



This statistical release provides results from the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2016, along with results from previous years.

Statistics from AFCAS are used by both internal MOD teams and external bodies to inform the development of policy and measure the impact of decisions affecting personnel, including major programmes such as the Armed Forces Covenant and New Employment Model.

Key Points and Trends

Overall satisfaction and morale

- Just under half (46%) of Service personnel are satisfied with Service life in general. This is unchanged since 2015 but remains below the level of satisfaction seen in previous years.
- Overall, morale has remained stable since 2012; 40% of personnel currently report high morale. Morale in the Royal Navy has increased since 2015, but this is offset by a decrease in the RAF.
- 76% of personnel report that they are proud to be in their Service, which is unchanged from 2015. The overall number of personnel who would recommend joining their Service is also unchanged at 45% in 2016, however in the RAF there have been declines in both pride and in those who would recommend others to join, over the last year.

Retention

- In 2016, job security continued to be the top retention factor, followed by dental and healthcare provision, pension and mental health provision. 48% of personnel now cite mental health provision as a retention factor, an increase of 10 percentage points since 2015.
- Among those who have put in their notice, the impact of Service life on family and personal life remains the top reason for leaving the Armed Forces. In 2016, more personnel cite current job satisfaction as a reason for leaving than in previous years, making it the second most common reason.

Satisfaction with Service accommodation

- 2016 has seen a decrease in satisfaction with the overall standard of Service accommodation, with just over half (53%) reporting that they are satisfied. Satisfaction has fallen noticeably among those living in Service Families Accommodation, with a decrease of 7 percentage points to 50% in 2016.
- In 2016, personnel are also less satisfied with the value for money, response to requests for repairs or maintenance to their accommodation, and the quality of repairs carried out. One third (33%) of personnel report satisfaction with the quality of repairs, with 45% dissatisfied.

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Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

Would you like to be added to our **contact list**, so that we can inform you about updates to these statistics and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Pubs@mod.uk

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Reference tables and questionnaires for AFCAS 2016 are published as separate documents and can be found on the AFCAS webpage here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

Introduction

The 2016 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey was distributed to a sample of 28,119 trained UK Regular Armed Forces personnel between September 2015 and February 2016, using both online and paper questionnaires. Participants were chosen using stratified simple random sampling, designed to ensure sufficient responses from each Service and from each rank group within each Service, whilst minimising respondent burden.

Overall, 12,785 responses were received, representing a response rate of 45%. This was an increase of one percentage point from the 2015 survey, however the rate remains below the 48% achieved in 2013 and 2014.

AFCAS 2016 was distributed at a time of significant change for the MOD, including the continuation of high-level change programmes such as the New Employment Model, and the announcement of the new National Security Strategy following the Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2015¹.

Results from AFCAS, along with those from companion surveys of Armed Forces families (FAMCAS) and Reservist personnel (RESCAS), are used by the single Services, central MOD teams and certain external organisations to inform the development of policy and measure the impact of decisions affecting personnel. For example, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body recently used AFCAS findings on satisfaction with Service accommodation to justify refusing proposed increases to accommodation charges.

Please see the Background Quality Report for full details of survey methodology, analysis, and data quality considerations.

Note: throughout the report, where statistical significance tests are applied, they are carried out at the 99% confidence level. This is at a fairly stringent level and means that there should be less than a 1% (1 in 100) chance that differences observed in AFCAS results aren't representative of the Armed Forces as a whole. This reduces the likelihood of wrongly concluding that there has been an actual change based on the survey results, which only cover a sample of the Armed Forces.

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494895/SDSR_2015_Booklet_vers_15.pdf

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.

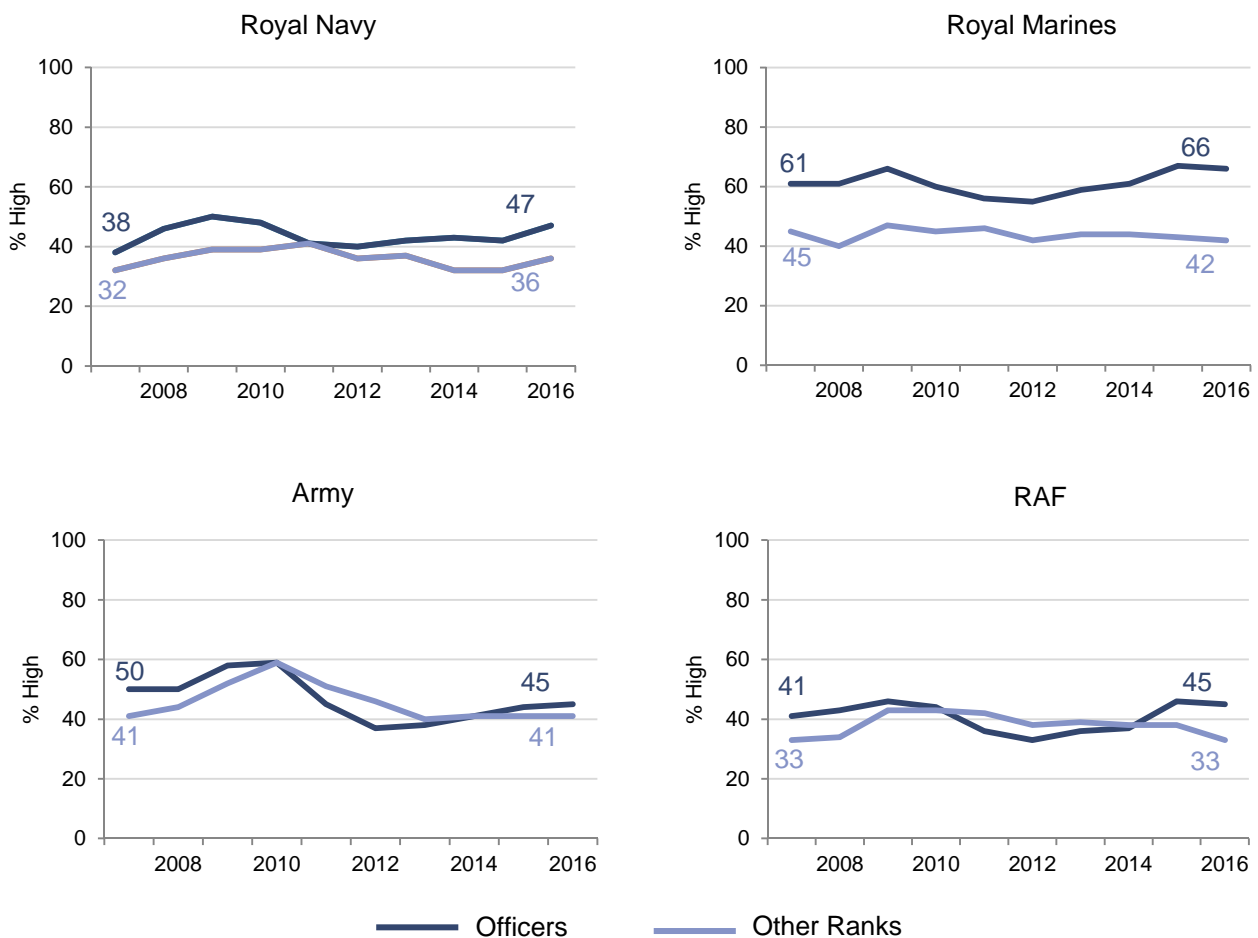
Section 1 - Morale, commitment and engagement

Section 1 covers satisfaction with a number of topics including morale, aspects of the job, Service ethos, commitment and engagement.

Morale (self, unit and Service)

The morale of Service personnel has stayed stable in 2016, with 40% of personnel reporting high self morale. Morale of the Royal Navy increased by five percentage points to 39%, however, morale of the RAF decreased by five percentage points to 35%. Overall, Officers report higher morale than Other Ranks. The levels of Officers and Other Ranks by Service reporting high morale are shown in Chart 1.1.

Chart 1.1 - Level of own morale



Overall, perceptions of unit morale have remained unchanged since 2015. Similar to the pattern of self morale, Royal Marine Officers report higher unit morale (60%) than other Services / rank groups.

Perceptions of Service morale differ greatly between Services. There has been little change in the proportion of individuals rating Service morale as high in 2016 (12%). The overall number of personnel rating morale as low has, however, increased by three percentage points to 52%. This is largely due to an increase in the proportion of Army and RAF Other Ranks rating Service morale as low. 62% of RM Officers rate Service morale as high; this is the highest proportion of all Services.

Satisfaction with Service life

Satisfaction with Service life is unchanged from 2015 at 46%. The level of satisfaction has, however, fallen over time, and is 15 percentage points lower than a peak of 61% in 2009. In 2016, Officers are more satisfied than Other Ranks (56%, 44%). RM Officers are the most satisfied (75%), whereas RN Other Ranks are the least satisfied (39%).

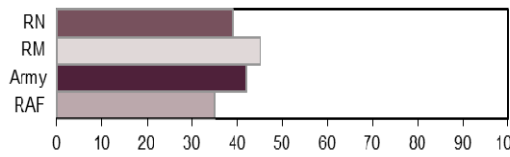
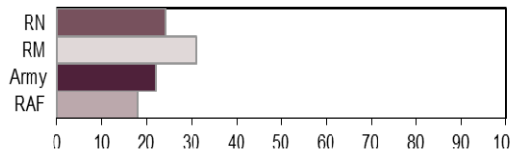
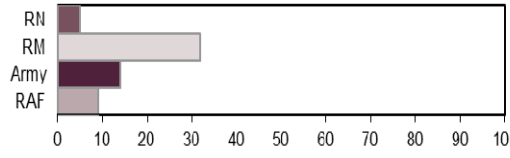
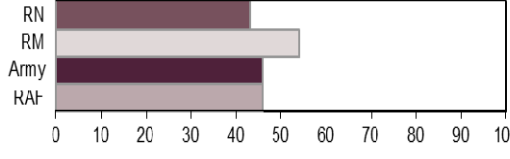
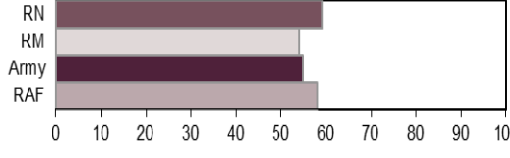
Job satisfaction

56% of personnel are satisfied with their job in general and 48% are satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work. These levels have not changed since 2015. The percentage of RN Officers who are satisfied with the sense of achievement they get from their work has however increased by six percentage points from 2015 to 66%. Officers are more satisfied than Other Ranks with the challenge in their job (70%, 51%)

Personal attachment

The proportion of personnel who agree that they have a strong personal attachment to their unit has increased by two percentage points to 49%. Army Other Ranks agreement increased five percentage points to 50% in 2016. Overall agreement with personal attachment to the Service is unchanged (57%), however both RM and RAF have seen a decline in agreement.

Key Questions - Morale & Satisfaction

Table Ref Question			Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B2.2	How would you rate the level of morale of... Myself? Positive = % High		40	↔	↔
B2.3	How would you rate the level of morale of... My Unit? Positive = % High		22	↔	-2
B2.4	How would you rate the level of morale of... The Service as a whole? Positive = % High		12	↔	-3
B2.1	How satisfied are you with Service life in general? Positive = % Satisfied		46	↔	-5
B2.5	How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job? My job in general. Positive = % Satisfied		56	↔	-4

↔ indicates no significant change has been found

Service pride

76% of personnel are proud to be in their Service. This figure has not changed since 2015 but does represent an eleven percentage point decrease from 2011. Although the Royal Marines remain the Service with the highest proportion of pride (80%), this figure has decreased by three percentage points from 2015, largely due to a reduction in pride in the Other Ranks. Similarly, pride has declined for RAF Other Ranks, dropping six percentage points to 70%.

Value by the Service

As a whole, the percentage of personnel who agree that they are valued by the Service remains unchanged since 2015 at 34%. Officers feel more valued than Other Ranks (40%, 33%); this difference is especially evident in the Royal Marines (63%, 43%).

Recommend others to join

After an increase in 2015 in the proportion of personnel who would recommend others to join their Service, overall results have stayed stable this year at 45%. The Royal Navy have seen an overall increase of four percentage points in the proportion who would recommend joining the Service, taking this up to 41%. Although there has been little change overall, both RM and RAF have seen a decrease in agreement taking these down four percentage points and six percentage points to 53% and 43% respectively. At 2016, RM agreement remains the highest of the Services at 53%.

Data Quality Note

Prior to 2015 this question was 'I feel proud to be in the Service', changed to 'I am proud to be in the Service'.

Data Quality Note

Prior to 2015 this question was 'I feel valued by the Service', changed to 'I am valued by the Service'.

Data Quality Note

Prior to 2010 this question included "... e.g. friends and family."

Chart 1.2 - Proud to be in the Service

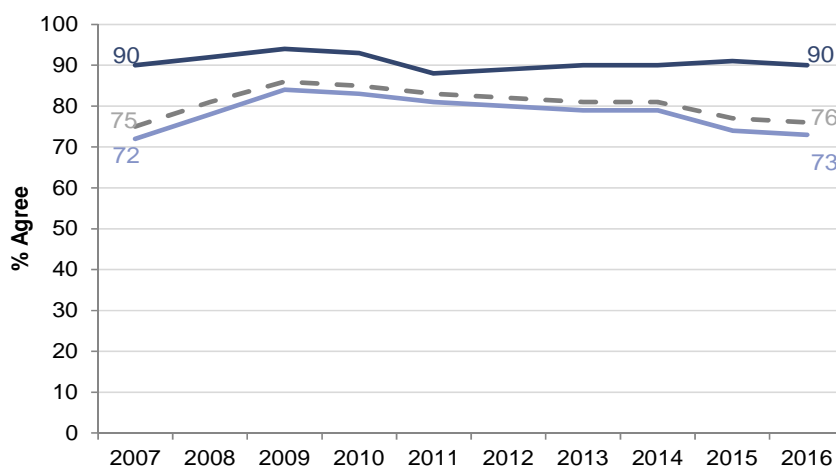
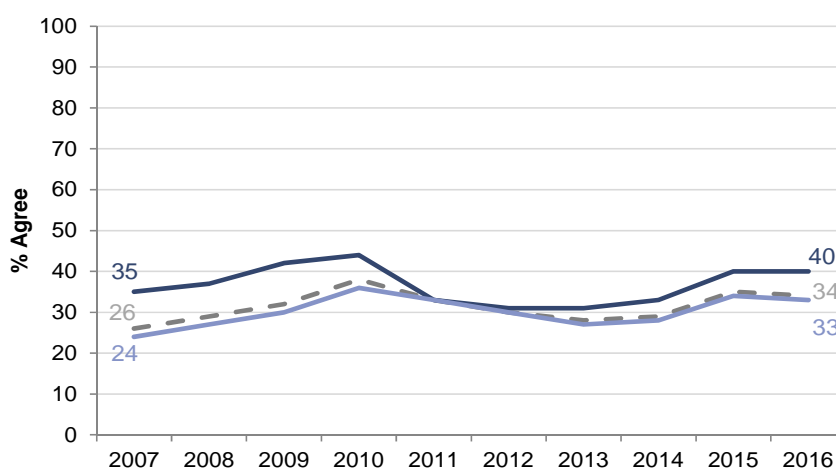


Chart 1.3 - Valued by the Service



Key Questions - Commitment

Table
Ref Question

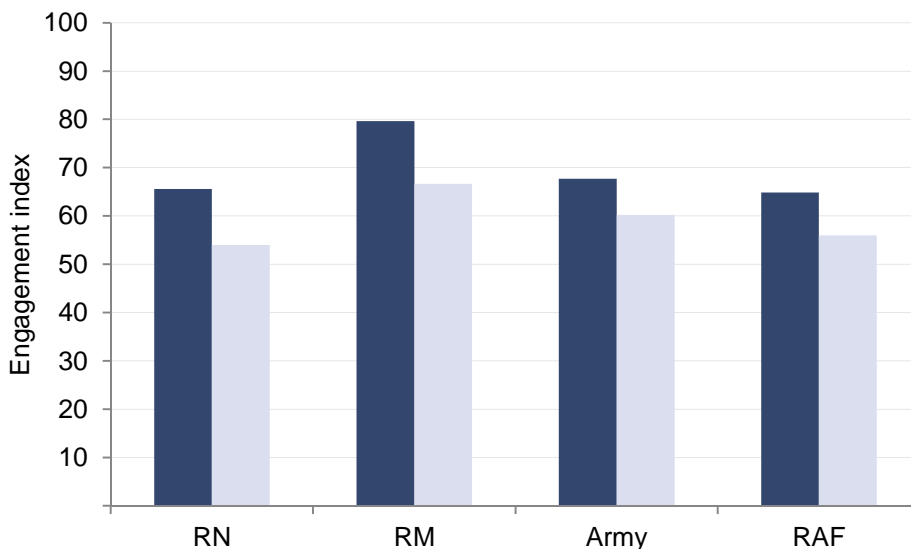
Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
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B6.3	I am proud to be in the Service.		76	↔	-6
Positive = % Agree		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B6.4	I am valued by the Service.		34	↔	4
Positive = % Agree		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B6.5	I would recommend joining the Service to others.		45	↔	↔
Positive = % Agree		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100	↔ indicates no significant change has been found		

Engagement index

The overall engagement index is 60%, a similar level to 2015. Officers remain more engaged than Other Ranks (67%, 59%). The RM overall has a higher engagement score than the other Services, and the RN has the lowest. With an engagement index of 80%, RM Officers are more engaged than Officers from the remaining Services. Similarly RM Other Ranks are the most engaged with an index of 67%.

