

One Step Forward

The case for ending recruitment
of minors by the British
armed forces

CHILD SOLDIERS
INTERNATIONAL

ForcesWatch

ForcesWatch

ForcesWatch is a British-based campaigning organisation. We seek to hold the state to account on the ethical integrity of its recruitment of young people into the armed forces. We advocate changes to policy, raise public awareness of the issues and challenge the armed forces on their recruitment practices, especially those aimed at the youngest and most disadvantaged groups.

Child Soldiers International

Child Soldiers International is an international human rights research and advocacy organisation. We seek to end the military recruitment and the use in hostilities, in any capacity, of any person under the age of 18 by state armed forces or non-state armed groups. We advocate for the release of unlawfully recruited children, promote their successful reintegration into civilian life, and call for accountability for those who unlawfully recruit or use them.

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ONE STEP FORWARD:

THE CASE FOR ENDING RECRUITMENT OF MINORS BY THE BRITISH ARMED FORCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

Currently, the British Armed Forces recruit from age 16. This paper shows that staffing the Forces exclusively with adults over the age of 18 is entirely feasible and would save at least **£81.5 million per annum**. It also shows that all-adult armed forces would be easier to manage, operate more effectively, and better serve young people's interests.

THE FINANCIAL CASE

Recruiting for an all-adult force would be substantially more cost-effective than the existing policy. In 2010-11, a typical year, recruiting minors aged 16-17½ cost between £81.5 million and £94 million more than had only adults been recruited, based on recruiting for a nominal career length of 10 years. The cost difference is mainly due to minors' longer initial training and higher trainee drop-out rate.

THE OPERATIONAL CASE

There are a number of operational disadvantages associated with recruiting minors. Minors are less likely to complete training; only 63.4% complete, compared with 71.7% of adults. Even when fully trained, minors, unlike adults, are not immediately deployable to war zones or on peacekeeping operations. An all-adult force would remove these and other practical complexities which arise from the legal framework for recruiting and caring for minors.

THE CHILD RIGHTS CASE

The legal age of responsibility in the UK bars minors from activities deemed by common consent to be harmful, or which require the maturity of adulthood, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, most forms of gambling, watching an adult film, signing a legal contract and working in the civil emergency services. The risks and obligations of military life surpass all these.

The personal risks of military life affect the youngest recruits most. Several negative outcomes are more common among minors than adults, including self-harm, post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual harassment and bullying. A disproportionately large number of minors join the Infantry, where the risk of fatality in Afghanistan has been five times that faced by the rest of the Army.

The legal constraints of enlistment differ for the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force (RAF); in all cases the obligations are more complicated and their effects further-reaching than any binding agreement that minors can make in civilian life. Evidence from armed forces helplines shows that parents

are often confused about the effect of enlistment on their child's rights.

For these and other reasons, most European Union states now only recruit adults. As international norms governing military recruitment progress, the UK is becoming increasingly isolated as the only state of the EU, Council of Europe and United Nations Security Council Permanent Members that still recruits from age 16.

A common defence of the current policy is that it supports the social mobility of young people but this is also now in question. Whilst young people can gain from a military career, recruiting school-leavers diverts them from the broader and superior educational and training opportunities of the civilian system. The Army's educational offer for minors is limited to low-grade qualifications and omits those that young people most need in the long-term – high-grade GCSEs in English and Maths.

COULD IT BE DONE? THE FEASIBILITY OF ADULTS-ONLY ARMED FORCES IN THE UK

Generally, EU states field all-volunteer armed forces which are of comparable size, *per capita*, to those of the UK and mostly recruited from age 18. Throughout most of the EU, compulsory education ends at age 16 or less; it is therefore unnecessary to link the minimum age of military recruitment with the school-leaving age.

In the UK, the armed forces' dependence on minors has been diminishing for a decade; in 2009-10, 21.4% of new recruits were under 18, down from 37.3% in 2000-01.

In 2009-10, 9.2% of new recruits were aged 16. Raising the minimum recruitment age to 17 or 17½ would be straightforward and bring immediate benefits to the armed forces, not least of which would be substantial financial savings and personnel who are more mature and thus better able to discharge their duties.

The RAF and Navy recruit few minors and could move to all-adult recruitment quickly. The Army still recruits around 3,500 minors per year, but the Government's plans to reduce the number of regular troops in a restructured force will easily allow the Army to recruit only adults in the future.

The current policy appears to be out of step with public opinion. In a recent ICM poll, 70% of respondents who expressed a view believed that the minimum age for enlisting into the Army should be 18 or above. The poll's findings indicate that a new policy of adults-only recruitment would win popular support.

In recent years, Parliamentary and UN committees have called on the Ministry of Defence to reconsider its policy of recruiting minors; it has yet to investigate the feasibility of this. Given the forceful financial, operational and ethical reasons for moving towards adults-only armed forces, this report asks the Ministry of Defence to give this proposal the attention it merits.

INTRODUCTION

The British armed forces enlist around 22,000 people each year to replace personnel who leave; of these, around 4,700 are under 18 years of age.²

This report shows that recruiting minors is highly costly and, due to the legal requirements governing their recruitment and deployment, leads to operational pressures. The report also argues that raising the minimum age of recruitment to 18 would better serve young people's interests.

This report argues that the case for change encompasses compelling financial, operational and duty of care concerns. It also shows how the change could be achieved without detriment to the trained staff requirement in the armed forces.

Although Parliamentary and UN committees have called on the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to reconsider the recruitment of minors, it has yet to conduct a feasibility study of an all-adult force.³ In the interests of the armed forces, the Exchequer and especially young people, this paper concludes by calling on the MoD to commission this work at the earliest opportunity.

* * *

The report focuses entirely on recruitment by enlistment (i.e. of non-officer personnel). Official sources are used throughout, wherever possible.

A CASE FOR ALL-ADULT ARMED FORCES IN THE UK

RECRUITING ADULTS IS MORE COST-EFFECTIVE

Four out of five minors who join the British armed forces enlist in the Army.⁴ Appendix I calculates the relative costs of recruiting and successfully training adults and minors in the Army for a nominal ten year career. Based on data from the financial year 2010-11, the calculations indicate that the cost of recruiting at age 16-17½ is 75-98% higher than that of recruiting from 17½.⁵ On this basis, the Army would save **between £81.5 million and £94 million per annum** by recruiting adults only.⁶

The calculations account for:

- The longer period of initial training for minors, at **23 or 50 weeks' duration** (depending on the recruit's trade), compared with **14 weeks** for adults.⁷
- The higher drop-out rate among trainees who enlisted as minors, at **36.6%**, compared with **28.3%** for adult recruits.⁸
- The longer average service among minors who successfully complete training, at **10 years**, compared with **7.6 years** for adult recruits (based on data from the Infantry).⁹

Although minors tend to serve for longer if they complete training, its prolonged duration and higher drop-out rate among trainees make recruitment from age 16 and 17 cost-ineffective when all three factors are accounted for.

OPERATIONAL REASONS TO RECRUIT ONLY ADULTS

As a State Party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), the UK must take "all feasible measures" to ensure that members of its armed forces aged less than 18 "do not take a direct part in hostilities".¹⁰ The Government takes this to mean that minors are barred from deployment 'on operations where hostile forces are involved',¹¹ whilst reserving the right to deploy minors in a

range of circumstances.¹² Additionally, the UN does not allow minors to serve as peacekeepers.

In the UK, the large majority of recruits under 18 are still in training, but this still leaves around 150 minors at any time who have completed training but are not fully deployable.¹³ It costs around **£2.65 million per annum** to pay the salaries of these soldiers.¹⁴

In addition to this cost, last-minute switching of personnel in units about to be deployed can cause considerable inconvenience¹⁵ and jeopardise their effectiveness. This is particularly significant as minors are generally over-represented in regiments with front-line responsibilities (see Appendix II).¹⁶

Occasionally, units containing minors are deployed to war zones. Since 2003, at least 20 minors were accidentally deployed to operational theatres in Afghanistan and Iraq; one was in Helmand for six weeks and took part in armed combat.¹⁷ The MoD attributes these mistakes to 'the pressures on units prior to deployment'.¹⁸

RECRUITING MINORS MAY BE DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR BEST INTERESTS

RECRUITING MINORS MAY HARM THEIR LONG-TERM SOCIAL MOBILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

The MoD argues that the recruitment of minors provides employment and training opportunities for young people who might otherwise be unemployed.¹⁹

In fact, few 16 year-olds are in the market for work; in 2009-10, **94%** of 16-year-olds were staying on in education, largely thanks to successive governments' policies aimed at enhancing social mobility.²⁰ By attempting to recruit young people leaving school at 16, the armed forces are in *de facto* competition with the civilian education sector.

