



Ministry  
of Defence

Army Policy and Secretariat  
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1 September 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 5 January 2022 in which you clarified your previous request for the following information as being for information in relation to the meeting referred to in a Guardian article dated 8 November 2021:

*Full copies of all minutes, agendas and briefing materials for meetings of the army's management board that took place in 2021. Please also include any other materials that were handed out or received during the meetings, such as presentations.*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please allow me to apologise again for the amount of time it has taken to provide you with this response.

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. Some of this information is exempt under sections 23(1) (security matters), 27(1)(a) and (b) (international relations), 36(2)(b)(ii) (prejudice to the conduct of public affairs), 40(2) (personal information) and Section 42(1) (legal professional privilege) of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore being withheld. The information that is not exempt is attached.

Section 40 has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Sections 23 and 40 are absolute exemptions and there is no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Section 27(1)(a) and Section 27(1)(b) have been applied because some of the information has the potential to adversely affect relations with our allies. The balance of the public interest test concluded that whilst release would increase public understanding and confidence in the relation the United Kingdom has with other international states, the balance of the public interest lay in withholding this information as disclosure would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other States, international organisations or international courts.

Section 36(2)(b)(ii) has been applied because disclosure of some of the information would be likely to inhibit the free and frank exchange of views within the Ministry of Defence. While the information requested may increase trust in government and the Army, withholding the information will protect the 'safe space' in which free and frank exchanges of views between Ministers and officials can take place.

Section 42(1) has been applied because some of the information has been provided by lawyers in confidence as legal advice. The outcome of the balance of the public interest test concluded that whilst release would promote openness, transparency and a further understanding of government processes in decision making, it has been necessary to weigh the factors favouring disclosure on a

case by case basis against the strong public interest in protecting the legal professional privilege which has been recognised by the courts and the Information Tribunal. The balance of the public interest therefore lay in withholding this information.

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-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-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,

Pers Leader B  
Army Policy and Secretariat

Releasable information:



## **241<sup>st</sup> Army Board**

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

1100 –1230hrs

Historic Room 27  
MOD Main Building  
Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB



**241<sup>st</sup> Army Board  
1100-1230hrs, Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Agenda**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
1	1100-1110	Introductory Remarks	The Secretary of State and the Chief of the General Staff
2	1110-1200	Army Culture, Behaviour and Discipline	The Chief of the General Staff
3	1200-1220	Future Plans and Further Measures	The Deputy Chief of the General Staff Director Personnel
4	1220-1230	Concluding Remarks	The Secretary of State and the Chief of the General Staff
<b>1230 Close</b>			

General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith KCB CBE ADC Gen  
Chief of the General Staff

MOD Main Building  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HB



DO/CGS

23 November 2020

To the Chain of Command,

The Army's reputation and performance is defined by how it treats its people and no institution is beyond reform and improvement of its culture, behaviour and leadership. Whilst the Army has made encouraging progress, we are still some way from making the essential cultural change necessary to ensure that we are as open, tolerant, fair and equal as all high-performing organisations need to be. Not treating people fairly and equally isn't part of any successful organisation's ethos. Every single person counts and far too often that seems in practice not to be the case.

So, we need to have an honest conversation with each other about those aspects of our leadership and culture that we are less proud of; and place a greater emphasis on our moral leadership. In a people-organisation, it's not just the outcome that's important, but increasingly the manner in which it's achieved.

The challenge we all face is to break down those barriers and obstacles that our people still tell us prevent them from giving of their best and feeling valued and comfortable for who they are, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation. Our leadership is pivotal to get beyond the corporate rhetoric and there is nothing politically correct about improving how we treat each other and behave around one another. This is about common decency and courtesy, mutual respect and the moral courage to do not just the right thing, but also the best thing. It's as much about leadership as it is effectiveness, and the one leads to the other.

Leadership from the top is the essential pre-requisite. We cannot rely on piecemeal organic change from the bottom. We have to lead it especially when it feels uncomfortable, because it's not simply about the shocking and outrageous incidents that we occasionally hear about which compromise and embarrass us all. More routinely it's the daily insidious grind and corrosive wear-and-tear that our people experience all too often but report all too infrequently. We almost expect them to become inured to it, in a way that most of us are. And if we are aware of it at all, we underestimate how draining and debilitating it is for those subjected to it – all too frequently we can countenance a casual dismissive attitude: 'get over it, what did you expect. This is the Army!'

If you are reading this and don't recognise any of yourself in it or don't believe that this is happening right now to some of those around you, or who work for you, then I think you are wrong. So, I would like you to think about what I have written and the extent to which it applies to you and your team and organisation and discuss this letter with them. I would like you to consider what your personal plans are to do something positive about it, and in time about how you are going to contribute to the Army campaign plan to do better.

When all is said and done we are in the business of nurturing and nourishing the fighting spirit of all our people. It's the only true litmus test of our readiness and our people are our single greatest responsibility. Let's make sure that they really are. All of them.

