

**COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN IN NATO**  
**UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL REPORT 2008**

**Policies (changes/new policy affecting women in uniform)**

1. A revised Ministry of Defence Unified Diversity Strategy, a copy of which is attached, has been issued which is applicable to both Service personnel and civilian staff, setting out the Department's diversity vision and diversity mission. The strategy also encompasses "Guiding Principles in Creating an Environment that Promotes Dignity, Respect and the Elimination of Bullying and Harassment".

2. Dealing with Sexual Harassment Work has continued on putting measures in place to prevent and deal with sexual harassment in the Armed Forces. Measures include raising awareness of the problem through discussions across the Services with personnel at every level. Research has been carried out to understand better the nature of the problem. Procedures for making and dealing with complaints of harassment have been reviewed to make them more accessible and robust. A mechanism has been established to identify and share lessons. Individuals' attitudes to equality and diversity have been incorporated into appraisal reporting to make personnel accountable. Guidance has been issued to encourage the consistent use of administrative action in harassment cases. A comprehensive review of equality and diversity training is being carried out.

3. Service Complaints Commissioner A new Service Complaints Commissioner has recently been appointed to act as an independent "watchdog" for the complaints system and to monitor and hold the Services to account for the way in which they handle complaints from Service men and women. The Commissioner also provides an alternative point of contact for Service personnel, their families, friends or anyone acting on their behalf, to raise concerns, particularly in relation to allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination or other improper behaviour.

**Organisation**

4. The following table shows the total percentages of women by rank in the UK Armed Services as at 1 April 2007.

	Total % of All Personnel	Naval Service	Army	Royal Air Force
<b>OFFICERS</b>				
<b>OF10</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>OF-6 to OF9</b>	0.4	0.9	0.4	-
<b>OF-5</b>	3.3	0.3	3.2	6.1
<b>OF-4</b>	4.9	3.0	4.5	7.1
<b>OF-3</b>	9.2	6.6	9.7	10.4
<b>OF-2</b>	14.8	13.3	13.8	17.0
<b>OF-1/OF-(D)</b>	17.6	12.7	16.1	24.5
<b>Total % of all Officers</b>	11.6	9.0	11.2	14.2
<b>OTHER RANKS</b>				
<b>OR-9</b>	3.4	3.0	3.9	2.9
<b>OR-8</b>	4.0	0.1	4.7	* <sup>1</sup>
<b>OR-7</b>	4.1	3.6	5.1	3.3
<b>OR-6</b>	7.7	7.0	7.1	9.1
<b>OR-4</b>	11.1	10.4	9.7	13.9
<b>OR-3</b>	9.2	0.4	9.4	*
<b>OR-2</b>	10.0	13.0	5.2	15.9
<b>OR-1</b>	8.8	*	8.2	16.1
<b>Total % of all ORs</b>	8.8	9.5	7.2	12.4

Notes: No Services have personnel at NATO Rank OF-10.  
The Royal Air Force has no personnel at NATO Ranks OR-3 or OR-8.  
The Naval Service has no personnel at NATO Rank OR-1.  
Figures less than 100 have been left un-rounded so as not to obscure the data.  
Percentages have been calculated from un-rounded figures.  
Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

(Extracted from Defence Analytical Services Agency Tri-Service Publication 9: UK regular Forces Rank Structure at 1 April 2007)

### **Recruitment**

5. Recruitment to the UK's Armed Forces is generally gender free and there are no separate recruiting targets for women. This means that recruitment is seen to be fair and unbiased as the best candidates are recruited, regardless of their gender. In Financial Year 2006/2007, the number of female recruits from civilian life was 1,960 (220 more than the previous year) representing 9.9% of the total intake. In the

<sup>1</sup> \* Denotes not applicable

first eleven months of Financial Year 2007/2008 the Services gained 1,980 female recruits being 10.2% of overall total.