The educational opportunities available to new armed forces recruits do not compare well with civilian alternatives. A report by Child Soldiers International in

2012 found that qualifications available to minors in the Army, which accounts for nine out of ten armed forces recruits aged 16,²¹ do not include GCSEs, A- or AS-levels, BTECs, HNCs or HNDs.²² The Army's only formal target for the education of minors is that they achieve a Functional Skills qualification in literacy and numeracy at Level One, which is approximately equivalent to GCSE grade G.²³

Alison Wolf's 'Review of Vocational Education' (the Wolf Report) was commissioned by the Department for Education to make recommendations for policy priorities in the sector. The Wolf Report strongly criticised Functional Skills courses as 'conceptually incoherent' and 'certainly not in themselves an adequate "maths and English" diet for the 16-19 cohort'.²⁴ It concluded that Grade A*-C passes in GCSE English and Maths – qualifications not available to minors in the Army – were the educational foundation on which to build the long-term social mobility of young people from all backgrounds.²⁵

Later in their careers, other vocational training options become available to recruits, particularly NVQs at Levels Two and Three.²⁶ This provision has been increasing in recent years with over 13,000 NVQs awarded at Level Two across the armed forces in 2009-10,²⁷ but employers do not value NVQs as a substitute for GCSEs. According to the Wolf Report, NVQs at Level Two 'do not appear to have any positive outcomes whatsoever in terms of earnings and career progression'; the wages of individuals bearing these qualifications are no higher, on average, than those of people with no qualifications at all.²⁸

Military apprenticeships may also be available, but with some exceptions these are focused on specialised military skills of little transferrable value to civilian employment.²⁹

The typical Infantry recruit who joins as a minor has few or no qualifications at enlistment. If he completes his training then he will serve for about ten years before leaving to join the civilian employment market in his mid-twenties.³⁰ There, he will be competing against his peers for work, 94% of whom will have continued in civilian education after school.³¹

In response to Professor Wolf's recommendations, The Department for Education pledged to do more to ensure that young people, including those at risk of disengaging from education, achieve key GCSEs, post-16 if necessary.³² Vigorous efforts to recruit young people into the armed forces risk undermining this policy aim by diverting young people from civilian options that would serve their social mobility better in the long-term. Indeed, were minors expected to continue in education before applying to enlist,

the armed forces might be better able to recruit for technical, pinch-point trades, which require well-qualified recruits.

THE RISKS OF MILITARY LIFE AFFECT THE YOUNGEST RECRUITS MOST

Military personnel are typically physically fitter than the general population but have higher rates of common psychological disorders, to which younger recruits are most vulnerable.³³ Research indicates that, compared with adult recruits, younger recruits face a higher risk of bullying,³⁴ sexual harassment (female recruits),³⁵ self-harm,^{36 37} and post-traumatic stress disorder (male recruits).³⁸ Compared with civilians of a similar age, younger recruits in the armed forces also face a substantially higher risk of serious alcohol problems³⁹ and, among male recruits, suicide.⁴⁰ Direct exposure to combat, especially to traumatic events, has been found to increase substantially the risk of committing violent offences; again, youngest recruits are the most susceptible.⁴¹ Many of these problems affect not only minors but also young adults; more research is needed to assess the psychiatric vulnerability of minors in the armed forces as a discrete group.

Soldiers who enlist as minors typically face the greatest risks once they turn 18 and are deployed to war zones. This is because they enlist in disproportionately high numbers in the Army's front-line roles, such as those in the Infantry, where the risk of death or injury in Afghanistan has been five times that faced by soldiers in the rest of the Army.⁴² Minors, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are more likely to enlist in these roles as GCSEs are not required and there are always vacancies available. As a consequence, the Infantry contains one third of all the Army's minors even though it comprises only one quarter of the Army overall.⁴³ Of the 34 British armed forces fatalities in Afghanistan aged 18 and 19 to date, 30 were Infantrymen and 27 had enlisted as minors.⁴⁴ Infantrymen killed in Afghanistan have been two years younger on average than fatalities in the rest of the Army.⁴⁵ These tragic facts reflect the over-representation of young people in the Infantry, their consequent increased exposure to risk, and the Army's practice of deploying soldiers to Afghanistan very soon after their 18th birthday.

THE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF ENLISTMENT AFFECT MINORS DISPROPORTIONATELY

Many human rights and civil rights instruments apply exemptions to military personnel. This means that many of the fundamental freedoms and rights which civilians take for granted are denied to members of the armed forces. For example, the Human Rights Act excludes military personnel from the right not to be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.⁴⁶

Minors in the armed forces are doubly disadvantaged by the differential legal framework for military personnel as they lose not only general civil rights but also many of the specific rights extended to civilian minors. For example, on enlistment, minors become subject to military law which does not always distinguish between minors and adults. A court martial is entitled to sentence a minor to long-term detention on the same terms as an adult if found guilty of Absence Without Leave (AWOL) or disobeying an order. In 2010, ten minors were incarcerated at the Military Corrective Training Centre in Colchester for AWOL offences.⁴⁷

THERE ARE WEAKNESSES IN THE SAFEGUARDS FOR ENLISTING MINORS

Under the OPAC, parental consent is required for the enlistment of recruits under 18 years of age,⁴⁸ but the MoD does not require recruiters to make contact with parents/guardians and the consent forms are usually signed at home. One senior recruiter said in 2007 that 'most' recruits' parents never meet recruiting staff.⁴⁹

Recruitment literature for recruits and their parents does not seriously attempt to explain the terms of service.⁵⁰ It is common for applicants to have underdeveloped literacy skills (the minimum reading age for Army entry is seven), yet the legal obligations are tortuous and the guidance papers given to applicants complicated. It cannot be assumed that parents granting consent are aware of the risks, difficulties and complex legal obligations of enlistment, especially if they have never met recruiters.⁵¹ Evidence from the independent information and advice services At Ease and BeforeYouSignUp.info indicates that many parents are confused about the terms of service and struggle to find simple and accurate information about their child's rights and obligations.⁵²

THE POLICY OF RECRUITING MINORS IS AT ODDS WITH THE LEGAL AGE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The use of children and adolescents in warfare has a long history but the policy today deserves to be evaluated ethically and with regard to modern standards for the care and rights of young people, particularly in respect of the legal age of responsibility which sets societal norms for activities properly reserved for adulthood.

A critical question is whether it can be reasonable to assume that minors are generally able to make informed and responsible choices on a matter with such far-reaching consequences as enlisting in the armed forces. In seeking to answer this question, account should be taken of how mature young people are at age 15, when they may begin the application process. Vulnerabilities at this age may be magnified by disadvantages common amongst potential recruits, such as family breakdown, neighbourhood deprivation and poor schooling.⁵³ Recruitment marketing which paints a glamorous and sanitised picture of military life risks capitalising on disadvantage by exploiting the impressionability of young people in hardship.⁵⁴

The law reserves for adulthood activities that either pose significant risk to health and wellbeing (such as smoking and drinking) or require sufficient personal maturity to take responsibility for the well-being of others (such as working in the civil emergency services). Joining the armed forces entails risks and responsibilities which are comparable to or greater than these. The discrepancy reveals morally striking inconsistencies. For example, a young person is considered mature enough to join the Army but not the fire service. He or she may sign the Enlistment Paper and accept its far-reaching, legally binding obligations, but cannot be held to any other legal contract in civilian life. It is legal for a minor to learn how to kill someone with a bayonet but not to use a fruit machine.

