



This publication provides information on the number of **Military Personnel** in (defined as the **strength**), joining (**intake**) and leaving (**outflow**) the UK Armed Forces. Detail is provided for both the **Full-time Armed Forces** and **Reserves**. Further statistics can be found in the [Excel tables](#).

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

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

Key Points and Trends

▲ 196 900	Strength of UK Forces Service Personnel at 1 March 2016 <i>an increase of 1 690 (0.9 per cent) since 1 March 2015</i>
▼ 140 570	Full-time Trained Strength at 1 March 2016 <i>a decrease of 3 940 (2.7 per cent) since 1 March 2015</i>
- 4.3%	Surplus/Deficit against the planned number of personnel needed (Liability) at 1 March 2016 <i>this is about the same sized deficit as at 1 March 2015</i>
▲ 27 060	Strength of the Trained FR20 Volunteer Reserve at 1 March 2016 <i>an increase of 2 650 (10.9 per cent) since 1 March 2015</i>
▲ 14 240	People joined the UK Regular Armed Forces in the past 12 months (1 March 2015 – 29 February 2016) <i>an increase of 1 600 (12.7 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>
▲ 8 370	People joined the FR20 Volunteer Reserve in the past 12 months (1 March 2015 – 29 February 2016) <i>an increase of 1 690 (25.4 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>
▼ 16 950	Regular personnel left the Armed Forces in the past 12 months (1 March 2015 – 29 February 2016) <i>a decrease of 1 730 (9.3 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>
▼ 4 190	FR20 Volunteer Reserve personnel left the Armed Forces in the past 12 months (1 March 2015 – 29 February 2016) <i>a decrease of 140 (3.3 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>

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Background quality report: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tri-service-personnel-bulletin-background-quality-reports

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-Tri-Enquiries@mod.uk

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A glossary and other supporting documents are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-supplementary-documents>

Supplementary tables containing further statistics can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-2016>

Introduction

This publication contains information on the **strength, intake and outflow** for the UK Armed Forces overall and each of the Services; **Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM)**, **Army** and **Royal Air Force (RAF)**.

Statistics released last month on the number of applications to the Army have been revised this month in the Excel tables due to a data processing error with our providers between November 2014 and March 2015. The smallest revision is approximately 40 applications and the largest is approximately 2,570. The updated figures have been marked 'r' for 'revised'. Updated commentary will be included in the next publication.

Statistics on Exit Reason for the Army (specifically Voluntary Outflow, Time Expiry and Other Wastage), for UK Regular personnel, have been marked as provisional from 1 February edition onwards (see page 7 and Excel tables 4 and 5d). The corresponding Tri-Service totals are also marked as provisional. This is due to the implementation of improvements to the quality assurance process. These statistics will be finalised in due course. The associated historic statistics will also be affected and therefore revised.

Detailed statistics and historic time series can be found in the **Excel tables**. These include statistics on **rank structure, military salaries, Separated Service** (the proportion of personnel breaching harmony guidelines) and the number of **applications** to each of the Services.

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

The next edition of this publication will be published on GOV.UK at 9:30am on 12 May 2016. A calendar of upcoming MOD statistical releases can be found on **GOV.UK**.

A National Statistics publication

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

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

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Policy background

The main factors affecting decisions about the size of the Armed Forces required by the MOD to achieve success in its military tasks include:

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

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

Full-time Armed Forces personnel:

In order to meet the manpower reduction targets set out in SDSR 2010, the **Three Month Exercise** (3ME) and **Army 2020** (A2020), a redundancy programme coupled with adjusted recruiting (intake) and contract extensions were set. The redundancy programme is now complete. On 23rd November 2015, the Ministry of Defence published the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015. SDSR 2015 outlines plans to uplift the size of the Regular Armed Forces, setting targets for a strength of 82,000 for the Army, and increasing the Royal Navy/Royal Marines and Royal Air Force by a total of 700 personnel. The **SDSR 2015 Defence Key Facts** booklet announced new targets for 2020 for each of the Services.

Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maritime Reserve	3 100
Army Reserve	30 100
RAF Reserves	1 860

UK Service Personnel

UK Service Personnel comprise the total **strength** of the military personnel employed by the Ministry of Defence ([Excel tables](#), table1). The current strength of the UK Service Personnel is 196,900, which include:

- All **UK Regular** personnel and all **Gurkha** personnel (which at 1 March 2016 comprised 78.1 per cent of UK Service Personnel);
- **Volunteer Reserve** personnel (which at 1 March 2016 comprised 17.7 per cent of UK Service Personnel);
- **Other Personnel** including the Serving Regular Reserve, Sponsored Reserve, Military Provost Guard Service, Locally Engaged Personnel and elements of the FTRS (which at 1 March 2016 comprised 4.1 per cent of UK Service Personnel).

Strength is the number of personnel.

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

The strength of the UK Forces has increased between 1 March 2015 and 1 March 2016, by 0.9 per cent (1,690 personnel). Over the same period, there has been a decrease in the strength of UK Regular personnel and Gurkhas and there have been increases in the Reserves populations.

Table 1: Recent Trends in the Strength of the UK Forces

	1 Apr 13	1 Apr 14	1 Apr 15	1 Dec 15	1 Jan 16	1 Feb 16	1 Mar 16
UK Forces Personnel	211 340	198 810	195 690	196 810	196 030	196 650	196 900
UK Regulars	170 710	159 630	153 720	151 700	150 900	150 950	150 960
Gurkhas	3 510	3 050	2 870	2 670	2 670	2 870	2 860
Volunteer Reserve	30 360	28 860	31 260	34 340	34 360	34 680	34 910
Other Personnel	6 760	7 280	7 840	8 090	8 100	8 140	8 170

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

- More recently, over the past two months, the strength of the UK Regular Forces has remained relatively stable, due to intake and outflow for the two months being broadly similar.
- The total strength of the Volunteer Reserve has increased by 4,030 (13.0%) between 1 March 2015 and 1 March 2016.

Table 2: UK Forces Strength by Service

	1 Mar 15	1 Mar 16	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Strength				
Naval Service	38 200	38 470	+260	0.7%
Army	119 980	121 510	+1530	1.3%
Royal Air Force	37 030	36 930	-100	-0.3%

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

1. UK Forces comprises all UK Regular, Gurkha, Volunteer Reserve and Other personnel. The constituents of "Other personnel" are reported towards the top of this page.

Full-time Trained Strength and Liability

The **Full-time Trained Strength** (which comprises military personnel who have completed 'Phase 1' and 'Phase 2' training) is counted against the **Liability**. The difference between the two is measured as either a surplus or deficit. This is one indicator of the Service's ability to execute military tasks. Other indicators include the surplus / deficit within key trades or in specific Ranks.

- The Strength of the Full-time Trained UK Armed Forces is 140,570, a decrease of 2.7 per cent (3,940 personnel) since 1 March 2015.
- The FTTS is 29,730 for the RN/RM, 79,840 for the Army and 31,000 for the RAF.
- The FTTS comprises: 137,620 Regular personnel (97.9 per cent); 2,500 Gurkhas (1.8 per cent); and 450 Full Time Reserve Service personnel (0.3 per cent) who can fill Regular posts and are deployable.

Full-time Trained Strength

includes all trained UK Regular personnel, Gurkhas and a number of Reserve Forces personnel filling Regular posts whilst serving on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS).

Liability is the number of Service personnel needed, based on the Defence Planning Round, set for each of the three Services.

