



Ministry  
of Defence

# UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020



● Annual

Published: 21 May 2020

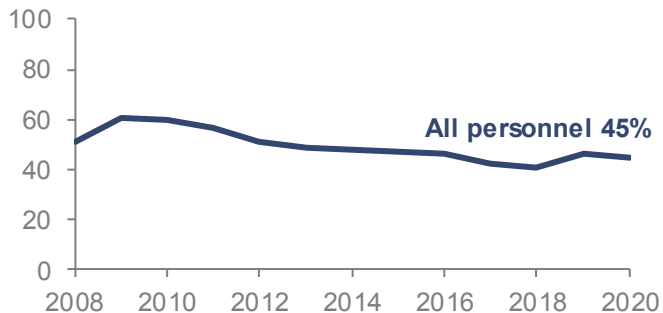
United Kingdom

This statistical release provides results from the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2020, along with results from previous years.

Statistics from AFCAS are used by both internal Ministry of Defence (MOD) teams and external bodies to inform the development of policy and measure the impact of decisions affecting personnel, including major programmes such as the Armed Forces Covenant.

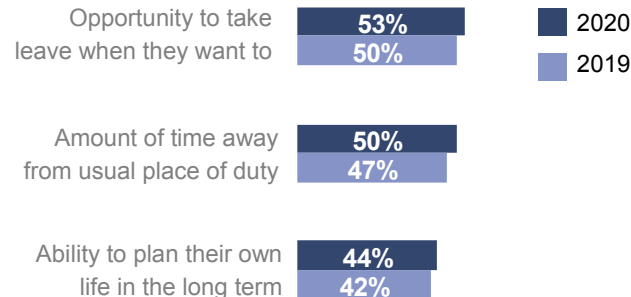
## Satisfaction with Service life remains unchanged this year at 45%

Although unchanged since 2019, satisfaction with Service life has increased four percentage points since 2018. Yet, it is still below peak satisfaction reported in 2009 (61%).



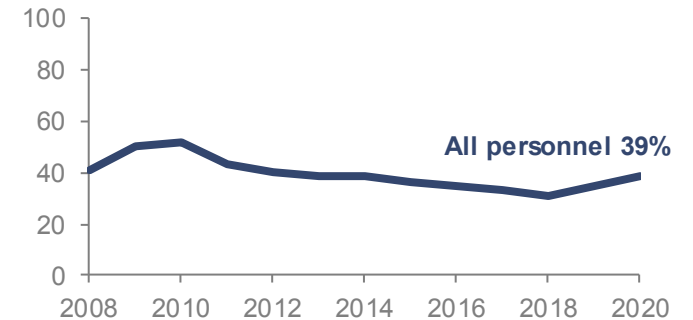
## A third of personnel are now satisfied with the opportunity to work flexibly

This is an increase of four percentage points since 2019, up from 29% to 33%. Also this year, more personnel are satisfied with the following aspects of work/life balance compared to 2019:



## Satisfaction with pay has increased for a second year in a row, to 39%

Nearly four in ten personnel are satisfied with their pay, an increase of three percentage points since 2019. However, this is still well below peak satisfaction reported in 2010 (52%).



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Background Quality Report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

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 [Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Publications@mod.gov.uk)

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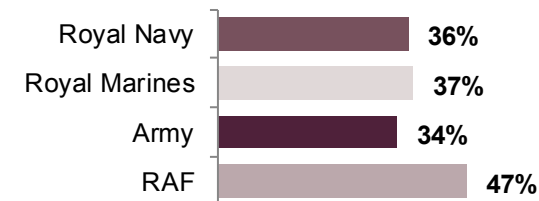
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## About these statistics

The 2020 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) was distributed to a sample of 27,265 trained UK Regular Armed Forces personnel between September 2019 and February 2020 using both online and paper questionnaires. Participants were chosen using (disproportionate) stratified simple random sampling, designed to ensure sufficient responses from each Service and from each rank group within each Service, whilst minimising respondent burden.

### Response Rates:

Overall, 10,433 responses were received, representing a response rate of 38%.



Reference tables and questionnaires for AFCAS 2020

are published as separate documents and can be found on the AFCAS webpage - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

Please see the Background Quality Report for full details of survey methodology, analysis, and data quality considerations.

*Note: Throughout the report, where statistical significance tests are applied, they are carried out at the 99% confidence level. This is at a fairly stringent level and means that there should be less than a 1% (1 in 100) chance that differences observed in AFCAS results are not representative of the Armed Forces as a whole. This reduces the likelihood of wrongly concluding that there has been an actual change based on the survey results, which only cover a sample of the Armed Forces.*

### A National Statistics publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2013, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

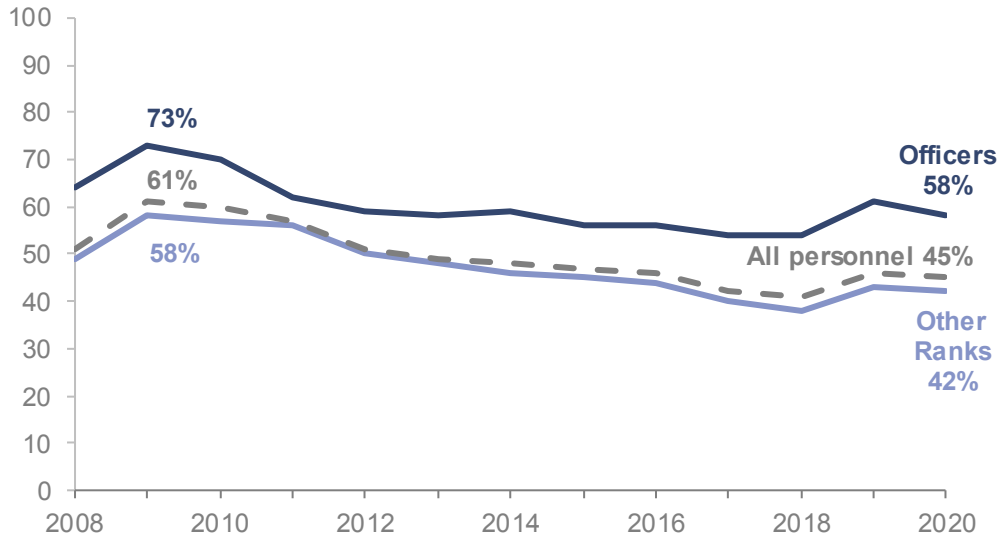
Further details about how this report has been developed since its confirmation as National Statistics, such as changes to the report format, can be found in the Background Quality Report.

# Section 1 - Morale, Commitment and Engagement

Section 1 covers how personnel perceive their self, Unit and Service morale, and satisfaction with topics including aspects of their job, commitment and engagement.

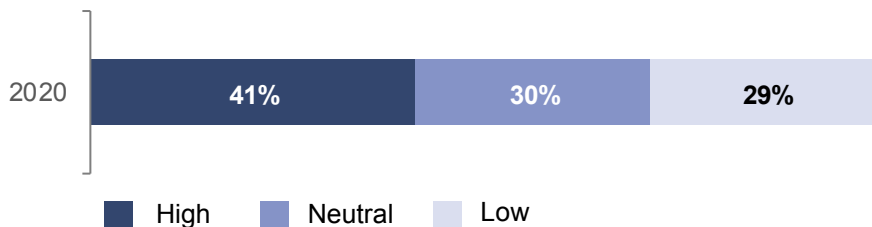
## Satisfaction with Service life in general remains well below the peak levels seen in 2009

% satisfied with Service life in general



## The proportion of Service personnel reporting high self morale remains unchanged since last year, at four in ten (41%)

Views on self morale



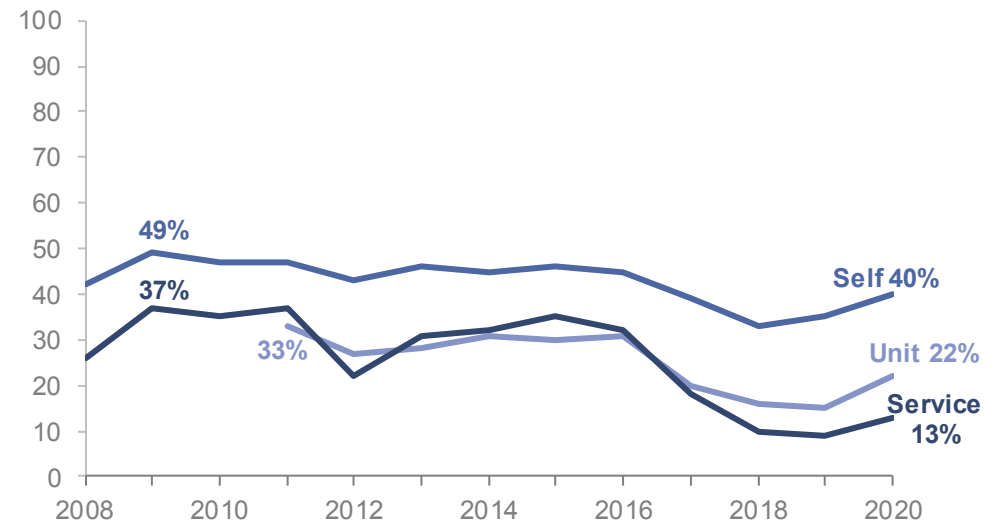
Officers are more likely to report high self morale (50%) compared to Other Ranks (39%).

## Levels of high Unit and Service morale remain stable following increases between 2018 and 2019

Nearly a quarter (24%) of personnel report high Unit morale and 11% report high Service morale. Whilst these proportions are considerably lower than high self morale (41%), AFCAS consistently shows year-on-year that self morale is rated higher than Unit or Service morale.

## More Royal Marines are reporting high self, Unit and Service morale in 2020 following historically low levels in recent years

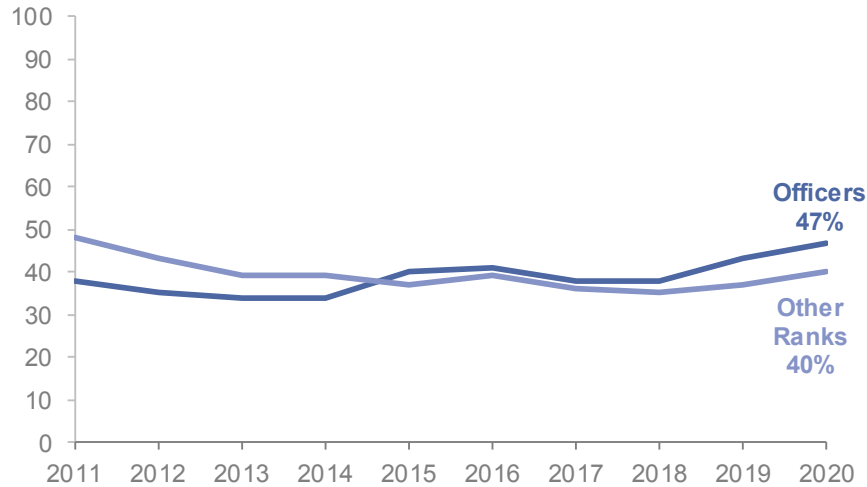
% RM personnel reporting high...morale



Although levels of high morale amongst the Royal Marines are no longer at their lowest, they are still below the peak levels reported in 2009 (for self and Service), and in 2011 when the question about Unit morale was first introduced.

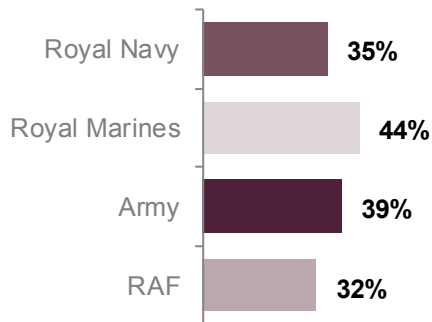
**The proportion of Officers who agree that their Service motivates them to help achieve its objectives is at the highest level since this question was first asked in 2011**

% agree that their Service motivates them to help achieve its objectives



**Royal Marines are now the most likely to feel valued compared to the other Services, following an increase of seven percentage points since last year to 44%**

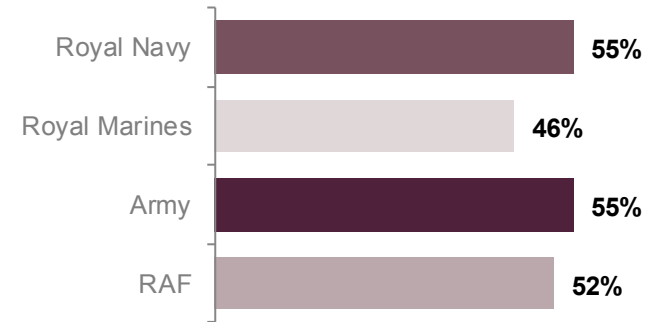
% agree that they feel valued by their Service



Royal Marines have also seen a similar increase in the proportion who would recommend joining the Service to others (up from 40% in 2019 to 47%). This is a return to the level recorded in 2017.

**However, Royal Marines remain the least satisfied with several aspects of their job compared to the other Services**

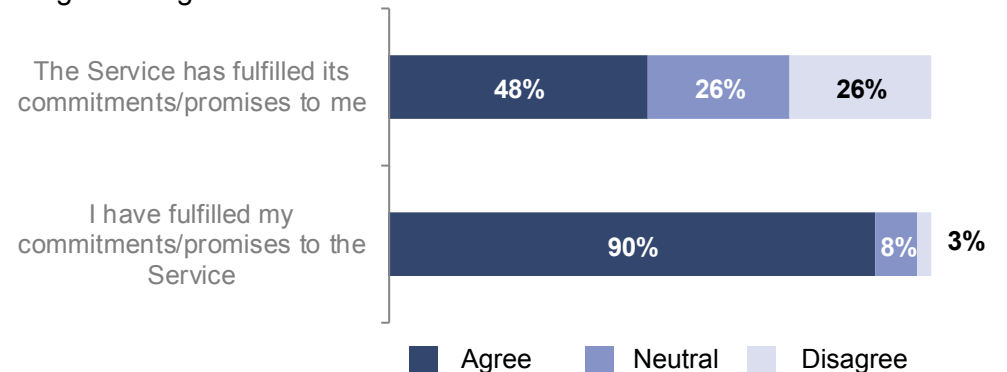
% satisfied with the challenge in their job



Royal Marines are the least satisfied with their job in general (52%), the amount of variety (44%) and the sense of achievement they get from their work (43%).

**A quarter (26%) of personnel do not believe their Service has fulfilled its commitments to them, unchanged since 2018**

% agree/disagree



Less than half (48%) of personnel believe their Service has fulfilled its commitments to them, well below the proportion who agree that they have fulfilled their commitments/promises to their Service (90%).

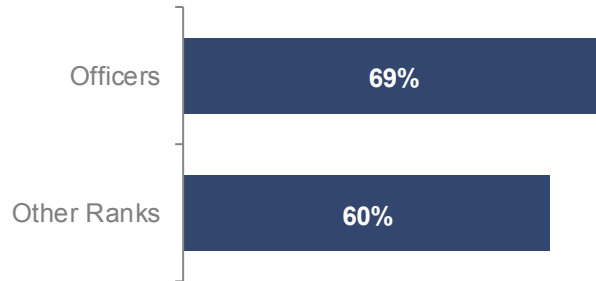
Three-quarters of personnel feel proud to be in their Service.