It is worth considering whether the legal age of responsibility should apply to a training regime that involves psychological conditioning techniques. For example, recruits aged 16 and 17 at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate are trained to charge at a hanging sack resembling a person and thrust a bayonet into its 'body' while their peers shout encouragement, such as 'Kill! Kill! Kill!'⁵⁵ The training is designed to stimulate the sympathetic nervous system with the aim of overriding the recruits' innate inhibition to killing.⁵⁶ Psychologists have long understood that such techniques amount to *conditioning*; rather than merely teaching a certain skill,

military training also affects the functioning of the brain.⁵⁷ This is a pragmatically necessary part of military training, for it helps to ensure that recruits will not balk at a kill order in the heat of warfare. Nonetheless, its suitability for minors, who have not yet emerged into psychological maturity, is in question.

THE UK IS INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AS INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS PROGRESS

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – the most widely ratified UN treaty – extends special protection to young people in recognition of their vulnerabilities and the corresponding responsibilities of the adult population. As of 2002, the OPAC extended this principle to protect young people affected by war and military recruitment. Although the OPAC does not raise the minimum recruitment age to 18, despite strong and widespread support for this proposal in negotiations, it has helped to create a growing international consensus that minors should not be recruited for any kind of military use.

Most states worldwide now only recruit from age 18. Only a handful of European states still accept recruits aged 17.⁵⁸ The UK is the only state among the EU, Council of Europe and UN Security Council Permanent Membership that recruits from age 16.⁵⁹

Since the deaths of four young soldiers at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut over a decade ago, the MoD and armed forces have introduced a number of improvements to the duty of care regime. Even so, concerns about expectations placed on minors in the armed forces, and the risks they face, have persisted. The House of Commons Defence Committee's 2005 *Duty of Care* report concluded:

'Concerns have been raised about the appropriateness of recruiting under 18 year olds into the Armed Forces. We recommend that MoD examine the potential impact of raising the recruitment age for all three Services to 18.'⁶⁰

Since the *Duty of Care* report, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UK Joint Committee on Human Rights have called on the UK to raise the minimum age of recruitment to 18.⁶¹ The MoD has yet to commission a feasibility study on this proposition.

Both committees have also asked the UK to prioritise recruitment of adults over minors, as it is required to do by

the CRC. The MoD has yet to create a policy to ensure that recruiters do this.⁶²

RAISING THE MINIMUM AGE OF RECRUITMENT WOULD BRING IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

By raising the minimum recruitment age to 18, possibly in stages, the armed forces would benefit in a number of ways. Trainee drop-out rates would decrease, since adults are more likely to complete training.⁶³ All recruits finishing training would be immediately deployable if necessary. The financial savings would also be substantial, as Standard Entry training is much shorter and costs much less than training for Junior Entrants. The UK would gain reputationally from ceasing to be the only state in Europe to recruit at 16.

Young people would also benefit. They would have an opportunity to remain in the education system for up to two years longer before enlisting. In this time they could re-sit their GCSEs if necessary, while those keen to enlist could take part in local cadet forces or do other preparatory work before becoming eligible to apply. At 18 and above, new recruits would be more mature and better educated, more able than now to make an informed choice about the commitment involved in enlisting, and more resilient to the risks and challenges of military life.

THE CHANGE TO RECRUITING ADULTS ONLY INTO THE ARMY WOULD WIN POPULAR SUPPORT

An ICM poll commissioned by Child Soldiers International and carried out in March 2013 found that 70% of respondents who expressed a view believed the minimum age to join the British Army should be 18 or above; only one in five believed it should be 16 or less.⁶⁴ This response indicates that the current policy is now out of step with public opinion. Although the poll focused on the Army alone, its findings suggest that raising the minimum age for all armed forces recruitment to 18 would be welcomed widely.

The next section examines the practical implications of this proposal.

THE FEASIBILITY OF RECRUITING ALL-ADULT ARMED FORCES IN THE UK

EUROPEAN STATES SHOW THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIELD ARMED FORCES COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF ADULT RECRUITS

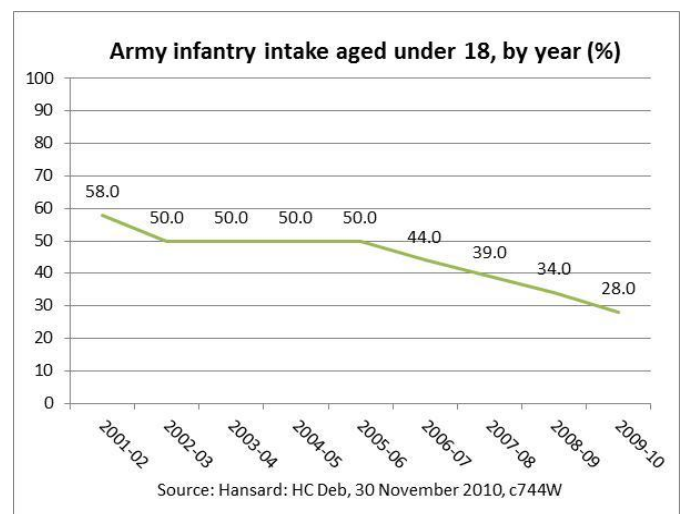
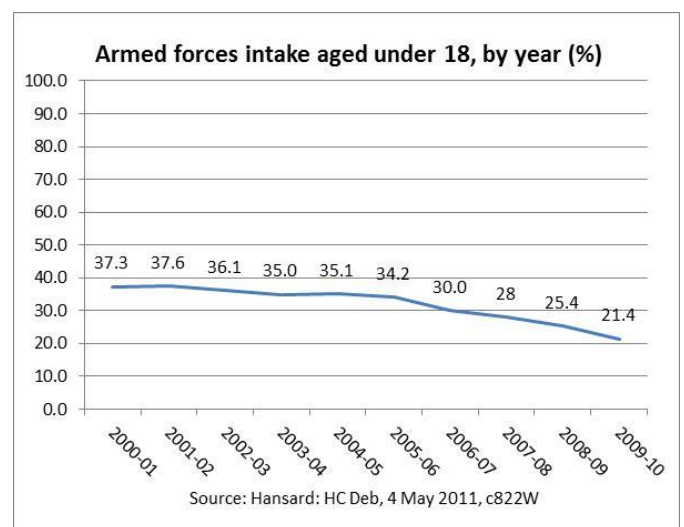
Whereas in 1960 almost all of the 27 states that now comprise the EU conscripted young people into military service, today all but six rely entirely on volunteer forces.⁶⁵ Appendix III tabulates military recruitment data for all EU countries. It shows that **in 25 member states compulsory education ends at 16 or earlier**, and that the minimum age for military recruitment is higher than this in every state except the UK. Indeed, **21 of the 27 EU states recruit from age 18**, leaving a two-year gap during which time a young person can continue in education or look for civilian work.⁶⁶

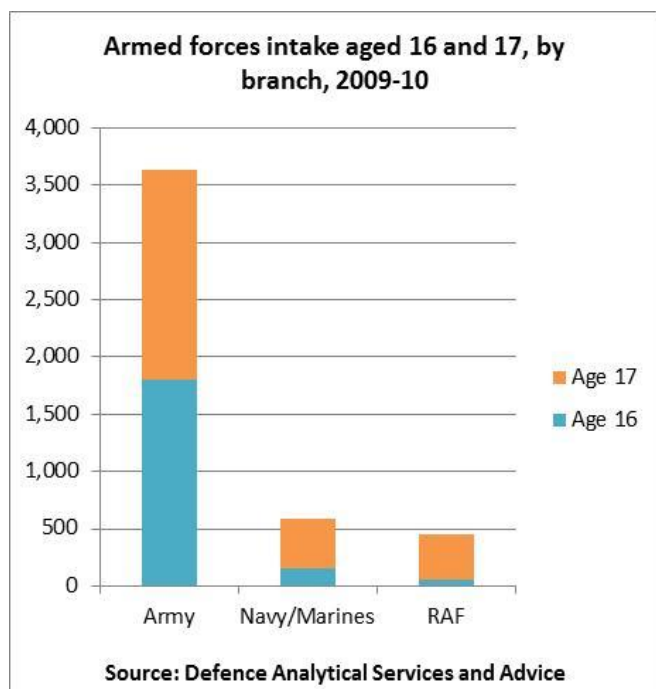
All EU states field armed forces comparable in size, *per capita*, to those of the UK.⁶⁷ This shows that linking the minimum age of military recruitment with the national school leaving age is unnecessary.