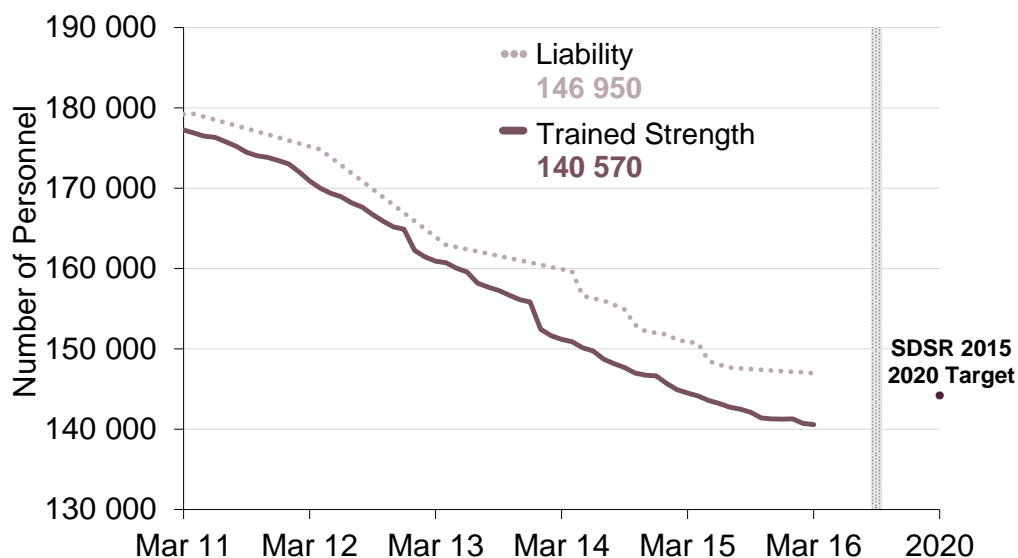
Table 3: Full-Time Trained Strength against the Liability

	1 Apr 13	1 Apr 14	1 Apr 15	1 Dec 15	1 Jan 16	1 Feb 16	1 Mar 16
Trained Strength	160 710	150 890	144 120	141 250	141 260	140 720	140 570
Liability	162 940	159 640	150 700	147 220	147 130	147 070	146 950
Surplus/Deficit	-2 230	-8 750	-6 580	-5 960	-5 860	-6 350	-6 380
% Surplus/Deficit	-1.4	-5.5	-4.4	-4.1	-4.0	-4.3	-4.3

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

- The current deficit against the Liability is 4.3 per cent for the UK Armed Forces. There is a deficit of 1.6 per cent in the Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM), 4.5 per cent in the Army and 6.5 per cent in the Royal Air Force (RAF).
- A proportion of the Army deficit (of FTTS against the Liability) is likely to be due to the numbers of Service personnel reducing to meet the targets previously set out in the SDSR 2010 and 3ME/A2020 and planned Liability reductions not keeping pace. During this transitional drawdown period the published Army Liability has lagged behind the number of personnel actually needed due to the way in which it is calculated.
- The SDSR 2015 envisaged that by 2020 the UK Armed Forces would have 144,200 personnel, comprising 30,450 for the RN/RM, 82,000 for the Army and 31,750 for the RAF.

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



UK Regular Personnel

As at 1 March 2016, the trained and untrained strength of the UK Regular Forces (which excludes Gurkhas) was 150,960, of which 137,620 were trained personnel.

- The majority of trained UK Regular Forces personnel are in the Army followed by the RAF and the RN/RM.
- There are 13,340 untrained personnel in the UK Regular Forces, of which 7,680 are in the Army. The untrained strength reflects the number of personnel who can potentially join the trained strength.

Intake and Outflow since 2010

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

- Excluding personnel who left on redundancy, in the 12 months to 29 February 2016, there was a net outflow of 2,600 personnel from the UK Regular Forces. This difference has reduced compared with the 12 months to 28 February 2015, when 4,680 more personnel left the UK Regular Forces than joined.

Intake

- Intake into the trained and untrained UK Regular Forces was 14,240 in the 12 months to 29 February 2016. This has increased from 12,640 in the 12 months to 28 February 2015.
- Of the current intake, 8.5 per cent was into the Officers and 91.5 per cent was into the Other Ranks.
- From the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2015 to 29 February 2016, 12,600 people have joined. This is an increase compared with intake of 11,340 in the same period last year (1 April 2014 to 28 February 2015).
- Intake numbers have increased for each Service. Compared to the 12 months to 28 February 2015, intake to the RN/RM has increased by 1.8 per cent, intake to the Army has increased by 16.3 per cent and the RAF has increased by 15.3 per cent.

