



A GUIDE TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

FOR

INDIVIDUALS SERVING

AS OFFICERS

IN THE

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Issued by – RAF Employment Policy

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INTRODUCTION

1. This pamphlet summarises the Terms and Conditions of entry and service for commissions in the Royal Air Force (RAF) (except for officers of the Specialist branches¹). The RAF reserves the right to alter the terms and conditions described in this pamphlet as a result of changes to Ministry of Defence (MOD) policies and the detailed regulations which govern them, but you will be notified of any variation in your final offer of commission. This pamphlet should be read in conjunction with the appropriate Branch Information Sheet for the individual branches that are available from your Armed Forces Careers Office (AFCO).
2. The RAF offers opportunities for service up to the age of 55 for those who achieve the requisite standards. Members of the RAF are liable for service in any part of the world and may, on occasion, be required to spend a significant period of time operating with the Royal Navy and/or the Army, consequently you may be required to serve at sea or deployed in the field.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

3. *General.* You must satisfy the RAF authorities that you are properly motivated towards a commissioned career in the Service. You will also be required to nominate character referees.
4. *Age.* The minimum age for entry into training for commissioned service is 17 ½ years of age. You may be considered for some branches provided that you can enter phase 1 training with the RAF before your 37th birthday, although there are lower limits for some branches, such as the Flying Branch and the RAF Regiment. You are advised to contact your local AFCO to verify the current upper age limit for the individual branches. You need to apply at least 6 months before reaching the upper age limit for the branch of your choice.
5. *Educational Standards.* The qualifications required for entry vary according to the branch and are detailed in the Branch Information Sheets, available from your AFCO. However, you are required to hold a minimum of 2 'A' level passes, or 3 Highers (Scotland), or equivalent for commissioned service in the RAF. In addition, you are also required to hold GCSE or a Scottish Certificate of Education at Standard Grade 'C', or higher, in at least 5 subjects including English Language and Mathematics and 3 other subjects. The other 3 subjects must not overlap significantly in content, and only one may be non-academic. Equivalent passes in commercial, technical or vocational qualifications may be acceptable.

¹ Medical, Dental, Legal, Chaplain, PMRAFNS and Directors of Music.

6. *Medical and Fitness Standards.* You must meet the required medical standards, as determined by an RAF Medical Board and the performance standard for your age and gender in the RAF Fitness Test (RAFFT). Please note that the acceptable standard of vision (including colour vision) is different for each branch. If you are unsure about your eligibility your AFCO will offer advice.

NATIONALITY

7. Each Branch has a nationality requirement. For many branches the minimum entry requirement is that you must at the time of your application be a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or citizen of the Republic of Ireland. There are a number of branches where enhanced nationality criteria apply and where the nationality of your parents is also important. If you are unsure about your eligibility your AFCO will offer advice.

RESIDENCE

8. Whether or not you are of UK origin, you should normally have resided in the UK for the 5 years immediately preceding your application. However, provided satisfactory enquiries can be made in your country of residence, the RAF may be able to consider your application even if you have never lived in the UK. If you are unsure about your eligibility your AFCO will offer advice.

TYPES AND LENGTHS OF SERVICE

9. Your appointment will be to either a short service commission (SSC) or a permanent commission (PC). Your continued employment is subject to satisfactory completion of Initial Officer Training (IOT) and basic professional training.

10. *Short Service Commission.* Officers appointed to a SSC will normally be required to serve in the RAF for a period of 6 years Regular service followed by 4 years in the Royal Air Force Reserve of Officers. SSC service, although pensionable, does not attract immediate financial benefits on exit. Paragraphs 36 to 38 explain what reserve service means. Those joining the Flying Branch on a SSC will be appointed to a 12 year SSC followed by 4 years in the Reserve.

11. Officers who subsequently wish to extend their service will normally be expected to apply for a PC. Applications will be considered by a Board of Officers and will be in direct competition for the award of a PC with other officers. Officers may also, depending on the service need, be able to apply to extend their SSC by any period of whole years up to a maximum total of 14 years.

12. *Permanent Commission.* The PC is initially based on the completion of a period of paid service that provides immediate financial benefits as follows:

- a. Officers Appointed to an initial PC. Officers appointed to a PC on or after 6 Apr 05 will serve to the 40/18 point. The 40/18 point is defined as the date on which you reach the age of 40 or the completion of 18 years reckonable service from the date of joining, whichever is later.

b. Officers with Previous Service. Officers with previous reckonable service will be required to serve the balance of an 18 year PC, subject to a minimum of 8 consecutive years, from the date of re-instatement or re-employment.

