



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**. Previous 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

▲ 196 810	Strength of UK Forces Service Personnel at 1 December 2015 <i>an increase of 760 (0.4 per cent) since 1 December 2014</i>
▼ 141 250	Full-time Trained Strength at 1 December 2015 <i>a decrease of 5 390 (3.7 per cent) since 1 December 2014</i>
▲ - 4.1%	Surplus/Deficit against the planned number of personnel needed (Liability) at 1 December 2015 <i>an increase in the deficit from -3.5 per cent, as at 1 December 2014</i>
▲ 26 560	Strength of the Trained FR20 Volunteer Reserve at 1 December 2015 <i>an increase of 2 670 (11.2 per cent) since 1 December 2014</i>
▲ 13 880	People joined the UK Regular Armed Forces in the past 12 months (1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015) <i>an increase of 1 430 (11.5 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>
▲ 8 640	People joined the FR20 Volunteer Reserve in the past 12 months (1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015) <i>an increase of 2 710 (45.7 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>
▼ 18 090	Regular personnel left the Armed Forces in the past 12 months (1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015) <i>a decrease of 3 370 (15.7 per cent) compared with the previous 12 month period</i>
▼ 3 860	FR20 Volunteer Reserve personnel left the Armed Forces in the past 12 months (1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015) <i>a decrease of 910 (19.1 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-2015>

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)**.

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.

Additional historic statistics have been added this month to tables relating to UK Forces Personnel and the Future Reserves 2020(FR20) Programme Monitoring; these tables now cover the period 1 April 2012 to 1 December 2015. Further 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 11 February 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. Previous 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 targets set out in SDSR 2010 a redundancy programme coupled with adjusted recruiting (intake) and contract extensions was 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 maintain the size of the Regular Armed Forces by not reducing the Army to below 82,000, and by 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](#).

Subsequently 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 for the end of Financial Year 2018 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 196,810, which include:

- All **UK Regular** personnel and all **Gurkha** personnel (which at 1 December 2015 comprised 78.4 per cent of UK Service Personnel);
- **Volunteer Reserve** personnel (which at 1 December 2015 comprised 17.4 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 (comprised 4.1 per cent of UK Service Personnel at 1 December 2015).

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 December 2014 and 1 December 2015, by 0.4 per cent (760 personnel). Over the same period, there has been a decrease in the strength of UK Regular personnel and Gurkhas, partly driven by planned reductions in the numbers of personnel under SDSR 2010, the 3ME and A2020, and there have been increases in the Reserves populations.

Table 1: UK Forces Strength by Service

Strength	1 Dec 14	1 Dec 15	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Naval Service	38 220	38 280	+60	0.2%
Army	120 700	121 490	+780	0.6%
Royal Air Force	37 130	37 040	-90	-0.2%

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

- The Maritime Reserve has increased by 410 (13.5 per cent) since 1 December 2014, the Army Volunteer Reserve has increased by 3,560 (14.3 per cent) since 1 December 2014 and the RAF Volunteer Reserve has increased by 560 (29.1 per cent) since 1 December 2014.

Table 2: Recent Trends in the Strength of the UK Forces

	1 Apr 13	1 Apr 14	1 Apr 15	1 Sep 15	1 Oct 15	1 Nov 15	1 Dec 15
UK Forces Personnel	211 340	198 810	195 690	195 670	196 500	196 670	196 810
UK Regulars	170 710	159 630	153 720	151 700	152 150	151 890	151 700
Gurkhas	3 510	3 050	2 870	2 700	2 690	2 680	2 670
Volunteer Reserve	30 360	28 860	31 260	33 290	33 630	34 030	34 340
Other Personnel	6 760	7 280	7 840	7 980	8 030	8 080	8 090

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

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.

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.

- The Strength of the Full-time Trained UK Armed Forces is 141,250, a decrease of 3.7 per cent (5,390 personnel) since 1 December 2014. The Full-time Trained Strength (FTTS) is 29,740 for the RN/RM, 80,290 for the Army and 31,230 for the RAF. For the first time since December 2014, there has been a very small increase in the FTTS for the Army.
- The FTTS comprises: 138,310 Regular personnel (97.9 per cent); 2,540 Gurkhas (1.8 per cent); and 410 Full Time Reserve Service personnel (0.3 per cent) who can fill Regular posts and are deployable.