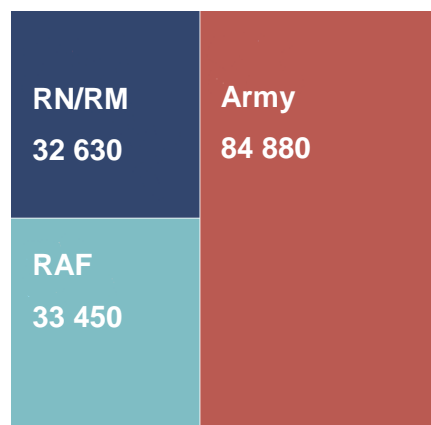
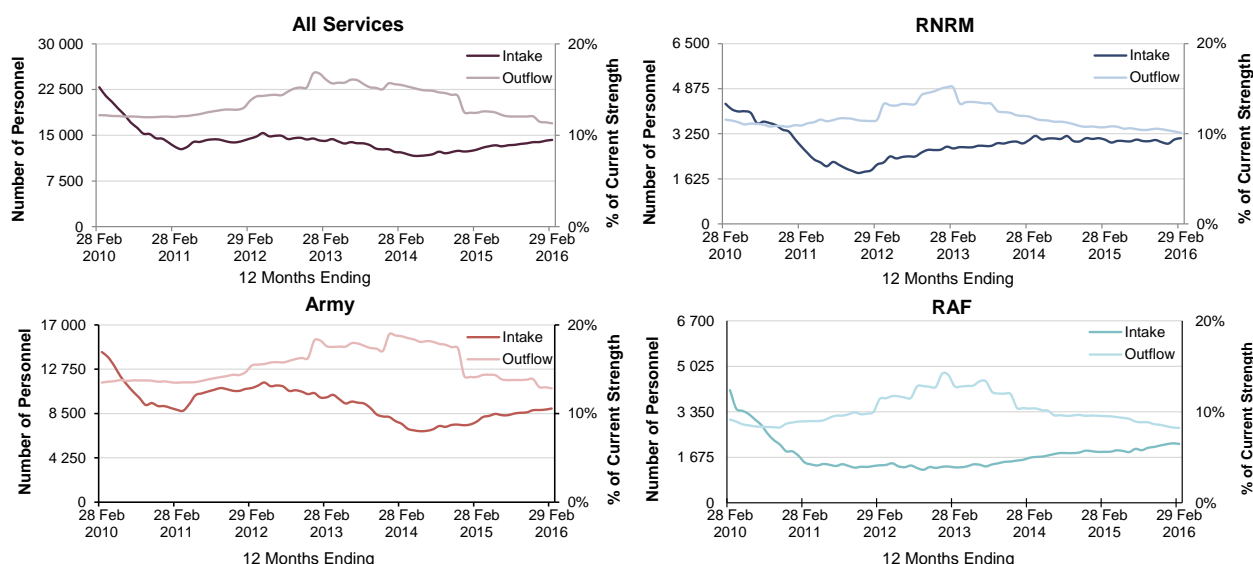


Figure 2: Trained and untrained Strength of the UK Regular Forces, by Service, as at 1 March 2016

UK Regulars are full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, excluding FTRS personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guarding Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), and Non Regular Permanent Service (NRPS).

Intake is defined as the number joining the Strength, whereas **Outflow** is the number leaving.

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



UK Regular Personnel

Outflow

- Outflow from the trained and untrained UK Regular Forces was 16,950 in the 12 months to 29 February 2016; down from 18,680 in the 12 months to 28 February 2015.
- In the 12 months to 29 February 2016, 120 trained and untrained personnel left the UK Regular Forces as part of the UK Armed Forces Redundancy Programme. This compares to 1,370 in the 12 months to 28 February 2015.
- From the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2015 to 29 February 2016; 15,380 people have left the UK Regulars. This is a decrease compared with outflow of 17,340 in the same period last year (1 April 2014 to 28 February 2015).

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

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

Voluntary Outflow

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

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

Other Wastage is outflow from the trained strength due to, amongst others, medical reasons, misconduct, compassionate, dismissals and death.

