



# Officer Cadet Survey

## Annual Executive Summary 2023-2024



IFF Research

# Contents page

**03**

**Introduction**

**06**

**Key  
Performance  
Indicators**

**08**

**Army**

**12**

**Royal Navy**

**16**

**RAF**

**19**

**Methodology**



**IFF Research**

# Introduction



# Introduction

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The Officer Cadet Survey (OCS) was established in 2010 to monitor Officer Cadets' experience of training at all four initial officer training colleges.

The OCS was created following the success of the Recruit Trainee Survey (RTS), a Tri-Service survey administered to gauge Phase 1 Recruits' and Phase 2 Trainees' experience of training. The RTS was established following an appraisal of initial training by the Defence Operational Capability (DOC) in 2002.

The aims of the survey are to:

- Elicit attitudes towards the quality and benefits of training provided.
- Monitor the fairness of treatment for Recruits, Trainees and Officer Cadets.

Reported results are aggregated to reflect the experiences of Officer Cadets who attended training at a college under each Service command.

Note: In 2023/24 the Officer Cadet Survey was completed by 6 Royal Marine Officer Cadets, data has not been reported for this Service as this falls below the minimum threshold of 30.



# Notes on reporting

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This Executive Summary compares results for the OCS survey for this current year, 2023/24, against the previous survey year of 2022/23. This report has been produced in addition to monthly and quarterly reports that are shared with the Services throughout the year.

This Executive Summary makes reference to aggregated totals, labelled as '% positive'. This refers to the sum of two answer options that are affirmative to the question or statement (e.g. 'very good' and 'good' or 'strongly agree' and 'agree'). The aggregate score takes into account the rounding which occurs when two figures are presented separately.

All comments and statistically significant differences are based on the aggregated total. Only differences that are statistically significant have been commented upon. A statistically significant result means the difference between two figures is likely the result of a factor rather than chance. **It does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important, or significant in the common meaning of the word.** A statistically significant difference can still occur if the overall percentage remains the same due to the large base sizes included in the dataset.



# Key Performance Indicators



# Key Performance Indicators - OCS

|                                                                                           | Army | Royal Navy | Royal Marines** | RAF |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------|-----------------|-----|
| Overall satisfaction with training experience: Very Satisfied/Satisfied                   | 80%  | 47%        | ~               | 75% |
| Enough time to eat meals: Always/Often                                                    | 81%  | 79%        | ~               | 73% |
| Opportunity to talk privately with training staff: Very good/Good                         | 90%  | 79%        | ~               | 87% |
| Opportunity to talk privately with welfare staff: Very good/Good                          | 83%  | 55%        | ~               | 59% |
| Satisfaction with support for general mental resilience: Very Satisfied/Satisfied         | 76%  | 55%        | ~               | 71% |
| Someone to go to outside of training hours: Yes                                           | 79%  | 65%        | ~               | 70% |
| Opportunity to raise concerns with a person in authority: Yes                             | 82%  | 69%        | ~               | 79% |
| I was treated fairly: Always/Most of the time                                             | 89%  | 78%        | ~               | 88% |
| Training was conducted without harassment: Always/Most of the time                        | 94%  | 89%        | ~               | 97% |
| My injury was properly dealt with: Strongly Agree/Agree                                   | 88%  | 84%        | ~               | 85% |
| Staff/instructors did all they could to help me succeed in training: Strongly Agree/Agree | 84%  | 70%        | ~               | 77% |

Where there are fewer than 30 respondents, estimates are replaced with ~

\*The response options changed in 2023/24 from Yes/No to Strongly agree to Strongly disagree

