



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

# Youth Engagement Review

## A Summary and Way Forward





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## Foreword by Rt Hon Andrew Robathan MP Minister for Defence Personnel Welfare and Veterans

This brief report summarises the Defence Youth Engagement Review (YER) and how the MOD intends to take it forward. I commissioned this Review in July 2010 in the wake of celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Cadet Forces. I wanted to ensure that we were making the most of not just the Cadet Forces but the many other youth engagement activities that the MOD, including the Armed Forces, undertake.

I believe that not enough is done to promote the work that we do in this area. For too long we have been keeping Defence's Youth Engagement activities to ourselves. Other Government Departments look enviously at our ability to engage young people. I am delighted that over 600 Army and Combined Cadet Force cadets are taking part in a Cadet based pilot of the National Citizen Service this summer, and that we are working with the Department of Education to deliver 100 new cadet units in schools by 2015. Defence Youth Engagement activity takes place throughout the United Kingdom and we work closely with our colleagues across the Devolved Administrations to ensure that our efforts complement their initiatives.



The Youth Engagement Review has been conducted during tough economic times, and difficult funding decisions have had to be made throughout Defence. But in the face of this austerity it is vital to understand that the investment we make in young people's future employability and good citizenship will contribute to a future stronger economy and society. That said, I feel it is right and proper that we should always strive to deliver more for the public money we are entrusted with and I welcome the Review's recommendation that we need better performance management.

The Review rightly singles out the Adult Volunteers in the Cadet Forces for special praise for their dedication to the development of today's young people. I would like to add my own salute to these men and women who give up so much of their precious spare time, whether evenings, weekends or holidays, to make the Cadet Experience one that leaves a lasting and beneficial impression and helps shape our young people to become active, successful citizens of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Robathan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the main body of text.

# SECTION 1

## Defence Youth Engagement as it is today.

### 1.0 Introduction

1.0.1. Today's young people (there are some 4.6 million 13 to 18 year olds in the UK) are the tax payers and decision makers of the future. Some of them will become recruits to the UK Armed Forces. All of them will make an impact on our society in one way or another. It is self-evident that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) needs to engage as wide a selection of young people as possible.

1.0.2. This section summarises the various ways Defence engages young people.

### 1.1 MOD sponsored Cadet Forces

1.1.1. The three Services run comprehensive external engagement activities for children and young people, which include the management and support<sup>1</sup> of around 140,000 cadets in the four MOD sponsored Cadet Forces, namely the Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), the Army Cadet Force (ACF) the Air Training Corps (ATC) and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

1.1.2. These cadet forces have strong links to our Armed Forces, and the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force (RAF) provide a broad "theme" to their own youth organisations which attracts both cadets and adult volunteers.

1.1.3. The cadet forces have become something of a National Institution and rely entirely on the good will, enthusiasm and dedication of the 26,000 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) who give up their spare time to supervise challenging, inspiring, and importantly, fun activities, steeped in the ethos and values of their particular Service.

### 1.2 Royal Navy's Volunteer Cadet Corps

1.2.1. Five Royal Navy establishments also host Volunteer Cadet Corps (VCC) units, having in total 600 members. Although these are not currently considered as MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces, their status is being reviewed by the Royal Navy.

### 1.3 Non-cadet youth development programmes

1.3.1. The MOD currently encounters over 650,000 young people every year in some form of non-cadet youth engagement activity to provide awareness of the Armed Forces. This engagement includes school presentations, military establishment visits and Service Outreach programmes. Outreach programmes provide opportunities for young people from disadvantaged communities or backgrounds.

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1. All have different operating models. The Army Cadets and Air Cadets are a part of their respective commands but have supporting charities, the Combined Cadet Force contingents are managed by schools and supported by the Services, and the Sea Cadets are a part of The Marine Society & Sea Cadets charity, which receives part funding through a partnership (via a memorandum of understanding) with the RN.

1.3.2. The current engagement programmes vary across the country and rely on local initiatives, the enthusiasm of volunteers and the building of relationships in the civilian community.