THE UK'S DEPENDENCE ON RECRUITING MINORS IS DIMINISHING ACROSS THE ARMED FORCES

Traditionally, the armed forces have relied heavily on recruiting minors to meet the trained strength requirement. In the past, removing this age group from the pool of potential recruits might have left staffing shortages but this risk is rapidly diminishing. The proportion of minors entering the armed forces has fallen in the last decade from over a third to under a quarter. The fall has been particularly dramatic in the Infantry, where traditionally the majority of new recruits have been minors. Whilst they are still over-represented, the proportion of new Infantry recruits under 18 has fallen by over a half, from **58%** in 2001-02 to **28%** in 2009-10.⁶⁸

In absolute terms, the RAF and Naval Service combined enlisted just over **1,000** minors in 2009-10, down from **2,200** a decade earlier.





GOVERNMENT PLANS TO RESTRUCTURE THE ARMY RENDER THE RECRUITMENT OF MINORS UNNECESSARY

Although the Army recruits many more minors than does the RAF or Naval Service, the minimum age of enlistment for soldiers could still be raised without detriment to the trained strength requirement, for at least two reasons.

First, unlike the Navy and RAF, the Army discharges a large number of personnel under the rubric of Service No Longer Required (SNLR). This is an administrative category used for various reasons including the discretionary discharge of personnel who wish to leave but have no legal right to do so, as well as discharges for minor offences. However, most such discharges are of personnel who have served for some years but not progressed up the ranks. Currently, the Army prefers to discharge these soldiers on the grounds that they are less fit and motivated than younger recruits. This contrasts with the Navy and RAF, which rarely discharge using SNLR.

The Army's policy on SNLR can be distressing for personnel who are laid off without the right of the redundancy process they would expect in civilian life. It is also extremely costly to the Army. **In 2006, 2,775 soldiers were discharged** for SNLR – more than the number of 16 year-olds the Army recruited that year.⁶⁹ To replace these recruits with new enlistments at 16 would have cost in the

order of **£400 million** at 2010-11 prices.⁷⁰ So, had the Army retained just half of the recruits discharged for SNLR, it could have saved up to **£200 million** that year.

Second, Government plans to restructure the Army through to 2020 will see a large number of regular troops replaced with reservists. Assuming that rates of adult recruitment remain as they are now, the Army's overhaul will eliminate the need to recruit minors.⁷¹

Under the plans, the trained strength requirement of the Regular Army will be **reduced by 20,000 personnel** from 102,000 to 82,000 by 2020,⁷² with the number of enlisted (i.e. not officers) personnel falling **from around 89,200 to 71,600**.⁷³ If the Army relied entirely on adult recruits to meet this requirement it would need to enlist **11,476** per year (assuming the current adult in-training drop-out rate of 28.3%). This is around **900 more adults** than the Army recruited in 2009-10.⁷⁴ Since phasing out the recruitment of minors would result in an increase in the recruitment of adults (as minors who were keen on joining did so as they turned 18), the Army could comfortably expect to meet this target by relying solely on adult recruits. In the context of the Government's plans for a restructured Army, the recruitment of minors will therefore become unnecessary.

Even without altering the policy on SNLR or taking account of the restructuring plans, the downward trend in the recruitment of minors, when combined with the 'straight-18' example set by other European states, indicates the growing feasibility of moving to an adults-only force.

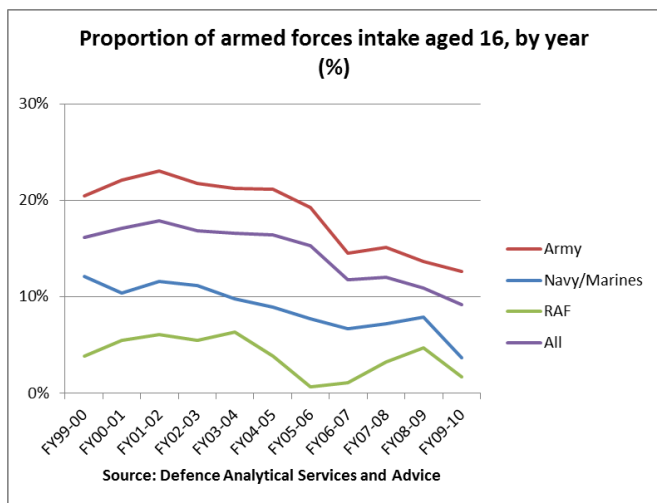
THE ARMED FORCES COULD CEASE RECRUITING FROM AGE 16 WITHIN A YEAR AND STILL MEET THE TRAINED STRENGTH REQUIREMENT

As a transitional measure, recruitment of 16 year-olds could be phased out quickly. Since 2001-02, the proportion of 16-year-olds joining the armed forces has been falling and as of 2009-10 stood at **9.2%** of the total intake.⁷⁵

Given the Navy and RAF recruit very few 16-year-olds (just ten each in 2011-12),⁷⁶ both could stop recruiting at this age immediately.

The Army still recruits larger numbers of 16 year olds (**1,475** in 2011-12), albeit as part of a generally downward trend.⁷⁷ Replacing these recruits with 17 year olds and above is readily feasible. The annual savings accrued from phasing out the Army's recruitment of 16 year olds would be in the order of **£83 million**,⁷⁸ or more than three times the current recruitment advertising spend for the armed forces as a

whole. Part of this saving could be used to fund the changes to recruitment practice that would be required as part of the transition to an all-adult force.⁷⁹



CONCLUSION

This report has made a case for raising the minimum age for military recruitment to 18 and suggested how this could be achieved. The armed forces would benefit from personnel who are more mature. Training and operations would be streamlined by a more manageable system without, as now, different arrangements for minors and adults. Young people would reap lasting benefits from staying on for longer in civilian education before becoming eligible to enlist. As adults, potential recruits would be better placed to give informed consent to the risks and

obligations that enlistment entails, and less likely to drop out of training. The Exchequer would benefit from substantial efficiency savings.

Given the significant financial, operational and ethical advantages of recruiting only adults into the armed forces, the concluding request of this report is that the MoD commission a full study of its feasibility.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF ENLISTING MINORS AND ADULTS INTO THE ARMY

The Army enlists non-officer recruits as Junior Entrants or Standard Entrants, depending on the age and trade of the recruit.⁸⁰ Generally, Junior Entrants are soldiers beginning training aged between 16 and 17 years and five months, although there is some minimal variation.⁸¹ In this paper '17½' is used for convenience to refer to the upper age limit for Junior Entry. All soldiers older than this enlist as Standard Entrants.

Initial training for all recruits divides into two phases. Phase One is basic soldier training carried out at a few centres around the UK. On completion of Phase One, recruits join their regimental or corps units for Phase Two training, which is of variable length and specific to the recruit's assigned role.

Phase One training is conducted in separate institutions for Junior and Standard Entrants. In 2010-11 all Junior Entrants were enrolled into either the Army Foundation College in Harrogate (AFC(H)) for 50 weeks or the Army Technical Foundation College in Winchester (ATFC(W)) for 23 weeks.⁸² Phase One courses for Standard Entrants are much shorter, at 14 weeks, and carried out at other centres.

