



Ministry
of Defence

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9 February 2017

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

Thank you for your email of 31 January 2017 in which you requested the following information:

1. *'What is the criteria for extending a 12 year term of engagement to a 24 year term of engagement?'*
2. *'Do you have to reach a specific rank in order to stay past 12 years' service?'*
3. *'If a soldier was on a 22 year term of engagement, would they have to leave after 12 years if they did not reach a specific rank?'*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held. The information you requested is enclosed.

Under Section 16 of Act (Advice and Assistance) you will find it useful to know that each capbadge uses slightly different criteria for its terms of engagement. If you were to ask about a particular capbadge we would be able to provide you with a more specific answer. Therefore the information provided is generic to the Army and applied to those personnel governed by the Versatile Engagement (VEng) policy. This is the engagement that most Regular soldiers will enter service on. The VEng consists of three stages; the Short, Full and Long career. Soldiers will usually enlist on a VEng (Short) which enables them to complete up to 12 years of service. During that time, they may be considered for extension (or conversion) to a VEng (Full) and serve a total of 24 years. VEng (Long) is a total of 30 years' service.

Normally conversions from VEng (Short) to VEng (Full) will be offered once an individual has reached an agreed substantive rank. This would be after they have been selected for promotion to that rank, completed Command, Leadership and Management Part 1 programme (which is mandatory for those selected for promotion to the rank of Non-Commissioned Officer) and achieved any other capbadge promotion requirements. Some capbadges will require individuals to complete specific trade training before they are offered a conversion. This is known as the Automatic Selections Process.

An alternative is the Conditional Selection Process which converts individuals who are unlikely to reach the relevant substantive rank and training within the required timeframe. The number of vacancies available under this process will alter and it is likely to be competitive as a boarding process is used in most cases to identify who will be granted an offer of conversion from VEng (Short) to VEng (Full). Both these selection processes offer exactly the same engagement to VEng (Full).

Personnel who are not given the automatic “offer” because they have not reached the relevant substantive rank and who are unsuccessful in the Conditional Selection process will be required to leave after 12 years’ service.

VEng replaced the 22 year engagement types. Therefore a soldier who enlisted directly onto a 22 year engagement is not governed by VEng policy so would not have to leave after 12 years if they did not reach a specific rank.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <https://ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

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Army Secretariat