Chart 1.4 - Engagement index



Data Quality Note

The engagement index is made up of responses to questions referenced B6.3, B6.5, B6.6, B6.8 and B6.9¹

It was calculated using the same method as that used in the Civil Service People Survey²

¹ How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following?

B6.3 I am proud to be in the [Service]. [A031]

B6.5 I would recommend joining the [Service] to others. [A033]

B6.6 I feel a strong personal attachment to the [Service]. [A331]

B6.8 The [Service] inspires me to do the best in my job. [A332]

B6.9 The [Service] motivates me to help it achieve its objectives. [A333]



² [Civil Service People Survey 2015 Technical Guide](#)

Section 2 – Work and Line Management

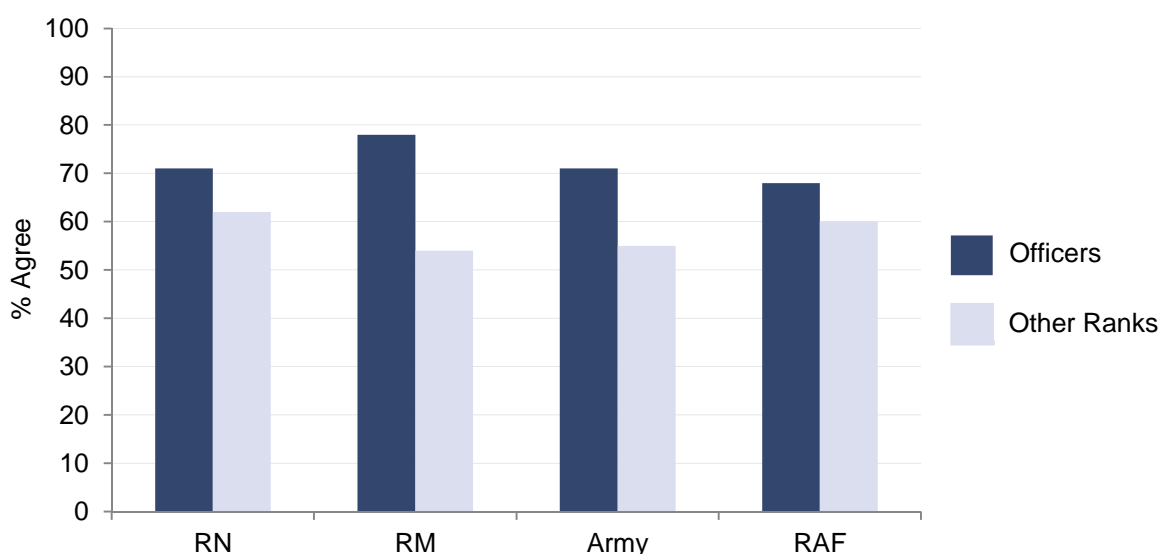
Section 2 focuses on Service personnel's own work, their equipment, line management and teamwork.

Work

Attitudes to work remain largely unchanged since 2015.

Over half (59%) of Service personnel agree that they are given sufficient authority to make decisions. Royal Marines Officers are the group most likely to say they have sufficient authority (78%), whereas Royal Marines Other Ranks, along with Army Other Ranks, are less likely to feel they have sufficient authority.

Chart 2.1 I am given sufficient authority to make decisions.



Less than half (38%) of all personnel agree that they will be praised or rewarded if they do their job well. Officers (46%) are more likely to agree than Other Ranks (36%).

Just over a third (37%) of personnel agree that where they work people do not automatically look for someone to blame when things go wrong. The Army are the least likely (33%) of the Services to agree.

Line management

Opinions about immediate superiors are largely unchanged since 2015. About three quarters (74%) of all Service personnel continue to agree that their immediate superior supports them in their job. About two-thirds (67%) of all personnel continue to be satisfied with their immediate superior.

The proportion of all Officers who agree that their immediate supervisor sets a positive example has increased by four percentage points, returning to the level recorded in 2014 (77%).

The proportion of RAF Other Ranks who agree that their immediate supervisor helps them to understand how they contribute to Service objectives has increased from 41% in 2015 to 46%.

Teamwork

A clear majority of Service personnel continue to have positive views of the teams they belong to. 84% of all personnel agree that team members work well with people from different backgrounds. 82% of personnel agree that 'We have confidence in ourselves as a team'. Officers are generally more positive than Other Ranks about the teams they belong to.

The proportion of Royal Navy Officers who agree that their team can be relied upon to help has increased by four percentage points since 2015 to 90%. The proportion of Army Officers who agree their team can be relied upon has increased by four percentage points since 2015 to 89%.

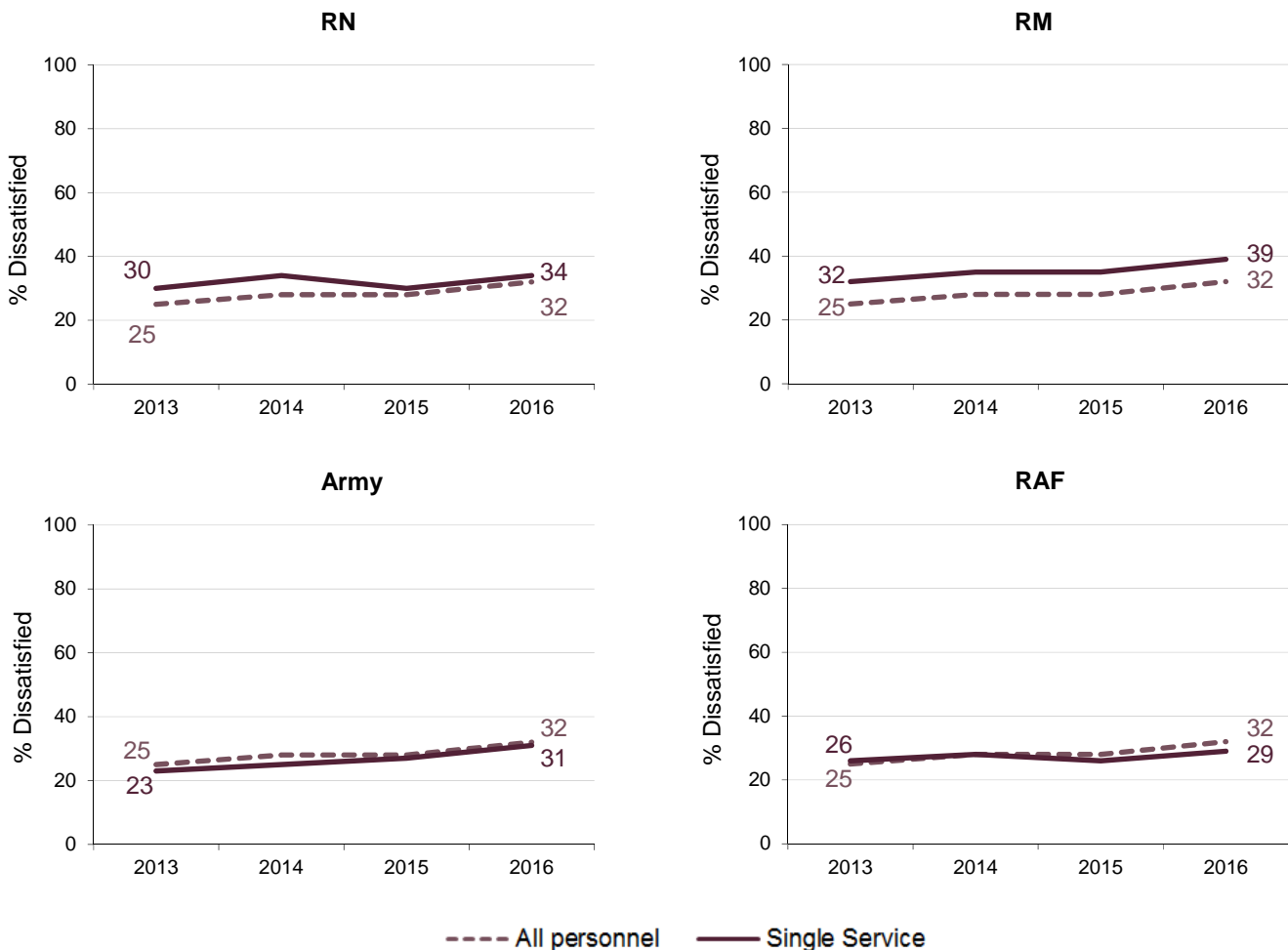
Resources and workload

Around half of Service personnel are satisfied with the standard (55%) and availability (45%) of their personal equipment/kit. Satisfaction with the standard has fallen 3 percentage points since 2015 whereas satisfaction with the availability is stable. The Royal Marines are the least satisfied with the standard (43%) and availability (35%) of their personal equipment/kit. The RAF are the most satisfied with the standard (61%) and availability (52%) of their personal equipment.

Around 2 in 5 personnel are satisfied with the standard (39%) and availability (38%) of the major equipment they use. The Royal Marines are the least satisfied with the standard (30%) and availability (28%) of major equipment.

The Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the Army have all seen an increase in dissatisfaction with the availability of major equipment, as shown in Chart 2.2.

Chart 2.2 Dissatisfaction with the availability of major equipment



Key Questions — Line management

Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B2.11	I am given sufficient authority to make decisions.	<p>Positive - % Agree</p>	59	↔	N/A
B3.1	The standard of personal equipment/kit I have to do my job (e.g. clothes, boots, personal weapon).	<p>Positive - % Satisfied</p>	55	-3	↔
B3.3	The standard of major equipment (e.g. vehicles and systems) I have to do my job	<p>Positive - % Satisfied</p>	39	-4	-6
B4.2	My immediate superior supports me in my job.	<p>Positive - % Agree</p>	73	↔	↔
B4.3	My immediate superior sets a positive example.	<p>Positive - % Agree</p>	67	↔	-3
B4.5	My immediate superior is supportive over work/life balance issues.	<p>Positive - % Agree</p>	66	↔	↔
B4.12	I am satisfied with the leadership provided by my immediate supervisor.	<p>Positive - % Satisfied</p>	67	↔	N/A

↔ Indicates no significant change

Section 3 – Leadership and Managing Change

Section 3 focuses on the views of personnel about their senior leaders, and about how change is managed.

Senior Leadership

A third (34%) of all personnel express confidence in the leadership of their Service, but there are significant differences between Services and between Officers and Other Ranks (Chart 3.1).

A quarter (26%) of personnel agree that senior leaders understand and represent their interests. Royal Marine Officers (64%) are most likely to agree with the statement. This compares to 30% of Royal Navy Officers.

These figures have changed in recent years (Chart 3.2). For example, the proportion of Army Officers who feel that senior leaders understand and represent their interests has fallen from 52% in 2010 to 33% today.

Royal Marine Officers are usually the most positive group when it comes to senior leaders. For example, 83% of RM Officers believe their senior leaders champion the RM's interests in Tri-Service issues, compared to 56% of all officers and 39% of all personnel.

Chart 3.1 Confidence in the leadership of the Service

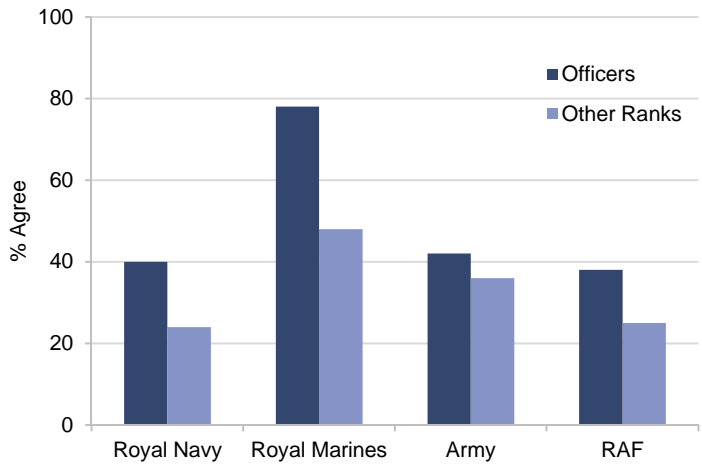
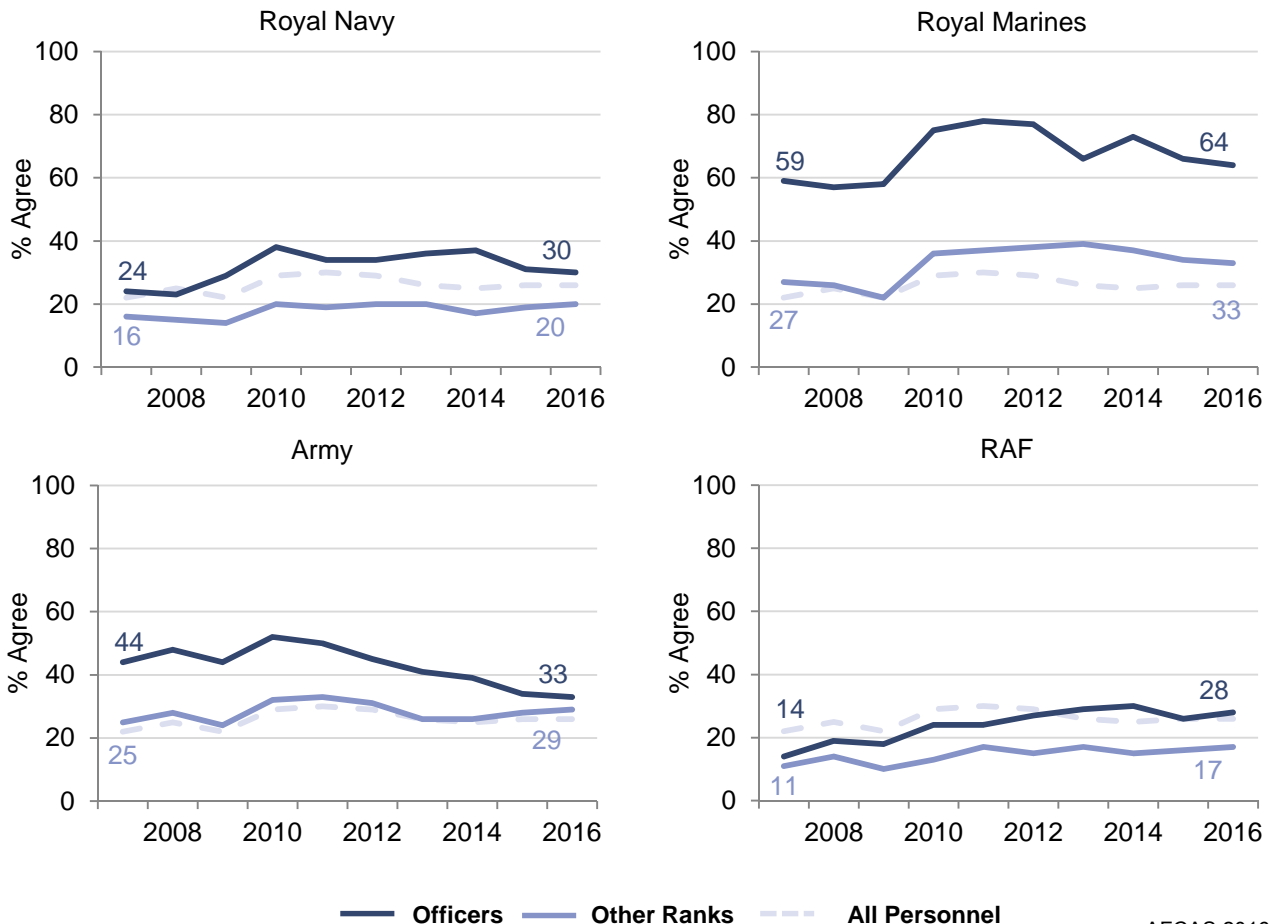


Chart 3.2 Senior leaders understand and represent my interests

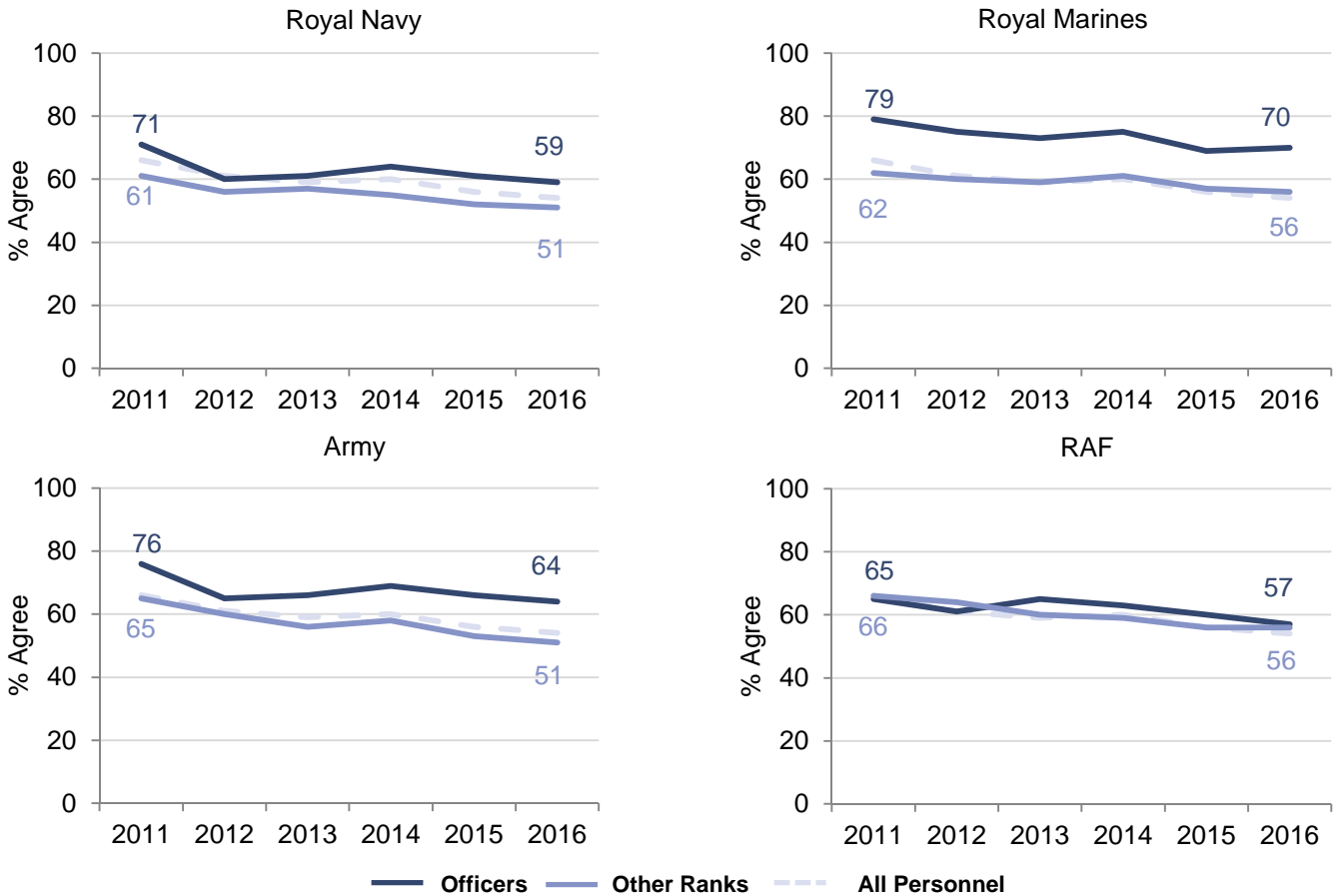


Managing Change

Around half (54%) of personnel feel that change is managed well in their immediate team, with Officers (61%) more positive than Other Ranks (53%). Since 2011, when the question was first asked, there has been a fall across all groups (Chart 3.3).