1.3.3. The Royal Navy recognises 101 Sea Scouts units and provides them with an annual grant. The RAF recognises 60 Air Scout Units and provides them with access to RAF Stations, equipment and flights in Service aircraft.

## 1.4 Service children

1.4.1. The MOD has welfare and educational responsibilities for around 80,000 Service children, runs its own schools for 10,500, and employs professional youth workers<sup>2</sup> to conduct youth club activity for 47,000.

## 1.5 Young Service personnel

1.5.1. Young people can join the Armed Forces with parental permission when they are 16 years of age. Commanding Officers of units have certain additional responsibilities for Service personnel under 18, over and above the duty of care they have to all Service personnel under their command.

1.5.2. Service personnel under 18 are not permitted to deploy to Afghanistan, Iraq, UN Missions or any other operations outside the United Kingdom, except where the operation does not involve personnel becoming involved in, or exposed to hostilities.

## 1.6 University units

1.6.1. Approximately 6,000 UK university students are members of the Army's 19 Officer Training Corps (OTC) units, 14 University Royal Navy Units (URNUs), the RAF's 14 University Air Squadrons (UAS).

1.6.2. Additionally there are six Defence Technical Undergraduate Schemes (DTUS), which specifically engage with engineering undergraduates who have already decided that they wish to follow a career as either a MOD civilian or military engineer.

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2. Each Service has a dedicated professional lead for youth activity.

## Case Study – Operation Youth Advantage +

Operation Youth Advantage + is a project in Scotland which aims to help young people break away from gang life. The young people are in 'hard to reach' social groups, are disadvantaged both socially and educationally, and are at high risk of offending.

The 5 day programme is designed to provide an insight into military life and gives the participants the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe environment. On attendance the students are divided into sections and are taught confidence building skills, teamwork and leadership, through the vehicle of low level military activities. The course is structured and mostly practical with much physical activity.

Activities include drill, sporting activities, an obstacle course, map reading and 'living-in-the-field'. On completion of the course attendees are presented with a Certificate of Achievement and an assessment of their personal qualities, their results in the mock physical test and the Team Commander's comments on their personality, performance and potential.

*"Later on, when I had a chance to think about the course and what I had achieved, I felt really proud of myself. I learned a lot about myself. I did things I never thought I could do. I know I can achieve a lot more than I thought I could if I just push myself, the staff told me that and now I know it is true. It was a lot tougher than I thought to learn that lesson. Would I do it again? Well the Army run a work experience course, my name will be down for it when I get back to school. The Army's motto is 'Be the Best', I might not have been the best, but I tried my best, and that is good enough for me".*

An OYA+ attendee



## SECTION 2

### The need for a review

#### 2.0 Introduction

2.0.1. In July 2010, the Youth and Cadet Council, chaired by the Minister for Defence Personnel Welfare and Veterans, directed Brigadier James Plastow CBE to undertake a review of Defence Youth Engagement. The purpose of the review was to:

- a. Determine the Defence requirement for engaging Young People.
- b. Recommend the posture Defence should take within the wider Government Youth Agenda.
- c. Propose options to deliver the Defence requirement.

#### 2.1 Exclusions and Limitations

2.1.1. The review team was directed that it was not to review the MOD's provision of education services for children of Service personnel, or those activities that are an integral part of the recruitment process.

2.1.2. The composition of the team was originally envisaged to have sufficient capacity to undertake all other aspects of Defence's Youth Engagement, but unfortunately it was unable to be as large as planned and therefore the review has had to focus on the age group between 13 and 18 years.

#### 2.2 Method

2.2.1. The Review consulted widely including:

- Offices of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister
- All Party Parliamentary Group Reserve Forces and Cadets
- Ministry of Defence
- Department for Education
- Home Office
- Office for Civil Society
- Royal Navy
- Army
- Royal Air Force
- Marine Society and Sea Cadets
- Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations
- Army Cadet Force Association
- Combined Cadet Force Association

- The Cadet Organisations of Australia and Canada
- Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation (CVQO)
- Youth United
- Prince's Trust
- The Scout Association
- SkillForce
- Operation Youth Advantage + (Scotland)
- Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) from the four MOD sponsored Cadet Forces

2.2.2. An online survey of adult volunteers was conducted which returned 4,700 completed questionnaires and made a valuable contribution to the Review.