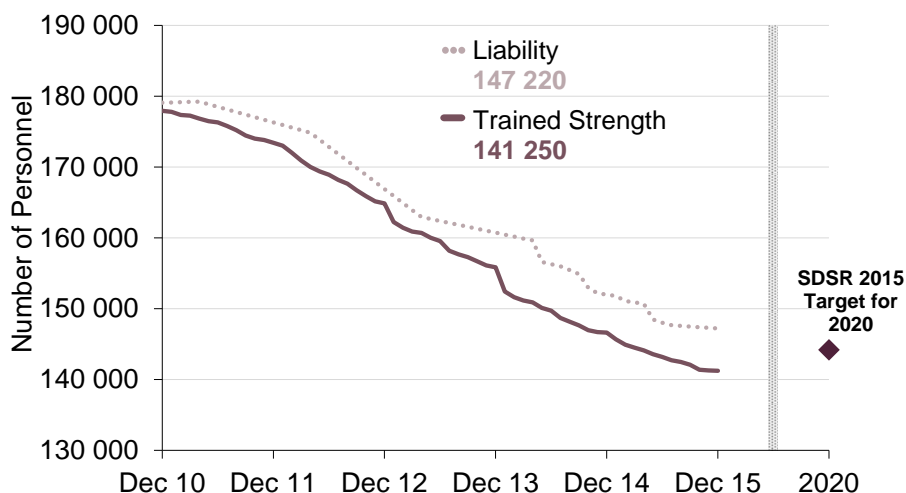
Table 3: Full-Time Trained Strength against the Liability

	1 Apr 13	1 Apr 14	1 Apr 15	1 Sep 15	1 Oct 15	1 Nov 15	1 Dec 15
Trained Strength	160 710	150 890	144 120	142 100	141 390	141 280	141 250
Liability	162 940	159 640	150 700	147 490	147 400	147 310	147 220
Surplus/Deficit	-2 230	-8 750	-6 580	-5 390	-6 000	-6 020	-5 960
% Surplus/Deficit	-1.4	-5.5	-4.4	-3.7	-4.1	-4.1	-4.1

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

- The current deficit against the Liability is 4.1 per cent for the UK Armed Forces. There is a deficit of 1.7 per cent in the Royal Navy/Royal Marines (RN/RM), 4.0 per cent in the Army and 6.4 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 December 2015, the trained and untrained strength of the UK Regular Forces (which excludes Gurkhas) was 151,700, of which 138,310 were trained personnel.

- The largest numbers of trained UK Regular Forces personnel are in the Army followed by the RAF and the RN/RM.
- There are 13,400 untrained personnel in the UK Regular Forces, of which 7,930 are in the Army. The untrained strength reflects the number of personnel who can potentially join the trained strength.

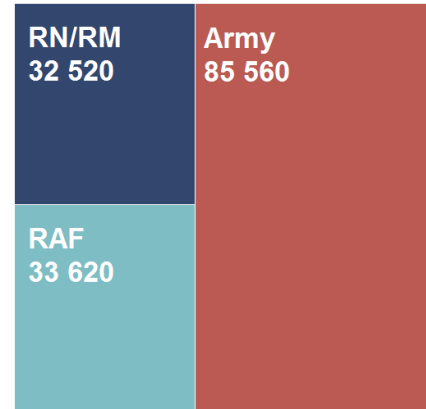


Figure 2: Trained and untrained Strength of the UK Regular Forces, by Service, as at 1 December 2015

Intake and Outflow since November 2009

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 30 November 2015, there was a net outflow of 3,390 personnel from the UK Regular Forces. This difference has reduced compared with the 12 months to 30 November 2014, when 5,040 more personnel left the UK Regular Forces than joined.