A quarter of all personnel feel that change is managed well across their Service, with Officers (19%) less positive than Other Ranks (27%). Royal Marines Officers (60%) are the most likely to believe that change is managed well across their Service, compared to 15% of Royal Navy Officers.

Chart 3.3 Change is managed well in my immediate working team



Key Questions - Leadership and Managing Change

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B5.1	Senior leaders understand and represent my interests.		26	↔	-3
B5.6	I have confidence in the leadership of the Service.		34	↔	N/A
B8.3	Change is managed well in the Service.		25	↔	-4

↔ Indicates no significant change

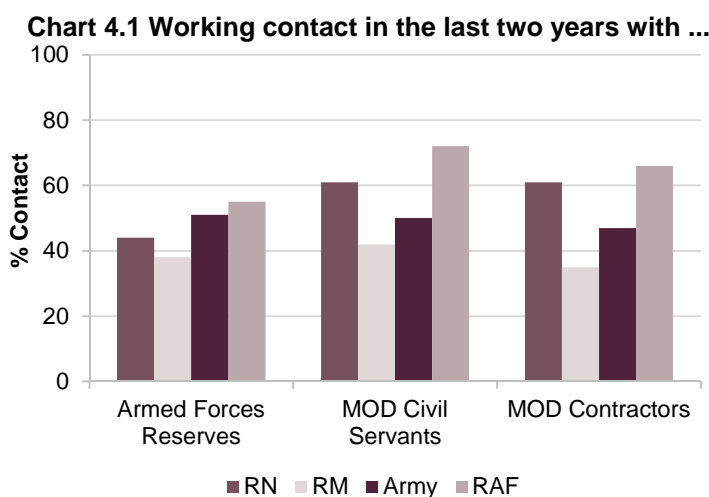
Section 4 – Working with Others

Section 4 focuses on regular Service personnel's working relationships with Reserves, civil servants and contractors. The Defence Reform Review of 2011 called for the closer integration of Regulars, Reserves, civil servants and contractors to ensure that Defence is supported by a sustainable, effective force¹.

Contact with other types of Defence personnel

About half of all personnel have had working contact with Armed Forces Reserves, MOD civil servants or MOD contractors in the last two years, but there are differences across the Services and between the ranks. Officers are much more likely than Other Ranks to have had contact with each group. The Royal Marines are the least likely to have had contact with any group (Chart 4.1).

The level of working contact with the Reserves for all personnel has remained since 2015, at 50%. There have been increases in the levels of contact with MOD civil servants over the last year. The RAF experienced the biggest change, with the proportion having contact rising from 58% to 72%. The Royal Navy increased from 55% to 61%, the Royal Marines from 39% to 42%.



Armed Forces Reserves

Army Officers remain most likely to have had working contact with Reserves (73%). Around two-thirds of RAF Officers (69%) have had contact with Reserves, an increase of 7 percentage points since 2015. Royal Navy Officers have also seen an increase in contact with Reserves, rising from 56% in 2015 to 63%.

The RAF are the most likely to have had working contact (55%) with Reserves over the last two years. 70% of RAF personnel consider the Reserves well-integrated, compared to 53% overall. 85% consider them to be professional (84% compared to 63% overall), and to value their contribution (74% compared to 61%).

Contribution

Service personnel are more likely to value the contribution of MOD Civil Servants (75%) than MOD contractors (66%) or Armed Forces Reserves (61%). The RAF (74%) are most likely to value the contribution of Reserves, compared to 53% of Royal Marines. Royal Marines are the least likely to value the contribution of civil servants (66%) or contractors (53%). The proportion of Army Officers who rate the contribution of MOD contractors as 'not very or not at all' valuable has risen from 27% in 2015 to 34%. The proportion of RAF Other Ranks who rate the contribution of MOD contractors as 'not very or not at all' valuable has increased from 26% to 32% over the last year.

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210470/Cm8655-web_FINAL.pdf

Integration

Overall, personnel are more likely to feel that civil servants (67%) are well integrated into their Service compared to Reserves (53%) or contractors (52%). The RAF (70%) are most likely to feel that Reserves are well integrated, compared to 43% of the Army (Chart 4.2). The Royal Marines are the least likely to consider civil servants (56%) or contractors (40%) to be well integrated.

Chart 4.2 How well integrated into the [Service] are Armed Forces Reserves?

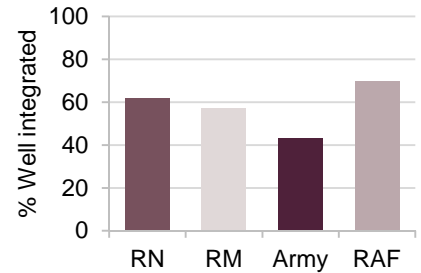
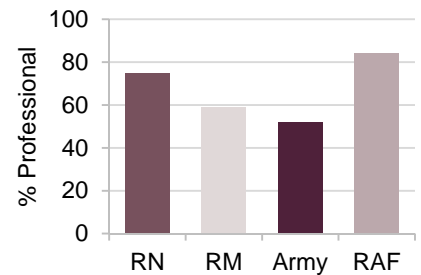


Chart 4.3 How would you rate the professionalism of Armed Forces Reserves?



Professionalism

Again, personnel consider that civil servants are more professional than contractors or Reserves. Around three quarters (74%) rate civil servants as professional compared to two-thirds (63%) for Reserves or contractors. There are large differences between the Services over the perceived professionalism of Reserves (Chart 4.3).

Key Questions - Working with Others

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B7.9	In your experience, how would you rate the contribution to the [Service] of Armed Forces Reserves?		61	↔	N/A
B7.12	In your experience, how well integrated into the [Service] are Armed Forces Reserves?		53	↔	N/A
B7.15	In your experience, how would you rate the professionalism of Armed Forces Reserves?		63	↔	N/A

↔ Indicates no significant change

Section 5 – Allowances, Pay and JPA

Section 5 asks a number of questions on the attitudes of Service personnel towards their pay, pension and allowances, as well as satisfaction with access to the Joint Personnel Administration System (JPA).

In early 2016, the MOD announced the launch of Pay 16, the new model for Armed Forces pay¹. Whilst the new pay structure came into effect in April 2016 after the survey closed, the announcement and associated communications may have influenced the views of personnel regarding their pay and benefits.

Satisfaction with pay and benefits

Overall, 34% of Service personnel agree that pay and benefits are fair for the work done. Officers are more likely than Other Ranks to agree. In 2016, RN overall are more satisfied than last year, whilst RAF show more dissatisfaction.

Basic Pay

Since 2010, Officer satisfaction with basic pay has dropped by 24 percentage points to 47%. Satisfaction has also decreased among the Other Ranks and this has resulted in overall satisfaction with pay decreasing by 17 percentage points to 35%. Officers are consistently more satisfied with basic pay than Other Ranks (47%, 32%) which is reflected in Chart 5.1. The decline in satisfaction with basic pay since 2010 may be influenced by ongoing public sector pay restraint, which has seen Armed Forces pay increase more slowly than in earlier years. Details on Armed Forces pay and allowances are available in the Armed Forces Pay Review Body 45th report².



There are differences in satisfaction with basic pay between Services. The RAF remain the most satisfied (37%), and Royal Marines are the least satisfied (24%). The RN is the only Service to register a slight decrease in dissatisfaction from 48% in 2015 to 44% in 2016.

Recruitment and Retention Pay (RRP)

Around a quarter of personnel are satisfied with their RRP; satisfaction is higher in Officers than Other Ranks. The RM is less satisfied than the other Services, both Officers and Other Ranks. RN satisfaction, however, has increased since 2015 by 5 percentage points to 25%.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-pay-reform-explained>

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-pay-review-body-forty-fifth-report-2016>

Data Quality Note

Caution is advised when comparing the latest results for RRP to previous years. Until 2014, RRP was called 'Specialist pay'.

X Factor

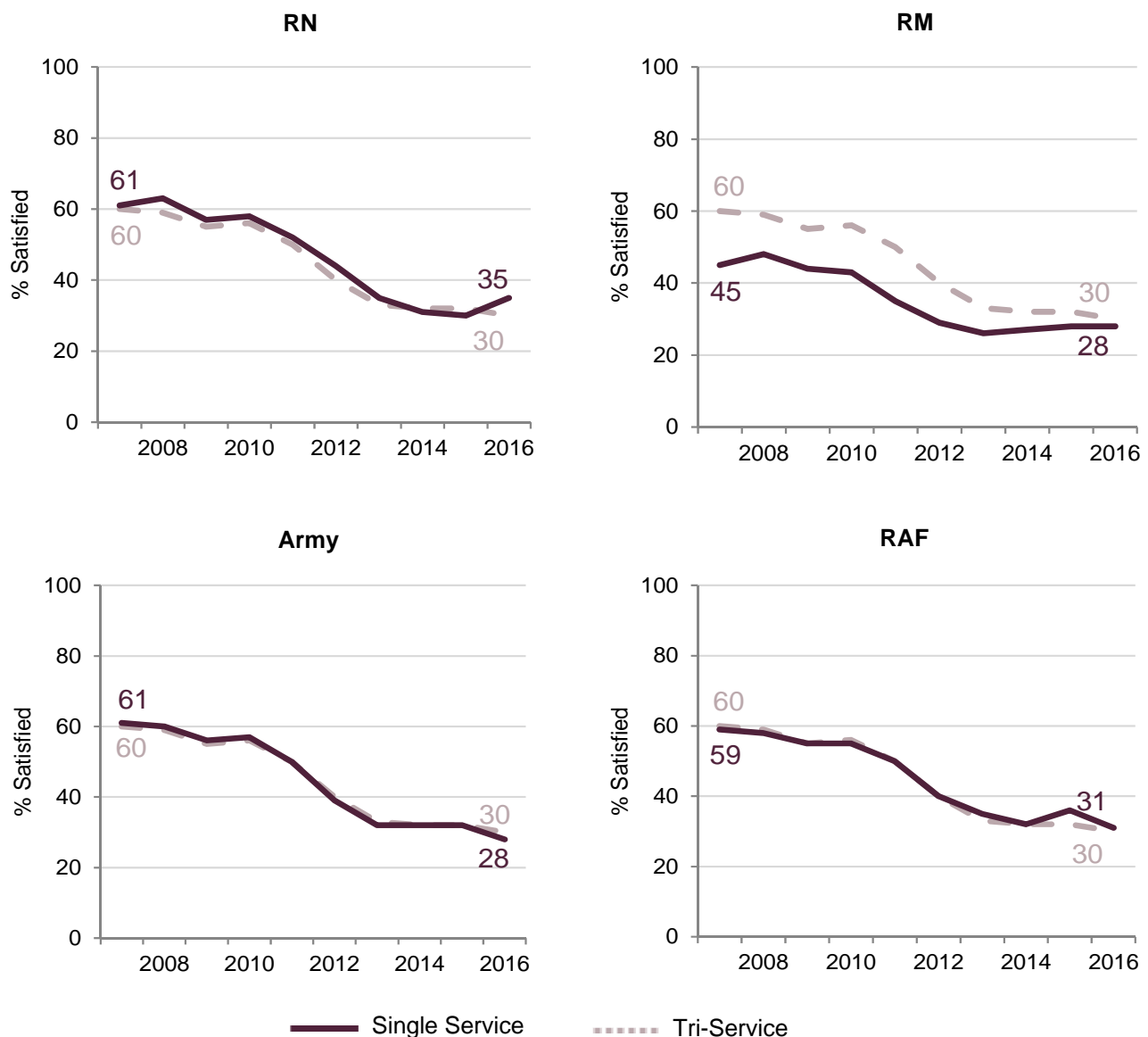
The X factor is an extra percentage added to pay in order to compensate for the differences in lifestyle, working conditions and expectations when compared to civilians. Less than a third (28%) of Service personnel agree that the level of compensation is enough, which has not changed significantly since 2010. The Naval Service shows the most dissatisfaction (59%), whilst the RAF has also registered an increase in dissatisfaction since last year (from 51% to 54%).

Satisfaction with pension benefits

Satisfaction with pension benefits has dropped 2 percentage points since 2015 and 26 percentage points since 2010. Officers (48%) are more satisfied with their pension benefits than Other Ranks (26%). Since last year, RN has shown a marked improvement in satisfaction whilst at the same time both Army and RAF have indicated an increase in dissatisfaction, particularly amongst the Other Ranks in those Services.

The decline in satisfaction with pensions over time may have been due to reforms made to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. Details of the 2015 scheme were published in October 2014¹. Chart 5.2 shows how satisfaction with pensions has changed for each Service over time.

Chart 5.2 - Satisfaction with pension benefits



1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afps-2015-what-you-need-to-know/armed-forces-pension-scheme-2015-guidance>

Key Questions - pay and benefits

Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B1.1	The X-Factor in my salary is enough compensation for Service lifestyle, working conditions and expectations.	<p>Positive = % agree</p>	28	↔	↔
B1.2	The pay and benefits I receive are fair for the work I do.	<p>Positive = % agree</p>	34	↔	N/A
B1.3	My rate of basic pay (basic pay includes X-Factor, but excludes RRP and any allowances).	<p>Positive = % satisfied</p>	35	↔	-5
B1.4	My Recruitment and Retention Pay (RRP).	<p>Positive = % satisfied</p>	26	↔	-7
B1.6	My pension benefits.	<p>Positive = % satisfied ↔ indicates no significant change</p>	30	-2	-10

Section 6 – Deployment

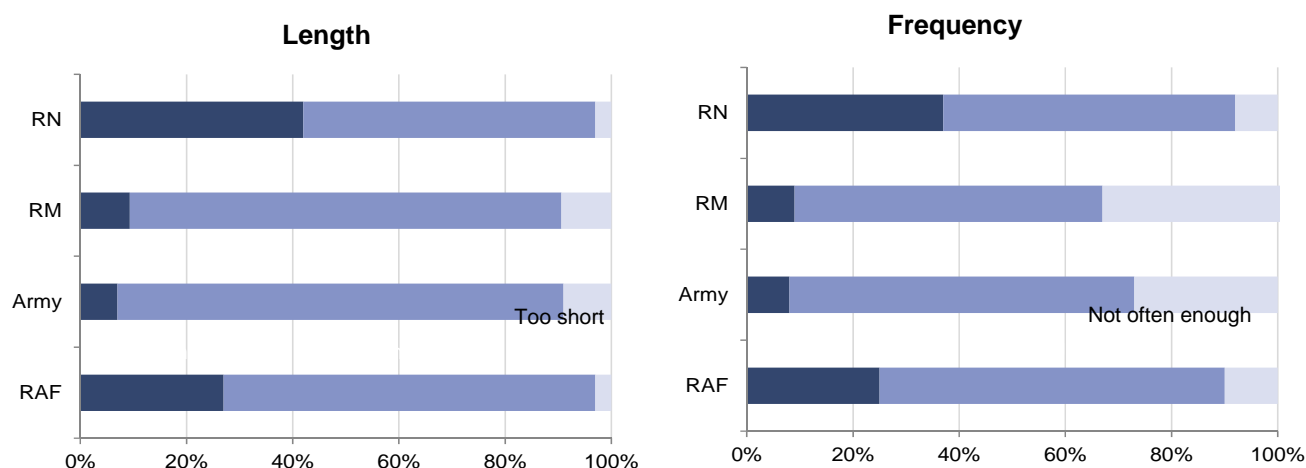
Section 6 covers respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of their operational deployments. The section focuses only on those who have been deployed at any time since 1 January 2013. Since the end of combat operations in Afghanistan¹, there have been lower levels of deployment, and this may have an effect on the views of personnel.