13. *Optional Exit Point.* Those entering as Graduates, University Cadets or Professionally Qualified (graduate equivalent) Entrants on a PC and who are not offered promotion to the rank of squadron leader within 12 years whole time service (excluding service as a University Cadet) will, after the completion of 10 years whole time service, have the option to apply to leave the Service at the 12 year point.

14. *Service beyond the 40/18 point.* On promotion to the rank of squadron leader officers will be required to accept service to age 55, subject to their continued fitness for service. A limited number of officers who are not promoted to squadron leader within their initial PC may also be offered further service to age 55; this is known as assimilation.

RANK ON ENTRY

15. Rank on entry and promotion to flight lieutenant (Flt Lt) is dependent upon academic and/or professional qualifications and any civilian experience which may be acceptable to the RAF. Previous whole-time commissioned or non-commissioned service in any of the Armed Forces of the Crown may also be taken into consideration. Details of rank, seniority, pay level on entry and time promotion to Flt Lt are shown at Annex A.

BRANCHES

16. *General.* It is not possible to give all the details you might want to know about each individual RAF Branch in this pamphlet. Detailed information about each individual Branch is contained in the Branch Information Sheets available from your AFCCO.

17. *Choice of Branch.* When you join the RAF you join in a particular branch and you will normally be expected to remain in that branch for the duration of your service, although in certain circumstances, there may be opportunities to apply to transfer to an alternative branch(es). Therefore it is very important that you make the right choice of branch before you enter the RAF. You are invited to contact your nearest AFCCO where you will be given full details of the branches in which training is currently available, the appropriate RAF Branch Information Sheets, and any other information you may require to help you decide which branch(es) to apply for.

TRAINING

18. The Initial Officer Training (IOT) Course lasts 30 weeks and is undertaken at the Officer and Aircrew Training Unit (OACTU), RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire. The object of the Course is to give you a good basis of General Service Knowledge, to prepare you for your responsibilities as an officer and give you a sound basis for your future development. In addition to the purely Service subjects, the syllabus includes

leadership training, management studies and physical education. Failure to complete this course successfully will lead to discharge from the Service or the termination of the commission of those candidates commissioned on entry to the Service.

19. After IOT most will be required to undertake a period of training in the professional duties of the branch for which they have been selected. The length and location of these courses differ from branch to branch; AFCO staff can provide you with specific details. For all Officers retention of their commission is subject to the satisfactory completion of the basic professional training course. Officers who fail their basic professional training may apply to be considered for re-selection to an alternative branch (providing they meet the entry criteria for that branch), or have their commission terminated.

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20. The RAF, as far as practicable, supports all personnel who wish to undertake further development opportunities, by providing access to courses of study, some financial assistance and other practical support. Service personnel have the opportunity to enrol on courses and work towards qualifications through local colleges or by distance learning, and special arrangements exist for study with the Open University. In addition, all stations have internet facilities and, as part of the Government's Learning Forces' Scheme will, in the near future, have a Learning Centre, which will provide even more learning opportunities for RAF personnel.

PROMOTION

21. Promotion to the rank of squadron leader (Sqn Ldr) and beyond is by competitive selection and is based on merit and individual performance. The performance of Officers is reported upon by their line manager on an Annual Appraisal Report and this report forms the basis of assessing their suitability for promotion. All Officers are eligible to be considered for promotion to the rank of Sqn Ldr; however promotion to the substantive rank of Sqn Ldr will be conditional upon acceptance of service to age 55.

PAY & ALLOWANCES

22. *General.* Full details of the rates of pay, which are reviewed annually, are given at www.rafcareers.com.

23. *Specialist Pay.* Certain types of duties attract specialist pay, for example Flying Pay and Parachute Pay. To attract the pay Service personnel have to qualify for the duties and have a continued liability to undertake them.

24. *Allowances.* A range of allowances are available to reimburse Service personnel for expenditure incurred in the course of duty, to compensate for specific circumstances arising from military service, such as separation, and to provide partial reimbursement of expenditure incurred for a particular activity, eg education allowances.

FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION CHARGES

25. Personnel who live in accommodation provided by the Service are required to pay to live there. Personnel occupying either Service families or single accommodation are charged at a rate, which is determined by the type and/or grade of accommodation occupied. Personnel will be required to live in single accommodation during IOT and in most cases during basic professional training and will also pay a standard food charge for the meals that are provided. Both the accommodation charge and the standard food charge are deducted directly from an individual's pay.

26. After initial training personnel who live in Service accommodation will continue to pay for their accommodation and, depending on the unit they are assigned to, will either continue to pay a standard food charge or will pay for their meals at the time they are taken.