6. The Army's Recruiting Group has a "Diversity Thread Directive 08/09" which includes a section on increasing female representation in the Army. In addition, Dignity and Respect at Work groups will be held in 2008/2009 during which serving Army personnel will be interviewed about their own experience of recruitment. Data from women will be analysed to establish whether there are any discrepancies and practices which need to be reviewed and adjusted.

7. The Royal Air Force has recently endorsed a five-year strategy to improve female representation in those branches and trades (mostly technical) in which they are currently under-represented. The strategy focuses on early engagement with girls aged from 13 and will encourage them to continue studying mathematics and science and increase their interest in technical and engineering career opportunities.

### **Retention**

8. Efforts are being made to introduce more "family friendly" policies to aid the retention of female personnel. (See paras 20 and 21 below)

### **Areas From Which Women Are Excluded**

9. The majority of posts in the UK's Armed Forces are open to women: 71% of posts in the Naval Service; 67% of posts in the Army and 96% of posts in the Royal Air Force. Women serve in all specialisations except those where the primary duty is to close with and kill the enemy. These roles include: the Royal Marines General Service (as Royal Marine Commandos); the Household Cavalry and Royal Armoured Corps; the Infantry; and the Royal Air Force Regiment. For health and safety reasons women do not serve in submarines or as mine clearance divers. Women also do not serve as Roman Catholic chaplains.

### **Most Popular Programmes or Disciplines Chosen by Women**

10. The most popular specialisations chosen by women are:

Royal Navy: Logistics, Medical, Communications

Army: Logistics, Medical, Military Police, Clerical/Administration

Royal Air Force: Administration, Air Traffic Control, Fighter Control, Intelligence, Catering

### **Training and Physical Fitness**

11. A guide entitled "*The UK Servicewoman's Guide to Health and Performance*" has been published for UK Servicewomen of all ages and ranks. It gives expert guidance on what to eat and drink to keep healthy and to optimise physical and mental performance during training and operations. Guidance is also provided on reducing the risk of injury and maintaining healthy bones. Information is also given

on the effects of smoking, alcohol and drugs and where to get help. Specific advice is given on health issues relating to pregnancy, maternity and returning to duty following childbirth.

12. The Royal Air Force has introduced a revised Fitness Strategy which requires all personnel to undertake regular exercise and to take responsibility for their own fitness. The Strategy requires both men and women to pass a fitness test that requires 15% more application than before. In addition, women are now required to do full press-ups as part of the test.

13. There have been problems with injuries among female recruits, particularly Pelvic Stress Injuries (PSIs). The exact cause of these injuries is unknown. Training programmes in the Army and Royal Air Force have been modified with the aim of reducing overall injury rates. Measures introduced include:

- single-sex platoons in the Army,
- single-sex physical education sessions in the Royal Air Force
- restrictions on marching over extended distances or up and down steep inclines whilst carrying Bergen rucksacks,
- modifications to Royal Air Force physical education programmes to include more swimming and less running,
- a ban in the Royal Air Force on corrective training involving physical measures such as running press ups

### **Deployments**

14. The UK Armed Services are currently operationally deployed in many locations worldwide. There are no restrictions on women's deployment overseas, unless they are pregnant or there are local cultural sensitivities involved. Women in roles such as Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC), media, interpreters, medical and police are increasingly serving alongside male colleagues in front-line roles. The recent award of medals for gallantry to women during operational deployments shows that women are now serving in more posts than ever before and in more demanding circumstances.

### **Career Development**

15. Current highest ranks achieved by women are: Royal Navy OF5, Army OF5, Royal Air Force OF6. Attainment of 2\* rank and above has tended to depend on operational experience or experience in the Combat Arms and at present there are no women in these ranks. However, as women are increasingly deploying on operations women may attain these higher ranks with time. Continuing difficulties in reconciling family (especially child and elder care) commitments with Service commitments to go to sea or deploy overseas remain obstacles to career advancement for many women.