The majority of personnel in all Services are satisfied with frequency and length of their operational deployments. Royal Navy personnel, however, are much more likely than any other Service to state that deployments are too frequent (37%) or too long (42%), especially the Other Ranks. In 2016 there has been an increase in the proportion of Royal Marines and Army who believe that their operational deployments are not frequent enough.

Since 2015, there has been a three percentage point decline to 66% in the satisfaction with deployment notice. This is largely due to Royal Marine Other Ranks satisfaction, which decreased from 61% to 54% this year. Army Officers are most satisfied with their deployment notice.

65% of all personnel are satisfied with pre-operational training. Army personnel are more satisfied than those in any other Service (70%).

Chart 6.1 - Satisfaction with aspects of Deployment

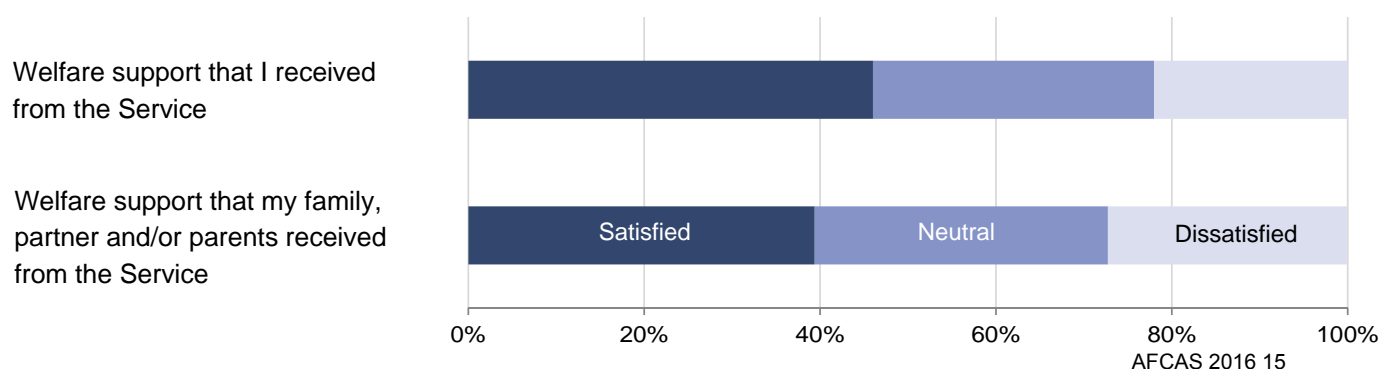


Welfare support whilst on operations

Army are the most satisfied Service with welfare support (54%). Royal Navy personnel are least happy with the welfare support they receive on return from deployment, with more personnel stating that they are dissatisfied (33%) than satisfied (28%). Royal Marine Other Ranks' satisfaction decreased six percentage points from 2015 to 45%.

Royal Navy personnel are also least happy with the support for their family upon return from deployment, with more personnel stating that they are dissatisfied (39%) than satisfied (25%). The proportion of RAF who are dissatisfied decreased from 35% to 30% in 2016.

Chart 6.2 - Satisfaction with welfare support



Key Questions - Deployment

Table
Ref Question

Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B9.10	Satisfaction with welfare support for family upon return from operational deployment Positive = % satisfied		39	↔	N/A
B9.11	Satisfaction with decompression and post operational tour support Positive = % satisfied		48	↔	N/A
B9.12	Satisfaction with Post Operational Stress Management Positive = % satisfied		43	↔	N/A
B9.18	Satisfaction with frequency of operational deployments Positive = % stating frequency is 'about right'		63	↔	N/A
B9.19	Satisfaction with length of operational deployments Positive = % stating length is 'about right'		75	↔	N/A

Section 7 – Training, Development and Career

Section 7 looks at respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of their career, training and development, including questions about the promotion system, career management, and the notice received before the last assignment.

There are increases amongst Officers and in particular in the proportions of RAF and Army Officers who are satisfied with their career management provider in 2016 when compared to 2015. RM Officers have the highest level of satisfaction with 58%, whereas RAF Officers have the lowest with 32%. The RAF also have the lowest proportion of Other Ranks satisfied at 30%. When compared to 2012 results, the RM Other Ranks show a marked increase in the proportion satisfied with 31% in 2012 compared to 40% in 2016. The RM are the most satisfied of all the Services.

Chart 7.1 - Satisfaction with the Career Management Service

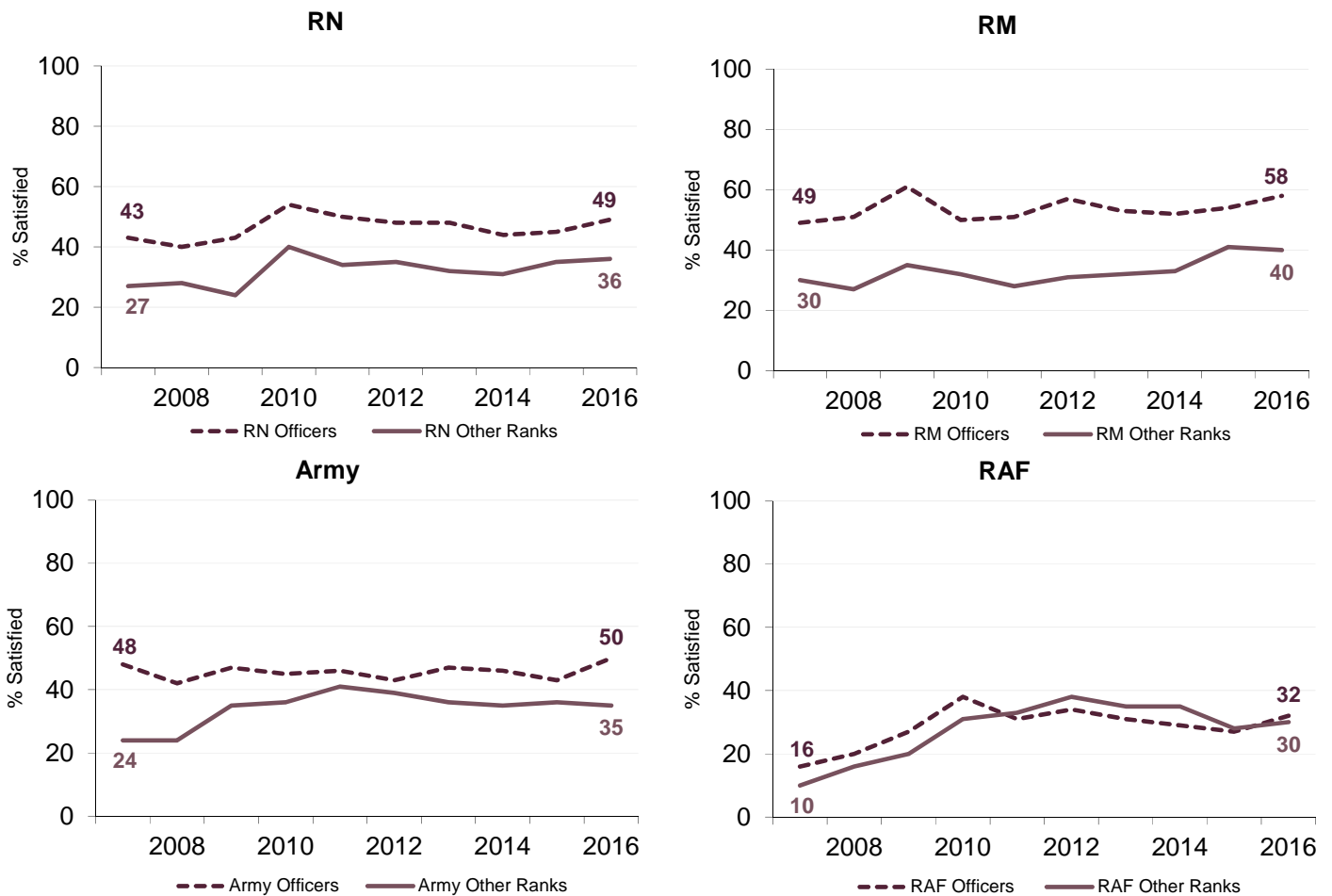
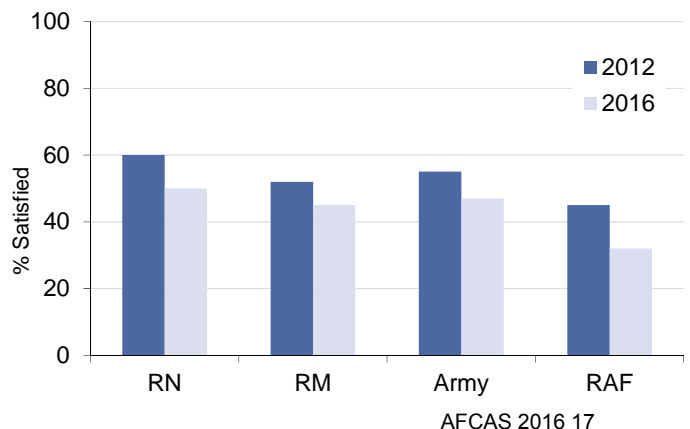


Chart 7.2 - Satisfaction with the fairness of the appraisal system, 2012 and 2016

Satisfaction with the fairness of the appraisal system has decreased for each of the Services in 2016 when compared with the 2012 results. The RAF shows the largest decrease of 13 percentage points from 45% in 2012 to 32% in 2016. The RAF continues to be the least satisfied with this aspect.



87% of personnel across the Services agree that they have the knowledge, skills and experience to do their job and 73% agree that these skills are being utilised.

Satisfaction with the fairness of the promotion system is low across the Services at 36% and this compares to 41% in 2012. The lowest level continues to be in the RAF with just 24% satisfied that promotion was fair; the RAF has had the lowest proportion satisfied in each year since AFCAS began in 2007. In contrast the highest proportion satisfied are Army respondents (39%). Officers tend to be more satisfied with the fairness of promotion than Other Ranks. Satisfaction with opportunities for promotion has been static since 2010 at 41% overall; again the RAF are least satisfied at 30%. Amongst the Royal Marines, satisfaction with promotion opportunities has decreased by 8 percentage points from 45% in 2012 to 37% in 2016.

Key Questions - Training, Development and Career

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B10.2	Career management service Positive= % satisfied		36	↔	-3
B10.10	Fairness of promotion system Positive= % satisfied		36	↔	-5
B10.11	Opportunities for promotion Positive= % satisfied		41	↔	↔
B11.4	Doing the job for which I was trained Positive= % satisfied		59	↔	↔
B10.7	Notice I received for my current/ last assignment Positive= % satisfied		69	↔	↔
B10.4	My knowledge, skills and experience are being used. Positive= % agree		73	↔	↔
B10.3	I have the knowledge, skills and experience to do my job. Positive= % agree		87	↔	↔

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

Section 8 - Future plans

Section 8 is about when personnel plan to leave the Services, whether they would join the Volunteer Reserves, and what influences their intentions to stay or leave.

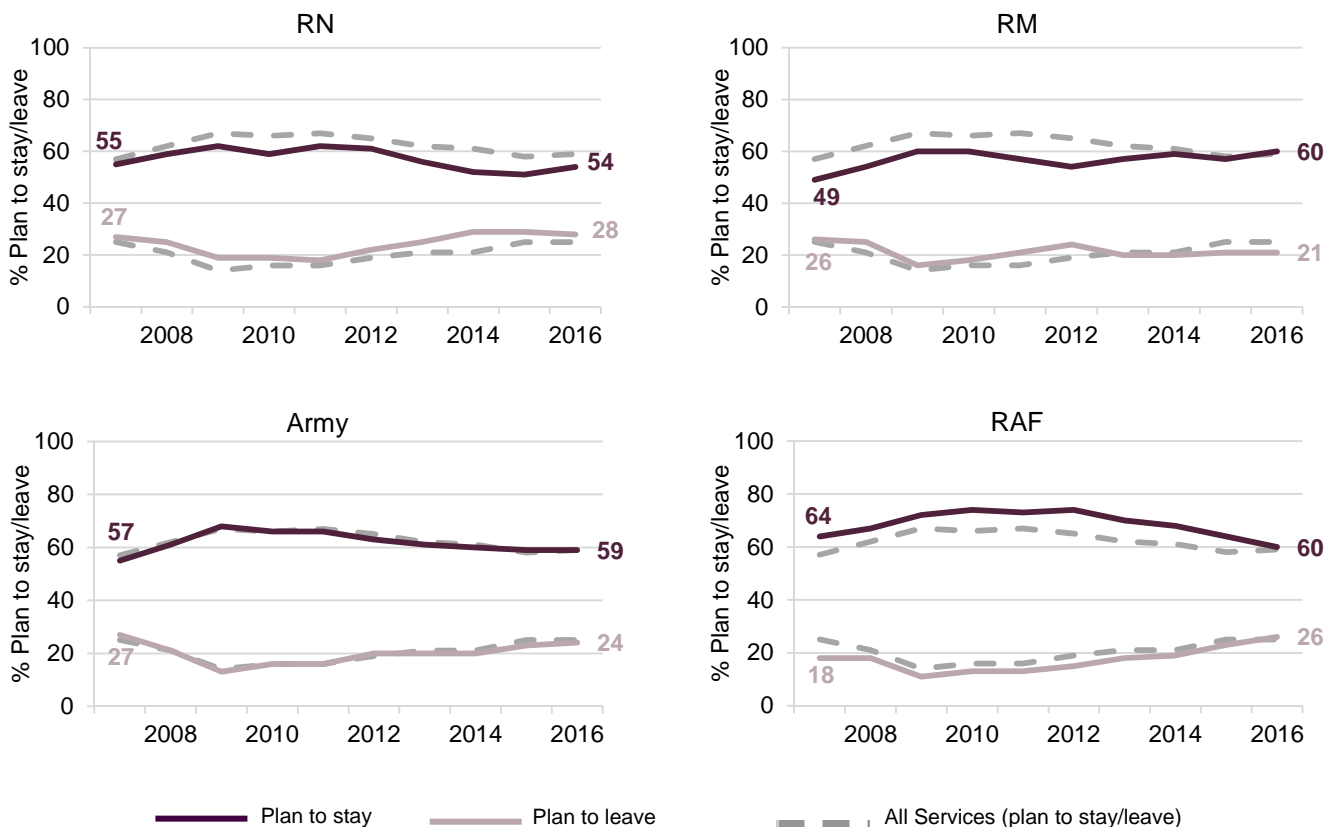
Future plans

The majority (59%) of personnel continue to say that they plan to stay in their Service for as long as they can or until the end of their current engagement/ commission (Chart 8.1). A quarter of personnel say they intend to leave before the end of their current engagement or commission, which includes 8% intending to leave as soon as they can, and 4% who have already put in their notice to leave.

Data Quality Note

'Don't know' responses have been excluded from Chart 8.1.

Chart 8.1 - Future Plans



These figures are largely unchanged since 2015, except for the RAF where the proportion of personnel saying they plan to serve as long as they can has fallen from 33% to 27%, and where those who say they plan to leave as soon as they can has risen from 4% to 6%.

Searching for a job outside the Services

Two out of five (38%) personnel have very or quite actively searched for a job outside the Services in the last 12 months, the same proportion as last year.

Joining the Volunteer Reserves

Under the Future Force 2020 programme, the MOD has introduced financial incentives for Regular personnel to join the Reserve Forces on completion of their Regular service. AFCAS includes questions on whether personnel would consider joining the Reserves on a full-time or part-time basis. Overall, personnel are more likely to consider joining than they were in 2015. One in five (19%) would consider joining full-time, up from 17%. A quarter (27%) would consider joining part-time, up from 24%. Officers are more likely to consider joining full-time (24%) or part-time (39%), than Other Ranks (18% and 24%).

The proportion of Officers who would consider joining part-time has increased from 32% in 2015. RAF Officers (30%) are most likely to consider joining full-time, compared to 13% of Royal Marine Officers.

Reasons for staying

The top five factors cited as increasing intentions to *stay* remain largely unchanged over the last year. Job security continues to be the most often cited factor, chosen by 69% of personnel (Table 8.2). 'Mental health provision' has replaced 'opportunities for sport' as the fifth most often cited factor.

Compared to five years ago, the most cited factors also remain largely unchanged (Table 8.2). Dental provision, healthcare provision, job security, pension and mental health provision remain the top five factors. Job security is now the most popular factor, rising from third place in 2012. The proportion of personnel identifying pensions as a reason to stay has fallen from 60% in 2012 to 49% in 2016.