2.2.3. Several related previous government, academic and independent studies (including from countries outside the UK) were examined as part of the Review



## SECTION 3

# The benefits to Defence of engaging Young People

### 3.0 Introduction

3.0.1 The MOD spends public money to carry out its functions, and has to justify spending that money to Parliament. While the most important benefit of MOD Youth Engagement for Society as a whole is the development of young people, the Review identified that the two most important benefits to the MOD are awareness and recruitment.

### 3.1 Awareness

3.1.1. There is a definite benefit to the MOD of young people and the UK population as a whole being aware of the Armed Forces. A supportive population will feel a greater connection to the Armed Forces.

3.1.2. In addition to the many activities undertaken by the cadet forces, giving exposure to family, friends, and the general public, cadet forces also provide support to many national and local events. These range from local Remembrance services and marching bands to providing “Guards of Honour” at the launching of Her Majesty’s Ships, from assisting with marshalling at the Royal International Air Tattoo to providing a platoon of “Pipes and Drums” helping launch a campaign to protect the nation’s War Memorials. These activities, when carried out by cadets and CFAVs wearing military uniform, help to keep the Armed Forces in the public eye at a time where the Regular and Reserve Forces are heavily committed to operations.

3.1.3. Cadet Forces pride themselves on inclusivity in every respect, raising awareness of Defence in sections of society that might otherwise not come into contact with the Armed Forces.

### 3.2 Recruitment

3.2.1. Although the MOD sponsored Cadet Forces are not part of the Armed Forces recruitment process and there is no compulsion or coercion to join Royal Navy, Army or RAF, a large number of recruits to the Armed Forces have had previous experience in the cadets. By providing young people with an insight into Service life, those cadets who do go on to choose a career in the Armed Forces are less likely to drop out of initial training, which ultimately saves money for that Service.

3.2.2. Many cadets go on to work in other areas of the MOD, where their cadet experience can help them to have a better understanding of Defence matters. A significant number become CFAVs themselves to pass on their experience to the next generation of cadets.



## SECTION 4

# The benefits to Society of Defence Youth Engagement

### 4.0 Introduction

4.0.1. The MOD has a UK wide remit unlike the Education Departments of the Devolved Administrations. The Education Departments generally take the lead on policy for children and young people. There is an increased demand for youth development activity following the August 2011 riots.

### 4.1 Devolved Administrations Youth Policies

4.1.1. Current policies for UK children and young people are:

#### England

The Positive for Youth strategy seeks to find cross-government solutions to youth development issues and contains significant detail on the Cadet Forces and their benefits. A commitment was made to explore the opportunities to expand the Cadet Forces.

The Participation Strategy seeks to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in Education, Work or Training. The skills gained through service in the Reserve Forces or with the Cadets are specifically mentioned under the heading of 'Getting into Employment'.



#### Scotland

The Scottish Government is working with youth work and youth information organisations and a wide range of partners to improve life chances for children and young people. 'Valuing Young People – principles and connections to help young people achieve their potential' is designed to support those delivering positive futures for all young people, while recognising that some need more help than others. The involvement of military personnel in youth development activities, such as "Operation Youth Advantage +", is becoming more frequent.

## Northern Ireland

The vision of the Northern Ireland Assembly is that 'all children and young people living in Northern Ireland will thrive and look forward with confidence to the future'. The ten year strategy 'Our Children and Young People' aims for all to be fulfilling their potential by 2016.

## Wales

In Wales as part of a five year rolling action plan 'Getting it right 2009', the Welsh Assembly is developing a new strategy for children and young people.

In all these policies MOD's youth development programmes play a key role by helping young people to feel valued, have a positive outlook on their future, develop skills and contribute to their local community.