JUNIOR AND STANDARD ENTRY: BREAKDOWN

In fiscal year (FY) 2010-11 the Army recruited **14,180** soldiers, of whom **2,390** were aged under 18 at enlistment.⁸³ Of these, **1,922 (80%)** were Junior Entrants, with **1,315 attending AFC(H) and 607 attending ATFC(W)**.⁸⁴ This leaves **468 (20%)** minors joining as Standard Entrants (i.e. they were aged at least 17 years and five months when they began training).⁸⁵

RECRUITMENT COSTS

In 2010-11 the cost of recruiting a soldier including selection but excluding marketing and training was **£10,000**. This cost does not vary between those who are under or over 18 years of age.⁸⁶

PHASE ONE TRAINING COSTS

Since the duration of Phase One training differs between Junior and Standard Entry, the training spend for each category of recruit and the amount of salary paid during the course also differ. Data from the MoD showing the extent of these differences in 2010-11 are shown in the table below:⁸⁷

Phase One training cost (per trainee)			
	Training costs	Salary costs	Total
Junior Entry			
at AFC(H)	£64,458	£29,000	£93,458
at ATFC(W)	£53,985	£25,000	£78,985
Standard Entry			
at ATC, Pirbright	£21,318	£11,000-£12,000	£32,818
at ATR, Bassingbourn	£26,992	£11,000-£12,000	£38,492
at ITC, Catterick	£26,543	£11,000-£12,000	£38,043

COSTS COMPARISON OF JUNIOR AND STANDARD ENTRY

Junior Entry costs, 2010-11

Estimated no. of Junior Entrants: 1,922
of which joining AFC(H): 1,315
of which joining ATFC(W): 607

Cost	Per trainee	Cohort
of recruitment	£10,000	£19,220,000 (n=1,922)
of training (Phase One)		
AFC(H):	£93,458	£122,897,270 (n=1,315)
ATFC(W):	£78,985	£47,943,895 (n=607)
Total cost of recruitment and Phase One training	£88,985 - £103,458	£190,061,165

Standard Entry costs, 2010-11

Estimated no. of Standard Entrants: 12,258

Cost	Per trainee	Cohort
of recruitment	£10,000	£122,580,000 (n=12,258)
of training (Phase One)		
- minimum (at ATC, Pirbright)	£32,818	£402,283,044 (n=12,258)
- maximum (at ATR, Bassingbourn)	£38,492	£471,834,936 (n=12,258)
Total cost of recruitment and Phase One training	£42,818 - £48,492	£524,863,044 - £594,414,936

IN-TRAINING DROP-OUT AND POST-TRAINING CAREER LENGTH

Two further factors significantly affect the cost-effectiveness of recruiting Junior and Standard Entrants. The first is the drop-out rate among trainees, which is higher among minors, at **36.6%**, compared with **28.3%** among adults.⁸⁸ The second is the average career length of those who successfully complete training, which (based on data from the Infantry) is longer among those who enlisted as minors, at **10 years**, compared with **7.6 years** for adult recruits.⁸⁹

Given that 80% of minors enlisting in the Army join as Junior Entrants, this paper assumes that enlistment age (under or over 18) may be used as a proxy for entry category (Junior or Standard) for the purposes of estimating drop-out rates and average career length in these groups. Furthermore, as the Infantry is the largest part of the Army, this paper also tentatively assumes that differences in Infantry career length according to age at enlistment are broadly similar throughout the rest of the Army.

With an in-training drop-out rate among minors of 36.6%, the 1,922 soldiers recruited as Junior Entrants in 2010-11 would result in **1,219** completing Phase Two and joining the trained strength.

To recruit and successfully train the same number of soldiers as Standard Entrants in 2010-11, the Army would have had to enlist **1,700**, assuming a drop-out rate of 28.3% for adult trainees. Based on the per-trainee cost of Standard Entrants (£42,818 - £48,492), the total cost of recruiting and training 1,700 new soldiers in this group is between £72,790,600 and £82,436,400.

As discussed, the cost-effectiveness of recruiting at Junior and Standard Entry depends further on the average career length for each group. Using data on Infantry career length based on age at enlistment as a proxy for Junior and Standard Entrants' career length in the Army as a whole, the equivalent cost of recruiting Standard Entrants for a nominal equivalent ten-year career may be calculated as follows:

A = Estimated total cost of recruiting 2010-11 Junior Entry cohort:	£190,061,165
B = Estimated cost of recruiting 2010-11 Junior Entry cohort as Standard Entrants:	£95,792,430 to £108,486,302
<i>Cost before adjusting for career length:</i>	<i>£72,790,600 to £82,436,400</i>
<i>Adjustment factor for average career length of Standard Entrants who complete training:</i>	<i>x 1.316 (i.e. 10/7.6)</i>
A-B = Potential annual saving from phasing out Junior Entry (based on FY 2010-11):	£81,574,863 to £94,268,735

CONCLUSION

According to these calculations, the cost of recruiting and training from age 16-17½ is 75-98% higher, per successfully trained intake of soldiers completing a nominal ten-year Army career than, that of recruiting from 17½.

The minimum estimated saving from entirely replacing Junior Entry places with Standard Entrants would be £81.5 million. This is equivalent to:

- **More than three times the annual cost of recruitment advertising;⁹⁰ or**
- **An annual bonus of at least £757 for every new Standard Entrant for the length of their career.⁹¹**

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA AND CALCULATIONS

Three factors may affect the accuracy of the estimate, although the variation in all cases is likely to be small.

The full cost of Phase One training does not apply where a recruit leaves before completing it. Bearing in mind that a) comparatively more Junior Entry recruits drop out during training; and b) the costs of Junior Entry training are higher than those for Standard Entry recruits, the unspent resources resulting from Junior Entrants dropping out are higher than those from Standard Entrants. The actual per-

trainee cost of Junior Entry training is therefore likely to be slightly lower than the estimate made in this paper. However, the financial cost to the Army of recruits dropping out is always greater than any saving made, and therefore this paper's conclusion will not be materially affected.

This paper assumes that Junior and Standard entry recruits who have completed Phase Two are equally deployable. However, under-18s are barred from deployment to zones of hostility. Were deployability the criterion by which someone was deemed to have joined the trained strength, the average career length of Junior Entry recruits would be lower than shown in the paper and therefore the relative cost of training would be higher. Despite this, the difference would probably not be significant as relatively few Junior Entry recruits are both fully trained and still under 18.

The Phase One salary data provided by the MoD are confusing as they appear to bear little relation to the length of the courses for Junior and Senior Entrants. This paper assumes that the MoD data are accurate. If that is not the case, then even when the salary data are entirely discounted, the cost of recruiting the required cohort of fully trained Junior Entrants for a nominal 10 year career (£136.5 million) is still much higher than recruiting Standard Entrants on the same terms (between £70 million and £82.5 million), which would have saved the MoD between £54 million to £66.5 million in 2010-11.

APPENDIX II: RECRUITS AGED UNDER 18 IN ARMY AT 1 APRIL 2010⁹²

	No. of Under-18s	% under 18	Under-18s in group/corps as % of under-18s in Army
Corps/groups with front-line or mainly front-line roles			
Infantry	990	3.6%	33.7%
Royal Regiment of Artillery	280	3.4%	9.5%
Household Cavalry/Royal Armoured Corps	220	3.4%	7.5%
Army Air Corps	40	1.7%	1.4%
Royal Army Medical Corps	35	1%	1.2%
Total	1,565		53.3%
Corps/groups with dual front-line / support roles			
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	475	4%	16.2%
Corps of Royal Engineers	305	2.7%	10.4%
The Royal Logistics Corps	290	1.7%	9.9%
Royal Corps of Signals	255	3%	8.7%
Adjutant General's Corps (Staff/Personnel)	40	1.1%	1.4%
Total	1,365		46.5%
All Army	2,930	2.7%	

In all other Army groups/corps, the number of recruits aged under 18 was fewer than five.

APPENDIX III: ARMED FORCES RECRUITMENT IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

EU states which continue to recruit minors into the armed forces are shaded orange; those recruiting adults only are shaded green.