Table 8.2 - Top five factors increasing intention to stay

2012	%	2015	%	2016	%
Dental provision	67	Job security	69	Job security	69
Healthcare provision	66	Dental provision	67	Dental provision	67
Job security	64	Healthcare provision	66	Healthcare provision	66
Pension	60	Pension	51	Pension	49
Mental health provision	47	Opportunities for sport	47	Mental health provision	48

Reasons for leaving

The top five factors cited as increasing intention to *leave* have remained unchanged since 2015, though the proportion who cite their spouses/partner's career has increased from 47% to 49% (Table 8.3). The 'impact of Service life on family and personal life' remains the most important factor increasing the intention to leave, cited by 61% of personnel.

Compared to five years ago, the top five factors also remain largely the same (Table 8.3). What has changed is the proportion of personnel citing each factor. For example, 36% gave 'opportunities outside the Service' as one of the factors increasing intention to leave in 2012, compared to 52% in 2016.

Table 8.3 - Top five factors increasing intention to leave

2012	%	2015	%	2016	%
Impact of Service life on family and personal life	55	Impact of Service life on family and personal life	61	Impact of Service life on family and personal life	61
Spouse/partner's career	43	Opportunities outside the Service	52	Opportunities outside the Service	52
Opportunities outside the Service	36	Spouse/partner's career	47 ^r	Spouse/partner's career	49
My morale	35	My morale	41	Service morale	41
Service morale	35	Service morale	40	My morale	40

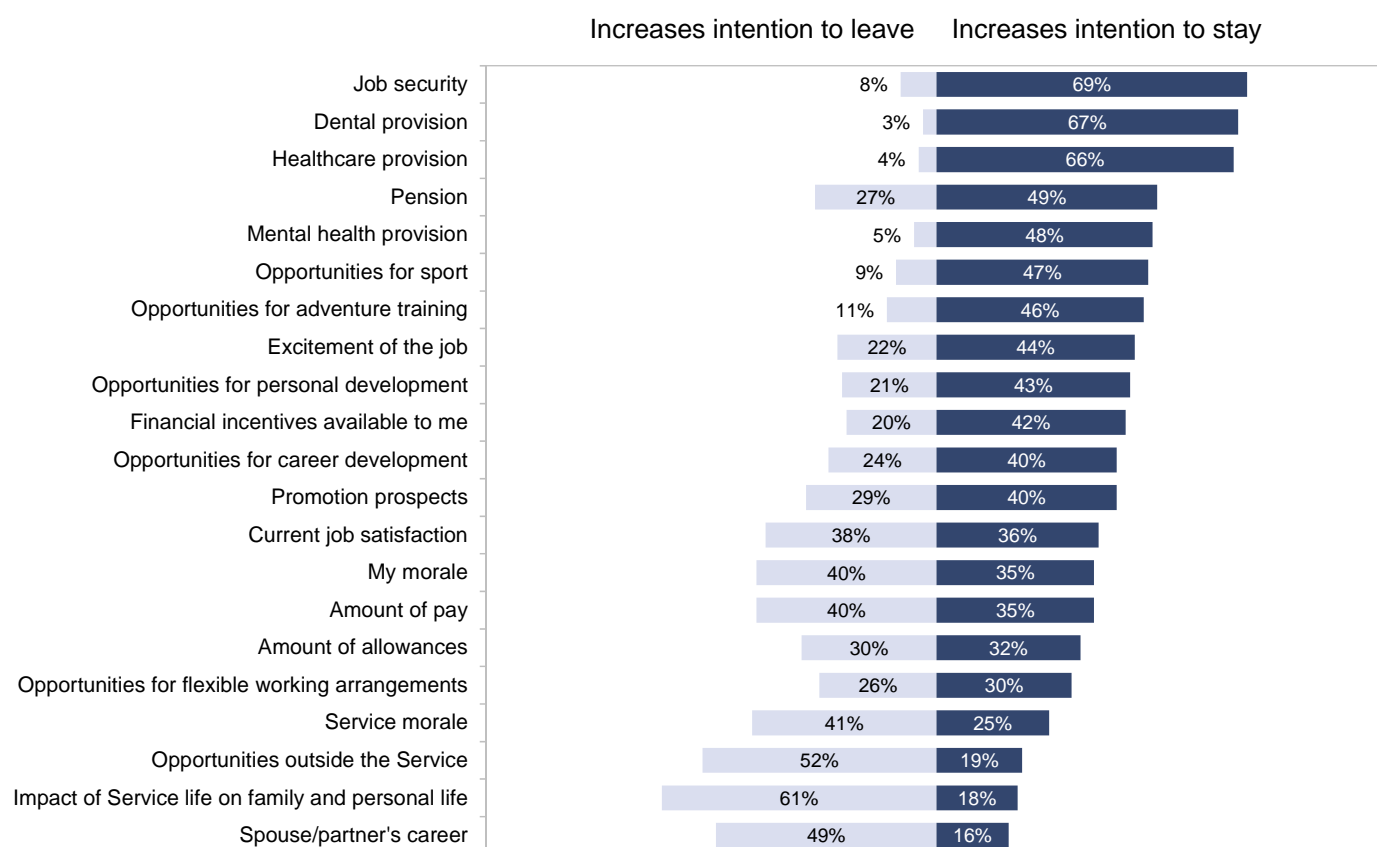
Chart 8.4 (overleaf) shows all factors and their influence on intentions to leave or stay.

Data Quality Note

The RN and RM surveys present four additional factors which are excluded from chart 8.4. See Section 12 reference tables for details.

^r This figure was reported as 43% in the 2015 report; it has been revised due to an error in data processing

Chart 8.4 Factors influencing intention to leave/stay



Personnel who have decided to leave

For those who have already submitted their notice to leave, 'impact of Service life on family and personal life' remains the most often cited reason for leaving (Table 8.5). Over three-quarters of Officers select that reason as one of the main factors in their decision to leave. 59% of Other Ranks select the same reason. A quarter of Officers choose 'promotion prospects' as a factor in their decision to leave. The top five reasons for leaving are the same for each Service except for the RAF where a third of personnel select 'promotion prospects' as a factor.

Table 8.5 Top five factors influencing decision to leave

All personnel	%	Officers	%	Other Ranks	%
Impact of Service life on family and personal life	65	Impact of Service life on family and personal life	79	Impact of Service life on family and personal life	59
Current job satisfaction	44	Opportunities outside the Service	47	Current job satisfaction	49
Opportunities outside the Service	39	Current job satisfaction	32	My morale	37
My morale	33	Promotion prospects	26	Opportunities outside the Service	36
Amount of pay	24	My morale	22	Amount of pay	28

Key Questions - Future plans

Table			Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
Ref	Question				
B12.1	What are your plans for the future? To stay serving as long as I can	<p>Positive - % Plans to stay</p>	34	↔	-5
B12.1	What are your plans for the future? To stay serving to the end of current engagement/commission	<p>Positive - % Plans to stay</p>	25	↔	↔
B12.2	How actively have you searched for a job outside the Service in the last 12 months?	<p>Positive - % Very or quite actively</p>	38	↔	N/A
B12.5	When you leave the Service, would you consider joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces? Full-time	<p>Positive - % Yes</p>	19	2	3
B12.6	When you leave the Service, would you consider joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces? Part-time	<p>Positive - % Yes</p>	27	3	4

↔ Indicates no significant change

Section 9 – Work-Life Balance

Section 9 looks at the work life balance of respondents, their satisfaction with their workload, whether or not they are satisfied with the amount of leave allowance they have, and the reasons for not being able to take leave.

Time spent away from family for Service reasons

Since 2015 the length of time personnel are spending away from their family for Service reasons has reduced. From a high in 2014 of 27% spending between seven and twelve months away, this proportion fell to 22% in 2015 and there is a further decline to 18% in 2016. The reduction in time spent away is evident across all four Services.

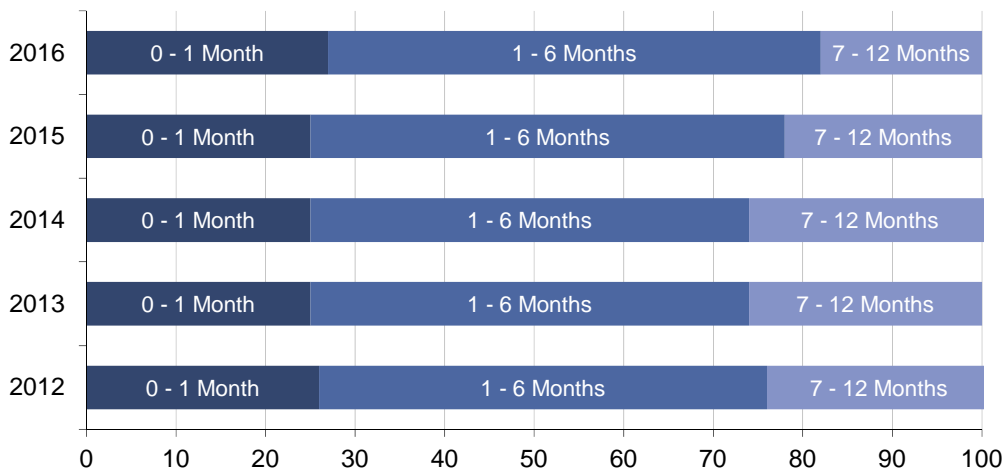
A breakdown by Service for 2016 shows that RN personnel spend the most time away (26%) compared to 20% of RM, 18% of Army and 10% of RAF respondents.

Data Quality Note

This question was introduced in 2012.

'N/A' responses are excluded from the analysis

Chart 9.1—Time spent away from family for Service reasons



Workload

In 2016 the proportion of respondents who feel their workload is too high (46%) is higher in comparison with 2012 where the figure was 40%. The percentage of respondents who rate their workload as too high has remained largely unchanged from the 2015 figure of 47% however, in the case of RN and RM respondents, there are noticeable decreases in 2016 (RN 45% and RM 35%) compared to 2015 (RN 49% and RM 38%).

Leave

The proportion of respondents who are satisfied with the amount of leave they were able to take in the past 12 months has remained stable at 62%. Notably the proportion of RN respondents who are satisfied rose from 58% in 2015 to 64% in 2016.

Satisfaction with the opportunity to take leave when they choose has remained largely unchanged (44%), but this level has increased when compared to 2012 when 40% were satisfied. There are large differences between the Services with the RM having the lowest proportion (29%) satisfied with the opportunity to take leave when they choose to and the RAF having the highest at 60%.

Respondents are asked to choose reasons for not taking all of their leave, and the top five reasons among those who weren't able to take all of their leave are shown in the adjacent table. Compared to 2015, the proportion citing 'Operational tour' as a reason has decreased by 10%.

Reason	2015 %	2016 %
Workload	50	50
Undermanning	35	34
Courses/training	27	28
Carry over to next year	26	27
Operational tour	25	15

Work - Life Balance

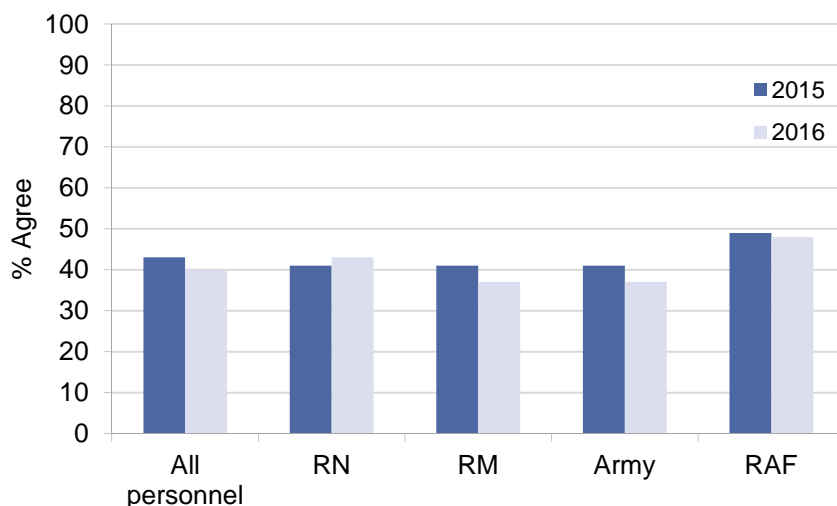
There has been an overall decrease in the proportion of respondents who agree that they are able to maintain a balance between their personal and working lives, from 43% in 2015 to 40% in 2016. Agreement has fallen in the RM and Army in particular, which has largely driven this overall decrease.

Data Quality Note

This question was introduced in 2015.

'N/A' responses are excluded from the analysis

Chart 9.2 - Percentage of respondents agreeing that they are able to maintain a balance between their personal and working lives



Key Questions - work/life balance

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012															
B14.10	I am able to maintain a balance between my personal and working life Positive = % Agree	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for B14.10: % Agree</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>RN</th> <th>RM</th> <th>Army</th> <th>RAF</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>41</td> <td>37</td> <td>37</td> <td>49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>43</td> <td>37</td> <td>37</td> <td>48</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF	2015	41	37	37	49	2016	43	37	37	48	40	-3	N/A
Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF																
2015	41	37	37	49																
2016	43	37	37	48																
B15.2	I am satisfied with the opportunity to take leave when I want to Positive = % Satisfied	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for B15.2: % Satisfied</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>RN</th> <th>RM</th> <th>Army</th> <th>RAF</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>48</td> <td>30</td> <td>40</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>48</td> <td>30</td> <td>40</td> <td>60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF	2015	48	30	40	60	2016	48	30	40	60	44	↔	+4
Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF																
2015	48	30	40	60																
2016	48	30	40	60																
B15.3	I am satisfied with the amount of leave I was able to take in the past 12 months Positive = % Satisfied	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for B15.3: % Satisfied</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>RN</th> <th>RM</th> <th>Army</th> <th>RAF</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>65</td> <td>55</td> <td>60</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>65</td> <td>55</td> <td>60</td> <td>75</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF	2015	65	55	60	75	2016	65	55	60	75	62	↔	↔
Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF																
2015	65	55	60	75																
2016	65	55	60	75																
B3.5	I rate my workload over the past 12 months as too high Positive = % Too high	<table border="1"> <caption>Data for B3.5: % Too high</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>RN</th> <th>RM</th> <th>Army</th> <th>RAF</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>48</td> <td>35</td> <td>50</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>48</td> <td>35</td> <td>50</td> <td>42</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF	2015	48	35	50	42	2016	48	35	50	42	46	↔	+6
Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF																
2015	48	35	50	42																
2016	48	35	50	42																

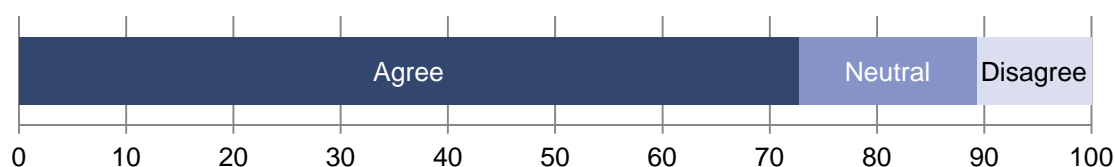
↔ indicates no statistically significant change has been found

Section 10 – Fairness at Work

Section 10 covers the views of personnel on fair treatment in their Service, whether they feel they have been subjected to bullying, discrimination or harassment, and their knowledge and experience of Service complaints.

73% of all Service personnel agreed that they are treated fairly at work, however, Army personnel are less likely to agree with this statement. Officers are more likely to agree they are treated fairly at work (87%) than Other Ranks (70%). Since 2015 however, agreement for RAF Officers has fallen four percentage points to 84%.

Chart 10.1 - Fair treatment at work

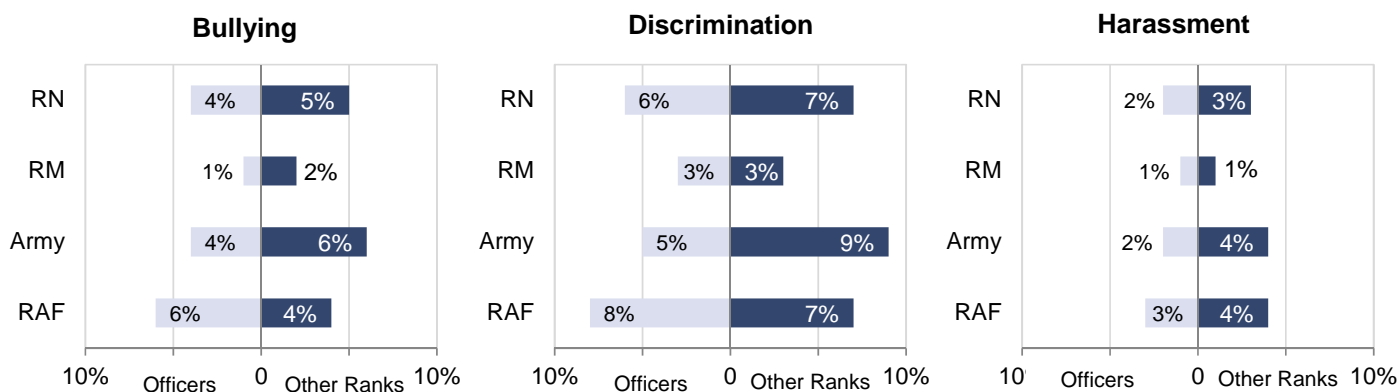


Views on the Service discipline system are largely stable over time, with Officers more likely than Other Ranks to believe it is fair (87%, 62%). Royal Marine Officers are the most likely of all Officers to state that the system is fair (94%).

Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment

The majority (89%) of Armed Forces personnel report that they have not been subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months. Royal Marines report the lowest level to bullying, discrimination or harassment across all Services (4%). The proportion of personnel who indicated being subject to bullying in the Service environment dropped two percentage points to 5%. This is partly due to a fall in the proportion of Army Other Ranks who indicated bullying in the Service environment.

Chart 10.2 - Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment in the last 12 months



Service Complaints

29% of personnel report being fully aware of how the Service Complaints Commissioner¹ can help them with a complaint about bullying, discrimination or harassment. This is unchanged since 2015, but remains above the level reported in 2010 (21%), when this question was first asked in its current form. In 2016, 13% of personnel state that they have not heard of the SCC. Officers report higher levels of awareness than Other Ranks.

Of those personnel indicating they had been subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months, 9% stated that they made a formal complaint. Among those who did not complain, the most commonly chosen reason was the belief that nothing would be done (43%).

1. The Service Complaints Commissioner became the Service Complaints Ombudsman in January 2016

Key Questions - bullying, discrimination and harassment

Table
Ref Question

Overall % Ticked	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2011			
B13.1	I am treated fairly at work		73	↔	N/A
Positive = % agree		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.2	The Service discipline system is fair/neutral/unfair		67	↔	-3
Positive = % fair		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.3	Do you believe you have been subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months?		11	↔	N/A
% ticking either bullying, discrimination or harassment		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.4	Do you believe you have been subject to bullying in the last 12 months?		5	-2	N/A
% ticked		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.5	Do you believe you have been subject to discrimination in the last 12 months?		7	↔	N/A
% ticked		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.6	Do you believe you have been subject to harassment in the last 12 months?		3	↔	N/A
% ticked		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.43	Fully aware of how the Service Complaints Commissioner can help with a bullying, discrimination or harassment complaint		29	↔	+4
% fully aware		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			
B13.43	Have not heard of the Service Complaints Commissioner		13	↔	-2
% have not heard of SCC		0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100			

↔ means no significant change between years has been found.

Section 11 – Health, Fitness and Welfare

Section 11 covers respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of the health, fitness and welfare services, including questions on medical treatment, fitness facilities and welfare support for personnel and their families.

Chart 11.1 Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

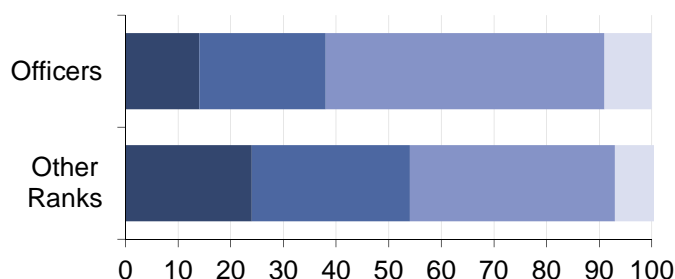


Chart 11.2 Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

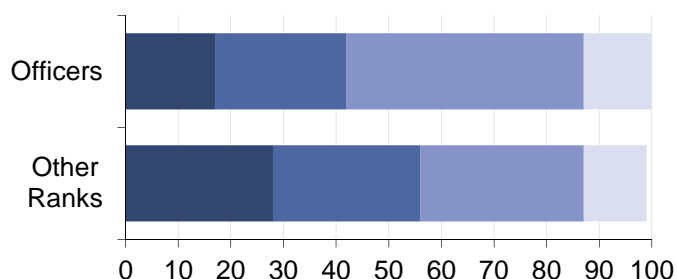


Chart 11.3 Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

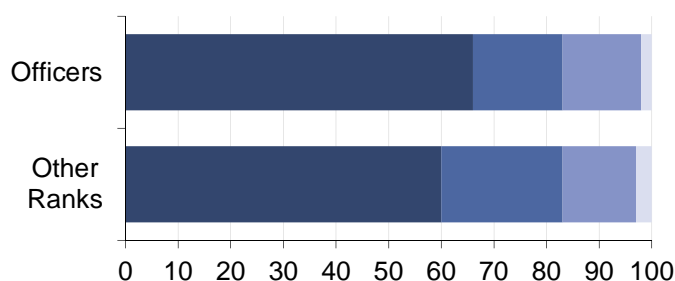
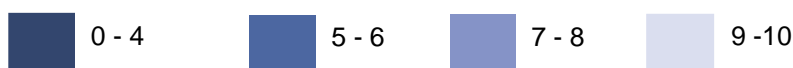
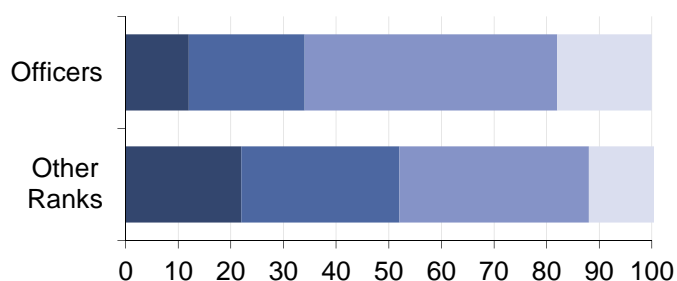


Chart 11.4 Overall, do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?



Wellbeing, happiness and satisfaction

Across all services the proportion of personnel rating 9 or above for satisfaction with life has decreased 2 percentage points since the question was first asked in 2012 to 8%.

Overall the proportion of Officers that rated their happiness the previous day as 7 or above was greater than the Other Ranks. Furthermore, Officers felt less anxious the previous day and had a greater feeling that things they do in life are worthwhile.

Of the Other Ranks the proportion of the RAF rating how happy they were yesterday as 4 or below was the lowest at 24%. Similarly RAF Other Ranks also had the smallest proportion rating 4 or below for feeling things they do in life are worthwhile at 17%.

RM Officers were found to be the least anxious, having the largest proportion of personnel rating their anxiety yesterday 4 or below (77%) with an overall proportion of 66% for Officers across all services.

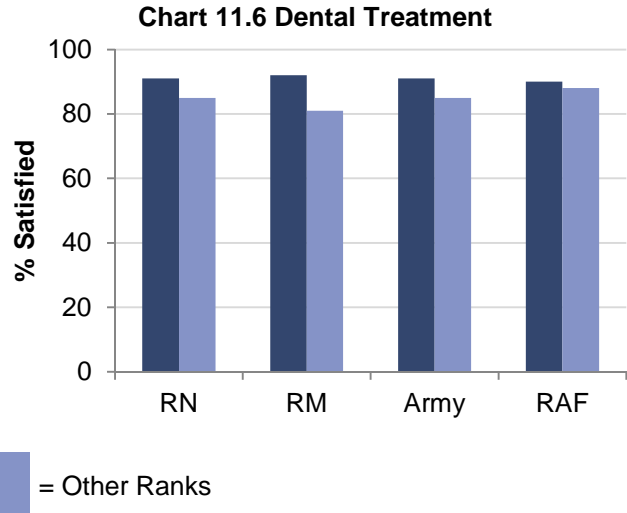
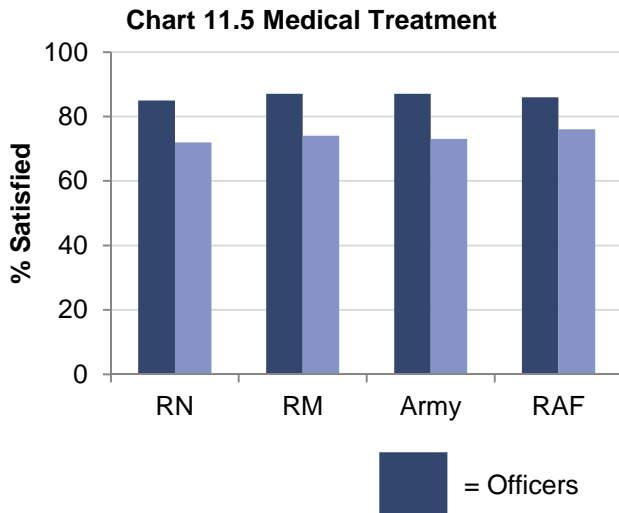
The Office for National Statistics collects data on wellbeing for the general population in their Annual Population Survey. Average scores are released in their Measuring National Well-being report¹. The demographic make-up of the Armed Forces is different to the general population; Armed Forces personnel are predominantly male and aged between 18 and 55. Armed Forces wellbeing scores are therefore not directly comparable to the general population.

¹<http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-09-23>

Health

The proportion of personnel satisfied with both medical and dental care in terms of access and treatment did not change from 2015. Overall Officers were more satisfied than Other Ranks in terms of access and treatment.

Of the Other Ranks RM had the lowest proportion of personnel satisfied with dental treatment (81%). The RAF Other Ranks had the highest at 88%.



Key Questions - Health

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B16.1	Access to medical care Positive= % satisfied		80	↔	↔
B16.2	Medical treatment Positive= % satisfied		76	↔	N/A
B16.3	Access to dental care Positive= % satisfied		83	↔	N/A
B16.4	Dental treatment Positive= % satisfied		86	↔	↔

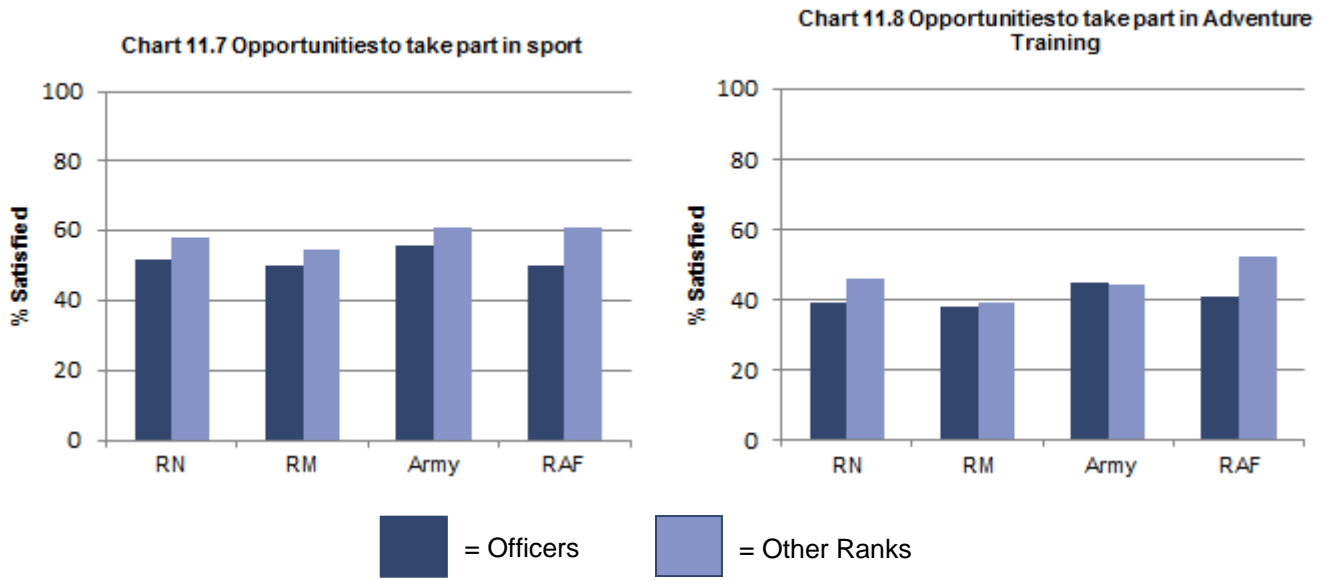
↔ Indicates no significant change has been found

Fitness

Overall Officers are less satisfied than Other Ranks with all opportunities to take part in fitness activities, sport and adventure training. However, Officers are more satisfied than Other Ranks with the standard of sport, exercise and fitness facilities (78% and 74%).

Other Ranks in the RN are less satisfied with their opportunity to undertake fitness activities (62%) than all other services. Officers from the RAF and RN have the lowest proportion of satisfied personnel, both at 60%.

The proportion of all personnel satisfied with opportunity to take part in adventure training was 45%. RAF Other Ranks were found to have higher satisfaction with their opportunity than all other services at 52%



Key Questions - Fitness

Table Ref	Question	% Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B17.1	Standard of sport, exercise and fitness facilities	74	-2	-4
B17.2	Opportunities to undertake fitness activities	68	↔	↔
B17.3	Opportunities to take part in sport	59	↔	N/A
B17.4	Opportunity to take part in Adventure Training	45	↔	+2

↔ Indicates no significant change
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Welfare

The proportion of personnel satisfied with welfare support provided for themselves (56%) and their families (46%) has stayed consistent compared to last year, when an increase was seen for both questions. Similar to 2015 the RN remain less satisfied with their own welfare support (49%) compared to all other Services.

Satisfaction with welfare support for families was lower for both RN (40%) and RAF (42%) compared to Army (49%) and RM (49%). A similar trend appears with satisfaction with support for spouses/partners when absent, with RN having the lowest proportion of satisfied personnel at 24%, followed by the RAF at 29%.

The proportion of personnel satisfied regarding their operational/deployment welfare package (43%) has stayed the same since 2015. The RN have the lowest proportion satisfied at 34%. RM Officers' satisfaction has decreased by ten percentage points since 2015, to 45%.

Overall Officers are more satisfied than Other Ranks with their own welfare support and with their operational/deployment welfare package. However, they have similar views to the Other Ranks on the support provided to their family and spouses/partners while absent.

Key Questions - Welfare

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B18.1	The welfare support provided for me	<p>Positive= % satisfied</p>	56	↔	+4
B18.2	The welfare support provided for my family	<p>Positive= % satisfied</p>	46	↔	+6
B18.3	The support my spouse/partner gets when I am absent	<p>Positive= % satisfied</p>	34	↔	+ 4
B18.4	The operational/ deployment welfare package	<p>Positive= % satisfied</p>	43	↔	N/A

↔ Indicates no significant change

Section 12 – Accommodation

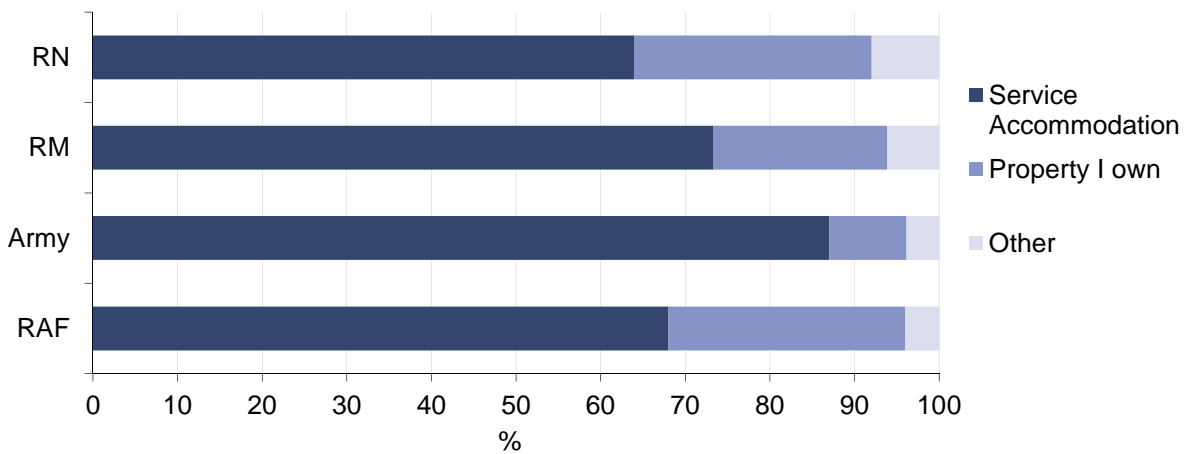
Section 12 covers respondents' satisfaction with various aspects of their accommodation and catering, including questions about home ownership, where personnel live during the week, and the standard of catering.

Accommodation

In 2016, the majority of personnel live in Service accommodation during the week (78%), with the highest proportion in the Army. The Army has the lowest proportion of personnel who live in their own home during the week (9%), contrasting with the Royal Navy and RAF, where 28% live in their own home.

When personnel move from their own home into Service accommodation, the most common reason given for this is posting requirements, with more than two thirds of movers doing so for this reason, and another fifth moving for personal reasons.

Chart 12.1 - Type of accommodation lived in during the working week

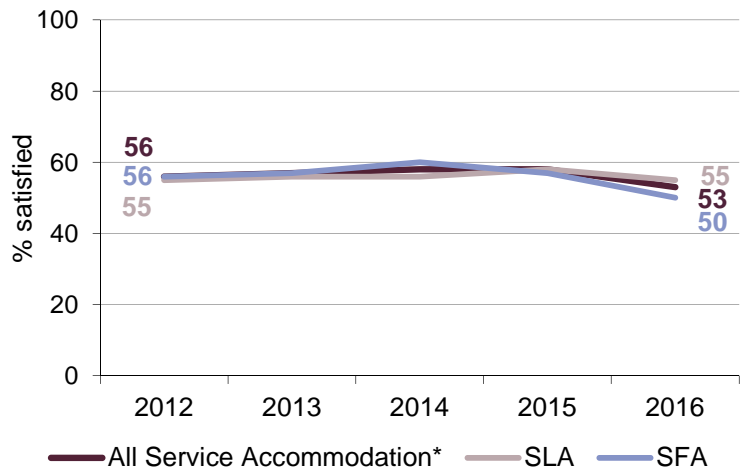


Service accommodation

Following a gradual increase since the beginning of AFCAS, satisfaction with the overall standard of Service accommodation has fallen in the past year, with just over half (53%) reporting that they are satisfied, down from 58% in 2015. This is largely due to falls in the Army and Royal Marines; the Royal Marines remain the least satisfied with their accommodation (46%).

