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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 21 July in which you requested information in order to: "*understand the opportunities which existed for AAC Islander and Defender pilots to transfer to the RAF in 2019 when these aircraft 'moved' from the AAC to the RAF. I gather that a one time offer was made for pilots to transfer with the aircraft but would like to know the terms and conditions of this.*" You ask detailed questions relating to this in three parts.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held. This is provided under each part below for ease of reference.

## Part One

### 1a. Was such an offer for transfer made and, if so, what was the time frame of this?

*Yes. The offer was made to those AAC personnel who, at time of the offer, were directly involved in the outputs of AAC Islander and Defender Sqn. This was offered in October 2018. AAC is committed to assist the RAF to ensure and man operational outputs until at least April 2022.*

### b. To whom was this offer made? Was it to all AAC pilots qualified on these aircraft (ie those who may have flown them in previous assignments and were doing something else in 2019) or just to those serving( ie flying) those aircraft at the time of the offer?

*The offer was available to those AAC personnel who had appropriate Fixed Wing Manned Airborne Surveillance (FW MAS) qualifications and were directly involved in the outputs of the AAC Islander and Defender Sqn at the time of the offer.*

### c. What were the criteria for transfer and how were 'applicants' prioritised?

*Applicants needed to be involved in the sqn outputs at the time of the offer in 2018. It was agreed that each transferee would fill positions in the Sqn for at least one tour of duty (3 years), preferably 2 tours, in order to maintain the outputs of the Sqn. In order to be eligible to transfer, personnel needed to meet the minimum Officers and Aircrew Selection criteria. The terms and conditions were based on the existing transfer options but some training elements were waived depending on experience and previous training. The opportunity to transfer Service was dependant on an individual's skills, competencies, qualifications and the needs of the Service. Each expression of interest was considered on a case by case basis.*

**d. Did the RAF have a limit of the number of AAC pilots they could accept on transfer and was this determined by rank? If so, how many could they take (or could the AAC 'afford' to let go and was there a requirement/limit by rank?**

*There were no quotas for personnel.*

**e. How many AAC pilots did transfer and what was their Army rank at the time of transfer?**

*Due to the low numbers of personnel that have transferred to the RAF, this information and breakdown by rank have been withheld under Data Protection. This information is exempt from release under section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA. Section 40(2) has been applied to the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in deciding to withhold the information.*

**f. Did those who transferred do so to an equivalent RAF rank or were they required to accept a reduction in rank?**

*Personnel who have transferred maintained an equivalent rank in the RAF or were subject to officer training in order to reach an appropriate rank as a pilot; the RAF does not have "Other Rank" pilots and as such OR pilots from the AAC would need to undertake officer training in order to be employed by the RAF.*

**g. Did the transfer bring a period of mandated Return of Service?**

*No, however if a transferring AAC pilot had an ongoing RoS at time of transfer then he/she would be held to that RoS in the RAF.*

**h. Would those who were on the Pilot Employment Stream (Army) and therefore in receipt of the Professional Aviators Pay Spine at the time of transfer have retained this level of pay on transfer?**

*There were no changes to pay for personnel who have transferred.*

**i. Would an officer pilot on transfer automatically be given the opportunity to serve to age 60 in the RAF, to their MEOS (Mandated end of Service)?**

*Yes, they would.*

## **Part 2**

Application to the Pilot Employment Stream (Army)

I have seen previously the Admin Instruction of 23 May 2016 for those AAC pilots wishing to apply for the PES(Army):

**2a. Is this still extant or is there a more recent instruction? I am interested to know whether the process has changed in any way since 2016.**

I understand that a PES(A) selection board is held each year.

*Part 2 of your request has been answered under FOI2020/07815 which you already received on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020.*

## **Part 3**

**3a. In each of the years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, how many AAC pilots (by rank) applied to join the PES(A) and how many were successful?**

*Please see the tables below. Please note that no information is held on how many service personnel have applied in 2016 and 2017. Due to the low numbers of personnel that have applied and been successful, breakdown by rank have been withheld under Data Protection. This information is exempt from release under section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA. Section 40(2) has been applied to the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in deciding to withhold the information.*

Year	Successful
2016	20
2017	10

Year	Applied	Successful
2018	10	10
2019	20	20

Notes/Caveats to both tables

- This data has been provided from a single service source rather than official statistics produced by Defence Statistics as they do not collate this information.
- Figures have been rounded to 10 for presentational purposes; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

**3b. How many of these were fixed wing (Islander/Defender) and how many rotary? I am trying to gauge the likelihood of an eligible and committed applicant in either category (fixed wing or rotary) being successful.**

*This information is presented in the table below:*

Rotary Pilots	Fixed Wing pilots
40	-

Notes/Caveats:

- This data has been provided from a single service source rather than official statistics produced by Defence Statistics as they do not collate this information.
- Figures have been rounded to 10 for presentational purposes; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

**3c. Can an individual apply in subsequent years if not successful and they continue to meet the eligibility criteria?**

*Provided that the candidate is eligible for PES(A), they will be awarded it on application. They should not need to reapply a second time.*

I apologise that it has taken slightly longer to reply than it would normally have done, but I hope you will understand this is because of the unusual circumstances in which we are currently working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-](mailto:CIO-)

[FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Manning Portfolio 2  
Army Secretariat