Member State	Age at which compulsory education ends (as of 2007) ⁹³	Minimum age of military recruitment (as of 2012) ⁹⁴	Conscription practised (as of 2011) ⁹⁵	Size of armed forces as percentage of population (as of 2005) ⁹⁶
Austria	14	17 (low numbers)	Yes	0.42%
Belgium	18	18	No	0.39%
Bulgaria	14	18	No	0.66%
Cyprus	14	17 (low numbers)	Yes	1.33%
Czech Republic	15	18	No	0.56%
Denmark	16	18	Yes	0.42%
Estonia	15	18	Yes	0.41%
Finland	16	18	Yes	0.52%
France	16	17½	No	0.41%
Germany	18	17 (training only)	No	0.34%
Greece	14	18	Yes	1.60%
Hungary	16	18	No	0.33%
Ireland	15	18	No	0.25%
Italy	15	18	No	0.34%
Latvia	15	18	No	0.21%
Lithuania	15	18	No	0.37%
Luxembourg	15	18	No	0.20%
Malta	15	18	No	0.53%
The Netherlands	17	17½ (training only)	No	0.33%
Poland	15	18	No	0.43%
Portugal	14	18	No	0.43%
Romania	14	18	No	0.45%
Slovakia	15	18	No	0.41%
Slovenia	14	18	No	0.33%
Spain	16	18	No	0.35%
Sweden	16	18	No	0.31%
United Kingdom	16	16	No	0.35%

APPENDIX IV: BRITISH FORCES FATALITIES AND CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN

FATALITIES⁹⁷

As of 25 March 2013, there have been 440 British Forces fatalities in Afghanistan since the conflict began in 2001.

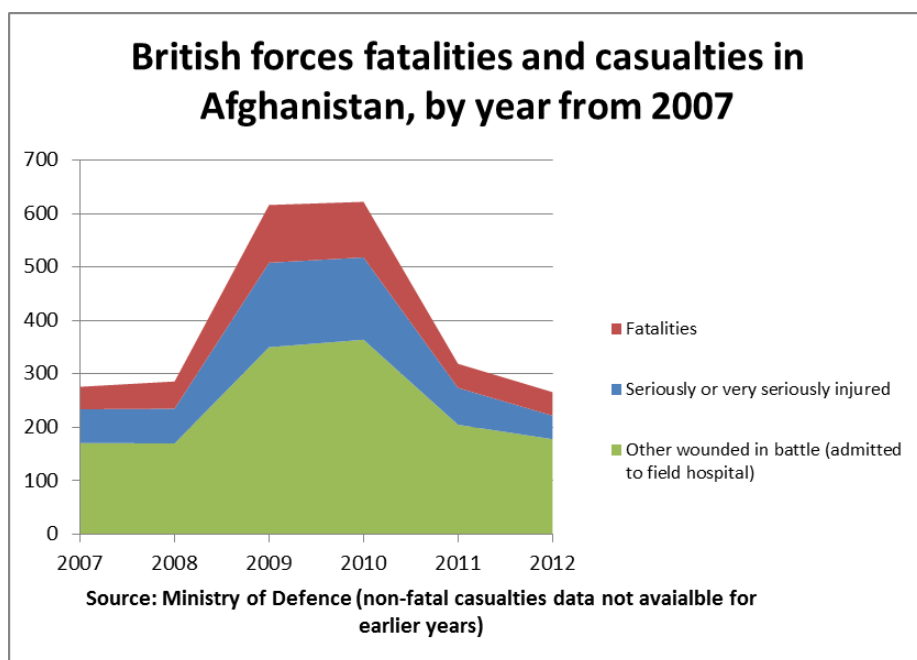
Group	Size of group ⁹⁸	Personnel aged 18 ⁹⁹	Fatalities in Afghanistan	Average age of fatality	Fatalities aged 18 or 19
Armed forces	162,240	--	440	26.4	34
Army	94,610 (58%)	2,560	358 (81%)	26.0	32
<i>Of which:</i>					
Infantry	23,272 (24.6% of Army)	920 (4.0% of Infantry)	236 (66% of Army fatalities)	25.3	30
Rest of Army	67,425 (75.4% of Army)	1,640 (2.3% of rest of Army)	122 (34% of Army fatalities)	27.3	2
Naval Service	31,810 (20%)	--	61 (14%)	26.4	2
RAF	35,820 (22%)	--	22 (5%)	32.5	0

Causes of death include hostile action, accidents, death by natural causes, suicide and undisclosed causes.

All Naval Service fatalities have been Royal Marines.

CASUALTIES¹⁰⁰

As of 31 December 2012 there have been 1,991 British forces field hospital admissions since 2007 when the armed forces began to record these data. Of these admissions, 553 were for injuries classified as Serious or Very Serious. The ratio of battle-wounded to fatalities has been approximately 5:1 since 2007 (ranging annually between 6.1:1 max and 4.5:1 min); the graph below illustrates the relationship.



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NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ Consult main text for references for data in the Executive Summary.

² Defence Analytical Services and Advice (2011): 'UK Regular Forces Intake And Outflow By Age For Financial Year 2009-10' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk> (accessed 11 June 2012).

³ As of November 2011. Information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (ref. FOI 07-11-2011-083412-001), 7 November 2011.

⁴ Defence Analytical Services and Advice (2011): 'UK Regular Forces Intake And Outflow By Age For Financial Year 2009-10' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk> (accessed 11 June 2012).

⁵ Army recruitment is divided between "Junior" entry, for those enlisting below the age of 17 ½ years, and "Standard" entry for those enlisting age 17 ½ and above.

⁶ The analysis compares the cost of recruiting and training new soldiers to the end of Phase One training. Figures for the cost of Phase Two training are not available, although the MoD states they do not differ according to age at enlistment. Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W.

⁷ Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W.

⁸ Army data for 2010-11. Hansard: HC Deb, 25 November 2011, c595W.

⁹ Hansard: HC Deb, 12 September 2011, c1007W (based on age at enlistment of those leaving between 1 July 2009 and 31 July 2011).

¹⁰ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, Article 1.

¹¹ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (nd): *Practice Relating to Rule 137: Participation of Child Soldiers in Hostilities*, Section VI: Other National Practice, online at http://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v2_cou_gb_rule137 (accessed 21 August 2012).

¹² The UK reserves the right to deploy minors on operations where hostile forces are involved when the Ministry of Defence deems that there is a

genuine military need, the situation is urgent, it is otherwise not practicable to withdraw minors before deployment, or it would undermine operational effectiveness. Cited in Child Soldiers International (2012): 'Louder than words: An agenda for action to end state use of child soldiers' (London: CSI, 2012) p. 47.

¹³ Based on the position at 1 July 2012. Hansard: HC Deb, 10 September 2012 c74W.

¹⁴ (Trained recruit annual salary 2013/14 = £17,690) x 150 trained under-18s = £2,653,500 *per annum*. Armed Forces Pay Review Body, '2013-2014 United Kingdom Rank - Rating & Wage Chart' online at <http://www.navycs.com/uk/2013-british-military-pay.html> (accessed 4 April 2013); and Hansard: HC Deb, 10 September 2012 c74W.

¹⁵ Army officer of senior rank, personal communication, November 2008. Andrew Robathan MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, has cited 'the pressures on units prior to deployment' as a reason for accidentally deploying four minors to operational theatres between April 2008 and March 2010.

¹⁶ HC Deb, 19 January 2011, c824W. As of 1 April 2010, 2.7% of army personnel were under 18 but in the three largest front-line regiments (Infantry, Artillery, Armoured Corps), the proportion of minors was higher than this average, at between 3.4% and 3.6%.

¹⁷ Child Soldiers International (2012): 'Louder than words: An agenda for action to end state use of child soldiers' (London: CSI, 2012) p. 49; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (2011): 'Catch 16-22: Recruitment and retention of minors in the British Armed Forces', p. 5.

¹⁸ Hansard: HC Deb, 18 October 2011, c868W.

¹⁹ E.g. Hansard: HC Deb, 27 April 2011, c417W.

²⁰ Alison Wolf (2011) 'Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report' (Department for Education), p.51.

²¹ Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA) (2010): 'TSP 19 - UK Regular Forces Intake and Outflow by Age (2009-10)' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk> (accessed 23 August 2012).

²² Hansard: HC Deb, 19 July 2011, c862W and HC Deb, 30 November 2011, c976W, in Child Soldiers International (2012): 'Mind the Gap: Education for Minors in the British Armed Forces' (London).

²³ Hansard: HC Deb, 30 November 2011, c975W.

²⁴ Alison Wolf (2011) op. cit. pp. 170, 84.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 8.

²⁶ Level Two is approximately equivalent in difficulty to A*-C grades at GCSE and Level Three, to 'A' Level, although in both cases NVQs involve a much shorter period of study.

