

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE TOP LEVEL MESSAGES

SECTION 1 - OPERATIONS

AFGHANISTAN

Top Line:

British forces are in Afghanistan to prevent Afghan territory from again being used by Al Qaeda (AQ) as a base from which to plan attacks on the UK and its allies. The presence of NATO forces is preventing AQ or the Taliban regime from returning while Afghanistan's security forces are trained to take over the tasks for themselves. We do not seek a perfect Afghanistan, but a stable Afghanistan, able to maintain its own security and prevent AQ from returning.

Supporting Lines:

- The Taliban regime in Afghanistan gave safe haven to Al Qaeda (AQ) and allowed terrorists to plan and carry out attacks around the world. That is why the UN authorised a NATO-led intervention.
- It is vital to Britain's security that AQ is denied a foothold to operate across Pakistan or be allowed to return to operate in Afghanistan. Pakistan is now robustly tackling the terrorist threat within its own borders particularly in the vital border regions. A more stable and secure Afghanistan and Pakistan will help ensure a safer Britain and world.
- The UK is part of a UN mandated NATO-led international mission in Afghanistan supported actively by 60 countries, of which 49 are providing troops. Several Islamic countries are part of the mission. The aim is to prevent Afghanistan becoming a terrorist sanctuary again.
- UK and NATO allies and partners in Afghanistan are resolved to see the campaign through to a successful conclusion. The international community has a clear, realistic, and achievable strategy, and a properly resourced campaign plan to deliver it. At the heart of the strategy is a process of transition from the international community and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan Government, with the continuing engagement and support of the international community.
- ISAF strategy, endorsed by NATO, involves protecting the civilian population from the insurgents, supporting more effective government at every level, and building up the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) as rapidly as feasible. The ISAF coalition wants to transfer security responsibility for districts and provinces to Afghan control as soon as they are ready.
- The Prime Minister is clear that there will not be British troops in a combat role or in the numbers they are now in Afghanistan by 2015. Of course, there could be some troops in a training role as part of a wider diplomatic relationship in the longer term, as we have with other countries. The bottom line is clear: we don't want to be fighting in Afghanistan a day longer than necessary, and we believe that we have the right strategy to achieve this.
- The Lisbon Conference (in November 2010) discussed both transition and long-term commitment to Afghanistan. The transition process is the next phase of the NATO/ISAF counter-insurgency strategy for Afghanistan, and will reinforce Afghan sovereignty as ISAF and the international community transfer responsibility to Afghan forces and move into a supporting role. Security responsibility for districts and provinces will transfer to Afghan control as soon as the ANSF are ready. This will begin in 2011, meeting President Karzai's objective for the ANSF to lead and conduct security operations in all provinces by the end of 2014. This is consistent with the deadline the Prime Minister has set for the end of UK combat operations in

Afghanistan by 2015. The NATO Summit also committed to a long-term relationship with the Government of Afghanistan, based on aid, development, diplomacy, trade and, if necessary, military training.

- UK troops working alongside US, Danish, Estonian and Afghan forces continue to make progress by driving out the Taliban and extending the authority and influence of the Afghan Government in Central Helmand. This is allowing the ANSF, with ISAF support, to protect the population, and the international community to help the Afghans extend governance and develop an area where a large portion of the population of Helmand province lives. But we must be realistic: Helmand's security situation remains complex and there will be more tough fighting ahead as we consolidate gains and spread Afghan governance to more towns and villages.

Key Facts:

- UK commitment: The enduring UK force level in Afghanistan is about 9,500, out of a total ISAF force of around 130,000 personnel from 49 troop contributing nations.
- Development: In 2010, the UK contributed £5 million to the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Finance Fund.
- Security: As of November 2010, the ANA's strength was 146,352 and the ANP's strength was 116,367. By 31 October 2011, ANSF force levels are planned to reach 171,600 for the ANA and 134,000 for the ANP. Of the 14 districts in Helmand Province, 6 were under Afghan Government control in 2008. By June 2010, this had risen to 11.
- Politics: The Asia Foundation (TAF) conducts a yearly survey to monitor perceptions of the state and how these may have changed over previous years. The TAF survey, published on 9 November 2010, showed the majority of Afghan people viewed both the ANA and the ANP as honest and fair and helped to improve security. However, the majority believed both the ANA and ANP needed the support of foreign troops, reiterating the importance of continued ANA and ANP training by ISAF to increase their professionalism and independence. A poll, commissioned by the BBC and published in December 2010, suggested that the people of Afghanistan felt they were benefiting from the progress being made in their country. The poll showed that ordinary Afghans continue to overwhelmingly reject the Taliban, who they clearly understand offer only violence and destruction and, instead, welcome the Government of Afghanistan. The poll showed the number of people who feel their country 'is heading in the right direction' has fallen from last year's poll, but the figure is still consistent with other respected polls of the Afghan people. The results also show that optimism still far outweighs pessimism.
- Drugs: Tackling the drug trade is a major priority for the Afghan Government and its international partners. The UK is supporting the Afghans to deliver their National Drug Control Strategy, including by co-ordinating the International Community's contributions. As a result of this work, the number of poppy-free provinces has risen from 8 to 20 (out of 34) since 2005.
- Education: There are currently 6.6 million children attending school, up from 1 million in 2001. 37% of school attendees are girls – up from virtually none under the Taliban when girls were not allowed to go to school. In Helmand, there are now 135 schools open, up from 34 in 2006.