LEAVE

27. a. *Annual Leave.* The normal allowance for annual leave for all personnel is 30 working days (6 weeks). Leave may be taken when and in what periods the individual chooses, however the demands of operations sometimes mean that leave may be cancelled or dates amended.
- b. *Public Holidays.* Personnel may be granted the 8 annual public holidays, which may be taken in conjunction with a period of leave. Time off in lieu may be granted to personnel who are required for duty during a public holiday.
- c. *Post Operational Leave (POL).* POL is a period of leave awarded to personnel to recognise the stresses and strains that Operational Deployments bring to them, their families and friends and is granted in addition to the Annual Leave Allowance. Personnel are awarded one working day of POL for every 9 calendar days deployed. Missed Public Holidays are not granted in addition to the POL allowance.
- d. *Relocation/Temporary Relocation Leave.* Personnel assigned or detached to/from overseas may be granted relocation/temporary relocation leave which is in addition to annual leave.
- e. *Terminal Leave.* Designed to assist resettlement, Terminal Leave is granted to qualifying Service personnel at the end of their service. Those leaving prematurely may, at the discretion of their Commanding Officer, be granted some leave depending on the amount of time they have served.
- f. *Miscellaneous Leave.* Other leave that may be available to eligible personnel includes maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave. Consult your AFCO for further details.

28. *Get You Home (Early Years).* Personnel serving in the UK who are within their first 3 years of service may be granted return travel journeys to restricted destinations in the UK or Irish Republic, subject to an annual maximum entitlement.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE

29. *Discharge for Compassionate Reasons.* Where the RAF accepts that there are extreme compassionate reasons which make it essential for an individual to leave the Service, exit will normally be granted.

30. *Early Release.* Officers may request to be released before the end of their period of commissioned service. However, this is not a right and the RAF may impose waiting periods (of up to 12 months), depending on the prevailing manning situation at the time of application. Early release will not normally be granted where a Training Return of Service (Trg ROS) has been incurred. A Trg ROS is defined as 'a period of time that an individual who has undertaken a course of training shall be required to serve in order to give a reasonable return on the investment made by the MOD'. All Officers incur an initial Trg ROS of at least three years on completion of basic professional training. Some branches such as the Flying Branch and Medical and Dental Officers incur longer Return of Service periods. Some types of additional training undertaken during the course of an Officer's career may incur a further Return of Service period.

31. *Pregnancy.* In recognition of the particular challenges that may be faced by pregnant Servicewomen, the Armed Forces offer supportive arrangements to enable them to accommodate pregnancy and maternity absence within their careers. Full details of the Maternity Scheme run by the Armed Forces are available from Unit Human Resources Staff. An Officer who becomes pregnant will be given the option of either:

- a. a period of Maternity leave before returning to duty, or
- b. discharge from the Service.

In either case the Officer will normally be allowed to remain on duty prior to the start of maternity absence. The Health and Safety of the pregnant Officer and unborn baby, and subsequently the mother and newborn baby, are paramount and will be safeguarded in accordance with UK law through the processes contained in the current Maternity Regulations.

PENSION, TERMINAL AND RESETTLEMENT GRANTS

32. Personnel who enter RAF service automatically join the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 (AFPS 05) unless they choose to opt out. AFPS 05 is a non-contributory scheme and personnel accumulate pension credits from the date they join the RAF. Members of AFPS 05 who reach the age of 40, having completed a minimum of 18 years paid service, qualify on discharge for Early Departure Payments (EDP) and a tax-free EDP lump sum equivalent to 3 times their annual pension value. The EDP is a flat payment, the value of which depends on the amount of qualifying service personnel have at the point they leave. Those who serve to age 55 receive an immediate pension payable from the date they leave the Service and a lump sum equivalent to 3 times their annual pension. For those who leave before age 55 and qualify, the EDP rises at age 55 and the full pension becomes payable at age 65, a pension lump sum, 3 times the rate of the pension value is also paid at age 65. Those who leave the Service without qualifying for Early Departure Payments or an Immediate Pension, will, if they have completed a minimum of 2 years paid service, qualify for a preserved annual

pension (and tax free lump sum of 3-times annual pension) which is normally paid from age 65. If they have satisfactorily completed at least 12 years paid service personnel may also receive a tax free resettlement grant. Further details about AFPS05 can be found in the booklet MPP/124 AFPS05 Your Pension Scheme Explained which is available from www.mod.uk.

33. *Transfer Out of Pension Rights.* As an alternative to preserved benefits, individuals may instead request that the pension rights they have already earned be transferred to the scheme of their next employer, to a 'buy out' policy issued by an insurance company or to a personal pension plan. An individual, who on leaving the Service elects to transfer their pension rights out of the AFPS and subsequently re-enlists, may find that their former service does not count in full on transfer back to the AFPS.

