

Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) – Defence relationship with employers

On 8 November 2012, MOD launched a public consultation on the future of the UK's Reserve Forces, 'Future Reserves 2020: Delivering the Nation's Security Together'.

The consultation is open until 18 January 2013 and invites reservists, their families, regular Armed Forces, employers and anyone else with an interest in Reserves to give us their views on the proposed changes to Reserve Service.

We are strengthening Defence's relationship with the employers of our reservists in order to maintain a dialogue between all three parties; the employer, the reservists and Defence.

Our commitment to employers:

"In order to contribute to delivering the security necessary to enable national prosperity, Defence requires access to appropriately trained and skilled reservists from the civilian workforce. Defence seeks an open relationship with employers that supports and, where possible, encourages reserve service. Defence will therefore explore and investigate mechanisms that will facilitate predictable demand, proper acknowledgement of employer support, improved and accredited skills and training for reservist employees and, where appropriate, the development of mutual business benefits with employers."

So what does this mean for an employer?

Defence is seeking a new relationship with employers which is:

Open. An employer should know that an employee is a reservist and the reservist should be confident that such knowledge will not prejudice their employment prospects. Defence will need to give employers greater predictability of when reservists might be needed and for how long.

Benefits to each other. Together we can better develop and exploit the skills and talents reservists have as employees. Reservists bring additional knowledge, skills and experience to an employer – such as self discipline and personal organisation – and the closer the military and civilian roles are, the greater the likelihood of opportunity for mutual benefit.

Tailored. Not all employers are the same and Defence will seek to reflect the different opportunities and impacts of reserve service for different employers – public and private; large, medium and small; for the self-employed and unemployed; and by sector.

The FR20 consultation sets out a number of proposals which affect employers. We are seeking their views on them:

- **Greater commitment from reservists to attend training and mobilisation.**
 - The role of our Reserves is set to grow and therefore attendance for designated training needs to be compulsory; we will need to strengthen current legislation to support this. Defence needs the assurance that reservists, when mobilised, meet the necessary standards for deployment.
 - In future, mobilisation is likely to be more directed, with less flexibility for the individual to choose when he or she is mobilised. In the majority of cases a reservist will be mobilised for no more than one year in every five,

which would include a six month deployment, training, recuperation and post-deployment leave.

- **However, there will also be greater predictability of training and mobilisation for the employer and the reservist.** Employers and reservists will be given more notice of training and mobilisation cycles. While unplanned mobilisation remains possible, it will tend to be for much shorter duration and is most likely to address civil emergencies in the UK.
- **Shared benefit of training and experience.** We are looking at the accreditation and benchmarking of skills and experience gained in reserve service with recognised civilian qualifications. Employers will directly benefit through a reduction in their own training costs – Defence will do the training for them.
- **From education to work.** We are looking at options to encourage reserve service among students, as they are more likely to have the time available to conduct military training. We are also looking at options for a joint approach to graduate training and apprenticeships. We believe that reserve military training gives individuals additional skills, such as decision making and leadership capabilities, which will make them more employable.
- **Incentives and recognition.** We are considering financial and non-financial incentives for employers, ranging from the award of a national 'Kitemark' type recognition scheme, to an additional financial award for employers. These incentives will be tailored so that they are accessible regardless of the size of a business.
- **Employers' Charter.** We are considering a voluntary Employers' Charter for the Reserve Forces - a public commitment to support reservists, recognising the benefit of employing reservists and setting the tone for the employer's HR policies towards reservists. It would encourage openness from employees about their Reserve status. We are looking at whether we need to extend current legislation so that reservists cannot be deliberately disadvantaged on account of their reserve status.
- **Feedback to employers on reservists' service.** We are investigating the idea of providing employers with feedback from Commanding Officers on what their employee has achieved during and following deployment as a Reserve. This will not be a report on performance.

We are seeking the views of employers of reservists. We are consulting on a range of proposals that also invites reservists, their families, regular Armed Forces and anyone else with an interest in Reserves. We want to hear your views on these proposals. **The consultation closes 18 January – don't miss out.**

To find out more about how the UK's Reserve Services are changing and why, see [Future Reserves Consultation](#) (www). From here you will find the Consultation paper, and a link to the survey to comment on the proposals – you may answer as many or as few of the questions asked as you wish.

For more information about the Future Reserves 2020 consultation, see related [www](#) links.

FR20 Consultation Team
DCDSPERS-RFC-FR20Consultation@mod.uk