IRAQ

Top Line:

UK combat forces were withdrawn from Iraq in July 2009 but a small number of British military trainers remain to build the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces. The Royal Navy is continuing to play a crucial role in training the Iraqi Navy to defend its territorial waters and offshore oil infrastructure upon which Iraq's economic stability is so dependent. Royal Navy warships also help to patrol Iraq's territorial while the Iraqi Navy develops its capability to undertake this task itself. The Royal Navy remains on course to complete its contribution to the training and maritime support mission by Spring 2011. The UK is also

the second largest contributor to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I), and leads on officer education and training. Through these efforts, the UK is contributing to a stable Iraq that can meet the security of its people.

SECTION 2 - POLICY

TRANSFORMING DEFENCE – SDSR AND DEFENCE REFORM

Top Lines:

The task ahead of us to 2015 and beyond is driving the transformation of Defence. This is a once in a generation opportunity, not only on the back of the SDSR, but also through the root and branch reform of the entire Ministry of Defence led by the Defence Reform Unit under Lord Levene.

The National Security Strategy and SDSR provide the baseline for everything in Defence from this point on. But we need to take the time to work through the decisions required to implement the vision. Future Force 2020 provides a realistic aiming point, and the commitment to Defence reviews every five years creates the ability to continue the transformation process.

The mission in Afghanistan remains the main effort, and this shaped many of the decisions in the SDSR. The MOD is working to ensure that as we transform Defence, the decisions required do not have unintended consequences for operations in Afghanistan.

Defence must learn to live within its means. That is why the transformation agenda is not just about the big ticket items decided in the SDSR, but about driving through new systems and processes to bring the efficiency required to keep Defence within its funding envelope. SDSR took some very difficult decisions to help rebalance the Defence programme and significantly reduced the underfunding, but we are not there yet. Implementation requires us to continue to develop and refine our plans to live within our means.

Supporting Lines:

SDSR

The Government's two main priorities in the SDSR were to protect the mission in Afghanistan; and to make sure the UK emerges with a coherent defence capability in 2020. The Department is, therefore, pressing ahead with procuring key capabilities which will allow us to deliver the National Security Strategy.

The UK will retain the ability to use the Armed Forces where necessary to protect the UK's national interests. Although future forces will be smaller than now, they will retain their geographical reach and their ability to operate across a spectrum from high-intensity intervention to enduring stabilisation activity.

The MOD has to play its part in reducing the deficit and bring the budget back into balance. However, given the importance this Government places on national security and defence, the defence budget is not being reduced by as much as most other parts of government. Overall, the resources allocated for the next four years will enable the MOD to pursue today's operations and prepare for those of tomorrow. But it has required some tough decisions which will result in scaling back in the overall size of the Armed Forces and reducing some capabilities that are less critical to today's requirements.

The Department will manage the risks associated with transition to a new force structure and reacting to unexpected future risks by maintaining our strategic intelligence capability, ensuring that Defence has adaptable capabilities, deepening partnerships with international allies, and preserving the ability to reconstitute our levels of military capability.

The SDSR is a point of departure, not the end of the line. It sets a path to 2020 and beyond, with regular reviews every five years. The first period from 2010 to 2015 is a period of rebalancing. The period from 2015 to 2020 will be about re-growing capability and achieving our overall vision. The Prime Minister, Defence Secretary and CDS have made clear that this will require year-on-year growth in the Defence budget beyond 2015.

Defence Reform

The Secretary of State launched the Defence Reform Review in August 2010 under the leadership of Lord Levene, to report by July 2011. Where possible, decisions will be taken earlier in order to maximise benefits and minimise the period of uncertainty.

Defence Reform is a root and branch reform of the entire department (essentially, everything other than the front line capabilities covered by the SDSR). This is one of the Secretary of State's top three priorities, alongside Afghanistan and the SDSR. It is the most ambitious reform programme in Defence for 25 years.

The aim of Defence Reform is to design and deliver a leaner and less centralised organisation by 2015 that works and is affordable within the budget set by the Spending Review; has clear allocation of responsibility, authority and accountability; and is based around policy and strategy, the Armed Forces, and procurement and estates.