7 \*\*Royal Marines 2023/24 n=6

# Army



# Army: Key Findings

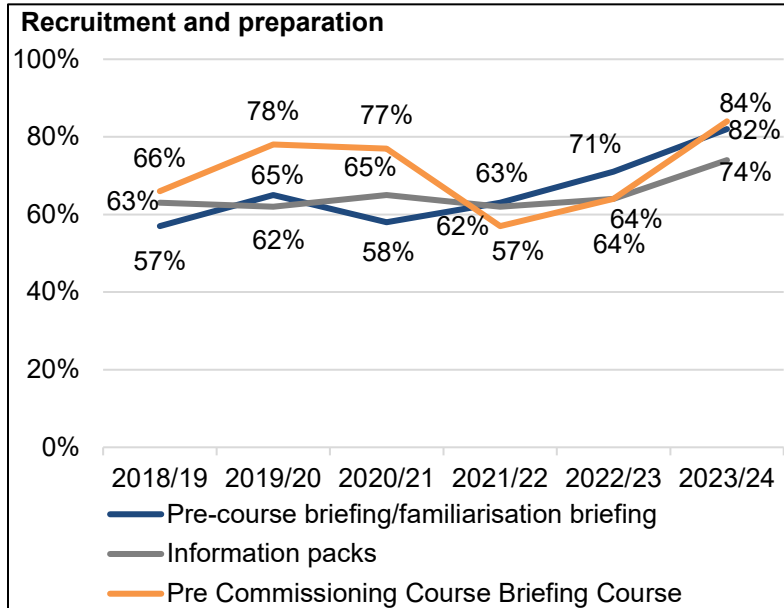
A total of 408 Army Officer Cadets completed the Officer Cadet Survey in 2023/24, representing a response rate of 73%.

## Key Findings

In 2023/24 there have been ten statistically significant increases and four statistically significant decreases when compared to 2022/23.

### Recruitment and preparation

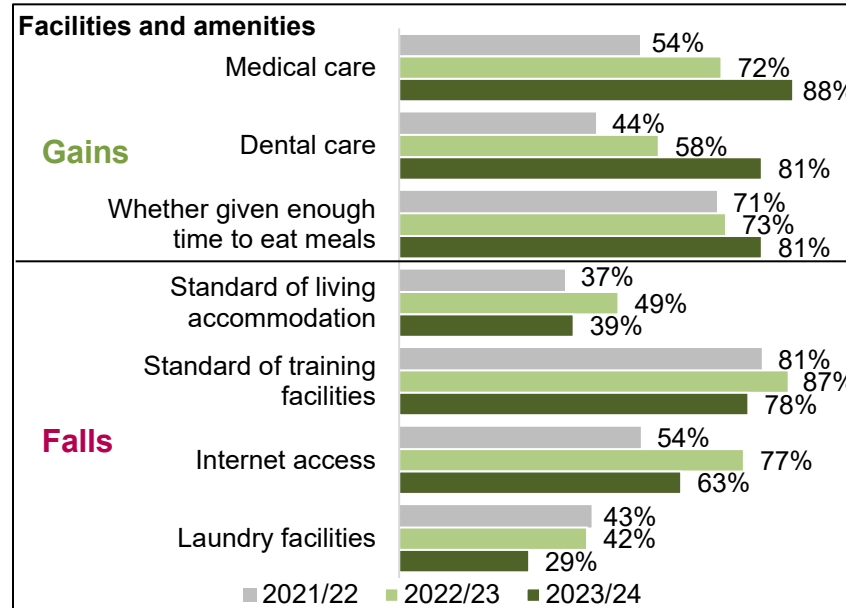
The usefulness of Pre-course/familiarisation briefings (82%), information packs (74%), and the Pre Commissioning Course Briefing Course (84%) continue on an upward trajectory, performing at the highest levels recorded in six years.



## Facilities and amenities

Performance for facilities and amenities is mixed, with three improvements recorded for medical care, dental care, and enough time to eat meals. These are now firmly back in line with pre-COVID levels, building on gains made last year.