34. *Transfer In of Pension Rights.* Personnel who join the RAF may apply to transfer their pension rights earned in a former pension scheme into AFPS05. **Those who consider themselves eligible and who wish to do so must apply within one year of joining AFPS 05.** Although it may be possible to transfer accrued pension rights, actual time served in a previous pension scheme does not count towards the qualifying criteria of 18 years service (and have reached the age of 40) necessary for the award of Early Departure Payments or resettlement grant. However, it does count towards the 2 years qualifying period for the award of a preserved pension. Further details about AFPS 05 can be found at www.mod.uk.

RESETTLEMENT

35. To assist personnel leaving the Service, the RAF, together with the RN and Army, operate a resettlement service in partnership with Coutts Consulting Group plc. The full provision, which is generally available to those who have served for 6 years or more, includes one-to-one counselling and advice, briefings, job related training and a job finding service. Those who have served for 4 or more years are eligible for job finding support. Personnel are generally entitled to resettlement advice (but not training or other support) whatever the reason for exit or length of time served with the RAF.

RESERVE SERVICE

36. On retirement, holders of a PC will become retired officers but remain liable to recall in certain circumstances. However, the Defence Council has the power to retain personnel in Regular Service beyond their normal retirement date, or to retire them prematurely, should either course be considered necessary in the interests of the Service.

37. Officers serving on a SSC will be transferred to the RAF Reserve of Officers for a period of 4 years on completion of their SSC. During Reserve Service they have a liability for recall for training for up to 16 days a year and may also be recalled to the Regular Service in an emergency. Details of these liabilities are given with the letter of appointment.

38. In addition at the end of RAF regular service personnel have a liability to be recalled for permanent service under section 68 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996, when it appears to Her Majesty that national danger is imminent or that a great emergency has arisen, or in the event of actual or expected attack on the UK. This recall liability continues for 18 years from the date personnel are discharged, or transferred to the Royal Air Force Reserve, or until age 55 if this is sooner. This 18-year period includes any time spent in reserve service.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

39. If you wish to apply you can obtain further information from any Armed Forces Careers Office, Careers Liaison Officer or Senior Careers Liaison Officer. The address and telephone number of your nearest AFCO, through which a Careers Liaison Officer can be contacted, will be found in your local telephone directory or alternatively, details of your nearest AFCO together with information on a career in the RAF can be found by visiting the RAF Careers Web Site www.rafcareers.com. You may be invited to undergo careers counselling and initial processing of your application at the AFCO. If short-listed you will be invited to the Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC) at RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire to take part in the selection procedure. This may last between 2½ and 4 days.

40. OASC. The OASC selection process consists of aptitude tests, an exercise phase, interview, medical and fitness test. Further information on the OASC selection procedure is available from your AFCO.

41. *Medical and Fitness Standards.* You must meet the required health standard, as determined by an RAF medical board and the performance standard for your age and gender in the RAFFT. The importance of fitness, not only for OASC but also for OACTU, must not be underestimated. In the case of OASC, fitness is tested by means of the Multi Stage Fitness Test (MSFT) or 'beep test', which requires you to run continuously backwards and forwards the length of a tennis court at ever increasing speed levels, with one minute at each speed. You will also be expected to perform press-ups and sit-ups. While it is your attitude to fitness as well as your performance in the RAFFT that is the main measure of fitness at OASC, general fitness will pay dividends in terms of strength and agility in the practical leadership tests and for the fitness tests conducted by OACTU. Current RAF Policy is for all RAF personnel, including RAF Bursars and Cadets, to complete the RAFFT twice yearly. Any candidate who fails the test will be given advice and will be required to retake the test immediately before the start of IOT. Failure of the test for a second time will deem the candidate unsuitable for training and any offer of Service issued will be reviewed with a view to it being withdrawn.

42. *Date of Entry.* If you are selected for commissioning you will be offered a date for entry into training. The date will take into consideration available vacancies on training courses and your personal circumstances such as notice required by an employer or the need to wait for the publication of examination results. Your date of entry may only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Provisional selection does not place you under any obligation, but means that the offer of a commission is held open until the date stated. If more than 6 months elapse between attendance at the OASC and entry into the RAF, a further medical examination may be required.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

43. The Armed Forces Equality and Diversity Policy is to treat all personnel fairly, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or social background. The Policy goes further than the mere elimination of unlawful discrimination. It recognises and values individuals from diverse backgrounds who bring fresh ideas, perceptions, skills and attributes. This enables the Armed Forces to recruit from the widest possible base, helping to achieve and sustain our manning needs and maintain operational capability. For reasons of combat effectiveness the RAF Regiment is open to men only.