The Defence Reform Unit comprises an external Steering Group, chaired by Lord Levene (a former Chief of Defence Procurement and now Chairman of Lloyd's of London), with Conservative Peer Sheila Noakes, George Iacobescu (Chief Executive of Canary Wharf), Dr David Allen (a Non-Executive member of the Defence Board), Raymond McKeeve (a partner at law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner), Björn Conway (a partner at Ernst and Young), and Gerry Grimstone (Chair of Standard Life and formerly a Non-Executive Director at Air Command). The Permanent Under Secretary and Vice Chief of the Defence Staff are the departmental members. None of the external members is being paid. This group will lead the review and make recommendations to the Defence Secretary in July 2011.

FUTURE RESERVES 2020 STUDY

Top Line:

In announcing the SDSR on 19 October 2010, the Prime Minister commissioned a review of the Reserve Forces to ensure that MOD makes the most efficient use of Reservist skills, experience and capabilities. Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nicholas Houghton KCB ADC Gen, will lead the review, supported by Julian Brazier TD MP, who has been appointed as his deputy. The Study is known as the Future Reserves 2020 Study (FR20) and will take six months to complete. MOD is expected to announce its findings in Summer 2011.

Supporting Lines:

FR20 is organised into three phases. In Phase One, the Study is developing a common understanding of the context in which Reserves will be used in future and define the strategic principles around which the balance between Regular and non-Regular manpower should be designed. Phase Two will focus on Reserve Force structures needed to complement the Regular

Force and meet operational requirements. Later, in Phase Three, the Study will develop a detailed concept and outline plan for implementing new single-Services Reserves' structures.

BUDGET

Top Line:

The Spending Review (announced on 20 October) set out the resources allocated to Defence for implementing the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). The Spending Review has been closely aligned with the SDSR throughout. The Core Defence Budget for 2010/11 is £32.9 billion. This does not include the costs for operations or depreciation.

Supporting Lines:

- The Government has committed to bringing down the national deficit by reducing public expenditure. Despite these cuts, the UK expects to continue to have the fourth largest military budget in the world (and, on some measures, the third largest) and to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of UK GDP on Defence.
- The MOD is committed to a one-third reduction in administrative costs over the SR10 period. In addition, it expects to save at least £3 billion in efficiencies by 2014/15 through further improvements in areas such as the way we support Defence Equipment; work examining the use of Service personnel; reviewing procurement; the management of the Defence Estate; savings in back office and process costs; as well as other opportunities presented in the Defence Review.

Key Facts:

- By 2014/15, the budget will reduce by a little over 7.5% in real terms.
- The Core Defence Budget for 2010/11 is £32.9 billion. This does not include the costs for operations or depreciation. This figure is consistent with the new Clear Line of Sight accounting methodology mandated by the Treasury, and reflects the near cash spending power of the MOD. The £4 billion difference between this figure and the previously quoted budget figure of £36.9 billion is mainly due to the removal of the notional 'cost of capital' charge (£3.6 billion) and a corresponding reduction to the budget. The remainder is due to machinery of Government changes (that is, the movement of responsibilities and associated resources between departments). The Department's net spending power has not decreased as a result of these changes.
- The cost of operations is additional to the Defence budget and is met from the Treasury Reserve. In the last financial year, 2009/10, over £4 billion was spent in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. A further £4.4 billion is estimated to be spent this financial year

SECTION 3 - EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT

Top Line:

Success in Afghanistan is the top priority for defence and the Government is fully committed to ensuring that the campaign is properly resourced, funded and equipped.

Supporting Lines:

- Significant improvements have been made in the equipment provided to UK Armed Forces on operations, and Operational Commanders now have a wide range of helicopters, protected vehicles, weapons, remotely piloted air system (RPAS) and other key equipments at their disposal.

Key Facts:

Current Operations

- Over £4.3 billion has been approved through the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) process on equipment to meet emerging threats and requirements for Afghanistan since Operation HERRICK began.
- On 10 June 2010, the Prime Minister announced up to an extra £67 million for equipment in support of the Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) campaign.
- On 7 July 2010, the Secretary of State announced £189 million of funding from the Treasury Reserve as a UOR. It is being spent on:
 - £158 million for equipment such as ground-based surveillance and communications systems to make bases more secure;
 - £19 million for personal equipment, including Osprey body armour and helmets, light and heavy machine guns, combat shotguns, and more night vision equipment;
 - £12 million for better protected logistics support vehicles.
- On 7 December 2010, the Prime Minister announced that Reaper remotely piloted aircraft hours in Afghanistan would be doubled, giving troops increased air support to ground operations. Reaper has already proved successful in the campaign against the laying and operation of IEDs in Afghanistan

Protected Vehicles

- Delivery of more protected vehicles to Afghanistan has continued, including Mastiff, Ridgback, and Jackal.
- In October 2010, Wolfhound, the 'heavyweight' in the Tactical Support Vehicle (TSV) fleet became operational. Combining the protection and firepower of a Mastiff with a flatbed for cargo, Wolfhound joins Husky and Coyote in carrying essential combat supplies such as food, water and ammunition to troops on frontline patrols. The original order was boosted by 30 more vehicles in June 2010, bringing total contract value to £160 million. On 17 October 2010, an order for a further 30 Husky vehicles was announced in a £36 million contract (bringing the total value to around £220 million).
- In Autumn 2010, the Warthog armoured all-terrain vehicle became operational in Afghanistan. Over 100 vehicles have been bought to replace Viking, with 2 Royal Tank Regiment being the first to benefit from the Warthog's outstanding manoeuvrability, greater protection and firepower.
- On 30 November 2010, the Government announced a £180 million contract to buy the next generation Light Protected Patrol Vehicle (Foxhound). The first vehicles should be available for training in 2011.