### **Maternity and Paternity Leave**

16. Servicewomen may opt to leave the Service on the grounds of pregnancy. However, if they choose to remain in the Service following pregnancy the Services' maternity policy is to provide supportive arrangements to enable a Servicewoman to

accommodate pregnancy and maternity absence within her career. All Servicewomen, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave. Those who have served for a qualifying period are also entitled to 39 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). Women who have served continuously for a year and who intend to return to duty following maternity leave are entitled to full pay during the first 26 weeks of maternity leave followed by 13 weeks at the lower SMP rate. Women may return to duty for up to 10 days during their maternity leave for training purposes without bringing their maternity leave to an end.

18. Similar arrangements are in place for Servicewomen (and men) who adopt a child.

19. Qualifying Servicemen (ie those who are the biological father of the child or have (with the mother) the main responsibility for the child's upbringing) are eligible for paternity leave. Currently, two weeks' paternity leave (ie 14 days) may be taken, paid at the basic weekly pay rate.

### **Initiatives to Improve Work-Life Balance**

20. The UK's Armed Forces operate a salary sacrifice system to help parents pay for childcare. This enables Service personnel to convert a proportion of their salary into childcare vouchers which can be used to pay for registered childcare. In turn, this allows them to make significant savings on tax and National Insurance Contributions. Nurseries are provided at a number of Ministry of Defence and Service establishments.

21. Other initiatives to improve work-life balance include:

- Career breaks (time permitted is over 3 months and up to 3 years)
- Special unpaid leave (up to 93 days)
- Variable start/finish times of the working day
- Home working (short-term)
- Compressed hours (working longer on some days to allow an earlier finish on other days)

### **Conclusion**

22. The representation of Servicewomen in the UK military is growing, and we continue to look at ways of improving recruitment and retention. Our challenge is to provide supportive arrangements without making women feel that they are being singled out for special treatment or compromising operational effectiveness. Our Armed Forces continue to be involved in a wide range of demanding tasks at home and overseas. The contribution of Servicewomen, alongside their male counterparts is vital to the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

## MINISTRY OF DEFENCE UNIFIED DIVERSITY STRATEGY

### “Diversity for Defence”

#### *Diversity Vision*

Our Vision is a workforce, uniformed and civilian, that: is drawn from the breadth of the society we defend; gains strength from that society's range of knowledge, experience and talent; and, welcomes, respects and values the unique contribution of every individual.

#### **Diversity Mission**

Diversity is core business for the Ministry of Defence in order to encourage people throughout society to join us, remain with us, make their distinctive contributions and achieve their full potential. Also, operating in multinational environments, our success will be improved by being able to understand and respond to different types of situations and people. We will be inclusive and not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse. We will ensure each individual is treated fairly, with dignity and respect and that the diversity of our workforce increases operational effectiveness.

#### ***Introduction***

1. The Ministry of Defence recognises that the people we employ are the most important factor in fulfilling our Mission to defend the United Kingdom and its interests. The United Kingdom embraces people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Drawing on this diversity enhances our capability to deliver our business and adapt continuously to a rapidly changing global context. We need a shared focus in this area which this Unified Diversity Strategy provides. The business case for diversity is set out at Annex A.

#### **Complying with Legislation**

2. We will meet our statutory obligations and seek minimum exemptions in order to safeguard operational effectiveness. We have published an overarching Equality and Diversity Scheme that describes the way in which we will make our vision a reality and meet our legal obligations. An accompanying annual Action Plan sets out specific measures to promote equality and diversity among our own personnel and those with whom we come into contact and ensure that we meet our statutory obligations.

## **Working Together**

3. The principles of diversity do not vary according to whether someone is military or civilian, uniformed or not, or the colour of that uniform. We value every one of our people for their own particular strengths and talents upon which we rely. We work together across the whole Department. Every man and woman contributes to defence capability and is entitled to the same standards of respect and equality of opportunity. We will also aim to ensure that contractors, agencies and other external organisations upon which we rely for the conduct of our business apply the same standards as those we require of our own people.