ANNEX

A. Standard Junior Officer Rank Progression.

Standard Junior Officer Rank Progression

Serial No	Type of Entry	Branch	Rank on Entry	Overall time to Flt Lt	Breakdown of time to Flt Lt
1	University graduate – 4 year course (see Note 2)	Fg Branch	Plt Off	1½ years	6 months Plt Off 12 months Fg Off
		Ground Branches	Plt Off	2½ years	6 months Plt Off 24 months Fg Off
2	University graduate 3 year course OR equivalent (see Note 3)	Fg Branch	Plt Off	2½ years	6 months Plt Off 24 months Fg Off
		Ground Branches	Plt Off	3½ years	6 months Plt Off 36 months Fg Off
3	Qualified entrant (see Note 4)	Ground Branches only	Plt Off	5 Years	12 months Plt Off 48 months Fg Off
4	Basic entrant (see Notes 5 and 6)	Fg Branch	Officer Cadet (OC)	5 ½ years + OC service	OC Service (duration of IOT Course) 12 months APO 12 months Plt Off 42 months Fg Off
		Ground Branches	Officer Cadet (OC)	6 ½ years + OC service	OC Service (duration of IOT Course) 6 months APO 24 months Plt Off 48 months Fg Off

Notes: See over page.

Notes:

1. Officers will serve the time periods appropriate to their type of entry before promotion to flight lieutenant unless they are awarded credits for civilian experience and/or post-graduate qualifications. See the relevant branch information sheet.
2. Antedates of seniority are only awarded for first degrees, unless provided for by branch specific rules. Includes a 4 year sandwich type degree course and graduates of the 4 ½ year Air Transport Engineering Course. Excludes a 4 year degree course at a Scottish University, foundation years, a degree course where the 4th year is beyond first degree level, and a BEd degree awarded in 4th year after the award of Cert Ed. Also excludes time spent in industry prior to commencing a university degree course which is a requirement of an industrial sponsor, and not the university.
3. Open University or part-time degrees are deemed to be the equivalent of 3 year degree courses. Candidates with professional qualifications equivalent to degrees who are eligible for graduate level entry to one branch may also be eligible for graduate level entry to another branch or branches.
4. The qualifications required for Qualified Entry are normally specific to a certain branch or branches. This progression may also be used when an officer is initially appointed or transferred to a branch in which their qualifications are acceptable. There is no Qualified Entry into the Operations Support (Prov/Sy), (RAF Regt), Medical Support or Administrative (Phys Ed) Branch Specializations. For qualifications acceptable to each branch see the relevant branch information sheet.
5. All basic entrants attend OACTU as officer cadets (OC) and are commissioned upon graduation. Exceptionally, basic entrants from civilian life with at least 3 years acceptable civilian experience gained after reaching the age of 18 may be commissioned on entry into some branches/specializations. See the relevant branch information sheet.
6. In ground branches (including Ops Spt) regrading from a/plt off to plt off will take place on satisfactory completion of professional training if earlier than 6 months. If professional training is not required regrading to plt off will take place on appointment to an established post.



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FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION CHARGES

22. Personnel who live in accommodation provided by the Service are required to pay to live there. Personnel occupying either Service families or single accommodation are charged at a rate, which is determined by the type and/or grade of accommodation occupied. Personnel will be required to live in single accommodation during IOT and in most cases during basic professional training and will also pay a standard food charge for the meals that are provided. Both the accommodation charge and the standard food charge are deducted directly from an individual's pay.

23. After initial training personnel who live in Service accommodation will continue to pay for their accommodation and, depending on the unit they are assigned to, will either continue to pay a standard food charge or will pay for their meals at the time they are taken.

LEAVE

24. a. *Annual Leave.* The normal allowance for annual leave for all personnel is 38 working days. Leave may be taken when and in what periods the individual chooses, however the demands of operations sometimes mean that leave may be cancelled or dates amended.
- b. *Public Holidays.* The 8 UK wide Public Holidays are included within the Annual Leave Allowance of 38 working days. When these days may be taken will still remain subject to operational requirements.
- c. *Post Operational Leave (POL).* POL is a period of leave awarded to personnel to recognise the stresses and strains that Operational Deployments bring to them, their families and friends and is granted in addition to the Annual Leave Allowance. Personnel are awarded one working day of POL for every 9 calendar days deployed.
- d. *Relocation/Temporary Relocation Leave.* Personnel assigned or detached to/from overseas may be granted relocation/temporary relocation leave which is in addition to annual leave.
- e. *Terminal Leave.* Designed to assist resettlement, Terminal Leave is granted to qualifying Service personnel at the end of their service. Those leaving prematurely may, at the discretion of their Commanding Officer, be granted some leave depending on the amount of time they have served.
- f. *Miscellaneous Leave.* Other leave that may be available to eligible personnel includes maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave. Consult your AFCO for further details.