Counter-IED (C-IED)

- In June 2010, the new Talisman Counter-IED system was unveiled. Bought as a UOR, worth more than £180 million, the suite of vehicles clears routes of IEDs and mines. Each Talisman suite consists of a Mastiff protected patrol vehicle; a Buffalo Mine-Protected Vehicle with a rummaging arm; a JCB High Mobility Engineer Excavator; a T-Hawk Micro Air Vehicle and a Talon tracked Remote Control Vehicle. Operated by the Royal Engineers, its capability improves our ability to manage the IED and mine threat, and protects vehicle convoys delivering supplies to Forward Operating Bases.

Personal protection

- In September 2010, the first layer of a new, multi-tiered pelvic protection system was introduced for troops in Afghanistan to help mitigate the effects of IED blasts. The three-tiered system of clothing and armour consists of special protective underwear and detachable armoured groin protection and trousers. The second and third protective tiers will be deployed in 2011.

Helicopters

- Installing new, improved engines has given the Lynx Mk9A helicopter enhanced performance at altitude and during the heat of the Afghan summer, providing a year-round light helicopter capability for the first time. They complement the support Chinook, Merlin and Sea King helicopters as well as the Apache attack helicopter in the theatre fleet. The Merlin helicopter deployed to Afghanistan at the end of 2009 and, equipped with the latest avionics and defensive aids, its addition to the helicopter fleet has been well received.

Weapons

- In June 2010, Royal Marines from 40 Commando became the first British troops to use the new Sharpshooter rifle on the front line. With enhanced accuracy of engagement during long-range firefights with the Taliban, Sharpshooter is the first new infantry combat rifle to be issued to troops for more than 20 years. It complements the already potent range of weaponry used by our forces in Afghanistan.

ISTAR

- The Reaper RPAS programme has now provided over 14,000 hrs of armed over-watch in support of UK and ISAF forces in Afghanistan. An extra Reaper remotely piloted aircraft arrived in Afghanistan in September 2010, allowing 39 Squadron to fly multiple Reaper aircraft at any one time, delivering a total of 36 hours of video surveillance in support of troops on the ground every day - an 80% increase over the past 12 months.
- The Future Force 2020 will include strategic surveillance and intelligence platforms capable of providing wide area coverage as part of our broader ISTAR capability. These will include UK-operated Boeing RC135 (Rivet Joint) and an increasing range of remotely-piloted aircraft systems.
- The Government has taken the difficult decision to take Sentinel out of service post Op HERRICK. At the time Sentinel was envisaged, no assets in Defence could provide similar capabilities. However, at present, Defence has the use of a number of other platforms which can match some of Sentinel's capabilities and can mitigate, to a degree, the loss of the platform.

Tornado/Harrier

- In August 2010, the Royal Air Force deployed an extra two Tornado GR4 aircraft to Afghanistan. The aircraft joined the eight RAF Tornado GR4s already provided, and will boost flying hours by 25%, or an extra 130 flying hours per month.
- The SDSR decision to retire Harrier aircraft and reduce the overall number of Tornados shows the choices the Government had to make to focus resources where they are needed most – in support of current operations. These reductions will enable the UK to maximise investment in new aircraft, leading to a more modern and capable fast jet fleet mix (Typhoon and JSF).
- Carrier Strike capability will be regenerated on the introduction into service, towards the end of the decade, of the Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and JSF.

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)

- The Government remains absolutely committed to the JSF programme, which will provide a world-beating aircraft, able to operate both from the sea and land, ideally suited for our future capability needs. The UK plans to transition to a combined fast jet fleet of JSF and Typhoon aircraft in the medium to long term, and will assess the balance between the two platforms in future Defence reviews.
- The UK now plans to buy the more capable Carrier Variant JSF, which offers advantages in terms of range, payload and through-life costs over the Short Take Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) variant. The UK plans to deliver the Carrier Strike capability from around 2020, bringing both the carrier and the JSF into service at around the same time.

Nimrod MRA4

- The Government has decided not to bring MRA4 into service. It would have cost significant amounts to operate and maintain the aircraft (up to £200 million annually or £2 billion in total).

- Sentry (our AWACS) offers some of the maritime patrol capability that MRA4 would have provided, but the Government accepts that the UK will be more reliant on allies and partners for some forms of maritime protection and for long-range search and rescue. Clearly, it is not appropriate to go into details on some of these alternatives, or on those used for protecting the UK's deterrent.

