

Sample communications plan

Reserve Forces recruitment campaign

Background

This plan is based on internal communications around Reserve Forces recruitment implemented by cross-government departments. It aims to provide an example of the type of activity you may want to implement and should be adapted based on your local knowledge and the channels available to you.

The Cabinet Office and Ministry of Defence is working with local councils to roll out localised communications to staff, residents and businesses. This activity is in addition to recruitment being undertaken by local and regional units and national advertising led by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Policy

Reserve Forces will play a crucial role in the future of the Armed Forces as set out in the government's Future Reserves 2020 policy. It requires the Army Reserve (Territorial Army) to grow to a trained strength of 30,000, the Maritime Reserve to 3,100 and the Royal Air Force Reserves to 1,800.

The main premises of the policy are:

- integration of the Reserve Forces with the Regular Armed Forces in terms of training and deployment alongside Regular Units, access to the same equipment and comparable rates of pay
- more training to ensure Reservists are fully prepared to serve if required
- more notice of training and deployment to benefit the Reservist and their employer
- accredited military training to develop skills that can be transferred to civilian roles
- harnessing niche skills such as cyber defence, language and medical skills
- as an integral part of the Armed Forces, Reservists will be required for military and humanitarian duties in the UK and overseas

The government is investing an additional £1.8 billion to achieve these goals.

Community Covenant

The majority of councils have signed a [Community Covenant](#) to publically pledge their support of the Armed Forces. A list of councils that have signed the covenant is [here](#). If your council is listed you may have an Armed Forces Champion in place who should be involved in your campaign. They may also be planning a series of events as part of the World War I commemorations throughout 2014.

Key messages

- gain new personal and professional skills through your training
- opportunities for travel, adventure and new experiences
- challenge yourself
- it's rewarding
- you can fit it in around your career and other commitments
- you will get paid for training and deployment
- other people like you are already doing it
- earn money in your spare time
- there are many roles to choose from, not just combat
- experience something different to your day job

Objectives

- to increase awareness of opportunities in the Reserve Forces amongst residents, businesses and staff
- to help your local unit meet its recruitment targets (these targets can be provided by your local unit)

Additional objectives if a staff campaign is in place

- to increase awareness amongst staff of the your HR policy for Reservists
- to implement a Reserves Champion scheme to encourage staff who are Reservists to be a point of contact for other staff

Target audience

The campaign is aimed primarily at residents and local businesses who meet the Reservist criteria. This varies depending on rank and service (see FAQs for full criteria) but is generally British or Commonwealth Citizens aged 18-43 (Army Reserve)/18-50 (Royal Air Force Reserves) or 16-40 (Royal Naval Reserve). You may also wish to consider an internal campaign aimed at staff.

MoD research shows that applicants are typically:

- in their late 20s or early 30s
- successful people wanting to add another element to their lives
- interested in voluntary activities or have volunteered in the past

Delivery

Implement an externally focused campaign aimed at residents and businesses, focusing mainly on the Army Reserve (Territorial Army) as this is where the greatest number of Reservists is needed:

The external campaign can be developed in partnership with your local unit using your council and partner channels as well as those available through your local unit. They will also be able to provide marketing materials to support your campaign.

Based on the target audience, the priority channels if available are:

- your website
- newsletters
- leisure centres
- social media – YouTube, Facebook, twitter, Flickr
- email footers

Your campaign may focus on one or more of the following:

- existing recruitment events planned by your local unit
- recruitment events or open/taster evenings organised with your local unit as part of your campaign
- Armed Forces Day (Saturday 28 June)
- national or regional Reserve Forces advertising campaigns
- monthly themes (a calendar of suggested themes is included in the gov.uk Reserve Forces toolkit)

You may consider an internal campaign, which can underpinned by a HR policy to support staff and 'Reserves Champions' – staff who are Reservists and are willing to act as case studies and a point of contact for other staff who want to find out more.

Timeline

We suggest your campaigns coincide with the national advertising campaigns which tend to run March-June and Sept-Nov.

Setting targets

Your local unit will be able to let you know the number of Reservists they currently have and their recruitment targets which you can use to set the evaluation for your resident communications.

Support and resources

Artwork and a campaign toolkit are available on gov.uk. You can request printed materials from your local unit.

SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) may be able to help you to identify local employers who support the Armed Forces to assist you with promoting local events. Find your Regional Campaign Director at <http://www.sabre.mod.uk> or call 0800 389 5459. They may also be able to help your HR department develop a Reservist policy if this is something they are considering.

If you have any questions, need resources other than those provided or want to request additional support please email reserves@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk.

Implementation: sample activity grid

External
Stage one: planning
Confirm how you will track the effectiveness of your campaign. Add a question to your resident survey, if applicable, to measure awareness levels before and after launch.
Confirm channels available for external roll out, prioritising digital channels but also including poster sites, resident magazine/newspaper, community and public facing TV screens. Artwork is available to download from the gov.uk toolkit.
Work with your local unit to organise open evenings/recruitment events at the local unit/careers office and council offices. There may be events already planned which you can support through your campaign. They may be able to organise a high profile recruitment event staffed by the Reserve Forces recruitment teams which can be district, borough or county-wide to form a focus for all your communications.
Work with your local unit to source case studies of local Reservists to support your campaign including quotes for media releases, your website and resident magazine/newspaper.

