This publication provides information on the number of Military Personnel in (defined as the strength), joining (intake) and leaving (outflow) the UK Armed Forces. Detail is provided for both the Full-time Armed Forces and Reserves. In addition, there is an update of quarterly statistics on Separated Service (the proportion of personnel breaching harmony guidelines). Further statistics can be found in the Excel tables.

The recent trends in personnel numbers in this report relate to the targets outlined in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015 and the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme. Prior to SDSR 2015, publications reported against SDSR 2010, the Three Month Exercise (3ME), Army 2020 and the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme.

Some of the statistics previously published in the following publications can now be found in this release: Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Personnel Reports, UK Reserve Forces and Cadets, Service Personnel Bulletin 2.01 and Service and Civilian Bulletin 2.03.

### Key Points and Trends

1. **Strength of UK Forces Service Personnel**
   - At 1 February 2016, an increase of 1,530 (0.8 per cent) since 1 February 2015

2. **Full-time Trained Strength**
   - At 1 February 2016, a decrease of 4,200 (2.9 per cent) since 1 February 2015

3. **Surplus/Deficit against the planned number of personnel needed (Liability)**
   - At 1 February 2016, an increase in the deficit from 4.1 per cent as at 1 February 2015

4. **Strength of the Trained FR20 Volunteer Reserve**
   - At 1 February 2016, an increase of 2,660 (11.0 per cent) since 1 February 2015

5. **People joined the UK Regular Armed Forces**
   - In the past 12 months (1 February 2015 – 31 January 2016), an increase of 1,700 (13.6 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period

6. **People joined the FR20 Volunteer Reserve**
   - In the past 12 months (1 February 2015 – 31 January 2016), an increase of 1,890 (29.1 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period

7. **Regular personnel left the Armed Forces**
   - In the past 12 months (1 February 2015 – 31 January 2016), a decrease of 1,580 (8.5 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period

8. **FR20 Volunteer Reserve personnel left**
   - In the past 12 months (1 February 2015 – 31 January 2016), a decrease of 420 (9.3 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period
Introduction

This publication contains information on the strength, intake and outflow for the UK Armed Forces overall and each of the Services: Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM), Army and Royal Air Force (RAF). An update to quarterly statistics on Separated Service (the proportion of personnel breaching harmony guidelines) is also included.

Statistics on Exit Reason for the Army (specifically Voluntary Outflow, Time Expiry and Other Wastage), for UK Regular personnel, are marked as provisional in this release (see page 7 and Excel tables 4 and 5d). The corresponding Tri-Service totals are also marked as provisional. This is due to the implementation of improvements to the quality assurance process. These statistics will be finalised in due course. The associated historic statistics will also be affected and therefore revised.

Detailed statistics and historic time series can be found in the Excel tables. These include statistics on rank structure, military salaries and the number of applications to each of the Services.

Further historic statistics will be added in due course; in the meantime, historic statistics can be found in the following archived publications: Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Personnel Reports, UK Reserve Forces and Cadets, Service Personnel Bulletin 2.01, Service and Civilian Bulletin 2.03, UK Armed Forces Maternity Report, Diversity Dashboard and Quarterly Location Statistics. The glossary contains definitions of terminology used in this publication.

The next edition of this publication will be published on GOV.UK at 9:30am on 14 April 2016. A calendar of upcoming MOD statistical releases can be found on GOV.UK.

A National Statistics publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.
The main factors affecting decisions about the size of the Armed Forces required by the MOD to achieve success in its military tasks include:

- An assessment of current and future threats to UK national security;
- The need for contingent / reactive capability – the requirement to be able to respond immediately to domestic or international crisis;
- Current operational and international obligations (e.g. NATO, UN);
- Changes in technology, the introduction of new equipment and restructuring that leads to equipment becoming obsolete or surplus to requirements;
- The need to deliver against the military tasks as efficiently as possible, maintaining a balanced, affordable defence budget.

The Service personnel statistics in this publication are reported against the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), released in November 2015. Prior to SDSR 2015, publications reported against the planned Future Force 2020, as set out in the SDSR 2010 which planned to reduce the size of the Armed Forces.

**Full-time Armed Forces personnel:**
In order to meet the manpower reduction targets set out in SDSR 2010, the Three Month Exercise (3ME) and Army 2020 (A2020), a redundancy programme coupled with adjusted recruiting (intake) and contract extensions were set. The redundancy programme is now complete.

On 23\(^{rd}\) November 2015, the Ministry of Defence published the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015. SDSR 2015 outlines plans to uplift the size of the Regular Armed Forces, setting targets for a strength of 82,000 for the Army, and increasing the Royal Navy/Royal Marines and Royal Air Force by a total of 700 personnel. The [SDSR 2015 Defence Key Facts](#) booklet announced new targets for 2020 for each of the Services.

**Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Programme**
The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme aims to increase the size of the Reserve Forces and targets the Volunteer Reserve.

2010 The 2010 [Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)](#) identified the future Armed Forces that the UK would need over the next ten years and beyond. It identified that the Reserve Forces should be an integral part of this Future Force; providing additional capacity as well as certain specialists whom it would not be practical or cost effective to maintain in the UK Regular Forces.

2011 The [2011 Independent Commission to Review the UK’s Reserve Forces](#), available [here](#), reported against this context.

2013 Information on measures the MOD planned to take in order to achieve these targets is in the [FR20 White Paper “Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued”](#) published in July 2013, available [here](#).

Subsequent to this, details of the planned growth of the FR20 over the next 5 years were placed in the House of Commons Library on 19 December 2013. This statement included annual trained strength targets along with intake targets to support the planned growth, and can be viewed in full [here](#).

This statement outlines that the trained strength targets Financial Year 2018/19 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maritime Reserve</strong></td>
<td>3 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Army Reserve</strong></td>
<td>30 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAF Reserves</strong></td>
<td>1 860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UK Service Personnel

UK Service Personnel comprise the total strength of the military personnel employed by the Ministry of Defence (Excel tables, table1). The current strength of the UK Service Personnel is 196,650, which include:

- All UK Regular personnel and all Gurkha personnel (which at 1 February 2016 comprised 79.2 per cent of UK Service Personnel);
- Volunteer Reserve personnel (which at 1 February 2016 comprised 17.6 per cent of UK Service Personnel);
- Other Personnel including the Serving Regular Reserve, Sponsored Reserve, Military Provost Guard Service, Locally Engaged Personnel and elements of the FTRS (which at 1 February 2016 comprised 4.1 per cent of UK Service Personnel).

Strength is the number of personnel.

Volunteer Reserves voluntarily accept an annual training commitment and are liable to be mobilised to deploy on operations. They can be utilised on a part-time or full-time basis to provide support to the Regular Forces at home and overseas.

The strength of the UK Forces has increased between 1 February 2015 and 1 February 2016, by 0.8 per cent (1,530 personnel). Over the same period, there has been a decrease in the strength of UK Regular personnel and Gurkhas and there have been increases in the Reserves populations.

Since last month, the total strength of the UK Forces has increased by 620 personnel (0.3 per cent).

The Maritime Reserve has increased by 340 (17.4 per cent) since 1 February 2015, the Army Volunteer Reserve has increased by 2,040 (9.9 per cent) since 1 February 2015 and the RAF Volunteer Reserve has increased by 280 (18.0 per cent) since 1 February 2015.
The **Full-time Trained Strength** (which comprises military personnel who have completed ‘Phase 1’ and ‘Phase 2’ training) is counted against the **Liability**. The difference between the two is measured as either a surplus or deficit. This is one indicator of the Service’s ability to execute military tasks. Other indicators include the surplus / deficit within key trades or in specific Ranks.

- The Strength of the Full-time Trained UK Armed Forces is 140,720, a decrease of 2.9 per cent (4,200 personnel) since 1 February 2015. The Full-Time Trained Strength (FTTS) has decreased by 550 personnel compared to last month.

- The FTTS is 29,720 for the RN/RM, 79,970 for the Army and 31,020 for the RAF.

- The FTTS comprises: 137,790 Regular personnel (97.9 per cent); 2,500 Gurkhas (1.8 per cent); and 420 Full Time Reserve Service personnel (0.3 per cent) who can fill Regular posts and are deployable.

- The current deficit against the Liability is 4.3 per cent for the UK Armed Forces. There is a deficit of 1.8 per cent in the Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM), 4.3 per cent in the Army and 6.6 per cent in the Royal Air Force (RAF).

- A proportion of the Army deficit (of FTTS against the Liability) is likely to be due to the numbers of Service personnel reducing to meet the targets previously set out in the SDSR 2010 and 3ME/A2020 and planned Liability reductions not keeping pace. During this transitional drawdown period the published Army Liability has lagged behind the number of personnel actually needed due to the way in which it is calculated.

- The SDSR 2015 envisaged that by 2020 the UK Armed Forces would have 144,200 personnel, comprising 30,450 for the RN/RM, 82,000 for the Army and 31,750 for the RAF.

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**Figure 1: Full-Time Trained Strength against Liability and 2020 target derived from SDSR 2015**

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UK Regular Personnel

As at 1 February 2016, the trained and untrained strength of the UK Regular Forces (which excludes Gurkhas) was 150,950, of which 137,790 were trained personnel.

- The majority of trained UK Regular Forces personnel are in the Army followed by the RAF and the RN/RM.
- There are 13,160 untrained personnel in the UK Regular Forces, of which 7,500 are in the Army. The untrained strength reflects the number of personnel who can potentially join the trained strength.