## The Engagement Index for Service personnel is 61%

This is unchanged since last year, which is the case for both Officers and Other Ranks and for all Services.

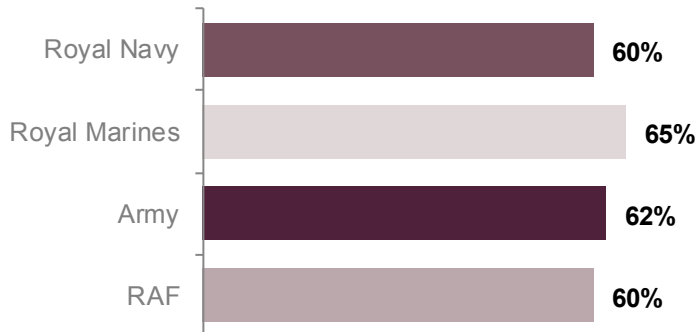
### Officers continue to be more engaged than Other Ranks in 2020

Engagement Index



### Royal Marines have the highest Engagement Index compared to the other Services, despite being the least satisfied with several aspects of their job

Engagement Index



### Civilian personnel comparison

In the latest Civil Service People Survey (2019), MOD Civilians had an Engagement Index of 63%, up from 61% in 2018.

### Engagement Index

The Engagement Index is calculated using the same method as that used in the Civil Service People Survey<sup>1</sup>, using the following questions:

*How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following?*

*I am proud to be in the [Service].*

*I would recommend joining the [Service] to others..*

*I feel a strong personal attachment to the [Service].*

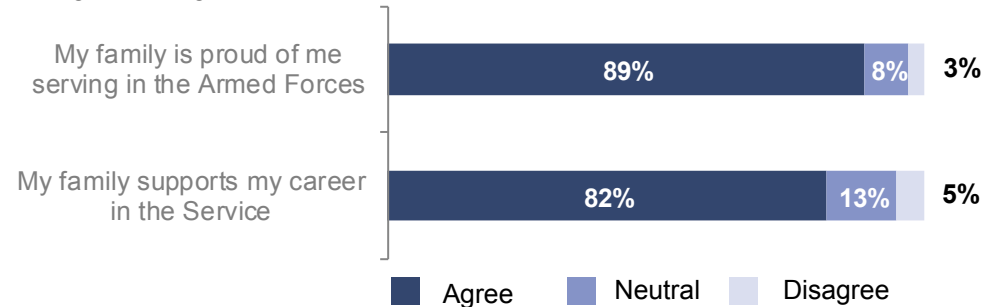
*The [Service] inspires me to do the best in my job.*

*The [Service] motivates me to help it achieve its objectives.*

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/867302/Civil-Service-People-Survey-2019-Technical-Guide.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/867302/Civil-Service-People-Survey-2019-Technical-Guide.pdf)

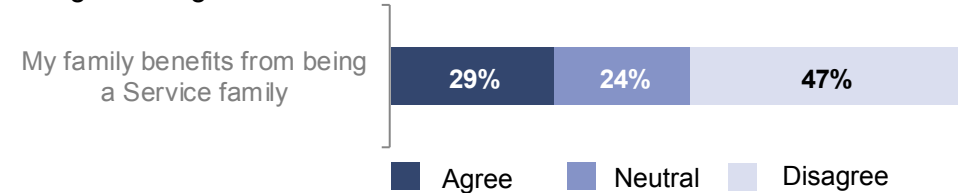
### Whilst the majority of personnel report that their family are proud, and supportive of their Armed Forces career...

% agree/disagree



### ...less than a third agree that their family benefits from being a Service family

% agree/disagree



A third of Army personnel agree that their family benefits from being a Service family, more than any of the other Services.

## Section 2 - Work and Line Management

Section 2 focuses on the work of Service personnel, their equipment, line management and teamwork.

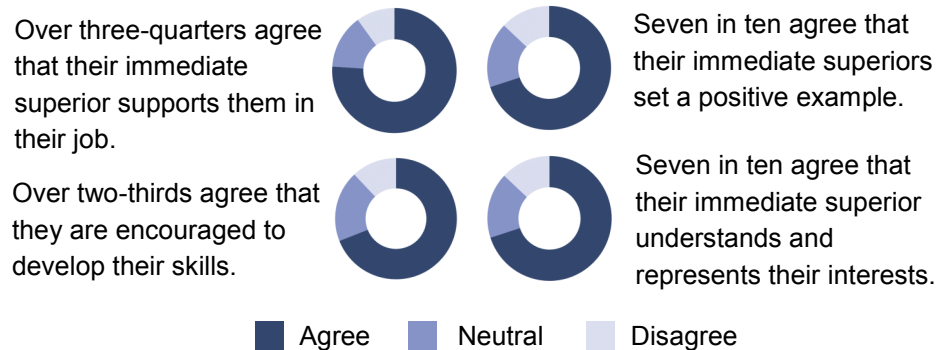
### Attitudes towards work remain largely unchanged since 2019

**61%** agree that they are given sufficient authority to make decisions.

**58%** agree that they are encouraged to find new ways of working.

**40%** agree that people do not automatically look for someone to blame when things go wrong.

### Opinions about immediate superiors remain largely positive



Royal Navy personnel are most likely to agree that their immediate superiors support them in their job and set a positive example.

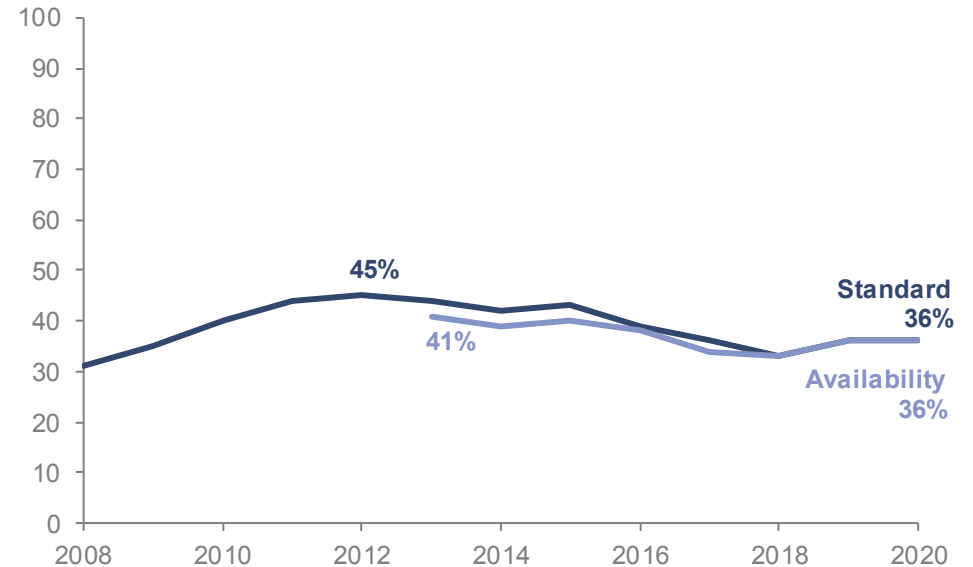
### Attitudes towards team members are also highly positive

**81%** agree that they have confidence in themselves as a team.

**77%** agree that the people in their team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in the job.

### Overall satisfaction with the standard and availability of major equipment has increased since 2018, but remains below peak satisfaction reported in previous years

% satisfied with the standard and availability of major equipment



### Satisfaction with personal equipment remains unchanged since last year

**57%** are satisfied with the standard of personal equipment.

**49%** are satisfied with the availability of personal equipment.

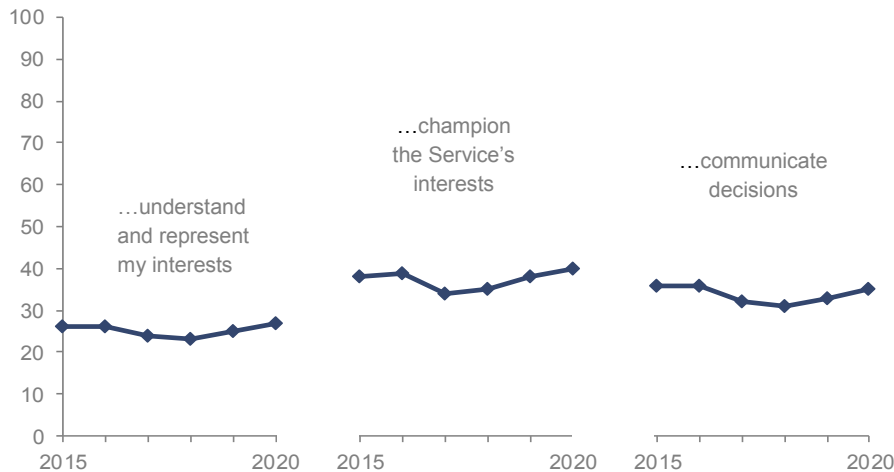
Royal Marines remain the least satisfied with the availability of major and personal equipment, and the standard of major equipment.

## Section 3 - Leadership and Managing Change

Section 3 focuses on the views of personnel about their senior leaders, and about how change is managed.

### Attitudes towards senior leaders have improved since 2018

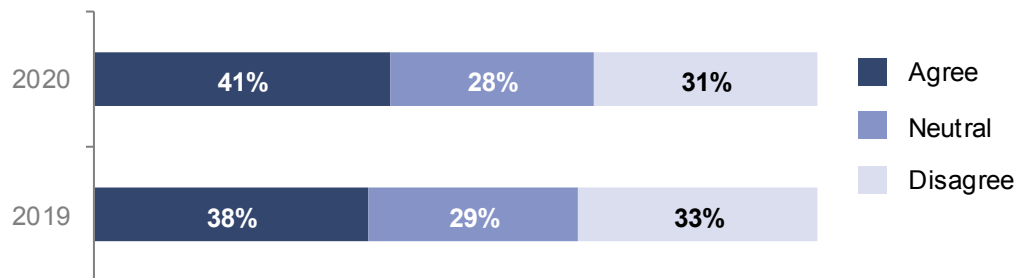
% agree that their senior leaders...



Officers are more positive about some aspects of senior leadership than Other Ranks. For example, Officers are more likely to have confidence in their senior leaders (45%) compared to a third (33%) of Other Ranks.

### Four in ten (41%) personnel agree that senior leaders are keen to listen to their feedback, an increase of three percentage points since last year

% agree that senior leaders are keen to listen to their feedback



### However, many personnel still have negative perceptions about their senior leaders

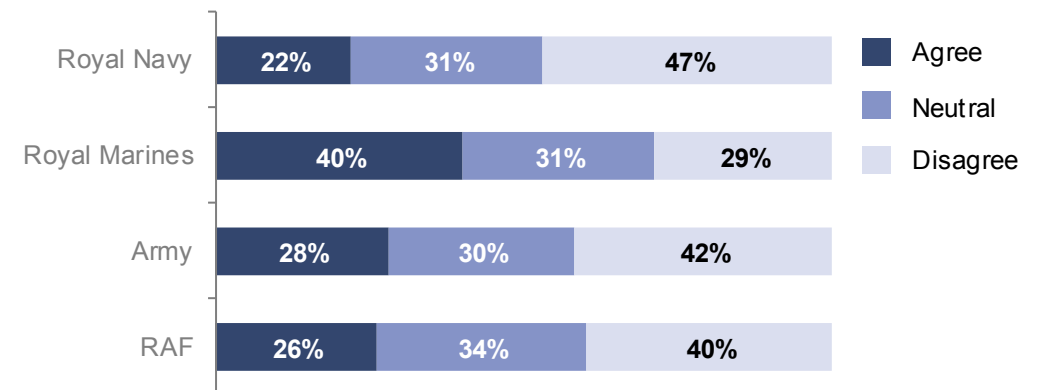


### Attitudes towards change remain similar to last year

Officers are more satisfied with how well change is managed within their immediate team compared to Other Ranks, whilst Other Ranks are more satisfied with how change is managed in their Service compared to Officers.

### Royal Marines remain the most positive about how well change is managed in their Service

% agree/disagree that change is managed well in their Service



## Section 4 - Working with Others

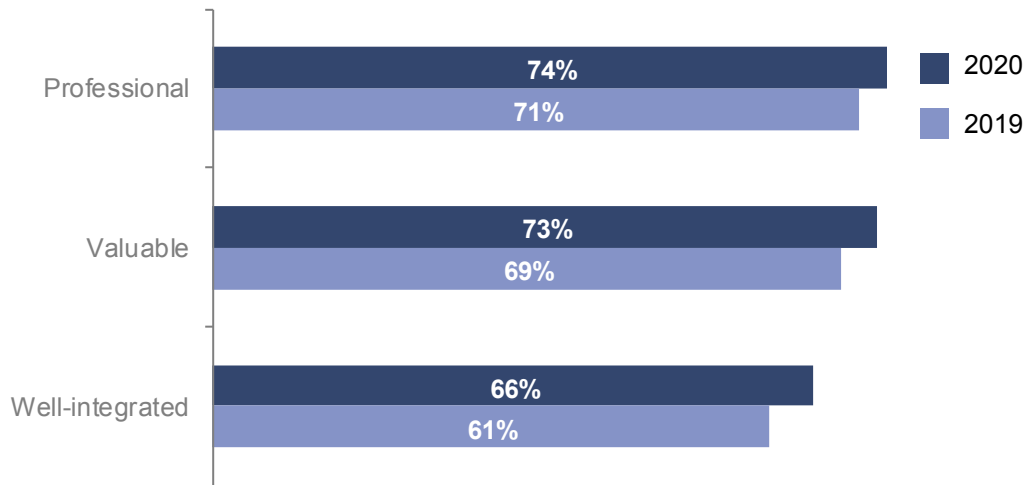
Section 4 focuses on working relationships with Reserves, MOD civil servants and contractors. The Defence Reform Review of 2011 called for the closer integration of Regulars, Reserves, civil servants and contractors to ensure that Defence is supported by a sustainable, effective force<sup>1</sup>.

### Half of personnel (51%) have had working contact with Armed Forces Reserves

RAF personnel remain the most likely to have worked with the Reserves (63%), whilst the Royal Marines are the least likely (39%).

### Opinions about working with Armed Forces Reserves are more positive than they were in 2019

% rating Armed Forces Reserves as<sup>2</sup>...



This is primarily driven by increases in the proportions of Army personnel since 2019 rating Reserves as professional (from 60% to 65%), valuable (from 63% to 69%), and well-integrated (from 51% to 59%).

RAF personnel remain the most likely to rate the Reserves as professional (87%), valuable (81%) and well-integrated (79%).

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/210470/Cm8655-web\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210470/Cm8655-web_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Based on those who have had working contact with Armed Forces Reserves (51% in 2020).

### Six in ten personnel have had working contact with MOD civil servants, unchanged since 2017

Of those who have had working contact with MOD civil servants:

**80%** rate the contribution of MOD civil servants as valuable.

**77%** rate MOD civil servants as professional.

**71%** rate MOD civil servants as well-integrated.   
 ↑ Three percentage points from 2019

RAF personnel are the most likely to have worked with MOD civil servants (75%). Royal Marines are the least likely to rate MOD civil servants as valuable (71%), professional (70%) and well-integrated (60%).

### Over half (54%) of personnel have had working contact with MOD contractors

RAF personnel are the most likely to have had working contact with MOD contractors (68%).