Strategic and Tactical Lift

- The RAF's Air Transport Force will be rationalised as quickly as possible to consist of only the most modern and capable aircraft types: A400M, C17 and FSTA. The UK will gradually withdraw legacy fleets such as the C130 Hercules, Tristar, VC10 and existing Comms Fleet Aircraft as soon as new capabilities are introduced.

Industrial and Technology Policy

- On 20 December 2010, the Government launched a Green Paper marking the formal consultation on Equipment, Support and Technology for UK Defence and Security. Led by the MOD and Home Office, it covers a range of issues including national security, working with other countries, exports, small and medium-sized enterprises and cyber security. This is the first time these key issues have been considered together from both a defence and security perspective. A White Paper, published in Spring 2011, will set out the Government's approach to industry and technology policy in the defence and security domains over the next five years.

Type 45 Destroyers

- The first Type 45, HMS Daring, entered service on 31 July 2010. The second in class, HMS Dauntless, was formally commissioned into the Royal Navy on 3 June 2010, and is currently undergoing sea trials. Sea Viper was fired from her in September 2010, representing the first firing of the missile from a Type 45 platform. HMS Diamond (Ship 3) was accepted off contract in September 2010 and is currently undergoing sea trials. Dragon (Ship 4) will shortly commence her first set of sea trials. Defender (Ship 5) was launched on 21 October 2009 and Duncan (Ship 6) on 11 October 2010. Both are currently being fitted out on the Clyde. .

Submarines

- The first in class of the new Astute Submarines, HMS Astute, has completed her first set of rigorous sea trials and has now been commissioned into the Royal Navy. She will now undergo further trials before she is declared operational. Ambush was named on 16 December 2010 to be launched in early 2011. Artful and Audacious are under construction at Barrow and are making excellent progress.

SECTION 4 – PERSONNEL

Top Line:

The Government recognises the need do much more to ensure our Armed Forces, veterans and their families have the support they need, and are treated with the dignity they deserve. The commitment to rebuilding the Covenant will set the tone for Government policy aimed at improving the support available for the Armed Forces Community.

Supporting lines:

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

- The Government has committed to rewrite the Covenant as a new tri-service document which sets the general principles which will be enduring and can be applied to particular problems as they arise.

- The Government is bringing forward legislation in the Armed Forces Bill which will require the Defence Secretary to present an Armed Forces Covenant report to Parliament every year.
- The “Programme for Government” described a number of measures designed to rebuild the Military Covenant. These range from support to Service children’s education to improved rest and recuperation arrangements. The MOD has already doubled Operational Allowance and has made changes to Rest and Recuperation.
- In December 2010, the Government announced details of a new scheme to provide university scholarships for the children of personnel killed in Service, enhancements to the scheme for Service personnel to study at university and the implementation of a Service children pupil premium.
- This work builds on the good things that came out of the Service Personnel Command Paper and the Government intends to continue with the specific commitments and principles that were laid down within it.

COMMITMENTS AND PRIORITIES

The coalition programme, published in June 2010, stated the Government would work to rebuild the Military Covenant by:

- Ensuring that Service personnel’s rest and recuperation leave can be maximised **[delivered]**;
- Changing the rules so that Service personnel only have to register once on the Service register;
- Exploring the potential for including Service children as part of proposals for a pupil premium **[announced on 9 December 2010]**;
- Providing university and further education scholarships for the children of Servicemen and women who have been killed on active service since 1990 **[announced for implementation in September 2011]**;
- Providing support for ex-Service personnel to study at university **[announced for implementation in September 2011]**;
- Creating a new programme, ‘Troops for Teachers’, to recruit ex-Service personnel into the teaching profession **[‘Troops to Teachers’ announced on 24 November 2010 in the Department for Education’s White Paper - scheme to be launched in 2011]**;
- Providing extra support for veteran mental health needs **[being taken forward as implementation of the Murrison study]**;
- Reviewing the rules governing the awarding of medals;
- Including Armed Forces pay in plans for a fair pay review;
- Ensuring that injured personnel are treated in dedicated military wards; and
- Looking at whether there is scope to refurbish Armed Forces’ accommodation from efficiencies within the Ministry of Defence.

PAY AND ALLOWANCES

The Government is determined that members of the Armed Forces should receive a remuneration package commensurate with the vital role they play. The outcomes of the SDSR and the Spending Review will have far-reaching consequences, particularly in curtailing cost growth, albeit the full impact on pay and allowances is not yet clear. It is critical that any changes are delivered with due consideration of the need to continue to attract, recruit and retain the highest calibre individuals possible.

- The tax-free Operational Allowance for Armed Forces personnel serving in qualifying operational theatres has been doubled.
- For financial year 2010/11, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) recommended, and the Government accepted, a 2% pay rise, plus targeted measures including the introduction of several new Financial Retention Incentives in specific ranks or trades.
- As part of the Government's Emergency Budget, on 22 June 2010, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a two-year pay freeze from 2011/12 for public sector workers, including Service and Civilian personnel. However, those earning £21,000 or less, will see a pay rise of at least £250 in these years. Annual increments for Service personnel will continue to be paid. The independent AFPRB will continue to submit recommendations for the Government's consideration on food and accommodation charges for all Service personnel to take effect from April 2011 and April 2012.