4. Diversity is essential for operational effectiveness now and for the future. We will ensure that implementation of this strategy has high priority across the Department in everything we do. The Strategy will be embedded in our operational and personnel functions and, wherever possible, we will adopt common standards, policies, practices and procedures.

## ***Working in Partnership***

5. Throughout the Department we will work together, sharing best practice, coordinating activity and collaborating to achieve value for money and effectiveness. We will also work in partnership with other nations, other Government Departments and other public and private sector organisations to learn from each other. We will work in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and other organisations to ensure that we are leaders in implementing Government policy and legislation and also that they understand the special circumstances of the Armed Forces and the role of the Ministry of Defence.

## **Taking Responsibility**

6. We expect every one of our people, whether uniformed or civilian, to fulfil their personal responsibilities:

- To foster a working environment where all members of staff feel comfortable and are welcomed and valued for their unique contributions to operational effectiveness.
- To promote a working environment that values dignity, respect and fairness for all in accordance with the principles set out at Annex B.
- To promote standards of best behaviour and comply with the law with regard to creating equality of opportunity and not discriminating against others.

7. We place additional responsibilities on every one of our leaders and managers, whether uniformed or civilian, at every level:

- To set an example through their actions, behaviour and language of respecting and valuing the diversity of others in every aspect of life.

- To be alert to the behaviour or language of others that is discriminatory, harassing, bullying or abusive and to be uncompromising in acting to challenge and prevent it and to take firm and timely action against perpetrators.
- To promote creative team-working that recognises and builds upon the variety of experience, skills and knowledge within our people.
- To remove any unnecessary barriers which restrict the progression and development of any of our people and to take positive action to ensure that their careers have the opportunity to flourish and succeed.

Where appropriate, individuals' discharge of their personal and leadership responsibilities will be reflected in appraisals.

8. The Defence Board, advised by the Ministry of Defence Diversity Panel, will have overall leadership responsibility for promoting diversity and interpreting legislation on equality and diversity, establishing the corporate policy and maintaining the unified focus and strategy for the Ministry of Defence. Responsibility for the implementation of initiatives in support of this strategy rests with the Top Level Budget Holders who will be accountable to the Defence Board.

### **Communicating and Building Commitment**

9. We will communicate and celebrate the progress we make towards achieving a more diverse workforce, both internally and externally. To this end, this strategy, its principles and implementation, will be included in regular policy statements by senior officers and managers; regular agenda items at meetings at all levels; and, internal newsletters, journals, magazines etc. We will continue to review our means of communication to ensure that they are accessible, in alternative formats where appropriate, to our diverse workforce and others who may need to refer to them. We will also explore other ways of exchanging information, best practice and supporting all our organisations and individuals.

10. We have put in place arrangements to assess our major policies and procedures to mitigate a disproportionately adverse impact on particular groups both within our own workforce and outside the Department who are likely to be affected by those policies and procedures.

11. The promotion of equality and diversity is a function of leadership. In order that all our people are equipped to implement this strategy, we will ensure that appropriate high quality training is provided:

- On joining the Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence Civil Service.
- Refresher training at specified intervals thereafter throughout an individual's career.
- Specific programmes covering key equality and diversity issues (e.g. disability awareness).

- During promotion/career development/management training.

12. Our Public Relations organisations will promote our successes in achieving the aims of this strategy to the widest possible audience. This includes giving visibility to individuals who can act as role models. Wherever appropriate, we will create external communications and recruitment material that is accessible to all sectors of the population (both in content and style), and find new outlets for promoting our activities and career opportunities.

