

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

### INTRODUCTION

This information is for Regular Army and Army Reserve soldier candidates and their parents / guardians to provide clear guidance on the general conditions and terms of engagement for joining the British Army. The Careers Adviser at the Army Careers Centre or Reserve Unit will be able to help and explain these terms of service if required. The information provided is designed to be given at the early stages of interest and more detailed information on Terms of Service will be provided prior to enlistment.

### REGULAR ARMY

**Age of Enlistment.** An individual may not join the Army below the age of 16 and employment safeguards are put in place for those under 18. The maximum age for enlistment is 33 (or 36.11 for those joining as a musician).

**Engagement Types.** When joining the Army, a soldier serves on an engagement. This is an agreement between the individual and the Army which covers matters such as the length of service and minimum commitment period. The individual aspects of an engagement are known as the Terms of Service. There are three types of engagement on which a soldier may serve. These are:

- a. **The Versatile Engagement (VEng).** This is the engagement that most Regular soldiers will enter service on. The VEng consists of three stages; the Short, Full and Long career. Soldiers will usually enlist on a VEng (Short) which enables them to complete up to 12 years of service. During that time, they may be considered for conversion to a VEng (Full) and serve a total of 24 years. Selection for VEng (Long) will extend the soldier's service to 30 years initially, and thereafter, for periods that are required by the Army. Soldiers will not normally be able to serve beyond age 55, irrespective of what VEng career they are on. Soldiers deemed suitable to convert to the next career stage will be offered conversion subject to the manning requirements at that time. Conversion enables personnel to serve for longer, accrue more pay and pension, reach certain pension points that would otherwise be unavailable to them and realise their potential by being able to promote through the ranks.
- b. **The Short Service Engagement (S-Type).** In some circumstances, a candidate may be enlisted onto an S-Type for a period of service between six months and 12 years. An S-Type is the engagement that is given to potential officers entering the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst but for new soldiers, this engagement type is rare and will only be authorised on a case by case basis. It will, therefore, not be discussed further here.
- c. **The Military Local Service Engagement.** The MLSE is only available to those who enlist into the Adjutant General Corp (Military Provost Guard Service). These soldiers guard military sites around the UK and are restricted to working within a 30 mile area of their choosing. Their engagement lasts for three years from the date of enlistment which is renewable depending upon the manning requirement at the time. The MLSE is only available to over 18s and does not attract any Regular Reserve liability<sup>1</sup>. As this is a specialist engagement type, no further detail will be provided here.

**Choice of Regiment / Corps.** A candidate may join any Regiment, Arms or Corps provided they are eligible and there is a vacancy. Information on the full range of cap-badges on offer and the associated eligibility rules will be provided to the candidate during the recruiting process.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on Regular Reserve liability is detailed below. Where the soldier has accrued Regular Reserve liability from previous service, this will remain valid until it has been spent, albeit, individuals will not be mobilised whilst engaged on MLSE.

**Conditions of Service.** Conditions of Service are financial and non-financial conditions associated with an individual's employment. A competitive and comprehensive remuneration (pay, pension and allowances) and non-remuneration (housing, welfare, medical and dental) package is available to all Regular soldiers. This includes the ability for eligible personnel to claim financial incentives such as the Army's Commitment Bonus and to get help with purchasing a home through the Forces Help to Buy scheme. Further details on the full package can be provided during the recruiting process.

**Discharge as of Right (DAOR).** When a recruit joins the Army on VEng, they have a statutory right to leave within a certain window. For over 18s they must give their Commanding Officer 14 days notice of their intention to leave once they have completed 28 working days<sup>2</sup>. Their window to submit their notice closes at the three month point. For under 18s, the soldier can effectively give notice to leave at any point up until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday having gone through the appropriate discharge procedure<sup>3</sup>, however, unless approved by the Commanding Officer, discharge would not normally occur before the 42 day window detailed above. The right to DAOR is separate to other administrative discharges such as those required for compassionate, medical or disciplinary reasons.

**Minimum Commitment Period / Termination from the Regular Army.** Once the DAOR window has closed, a soldier is committed to serve a minimum of four years service from their date of enlistment or their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if later. A soldier must give 12 months notice to end their engagement early and the earliest they can do this is after three years service. This is known as Notice to Terminate (NTT). If they do not submit their NTT or are discharged for some other matter (e.g. for medical or discipline reasons), the soldier will leave at the end of their engagement, unless they convert to the next career stage as detailed above.