ARMED FORCES COMPENSATION SCHEME (AFCS)

- The AFCS provides compensation for injuries, illness and death arising from Service since 6 April 2005. War pensions are paid to veterans with injuries caused by their service prior to this date. It covers all serving and ex-Service personnel and provides an immediately-available tax-free lump sum for pain and suffering, the size of which reflects the severity of injury or illness that has been sustained. There are 15 tariff levels with associated lump sum awards which currently range from £1,155 to £570,000. The AFCS also provides a bereavement grant to survivors of Service personnel who die as a result of their service.
- For serious injuries and illness, the AFCS also provides an income stream known as the Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP). This is in addition to the lump sum and is a tax-free, index-linked monthly payment from discharge until death. The GIP is an enhancement to an individual's ill-health pension, paid to recognise the injury or illness was sustained as a result of service. The scale of the payment is based on the severity of the injury, and age and salary on discharge.
- The Scheme was recently reviewed under the independent chairmanship of former Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral the Lord Boyce. The Review found that the Scheme was fundamentally sound, but that adjustments were required in some areas.
- The MOD is committed to implementing all recommendations from the Review and although the majority of these improvements have required detailed amendment to the Scheme, these will be completed in time for new legislation being laid in February 2011. It was possible to implement some legislative amendments more quickly and, therefore, the following changes came into effect on 3 August 2010:
 - Extending the time limits for making a claim for injury from 5 to 7 years and for bereavement from 1 to 3 years;
 - Increasing the maximum bereavement grant to £25,000 for all Regular personnel and to £37,500 for Reservist personnel not members of a reserve forces pension scheme; and
 - Increasing by one Tariff level most awards for hearing loss.
- The February 2011 changes to the Scheme will see increases in all lump sum payments (except in the case of the highest tariff, which was doubled from £285,000 to £570,000 in 2008) and an average uplift of 30% to Guaranteed Income Payments (GIP) for the more seriously injured. Policy changes coming into force in February 2011 include a new approach to compensating for multiple injuries, and a new fast payment award that will enable those most seriously injured to have the option of receiving a modest up-front payment before full consideration of their claim.

EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL AND FAMILIES HEALTH

- Healthcare. The NHS is responsible for the health care needs of Armed Forces personnel after their discharge. Ex-Service personnel who have a medical condition as a result of service are entitled to priority healthcare.
- Prosthetics. Recent Service leavers who have lost a limb while serving will, where clinically appropriate, be entitled to receive from the NHS an equivalent standard prosthetic limb to

those provided by Defence Medical Services. Dr Andrew Murrison MP is leading a review to examine NHS prosthetic services currently offered to veterans and to assess how these can be strengthened to meet the ongoing needs of veterans.

- Retention of NHS Waiting List Position. The UK health departments have agreed that previous waiting times will be taken into account when families relocate.
- Coordination. In England, Armed Forces Champions in Strategic Health Authorities and regional Armed Forces Networks are bringing together the NHS, Service charities and others, to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community in their area.
- Veterans' mental health. Dr Murrison's report "Fighting Fit – a mental health plan for servicemen and veterans" was published on 6 October. It set out 13 recommendations to encourage engagement with serving and former Service personnel with mental health problems, including a 24-hour helpline and 30 full-time equivalent veterans' mental health nurses in NHS Mental Health Trusts across England. The Government accepted all of Dr Murrison's recommendations. Detailed implementation plans, involving the MOD, the Department of Health and the voluntary and community sector, are being worked up and coordinated through the MOD/NHS Partnership Board.
- Mental health pilots. The MOD contributed £500,000 towards setting up and evaluating NHS Veterans Community Mental Health Pilot schemes in six NHS trusts around the country. An independent evaluation of these pilots was undertaken by the University of Sheffield and its report, published on 20 December 2010, identified key components of successful services. The Report's findings will inform broader rollout of veterans' mental health services across the NHS from 2011.

HOUSING

The MOD has committed to undertake a detailed review of the approach to accommodation. The aim will be to better meet the needs better of Service personnel for affordable and good quality housing during and after Service. Accommodation will form part of an overall review into the Terms and Conditions of Service.

- Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme (Pilot). An MOD £20 million, 4-year pilot shared equity scheme was launched on 26 January 2010. The scheme is eligible to full-time permanent members of the Armed Forces who wish to remain in the Forces, and who have between 4 and 6 years' service, to buy a property in England. Up to December 2010, the scheme attracted 510 applicants assessed as being eligible in principle. Of these, 198 are ready to be invited to speak to a financial adviser and there have been 78 completions.
- Extended Eligibility for Priority Status to Affordable Housing Schemes. Armed Forces personnel with over six years service are entitled to keep their priority status for 12 months after leaving the Armed Forces to help them buy a house through the affordable home schemes across all areas in England, Scotland and Wales. This has been extended to include bereaved spouses and partners of Service personnel. In England, covering the period April 2009 to May 2010, there were 774 completions.
- Housing Adaptation Grants. Seriously injured personnel in receipt of AFCS or War Pension Scheme (WPS) payments can access substantial grants to adapt their home for their disability. AFCS and WPS lump sum payments are not considered to be income when means-testing for Housing Adaptation Grants.
- Disregard to compensation payments. AFCS lump sum payments are not considered to be income when assessing for affordable housing.
- Local Connection. Previously, Local Connection legislation meant that service leavers received no recognition for having lived and worked in an area when applying for social housing. This has been amended in England and Wales, and the change in Scotland will come into force from 1 March 2011.
- Priority Housing for Injured Service Personnel. Ex-Servicemen and women who are seriously injured have priority for specially adapted social homes.

- Service Families Accommodation. The vast majority of UK Service homes are now at the top two standards (of four) for condition¹, with families no longer required to live in properties at the lowest standard, although some still choose to do so.

EDUCATION

- Free Further or Higher Education. Service leavers with six years' service, and who have previously been members of the Enhanced Learning Scheme, can apply for funding to cover tuition fee expenses for an additional qualification. This is up to and including degree level courses.
- School Place Allocation. The School Admissions Code is designed to recognise the needs of Service children.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN). Local authorities and schools have received guidance reminding them of their obligation to ensure continuity of support.
- Troops to Teachers. As part of the Schools White Paper, released on 24 November 2010 by the Department for Education, the Government announced plans to develop a 'Troops to Teachers' programme which will sponsor Service leavers to train as teachers.

WELFARE

The welfare needs of Service personnel and their families remain a key priority. Any changes proposed to Terms and Conditions of Service will take into account the impact on welfare support. The Government remains committed to providing the best possible support to deployed personnel and their families through the Deployed Welfare Package. Until more work is carried out into Terms and Conditions of Service, it is unclear what, if any, changes will need to be made in the provision of welfare support to Service personnel and their families.

- Operational Welfare. The Deployed Welfare Package is kept under constant review to ensure it meets the needs of both the Service person and their dependants. Free phone calls are available for 30 minutes per week. WiFi access has been extended in operational areas, texting and internet facilities have been improved in Forward Operating Bases and the Families Welfare Grant doubled.
- Post. MOD and the Royal Mail continue to operate the Enduring Families Free Mail Service (EFFMS) for friends and families to send packages of up to 2 kg to named personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq plus HM Ships in support.
- Improved access to welfare services. Five pilot schemes are running, and one further scheme is being developed, to improve access by members of the Armed Forces Community (Service personnel, families and veterans) to the help and support from the MOD, statutory providers and from the voluntary and community sector. If successful, the intention is to roll out the scheme nationally by the end of 2011.
- Rest and Recuperation. On 22 July 2010, the Government announced steps to maximise Service personnel's rest and recuperation.

REDUNDANCY

Following the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), the shape and size of the Defence workforce (both military and civilian) required to meet our Defence capability must be addressed. The UK's Armed Forces will be restructured to meet current and emerging threats and in doing so, the Services will undergo some changes, including a reduction in capabilities and the associated manpower requirements. The outcome of the SDSR will also result in significant reductions in the civilian workforce.

For the civilian workforce, the department intends to manage the reductions as far as possible through natural wastage and restrictions on external recruitment have been in place for some time.

¹ We refer here to Standard for Condition, not Grade for Charge.

Natural wastage will not, however, be sufficient to achieve this scale of reduction and the MOD plans to launch a Voluntary Early Release scheme in 2011.

- The TUs will be fully consulted in developing the scheme.
- The compensation payable will be determined in accordance with the rules of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (and equivalent arrangements for members of other pension arrangements – such as Teachers, Burnham Lecturers and NHS grades).
- The Department is committed to achieving the necessary reductions without recourse to compulsory redundancy although this eventuality cannot be ruled out.

An Armed Forces redundancy programme will aim to reduce the number of Service personnel while maintaining a satisfactory balance of skills, experience, ability and seniority in rank throughout the Armed Forces to enable delivery of operational requirements.

- A compulsory redundancy programme will be developed under the terms of Armed Forces Redundancy Scheme 2006 (AFRS 06) and AFRS 10, broadly aligning with the Armed Forces Pension Schemes 05 and 75.
- A comprehensive implementation programme is being developed. The single Services will publish details as soon as they have identified their redundancy fields.
- Decisions on those selected for redundancy (from the identified redundancy fields) will be made by the single Services, and may include non-applicants as well as applicants.
- Transition of those selected for redundancy will be managed through the appropriate resettlement package.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Top Line:

The support to personnel injured on operations is of an excellent standard. All Armed Forces personnel are supported by dedicated and comprehensive medical services, including mental health support.

