

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. But getting rid of the brutal Taliban regime and AQ was only the first step. The second is making sure they cannot return.
- 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 48 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 significant numbers 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.
- At the successful Kabul Conference on 20 July 2010, the international community supported the Government of Afghanistan's (GoA) vision for the 'Kabul Process' of greater leadership and ownership towards full Afghan sovereignty. The Afghan-run Conference was the first staged in Afghanistan for generations, with representatives from over 70 countries and international organisations. The Conference reviewed progress since the London Conference (January 2010) and was important for Afghan political momentum and leadership. President Karzai said

UPDATED MONTHLY – NOVEMBER 2010 VERSION

at the Kabul Conference: “The Afghan National Security Forces should lead and conduct military operations in all provinces by the end of 2014”.

- 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.
- UK forces transferred responsibility for security in Sangin in northern Helmand Province to US forces on 20 September 2010, the final step in a re-balancing of troops throughout Helmand, and in response to the overall increase of ISAF and ANSF personnel. Part of the re-investment into Central Helmand has facilitated the extraction of the Theatre Reserve Battalion. These troops, who were temporarily deployed into the Helmand area earlier this year, have returned to their base in Cyprus.
- The Afghanistan Parliamentary Elections were held on 18 September 2010. They were Afghan run, led by Afghan election institutions – the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and Electoral Complaints Commission, in concert with GoA and the ANSF. A wide reaching secure and stable framework in which the electoral process could take place was delivered primarily by the ANSF. In Helmand the provincial government is upbeat – the IEC appears to have prevented systemic fraud; the ANSF, who led on providing security to the elections, had a good plan and executed it well; visible efforts were made to tackle fraud throughout.
- Members of 3rd Brigade of 215 Maiwand Corps Afghan National Army (known as 3/215 Brigade) launched Operation OMID CHAR (Hope Four) in October, a significant operation in conjunction with ISAF forces to secure a key area near Gereshk in Nahr-e Saraj district. The operation has been completely devised and led by the Afghan forces and, for the first time, engineering, artillery, counter-IED and reconnaissance support is being conducted by the ANA itself. 3/215 Brigade has worked in close conjunction with the District Governor and Chief of Police in Nahr-e Saraj to coordinate the relevant authorities in their response to the operation. The Afghan-led coordination and Afghan-led delivery of this operation is a positive indicator of their growing capability. The UK will continue to work with international partners, including the Government of Afghanistan, to establish the conditions under which Afghans can start to take responsibility for their own security.

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 48 troop contributing nations.
- Counter IED: During his visit to Afghanistan in June 2010, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will spend up to an extra £67 million to support the C-IED campaign and equip an increase in the number of specialist EOD teams.
- Development: The development budgets for Afghanistan and Pakistan are, together, over £1 billion over four years, of which £510 million is committed to Afghanistan.
- Security: As at July 2010, ANSF strength was approximately 134,000 (ANA) and 116,000 (ANP) and is, therefore, ahead of schedule to meet the target strength of 134,000 and 109,000 respectively by 31 October 2010. By 31 October 2011, ANSF force levels are planned to reach 171,600 and 134,000. Around one-third of the ANP has been trained by international mentors. Over 60,000 former combatants have been disarmed. Of the 14 districts in Helmand Province, 6 were under Afghan Government control in 2008. By June 2010, this had risen to 11.
- Politics: A January 2010 BBC/ABC/ARD poll showed that in Afghanistan there is virtually no evidence of any desire for the return of the Taliban. They are increasingly blamed for the

violence in the country, and 69% think they pose the greatest danger to its future. Although 30% think they are stronger than a year ago (down from 43% in 2009), 40% think they're weaker (up from 24% in 2009).

- 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. International forces help create the security conditions that enable the Afghan Government to conduct their counter-narcotics activities.
- Elections: Afghan authorities reported that 91% of planned polling centres across Afghanistan were able to open. In Helmand, 120 out of 129 centres were opened, which at 93% is just above the national average. The IEC now assesses that 5.6 million votes were cast. The ECC has, however, invalidated 1.3 million of them for irregularities and is investigating 240 candidates.