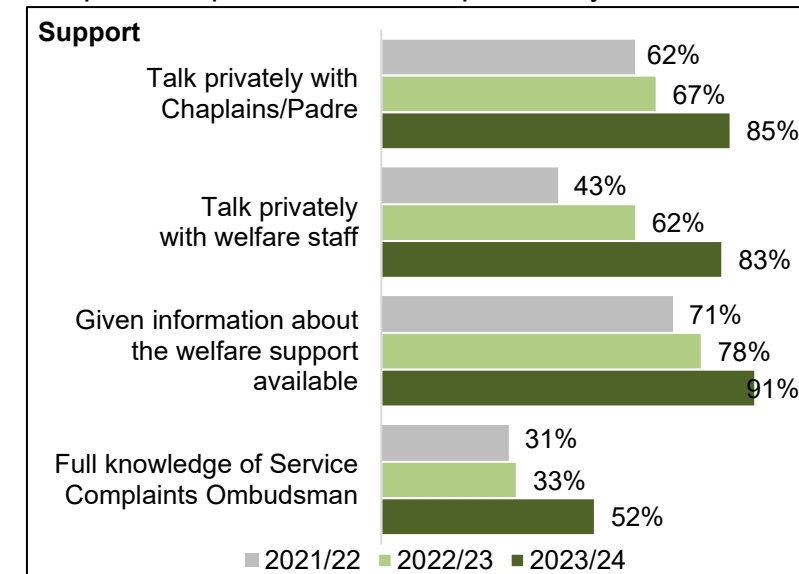
However, falls were recorded in four areas; standard of living accommodation, training facilities, and internet access all dropped following signs of post-COVID recovery last year. Laundry facilities also fell, back in line with 2020/21.



## Support

Four support measures have increased; opportunity to talk privately with Chaplains/Padre (67% to 85%) and welfare staff (62% to 83%) have both improved for a consecutive year.

Army Officer Cadets felt they were provided with enough information about welfare support available (91%) and over half (52%) have full knowledge of how the Service Complaints Ombudsman can help with discrimination, harassment and/or bullying complaints, up from a third the past two years.



# Army: Areas of positive change

## Gains

- There have been gains for ten measures between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Performance has improved for three recruitment and preparation measures, building on the uplift last year. Usefulness of Pre-course briefings, information packs and the Pre Commissioning Course Briefing Course are all performing at the highest levels recorded in six years.
- Under facilities and amenities, further improvement on gains made last year have been recorded for medical and dental care. Providing enough time to eat meals also increased. All three are now firmly back in line with pre-COVID performance levels.
- Four support measures have increased. These include the opportunity to talk privately with Chaplains/Padre and the opportunity to talk privately with welfare staff. In addition, information on available welfare support and knowledge of the Complaints Ombudsman have increased. These four measures are now at the highest levels recorded in the last six years (or since the measure was introduced).

| GAINS                                                                                           | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Recruitment and preparing for training</b>                                                   |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Usefulness of information: Pre-course briefing/familiarisation briefing: Very useful/useful     | 57%     | 65%     | 58%     | 63%     | 71%     | 82%     |
| Usefulness of information: Information packs: Very useful/useful                                | 63%     | 62%     | 65%     | 62%     | 64%     | 74%     |
| Usefulness of information: Pre Commissioning Course Briefing Course (PCCBC): Very useful/useful | 66%     | 78%     | 77%     | 57%     | 64%     | 84%     |
| <b>Facilities and amenities</b>                                                                 |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Medical care: Very good/Good                                                                    | 92%     | 94%     | 70%     | 54%     | 72%     | 88%     |
| Dental care: Very good/Good                                                                     | 87%     | 80%     | 49%     | 44%     | 58%     | 81%     |
| Whether given enough time to eat meals: Always/Often                                            | 79%     | 62%     | 76%     | 71%     | 73%     | 81%     |
| <b>Support</b>                                                                                  |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Opportunity to talk privately with Chaplains/Padre: Very good/Good                              | 82%     | 80%     | 74%     | 62%     | 67%     | 85%     |
| Talk privately with welfare staff: Very good/Good                                               | ..      | ..      | ..      | 43%     | 62%     | 83%     |
| Given information about the welfare support available: Yes, I was given enough information      | ..      | ..      | ..      | 71%     | 78%     | 91%     |
| Full knowledge of Service Complaints Ombudsman: Yes                                             | 37%     | 38%     | 14%     | 31%     | 33%     | 52%     |

Where there are fewer than 30 respondents, estimates are replaced with ~  
Where data is not available, or no respondents have answered a question this is indicated with ..