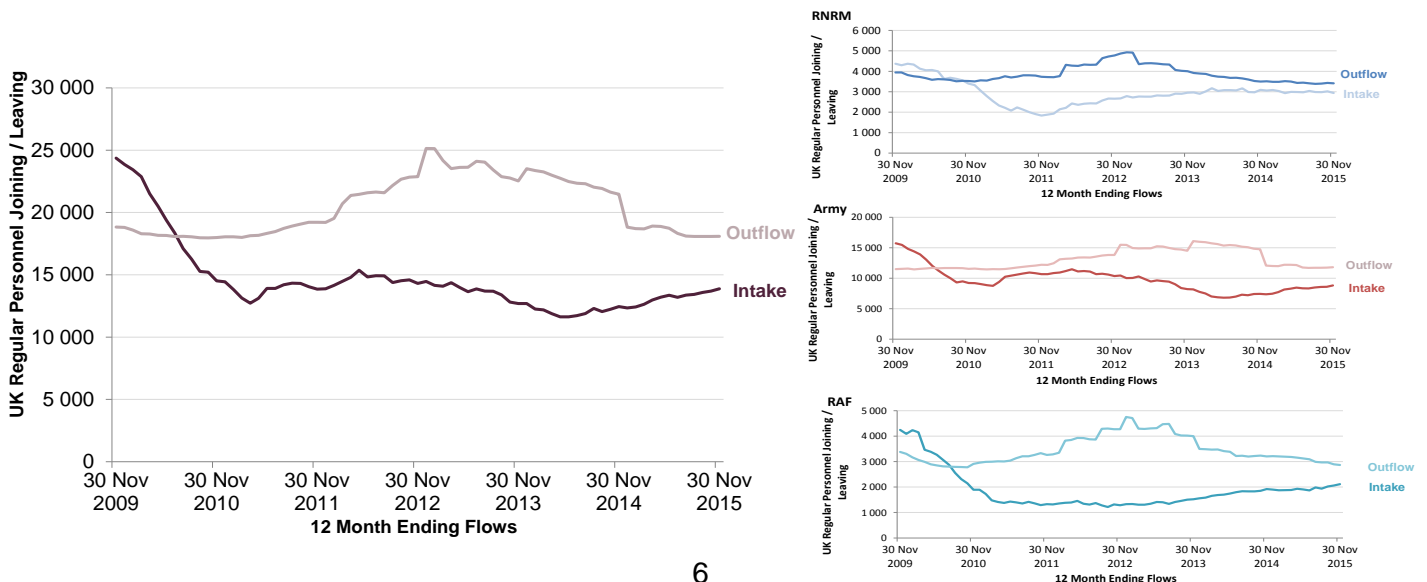
Intake

- Intake into the trained and untrained UK Regular Forces was 13,880 in the 12 months to 30 November 2015. This has increased slightly compared to the 12 months to 31 October 2015 (13,690) and is up from 12,450 in the 12 months to 30 November 2014.
- Of the current intake, 8.2 per cent was into the Officers and 91.8 per cent was into the Other Ranks.
- From the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2015 to 30 November 2015, 9,600 people have joined. This is an increase compared with intake of 8,700 in the same period last year (1 April to 30 November 2014).
- The intake pattern for each Service differs. Compared to the 12 months to 30 November 2014, intake to the RN/RM has decreased by 4.8 per cent, the Army has increased by 18.6 per cent and the RAF has increased by 9.9 per cent.

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 18,090 in the 12 months to 30 November 2015; down from 21,470 in the 12 months to 30 November 2014.
- From the beginning of the financial year on 1 April 2015 to 30 November 2015; 11,640 people have left the UK Regulars. This is a decrease compared with outflow of 12,450 in the same period last year (1 April to 30 November 2014).
- In the 12 months to 30 November 2015, 830 trained and untrained personnel left the UK Regular Forces under Tranche 4 of the Armed Forces Redundancy Programme as part of SDSR 2010. This compares to 3,980 in the 12 months to 30 November 2014, leaving on Tranche 3; the largest of the four Tranches of redundancies. As a result, overall outflow is now lower.

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

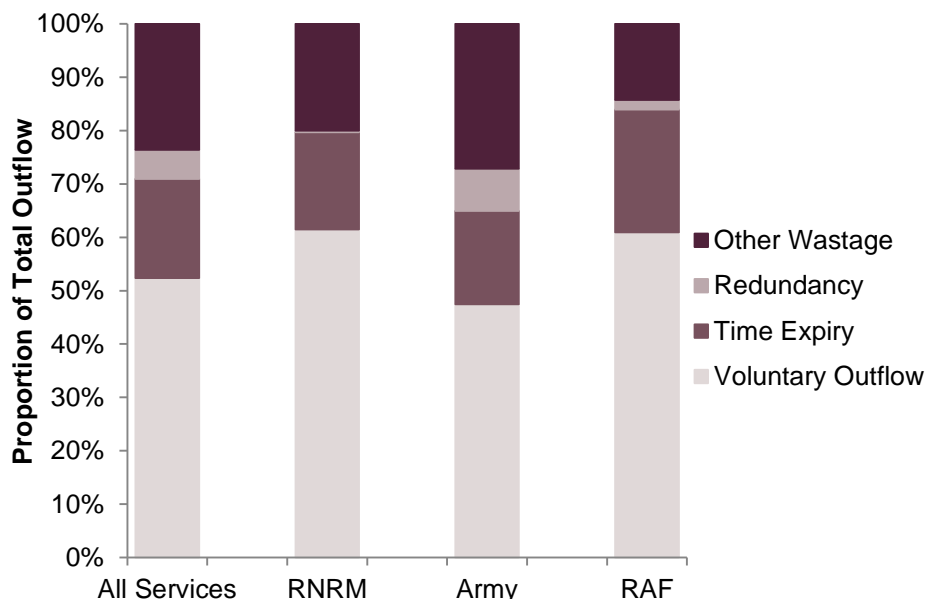
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-redundancy-program-statistics-index>