IRAQ

Top Line:

UK combat forces were withdrawn from Iraq in July 2009 but British military training teams remain to build the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces. The Royal Navy is playing 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 are patrolling Iraq's territorial waters until the Iraq Navy is able to undertake this task itself. This arrangement is currently under review. The UK is also continuing to provide officer education and training as part of the NATO Training Mission in Baghdad.

SECTION 2 - POLICY

STRATEGIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY REVIEW (SDSR)

Top Line:

The Government published the UK's National Security Strategy on 18 October, and the Strategic Defence and Security Review on 19 October. These set out the way forward for Defence looking towards 2020. Details have been widely disseminated, and can be found [here on the MOD website](#). The Department will now be taking forward implementation of the Review's conclusions including through Planning Round 11, the Strategy for Defence, and the work of the Defence Reform Unit. SDSR will ensure we maintain the UK's military effort in Afghanistan and it will make no changes to Army or Royal Marine Units serving in Afghanistan. Changes to other key capabilities which support forces on the ground will be postponed until the combat mission is complete.

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 plans to make over £1.8 billion annual efficiency savings by the end of the Spending Review period in order to focus resources on front line capability. This is a demanding but realistic target, built around savings in estate running costs, more efficient training, equipment support savings, contract renegotiation savings in the cost of back office functions, and savings in commodity procurement.

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.

Protected Vehicles

- Delivery of more protected vehicles to Afghanistan has continued, including Mastiff, Ridgback, and Jackal.
- On 22 September 2010, Force Protection, in association with Ricardo, were announced as the preferred bidders in the LPPV competition with their Ocelot vehicle. The first vehicles should be available for training in 2011.
- 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 of a further 30 Husky vehicles was announced in a £36 million contract (bringing the total value to around £220 million).

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 system 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.

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.
- In June 2010, the Prime Minister stated that the UK will no longer have forces deployed in combat roles in Afghanistan after 2015. The additional Chinooks that the UK had intended to buy would not have been available before 2015, so the numbers we are buying can be reduced without affecting operations there.
- The UK is sustaining a significant battlefield helicopter capability and is buying 12 support helicopters as well as undertaking a major Puma life extension programme. This will increase battlefield mobility from land and sea, using Chinook heavy, and Merlin and Puma medium lift helicopters able to move personnel and equipment quickly over long distances. This rationalised fleet will be easier and more cost-effective to support, and will deliver significant operational advantages.
- The UK will also field Apache attack helicopters able to provide precision firepower and ISTAR in support of ground forces, and Wildcat helicopters for reconnaissance, command and control, and escort duties.

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.

UPDATED MONTHLY – NOVEMBER 2010 VERSION

- 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 E-3D AWACS, Rivet Joint and an increasing range of remotely-piloted air systems.
- We have 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

- A Green Paper on the MOD's industrial and technology policy will be published by the end of 2010

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, 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 have the support they need, and that veterans and their families 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 “Programme for Government” describes a number of measures which are designed to rebuild the Military Covenant. These range from support to Service children’s education to improved rest and recuperation arrangements. We have already announced the doubling of Operational Allowance and changes to Rest and Recuperation.
- 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 Government’s coalition programme published in June 2010 states:

“We will work to rebuild the Military Covenant by:

- Ensuring that Service personnel’s rest and recuperation leave can be maximised;
- 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 our proposals for a pupil premium;
- Providing university and further education scholarships for the children of Servicemen and women who have been killed on active service since 1990;
- Providing support for ex-Service personnel to study at university;
- Creating a new programme, ‘Troops for Teachers’, to recruit ex-Service personnel into the teaching profession;
- Providing extra support for veteran mental health needs; and
- Reviewing the rules governing the awarding of medals.

“We will [...] include Armed Forces pay in our plans for a fair pay review.