**Regular Reserve Liability.** If a soldier leaves on NTT they will be considered a Regular Reservist and may be called back into Regular service if the Secretary of State makes such an order. This is known as mobilisation and will only occur for specific reasons of national importance<sup>4</sup> and usually, only those who wish to do so, are asked to re-enter Service. By being on the Regular Reserve, the individual may carry out other employment that is beneficial to them, such as Full Time Reserve Service or, if they so wish, rejoin the Regular Army as if they had never left. The Regular Reserve commitment lasts for six years or until their engagement would have otherwise ended, for example, if the soldier left after ten years on a Short Career (12 years), they would only be a Regular Reservist for two years. Once the Regular Reserve period is over, the ex-soldier may only ever be called out for imminent national danger or great emergency and this liability stays with them till age 55 or for a combined liability period of 18 years from date of discharge. Whilst an individual remains on the Regular or Recall Reserve, they are obligated to keep the Army informed of their most up to date contact details.

## ARMY RESERVE

**Age of Enlistment.** An individual may not join the Army Reserve below the age of 18<sup>5</sup>. The maximum age at which a Reservist may start Phase One training is their 51<sup>st</sup> birthday and their Phase Two training before their 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Applications must, therefore, be submitted before reaching the age of 50 to allow time for the recruitment process to be completed. However, candidates with previous trained Regular or Reserve Service who left service within the last 6 years may join up to the age of 52.

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<sup>2</sup> The earliest day they may leave is after 42 working days.

<sup>3</sup> The last day in which an individual would leave having given notice on the day before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is at age 18 years and 3 months. As an additional safeguard, if an individual registers with their Chain of Command as being unhappy before they turn 18, they may apply to discharge after they are 18 up to a maximum 18 years and 3 months. Their discharge will be enacted as soon as possible.

<sup>4</sup> Imminent National Danger or Great Emergency; Warlike Operations; For the Protection of Life or Property Outside the UK or in Support of Disaster Relief Operations World Wide and for any purpose for which members of the Regular Army may be used.

<sup>5</sup> The on-line application process can start when an individual is aged 17 years and 9 months.

**Engagement.** The majority of individuals joining the Army Reserve will be classed as a 'Group A Reservist'. The initial term of enlistment shall be for up to 12 years and candidates may serve up to the age of 55.

**Choice of Regiment / Corps.** The Army Reserve is broken down into Regional and National Units. Due to the small numbers required for some trades, personnel may be part of a National Army Reserve Unit. Alternatively, they may be able to join a local, Regional Unit, if their trade is required and represented in that unit.

**Man Training Days.** The training year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April and ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March. Soldiers will be expected to complete their training obligation within that year. Dependent on the type of unit, soldiers will be expected to complete either 19 (National Unit) or 27 (Regional Unit) Man Training Days per year. There may be opportunities to complete more training days in the form of Voluntary Training Other Duties or to conduct Additional Duties Commitments which are usually up to 180 days part time work. Once a soldier has joined the Army Reserve there is also the opportunity to apply for Full Time Reserve Service.

**Mobilisation.** Reservists can be mobilised by the Secretary of State for any purpose for which Regular forces may be used for up to 12 months. Individuals may volunteer to meet programmed operational commitments or can be called out for additional war fighting capability. The MOD uses a process of 'intelligent mobilisation' which allows mobilisation by mutual consent in all but the most extreme cases.

**Conditions of Service.** A Reservist may be eligible to receive:

- a. Occupational Health.
- b. Access to welfare support.
- c. Annual tax free bounty.
- d. From April 2015 new pension rights.
- e. Access to Standard Learning Credits (payment towards education / training).
- f. Up to 40 days paid training a year.
- g. New recruits: £300 enlistment bonus.
- h. New recruits: £1,000 Phase 1 completion training bonus.
- i. New recruits: £1,000 Phase 2 completion training bonus.
- j. New recruits: Uniform allowance.
- k. Paid leave.
- l. Employment Tribunal access.
- m. Military skills accredited to civilian qualifications.
- n. Military Railcard.
- o. When mobilised, a Reservist is entitled to make a claim for an award to cover a loss of earnings or benefits as well as to submit an allowable expense claim.

**Employment Protection.** The standard two-year qualifying period for bringing claims for unfair dismissal from civilian employment has been removed where the reason, or primary reason, for dismissal is connected with the employee's membership of the Reserve forces. This is additional protection to that provided by the Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985.

Legislation governing employment protection in Northern Ireland is separate and as a result this change will not be applicable there. However, in Northern Ireland the statutory requirement is that only one year's continuous employment is needed before a case of unfair dismissal can be raised.

If a reservist feels they have been disadvantaged in their civilian employment as a result of their Reserve service, they can report it at: <https://surveys.mod.uk/reserveemployer-issues>

**Payments to Employers and Business Partners When a Reservist is Mobilised.** An Employers Financial Assistance Payment will be made to employers of Reservists or to persons carrying on business in partnership to cover any additional replacement cost; capped at £110.00 per day, as well as any agency placement or advertisement fee. In addition, up to £500 per month per Reservist will be paid to employers to compensate for those who are called-up as part of their commitment. Payments will only be made to micro, small and medium sized enterprises with fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of less than £25.9 million. Charities and partnerships that meet the qualifying criteria will also be eligible to receive this payment. For those in part-time employment, a pro-rata payment is made.