²⁷ Hansard: HC Deb, 7 June 2011, c7W.

²⁸ Alison Wolf (2011) op. cit. pp. 32, 71.

²⁹ See Child Soldiers International (2012): 'Mind the Gap: Education for Minors in the British Armed Forces' for a discussion of military apprenticeships.

³⁰ Hansard: HC Deb, 12 September 2011, c1007W (based on age at enlistment of those leaving between 1 July 2009 and 31 July 2011).

³¹ Alison Wolf (2011) op. cit. p.51.

³² Department for Education (2011): 'Wolf Review of Vocational Education: Government Response', p. 3.

³³ For example, see N Fear et al. (2010) 'What are the consequences of deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan on the mental health of the UK armed forces? A cohort study', *The Lancet*, 13 May 2010, (online), at [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)60672-1/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60672-1/fulltext) (accessed 13 May 2010). For civilian comparators, see, for example, S McManus et al. [eds.] (2009) 'Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, 2007: Results of a household survey' National Health Service, online at <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/psychiatricmorbidity07> (accessed 13 May 2010).

³⁴ There is some evidence to indicate that bullying in armed forces training establishments is higher than among the trained strength. See Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (now known as Child Soldiers International) (2011): 'Catch 16-22: Recruitment and retention of minors in the British armed forces', p. 9-10.

³⁵ A report commissioned by the MoD from the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2006 found that 15% of all female recruits surveyed and 20% of female recruits aged 16-23 reported having experienced a 'particularly upsetting' experience of unwanted sexual behaviour directed at them in the previous 12 months. Rutherford, Sarah; Schneider, Robin; Walmsley, Alexis: Quantitative & Qualitative Research into Sexual Harassment in the Armed Forces [report], (Equal Opportunities Commission and the Ministry of Defence, 22 March 2006), p. 22.

³⁶ Among male recruits, pre-enlistment vulnerability to a number of negative health outcomes including PTSD and previous self-harm is associated with 'being single, of lower rank, having low educational attainment and serving in the Army', all of which are typical of the profile of those who enlist in the armed forces as minors. Iversen, A et al. (2007). 'Influence of childhood adversity on health among male UK military personnel' *The British Journal of Psychiatry* (2007) 191: 506-511.

³⁷ Pinder, R et al. (2011) 'Self-harm and attempted suicide among UK Armed Forces personnel: Results of a cross-sectional survey' *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 21 June 2011, 58: 433-439

³⁸ Iversen, A et al. (2007). 'Influence of childhood adversity on health among male UK military personnel' op. cit.

³⁹ A 2010 *Lancet* study found that 26.1% of armed forces personnel aged 18-24 were 'drinking heavily', compared with 8.8% of civilian men in a

similar age group (16-24); the rate of heavy drinking among this age group was the highest in the armed forces. 'Drinking heavily' is defined as 'a high level of alcohol problems' including 'feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking, blackouts, alcohol-related injury, other concern about alcohol consumption'. N Fear et al. (2010) op. cit.; S McManus et al. [eds.] (2009) op. cit.

⁴⁰ Male recruits under 20 face a higher risk of suicide than the general population; for young male Army recruits, for example, the risk is 47% higher than for the general population. Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA) (2011): 'Suicide and open verdict deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces: numbers and standardised mortality ratios, 1984 - 2010, males only' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/modintranet/UKDS/UKDS2011/c3/table306.php> (accessed 22 August 2012).

⁴¹ D Macmanus et al. (2013) 'Violent offending by UK military personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan: a data linkage cohort study', *The Lancet*, 16 March 2013, online at [http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(13\)60354-2/fulltext](http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(13)60354-2/fulltext) (accessed 16 March 2013).

⁴² Calculated from Ministry of Defence (2013) 'British Fatalities: Operations in Afghanistan' online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/fields-of-operation/afghanistan> (accessed 13 March 2013). The casualty:fatality ratio is assumed here to be constant for infantry and non-infantry soldiers. See Appendix IV.

⁴³ Hansard: HC Deb, 19 January 2011, c824W.

⁴⁴ Calculated from Ministry of Defence (2013) 'British Fatalities: Operations in Afghanistan' op cit.

⁴⁵ See Appendix IV for detail and sources.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Act 1998, Art. IV.

⁴⁷ Hansard: HC Deb, 28 March 2011, c110W.

⁴⁸ In the UK, a parent must sign the application form at the outset to consent to the application process, which usually takes at least three months, and must also sign at the point of enlistment. If the recruit is living with both parents, both must sign at enlistment; otherwise either parent or the legal guardian must sign. In the case of children in care of a local authority, its representative must sign. A birth certificate is also required to attest the age of the recruit.

⁴⁹ Senior recruiter, London, personal communication, November 2007.

⁵⁰ D Gee (2008) 'Informed Choice? Armed Forces Recruitment Practice in the United Kingdom' (London).

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 30-31.

⁵² At Ease, personal communication, 2007; www.BeforeYouSignUp.info, 2012 (the author manages this service). This weakness in the safeguarding regime may be compounded when the legal guardian is an appointed representative of a local authority who has limited personal knowledge of their ward and insufficient time to investigate the issues involved.

⁵³ The armed forces do not collect data on the socio-economic background of recruits but the Ministry of Defence supplied an analysis on the subject to the Defence Committee in 2004, which showed that educational attainment among Army recruits is substantially lower than the national average. A survey of recruits in Cardiff in 1999 found that 69% of recruits came from 'broken homes'. MoD (2004), 'Analysis of socio-economic and educational background of non-officer recruits', in HC Defence Committee, *Duty of Care*, Vol 2, Ev 256. For a discussion, see David Gee (2008) 'Informed Choice? Armed Forces Recruitment Practice in the United Kingdom' (London), chapter 1.2.

⁵⁴ See David Gee (2008) 'Informed Choice? Armed Forces Recruitment Practice in the United Kingdom' (London).

⁵⁵ British Army website (nd), 'AFC Harrogate (Training)' online at https://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/training/16495.aspx (accessed 22 August 2012). This Youtube video shows bayonet training for recruits age 17+ at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick, online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Op1zjd7KKE.

⁵⁶ For example, see Dave Grossman (1999): 'Psychological Effects of Combat: The Price of Overcoming the Resistance to Killing' online at http://www.killology.com/art_psych_price.htm (accessed 22 August 2012).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Based on Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (now known as Child Soldiers International) (2008) 'Child Soldiers Global Report 2008', p. 389 ff.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ House of Commons Defence Committee: *Duty of Care* (Vol 1), (London: The Stationery Office, 2005), p. 43.

⁶¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, (2008) Concluding Observations on the initial report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (UN Doc: CRC/C/OPAC/GBR/CO/1), para.13; House of Lords/House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights (2009) 'Children's Rights' (Twenty-fifth Report of Session 2008–09), pp. 47–48.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Hansard: HC Deb, 25 November 2011, c595W.

⁶⁴ ICM interviewed a random sample of 2,018 adults aged 18+ in Great Britain online between 28 March and 1 April 2013. Surveys were conducted across the country and the results were weighted to the profile of all adults. (ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.) All adults were asked: 'In your opinion, what should be the minimum age to join the British army? (This is regardless of whatever you believe the minimum age is at the moment)' 1,792 respondents expressed a view. Of these, 1,249 (69.7%) responded with ages from 18 upwards; 185 (10.3%) responded with '17' and 358 (20.0%) responded with ages up to 16. See www.child-soldiers.org

⁶⁵ European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (2011) 'Report To The Committee On Civil Liberties, Justice And Home Affairs Of The European Parliament' online at <http://www.ebco-beoc.org/files/2011-EBCO-REPORT-EU.pdf> (accessed 23 August 2012), p. 3.

⁶⁶ See Appendix III.

⁶⁷ David Gee (2008) 'Informed Choice? Armed Forces Recruitment Practice in the United Kingdom' (London), p. 24.

⁶⁸ Hansard: HC Deb, 30 November 2010, c744W.

