

From **Admiral Tim Fraser** CB ADC



Vice Chief of Defence Staff

20 May 2020

Dear Employer,

I am writing to you, as the employer of a reservist who has been called-out as part of the UK's national response to the COVID-19 virus, to thank you for your support at this challenging time.

Overall, the three Services have mobilised around 2000 reservists to help in the fight against the Coronavirus. Other reservists have helped by undertaking short-term tasks that did not require formal mobilisation. In many cases these call-outs have, of necessity, occurred at very short notice as we moved to ensure we could quickly respond to requests for help from other government departments. The fact that we were able to move so swiftly is mainly down to two factors: the 'can-do' attitude of our reservists, and the selfless way in which employers such as you have responded.

As a result, Reservists have been able to take their place alongside their Regular colleagues, either by providing a range of much-needed specialist skills that have directly contributed to the response, or, by taking over the roles of Regulars in order to release them for COVID-19-related duties. This has been a good example of the flexibility and utility of our Reserve Forces, but we know this is only made possible by employers who are prepared to 'go the extra mile', in supporting their reservist employees at times like this.

We are always mindful of the need to return mobilised reservists to their civilian employers and families as quickly as possible. Thankfully, as a result of the huge national effort, which has successfully helped to restrict the spread of the virus, the demands on Defence have been less than we anticipated. This means we are now able to begin the process of demobilising some reservists, although some will need to remain in service for up to six months (and possibly longer in a few cases).

We are well aware that while many reservists and employers will welcome this early release, there will be some for whom, for a variety of reasons, this will be an unexpected development, bringing further uncertainty at a difficult time. For this reason, we aim to manage the de-mobilisation process as sensitively as possible in order to ensure that the impact on individuals and their employers is minimised. Reservists called out in response to

COVID-19 can be furloughed when they return to their civilian employment, providing they have been retained on your payroll (unpaid) during the period of mobilisation.

There is a tried and tested process for demobilisation and return to work and you can find further details on-line at this address: <https://www.gov.uk/employee-reservist/returning-to-work>.

Thank you again for all you have done to support your reservist employees – and the nation – at this difficult time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "The Prime Minister".