# Army: Areas of negative change

## Falls

- There have been falls in four areas between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- All falls relate to facilities and amenities. Standard of living accommodation, training facilities and internet access were showing signs of recovery last year following dips in 2021/22 but have decreased again.
- For laundry facilities, performance has fluctuated. Following two stronger years, the proportion indicating that this facility is very good/good has now dropped to 29%.

| FALLS                                            | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Facilities and amenities</b>                  |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Standard of living accommodation: Very good/Good | 53%     | 63%     | 56%     | 37%     | 49%     | 39%     |
| Standard of training facilities: Very good/Good  | 88%     | 91%     | 86%     | 81%     | 87%     | 78%     |
| Internet access: Very good/Good                  | 72%     | 84%     | 61%     | 54%     | 77%     | 63%     |
| Laundry facilities: Very good/Good               | 16%     | 30%     | 31%     | 43%     | 42%     | 29%     |

# Royal Navy



# Royal Navy: Key Findings

A total of 320 Royal Navy Officer Cadets completed the Officer Cadet Survey in 2023/24, representing a response rate of 77%.

## Key Findings

Compared to 2022/23, there were statistically significant decreases for ten measures and a statistically significant increase for one measure.

### General

The proportion of Officer Cadets that were satisfied with their overall training experience dropped by 25 percentage points (72% to 47%) to the lowest level in the last six years.

There was also a decline in perceptions of online learning being effective and engaging (49% to 32%, added in 2022/23).

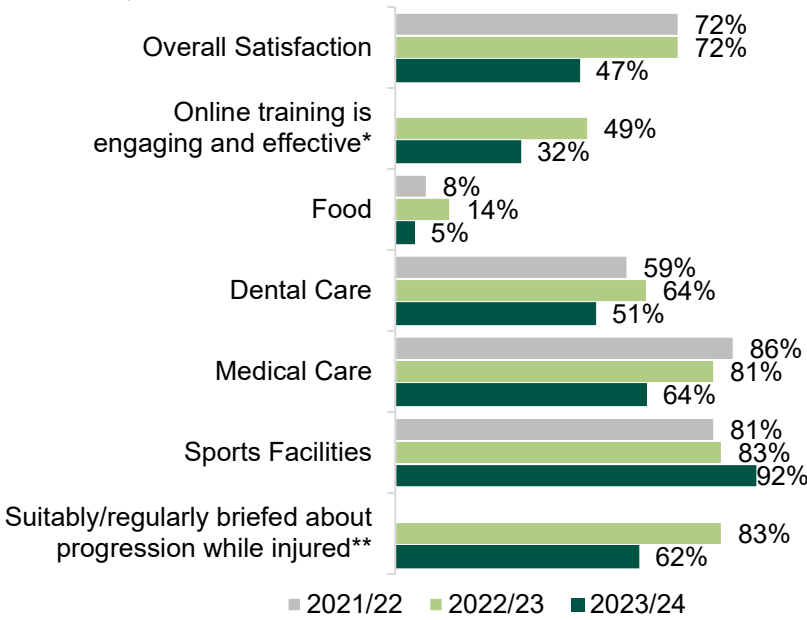
### Facilities and amenities

Ratings of medical care (81% to 64%), dental care (64% to 51%) and food (14% to 5%) all saw declines in 2023/24, with medical care and food performance dropping to the lowest level in the last six years. Satisfaction with sports facilities was the only measure to show improvement in 2023/24 (83% to 92%).