25. *Get You Home (Early Years).* Personnel serving in the UK who are within their first 3 years of service may be granted return travel journeys to

restricted destinations in the UK or Irish Republic, subject to an annual maximum entitlement.

26. Personnel (other than recruits) over the age of 18 may normally be permitted to remain off unit overnight when not required for duty.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE

27. *Discharge for Compassionate Reasons.* Where the RAF accepts that there are extreme compassionate reasons which make it essential for an individual to leave the Service, exit will normally be granted.

28. *Early Release.* Officers may request to be released before the end of their period of commissioned service. However, this is not a right and the RAF may impose waiting periods (of up to 12 months), depending on the prevailing manning situation at the time of application. Early release will not normally be granted where a Training Return of Service (Trg ROS) has been incurred. A Trg ROS is defined as 'a period of time that an individual who has undertaken a course of training shall be required to serve in order to give a reasonable return on the investment made by the MOD'. All Officers incur an initial Trg ROS of at least three years on completion of basic professional training. Some branches such as the Flying Branch and Medical and Dental Officers incur longer Return of Service periods. Some types of additional training undertaken during the course of an Officer's career may incur a further Return of Service period.

29. *Pregnancy.* In recognition of the particular challenges that may be faced by pregnant Servicewomen, the Armed Forces offer supportive arrangements to enable them to accommodate pregnancy and maternity absence within their careers. Full details of the Maternity Scheme run by the Armed Forces are available from Unit Human Resources Staff. An Officer who becomes pregnant will be given the option of either:

- a. a period of Maternity leave before returning to duty, or
- b. discharge from the Service.

In either case the Officer will normally be allowed to remain on duty prior to the start of maternity absence. The Health and Safety of the pregnant Officer and unborn baby, and subsequently the mother and newborn baby, are paramount and will be safeguarded in accordance with UK law through the processes contained in the current Maternity Regulations.

PENSION, TERMINAL AND RESETTLEMENT GRANTS

30. Personnel who enter RAF service automatically join the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 (AFPS 05) unless they choose to opt out. AFPS 05 is a non-contributory scheme and personnel accumulate pension credits from the date they join the RAF. Members of AFPS 05 who reach the age of 40, having completed a minimum of 18

years paid service, qualify on discharge for Early Departure Payments (EDP) and a tax-free EDP lump sum equivalent to 3 times their annual pension value. The EDP is a flat payment, the value of which depends on the amount of qualifying service personnel have at the point they leave. Those who serve to age 55 receive an immediate pension payable from the date they leave the Service and a lump sum equivalent to 3 times their annual pension. For those who leave before age 55 and qualify, the EDP rises at age 55 and the full pension becomes payable at age 65, a pension lump sum, 3 times the rate of the pension value is also paid at age 65. Those who leave the Service without qualifying for Early Departure Payments or an Immediate Pension, will, if they have completed a minimum of 2 years paid service, qualify for a preserved annual pension (and tax free lump sum of 3-times annual pension) which is normally paid from age 65. If they have satisfactorily completed at least 12 years paid service personnel may also receive a tax free resettlement grant. Further details about AFPS05 can be found in the booklet MPP/124 AFPS05 Your Pension Scheme Explained which is available from www.mod.uk.

31. *Transfer Out of Pension Rights.* As an alternative to preserved benefits, individuals may instead request that the pension rights they have already earned be transferred to the scheme of their next employer, to a 'buy out' policy issued by an insurance company or to a personal pension plan. An individual, who on leaving the Service elects to transfer their pension rights out of the AFPS and subsequently re-enlists, may find that their former service does not count in full on transfer back to the AFPS.

32. *Transfer In of Pension Rights.* Personnel who join the RAF may apply to transfer their pension rights earned in a former pension scheme into AFPS05. **Those who consider themselves eligible and who wish to do so must apply within one year of joining AFPS 05.** Although it may be possible to transfer accrued pension rights, actual time served in a previous pension scheme does not count towards the qualifying criteria of 18 years service (and have reached the age of 40) necessary for the award of Early Departure Payments or resettlement grant. However, it does count towards the 2 years qualifying period for the award of a preserved pension. Further details about AFPS 05 can be found at www.mod.uk.

RESETTLEMENT

33. To assist personnel leaving the Service, the RAF, together with the RN and Army, operate a resettlement service in partnership with Coutts Consulting Group plc. The full provision, which is generally available to those who have served for 6 years or more, includes one-to-one counselling and advice, briefings, job related training and a job finding service. Those who have served for 4 or more years are eligible for job finding support. Personnel are generally entitled to resettlement advice (but not training or other support) whatever the reason for exit or length of time served with the RAF.