## 4.2 National Citizen Service (NCS)

4.2.1. National Citizen Service forms part of the Social Action strand of the Government's Big Society initiative. Its aims are to encourage a more cohesive society by mixing participants of different backgrounds, create a more responsible society by supporting the transition into adulthood for young people, and create a more engaged society by enabling young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities. The Government hopes to eventually have all 16 year olds in England involved in the scheme.

4.2.2. A series of NCS pilots was conducted in 2011 and a further round of pilots for 30,000 young people is planned for 2012. The single Services were involved, to varying degrees, in the 2011 pilots and this year over 600 ACF and CCF Cadets will take part in a pilot of a modified NCS programme that recognises the Cadet Experience and engages cadets with other young people.

## Case Study – Aftermath of the August 2011 riots

*This August, after the civil unrest that started in London spread to other cities, 26 year old Amy Liston, a CFAV in the Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force and her teenage cadets were at the forefront of efforts to clean up their local area in Salford and help restore the local community's faith in young people.*

*Like many in the ACF, they were away from home at the time, enjoying their two-week annual camp at Wathgill near Catterick, when the call came from the Lord Lieutenant's Office asking whether they could help in a clean-up operation being sponsored by Greater Manchester Police. For the 40 cadets from Amy's Company this meant withdrawing from their "field exercise", always cited as the highlight of annual camp, yet they did so cheerfully and with enthusiasm. Once back in Salford they divided into two teams: one tending to gardens in pensioner accommodation and the other painting and repairing retail units in Salford shopping precinct.*

*18-year-old cadet Ryan Gemmell told his own story: "I used to be one of those trouble makers. I never used to listen in school at all. I was at the point of being excluded and it was actually cadets that turned my life around," he said.*

*Amy added: "Our cadets were willing to give up their field exercise at camp this year to come back and get involved in the activities. In terms of the wider impact, they see themselves as instilling the core values and standards of the British Army – in this case, selfless commitment. They are determined to show the world that the majority of young people today want to have a positive impact on the world around them. In all my time in the ACF, I have never been more proud."*



# SECTION 5

## Analysis of youth engagement activity

### 5.0 Introduction.

5.0.1. The YER concluded that the principal benefit of the MOD's Youth Engagement activity to the UK as a whole is the personal and social development of Young People, especially those in the Cadet Forces.

5.0.2. The two principal benefits to Defence are increasing awareness and recruitment to the Armed Forces and MOD Civil Service. Figure 1 below shows how the various activities contribute to these benefits. All the listed activities that provide a development outcome also produce some level of awareness of the Armed Forces or potential for recruitment.