Since 2019, there have been increases in the proportions of personnel who rate MOD contractors as professional (from 61% to 65%), valuable (from 64% to 68%), and well-integrated (from 49% to 55%). These proportions are now back in line with levels reported in 2016.

As with MOD civil servants, Royal Marines are also least likely to rate MOD contractors as professional, valuable and well-integrated.

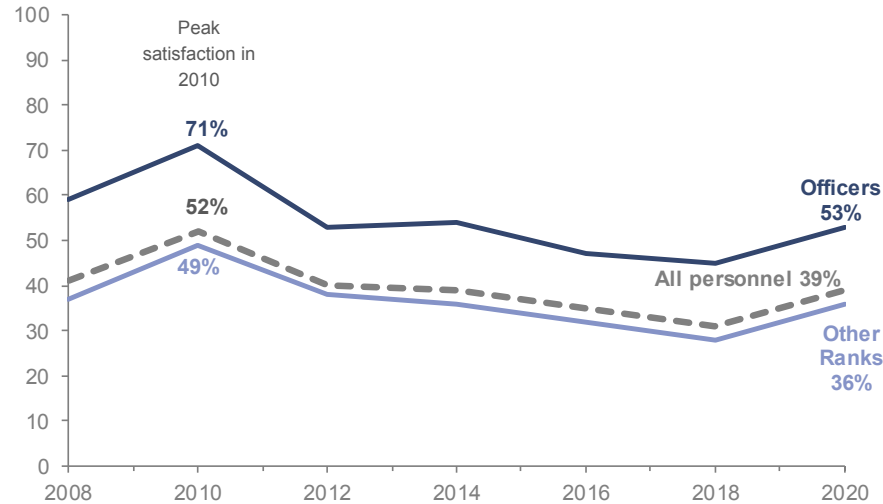


## Section 5 - Allowances, Pay and JPA

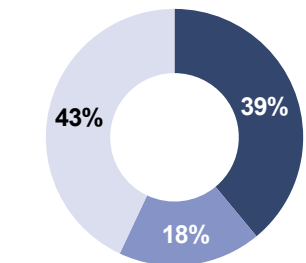
Section 5 covers the attitudes of Service personnel towards their pay, pension and allowances, as well as satisfaction with access to the Joint Personnel Administration System (JPA).

### More personnel are satisfied with their rate of basic pay in 2020, but levels remain well below those reported in 2010

% satisfied with basic rate of pay



### Four in ten (39%) personnel now agree that the pay and benefits they receive are fair for the work they do



The proportion of personnel who agree that the pay and benefits they receive are fair is at the highest level since this question was first asked in 2015.

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

In October 2018, the MOD announced a pay rise for all personnel following a recommendation by the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) which may have influenced the views of personnel regarding their pay and benefits. Details on Armed Forces pay and allowances<sup>1</sup> are available in the AFPRB's 48<sup>th</sup> report<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-pay-review-body-forty-eighth-report-2019>

### A third of personnel agree that the X-Factor is enough compensation, an increase of three percentage points since 2019

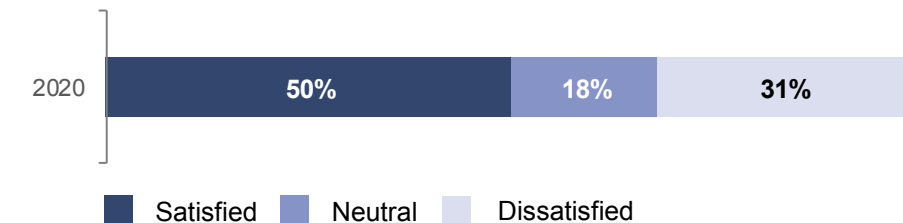
Despite this increase, just under half (48%) of personnel disagree that the X-Factor is enough compensation for Service lifestyle.

More Officers agree (44%) compared to Other Ranks (30%), whilst Royal Marine Other Ranks are least likely to agree (21%).

**X-Factor:** Additional payment to Armed Forces personnel to compensate for differences in lifestyle, working conditions and expectations compared to civilian equivalents.

### Of those in receipt of Recruitment and Retention Payment (RRP) (12%), half are satisfied with RRP

% satisfied with RRP



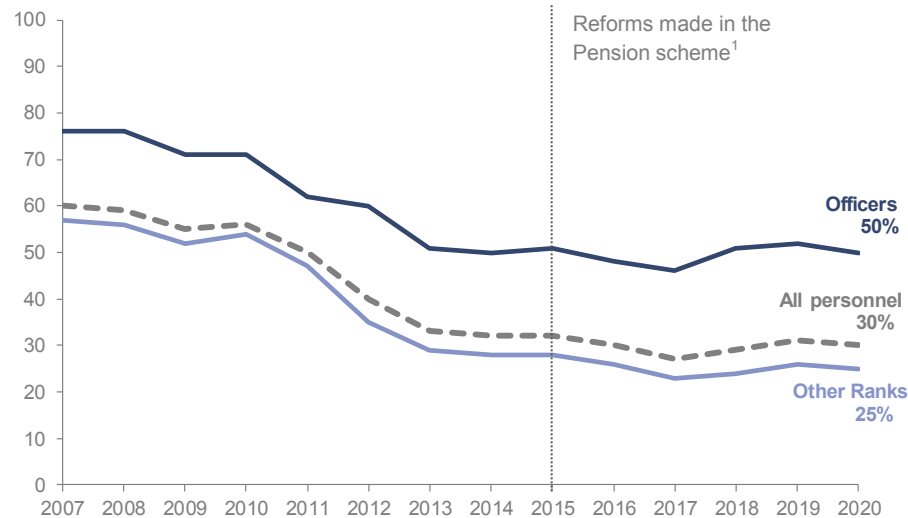
Officers (61%) are more satisfied with their RRP than Other Ranks (47%).

Royal Navy personnel are considerably more likely to receive RRP (32%) compared to the other Services (between 6% and 12%).

**Recruitment and Retention Payments (RRPs)** are additions to salary, where there is a need to support recruitment and retention of personnel working in niche capability areas. There are greater numbers of deep specialists within the Naval Service who are more likely to be in receipt of a RRP versus the RAF and Army.

**Three in ten personnel are satisfied with their pension benefits, unchanged since 2018 but still well below peak satisfaction in 2007**

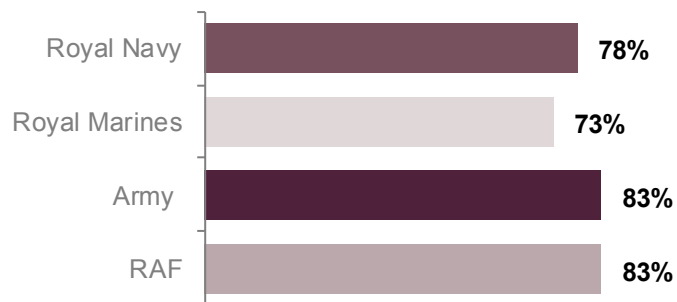
% satisfied with their pension benefits



<sup>1</sup>In April 2015, the MOD introduced the new Armed Forces Pension Scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pensions-and-compensation-for-veterans>

**The majority (82%) of personnel are satisfied with their ability to access JPA; Royal Marines are the least satisfied**

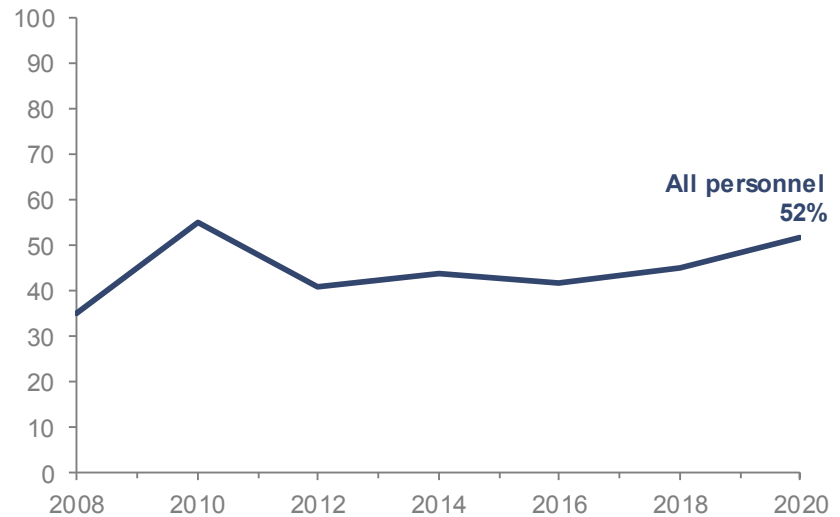
% satisfied with ability to access JPA



Royal Marines remain the least satisfied with their access to JPA despite an increase in satisfaction of four percentage points since 2019.

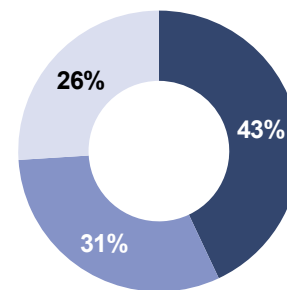
**Over half (52%) of personnel are satisfied with their allowances, an increase of six percentage points since 2019**

% satisfied with allowances



Officers and Other Ranks have similar levels of satisfaction with their allowances except for Royal Marines where Officers are more satisfied than Other Ranks.

**Over four in ten (43%) personnel are satisfied with information about pay and allowances**



■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Dissatisfied

RAF personnel are more satisfied (43%) compared to last year (39%); the other Services remain unchanged.

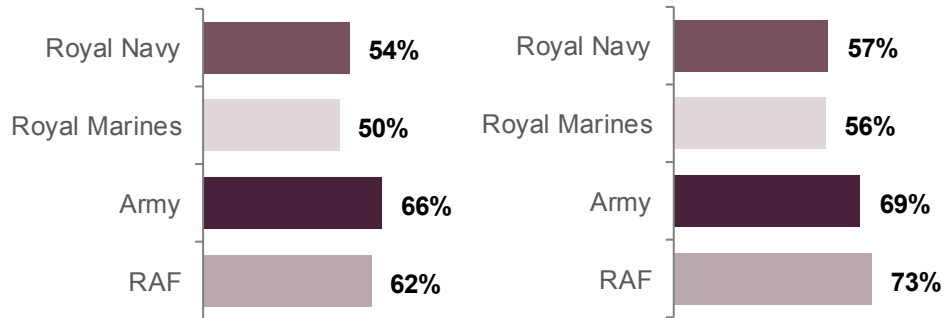
Royal Marine Other Ranks are least likely to be satisfied with information about pay and allowances (32%).

## Section 6 - Deployment

Section 6 covers satisfaction with various aspects of operational deployments. The section focuses only on those who have been deployed at any time since 1 January 2017.

### Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel are the least satisfied with aspects of pre-deployment in 2020

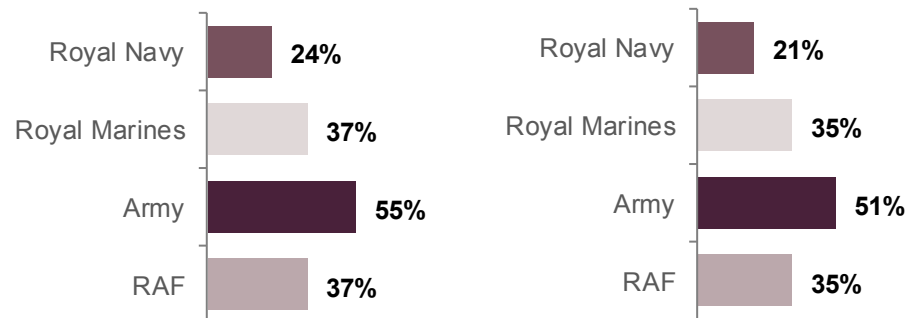
% satisfied with pre-operational training    % satisfied with deployment notice



Satisfaction with pre-operational training amongst Royal Navy personnel has fallen by five percentage points this year, returning to the level previously reported in 2018.

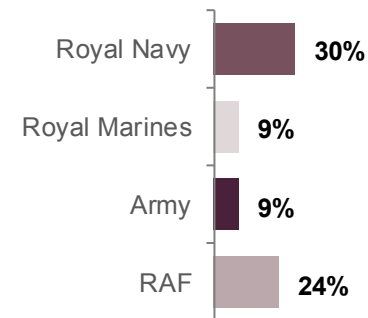
### Army personnel are the most satisfied with some aspects of post-deployment in 2020; Royal Navy personnel are the least satisfied

% satisfied with decompression and post operational tour support    % satisfied with Post Operational Stress Management



### Less than a fifth (18%) of personnel report that the frequency of their deployment is too often; Royal Navy personnel are most likely to report that they deploy too often

% reporting the frequency of deployments is too often



Officers are more likely to report that the frequency of their deployment is about right compared to Other Ranks (68% and 53% respectively).

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of RAF personnel report that the frequency of their deployments is about right, more than any of the other Services.

### A third (32%) of Royal Navy personnel report that operational deployments are too long, a decrease of eleven percentage points since 2017

Despite this decrease, Royal Navy personnel are still far more likely to report that the length of their deployments is too long in comparison to the other Services (Royal Marines: 10%; Army: 11%; RAF: 20%).

In general, Royal Navy personnel are deployed for longer periods of time than personnel from the other Services.

## Section 7 - Training, Development and Career

Section 7 looks at satisfaction with various aspects of career, training and development, including questions about the promotion system, career management and opportunities for development.

### Overall, four in ten personnel are satisfied with the way their career is managed (41%); a third are dissatisfied

Royal Marines are more satisfied this year with how their career is managed, up from 40% in 2019 to 44%, a return to the level reported in 2016. They are also more satisfied with the career management service provided to them (up six percentage points since 2019 to 47%).

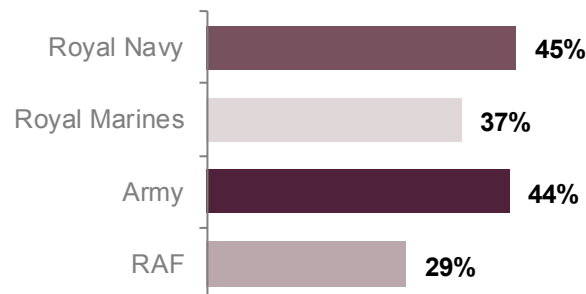
### Opinions on the knowledge, skills and experience required to undertake their jobs remain highly positive

**86%** agree that they have the knowledge, skills and experience to do their job.

**72%** agree that their knowledge, skills and experience are being used.

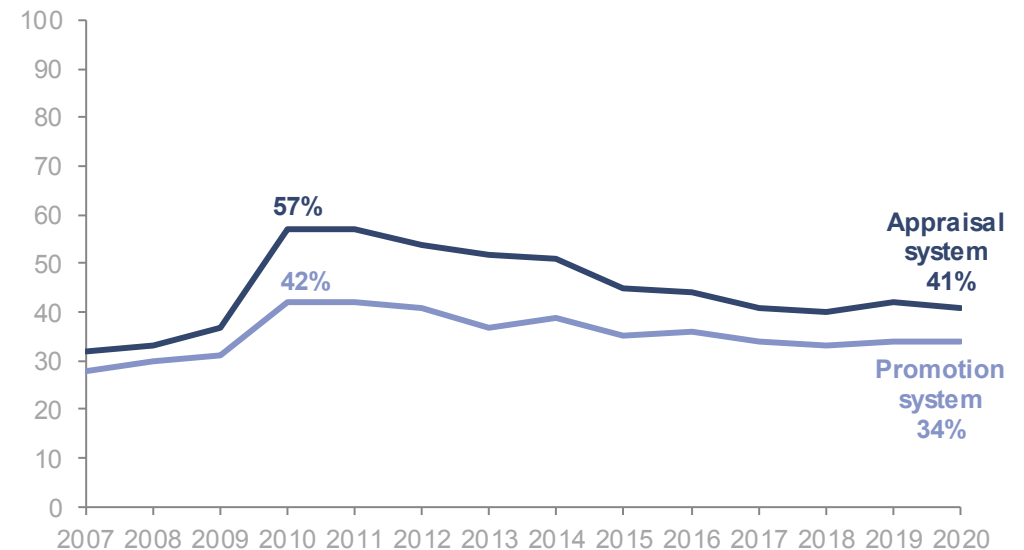
### RAF personnel are considerably less satisfied with their opportunities for promotion than the other Services

% satisfied with opportunities for promotion



### Satisfaction with the fairness of promotion and appraisal systems has remained steady since 2017

% satisfied with the...