Supporting Lines:

- The NAO, in its report “Treating injury and illness arising on military operations” (10 February 2010) states that “*clinical treatment and rehabilitation of service personnel seriously injured on military operations are highly effective*”, and “*The quality of trauma care on operations is demonstrated by the numbers of “unexpected survivors”, who would usually be expected to die given the severe nature of their injuries.*”
- Operational casualties whose injuries are serious enough to require further treatment back in the UK are aeromedically evacuated as a matter of priority. The Queen Elizabeth NHS Hospital in Birmingham, which opened in June 2010, is now the primary reception hospital for military patients evacuated to the UK from overseas. The new facilities offer injured soldiers the best possible care in a Military Ward, subject to clinical need. The highly valued military support offered to personnel at Selly Oak Hospital continues at the new site.

Rehabilitation care

- If patients require further rehabilitation care (including provision of prosthetics), they may be referred to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Headley Court in Surrey, the principal medical rehabilitation centre run by the Armed Forces. DMRC now has 96 in-patient based beds with a further 15 beds to support acute trauma rehabilitation. In addition, the unit retains an extra 95 hostel beds to support the rehabilitation of those with less serious sports, exercise and industrial injuries. Other less serious rehabilitation cases may go on to receive outpatient treatment at one of MOD’s 15 Regional Rehabilitation Units (RRUs) in the UK and Germany. These military units provide accessible, regionally-based assessment and treatment, including physiotherapy and group rehabilitation facilities.

- Birmingham hospitals and Headley Court have the ability to manage increased casualty numbers (as seen during recent surge operations on Op HERRICK), including mobilising additional military medical staff and providing extra bed spaces. We have contingency measures in place for managing increased numbers over and above those experienced last year.

Mental Health

- The MOD provides mental healthcare for those who need it, primarily through our 15 military Departments of Community Mental Health across the UK (plus centres overseas), which provide out-patient treatment. As with the RRU's, these are run by the MOD for military patients, and are located close to the main military population centres.
- The latest phase of a King's College study into the effects of deployment on the mental health of personnel was published on 13 May 2010. The findings confirm the continuing low incidence rate of probable PTSD for the UK Armed Forces. Alcohol misuse and common mental disorders were the most prevalent mental health problems. Service personnel are no worse off as regards mental health disorders compared with available data for the civilian population. The number of times that a member of the Armed Forces deploys to Afghanistan or Iraq does not increase their risk of developing common mental health disorders. Deployment on operations was associated with a small increase in symptoms of PTSD in Reservists, and Regular personnel in combat roles were more likely than those in support roles to report probable PTSD.
- In November 2010, researchers from King's College London published the first major study of the mental health of UK Armed Forces while they are on deployment. The study suggested there is little overall effect of deployment on mental health. The majority (92.6%) of personnel involved in the self assessment element of the study rated their overall health as good, very good or excellent. The rates of those experiencing symptoms of psychological distress are similar to those found among Service personnel who are not on deployment. They are also lower than in other high stress occupations such as police officers, doctors in emergency departments and disaster workers. The study suggested that pre-deployment stress briefing proves to be of significant benefit to individuals. Most units have in-house medical support: training for these staff should cover mental health issues and the potential link between personnel reporting sick and having poorer mental health. This awareness may help identify those in most need of psychological help.
- The MOD is working closely with the Department of Health to take forward the recommendations in Dr Andrew Murrison's report, 'Fighting Fit', including:
 - Incorporating a structured mental health systems enquiry into existing medical examinations performed while serving;
 - Trialling an online early intervention service for serving personnel and veterans; and
 - Enabling access to military Departments of Community Mental Health for personnel leaving the Armed Forces for up to six months following discharge from April 2011.

DMS Key Facts:

- Work continues on plans to develop Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, as the home of the Defence Medical Services. The Surgeon General and his strategic HQ are now based there, co-located with the HQ Joint Medical Command. With the award of a contract for providing medical training facilities, by early 2014, over 1,100 military and civilian personnel will be based at Lichfield as a key component of delivering a Defence medical centre of excellence in the West Midlands.

UPDATED MONTHLY – JANUARY 2011 VERSION

- The MOD continues to invest in Headley Court to ensure its provision of world class care. A new 58-bed accommodation block and a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury facility were brought into service in 2009. A new £11.7 million swimming pool and gym facility, built with a generous £8 million contribution from the Help for Heroes charity, opened officially on 4 June 2010. The MOD has contributed some £3.7 million to the construction costs and is responsible for the running costs. A utilities upgrade for the DMRC site was completed in mid-2010. While there is sufficient capacity at Headley Court, an additional 30 ward beds were opened in September 2010 as a contingency against any increase in demand for in-patient treatment
- Planning is also continuing for the further upgrade of ward and therapeutic accommodation that will ensure DMRC is able to provide continuing care to casualties injured in the service of their country.

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