Ad-Hoc Statistical Release: NEM Survey Results 2013/14

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This report provides a summary of responses to a survey of Service Personnel aimed at exploring attitudes towards current service employment conditions and reactions to proposals for revised service conditions proposed under the New Employment Model (NEM). This survey was not meant to provide a comprehensive assessment of these issues, but to fill key evidence gaps from the existing evidence base. The full results from the survey can be found at https://www.gov.uk/new-employment-model

Key Findings

Accommodation
- The most common type of accommodation used by Service Personnel is Service Family Accommodation, with 41% saying this is where they live at weekends or when on leave
- Almost a third (30%) of personnel live in their own home which they are buying on mortgage, however, around a quarter (27%) think that they wouldn't be able to afford a mortgage on a suitable property based on current circumstances
- The key advantages of living in service accommodation are that it is low cost (40%) and close to work (23%)
- The key disadvantages are the standard of maintenance (15%), lack of choice (14%) and size (10%) of accommodation
- The most important factor when choosing new service accommodation would be its condition (ranked as the top priority by 53%)
- Nearly two thirds of Service Personnel think if entitlement to service accommodation was extended it should be extended to unmarried partners with children (64%), with this group mentioned more than any other
- Closeness to work (21%) and broadband internet access (18%) are the things which are most important in terms of location of their property
- Service personnel want more information from the Services about Government help-to-buy schemes (76%) and mortgages (67%) in particular, and they want more information from Service sources than they currently feel they are getting. A quarter (24%) say they would like to use the Joint Service Housing Advice Office (JSHAO) for information and advice on non-Service housing in the future and 25% saying they would like to use the Unit Welfare Office, compared with four percent and six percent who use them currently
- When receiving information from Service sources, there is a preference for face-to-face advice (50% for JSHAO and 54% if using the Unit Welfare Office), although most currently use non-Service sources, getting their information from the internet (53%)

Family life
- Around half (48%) of Service Personnel have children aged under 16 living with them

- The most common form of childcare is using friends or relatives (36%). Nurseries (27%) and school clubs (22%) are used by around a quarter
- Generally personnel are satisfied with the quality and location of childcare services in their area (57% and 55% respectively) but cost and flexibility are an issue (56% and 35% respectively are dissatisfied)
- Around half (47%) of Service Personnel in long-term relationships have a partner in full-time work
- Only a small minority of partners are unemployed and available for work (six percent)

Overseas postings
- Around half (52%) of Service Personnel have undertaken an overseas posting in their careers
- Three in five (61%) Service Personnel say they are keen to take up an overseas posting
- Key advantages are seen to be the ability to live (87%) and work (73%) in a different country, and develop a broader career profile (64%)
- Key disadvantages are perceived to be separation from, or disruption of, family life (52% say they do not want to be separated from their family, 47% that it would make it difficult for their partners to work and 39% that it would disrupt their children's education)

Allowances
- Most Service Personnel agree that it is difficult to find out what allowances they are entitled to (74% agree) and disagree that they understand what they can claim (53% disagree)
- The systems and regulations surrounding allowances are felt to be difficult to use (45% agree it is difficult to use JPA, 52% that they find the regulations difficult to understand), although Unit Admin staff are generally thought to provide helpful advice (39% agree versus 36% who disagree)
- More Service Personnel agree they use Unit Admin staff to help with most claims they make, than disagree (46% versus 30%)
- The majority support maintaining the current system of Local Overseas Allowance in preference to the proposed change of frontloading payments (62% versus 21%)
- However, more people support the proposal for changing Disturbance Allowance to a system of differential payments based on location than support the current system (48% versus 42%)

Training and education
- Around half (54%) of Service Personnel find the idea of reducing residential course time through e-learning appealing, with a quarter (25%) saying this does not appeal
- Around half (51%) agree that e-learning is a good way to develop new skills, with slightly fewer (41%) saying they like to access e-learning from home
- Only a third (35%) agree that they have sufficient time to complete e-learning at work
- Around a third (34%) of Service Personnel have used Standard or Enhanced Learning Credits (SLC/ELC)
- The key reason for not using SLCs/ELCs is lack of time to study (cited by 40%)

Flexible working
- There is currently a very small proportion of Service Personnel who have applied for flexible working arrangements (five percent), although there is clear appetite for this to increase in the future with 23% saying they would definitely be interested and a further 37% saying they would possibly be interested in applying
- Most of those who apply are accepted (76%), with variable start or finish times (three percent) and working from home (two percent) the most requested options
- Awareness of the guidance around flexible working arrangements is low, with three quarters (76%) of Service Personnel having not heard of this