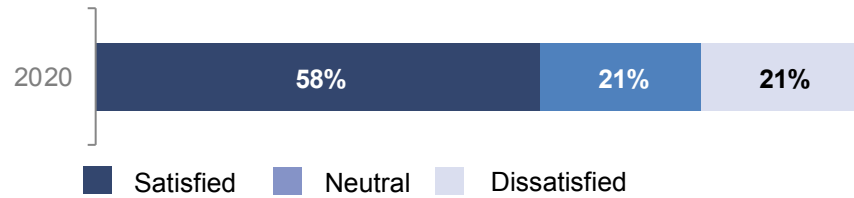
The proportions of personnel satisfied with the promotion and appraisal systems have fallen since peak satisfaction in 2010 (by nine and 15 percentage points respectively). However, current levels of satisfaction remain higher than those reported in 2007.

Officers continue to be more satisfied with the fairness of the appraisal and promotion systems than Other Ranks.

RAF personnel are considerably less satisfied with the fairness of the appraisal (29%) and promotion (22%) systems, when compared to the other Services.

**Nearly six in ten personnel are satisfied with their opportunities for personal and professional development**

% satisfied with personal development



These figures are unchanged since last year following a slight dip in satisfaction between 2017 and 2018. Around a fifth of personnel are dissatisfied with the opportunities for personal and professional development.

**Royal Marines are less satisfied with the opportunities for professional development than the other Services**

% satisfied with the opportunities for professional development

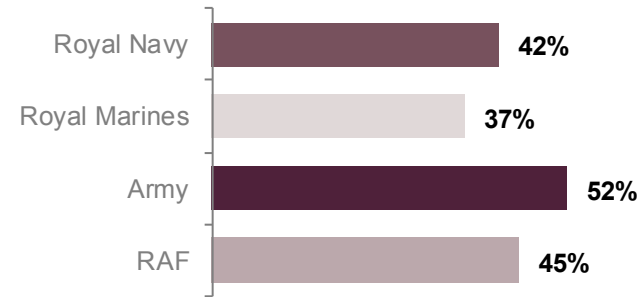


Although the Royal Marines are still the least satisfied, their satisfaction with professional (and also personal) development has increased this year, returning to levels previously reported in 2016.

Officers (71%) are more likely to be satisfied than Other Ranks (57%) with opportunities for professional development.

**Army personnel are the most satisfied with the opportunities to gain civilian accreditation for their Service training; Royal Marines are the least satisfied**

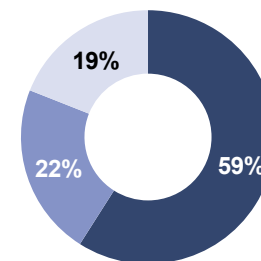
% satisfied with the opportunities to gain civilian accreditation



**Over half (56%) of personnel are satisfied with the timing of training they have received in order to carry out their job roles**

Levels of satisfaction have been fairly steady over time, with a slight dip in 2018 (53%), but remain slightly below peak satisfaction recorded in 2012 when this question was first asked (59%).

**Six in ten (59%) personnel are satisfied with the extent to which they are doing the job for which they were trained**



This is unchanged since 2012.

Officers (63%) are more satisfied with the extent to which they are doing the job for which they were trained than Other Ranks (58%).

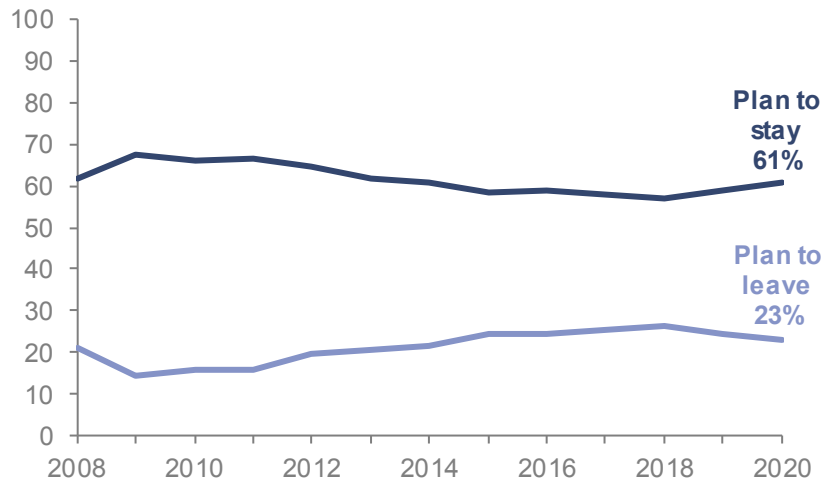
■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Dissatisfied

## Section 8 - Future Plans

Section 8 focuses on personnel's plans to leave the Services, whether they would join the Volunteer Reserves, and what influences their intention to stay or leave.

### Six in ten (61%) personnel plan to stay in the Services, an increase of two percentage points since 2019

% plan to stay/leave



This includes those who plan to stay as long as they can, or until the end of their current engagement or commission. The change in 2020 is largely driven by Other Ranks who are now more likely to report that they plan to stay in their Service than Officers.

Under a quarter (23%) of personnel say they intend to leave before the end of their current engagement or commission, which includes 6% intending to leave as soon as they can and 4% who have already put in their notice to leave.

#### Data Quality Note

"Don't know" responses have been excluded from the charts.

### Four in ten personnel have very or quite actively searched for a job outside the Service in the last 12 months, remaining fairly steady over time

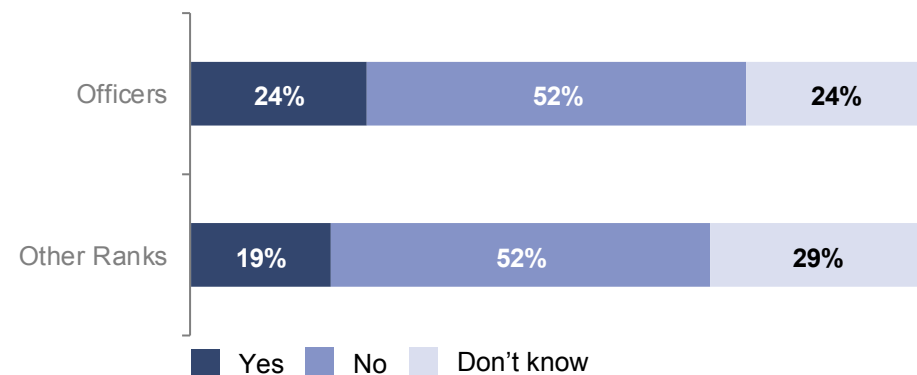
Under the Future Force 2020 programme, the MOD has introduced financial incentives for Regular personnel to join the Reserve Forces on completion of their Regular Service. AFCAS includes questions on whether personnel would consider joining the Reserves on a full-time or part-time basis.

### Two in ten (20%) would consider joining the Volunteer Reserves full-time and just over three in ten (31%) part-time

These proportions remain at the highest levels reported since personnel were first asked about joining the Volunteer Reserves in 2012.

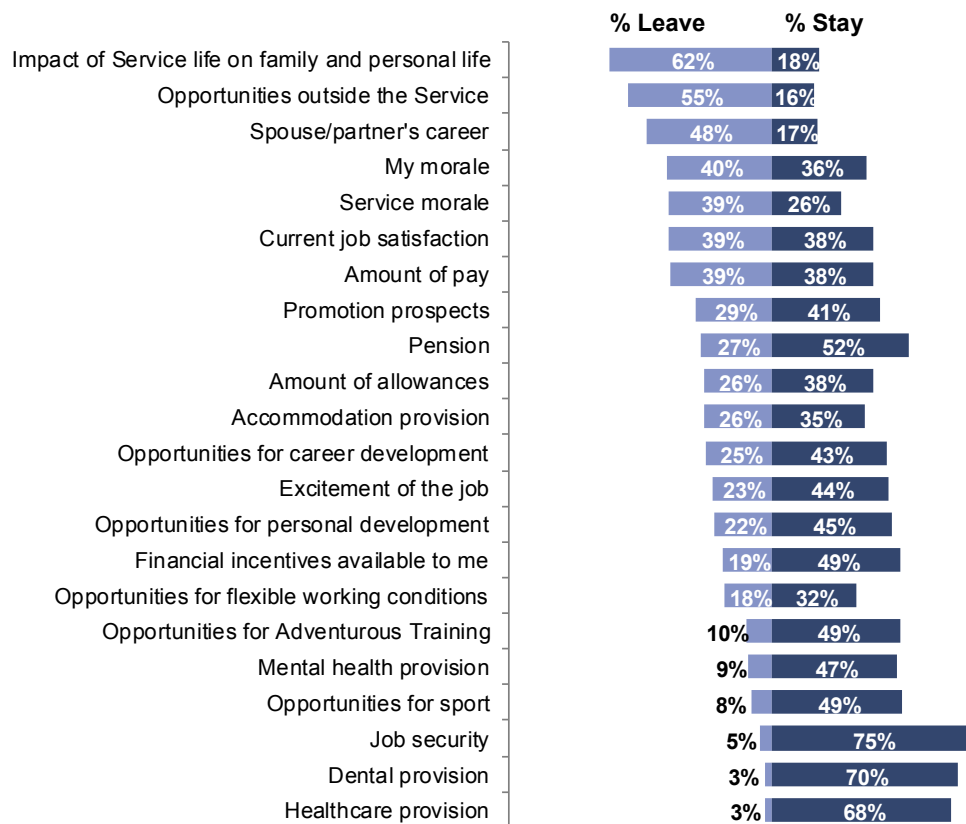
### Officers continue to be more likely to consider joining the Volunteer Reserves full-time than Other Ranks in 2020

% yes/no to joining the Volunteer Reserves full-time



Officers are also more likely to consider joining part-time (46%) than Other Ranks (28%).

## Impact of Service life on family/personal life remains the top factor influencing intentions to leave



### Data Quality Note

“Has no effect on intention to stay or leave” responses have been excluded from the chart.

## Job security remains the top factor increasing intentions to stay

Three-quarters of personnel cite job security as influencing their intention to stay, unchanged since 2019. This is followed by dental provision and healthcare provision.

## More personnel are citing the following factors as influencing their intentions to stay this year compared to 2019

**52%** Pension  
 ↑ Three percentage points from 2019

**38%** Amount of allowances  
 ↑ Three percentage points from 2019

**38%** Amount of pay  
 ↑ Three percentage points from 2019

These changes are somewhat reflective of the increases in satisfaction with basic rate of pay and allowances reported this year (see Section 5).

## The top reasons for leaving the Services differ slightly for Officers and Other Ranks; the impact on family and personal life remains the most cited reason

Of those who have put their notice in to leave (4%), the most cited reasons for leaving are:

All personnel	%	Officers	%	Other Ranks	%
Impact of Service life on family and personal life	63	Impact of Service life on family and personal life	72	Impact of Service life on family and personal life	60
Current job satisfaction	42	Opportunities outside the Service	38	Current job satisfaction	48
Opportunities outside the Service	39	My morale	32	Opportunities outside the Service	40
My morale	33	Current job satisfaction	28	My morale	33
Amount of pay	18	Opportunities for career development	23	Amount of pay	20

## Section 9 - Work/Life Balance

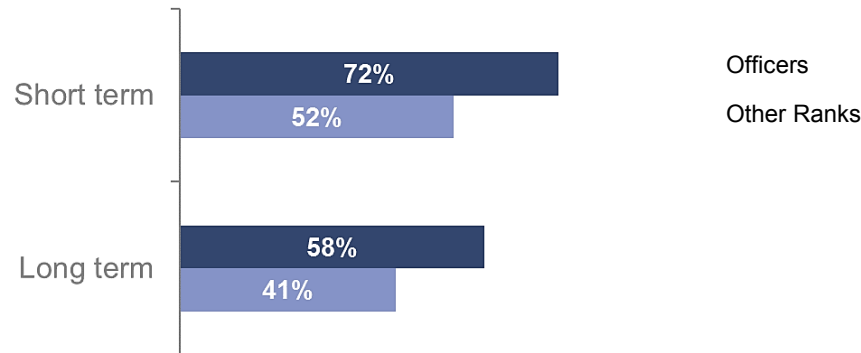
Section 9 looks at the work/life balance of personnel, their satisfaction with their workload, whether or not they are satisfied with the amount of leave allowance they have, and the reasons for not being able to take leave.

### Less than half (45%) of personnel agree that they are able to maintain a balance between their personal and working life

RAF personnel are the most satisfied (52%) with their ability to maintain a work/life balance.

### Officers are more satisfied with their ability to plan their lives in both the short and long term compared to Other Ranks

% satisfied with the ability to plan their lives in the short/long term



Overall, the proportion of personnel who are satisfied with their ability to plan their lives in the long term has increased from 42% to 44% in the last year. This is the highest proportion reported since this question was first asked in 2007.

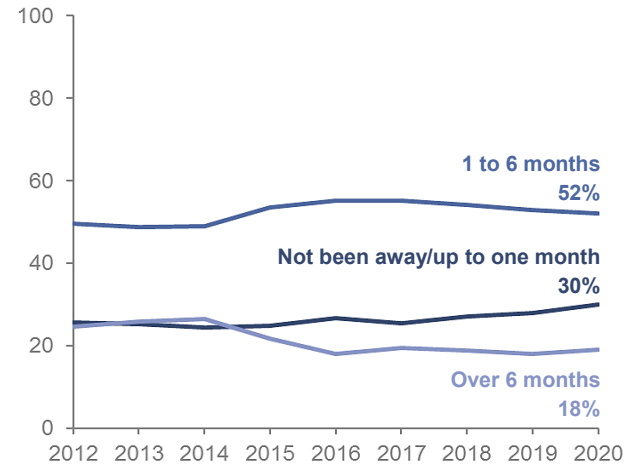
### Royal Marines<sup>1</sup> are the least satisfied with the effect Service life has on their partner's career

Only 16% of Royal Marines are satisfied with the effect on their partner's career, compared to over 20% in the other Services.

<sup>1</sup> Based on RM personnel who are married/in a long term relationship (72% in 2020).

### The amount of time personnel spent away from their families and friends in the last year remains largely unchanged since 2019

% time spent away from families in the last year for Service reasons



The proportion of personnel stating they spent over six months apart fell between 2014 and 2016 but has remained stable since.