In 2016, personnel are also less likely to be satisfied that their accommodation is value for money, again driven by declining satisfaction in the Army and Marines. The RAF remain the most satisfied with the value for money of their Service accommodation.

Chart 12.2 - Satisfaction with overall standard of Service accommodation



* All Service Accommodation includes those in SLA, SFA, SSLA and SSFA, and onboard Ship or submarine

When compared to 2015, personnel report a decline in satisfaction with both the response to requests for repairs to their Service accommodation, and the quality of repairs carried out, with only one third of personnel satisfied in 2016. The biggest falls can be observed in the RAF, among both Officers and Other Ranks. This appears to be a change in trend, as levels of satisfaction with repairs had been fairly stable since 2012.

Single Living Accommodation

In 2016, 40% of personnel live in Single Living Accommodation (SLA). This proportion has been stable over the last 5 years. Overall, around a third of Royal Navy (30%) and RAF (33%) personnel live in SLA, compared to 50% in the Royal Marines and 45% in the Army. Other Ranks in all Services are more likely than Officers to live in SLA, with around half of the Royal Marines and Army Other Ranks in this type of accommodation.

55% of personnel in SLA are satisfied with the overall standard, which has remained largely stable since 2012. The Royal Marines are the least satisfied Service (45%), and their satisfaction level has declined by 5 percentage points since 2015, whereas the satisfaction level has remained static in the other Services.

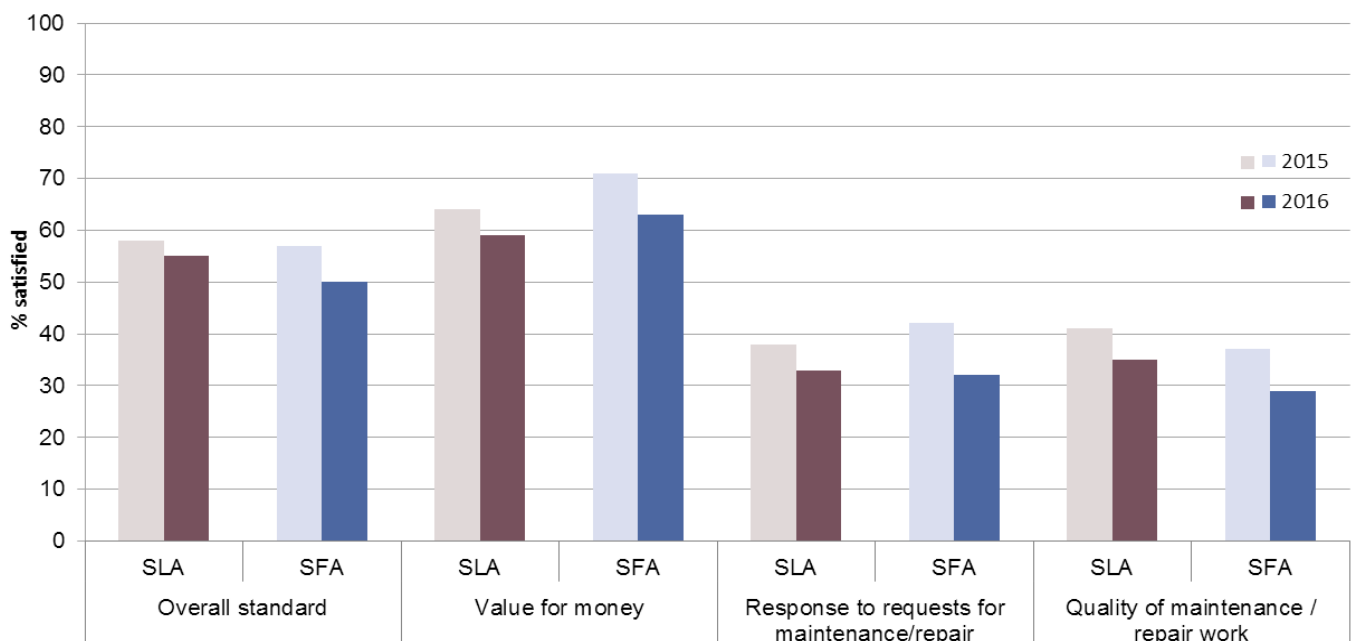
Service Families Accommodation

32% of personnel live in Service Families Accommodation (SFA). The Army (38%) and RAF (32%) have the highest proportions of personnel in SFA, with this being a much less common accommodation type in the Royal Navy (17%) and Royal Marines (15%).

50% of personnel in SFA are satisfied with the overall standard. Following largely stable satisfaction levels since 2012, satisfaction has dropped 7 percentage points since 2015, and this is largely responsible for the overall decline in satisfaction this year. In 2015 the different Services had similar satisfaction levels, however the Royal Navy and Army have dropped by 9 and 8 percentage points respectively. The Royal Navy has an almost equal proportion of satisfied (43%) and dissatisfied (40%) personnel.

The decline in satisfaction with value for money, response to requests for and quality of repairs to accommodation is most pronounced among personnel living in SFA. For those in SFA, satisfaction with the response to requests for repairs has dropped 14 percentage points since 2014, and 10 percentage points in the last year, to 32%. More than half (52%) of personnel in SFA are dissatisfied with the quality of repairs, compared to 41% of those living in SLA.

Chart 12.3 - Satisfaction with various aspects of SLA and SFA

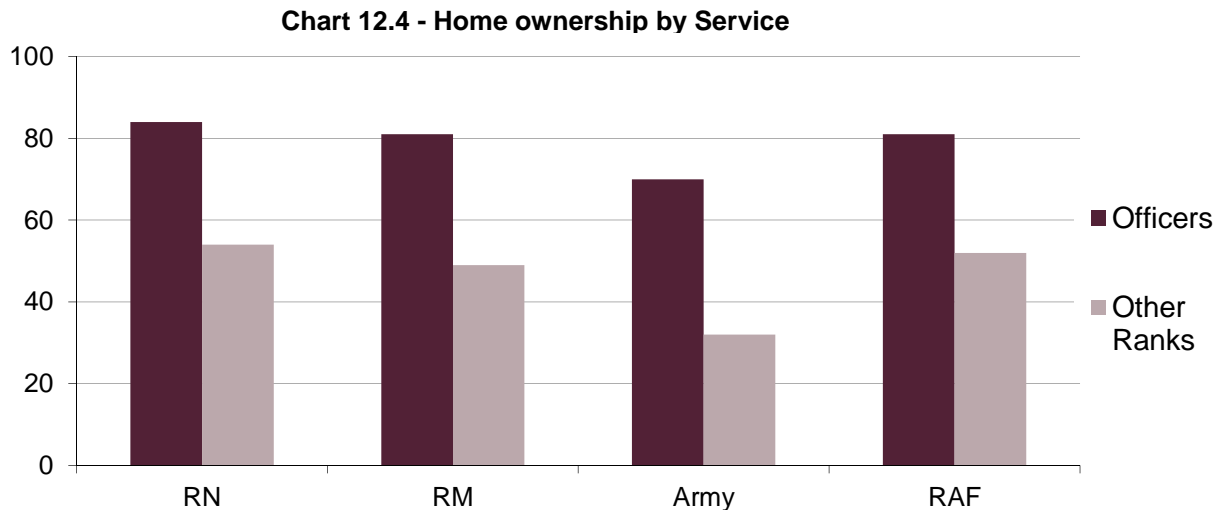


Catering

Around a third of personnel (32%) are satisfied with the standard of catering from contractors on their unit, with a greater proportion dissatisfied (37%). When choosing where to eat, personnel rate quality (84%), value for money (72%) and choice (64%) as the top three factors influencing their decision.

Home ownership

Around half (47%) of all personnel report owning their own home, whether they live in it or not. Officers are far more likely than Other Ranks to own their home.



Forces Help to Buy

In April 2014, the MOD introduced the Forces Help to Buy (FHTB) scheme, under the New Employment Model programme. The scheme offers advances of salary to Service personnel for the purpose of buying a home¹. In 2016, 5% of personnel report using this scheme to buy their own home in the last year, with a higher proportion of Royal Marines Officers using the scheme than those in any other Service, or any of the Other Ranks. This compares to 8% who purchased a home without the help of this or any other Government Affordable Housing scheme.

The numbers of applications and payments made under FHTB are reported in the monthly FHTB Statistics publication². In AFCAS, 1 in 5 (21%) state that they are considering using FHTB, suggesting that uptake of this scheme may increase in the future.

Data Quality Note

Questions on FHTB were not asked prior to 2016, therefore time series comparisons are not possible.

Statistics reported in the FHTB publication are not directly comparable to AFCAS estimates; the AFCAS question is worded generically to cover 'usage' of the scheme rather than any specific stage.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/forces-help-to-buy>;

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-monthly-statistics-2016>

Key Questions - Accommodation

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B19.6	Overall Standard of accommodation Positive= % satisfied		53	- 5	- 6
B19.12	Response to requests for repair Positive= % satisfied		34	- 6	- 8
B19.15	Quality of repair work Positive= % satisfied		33	- 7	- 6
B19.21	Home ownership Positive= % owning a home		47	↔	+ 4
B19.40	Used FHTB to buy home in the last year Positive= % using FHTB		5	N/A	N/A
B19.42	Considering using FHTB in the future Positive= % considering using FHTB		21	N/A	N/A

↔ Indicates no significant change was found

Section 13 – Family Life and Being Part of Society

Section 13 covers a number of questions relating to respondents' personal lives, such as their marital status and childcare situation. This section also captures the perceptions of Service personnel of their involvement in, and relative advantage or disadvantage when compared to, wider society.

Marital status and children

Just over half of Service personnel (52%) report that they are married or in a civil partnership and a further 22% are in a long term relationship. Around half (51%) state that they have children that they support financially. These figures are fairly stable over time, although both the proportions of those married / civil partnership, and those with children have increased slightly since the AFCAS survey began in 2007.

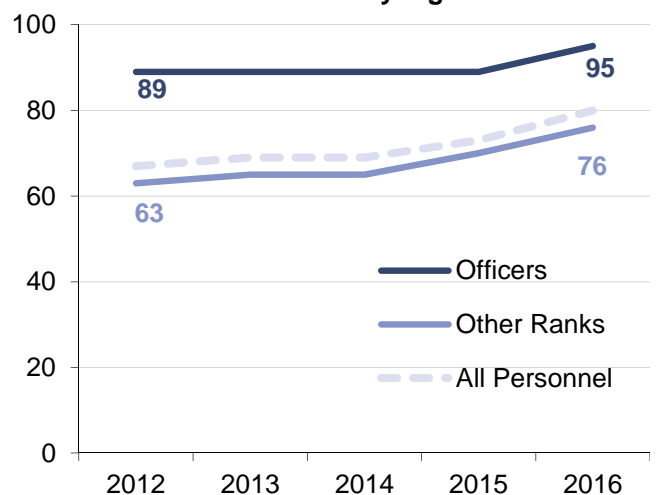
Of those respondents that require childcare, 50% are satisfied with the locally provided childcare facilities, which is an increase of 7 percentage points since 2015. This overall increase is driven largely by the Army and Royal Marines. Officers remain more satisfied with childcare than Other Ranks.

Voting

Four out of five Service personnel report that they are registered to vote, continuing the trend of increase in voter registrations since the question was introduced in 2012, when 67% were registered. Army personnel are the least likely to be registered (74%), but this has also increased, from 60% in 2012 and 68% in 2015. The MOD actively encourages personnel to register, including holding Service Voters Registration Roadshows in 2015, which may have resulted in the observed increase in the number of registered voters.

Among those not registered to vote, a lack of interest in politics is the most commonly-cited reason (26%).

Chart 13.1 I am currently registered to vote



Key Questions - family life and voting

Table Ref	Question		Overall % ticked	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B21.1	I am married/ in a Civil partnership		52	↔	+ 3
B21.3	I have children that I support financially		51	↔	↔
B21.9	I am satisfied with the locally provided		50	+ 7	N/A
B22.1	I am currently registered to vote		80	+ 7	+13

Ticked = % Yes

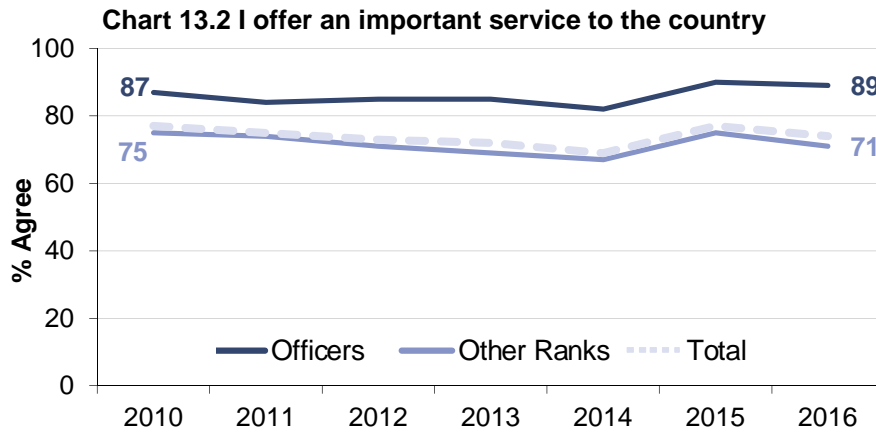
Ticked = % Satisfied

Ticked = % Yes

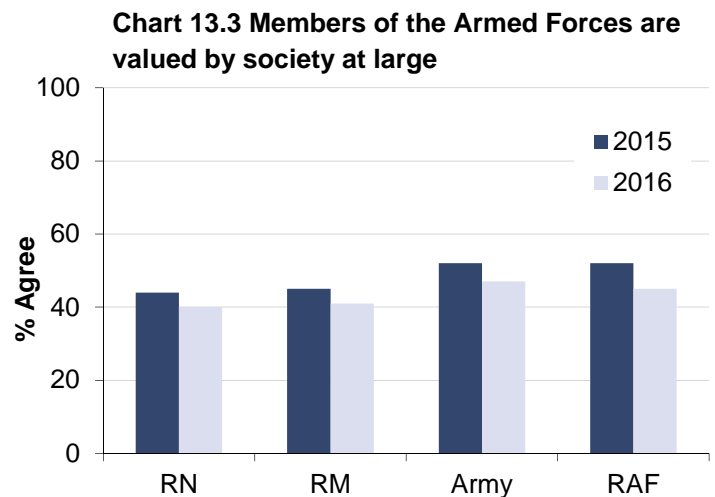
AFCAS 2016 35

The value of serving

Since 2015 there has been a decline in the proportion of personnel agreeing that they offer an important service to the country, following the increase observed in the year before (69% in 2014; 77% in 2015; 74% in 2016). There has been no change for Officers; the overall decline is due to a decrease among the Other Ranks. Responses to this question fluctuate over time and the latest decrease could reflect a decline in levels of deployment and operational activity since the end of combat operations in Afghanistan¹.



Over the last year, there has been a decline in the proportion of respondents who feel valued by society at large. All Services have experienced a decrease, however the sharpest drop has been in the RAF, amongst both Officers and Other Ranks. Overall, Officers (64%) continue to feel more valued than Other Ranks (41%).



Key Questions - the value of serving and awareness of the Covenant

Table Ref	Question		Overall % ticked	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B22.4	I know nothing about the Armed Forces Covenant		47	↔	↔
B22.14	I offer an important service to the country		74	- 3	↔
B22.15	Armed Forces members are valued by society at large		45	- 5	N/A

↔ indicates no significant change

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482894/19_MOD_ARAc_combined_at_02_Dec_2015_for_web.pdf

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant, announced by the Government in May 2011, sets out how Armed Forces personnel and their families can expect to be treated by the Government and the nation in a number of areas. It sets out, for example, that personnel can expect the same access to and standard of healthcare as any other UK citizen.

The majority of personnel (73%) have heard of the Armed Forces Covenant, however only around half (53%) claim to know a little or a lot about it. Almost all Officers (99%) have heard of the Covenant, however one third of Other Ranks have not. Since 2012, levels of awareness have remained fairly static, however in the last year, there has been a decrease in the proportion of Royal Navy personnel who have not heard of the Covenant (21% in 2015; 18% in 2016).