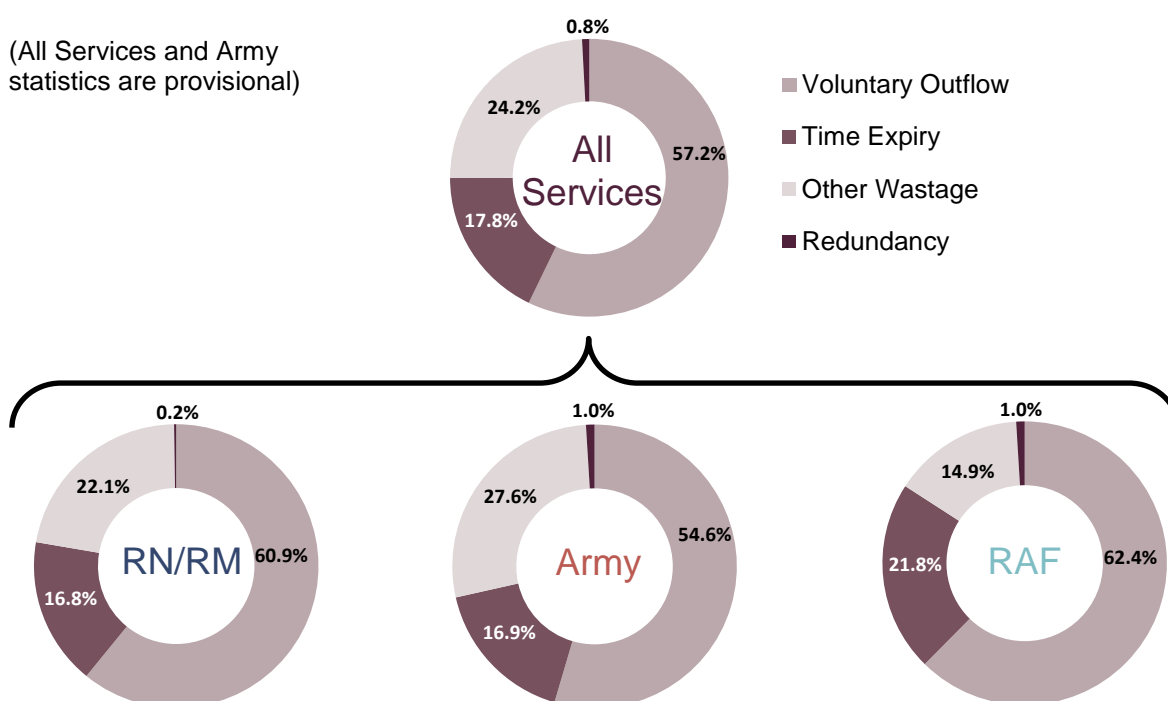
The following statistics on exit reason are **provisional** (see introduction for further information). At a Tri-Service level, more personnel left the trained UK Regular Forces by Voluntary Outflow (VO) than for any other reason (Figure 4).

- In the 12 months to 29 February 2016, 7,940 trained personnel left through VO; provisionally the VO rate was 5.7 per cent. This is an increase from 7,410 in the 12 months to 28 February 2015 and a VO rate of 5.1 per cent
- Provisionally, the VO rate is slightly higher amongst Other Ranks (5.9 per cent), compared to Officers (5.0 per cent).

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

Figure 4: Outflow of trained UK Regulars by exit reason (12 months to 29 February 2016)

(All Services and Army statistics are provisional)



Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme monitoring

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

FR20 Volunteer Reserve Strength

Progress against FR20 trained strength targets is reported in table 6a of the [Excel tables](#).

The total **trained and untrained strength** of the FR20 Tri-Service Volunteer Reserve was 34,590; an increase of 4,180 or 13.7 per cent since 1 March 2015.

The **trained strength** of the FR20 Tri-Service Volunteer Reserve was 27,060; an increase of 2,650 or 10.9 per cent since 1 March 2015.

FR20 Volunteer Reserve

Includes mobilised volunteer reserves, High Readiness Reserves (HRR) and those volunteer reserves serving on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and Additional Duties Commitments (ADC). Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) are excluded.