Over a third of personnel (35%) are satisfied with the amount of time they spend away from family and friends.

### A third (33%) of personnel are satisfied with the opportunity to work flexibly in 2020

This proportion has increased by four percentage points since last year, largely driven by Army and RAF personnel.

Officers are considerably more satisfied with the opportunity to work flexibly (50%) compared to Other Ranks (29%).

The MOD modernised its flexible working offer on 1st April 2019 by introducing Flexible Service, which allows Regular personnel of the Armed Forces to ask to temporarily work part time and/or restrict their separation from home base.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flexible-engagements-system-what-you-need-to-know>



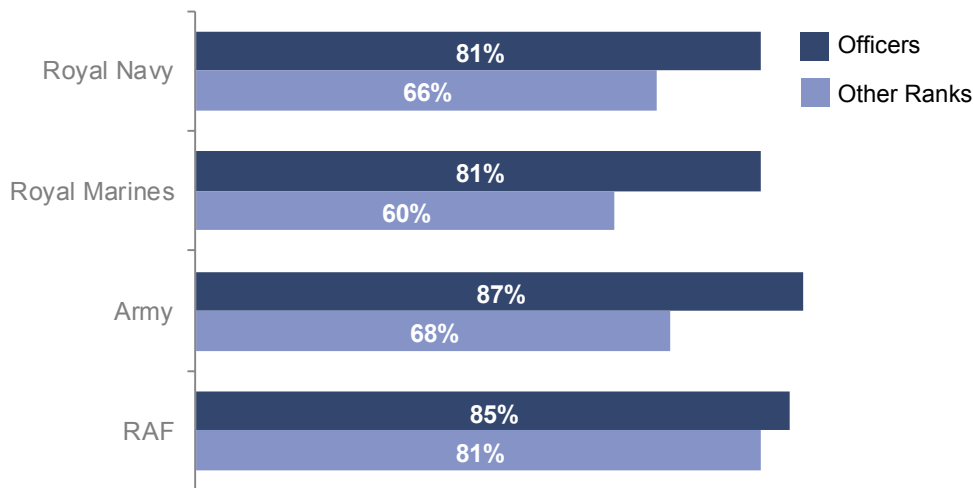
**Just under half (49%) of personnel rate their workload as about right, unchanged since last year**

A slightly lower proportion (45%) perceive their workload to be too high, with a further 6% rating their workload as too low.

Other Ranks are more likely to rate their workload as about right (50%) than Officers (46%).

**Officers are more satisfied with their overall leave allowance than Other Ranks**

% satisfied with overall leave allowance



The exception to this is RAF personnel, with similar proportions of Officers and Other Ranks being satisfied with their leave allowance. Overall, RAF personnel are the most satisfied with their overall leave allowance.

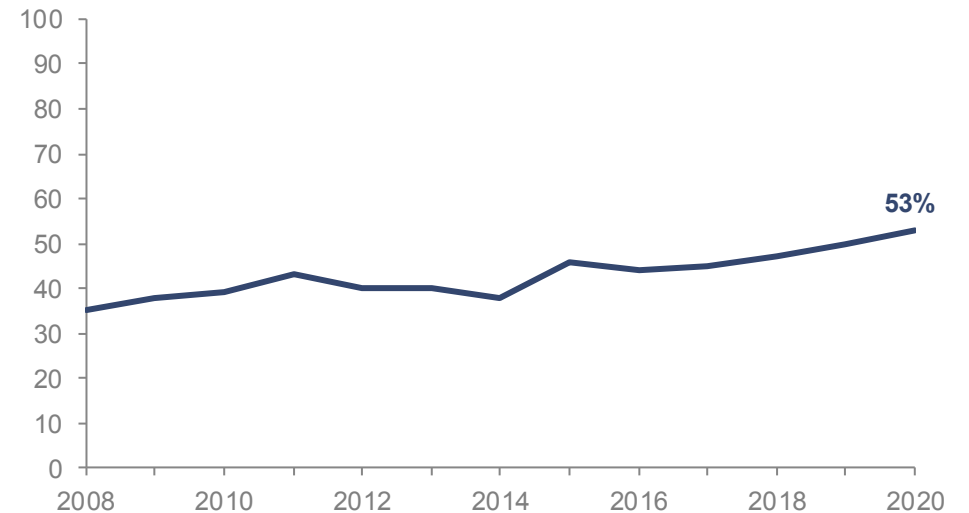
**‘Workload’ continues to be the main reason for personnel not using all their leave (48%)<sup>1</sup>**

This year has seen an increase in the proportion of personnel citing ‘the desire to carry days over to the next leave year’ as the reason they did not take all their annual leave allowance (from 31% to 34%).

<sup>1</sup>Based on those who did not use all of their annual leave allowance (63% in 2020).

**Satisfaction with the opportunity to take leave when personnel want to is at its highest recorded level following an increase of four percentage points since 2019 to 53%**

% satisfied with opportunities to take leave when they want to

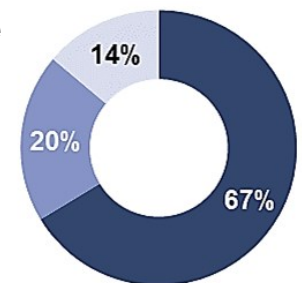


This has largely been driven by increases amongst Royal Marines and Army personnel.

RAF personnel are the most satisfied with the opportunity to take leave when they want to (66%), whilst the Royal Marines are the least satisfied (35%).

**Two thirds of personnel are satisfied with the amount of leave they were able to take in the last 12 months, unchanged since 2018**

RAF personnel are the most satisfied with the amount of leave they were able to take (74%).



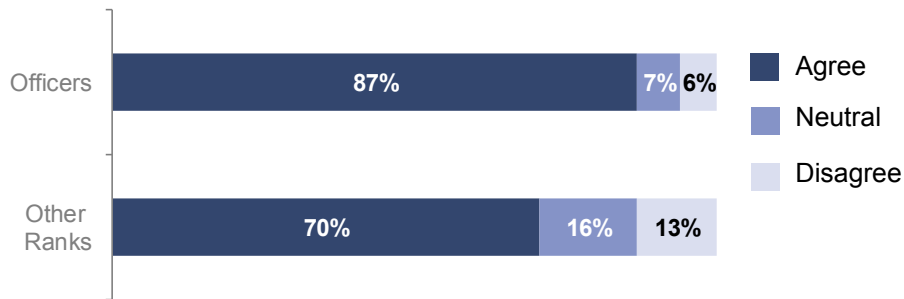
■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Dissatisfied

## Section 10 - Fairness at Work

Section 10 covers the views of personnel on fair treatment in their Service, whether they feel they have been subjected to bullying, discrimination or harassment, and their knowledge and experience of Service complaints.

### More than seven in ten (73%) personnel agree that they are treated fairly at work

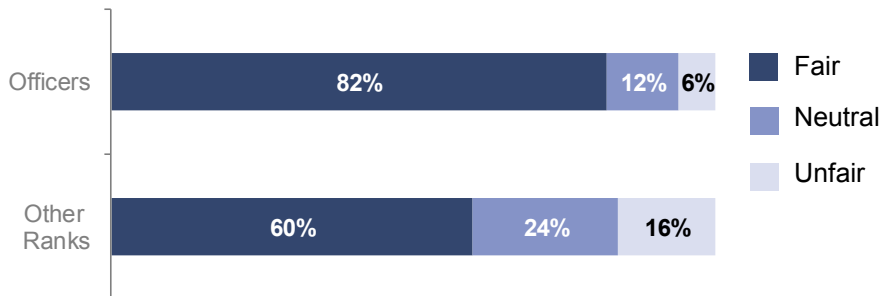
% agree/disagree they are treated fairly at work



Officers are more likely to agree that they are treated fairly at work than Other Ranks, particularly so for Royal Marine and Army Officers.

### Officers are more likely than Other Ranks to feel that the discipline system is fair

Views on the discipline system



Royal Marine Officers are most likely to feel that the discipline system is fair (93%) compared to Officers in the other Services.

Army personnel are the least likely to feel that the discipline system is fair (60%) compared to the other Services.

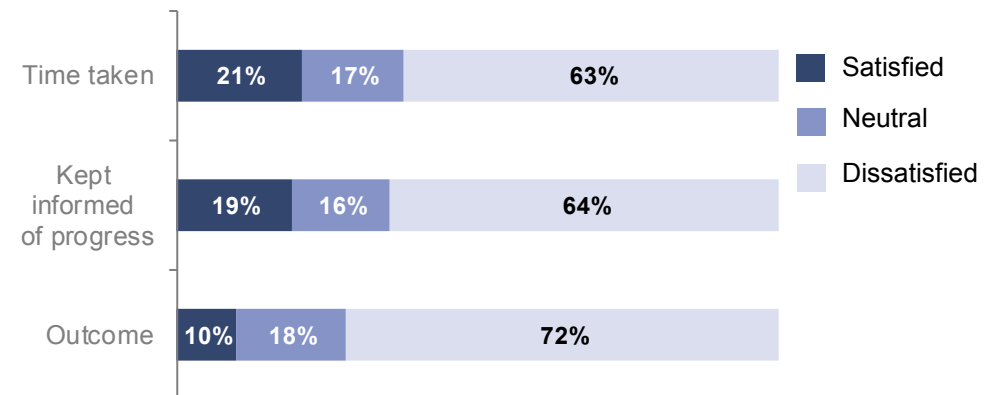
### Over one in ten (12%) personnel report that they have been subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months, unchanged since this question was first asked in 2015

#### The majority of personnel who have been subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment do not make a complaint (90%)

The main reasons why personnel do **not** make a formal written complaint are: not believing anything would be done if a complaint was made (60%) and belief that it might adversely affect their career (52%).

#### Of those who made a formal complaint<sup>1</sup>, over half are dissatisfied with the time taken, being kept informed of progress and the outcome of the complaint process

Views on aspects of the formal written complaint process<sup>1</sup>



90% of Officers and 65% of Other Ranks are aware to some extent how the Service Complaints Ombudsman can help them with a bullying, discrimination and/or harassment complaint.

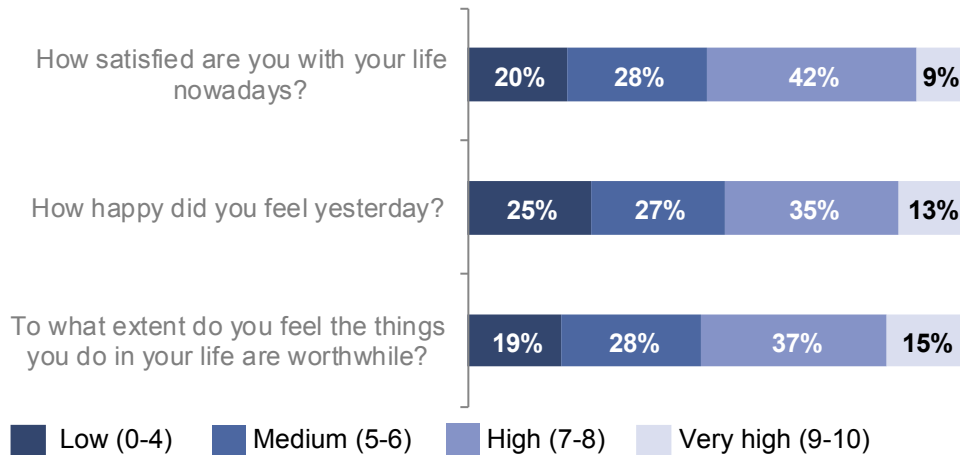
# Section 11 - Health, Fitness and Welfare

Section 11 covers satisfaction with various aspects of health, fitness, well-being and the provision of welfare services. This includes medical treatment, fitness facilities and welfare support for personnel and their families.

## Measuring well-being

The Office for National Statistics collects data on well-being for the general population in their Annual Population Survey. Average scores are released in their Measuring National Well-being report<sup>1</sup>.

### Well-being measures of Service personnel:



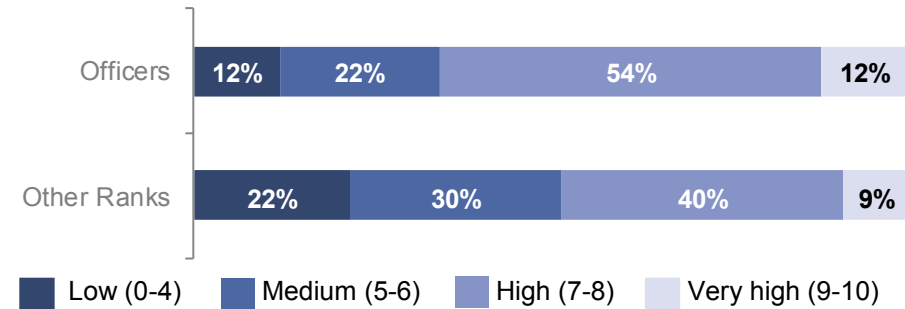
## National comparison

National well-being results<sup>2</sup> are not directly comparable to those of Service personnel due to differences in demographics i.e. the majority of Service personnel are male. Furthermore, national figures include a larger proportion of over 60s who generally score their well-being higher than younger people. However, national well-being results by gender may still provide some context. The proportion of UK males scoring aspects of their well-being as 'very high' (a score of 9-10) ranges between 29-33%. These are considerably higher than corresponding results for male Service personnel.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2018tomarch2019>

## Officers have higher well-being scores than Other Ranks

Views on how satisfied with their life they are nowadays



Officers have higher average scores for their life satisfaction, happiness and how worthwhile the things they do in life are than Other Ranks. They also have lower average anxiety scores.

## The proportions of personnel satisfied with their opportunities to take part in sport and fitness activities remain unchanged this year

**70%** are satisfied with their opportunities to undertake fitness activities.

**60%** are satisfied with the opportunities to take part in sport.

Army personnel are more satisfied with their opportunities to take part in sport and fitness activities (73% and 63% respectively) compared to the other Services.

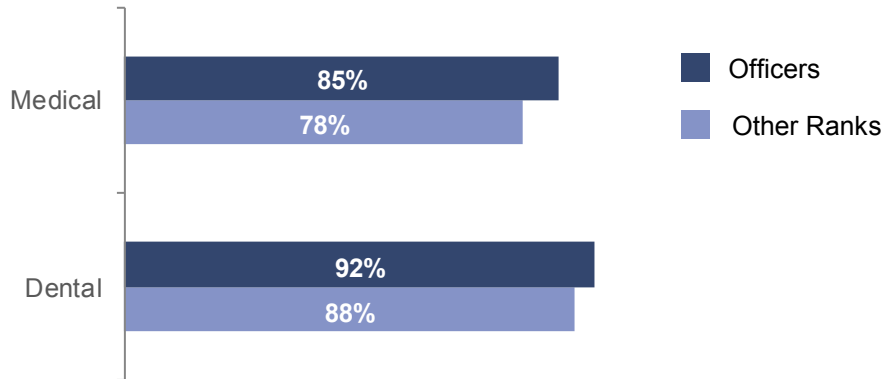
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/headlineestimatesofpersonalwellbeing>

## Satisfaction with medical and dental care remains high in 2020

The majority of personnel are satisfied with medical care in terms of access and treatment (83% and 80% respectively). Slightly higher proportions of personnel are satisfied with access to dental care and dental treatment (86% and 89% respectively).