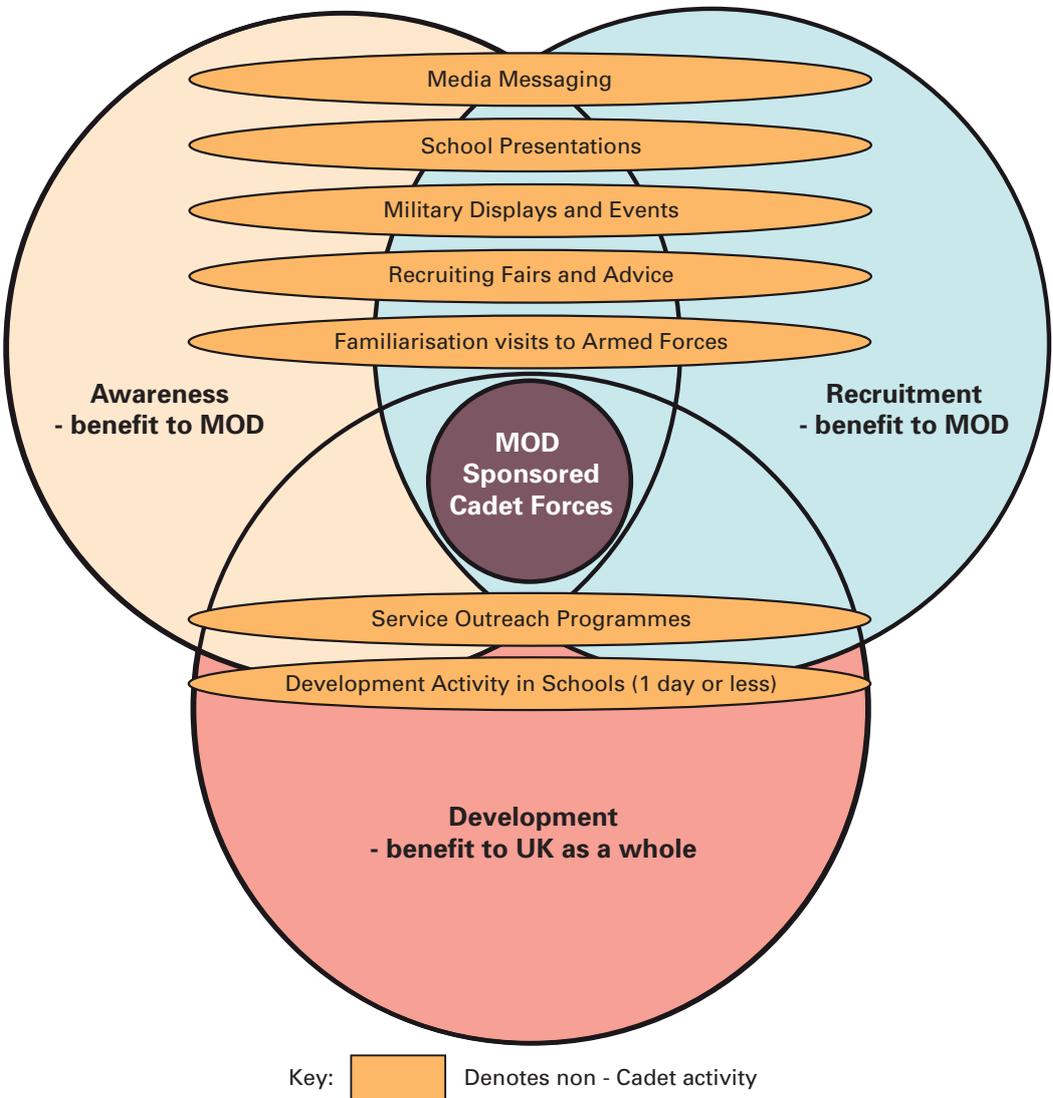


Fig.1: MOD Youth Engagement activities and the benefits they provide

## 5.1 Principal observations of the Review

**5.1.1. Adult Volunteers are vital to the continued success of the MOD sponsored Cadet Forces.** Defence must ensure that it recruits and retains high calibre CFAVs.

**5.1.2. Cadet Forces are an excellent vehicle for promoting awareness of the Armed Forces.** Through their presence in the community in Service uniform, week in and week out, the cadet forces are a constant reminder of the Armed Forces for the citizens of the UK. Many ceremonial and representative tasks carried out by the Cadet Forces may be the only opportunity for many to see people in Armed Forces uniform.

**5.1.3. External understanding of Cadet Forces is limited.** Outside the MOD, Cadet Forces are not well understood and are sometimes seen by local authorities as more of a military activity, driven solely by recruitment, than as part of the Government's general youth development strategy.

**5.1.4. Cadet Forces produce great outcomes for young people, but these outcomes are difficult to measure.** A greater ability to link cadet activity (which can be measured) to youth outcomes would enable the Cadet Forces to better promote themselves externally.

**5.1.5. Other Government Departments benefit from MOD youth development activity.** A consistent high level skills framework across the cadet forces would make it easier to promote them together to local authorities, schools and government schemes such as National Citizen Service.

## 5.2 Principal recommendations of the Review

**Recommendation: Defence is to adopt a Youth Engagement posture that will:**

- Improve awareness
- Sustain recruitment
- Maintain cadet forces at current levels, but be prepared for expansion
- Conduct focussed outreach programmes
- Sustain internal youth engagement and support

**Recommendation: Defence is to produce a coherent Youth Engagement Strategy that is:**

- Coordinated at a regional level by an appropriate agency, where beneficial
- Conducted in accordance with a set of national policies formulated by a central MOD team
- Complementary to cross-Government (including devolved administrations) youth initiatives

**Recommendation: Defence is to develop a joined up cadet programme starting with:**

- A single Management Information System
- A core skills framework set within the single-Service ethos
- A consistent performance report

**Recommendation: Defence is to prioritise further work on:**

- The support structures in place for cadet units
- The terms of volunteering for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers
- Determining the requirement for cadet forces in schools

**Recommendation: Defence is to fully examine the method and level of remuneration and allowances for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.**

- No immediate changes to the level of remuneration will be made.