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 30 November 2015, 7,920 trained personnel left through VO.
- The VO rate is slightly higher amongst Other Ranks (5.8 per cent), compared to Officers (5.1 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 from the trained UK Regular Forces, by exit reason, in the 12 months to 30 November 2015



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.

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 34,000; an increase of 4,770 or 16.3 per cent since 1 December 2014.

The **trained strength** of the FR20 Tri-Service Volunteer Reserve was 26,560; an increase of 2,670 or 11.2 per cent since 1 December 2014.

		1 Dec 14	1 Dec 15	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
Maritime Reserve	Trained	1 940	2 250	+310	+15.9%
	Untrained	1 110	1 210	+100	+ 9.1%
Army Reserve	Trained	20 450	22 530	+2080	+10.2%
	Untrained	3 800	5 520	+1720	+45.2%
RAF Reserves	Trained	1 510	1 780	+280	+18.5%
	Untrained	430	710	+280	+66.4%

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 coming from the Regular Forces, other Reserve populations, or Reserve re-joiners.

In the 12 months between 1 December 2014 and 30 November 2015 **8,640 people** joined the Tri-Service FR20 Volunteer Reserve (3,060 trained and 5,570 untrained); a **45.7 per cent increase** on the same 12 month period last year.

Intake	1 Dec 13	1 Dec 14	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
	30 Nov 14	30 Nov 15		
Maritime Reserve	910	1 060	+140	+15.6%
Army Reserve	4 400	6 600	+2200	+50.1%
RAF Reserves	610	980	+360	+58.8%

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 December 2014 and 30 November 2015 **3,860 people** left the Tri-Service FR20 Volunteer Reserve (2,510 trained and 1,350 untrained); a **19.1 per cent decrease** compared to the same 12 month period last 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.

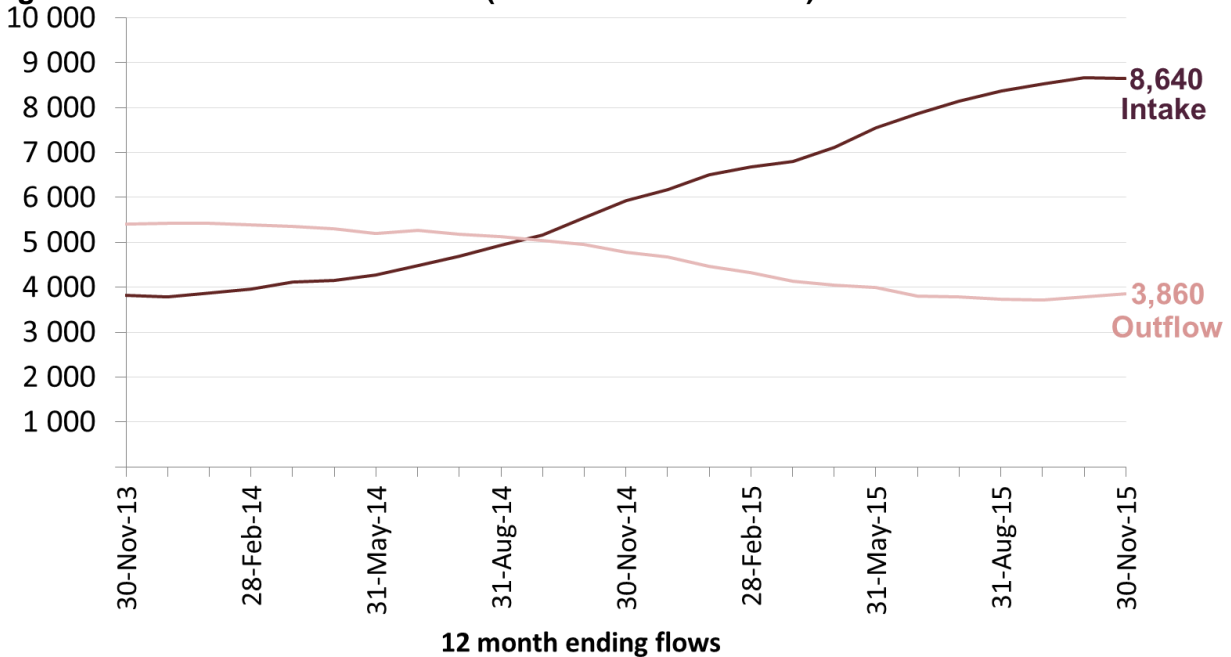
Outflow	1 Dec 13	1 Dec 14	Increase/ Decrease	% Increase/ Decrease
	30 Nov 14	30 Nov 15		
Maritime Reserve	490	650	+150	+31.2%
Army Reserve	4 010	2 800	-1200	-30.0%
RAF Reserves	280	410	+140	+48.6%