Advantage or disadvantage when compared to the general public

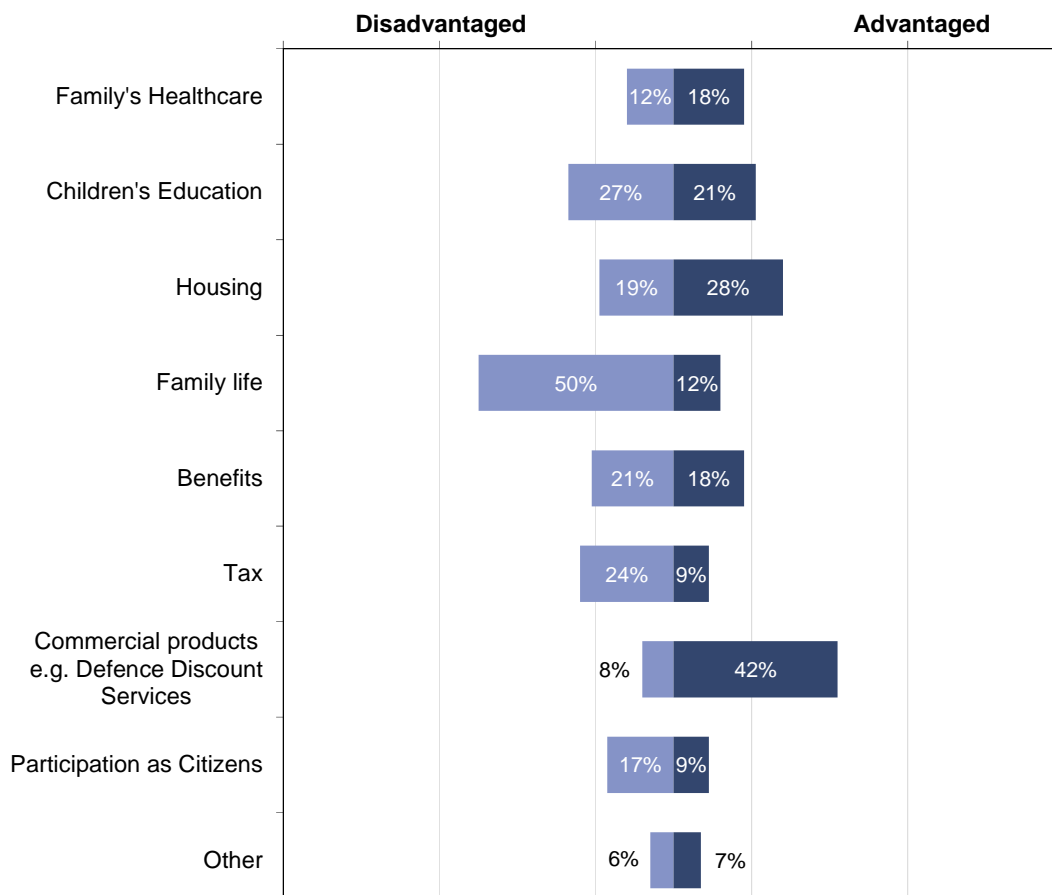
Chart 13.4 indicates what percentage of personnel feel either advantaged or disadvantaged when compared to the general public in a number of areas.

In most areas, the majority of personnel feel neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. The area in which respondents feel they are most disadvantaged is 'Family life' with 50% indicating that they feel disadvantaged in this area. The area in which Service personnel feel that they are most at an advantage is 'Commercial products and services', with 42% indicating that they feel advantaged in this area.

Data Quality Note

The questions in this section were changed in 2016. The 2015 survey offered two response options (Advantaged / Disadvantaged) and the 2016 survey included a 5-point advantage scale, plus a don't know / N/A option. Comparisons to 2015 results are not possible due to this change in question structure.

Chart 13.4 - Advantage or disadvantage of being a Service person when compared to the general public



Section 14 – Taking action

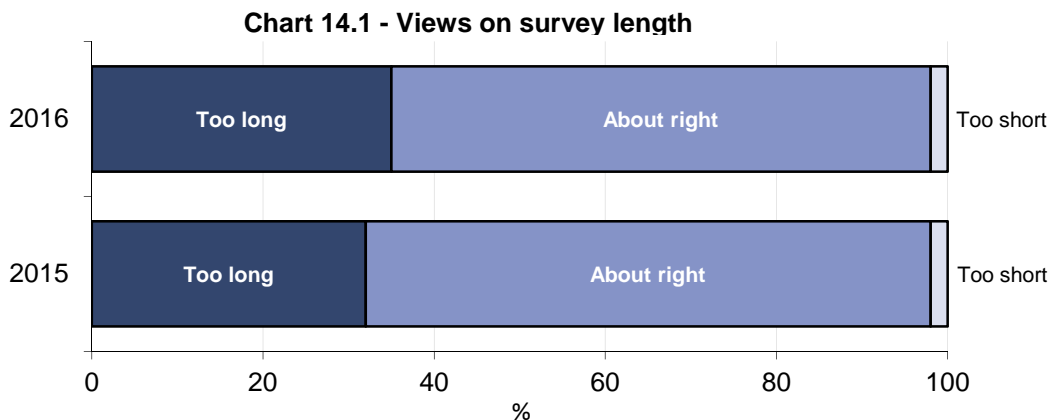
Section 14 covers beliefs on whether action has been taken on the results of AFCAS, and asks whether personnel feel the survey is of the right length.

In 2014, a major review of AFCAS resulted in a shorter survey updated to better reflect the current priorities of the MOD. It was hoped that this would result in less burden on respondents and boost response rates.

In 2016, the AFCAS survey achieved an overall response rate of 45%, an increase of one percentage point since 2015, but 3 percentage points lower than in 2014. Respondents are asked whether they think effective action has been taken on the results of AFCAS, and only one in five agree that it has. In 2016, more personnel (41%) disagree that effective action has been taken, due to increases in the Royal Marines and RAF Other Ranks. The Royal Marines Officers remain the most likely to agree that effective action has been taken (41%).

The 2016 AFCAS survey was similar in length to 2015, however there has been a 3 percentage point increase in the proportion of respondents who feel it is too long. Just under two thirds of personnel believe that the survey's length is about right.

68% of personnel report that they completed the survey in under half an hour, although Other Ranks are more likely than Officers to take longer than 30 minutes.



Key Questions - taking action and survey length

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2015	% Change from 2012
B23.2	I think effective action has been taken on the results of AFCAS		21	↔	N/A
B23.3	This survey is too long / about right / too short?		63	- 3	+ 8

Positive = % agree

Positive = % stating it is about right

Methodology

1. Target Population

The target population for AFCAS 2016 was trained UK Regular Armed Forces personnel including Gurkhas, excluding Special Forces and those deployed or attending training courses at the time the survey sample was drawn from the Joint Personnel Administration system.

2. The survey

AFCAS is distributed both electronically and in paper format. Data collection ran from September 2015 to February 2016, a relatively long period which allows time for receiving paper responses from personnel serving overseas.

The survey is confidential rather than anonymous. An individual's unique Service number is used both to control access to the survey and allow responses to be linked to demographic data held on the Joint Personnel Administration system. Personally identifiable data are only available to a small group of civilian researchers working on analysis and report production.

3. The sample and respondents

The total AFCAS 2016 sample consisted of 28,119 personnel. AFCAS questionnaires were issued to Service personnel selected under a (disproportionate) stratified simple random sampling process.

Samples were designed to provide sufficient responses to yield estimates with a margin of error of plus or minus 3% for the main comparison groups of Officer/Rank and Service. A census of all Royal Marines was employed due to the small size of the Service. Despite a relatively high response rate of 56%, margins of error around the estimates for RM Officers may be greater than 3%, due to the relatively small number of respondents in this group.

12,782 responses were used in the AFCAS 2016 analysis, giving an overall response rate of 45%. The table below contains detailed information on the number of questionnaires issued and received along with corresponding response rates.

Table A1: Response rates by Service and rank group

		Sample size	Surveys returned	2016 response rate	2015 response rate
Royal Navy	Officers	1 560	980	63%	60%
	Ratings	4 894	1 814	37%	40%
	Total	6 454	2 794	43%	45%
Royal Marines	Officers	544	307	56%	63%
	Marines	4 581	2 690	59%	60%
	Total	5 125	2 997	58%	60%
Army	Officers	1 928	1 231	64%	58%
	Soldiers	8 262	2 838	34%	29%
	Total	10 190	4 069	40%	34%
Royal Air Force	Officers	1 677	916	55%	59%
	Airmen	4 673	2 006	43%	45%
	Total	6 350	2 922	46%	49%
All Services	Officers	5 709	3 434	60%	59%
	Ranks	22 410	9 348	42%	41%
	Total	28 119	12 782	45%	44%

Note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole % for ease of interpretation.

4. Weighting methodology and non-response

Due to the sample design and the differences in prevalence of non-response between the Service and rank strata, the distribution of characteristics amongst the AFCAS respondents did not reflect the distribution in the whole Armed Forces population. Response rates tend to vary by rank, therefore responses are weighted by rank in order to correct for the bias caused by over or under-representation.

The weights were calculated simply by:

$$\frac{\text{Population size within weighting class (p)}}{\text{Number of responses within weighting class (r)}}$$

Weighting in this way assumes missing data are missing at random (MAR) only within weighting classes. This means we assume that within a single weighting class the views of non-respondents do not differ (on average) to the views of respondents.

Table A2: Weightings used for AFCAS 2016 analysis

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied	Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
RN_OF-7+	2.77	RM_OF-4+	2.57	Army_OF-7+	2.57	RAF_OF-7+	2.62
RN_OF-4 to 6	5.00	RM_OF-3	2.36	Army_OF-4 to 6	10.61	RAF_OF-4 to 6	10.62
RN_OF-3	4.54	RM_OF-1 to 2	2.36	Army_OF-3	8.23	RAF_OF-3	6.65
RN_OF-1 to 2	6.12	RM_OR-8 to 9	1.68	Army_OF-1 to 2	11.61	RAF_OF-1 to 2	7.05
RN_OR-8 to 9	6.15	RM_OR-7	1.95	Army_OR-8 to 9	14.79	RAF_OR-7-9	8.08
RN_OR-7	5.80	RM_OR-6	2.04	Army_OR-7	16.14	RAF_OR-6	8.35
RN_OR-6	7.80	RM_OR-3 to 4	2.55	Army_OR-6	16.99	RAF_OR-3 to 4	13.12
RN_OR-4	10.93	RM_OR-2	2.45	Army_OR-4	21.85	RAF_OR-1 to 2	19.60
RN_OR-2	14.65			Army_OR-3	28.06		
				Army_OR-2	38.42		

5. Analysis and statistical tests

Attitudinal questions in the questionnaires have generally been regrouped to assist in analysing results and to aid interpretation. For example, questions asked at a 5-point level (e.g. Strongly agree – Agree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree) have been regrouped to a 3-point level (e.g. (Agree – Neutral – Disagree)).

Missing values, where respondents have not provided a response/valid response, have not been included in the analysis. In addition, some questions are filtered to exclude invalid responses. As a result the unweighted counts (or 'n') will vary from question to question and these are shown within the reference tables published alongside this report on the AFCAS webpage here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

Unless otherwise specified, 'don't know' and 'not applicable' responses are ignored and percentages are based only on the numbers of respondents who chose the remaining item response options.

Where applicable, Z tests at a 1% alpha level were used to test whether observed estimates were significantly different to estimates from previous surveys. A statistically significant difference means that there is enough evidence that the change observed is unlikely to be due to chance variation (less than a 1% probability that the difference is the result of chance alone).

6. Format of the reference tables (published separately to the report on the AFCAS webpage here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

Each reference table refers to a question asked in the survey and includes estimates of the proportion of the population by category. Tables are arranged generally in the order in which they were asked in the questionnaires, which is not the same as the order of the sections in the Main Report. An index is available in within the Excel tables. Each table is broken down by Service and also by Rank Group with the Total column referring to the Officers and Other Ranks results combined.

Glossary

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	Compensation available to those who become injured or ill as a result of their service in the Armed Forces
Armed Forces Covenant	The Armed Forces Covenant defines the principles for ensuring that Armed Forces personnel are not disadvantaged in their access to public and commercial services as a result of their service. It also sets out that in some cases special treatment may be appropriate, for example for those that have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved.
Armed Forces Pay Review Body	Provides independent advice to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on the pay and charges for members of the Naval, Military and Air Forces of the Crown.
Assisting Officer	Appointed to provide help and support to personnel either considering or having made a formal written complaint about discrimination, harassment or bullying
Bullying	May be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and abuse of or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipients
Catering Retail and Leisure (CRL)	Provision of on-site facilities for dining, shopping and recreation by commercial partners
Commission	Officer's period of employment usually under contractual terms
Core Meal	Meal supplied that should conform to certain cost and nutritional standards within core hours
Defence Board	The highest committee in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and is responsible for the full range of Defence business, other than the conduct of operations.
DIN	Defence Instructions and Notices
Discrimination	can occur when a person is treated less favourably because of race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, age or disability. Discrimination can also occur where a policy or practice which applies to everyone unreasonably disadvantages a person on the basis of the characteristics mentioned above.
Engagement	Period of employment usually under contractual terms
Ethos	The nature, aims and objectives of a Service
Flexible working	Agreed variation in starting and finishing working hours normally designed to meet work/home life balance
Government Affordable Housing Scheme	Schemes providing financial assistance for those who are unable to afford to buy or rent a home; includes Forces Help to Buy
Harassment	includes unwanted conduct which is related to the characteristics mentioned above and is intended to or has the effect of violating another's dignity or creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
HIVE	Service information hub which assists personnel in a wide variety of topics affecting their everyday Service and personal life
JPA	Joint Personnel Administration - JPA is the system used by the Armed Forces to deal with matters of pay, leave and other personal administrative tasks
Marines	RM personnel of NATO ranks OR1 to OR9
Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC)	Ensures that all research involving human participants undertaken, funded or sponsored by the MOD meets nationally and internationally accepted ethical standards
Missing at Random (MAR)	Statistical theory that states that those who did not respond to a question do not differ from those who did respond
Missing value(s)	Refers to the situation where a respondent has not submitted an answer or a valid answer to a question
MOD	Ministry of Defence
Morale	A measure of commitment and willingness to the ethos of a Service
N/A	Not applicable
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Naval Service	Comprises the Royal Navy (including the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) and the Royal Marines combined.
Non-response	Refers either to a person who although sampled and sent a questionnaire did not reply or to a respondent who did not reply to a question
OF	Officer of NATO rank designation ranking from '1' lowest to '10' highest
Officer(s)	All regular trained officers of NATO ranks OF1 to OF10
Operational commitment and stretch	Refers to the situation where operational deployment requires the use of materiel and personnel in extended circumstances beyond the level they are resourced and structured to sustain in the long-term
Operational/Deployment Welfare Package	Measures taken to support the morale of Service personnel by making the fullest possible provision for their emotional and physical wellbeing whilst on operational deployment
OR	Other Ranks of NATO rank designation ranking from 'OR1' lowest to 'OR9' highest
Other Rank(s)	Other Ranks are members of the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force who are not Officers. The equivalent group in the Royal Navy is known as "Ratings".
Pay As You Dine (PAYD)	Enables personnel to pay for meals when they want them rather than pay a fixed daily charge
Post Operational Leave (POL)	Leave granted in addition to annual leave for personnel returning from operational deployment and who are not entitled to Seagoers' Leave (Army uses Post Operational Tour Leave (POTL))
RAF	Royal Air Force
Recruitment and retention pay (RRP) - formerly Specialist Pay	Discretionary payment received in addition to basic pay by specific groups within the Armed Forces to assist with specific recruitment or retention requirements
Retail Meal	Meals supplied by the contractor in addition to Core Meals
RM	Royal Marines
RN	Royal Navy
Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)	In the context of the Services, refers to a Review of what needed to be done to restructure and rescale the size of the Armed Forces to meet future Defence requirements of the UK's national security.
Seagoers' Leave (SGL)	Leave granted in addition to annual leave for personnel employed in a seagoing unit
Service Accommodation	Any type of accommodation that includes 'SFA', 'SSFA', 'SLA', 'SSLA' and 'Onboard a ship or submarine'
Service Complaints Commissioner	Oversees the Service Complaints system and also acts as an alternative point of contact for Service Complaints including ensuring that Service Complaints are dealt with efficiently, effectively and fairly
Service Complaints Procedure	Available to those who believe they have been the subject of unlawful or unfair treatment in the Service
Service(s)	Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and RAF
SFA	Service Families Accommodation
SLA	Single Living Accommodation
SNCO	Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NATO ranks OR6 to OR9)
Soldiers	Army personnel of NATO ranks OR1 to OR9
Special Educational Need (SEN)	Children who have needs or disabilities that affect their ability to learn
SSFA	Substitute Service Family Accommodation
SSLA	Substitute Single Living Accommodation
Standard Error	A measure derived using weighting factors from the sample proportion and unweighted count in a sampling distribution and used as a benchmark in order to ascertain a range of values within which the true population proportion could lie
Statistically significant	Refers to the result of a statistical test in which there is evidence of a change in proportions between years

Statistical tests	Refers to those tests which are carried out to see if any evidence exists for a change in response proportions from one year to another
Trained strength	Trained Strength comprises military personnel who have completed Phase 1 and 2 training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 Training includes all new entry training to provide basic military skills. • Phase 2 Training includes initial individual specialisation, sub-specialisation and technical training following Phase 1 training prior to joining the trained strength.
Unit	A sub-organisation of the Service in which personnel are employed
Unweighted count	Refers to the actual number who provided a valid response to a question in the survey
Weighting (factors)	Refers to factors that are applied to the respondent data set by Service and rank group in order to make respondent Service rank groups representative of their population equivalents
Weighting class	Refers to those members of a specific rank group to whom a weighting factor is applied
X-Factor	Additional payment to Armed Forces personnel to compensate for differences in lifestyle, working conditions and expectations compared to civilian equivalents
z test	Statistical test based on a standardised distribution which allows comparison between years for populations of different sizes