### Officers are more satisfied than Other Ranks with both medical and dental treatment

% satisfied with medical/dental treatment

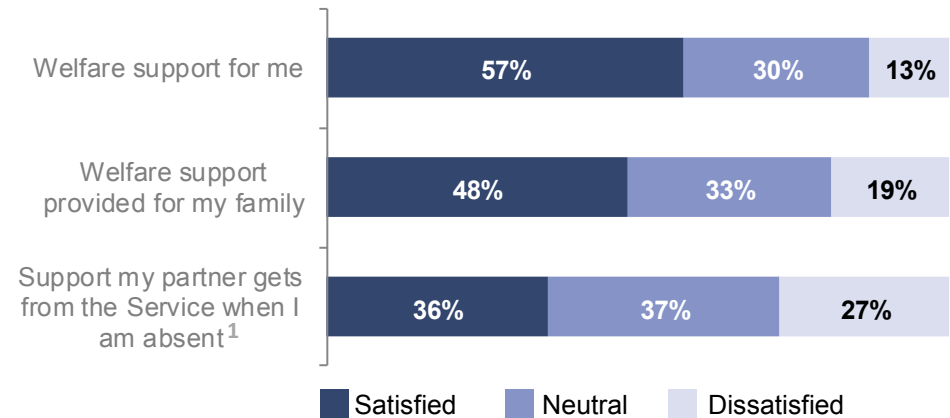


Officers are also more satisfied with access to medical care (86%) than Other Ranks (83%). However there is no difference between their levels of satisfaction with access to dental care.

Although still high, Royal Marines personnel are the least satisfied with dental treatment (84%) compared to the other Services (89-90%). Otherwise, there are little differences in satisfaction with aspects of medical or dental care between the Services.

## Over half of personnel are satisfied with the welfare support provided to them, whilst less than half are satisfied with welfare support provided to their family

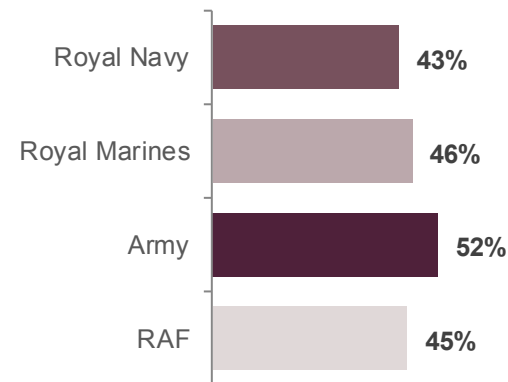
% levels of satisfaction with...



Lower levels of satisfaction are reported for the support their partner gets when they are absent with just over a third being satisfied<sup>1</sup>.

### Army personnel are more satisfied with the welfare support provided to their family compared to the other Services

% satisfied with the welfare support provided by the Service to their family



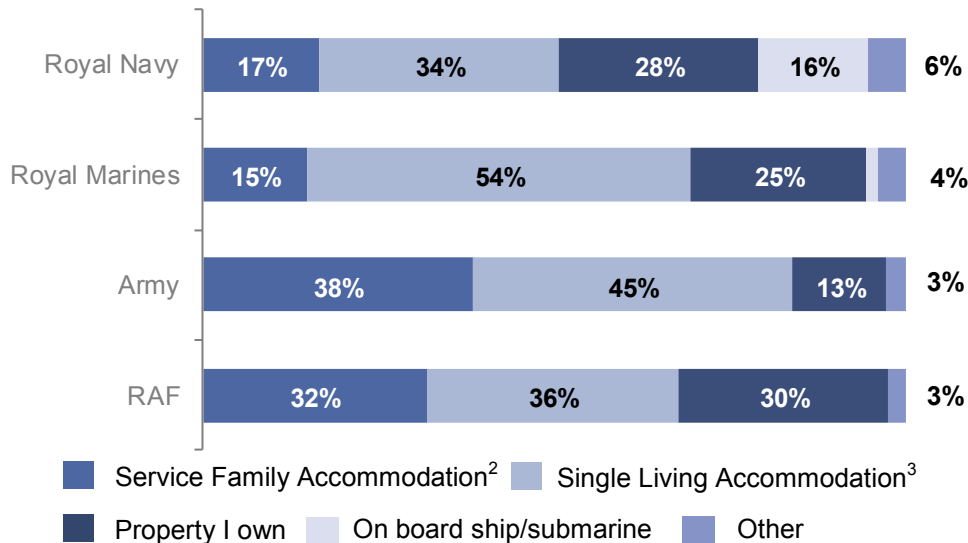
18 <sup>1</sup> Based on those who are married/in a long term relationship (75% in 2020).

## Section 12 - Accommodation and Catering

Section 12 covers satisfaction with various aspects of accommodation and catering, including questions about home ownership, where personnel live during the week, and the standard of catering facilities.

### Three-quarters of personnel (76%) live in Service accommodation<sup>1</sup> during the working week

% accommodation type



Just over two in five (42%) personnel live in Single Living Accommodation (SLA) and about a third (32%) live in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) during the working week.

Army personnel are more likely to live in SFA and less likely to live in their own property compared to the other Services, whilst Royal Marines are more likely to live in SLA.

Officers are more likely to live in SFA (34%) or their own property (28%) during the working week compared to Other Ranks (30% and 18% respectively) and less likely to live in SLA (Officers: 24%; Other Ranks: 42%).

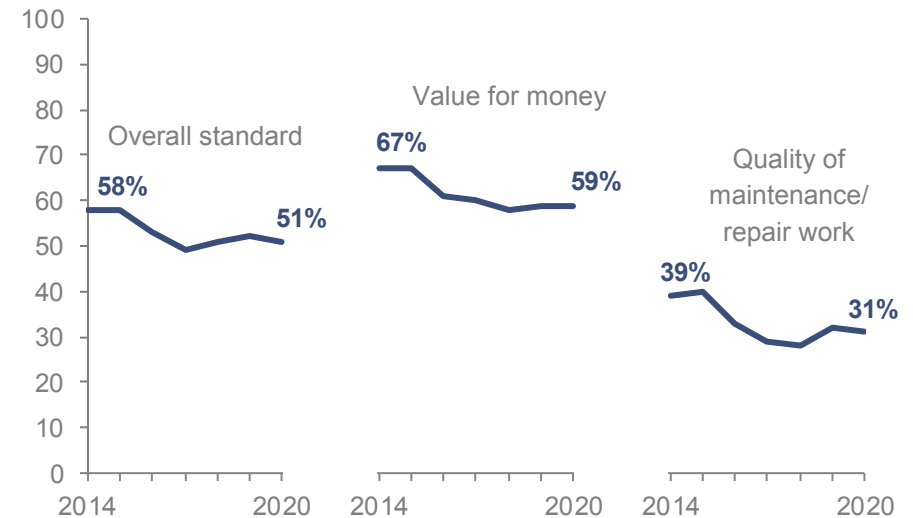
<sup>1</sup> Service accommodation refers to SFA, SLA, Substitute SFA, Substitute SLA, on board ship/submarine.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Substitute SFA

<sup>3</sup> Includes Substitute SLA

### Following large decreases in 2016, satisfaction with aspects of Service accommodation<sup>1</sup> remains largely unchanged

% satisfied with aspects of Service Accommodation



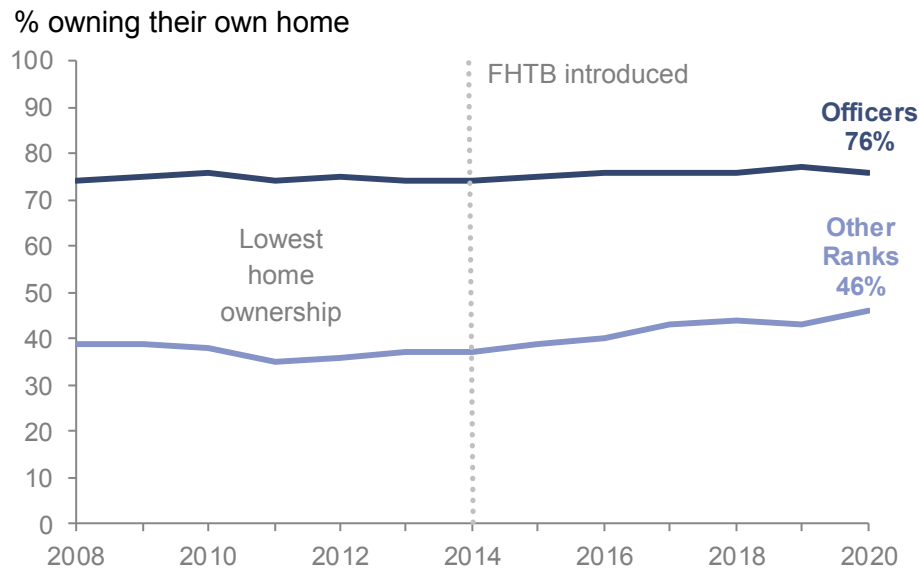
Satisfaction with responses to maintenance/repair work continued to fall in 2017 but has since increased four percentage points to 33%, a return to the level reported in 2016.

Officers are more satisfied with the overall standard of Service accommodation (55%) compared to Other Ranks (50%).

Royal Marines are the least satisfied with the value for money of SLA (44%) and how fairly SLA is allocated (37%) compared to the other Services.

Satisfaction with most aspects of Service Accommodation fell markedly in 2016 due, in part, to underperformance by the National Housing Prime contractor and changes to the SFA charging method in April 2016.

**Over half (52%) of personnel now own their own home following an increase in home ownership amongst Other Ranks since 2019, up from 43% to 46%**



Whilst this increase is largely driven by Army Other Ranks, home ownership remains much lower amongst Army personnel compared to the other three Services.

Since 2015 (the year after the introduction of Forces Help to Buy (FHTB)) home ownership amongst Other Ranks has risen from 39% to 46%. There has been no change for Officers over the same period. In December 2019, 84% of FHTB payments were made to Other Ranks.

**Forces Help to Buy** In April 2014, the MOD introduced the Forces Help to Buy scheme, under the New Employment Model programme. The scheme offers advances of salary to Service personnel for the purpose of buying a home.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forces-help-to-buy-scheme-quarterly-statistics-201920>

**Future Accommodation Model** Following the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), the MOD is exploring how it can provide Armed Forces personnel with more choice of housing and meet their aspirations for home ownership.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-accommodation-model-what-you-need-to-know/what-you-need-to-know-about-fam>

**The most common reason why personnel do not own their own home continues to be that they cannot afford to buy a suitable home at the moment, at 63%<sup>1</sup>**



Affordability was the top reason across all Services and for both Officers and Other Ranks.

Other Ranks (64%) are more likely to have selected affordability compared to Officers (53%).

**The most common reason why personnel purchase their own home continues to be stability for themselves and their family, at 76%<sup>2</sup>**

Overall, satisfaction with the opportunity to live in their own home remains unchanged this year at just over half (51%).

**Less than a third (29%) of personnel are satisfied with the standard of service from catering contractors on their unit, unchanged since 2017**

Officers (39%) are more satisfied than Other Ranks (26%).

Half (49%) of RAF personnel are dissatisfied with the standard of service, more than any of the other Services.

**Half (53%) of personnel tend to use<sup>3</sup> Service-provided catering facilities for eating at lunchtime, with around a third (32%) using it in the evening**

A higher proportion of RAF personnel never dine at their facilities compared to the other three Services.

<sup>1</sup> Of those personnel who do not own their own home (48% in 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Of those personnel who do own their own home (52% in 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Use is defined as at least sometimes.

## Section 13 - Family Life and Being Part of Society

Section 13 covers a questions relating to personal lives, such as marital status and childcare. This section also captures the perceptions of Service life when compared to wider society.

### Family life of Service personnel

**53%** are married; **22%** are in long-term relationships.

**53%** have children they support financially.

**47%** of those who require childcare are satisfied with locally provided facilities.

### Personnel<sup>1</sup> reporting that their spouse/partner is in full-employment<sup>2</sup> or part-time employment remains unchanged in 2020

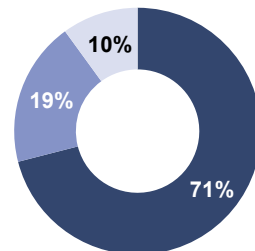
Just under half (48%) report that their spouse/partner is in full-time employment and a fifth (21%) in part-time. More Royal Marines (55%) report that their spouse/partner is in full-employment compared to the other Services.

### The majority (85%) of personnel are registered to vote

Whilst this remains unchanged since 2017, the proportion of personnel registered as ordinary residential voters has increased over the same period (from 75% in 2017 to 81% this year), with a subsequent decrease in registered Service voters (from 24% to 18%).

### Seven in ten (71%) feel they offer an important service to the country

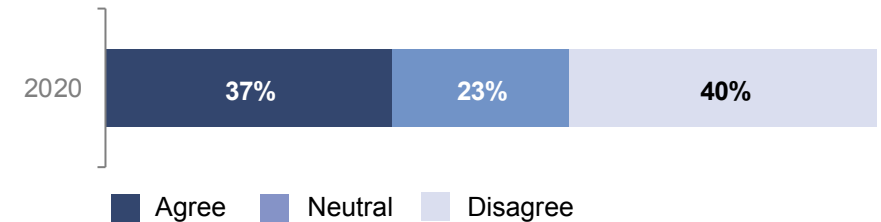
This remains unchanged since 2017, with Officers (87%) more likely to agree than Other Ranks (67%).