Joining the Armed Forces
- The majority (60%) of Service Personnel said their highest qualification held on joining was NVQ Level 1-2: the equivalent of GCSEs, CSEs or O-Levels
- Around half (48%) of Service Personnel had a driving licence before they joined the Armed Forces
- Having to undertake a vocational or academic qualification selected by the Services of more than one year in duration was the only suggestion where more Service Personnel said it would have made them less likely to join than said it would not make a difference (37% said it would make them less likely to join versus 31% who said it would make no difference).
- For undertaking a vocational or academic qualification selected by the Services of one year only in duration - 31% said they would be less likely to join versus 36% who said it would make no difference.
- Having to obtain a driving licence before joining was the least likely to put Service Personnel off joining (27% said it would make them less likely to join).

Background

Ipsos MORI was commissioned to design and analyse data from a survey of Service Personnel to explore attitudes towards current service employment conditions and reactions to proposals for revised service conditions proposed under the New Employment Model (NEM). The fieldwork for the survey was carried out by MOD.

The main objective of the survey was to collect data that can be used in developing future personnel policies.

Methodology

The survey was bimodal - conducted using a combined postal and online methodology. Fieldwork was carried out between 12 November 2013 and 22 January 2014. Links to the online questionnaire were sent to all Service Personnel in the sample at the beginning of the fieldwork period. Copies of the questionnaire, including the participant information sheet outlining the purpose of the survey and ways to take part, were sent to all respondents two weeks into the fieldwork period. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A of the main report, found through the following link: https://www.gov.uk/new-employment-model

The target population for this survey was UK trained, regular Armed Forces personnel, including Gurkhas, who have address details recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system, excluding Special Forces and, for the RN, RM, and RAF, excluding personnel that were shown as deployed at the time the

survey sample was drawn from JPA. Both males and females were included in this survey although the sample was not specifically stratified by gender.
The total sample consisted of 16,372 personnel. Questionnaires were issued to Service personnel selected under a (disproportionate) stratified simple random sampling process. The sample was stratified by Service and rank (at Officer / Other Rank level).

The samples were designed to provide sufficient responses to yield estimates with a confidence interval[1] of no more than +/-3 percentage points by Officer/Rank status and Service, taking into account the differential response rates in these groups typically observed in AFCAS. Some questions, where filtering has been applied, or with higher levels of item non-response, may have larger confidence intervals.

In total 7,927 responses were returned (excluding duplicates and wholly incomplete forms), giving an overall response rate of 48%. The table below contains detailed information on the number of questionnaires issued and received along with corresponding response rates.

Figure 2.1 - Response rates by Service and rank group

Service		Sample size	Surveys returned	% response rate
Royal Navy (RN)	Officers	1505	1053	70%
	Other ranks	2683	1105	41%
Royal Marines (RM)	Officers	696	344	49%
	Other ranks	1600	585	37%
Army	Officers	1855	1360	73%
	Other ranks	4087	1124	28%
Royal Air Force (RAF)	Officers	1646	1088	66%
	Other ranks	2300	1163	51%
Total	Officers	5702	3845	67%
	Other ranks	10,670	3977	37%

Due to the sample design and the differences in prevalence of non-response between the Service and rank strata, the distribution of characteristics amongst respondents did not reflect the distribution in the whole Armed Forces population. This means that some types of personnel were over-represented and others under-represented in the raw data. Therefore the survey data were weighted by rank (Officer or Other Rank) within each single Service to correct for the bias caused by such over or under-representation.

The weights were calculated simply by: Population size within weighting class (p) / 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

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[1] When looking at the findings for the population as a whole, or for sub-groups, it is important to note that as this is a sample survey each percentage quoted is an estimate of what the population would say if every eligible person was interviewed. We have used a 95% confidence interval. This means that if 100 sample surveys were conducted, for 95 of the samples the true population figure would sit within 3 percentage points of the results in this report for officer/other ranks within Service.

that we assume that within a single weighting class the views of non-respondents do not differ (on average) to the views of respondents.

Analysis of the data is based on all valid responses, excluding not stated responses. 'Don't knows' are also excluded, except where the percentage of 'Don't knows' was greater than five percent in the unweighted data; this will be indicated in the base description. This is consistent with data reporting in the AFCAS and FAMCAS surveys carried out on an annual basis by MOD. This means base sizes will vary and are indicated for each piece of analysis.

A further explanation of statistical reliability is appended in Appendix B of the main report, but it should be remembered at all times that a sample, rather than the entire population of Service Personnel, has taken part in the survey. As a consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences in the figures are significant. All differences reported in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise stated. When a difference is described as statistically significant this is at the 95% level of confidence.