RESERVE SERVICE

34. On retirement, holders of a PC will become retired officers. They remain liable to recall for 18 years or to age 55 if this is sooner when it appears to Her Majesty that national danger is imminent or that a great emergency has arisen, or in the event of

actual or expected attack on the UK. Additionally, the Defence Council has the power to retain personnel in Regular Service beyond their normal retirement date, or to retire them prematurely, should either course be considered necessary in the interests of the Service.

35. Officers serving on a SSC will be transferred to the RAF Reserve of Officers for a period of 4 years on completion of their SSC. During Reserve Service they have a liability for recall for training for up to 16 days a year (currently waived) and may also be called out into permanent service in an emergency. Details of these liabilities are given with the letter of appointment.

36. In addition at the end of RAF regular service personnel have a liability to be recalled for permanent service under section 68 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996, when it appears to Her Majesty that national danger is imminent or that a great emergency has arisen, or in the event of actual or expected attack on the UK. This recall liability continues for 18 years from the date personnel are discharged, or transferred to the Royal Air Force Reserve, or until age 55 if this is sooner. This 18-year period includes any time spent in reserve service.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

37. If you wish to apply you can obtain further information from any Armed Forces Careers Office, Careers Liaison Officer or Senior Careers Liaison Officer. The address and telephone number of your nearest AFCO, through which a Careers Liaison Officer can be contacted, will be found in your local telephone directory or alternatively, details of your nearest AFCO together with information on a career in the RAF can be found by visiting the RAF Careers Web Site www.rafcareers.com. You may be invited to undergo careers counselling and initial processing of your application at the AFCO. If short-listed you will be invited to the Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC) at RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire to take part in the selection procedure. This may last between 2½ and 4 days.

38. OASC. The OASC selection process consists of aptitude tests, an exercise phase, interview, medical and fitness test. Further information on the OASC selection procedure is available from your AFCO.

39. *Medical and Fitness Standards.* You must meet the required health standard, as determined by an RAF medical board and the performance standard for your age and gender in the RAFFT. The importance of fitness, not only for OASC but also for OACTU, must not be underestimated. In the case of OASC, fitness is tested by means of the Multi Stage Fitness Test (MSFT) or 'beep test', which requires you to run continuously backwards and forwards the length of a tennis court at ever increasing speed levels, with one minute at each speed. You will also be expected to perform press-ups and sit-ups. While it is your attitude to fitness as well as your performance in the RAFFT that is the main measure of fitness at OASC, general fitness will pay dividends in terms of strength and agility in the practical leadership tests and for the fitness tests conducted by OACTU. Current RAF Policy is for all RAF personnel, including RAF Bursars and Cadets, to complete the RAFFT twice yearly. Any candidate who fails the test will be given advice and will be required to retake the test immediately before the start of IOT. Failure of the test for a second time will deem the

candidate unsuitable for training and any offer of Service issued will be reviewed with a view to it being withdrawn.

40. *Date of Entry.* If you are selected for commissioning you will be offered a date for entry into training. The date will take into consideration available vacancies on training courses and your personal circumstances such as notice required by an employer or the need to wait for the publication of examination results. Your date of entry may only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Provisional selection does not place you under any obligation, but means that the offer of a commission is held open until the date stated. If more than 6 months elapse between attendance at the OASC and entry into the RAF, a further medical examination may be required.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

41. The Armed Forces Equality and Diversity Policy is to treat all personnel fairly, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or social background. The Policy goes further than the mere elimination of unlawful discrimination. It recognises and values individuals from diverse backgrounds who bring fresh ideas, perceptions, skills and attributes. This enables the Armed Forces to recruit from the widest possible base, helping to achieve and sustain our manning needs and maintain operational capability. For reasons of combat effectiveness the RAF Regiment is open to men only.

ANNEX

A. Standard Junior Officer Rank Progression.

Standard Junior Officer Rank Progression

Serial No	Type of Entry	Branch	Rank on Entry	Overall time to Flt Lt	Breakdown of time to Flt Lt
1	University graduate – 4 year course (see Note 2)	Fg Branch	Plt Off	1½ years	6 months Plt Off 12 months Fg Off
		Ground Branches	Plt Off	2½ years	6 months Plt Off 24 months Fg Off
2	University graduate 3 year course OR equivalent (see Note 3)	Fg Branch	Plt Off	2½ years	6 months Plt Off 24 months Fg Off
		Ground Branches	Plt Off	3½ years	6 months Plt Off 36 months Fg Off
3	Qualified entrant (see Note 4)	Ground Branches only	Plt Off	5 Years	12 months Plt Off 48 months Fg Off
4	Basic entrant (see Notes 5 and 6)	Fg Branch	Officer Cadet (OC)	5 ½ years + OC service	OC Service (duration of IOT Course) 12 months APO 12 months Plt Off 42 months Fg Off
		Ground Branches	Officer Cadet (OC)	6 ½ years + OC service	OC Service (duration of IOT Course) 6 months APO 24 months Plt Off 48 months Fg Off

Notes: See over page.