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

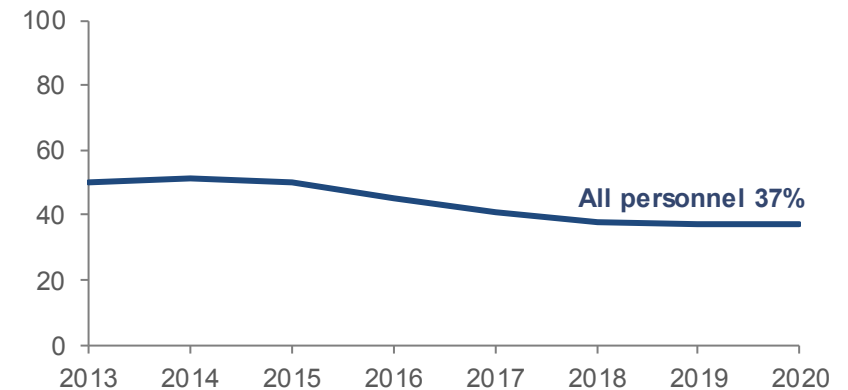
### Just under four in ten (37%) agree that they are valued by society at large; a similar proportion disagree

% agree/disagree members of the Armed Forces are valued by society



### The proportion of personnel who agree members of the Armed Forces are valued by society has remained stable following a decline between 2015 and 2017

% agree that members of the Armed Forces are valued by society

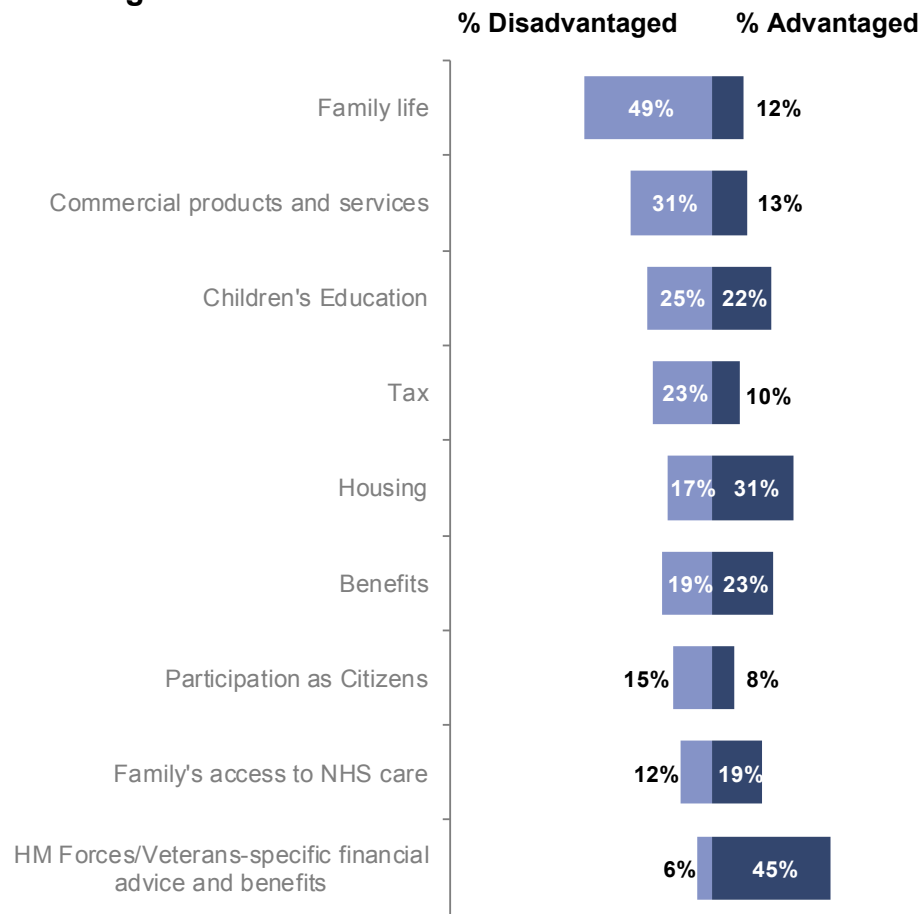


Officers are more likely to agree that members of the Armed Forces are valued by society than Other Ranks (52% and 33% respectively).

<sup>1</sup> Based on those who are married or in a long term relationship (75% in 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Includes self-employment but does not include those in the Armed Forces (12% in 2020).

**Half (49%) of personnel feel disadvantaged about family life compared to the general public; just over one in ten (12%) feel advantaged**



Three in ten (31%) personnel now feel advantaged about housing compared to the general public (up from 28% in 2019). There have also been increases in the proportions who feel advantaged about benefits and HM Forces-specific financial advice and benefits (up three and two percentage points respectively) since last year.

**Data Quality Note**

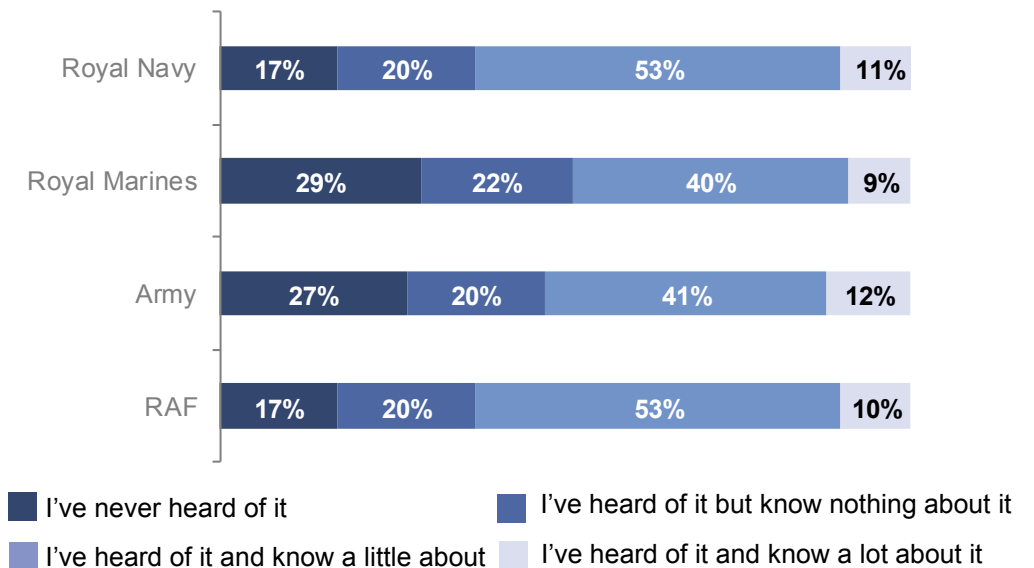
“Neutral” and “Don’t know / N/A” responses have been excluded from the chart.

**The Armed Forces Covenant** The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

[www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)

**The majority of personnel (77%) have at least heard of the Armed Forces Covenant, unchanged since 2018**

Awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant



Royal Navy and RAF personnel are most likely to have at least heard of the Armed Forces Covenant (both 83%) compared to the Army and Royal Marines (73% and 71% respectively).

Officers are considerably more likely to have at least heard of the Armed Forces Covenant (98%) compared to Other Ranks (72%).



## Section 14 - Taking Action

Section 14 covers beliefs on whether action has been taken on the results of AFCAS, and asks whether personnel feel the survey is of the right length.

The proportions of personnel who agree that action has been, and will be taken on the results of AFCAS remain unchanged since last year

**26%** believe that leaders in their Service will take action on the results.

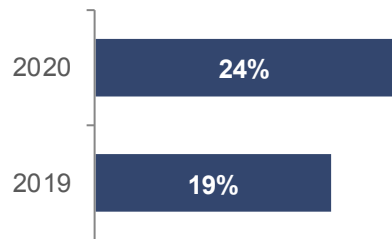
**22%** agree that effective action has been taken on the results of AFCAS.

Officers are more likely than Other Ranks to agree with these statements.

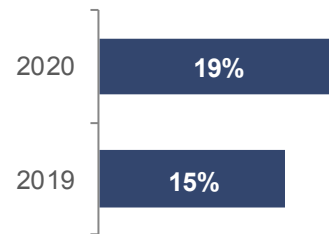
More RAF personnel agree with these statements this year compared to 2019, returning to levels first reported in 2015

% RAF personnel who agree that...

...leaders in their Service will take action on the results



...effective action has been taken on the results of AFCAS

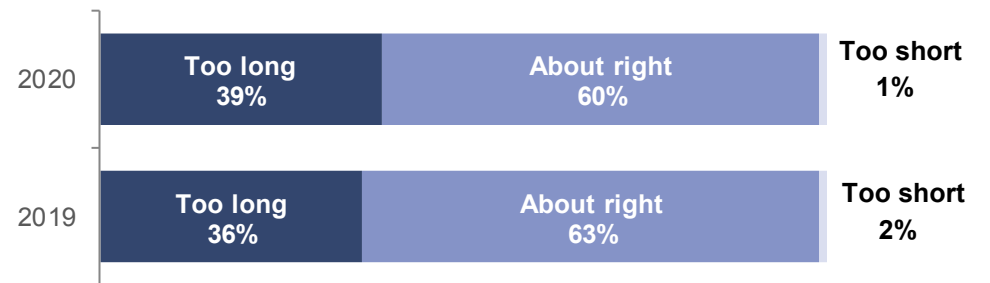


These changes have largely been driven by RAF Other Ranks.

In 2020 the survey achieved an overall response rate of 38%, a four percentage point decrease since 2019

Nearly four in ten personnel report the survey length is too long, a three percentage point increase since last year

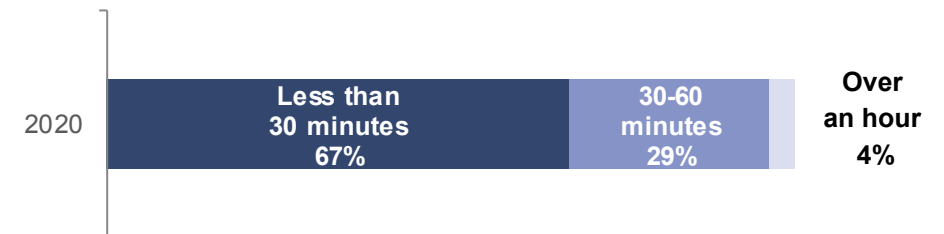
% views on survey length



This increase has largely been driven by Army and Royal Marine Other Ranks.

Two-thirds (67%) of personnel reported that they completed the survey in 30 minutes or less

Length of survey completion



# Key questions

The following charts highlight the key questions for each section of the AFCAS report. The key questions are presented by Service in the charts with an overall tri-Service figure provided for comparison. Overall differences from last year (2019) are presented, along with the differences from 2015 for a longer time-series comparison.

A positive change value represents an increase from a previous time period, a negative value represents a decrease.

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Morale, Commitment and Engagement

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B2.1	How satisfied are you with Service life in general? Positive= % satisfied		45	↔	↔
B2.2	How would you rate your level of morale? Positive= % high		41	↔	↔
B2.3	How would you rate the level of morale of your Unit? Positive= % high		24	↔	+3
B2.4	How would you rate the level of morale of your Service as a whole? Positive= % high		11	↔	-3
B2.5	How satisfied are you with your job in general? Positive= % satisfied		58	↔	↔
B7.3	I am proud to be in the Service Positive= % agree		75	↔	↔
B7.4	I am valued by the Service Positive= % agree		37	↔	↔
B7.5	I would recommend joining the Service to others Positive= % agree		50	+4	+3

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Work and Line Management

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
<b>B2.11</b>	I am given sufficient authority to make decisions Positive= % agree		<b>61</b>	↔	+3
<b>B3.1</b>	The standard of personal equipment/kit I have to do my job Positive= % satisfied		<b>57</b>	↔	↔
<b>B3.3</b>	The standard of major equipment I have to do my job Positive= % satisfied		<b>36</b>	↔	-7
<b>B5.2</b>	My immediate superior supports me in my job Positive= % agree		<b>76</b>	↔	+4
<b>B5.3</b>	My immediate superior sets a positive example Positive= % agree		<b>70</b>	↔	+3
<b>B5.5</b>	My immediate superior is supportive over work/life balance issues Positive= % agree		<b>73</b>	↔	+7
<b>B5.12</b>	I am satisfied with the leadership provided by my immediate supervisor Positive= % agree		<b>70</b>	↔	+4

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Leadership and Managing Change

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B6.1	Senior leaders of the Service understand and represent my interests Positive= % agree		27	↔	↔
B6.6	I have confidence in the leadership of the Service Positive= % agree		35	↔	↔
B9.3	Change is managed well in the Service Positive= % agree		27	↔	↔

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Working with Others

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B8.7	How do you rate the contribution of the Reserves? <sup>1</sup> Positive= % valuable		73	+3	+11
B8.8	How well-integrated into the Service are the Reserves? <sup>1</sup> Positive= % well-integrated		66	+5	+14
B8.9	How do you rate the professionalism of the Reserves? <sup>1</sup> Positive= % professional		74	+3	+11

<sup>1</sup> Of those who have had working contact with Armed Forces Reserves (51% in 2020).

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Allowances, Pay and JPA

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B1.1	The X-Factor in my salary is enough Positive= % agree		33	+3	+6
B1.2	The pay and benefits I receive are fair for the work I do Positive= % agree		39	+4	+4
B1.4	My rate of basic pay Positive= % satisfied		39	+3	+3
B1.5	My pension benefits Positive= % satisfied		30	↔	-2

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Deployment

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B10.4	Deployment notice in current/last deployment Positive= % satisfied		66	↔	↔
B10.5	Pre-operational/deployment training for current/last deployment Positive= % satisfied		62	↔	-6
B10.9	Welfare support I received when I returned from operational deployment Positive= % satisfied		46	↔	N/A
B10.10	The welfare support that my family received when I returned from deployment Positive= % satisfied		41	↔	N/A
B10.19	The frequency of my operational deployments Positive= % about right		56	↔	-9
B10.20	The length of my operational deployments Positive= % about right		74	↔	↔

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Training, Development and Career

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B4.2	Career management service provided Positive= % satisfied		37	↔	↔
B4.6	I have the knowledge, skills and experience to do my job Positive= % agree		86	↔	↔
B4.7	My knowledge, skills and experience are being used Positive= % agree		72	↔	↔
B4.10	The notice I received for my current/last assignment Positive= % satisfied		70	↔	↔
B4.13	The fairness of the promotion system Positive= % satisfied		34	↔	↔
B4.14	My opportunities for promotion Positive= % satisfied		41	↔	↔
B11.4	The extent to which I am doing the job for which I was trained Positive= % satisfied		59	↔	↔

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Future Plans

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B12.1	What are your plans for the future? To stay serving as long as I can Positive= % ticked		32	↔	↔
B12.1	What are your plans for the future? To stay serving to the end of current engagement/commission Positive= % ticked		29	↔	+5
B12.3	How actively have you searched for a job outside the Service in the last 12 months? Positive = % very or quite actively		40	↔	↔
B12.6	When you leave the Service, would you consider joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces? Full-time Positive= % ticked		20	↔	+4
B12.7	When you leave the Service, would you consider joining the Volunteer Reserve Forces? Part-time Positive= % ticked		31	↔	+8

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Work/Life Balance

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B3.5	How would you rate your workload over the last 12 months? Positive= % about right		49	↔	↔
B14.9	I am able to maintain a balance between my personal and working life Positive= % agree		45	↔	↔
B15.2	The opportunity to take leave when I want to Positive = % satisfied		53	+4	+8
B15.3	The amount of leave I was able to take in the last 12 months Positive= % satisfied		67	↔	+5

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Fairness at Work

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B13.1	I am treated fairly at work Positive= % agree		73	↔	↔
B13.2	The Service discipline system is fair Positive= % fair		64	↔	-3
B13.3	Do you believe you have been subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months? Positive= % ticked yes		12	↔	↔
B13.4	Do you believe you have been subject to <b>bullying</b> in the last 12 months? Positive= % ticked yes		6	↔	↔
B13.5	Do you believe you have been subject to <b>discrimination</b> in the last 12 months? Positive= % ticked yes		8	+2	↔
B13.6	Do you believe you have been subject to <b>harassment</b> in the last 12 months? Positive= % ticked yes		3	↔	↔

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found



## Key Questions - Health, Fitness and Welfare

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B16.1	Being able to access the medical care when I needed it Positive= % satisfied		83	↔	+3
B16.2	The medical treatment Positive= % satisfied		80	↔	+3
B16.4	The dental treatment Positive= % satisfied		89	↔	+2
B17.1	Service sport, exercise and fitness facilities in general Positive= % satisfied		76	↔	↔
B17.2	My opportunities to undertake fitness activities (e.g. to meet fitness standards) Positive= % satisfied		70	↔	↔
B18.1	The welfare support provided by the Service for me Positive= % satisfied		57	↔	N/A
B18.2	The welfare support provided by the Service for my family Positive= % satisfied		48	↔	N/A
B18.3	The support my spouse/partner gets from the Service when I am absent Positive= % satisfied		36	↔	N/A

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Accommodation and Catering

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
<b>B19.6</b>	The overall standard of Service Accommodation <sup>1</sup> Positive= % satisfied		<b>51</b>	↔	-7
<b>B19.38</b>	The opportunity to live in my own home (For home owners only) <sup>2</sup> Positive= % satisfied		<b>51</b>	↔	+7
<b>B19.39</b>	The allowances for living in my own home (For home owners only) <sup>2</sup> Positive= % satisfied		<b>28</b>	↔	↔
<b>B19.44</b>	Have you used a Government Affordable Housing Scheme in the last year to buy or rent? Positive= % used		<b>3</b>	↔	N/A
<b>B20.15</b>	The availability of food during the week on my unit e.g. opening hours Positive= % satisfied		<b>49</b>	↔	-3
<b>B20.17</b>	The standard of service from catering contractors on my unit Positive= % satisfied		<b>29</b>	↔	-4

<sup>1</sup> Service accommodation includes Service Family Accommodation (SFA), Substitute SFA, Single Living Accommodation (SLA), Substitute SLA and on board ship/submarine (76% live in Service accommodation in 2020).