## Setbacks during training

The proportion of Officer Cadets who felt suitably and regularly briefed about progression during injury fell from 83% in 2022/23 when the question was introduced to 62% this year.

### General, facilities and amenities and setbacks

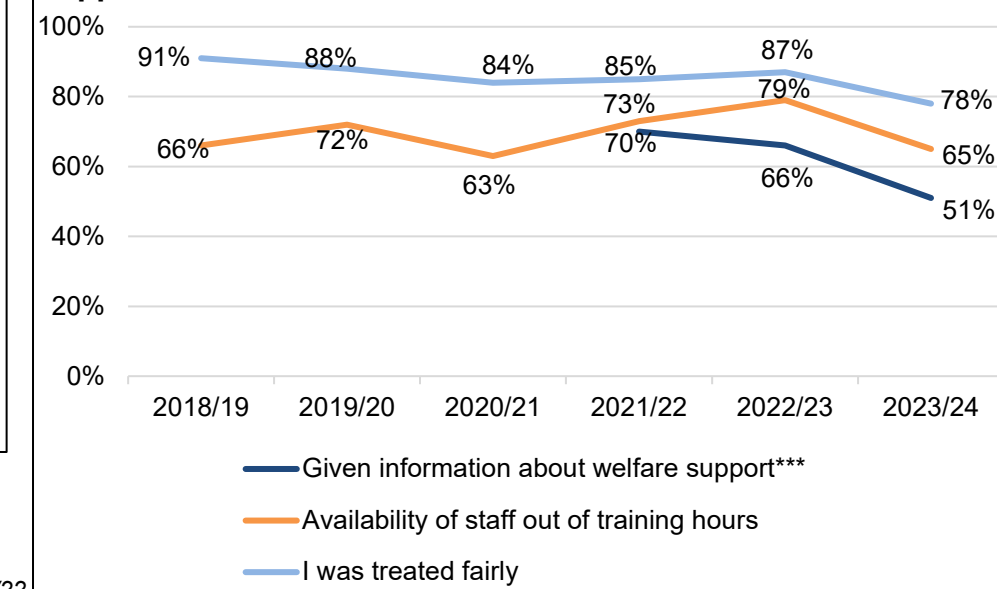


## Support and fairness

Across support and fairness measures, four decreases were recorded. Provision of information about welfare support (66% to 51%) and being treated fairly always/most of the time (87% to 78%) reached the lowest performance levels in the last six years (or since the question was introduced).

Availability of staff for any problems out of training hours (79% to 65%) dropped following two years of improvement.

### Support and fairness



\*Where online learning was provided it was engaging and effective' was introduced as a measure in 2022/23

\*\*'Whilst recovering from injury, you felt suitably and regularly briefed about your progression through training' was introduced as a measure in 2022/23

\*\*\*'Were you given information about the welfare support available during your time at your unit' was introduced as a measure in 2021/22

# Royal Navy: Key areas of positive change

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## Gains

- There was one gain between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The proportion of Royal Navy Officer Cadets who were satisfied with sports facilities increased from 83% to 92%, the highest level recorded for the measure in the last six years.

|                                   | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>GAINS</b>                      |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Facilities and amenities</b>   |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Sports facilities: Very good/Good | 69%     | 65%     | 67%     | 81%     | 83%     | 92%     |

# Royal Navy: Key areas of negative change

## Falls

- There has been a fall for ten measures between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Medical care, dental care and food all saw declines in 2023/24, with medical care and food satisfaction dropping to the lowest level in the last six years.
- Across support measures, provision of information about welfare support dropped (66% to 51%); this is the lowest level since the measure was introduced in 2021/22. Staff availability for problems out of training hours has fallen following two stronger performing years (79% to 65%).
- The proportion of Officer Cadets that felt they were treated fairly reached the lowest level in the last six years (87% to 78%).
- For those experiencing injury, agreement that they felt briefed about progression fell from 83% to 62%.
- There was a decline of 25 percentage points (72% to 47%) for overall satisfaction with the training experience, the lowest level recorded for measure in the last six years. Perceptions of online learning being engaging and effective also fell (49% to 32%).