Table 4: FR20 Volunteer Reserve strength by Service

		1 Mar 15	1 Mar 16	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Maritime Reserve	Trained	1 970	2 320	+350	+17.9%
	Untrained	1 120	1 190	+60	+ 5.7%
Army Reserve	Trained	20 880	22 890	+2010	+9.6%
	Untrained	4 280	5 680	+1390	+32.5%
RAF Reserves	Trained	1 560	1 840	+290	+18.5%
	Untrained	600	670	+70	+11.8%

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

FR20 Intake

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

In the 12 months between 1 March 2015 and 29 February 2016, **intake** to the Tri-Service FR20 Volunteer Reserve was **8,370 people** (3,010 trained and 5,360 untrained, including transfers); a **25.4 per cent increase** on the same 12 month period in the previous year.

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

	1 Mar 14 28 Feb 15	1 Mar 15 29 Feb 16	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Intake				
Maritime Reserve	910	1 090	+180	+19.1%
Army Reserve	5 040	6 400	+1360	+27.0%
RAF Reserves	720	880	+160	+22.3%

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

FR20 Outflow

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

In the 12 months between 1 March 2015 and 29 February 2016 **outflow** from the Tri-Service FR20 Volunteer Reserve was **4,190 people** (2,630 trained and 1,560 untrained, including transfers); a **3.3 per cent decrease** compared with the same 12 month period in the previous year. The overall decrease in Tri-Service outflow is a result of a large decrease in Army Reserve outflow; Maritime Reserve and RAF Reserves outflow has increased over the periods. Such increases in outflow are to be expected following growth in the untrained strength.

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

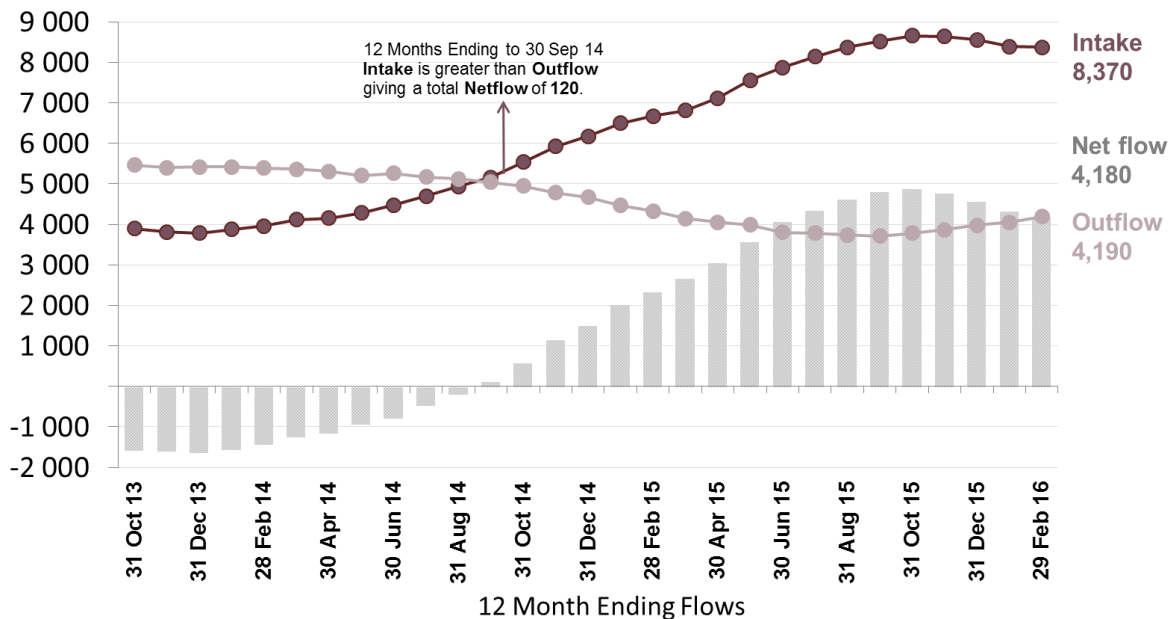
	1 Mar 14 28 Feb 15	1 Mar 15 29 Feb 16	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Outflow				
Maritime Reserve	560	670	+110	+20.0%
Army Reserve	3 530	3 000	-540	-15.2%
RAF Reserves	240	520	+280	+119.9%