## Case Study – Cadet service improving life outcomes

*“The area in which I grew up was a deprived area with a high crime and drugs rate and this sort of lifestyle is common and easy to fall into. I was often getting into trouble with the police and my attendance at school was poor, and I left without any qualifications.*

*Then I joined the Sea Cadets. I never missed the chance to parade as a Sea Cadet. Some months I was attending cadet courses nearly every evening and weekend. The instructors in my unit encouraged me to enrol on the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation (CVQO) BTEC in Public Services. The sea cadets changed my attitude towards learning; I gained two nationally recognised qualifications during my sea cadet career a BTEC and an ILM [Institute of Leadership and Management] team leading certificate, additionally I achieved my Duke of Edinburgh’s award. These gained me a place in College to re sit my GCSE’s and I now plan to continue my studies whilst at sea through the Marine Society and Sea Cadets’ College of the Sea. My time in the cadets has taught me the importance of education and proven to me that anything is possible when you are willing to put in the time and effort.”*

**A former Sea Cadet**



## SECTION 6

# Implementing the YER and beyond

### 6.0 Introduction

6.0.1. With any review the one thing that people want to know is “What happens next?” This section outlines how the MOD intends to take the YER recommendations and wider youth engagement forward.

### 6.1 Youth Development as a Defence Task

6.1.1. The YER recommended that Youth Development Activity became a Defence Task but, after careful reflection, this recommendation has not been accepted. It is true that Defence does an amazing amount of good development work in its many Youth Engagement programmes. However, Defence’s mission is to protect our country and provide the ultimate guarantee of its security and independence, as well as helping to protect its values and interests abroad, and nothing should distract it from that.

### 6.2 The Next Steps

6.2.1. All of the principal recommendations outlined at section 5.2 have been broadly accepted and a team to implement them is being formed. This team will be based on the MOD’s central Youth & Cadet policy team, but will include representatives of the Cadet Forces and Armed Forces as work requires. However, this will not be an overnight process. Progress will be reported to the annual Youth and Cadets Council and will be driven by the 3\* Youth & Cadets Steering Group. A particular focus will be the work related to the review of Adult Volunteer terms.

6.2.2. In addition to the recommendations of the report the following specific actions have been agreed with Ministers. MOD will:

- Continue to support the Community Covenant scheme which aims to foster greater understanding and support for the Armed Forces (including Veterans, Families, Reserves and Cadets) in the area that they live.
- Councils are being encouraged to sign a Community Covenant which is a pledge of support for the Armed Forces community and to look at the specific needs of that community.
- The Community Covenant has engaged with significant numbers of young people and provided them with facilities such as the building of a “Go Ape” obstacle course. A £30 million fund has been committed to the Community Covenant scheme up to Financial Year 2014/15.
- Deliver with the Department of Education the school based expansion plan of 100 new third party funded units by 2015 as announced by the Prime Minister on 30 June 2012. The Departments have committed in total £10.85 million to deliver equipment, infrastructure and training support necessary to meet this objective.