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme monitoring

Intake and Outflow over time

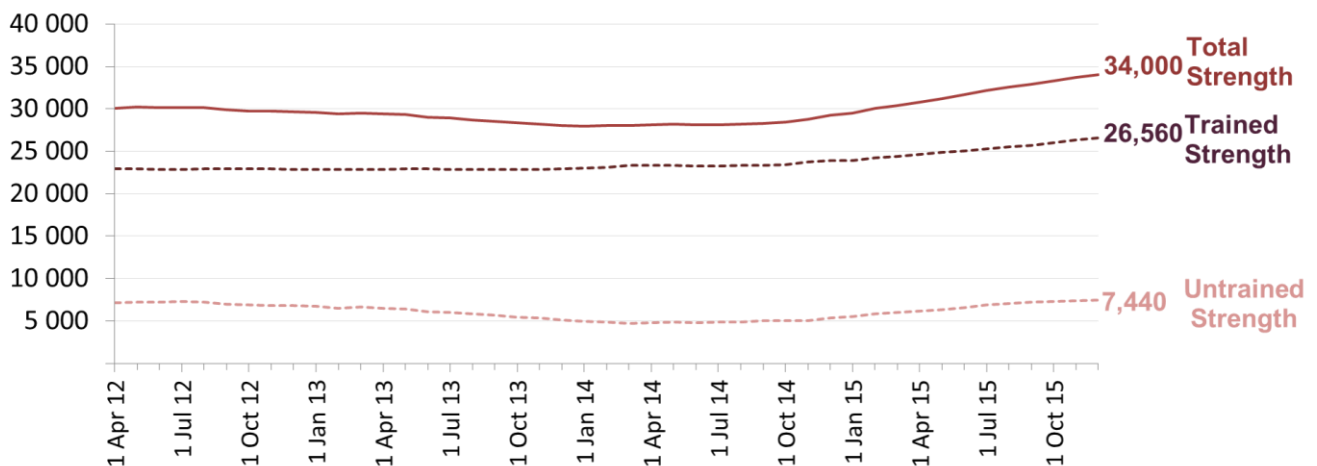
Figure 5: FR20 Volunteer Reserves (Trained and Untrained) Intake and Outflow



By studying intake (number of personnel joining) and outflow (number of personnel leaving) over time the graph 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 higher than intake; this situation results in a decrease in total strength (as illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6). During 2014 a crossover occurred whereby intake became higher than outflow; once this happens the total strengths start to increase (again illustrated in Figure 5 and 6). The FR20 Programme has sought to increase recruitment level and to improve the proposition for the Reserves. Hence there is now a widening gap between intake and outflow, which if sustained, will result in continuing growth in the strength numbers; the overarching aim of the Programme.

Total Strength over time

Figure 6: FR20 Volunteer Reserve Trained and Untrained Strength



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

Revisions have been made to the apportioning of the Officer and Other Ranks liability for the RN/RM and the RAF in Table 3a of the supporting Excel Tables; this has impacted the All Services Officers Liability, the All Services Other Ranks Liability and the associated surplus / deficit calculations. The combined Officer and Other Rank liabilities remain unchanged. These revisions have been made to the RN / RM figures from 1 August 2015 to 1 November 2015 and to the RAF figures from 1 May 2015 to 1 November 2015. The largest change has been a difference of 40 and the smallest change has been difference of 10.

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

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

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Naval Service Manpower	023 9254 7426	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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