<p>Consider following new recruits through the process to provide interactive content such as a blog on your website, twitter, photo diary and potential video footage. Your local unit will be able to help you to identify and approach the new recruits. This will add an interactive element particularly if people are able to post questions and comments on the blog.</p>
<p>Identify and confirm support of partner organisations. If you commission an organisation to deliver volunteering opportunities for example, information on the Reserves could be added to their website, included in their enewsletter and information stands booked at their events.</p>
<p>Identify and confirm the support of your contractors. An organisation called SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) can help you to identify local businesses who already support the Armed Forces at www.sabre.mod.uk.</p>
<p>Produce a calendar of community and council events at which a recruitment stand can be present and work with your local unit to confirm availability and book. Source speaking slots where relevant.</p>
<p>Plan content for themed months. A calendar of suggested themes is in the gov.uk toolkit and regular themed content will be added to support your activity. This will help to provide regular content for your social media activity.</p>
<p>Contact council leisure centres to confirm and promote partnership events and activities such as free Army Reserve (Territorial Army) training sessions.</p>
<p>Set up Reserve Forces web pages on your external website.</p>
<p>Brief staff, particularly call centre and frontline, on the external campaign rollout including your campaign URL so they can direct enquiries. Provide them with materials where appropriate.</p>
<p>Stage two: rollout</p>
<p>Roll out content across the council, partner, media and contractor channels identified. Promote campaign on council-wide email footers.</p>
<p>Sell in case studies and events to local and regional media. Consider a launch event or photocall with your local unit.</p>
<p>Promote open evenings/events through all channels including your website, twitter (please use #jointhereserves), posters, enewsletters and a local press release (a template is on the gov.uk toolkit).</p>
<p>Artwork on council owned local media.</p>
<p>Leisure centre activities begin.</p>
<p>Materials displayed across council-owned and other community and partner venues.</p>
<p>Stands and speaking opportunities at external events.</p>

Internal (if relevant)
Stage three: planning
<p>Speak to your HR Director to obtain support and clarify if a Reservist policy is in place, particularly in terms of special leave for continuous training (10 days) and during deployment. A sample HR policy is provided in the gov.uk toolkit.</p>
<p>Identify staff Reservists via HR. Ask your HR team to contact them on your behalf to ask if they are willing to be identified. Appoint a Reserves Champion and create case studies for rollout through internal channels and confirm their commitment to speak at internal and external events.</p>
<p>Engage with your local unit to gain support, confirm targets and gauge resources (open days, events, training sessions etc).</p> <p>A list of units is in the gov.uk toolkit or you can check below:</p> <p>Army Reserve Units: http://www.army.mod.uk/territorial/31792.aspx</p> <p>RAF Reserves Squadrons: http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafreserves/rolesandsquadrons/squadrons.cfm</p> <p>Royal Naval Reserve Units: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/The-Fleet/Maritime-Reserves/Royal-Naval-Reserve/RNR-Units</p>
<p>Brief councillors, inviting them to an evening reception for councillors hosted by your local unit.</p>
<p>Brief the Senior Executive Board to give an overview of the campaign, encouraging senior managers to consider it for themselves if appropriate. Book a space for a staff Reservist to talk at any Senior Management conferences or events.</p>
<p>Consider how you will measure staff awareness to track the effectiveness of your campaign ahead of your evaluation. Add a question to any existing staff surveys or run a poll on your intranet.</p>
Stage four: implementation
<p>Promote HR Reservist policy to staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manager briefing • information on intranet • information in induction pack • speaking slot at induction presentations

Launch Reserve Forces recruitment pages on the staff intranet including:

- introduction to the Reserve Forces - generic sample copy is provided in the gov.uk toolkit
- links to FAQs
- HR policy if appropriate
- case studies and contact details for Reserves Champions and other staff who are Reservists
- links to the Reserve Forces websites

News items in staff enewsletter/staff magazine linking to internal and external resources.

Roll out materials in lobbies, lifts, kitchen noticeboards etc.

Lunchtime events with Reserves Champions to share their experiences of being a Reservist. Look to organise both Reservist specific events and source speaking slots at existing events and training. Being a Reservist helps with career development in terms of leadership and teamwork so personal development events are the ideal platform.

Organise a uniform to work day for staff Reservists. This may be on Friday 27 June to coincide with Armed Forces Day on Saturday 28 June.

Interactive information stand in reception area of council building, staffed by your local unit.

Lunchtime/after-work fitness sessions run by a Reservist from your local unit which may coincide with staff wellbeing days/weeks. Also consider sessions on council sports days/team away days.

Evaluation

Current number of Reservists in your local unit: Insert (this can be sourced through your local unit)

Target number of Reservists: To meet local unit target

You may also wish to consider a target for the number of staff Reservists if you are running an internal campaign. Your HR department may be able to provide you with the number of employees who are already Reservists to help you with your target setting. As a guide, to meet government targets, 0.25% of the UK's eligible workforce (aged 18-43) needs to join the Reserve Forces.