|                                                                                                                 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>FALLS</b>                                                                                                    |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Facilities and amenities</b>                                                                                 |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Medical care: Very good/Good                                                                                    | 80%     | 86%     | 75%     | 86%     | 81%     | 64%     |
| Dental care: Very good/Good                                                                                     | 61%     | 68%     | 49%     | 59%     | 64%     | 51%     |
| Food: Very good/Good                                                                                            | 22%     | 18%     | 25%     | 8%      | 14%     | 5%      |
| <b>Support</b>                                                                                                  |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Given information about the welfare support available: Yes, I was given enough information                      | ..      | ..      | ..      | 70%     | 66%     | 51%     |
| Availability of staff for problems out of training hours: Yes                                                   | 66%     | 72%     | 63%     | 73%     | 79%     | 65%     |
| <b>Fairness</b>                                                                                                 |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| I was treated fairly: Always/Most of the time                                                                   | 91%     | 88%     | 84%     | 85%     | 87%     | 78%     |
| <b>Setbacks during training</b>                                                                                 |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Felt suitably and regularly briefed about your progression through training while injured: Strongly agree/Agree | ..      | ..      | ..      | ..      | 83%     | 62%     |
| <b>General</b>                                                                                                  |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Overall satisfaction with training experience: Very Satisfied/Satisfied                                         | 73%     | 69%     | 63%     | 72%     | 72%     | 47%     |
| Where online learning was provided it was engaging and effective: Strongly agree/Agree                          | ..      | ..      | ..      | ..      | 49%     | 32%     |

Where there are fewer than 30 respondents, estimates are replaced with ~  
Where data is not available, or no respondents have answered a question this is indicated with ..

# RAF



# RAF: Key Findings

A total of 230 RAF Officer Cadets completed the Officer Cadet Survey in 2023/24, representing a response rate of 80%.

## Key Findings

There have not been any statistically significant increases between 2022/23 and 2023/24. There have been statistically significant decreases for three measures.