Intake and Outflow since January 2010

Intake and Outflow over the past six years are presented in Figure 3. Since 2010 outflow has exceeded intake for each 12 month period, following the announcement of the reduction in the size of the Armed Forces.

- Excluding personnel who left on redundancy, in the 12 months to 31 January 2016, there was a net outflow of 2,880 personnel from the UK Regular Forces. This difference has reduced compared with the 12 months to 31 January 2015, when 4,910 more personnel left the UK Regular Forces than joined.

Intake

- Intake into the trained and untrained UK Regular Forces was 14,120 in the 12 months to 31 January 2016. This has increased from 12,420 in the 12 months to 31 January 2015.

- Of the current intake, 9.1 per cent was into the Officers and 90.9 per cent was into the Other Ranks.

- From the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2015 to 31 January 2016, 11,340 people have joined. This is an increase compared with intake of 10,200 in the same period last year (1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015).

- The intake pattern for each Service differs. Compared to the 12 months to 31 January 2015, intake to the RN/RM has remained relatively stable, intake to the Army has increased by 19.1 per cent and the RAF has increased by 16.9 per cent.

Figure 3: Intake to and Outflow from the UK Regular Forces (over a 12-month period)
Outflow

- Outflow from the trained and untrained UK Regular Forces was 17,120 in the 12 months to 31 January 2016; down from 18,700 in the 12 months to 31 January 2015.

- In the 12 months to 31 January 2016, 120 trained and untrained personnel left the UK Regular Forces as part of the UK Armed Forces Redundancy Programme. This compares to 1,370 in the 12 months to 31 January 2015.

- From the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2015 to 31 January 2016, 14,130 people have left the UK Regulars. This is a decrease compared with outflow of 15,920 in the same period last year (1 April 2014 to 31 January 2015).

Armed Forces Redundancy Programme Tranche 1-4 statistics are available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-redundancy-program-statistics-index

The following statistics on exit reason are provisional (see introduction for further information). At a Tri-Service level, more personnel left the trained UK Regular Forces by Voluntary Outflow (VO) than for any other reason (Figure 4).

- In the 12 months to 31 January 2016, 7,960 trained personnel left through VO; the VO rate was 5.7 per cent. This is an increase from 7,400 in the 12 months to 31 January 2015 and a VO rate of 5.1 per cent.

- The VO rate is slightly higher amongst Other Ranks (5.8 per cent), compared to Officers (5.0 per cent).

There is no single reason why personnel leave on Voluntary Outflow, but the personnel who completed the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey indicated reasons for leaving the Armed Forces included the impact of Service life on family and personal life and opportunities outside the Armed Forces.

Figure 4: Outflow from the trained UK Regular Forces, by exit reason, in the 12 months to 31 January 2016

Voluntary Outflow encompasses all trained personnel who voluntarily exit before the end of their agreed engagement or commission period.

Time Expiry is a term used to describe those in the Armed Forces who reach the end of their engagement or commission and then leave.

Other Wastage is outflow from the trained strength due to, amongst others, medical reasons, misconduct, compassionate, dismissals and death.
Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme monitoring

The written ministerial statement released on the 19th December 2013 details the planned growth of the FR20 over the next 5 years.

**FR20 Volunteer Reserve Strength**

Progress against FR20 trained strength targets is reported in table 6a of the Excel tables. The total trained and untrained strength of the FR20 Tri-Service Volunteer Reserve was 34,360; an increase of 4,340 or 14.4 per cent since 1 February 2015. The trained strength of the FR20 Tri-Service Volunteer Reserve was 26,850; an increase of 2,660 or 11.0 per cent since 1 February 2015.

**Table 4: FR20 Volunteer Reserve strength by Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>1 Feb 15</th>
<th>1 Feb 16</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease</th>
<th>% Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Reserve</td>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>2,290</td>
<td>+340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>+30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Reserve</td>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>20,700</td>
<td>22,740</td>
<td>+2040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>4,150</td>
<td>5,640</td>
<td>+1,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Reserves</td>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>1,540</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>+280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>+160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

**FR20 Intake**

Intake statistics report how many people have joined the trained or untrained strengths. As well as new recruits, this can include personnel transferring from the Regular Forces, other Reserve populations, or Reserve re-joiners.

In the 12 months between 1 February 2015 and 31 January 2016, intake to the Tri-Service FR20 Volunteer Reserve was 8,390 people (3,020 trained and 5,370 untrained, including transfers); a 29.1 per cent increase on the same 12 month period in the previous year.