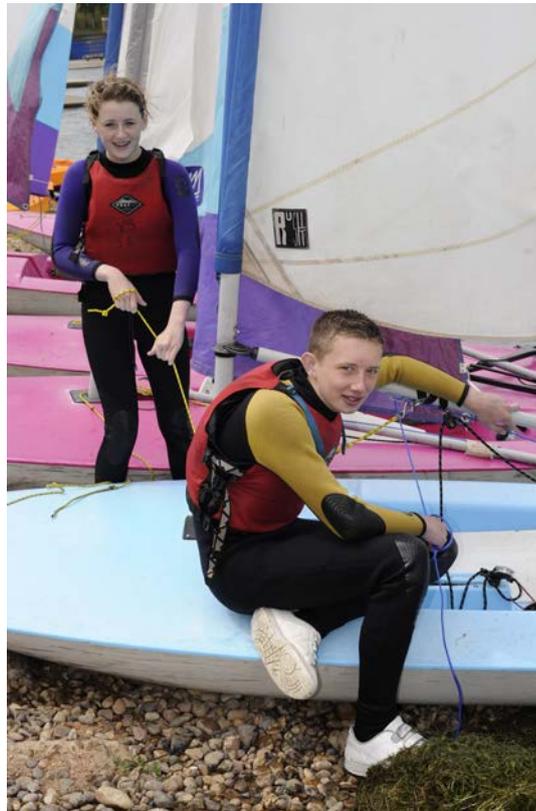
- Continue the partnership between the Royal Navy and the Marine Society and Sea Cadets to support the charity’s Sea Cadet Corps through a new five year Memorandum of Understanding outlining the financial and resource support to meet around 55% of the operating costs.
- Continue its award winning Educational Outreach work where MOD employees mentor young people.
- Support a trial of NCS with ACF and CCF Cadets.

## 6.3 Summary

6.3.1. The YER will contribute to our ongoing work to ensure Defence not only satisfies its own needs to engage with young people, but also plays a full part in their personal and social development alongside other government departments and organisations.

6.3.2. The MOD sponsored Cadet Forces will continue to be the primary means of delivering this development outcome through the “Cadet Experience” and the Review is clear that this experience must be preserved.

6.3.3. By highlighting their good work, the YER has shown that the Cadet Force Adult Volunteers are without doubt at the heart of the Cadet Forces. The dedication shown by these volunteers is in itself one of the best examples of Big Society in action.



## Case Study – Education Outreach

*The MOD undertakes Education Outreach as a demonstration of commitment to our corporate social responsibility and a visible contribution to helping develop the skills of the next generation. The programme is a demonstrable example of the volunteering ethos of MOD staff, both military and civilian, with the added benefit of helping develop their own team, interviewing, presentation, and hosting skills by participation. Mentoring is still a core strand of the programme, and over the past year over 40 staff have taken part in supporting students' studies, plus CV workshops, mock interviews and sifting and selection exercises.*

*It is not uncommon to be working with students for whom English is not their first language and whom the colleges class as 'at risk'. They often have nobody in their family in work, so the opportunity to have speakers from the MOD in the classroom, to take part in activities such as mock interviews, and then be able to visit a work zone in MOD is a fantastic experience and one they will never forget.*

*Hammersmith College has had nearly 700 students supported in the last seven years. Their Principal, Paula Whittle wrote that the programme "is a most valuable and enriching partnership for a significant number of our learners and we are very grateful for the involvement in college by the Ministry of Defence".*

*One student enthused, "I found the MOD programme very useful. My mentor kept in touch from the start. He helped me with interview skills and questions. Thanks to his help I am now working with the company a few days a week and hopefully will get a paid job there in a few months time. Whitehall was an amazing experience ... I feel very lucky, and I am very grateful for all that the MOD has helped me with."*



## Case Study – Cadets striving for excellence

*“I can’t say enough about how fabulous Air Cadets was and how it was the main driving force into getting me into athletics. Whenever I am questioned about how I started it I always mention how I was at an event for my squadron and I was introduced to my first ever coach there.*

*The Air Cadet Organisation gets you involved not just in things like aircraft and drill, but also activities that you wouldn’t normally be involved in from flying, gliding and orienteering to performing with a marching band, five-a-side football, netball and of course athletics.*

*As well as all of those activities, you also get taught respect for hierarchy of rank and structure. It gave me the opportunity to get involved in so much and opened all of the doors for me.”*

**Former Air Cadet, and 2012 Olympic long-jump hopeful, Abigail Irozuru.**



Abigail Irozuru pictured next to the train named in her honour.

A.C.F.



BTEC



ACC



LSW