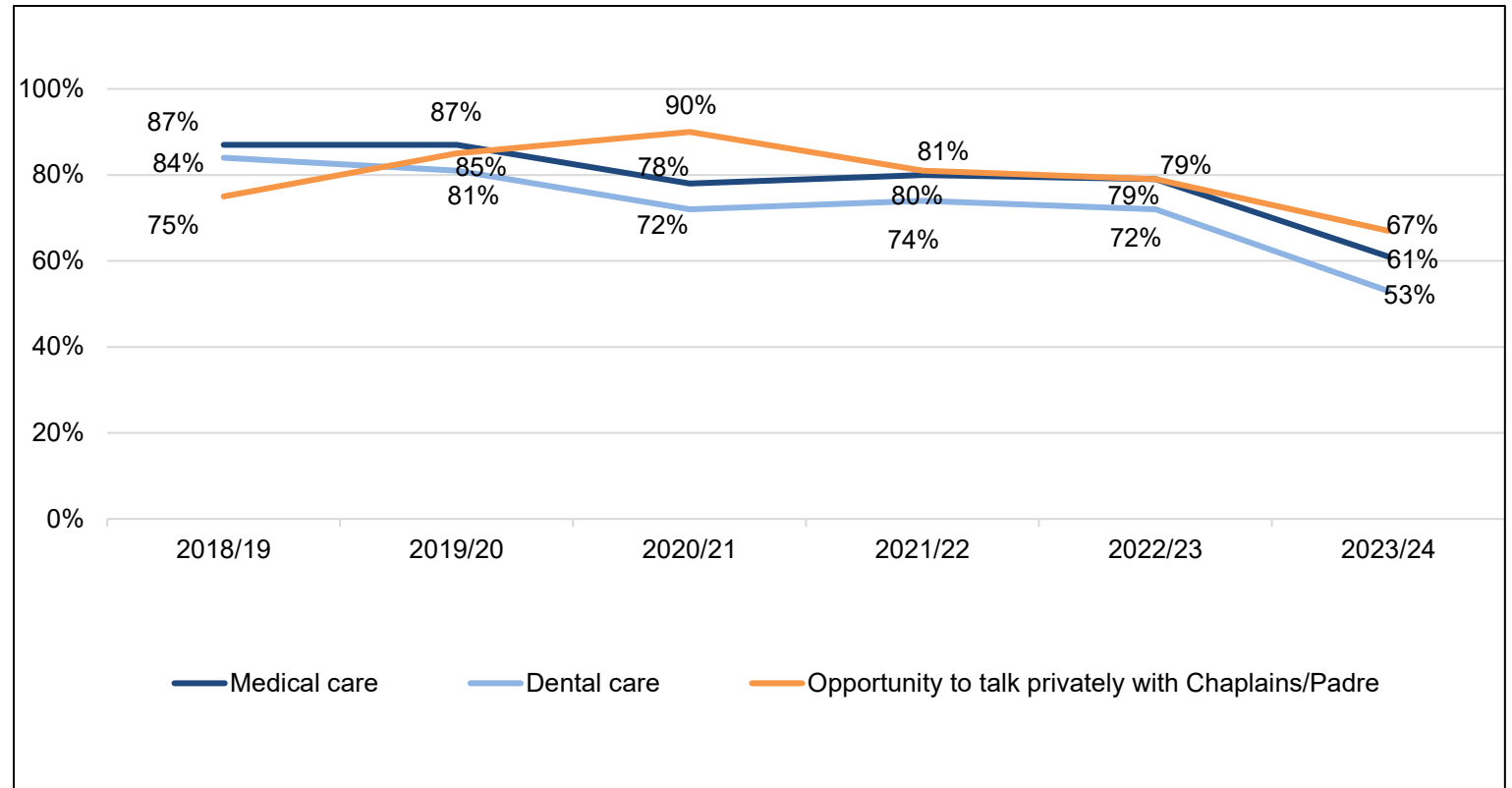
### Facilities and amenities

The two facilities and amenities measures that decreased this year were medical (79% to 61%) and dental care (72% to 53%), both decreased by more than 10 percentage points.

There has been a gradual decline over time, both measures are now at the lowest level in the last six years.

### Support

One support measure, the opportunity to talk privately with Chaplains/Padre, decreased from 79% to 67%. Performance has fluctuated but now dropped after two stable years to the lowest level recorded in the last six years.



# RAF:

## Key areas of negative change

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### Falls

- There have been falls for three measures between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Two of these are within facilities and amenities, medical care decreased from 79% to 61%, an 18 percentage point decline. Dental care decreased from 72% to 53%, a decrease of 19 percentage points. Both measures are now at the lowest levels recorded in the last six years.
- One support measure, the opportunity to talk privately with Chaplains/Padre, decreased (79% to 67%). Again, this is the lowest level recorded in the last six years.

| <b>FALLS</b>                                                       | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>2019/20</b> | <b>2020/21</b> | <b>2021/22</b> | <b>2022/23</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Facilities and amenities</b>                                    |                |                |                |                |                |                |
| Medical care: Very good/Good                                       | 87%            | 87%            | 78%            | 80%            | 79%            | 61%            |
| Dental care: Very good/Good                                        | 84%            | 81%            | 72%            | 74%            | 72%            | 53%            |
| <b>Support</b>                                                     |                |                |                |                |                |                |
| Opportunity to talk privately with Chaplains/Padre: Very good/Good | 75%            | 85%            | 90%            | 81%            | 79%            | 67%            |

# Methodology

# Survey methodology

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## Survey completion

All Officer Cadets who have completed at least two weeks training should be given the opportunity participate in the online survey which is administered by training units.

All respondents completing the survey are reassured that they will not be asked to record their name anywhere on the survey, and are told how their information will be made available to those at their unit and involved in the training evaluation process.