**Table 5: Intake to FR20 Volunteer Reserve, trained and untrained**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>1 Feb 14</th>
<th>1 Feb 15</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease</th>
<th>% Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Reserve</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>+140</td>
<td>+14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Reserve</td>
<td>4,840</td>
<td>6,420</td>
<td>+1,580</td>
<td>+32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Reserves</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>+180</td>
<td>+24.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

**FR20 Outflow**

Outflow statistics report how many personnel have left the trained or untrained strengths. The majority of outflow is personnel leaving the Armed Forces, though a substantial proportion do transfer to another part of the Armed Forces, such as the Regulars or another Reserve Force.

In the 12 months between 1 February 2015 and 31 January 2016 outflow from the Tri-Service FR20 Volunteer Reserve was 4,060 people (2,550 trained and 1,500 untrained, including transfers); a 9.3 per cent decrease compared with the same 12 month period in the previous year. The overall decrease in Tri-Service outflow is a result of a large decrease in Army Reserve outflow; Maritime Reserve and RAF Reserves outflow has increased over the periods.

**Table 6: Outflow from FR20 Volunteer Reserve, trained and untrained**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outflow</th>
<th>1 Feb 14</th>
<th>1 Feb 15</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease</th>
<th>% Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Reserve</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>+170</td>
<td>+32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Reserve</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td>-810</td>
<td>-21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF Reserves</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>+230</td>
<td>+90.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)
By studying intake (number of personnel joining) and outflow (number of personnel leaving) over time, Figure 5 shows that since the start of the FR20 Programme, more people are now joining the Reserve Forces and less people are leaving. Initially, outflow was greater than intake; this situation resulted in a decrease in total strength (as illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6). The FR20 Programme sought to increase recruitment levels for the Reserves, and in the 12 months to 30th September 2014 a crossover occurred whereby intake became higher than outflow. When this happened, the total strength began to increase (again, illustrated in Figure 5 and 6). If this gap between intake and outflow is sustained, it will result in continuing growth in the strength numbers; the overarching aim of the Programme. Decreases in net flow have resulted in this growth in strength slowing since October 2015.

Since April 2012 trained strength has shown a gradual increase, whereas untrained strength initially decreases (reaching its lowest point in early 2014) before commencing a steady increase. Early changes in the strengths were likely due to the restructuring of the Reserve Forces during the initial stages of the FR20 Programme. Subsequent improved recruitment and training of Reserves, as a result of the FR20 Programme, has resulted in larger numbers both joining and completing training and therefore increased strengths for both trained and untrained personnel.
**Separated Service**

**Separated service** measures absence from normal place of duty. The time an individual experiences separated service is compared against each Service’s “Individual Harmony” guidelines to ensure a balance between duty and leisure for all Service Personnel.

A breach of individual harmony guidelines occurs when Service personnel experience separated service for longer than the period outlined in individual harmony guidelines which are based on the structures and organisation of that Service; for the RN/RM **660 days** away over a 36 month period for the Army no more than **498 days** away and the RAF no more than **468 days** away.

Using 1 January 2016 as an example:

**Trained UK Regular personnel breaching over 1 January 2013 – 31 December 2015**

**Trained UK Regular personnel as at 1 January 2016**

Table 7 shows the rate at which individual harmony guidelines have been breached by Service.

**Table 7: Tri Service UK Regular Breaching Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Breaching Harmony</th>
<th>1 Jul 14</th>
<th>1 Oct 14</th>
<th>1 Jan 15</th>
<th>1 Apr 15</th>
<th>1 Jul 15</th>
<th>1 Oct 15</th>
<th>1 Jan 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RN/RM</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

Compared with 1 January 2015, the Army and RAF have seen a decrease in breach rates at 1 January 2016. The RN/RM has shown a downward trend in 2014 which has levelled out in 2015.
Rounding
Figures in this publication have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in a “5” have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent the systematic bias caused by always rounding numbers upwards. For example; a value of “25” would be rounded down to “20” and a value of “15” would be rounded up to “20”.

Additionally, totals and sub-totals are rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts.

Percentages are calculated from unrounded data and presented to one decimal place.

Revisions
There are no revisions in this release, however, statistics on Exit Reason for the Army (specifically Voluntary Outflow, Time Expiry and Other Wastage), for UK Regular personnel, are marked as provisional in this release (see page 7 and Excel tables 4 and 5d). The corresponding Tri-Service totals are also marked as provisional. This is due to the implementation of improvements to the quality assurance process. These statistics will be finalised in due course. The associated historic statistics will also be affected and therefore revised.

There are no regular planned revisions of this Bulletin.

Symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>Zero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~</td>
<td>5 or fewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>Provisional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>Revised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Italic figures are used for percentages and other rates, except where otherwise indicated.*
Contact Us
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- RAF Manpower  01494 496822  DefStrat-Stat-Air-Hd@mod.uk
- Tri-Service Manpower  020 7807 8896  DefStrat-Stat-Tri-Hd@mod.uk
- Civilian Manpower  020 7218 1359  DefStrat-Stat-Civ-Hd@mod.uk
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