### **Measuring Progress**

13. Progress will be monitored against key performance indicators within the Defence Balanced Scorecard. We will collect qualitative and quantitative data to measure progress under this strategy including employees' views on diversity; workforce composition; recruitment, progression, training and development and retention data for different groups; disciplinary and complaints statistics; etc. We will monitor and review policies and practices regularly to ensure their compliance with this strategy and any changes in legislation. Monitoring and review will take place at all board levels, up to and including the Defence Board. There will be a particular role for the Diversity Panel in assessing progress and making recommendations to the Defence Board. Our progress and compliance with legislation will be able to be assessed by external bodies through our publication of an annual report against our Equality and Diversity Scheme (see para.2 above).

Annexes:

- A. The Business Case for Diversity.
- B. Guiding Principles in Creating an Environment That Promotes Dignity, Respect and the Elimination of Harassment and Bullying.



## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

The business case for diversity is compelling. It drives our objective to be a fair, inclusive employer, representative of British society, that makes best use of talent in order to provide first class public service. The key elements are:

- a. **Improving Recruitment and Retention.** Talent differentiates successful organisations. We need to be a world class employer that is truly inclusive in thought, word and action, thus strengthening our position relative to the competition. We need to attract talent from a range of sources because we will not be able to attract the very best people if we continue to rely solely on those parts of society from which we recruited in the past. Embracing diversity will help us to tap in to the whole of society to develop and retain the people we need.
- b. **Increasing Creativity and Innovation.** Creativity and response to change are key to operational effectiveness: from new operations to new equipment. Diversity increases innovation and flexibility by capitalising on different experience and knowledge. Employees who feel supported by their organisation and satisfied by their job are more likely to be innovative and offer better service.
- c. **Supporting Operational Activities.** We operate in multinational environments alongside a multiplicity of people: from operations and peacekeeping to assisting in civil emergencies. Our success will be improved by being able to understand and respond to different types of situations and people.
- d. **Strengthening Teamwork.** We rely on teams working to their full potential to enhance operational effectiveness. Diverse teams can draw on a wider range of background, experience and skills. A culture that embraces diversity enables each team member's contribution to be fully realised, recognised and integrated to achieve success.
- e. **Achieving Cost Savings.** Although embedding a culture that embraces diversity can be a significant investment, it also generates cost savings through improved recruitment and retention, lower absenteeism and fewer complaints and tribunal cases as well as developing products and services that are relevant for a diverse society.
- f. **Upholding Our Reputation.** The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces are respected 'brands' and a reputation for valuing diversity will increase that respect. Unfair or discriminatory behaviour marginalises elements of our workforce, damages our reputation and undermines our corporate responsibility to do, and be seen to do, the right thing.

g. **Building for the Future.** We need to act now to safeguard the future. We cannot afford to fall behind other sectors of society or other employers in integrating diversity in to every aspect of our work.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTES DIGNITY, RESPECT AND THE ELIMINATION OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

The Ministry of Defence will create an environment that promotes dignity, respect and fairness for all and is free from harassment and bullying, where being a member of the Armed Forces or Ministry of Defence Civil Service brings with it the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect, because:

All leaders **champion** dignity, respect, fairness and the prevention of harassment.

All personnel are **alert and sensitive** to the risk of offending.

All personnel understand the need and are able to **'find the line'**.

All personnel challenge harassment and inappropriate behaviour early to **'nip it in the bud'**.

Every Serviceman and woman acts in accordance with **Core Values and Standards**.

All complaints are dealt with **swiftly and effectively**.

All personnel are **aware of the impact** of harassment and react quickly and positively when challenged.

**Careers are impeded** where shortfalls in behaviour occur.

All interactions should **build a positive team ethos**.

Core values and standards for the MoD Civil Service and the Armed Forces are set out in the following publications:

MoD Civil Service	Civil Service Code
Royal Navy	Naval Service Core Values
Army	Values and Standards of the British Army (Commanders' edition)
	Basically Fair – Respect for Others in the British Army
Royal Air Force	Ethos, Core Values and Standards of the RAF