CGS

# TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF ARMY CULTURE

*“no institution is beyond reform of its behaviour, culture and leadership”*

## Introduction

Promoting and sustaining a healthy, inclusive culture in the Army is vital to its success. Driven by its leaders, general to junior NCO, culture is the constant duty of all to safeguard and improve. In the absence of active management, a culture will develop which may not align to the Army’s strategy, damage its reputation and reduce its attractiveness to those in the Army, and those who wish to join. The Army’s culture is not an accident of happenstance, it is derived from heritage and ethos and it must be owned and managed by the Chain of Command. Without constant stewardship elements of the Army’s culture, once prized, can become demonstrably destructive and a barrier to recruitment, retention and motivation.

## Why is there a need for an Audit?

2. The Army’s culture is being improved through a structured programme of interventions through The Army Teamwork Plan<sup>1</sup>. However, there is seemingly slow progress in reducing unacceptable behaviours. There is evidence that suggests there is a worsening trend of sexualised behaviours and for some members of the Army, particularly those who are in minoritized groups, their treatment sometimes falls short of what is expected. Moreover, it appears that our people are not applying the Values and Standards and Civil Service Code consistently. Finally, there is a perception that in some parts of the Army there is a lack of a safe environment for people to raise concerns because of:

Unquestioning or misguided loyalty.

Fear of being ostracised.

Fear of repercussions.

Fear of getting it wrong.

## What will an Audit achieve?

3. An audit will act as the eyes and ears of SofS to judge and advise whether the tone and direction from the top is being adhered across the Army. The aim of the audit is to satisfy SofS that the Army’s culture is aligned to its strategy and is being reflected in the actions, leadership, risk appetite, policies and decisions, throughout the Army. The Audit will identify the good alongside areas in need of improvement. It will examine any environmental factors, including its history, symbols and ethos, that could be holding the institution back. It will also support any observations with specific examples of improvement and will weight, prioritise and contextualise each (quantitative and qualitative) with the any quick wins reported as they arise.

## How to Audit the Army’s culture

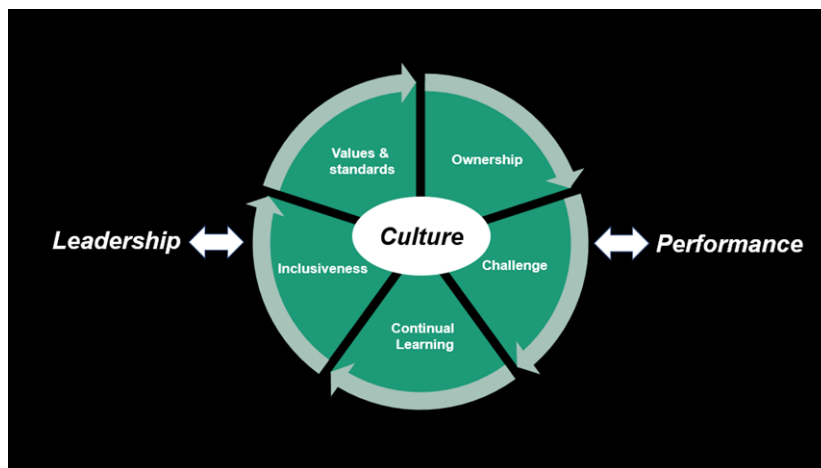
4. The audit will begin by examining the formal drivers of culture and then evaluate them against the perceptions of our people:

- a. Leadership (top, middle and frontline) – tracking intent, action and outcome.
- b. Army Strategy.
- c. Talent management and development (education and mainstream training).

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly the D&I Campaign Plan.

- d. Resource management.
- Process and polices.
- f. Modernisation and transformation.
  - g. Demographics and societal change.
  - h. The Army's Cultural framework (Figure 1).



**Figure 1**

## **Methodology**

5. The evaluation of Army culture will use the following approaches:
  - a. Qualitative (interviews, influencers, focus groups, networks, climate assessments and behavioural observations).
  - b. Quantitative (KPIs, data (Disc and SC) and existing survey results (longitudinal)).
  - c. Continuous monitoring throughout the (several) year<sup>2</sup>.
  - d. Data analytics.
  - e. Document analysis (review of what policies are doing vs what they were intended to do).
  - f. Review previous studies, papers, audits (external and internal) particularly Wigston, Gray, Army Inspector and Atherton.
  - g. Assess actual understanding of V&S and Civil Service Code.
  - h. Consider progress against existing plans.
  - i. Assess the policy v lived experience gap.
  - j. Assess activity to implement policy change throughout the org (top to bottom and in different capability/cap badge areas).

<sup>2</sup> The Police see culture change after the Macpherson inquiry into Stephen Lawrence's murder in 1993 as ongoing/continuous business.

## **Independent and Defence Supported**

6. The audit of Army culture must be independent to provide the necessary balance, objectivity and challenge. Moreover, an independent, reliable, and ethically sound audit will give the Army the credibility it needs and will engender public trust in the accuracy and integrity of the results. The Army's approach will need to nest with Defence and will require coherence with the other sS, STRATCOMD, ALBs and the civil service through CDP.

## **Scope**

7. The Audit will be owned by SofS and will be wholeforce (Regular, Reserve and Civil Servant). Due to the scale of the challenge, the Audit will first focus on areas where there is inherent cultural risk<sup>3</sup> then expand its remit. It will be conducted over a six-month period, with quarterly update reports to ECAB and SofS.

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<sup>3</sup> Gender, sexualised behaviour and race.