“We will ensure that injured personnel are treated in dedicated military wards.

“We will look at whether there is scope to refurbish Armed Forces’ accommodation from efficiencies within the Ministry of Defence.”

PAY AND ALLOWANCES

The Government has decided to review the overall remuneration package, including structure, pay, allowances and accommodation options, as it believes the package needs to be simpler to administer more cost effective, offer greater choice and encourage greater personal responsibility.

- 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 are not affected. 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 require detailed legislative amendment to the Scheme, they will be implemented by February 2011. It was possible to implement some legislative amendments more quickly and, therefore, the following changes therefore 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 changes to the Scheme in February 2011 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 in Guaranteed Income Payments (GIP) for the more seriously injured. Policy changes also 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

- 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.
- 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.
- Retention of NHS Waiting List Position. Across the UK health departments have agreed that previous waiting times will be taken into account when families relocate.
- The Department of Health has put in place Armed Forces Champions in Strategic Health Authorities and is developing a network of Armed Forces Networks in regions bringing together the NHS, Service charities and others, to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community in their area.
- The Government is committed to providing effective, through-life, health services for our service and ex-service personnel. The Prime Minister asked Dr Andrew Murrison to conduct an independent study into the provision of MOD and NHS support and services to the Armed Forces and ex-Service personnel and to make recommendations for improvement particularly in the area of mental health. His report "Fighting Fit – a mental health plan for servicemen and veterans" was published on 6 October.
- Two priority forms of support recommended by Dr Murrison will be introduced immediately by the Department of Health: 30 extra veterans' mental health nurses working in mental health trusts across England, and a 24-hour veterans' helpline, operated by Combat Stress and the Mental Health Helplines Partnership. The MOD is working with the Department of Health to take forward the report's other recommendations.
- The MOD has contributed £500,000 towards setting up and evaluating NHS Veterans Community Mental Health Pilot schemes in six NHS Trusts around the country. They are currently being evaluated with a report expected later this year. The findings of the evaluation report will inform broader rollout of veterans' mental health services across the NHS in 2011-12.

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 September 2010, the scheme attracted 443 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 42 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. Scotland is planning to change its legislation by the end of 2010.
- 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.

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 Iraq and Afghanistan plus HM Ships in support.
- Improved access to welfare services. Four pilot schemes are running to improve access by members of the Armed Forces Community (Service personnel, families and veterans) to the help and support available from the MOD, statutory providers and from the charity and voluntary sector. If successful, the intention is to roll out the scheme nationally in 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

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

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. 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.
- A comprehensive implementation programme will be developed. The single Services will publish details as soon as they have identified redundancy fields.
- Decisions on those selected for redundancy will be made by the single Services, and may include applicants (from the identified redundancy fields) as well as non-applicants.
- Transition of those selected for redundancy will be managed through the appropriate resettlement package.
- The value of redundancy payments will depend on which Armed Forces Pension Scheme individuals belong to.

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 new Queen Elizabeth NHS Hospital in Birmingham 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.
- 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. A new ward with 29 beds for seriously injured in-patients was opened in September 2010. 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.
- The MOD also 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 RRUs, these are run by the MOD for military patients, and are located close to the main military population centres. As recommended in Dr Murrison's 'Fighting Fit' report, military mental health services, and services to veterans, will be further enhanced to include an increase in specialist and supporting personnel.
- 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.

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. On current plans, by 2014, over 1,100 military and civilian personnel are planned to be based at Lichfield.
- 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 swimming pool and gym facilities, 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 million to the construction costs and is responsible for the running costs. The MOD is also currently investing in a utilities upgrade for the whole site. While there is sufficient capacity at Headley Court, an additional 29 ward beds were opened in September 2010 as a contingency against any increase in demand for in-patient treatment

UPDATED MONTHLY – NOVEMBER 2010 VERSION

- 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.

DMC Secretariat & New Media

Please direct any queries to 020 7218 0233