<sup>2</sup> 52% are homeowners in 2020.

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Family Life and Being Part of Society

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B21.1	I am married / in a Civil partnership Positive = % ticked		53	↔	↔
B21.3	I have children that I support financially Positive = % ticked		53	↔	+3
B21.9	I am satisfied with the locally provided childcare facilities Positive = % ticked		47	↔	↔
B22.1	I am currently registered to vote Positive = % ticked		85	↔	+12
B22.4	I have heard of the Armed Forces Covenant Positive = % heard of		77	↔	+6
B22.15	I offer an important service to the country Positive = % agree		71	↔	-6
B22.16	Members of the Armed Forces are valued by society at large Positive = % agree		37	↔	-13

<sup>1</sup> Of those who have children that they support financially and live with them/have shared access.

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

## Key Questions - Taking Action

Table Ref	Question		Overall % Positive	% Change from 2019	% Change from 2015
B24.2	I think effective action has been taken in the Service on the results of AFCAS Positive = % agree		22	↔	↔
B24.3	This survey is about right in length Positive = % about right		60	-3	-6

↔ Indicates no statistically significant change has been found

# Methodology

## 1. Target population

The target population for AFCAS 2020 was trained UK Regular Armed Forces personnel including Gurkhas, excluding Special Forces and those deployed or attending training courses at the time the survey sample was drawn from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system.

## 2. The survey

AFCAS is distributed both electronically and in paper format. Data collection ran from September 2019 to February 2020, a relatively long period which allows time for receiving paper responses from personnel serving overseas.

The survey is confidential rather than anonymous. An individual's unique Service number is used both to control access to the survey and allow responses to be linked to demographic data held on the JPA system. Personally identifiable data are only available to a small group of professional researchers working on analysis and report production.

## 3. The sample and respondents

The total AFCAS 2020 sample consisted of 27,265 personnel. AFCAS questionnaires were issued to Service personnel selected under a (disproportionate) stratified simple random sampling process.

Samples were designed to provide sufficient responses to yield estimates with a margin of error of plus or minus 3% for the main comparison groups of Officer/Rank and Service. A census of all Royal Marines was employed due to the small size of the Service. Despite a relatively high response rate of 55%, margins of error around the estimates for Royal Marine Officers may be greater than 3%, due to the relatively small number of respondents in this group.

10,433 responses were used in the AFCAS 2020 analysis, giving an overall response rate of 38%. The table below contains detailed information on the number of questionnaires issued and received along with corresponding response rates.

78% of responses were received electronically and 22% were paper responses, compared to 67% and 33% last year, respectively.

**Table A1: Response rates by Service and Rank group**

		Sample size	Surveys returned	2020 response rate	2019 response rate
<b>Royal Navy</b>	Officers	1,525	953	62%	61%
	Ratings	6,588	2,002	30%	32%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,113</b>	<b>2,955</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Royal Marines</b>	Officers	546	302	55%	59%
	Marines	3,856	1,325	34%	46%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,402</b>	<b>1,627</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Army</b>	Officers	1,577	979	62%	66%
	Soldiers	6,836	1,889	28%	34%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,413</b>	<b>2,868</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Royal Air Force</b>	Officers	1,611	935	58%	59%
	Airmen	4,726	2,048	43%	43%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,337</b>	<b>2,983</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>All Services</b>	Officers	5,259	3,169	60%	62%
	Ranks	22,006	7,264	33%	37%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>27,265</b>	<b>10,433</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>42%</b>

Note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole % for ease of interpretation.

#### 4. Weighting methodology and non-response

Due to the sample design and the differences in prevalence of non-response between the Service and rank strata, the distribution of characteristics amongst the AFCAS respondents did not reflect the distribution in the whole Armed Forces population. Response rates tend to vary by rank, therefore responses are weighted by rank in order to correct for the bias caused by over or under-representation.

The weights were calculated simply by:

$$\frac{\text{Population size within weighting class (p)}}{\text{Number of responses within weighting class (r)}}$$

Weighting in this way assumes missing data are missing at random (MAR) only within weighting classes. This means we assume that within a single weighting class the views of non-respondents do not differ (on average) to the views of respondents.

**Table A2: Weightings used for AFCAS 2020 analysis**

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
RN_OF-7+	2.69
RN_OF-4 to 6	5.61
RN_OF-3	5.49
RN_OF-1 to 2	5.02
RN_OR-8 to 9	4.77
RN_OR-7	6.15
RN_OR-6	8.46
RN_OR-3 to 4	10.23
RN_OR-2	11.01

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
RM_OF-4+	2.11
RM_OF-3	2.27
RM_OF-1 to 2	2.92
RM_OR-8 to 9	2.03
RM_OR-7	3.16
RM_OR-6	3.14
RM_OR-3 to 4	4.63
RM_OR-2	4.85

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
Army_OF-7+	2.70
Army_OF-4 to 6	11.35
Army_OF-3	12.13
Army_OF-1 to 2	13.62
Army_OR-8 to 9	16.04
Army_OR-7	19.92
Army_OR-6	23.48
Army_OR-4	28.04
Army_OR-3	42.31
Army_OR-2	83.86

Weighting Class	Weighting Applied
RAF_OF-7+	2.25
RAF_OF-4 to 6	6.73
RAF_OF-3	6.44
RAF_OF-1 to 2	7.93
RAF_OR-7-9	7.82
RAF_OR-6	8.51
RAF_OR-3 to 4	11.94
RAF_OR-1 to 2	16.26

## 5. Analysis and statistical tests

Attitudinal questions in the questionnaires have generally been regrouped to assist in analysing results and to aid interpretation. For example, questions asked at a 5-point level (e.g. Strongly agree – Agree – Neither Agree nor Disagree – Disagree – Strongly Disagree) have been regrouped to a 3-point level (e.g. (Agree – Neutral – Disagree)).

Missing values, where respondents have not provided a response/valid response, have not been included in the analysis. In addition, some questions are filtered to exclude invalid responses. As a result the unweighted counts (or 'n') will vary from question to question and these are shown within the reference tables published alongside this report on the AFCAS webpage here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

Unless otherwise specified, “Don’t know” and “Not applicable” responses are ignored and percentages are based only on the numbers of respondents who chose the remaining item response options.

Where applicable, Z tests at a 1% alpha level were used to test whether observed estimates were significantly different to estimates from previous surveys. A statistically significant difference means that there is enough evidence that the change observed is unlikely to be due to chance variation (less than a 1% probability that the difference is the result of chance alone).

## 6. Format of the reference tables (published separately to the report on the AFCAS webpage here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>)

Each reference table refers to a question asked in the survey and includes estimates of the proportion of the population by category.

Tables are arranged generally in the order in which they were asked in the questionnaires, which is not the same as the order of the sections in the Main Report.

An index is available within the Excel tables. Each table is broken down by Service and also by Rank Group with the Total column referring to the Officers and Other Ranks results combined.

Questionnaire Section	Table Numbers
01 Your Pay	B1.1 - B1.10
02 Your Work	B2.1 - B2.18
03 Resources and Workload	B3.1 - B3.7
04 Your Career	B4.1 - B4.24
05 Your Line Management	B5.1 - B5.18
06 Senior Leadership	B6.1 - B6.6
07 Commitment	B7.1 - B7.14
08 Working with Others	B8.1 - B8.17
09 Change	B9.1 - B9.3
10 Your Deployment	B10.1 - B10.20
11 Training and Development	B11.1 - B11.7
12 Your Future Plans	B12.1 - B12.41
13 Fairness at Work	B13.1 - B13.43
14 Your Work/Life Balance	B14.1 - B14.12
15 Your Leave	B15.1 - B15.11
16 Your Health and Well-being	B16.1 - B16.8a
17 Fitness, Sport and Adventurous Training	B17.1 - B17.5
18 Welfare	B18.1 - B18.19
19 Your Accommodation	B19.1 - B19.45
20 Catering, Retail and Leisure	B20.1 - B20.17
21 Your Family Life	B21.1 - B21.12
22 Being Part of Society	B22.1 - B22.16
23 Your Background	B23.1 - B23.7
24 Taking Action and Your Comments	B24.1 - B24.4

## Glossary

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	Compensation available to those who become injured or ill as a result of their service in the Armed Forces	Government Affordable Housing Scheme	Schemes providing financial assistance for those who are unable to afford to buy or rent a home; includes Forces Help to Buy (FHTB)
Armed Forces Covenant	The Armed Forces Covenant defines the principles for ensuring that Armed Forces personnel are not disadvantaged in their access to public and commercial services as a result of their service. It also sets out that in some cases special treatment may be appropriate, for example for those that have given the most, such as the injured and the bereaved	Harassment	Includes unwanted conduct which is related to the characteristics mentioned above (see Discrimination above) and is intended to or has the effect of violating another's dignity or creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment
Armed Forces Pay Review Body	Provides independent advice to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on the pay and charges for members of the Naval, Military and Air Forces of the Crown	HIVE	Service information hub which assists personnel in a wide variety of topics affecting their everyday Service and personal life
Assisting Officer	Appointed to provide help and support to personnel either considering or having made a formal written complaint about discrimination, harassment or bullying	JPA	Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) is the system used by the Armed Forces to deal with matters of pay, leave and other personal administrative tasks
Bullying	May be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and abuse of or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipients	Marines	Royal Marines personnel of NATO ranks OR1 to OR9
Catering Retail and Leisure (CRL)	Provision of on-site facilities for dining, shopping and recreation by commercial partners	Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC)	Ensures that all research involving human participants undertaken, funded or sponsored by the MOD meets nationally and internationally accepted ethical standards
Commission	Officer's period of employment usually under contractual terms	Missing at Random (MAR)	Statistical theory that states that those who did not respond to a question do not differ from those who did respond
Defence Board	The highest committee in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and is responsible for the full range of Defence business, other than the conduct of operations	Missing Value(s)	Refers to the situation where a respondent has not submitted an answer or a valid answer to a question
DIN	Defence Instructions and Notices	MOD	Ministry of Defence
Discrimination	Can occur when a person is treated less favourably because of race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, age or disability. Discrimination can also occur where a policy or practice which applies to everyone unreasonably disadvantages a person on the basis of the characteristics mentioned above	Morale	A measure of commitment and willingness to the ethos of a Service
Ethos	The nature, aims and objectives of a Service	N/A	Not applicable
Engagement	Period of employment usually under contractual terms	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
Flexible Service	Allows Regular members of the Armed Forces to request part time working and/or restricted separation from home base, for a limited length of time	Naval Service	Comprises the Royal Navy (including the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) and the Royal Marines combined
Flexible Working	Agreed variation in starting and finishing working hours normally designed to meet work/home life balance	Non-response	Refers either to a person who although sampled and sent a questionnaire did not reply or to a respondent who did not reply to a question
Force Development Activities	Refers to a wide range of activities designed to improve operational effectiveness	OF	Officer of NATO rank designation ranking from '1' lowest to '10' highest
		Officer(s)	All regular trained officers of NATO ranks OF1 to OF10

Operational Commitment and Stretch	Refers to the situation where operational deployment requires the use of materiel and personnel in extended circumstances beyond the level they are resourced and structured to sustain in the long-term
Operational/Deployment Welfare Package	Measures taken to support the morale of Service personnel by making the fullest possible provision for their emotional and physical wellbeing whilst on operational deployment
OR	Other Ranks of NATO rank designation ranking from 'OR1' lowest to 'OR9' highest
Other Rank(s)	Other Ranks are members of the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force who are not Officers. The equivalent group in the Royal Navy is known as "Ratings"
Post Operational Leave (POL)	Leave granted in addition to annual leave for personnel returning from operational deployment and who are not entitled to Seagoers' Leave (Army uses Post Operational Tour Leave (POTL))
RAF	Royal Air Force
Recruitment and Retention Payment (RRP) - formerly Specialist Pay	Discretionary payment received in addition to basic pay by specific groups within the Armed Forces to assist with specific recruitment or retention requirements
RM	Royal Marines
RN	Royal Navy
RNRMW	Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare (Service)
Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)	In the context of the Services, refers to a Review of what needed to be done to restructure and rescale the size of the Armed Forces to meet future Defence requirements of the UK's national security
Seagoers' Leave (SGL)	Leave granted in addition to annual leave for personnel employed in a seagoing unit
Service Accommodation	Any type of accommodation that includes 'SFA', 'SSFA', 'SLA', 'SSSA' and 'Onboard a ship or submarine'
Service Complaints Ombudsman	Oversees the Service Complaints system and also acts as an alternative point of contact for Service Complaints including ensuring that Service Complaints are dealt with efficiently, effectively and fairly
Service Complaints Procedure	Available to those who believe they have been the subject of unlawful or unfair treatment in the Service
Service(s)	Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and RAF
SFA	Service Families Accommodation

SLA	Single Living Accommodation
SNCO	Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NATO ranks OR6 to OR9)
Soldiers	Army personnel of NATO ranks OR1 to OR9
Special Educational Need (SEN)	Children who have needs or disabilities that affect their ability to learn
SSFA	Substitute Service Family Accommodation
SSSA	Substitute Service Single Accommodation (formerly SSLA)
Standard Error	A measure derived using weighting factors from the sample proportion and unweighted count in a sampling distribution and used as a benchmark in order to ascertain a range of values within which the true population proportion could lie
Statistically Significant	Refers to the result of a statistical test in which there is evidence of a change in proportions between years
Statistical Tests	Refers to those tests which are carried out to see if any evidence exists for a change in response proportions from one year to another
Trained Strength	Trained Strength comprises military personnel who have completed Phase 1 and 2 training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 1 Training includes all new entry training to provide basic military skills</li> <li>Phase 2 Training includes initial individual specialisation, sub-specialisation and technical training following Phase 1 training prior to joining the trained strength</li> </ul>
Unit	A sub-organisation of the Service in which personnel are employed
Unweighted Count	Refers to the actual number who provided a valid response to a question in the survey
Weighting (Factors)	Refers to factors that are applied to the respondent data set by Service and rank group in order to make respondent Service rank groups representative of their population equivalents
Weighting Class	Refers to those members of a specific rank group to whom a weighting factor is applied
X-Factor	Additional payment to Armed Forces personnel to compensate for differences in lifestyle, working conditions and expectations compared to civilian equivalents
Z-test	Statistical test based on a standardised distribution which allows comparison between years for populations of different sizes



## Further Information

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### Contact Us

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