⁶⁹ 2006 is the most recent year for which SNLR statistics are available. Information obtained from the Ministry of Defence by the author under the Freedom of Information Act, disclosed on 5 October 2007; also Defence Analytical Services Agency, 'TSP 19 - UK Regular Forces Intake And Outflow By Age For Financial Year 2005/06: Tables 4 and 5' [data tables], 18 May 2006, online at http://www.dasa.mod.uk/natstats/tsp19/pdfs/tsp19_2005_2006.pdf, (accessed 5 September 2007).

⁷⁰ SNLR = 2,775. (New enlistments: 4,377 [to account for 36.6% expected drop-out rate] = 2,755 recruits completing training) x (Cost of Junior Entry recruit = £93,458) = £409million. For breakdown of costs of recruiting for Junior Entry, see Appendix I.

⁷¹ Hansard: HC Deb, 5 July 2012, c1085-1088. According to the plans, by 2020 the Army will be formed of two components. The first will be a 'reaction force' comprising mainly well-trained regular troops to provide a

rapid, agile force-projection capability. The second is envisaged to be an 'adaptable force' of regular and reserve personnel for long-term defence roles, ceremonial duties, and supplementing the reaction force as necessary. The Government plans to maintain the overall size of the Army at 110,000-120,000 but use the creation of the adaptable force as an opportunity to replace a large number of regular personnel with reservists aged 18 and above. Greater use will also be made of private contractors.

⁷² British Army (2012) 'Transforming The British Army, July 2012' [brochure]; Defence Analytical Services and Advice (2012): 'Table 2.5a Full-time trained strength and requirement, at 1 April each year' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/modintranet/UKDS/UKDS2011/c2/table205a.php> (accessed 1 September 2012).

⁷³ Given the current average career length of 8.7 years and assuming this attrition rate is constant, the Army currently needs to enlist and fully train 10,256 new recruits each year to replace those who leave. By 2020, this requirement will fall to 8,288, assuming that all other factors remain the same. Proportion of Officers to Other Ranks extrapolated from Defence Analytical Services and Advice (2012): 'Table 2.5b Full-time trained strength and requirement, at 1 April each year' at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/modintranet/UKDS/UKDS2011/c2/table205b.php> (accessed 1 September 2012).

⁷⁴ This is based on the current in-training drop-out rate for adults of 28.3%.

⁷⁵ Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA) (2010): 'TSP 19 - UK Regular Forces Intake and Outflow by Age (2009-10)' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk> (accessed 23 August 2012).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Calculated from Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W. This figure is adjusted for differential career lengths and drop-out rates of Junior and Standard Entrants. The calculation basis is similar to that used in Appendix I. It assumes that all 17 year-olds would be recruited as Standard Entrants.

⁷⁹ Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W. The cost of training a 16-year-old recruit for the Infantry at the Army Foundation College (Harrogate) is £93,458, whereas it costs £38,043 to train a recruit aged 17½ or above at the Infantry Training Centre (Catterick). Salary rates are rounded in original source to nearest £1,000; for the purpose of producing a total per-trainee cost for Standard Entrants' Phase One training, the average salary rate has been assumed at £11,500.

⁸⁰ Standard Entry is sometimes also called Senior Entry.

⁸¹ For example, soldiers joining the Royal Mechanical and Electrical Engineers may join as Standard Entrants once they reach 17 years and one month of age. Ministry of Defence (nd): 'REME soldier' online at <http://www.army.mod.uk/reme/3203.aspx> (accessed 15 June 2012); Ministry of Defence (nd): 'AFC Harrogate' online at http://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/training/7127.aspx (accessed 15 June 2012); Ministry of Defence (nd): 'ATFC Winchester' online at http://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/training/7409.aspx (accessed 15 June 2012).

⁸² Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W. As of 2012 ATFC(W) stopped providing Junior Entry training and all Junior Entrants now train at AFC(H).

⁸³ Hansard: HC Deb, 30 November 2011, c977W; HL Deb, 19 October 2011, c67W.

⁸⁴ During the 2010-11 academic year, 55% of recruits who were under 18 at enlistment joined AFC(H) and 25.4% joined ATFC(W) to begin their Phase One training (Hansard: HC Deb, 19 July 2011, c861W; HC Deb, 8 December 2011, c426W). Assuming that no Junior Entrants were trained

in institutions other than AFC(H) and ATFC(W) and the proportions of AFC(H) and ATFC(W) entrants for the academic year are the same as for the financial year, this suggests that in FY 2010-11 there were approximately 1,922 (80%) Junior Entrants.

⁸⁵ Although figures for minors who joined as Standard Entrants (i.e. aged 17½+ at enlistment) are not published, it is consistent with the data to assume that the remaining 19.6% of those recruited as minors in 2010-11 were in this group. In 2010-11 the Defence Analytical Services Agency stopped collecting age-related data for the armed forces' annual intake. However, over the three previous years, the proportion of minors recruited aged 16 and 17 has varied little, and stood at 47.7% and 52.3% respectively. This allows an estimate of the number of new army recruits aged 16-17½ in 2010-11, based on the known number of minors recruited that year. For historical data, see Defence Analytical Services Agency (2009): 'UK Regular Forces Intake And Outflow By Age For Financial Year 2007/08'; at 'UK Regular Forces Intake And Outflow By Age For Financial Year 2008/09'; 'UK Regular Forces Intake And Outflow By Age For Financial Year 2009-10' online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk> (accessed 11 June 2012).

⁸⁶ Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W (rounded in original source to nearest £1,000).

⁸⁷ Hansard: HC Deb, 13 September 2011, c1146W; Hansard: HC Deb, 15 December 2011, c865W. Salary rates are rounded in original source to nearest £1,000; for the purpose of producing a total per-trainee cost for Standard Entrants' Phase One training, the average salary rate has been assumed at £11,500.

⁸⁸ Hansard: HC Deb, 25 November 2011, c595W.

⁸⁹ Hansard: HC Deb, 12 September 2011, c1007W (based on age at enlistment of those leaving between 1 July 2009 and 31 July 2011).

⁹⁰ Hansard: HC Deb, 13 January 2010, c996W. Based on 2008-09 recruitment advertising spend.

⁹¹ £81,574,863 / 14,180 new intake x 7.6 years.

⁹² Hansard: HC Deb, 19 January 2011, c824W.

⁹³ The data is from 2007 in most cases. UNESCO (UIS) (2009): *Education*, 2009, United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (Institute for Statistics), Canada, cited at ChatsBin, <http://chartsbin.com/view/qpp> (accessed 24 September 2009).

⁹⁴ Child Soldiers International (2012): 'Louder than words: An agenda for action to end state use of child soldiers' (London: CSI, 2012), pp. 142-160. In Malta's case, the law allows for military recruitment from age 17 but this has not taken place since 1970.

⁹⁵ European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (2011) 'Report To The Committee On Civil Liberties, Justice And Home Affairs Of The European Parliament' online at <http://www.ebco-beoc.org/files/2011-EBCO-REPORT-EU.pdf> (accessed 23 August 2012).

⁹⁶ Calculated from Eurostat: 'Total Population' [table – data for 1 January 2005], online at <http://tinyurl.com/zzasn> (accessed 5 June 2007); and Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers: Global Report 2004*, 17 November 2004, online at <http://www.child-soldiers.org/library/global-reports> (accessed 5 June 2007).

⁹⁷ Except where indicated, the data in this table is calculated from Ministry of Defence (2013) 'British Fatalities: Operations in Afghanistan' online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/fields-of-operation/afghanistan> (accessed 13 March 2013).

⁹⁸ Defence Analytical Services and Advice (2013) 'Table 2: Full time trained strengths and requirements of UK Armed Forces at 1 Jan 2013' in Quarterly Personnel Report, 14 February 2013, online at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/> (accessed 25 March 2013). Infantry strength is

for 1 February 2013, provided by Defence Analytical Services and Advice (personal communication), 25 March 2013.

⁹⁹ Hansard: HC Deb, 22 March 2013, c827W.

¹⁰⁰ Calculated from Ministry of Defence (2013) 'British Fatalities: Operations in Afghanistan' op cit. and Ministry of Defence (2013): 'Op Herrick casualty and fatality tables' online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/op-herrick-casualty-and-fatality-tables> (accessed 13 March 2013).

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