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme monitoring

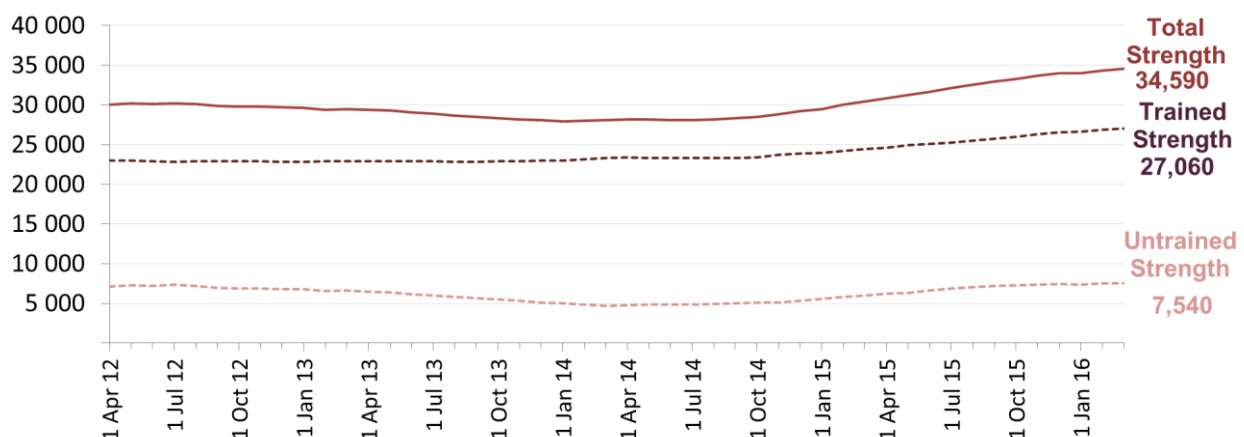
Intake and Outflow over time

Figure 5: FR20 Volunteer Reserve (Trained and Untrained) Intake and Outflow



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

Figure 6: Total Strength over time



Since April 2012 trained strength has shown a gradual increase, whereas untrained strength initially decreases (reaching its lowest point in early 2014) before commencing a steady increase.

Early changes in the strengths were likely due to the restructuring of the Reserve Forces during the initial stages of the FR20 Programme. Subsequent improved recruitment and training of Reserves, as a result of the FR20 Programme, has resulted in larger numbers both joining and completing training and therefore increased strengths for both trained and untrained personnel.

Further Information

Rounding

Figures in this publication have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in a “5” have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent the systematic bias caused by always rounding numbers upwards. For example; a value of “25” would be rounded down to “20” and a value of “15” would be rounded up to “20”.

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

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

Revisions

Statistics on the number of applications to the Army have been revised this month in the Excel tables due to a processing error with our data providers between November 2014 and March 2015. The smallest revision is approximately 40 applications and the largest is approximately 2,570. The updated figures have been marked ‘r’ for ‘revised’. Updated commentary will be included in the next publication.

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

There are no regular planned revisions of this Bulletin.

Symbols

	Discontinuity in time series
*	not applicable
..	not available
—	Zero
~	5 or fewer
p	Provisional
e	Estimate
r	Revised

Italic figures are used for percentages and other rates, except where otherwise indicated.

Further Information (cont.)

Contact Us

Defence Statistics welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Ministry of Defence. For more information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>

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Naval Service Manpower	023 9262 5956	DefStrat-Stat-Navy-Hd@mod.uk
Army Manpower	01264 886175	DefStrat-Stat-Army-Hd@mod.uk
RAF Manpower	01494 496822	DefStrat-Stat-Air-Hd@mod.uk
Tri-Service Manpower	020 7807 8896	DefStrat-Stat-Tri-Hd@mod.uk
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Please note that these email addresses may change later in the year.

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