Survey completion is voluntary and Officer Cadets can opt out of participating at any point.

The data set used for this Executive Summary includes data collected from full survey completes only.

This report is based on data collected from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

## Survey questions

The questionnaire was designed to include all the key questions raised by the Defence Operational Capability Audit and was developed by a Tri-Service group. The survey is reviewed annually by the Tri-Service Steering Group.

Questions are asked of all Officer Cadets unless they are specific to a sub-group of respondents. For example, questions about set-backs during training will only be asked of those who indicated that they were ill or injured and reported this.

IFF Research conducted a series of cognitive interview sessions with 11 RTS Recruits. This took place between 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to give an opportunity to review the question set to ensure it makes sense to Recruits and is providing information MOD require. Changes made to the RTS survey that apply to the OCS also were carried over.



# Response rates

Over a twelve-month fieldwork period between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 964 Officer Cadets completed the survey. All training establishments were directed to give all Officer Cadets access to the survey and an opportunity to complete it. Officer Cadets are not mandated to complete the survey and can opt out if they wish. The tables below present the survey response rates for each Command Service.

|               | Total Responses<br>(22/23) | Response Rate<br>(22/23) | Total Responses<br>(23/24) | Response Rate<br>(23/24) |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Army          | 414                        | 70%                      | 408                        | 73%                      |
| Royal Navy    | 180                        | 55%                      | 320                        | 77%                      |
| Royal Marines | 24                         | 43%                      | 6*                         | 10%                      |
| RAF           | 319                        | 75%                      | 230                        | 80%                      |
| Total         | 937                        | 67%                      | 964                        | 73%                      |

# Statistical reliability

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Only a sample of the overall 'population' has completed the survey so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those that would have been found, had everybody been surveyed (the 'true' values). All Officer Cadets should have been provided with the opportunity to participate, therefore figures can be susceptible to potential bias, more so than a random sample.

Statistical tests are carried out between various sub-sets of respondents and over time for certain key indicators (full details of the testing applied is included in the Background Quality Report). This includes the following:

- Current vs last year:
  - Army 2023/24 vs Army 2022/23
  - Royal Navy 2023/24 vs 2022/23
  - RAF 2023/24 vs RAF 2022/23

For any percentage given, however, we can estimate 'confidence intervals' within which the true values are likely to fall. For example; if 10% or 90% of our respondents base of 230 RAF Officer Cadets strongly agreed/agreed that the training was what they expected, we can be 99% confident that the 'true' value would be between 7.7% and 12.3% (if 10% strongly agree) and between 87.7% or 92.3% (if 90% strongly agree/agree), i.e. a margin of 2.3% on each side.

Similar margins for other percentages and sub-groups of the respondents are given in table on the following page. It should be remembered that the 'true' finding is much more likely to be towards the centre of the possible range of responses than towards the margins.

For similar reasons, apparent differences in results relating to sub groups may, if small, not necessarily reflect genuine attitudinal differences. We can be 99% confident that differences exceeding those in the table on the next page are genuine or 'statistically significant' differences.

Please note confidence intervals in the table overleaf refer to questions where all respondents are asked. For routed questions where only a sub-set of respondents are asked (e.g. those who were ill or injured during training), confidence intervals will be larger.

# Confidence intervals

The table below shows 99% confidence intervals for data recorded at different percentages.

| Size of respondent base on which survey results are based | 10% or 90%<br>± | 20% or 80%<br>± | 30% or 70%<br>± | 40% or 60%<br>± | 50%<br>± |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Army (408)                                                | 2.0             | 2.7             | 3.0             | 3.3             | 3.3      |
| Royal Navy (320)                                          | 2.1             | 2.8             | 3.2             | 3.4             | 3.4      |
| Royal Marines (6)*                                        | -               | -               | -               | -               | -        |
| RAF (230)                                                 | 2.3             | 3.0             | 3.5             | 3.7             | 3.8      |





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