Notes:

1. Officers will serve the time periods appropriate to their type of entry before promotion to flight lieutenant unless they are awarded credits for civilian experience and/or post-graduate qualifications. See the relevant branch information sheet.
2. Antedates of seniority are only awarded for first degrees, unless provided for by branch specific rules. Includes a 4 year sandwich type degree course and graduates of the 4 ½ year Air Transport Engineering Course. Excludes a 4 year degree course at a Scottish University, foundation years, a degree course where the 4th year is beyond first degree level, and a BEd degree awarded in 4th year after the award of Cert Ed. Also excludes time spent in industry prior to commencing a university degree course which is a requirement of an industrial sponsor, and not the university.
3. Open University or part-time degrees are deemed to be the equivalent of 3 year degree courses. Candidates with professional qualifications equivalent to degrees who are eligible for graduate level entry to one branch may also be eligible for graduate level entry to another branch or branches.
4. The qualifications required for Qualified Entry are normally specific to a certain branch or branches. This progression may also be used when an officer is initially appointed or transferred to a branch in which their qualifications are acceptable. There is no Qualified Entry into the Prov/Sy, RAF Regt, or Medical Support branches or the Personnel (P Ed) and Flt Ops (Fire) Specializations. For qualifications acceptable to each branch see the relevant branch information sheet.
5. All basic entrants attend OACTU as officer cadets (OC) and are commissioned upon graduation. Exceptionally, basic entrants from civilian life with at least 3 years acceptable civilian experience gained after reaching the age of 18 may be commissioned on entry into some branches/specializations. See the relevant branch information sheet.
6. In ground branches regrading from a/plt off to plt off will take place on satisfactory completion of professional training if earlier than 6 months. If professional training is not required regrading to plt off will take place on appointment to an established post.



A GUIDE TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
FOR
INDIVIDUALS SERVING
AS OFFICERS
IN THE
ROYAL AIR FORCE

Issued by – RAF Employment Policy

A Guide to Terms and Conditions of Service for Individuals Serving as Officers in the Royal Air Force

Introduction

1. This document summarises the Terms and Conditions of commissioned service in the Royal Air Force (RAF) (except for officers of the Specialist branches¹). The RAF reserves the right to alter the terms and conditions described in this document as a result of changes to Ministry of Defence (MoD) policies and the detailed regulations which govern them, but you will be notified of any variation in your final offer of commission (F308 series). It is not possible to give all the details you might want to know about commissioned service in the RAF in this document; Branch Information Sheets for the individual branches are available from your local Armed Forces Career Office (AFCO). The RAF Careers website at <https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment> also provides detailed information on all of the roles within the RAF.
2. Members of the RAF who are serving on a Regular engagement are liable for service in any part of the world and may, on occasion, be required to spend a significant period of time operating with the Royal Navy and/or the Army. As a consequence you may be required to serve at sea or be deployed in the field.

Young Entrants

3. The RAF has special responsibilities for the welfare of young recruits who enlist below the age of 18. If you are enlisting below the age of 18 the written consent of your parent or guardian is required. If you are over the age of 18 and subject to an Adult Care Order the written consent of your guardian/care worker is required.

Conditions of Entry

4. You must satisfy the RAF authorities that you remain properly motivated towards the Service, and that you continue to meet all the necessary eligibility **and** suitability requirements. If you are unsure about your continued suitability **and** eligibility, your Armed Forces Careers Office (AFCO) will offer advice.

Residency

5. As part of the application process you were required to provide details of any time spent outside the **United Kingdom and Northern Ireland** to ensure you met the residency requirement. To ensure you continue to meet the residency requirement, if you intend to spend any time outside of the **United Kingdom and Northern Ireland** between any Offer of Service and Enlistment at RAF Cranwell, you should seek advice and guidance from your nearest AFCO.

Types and Lengths of Service

6. **General.** For the duration of the Initial Officer Training Course (IOTC) you will be enlisted to serve in the Royal Air Force under Airmen's Terms and Conditions of Service.

¹ Medical, Dental, Legal, Chaplain, Nursing, Medical Support Officer (Physiotherapist) and Directors of Music. For Specialist Branches, see PAM(Air) 429a.

Following successful completion and graduation from IOTC, you will be awarded an **Initial Commission (IC)**. However, your engagement in the RAF will be for the period of time defined by your commission, but will include your airman service during IOTC.

7. **Initial Commission (IC).** Officers appointed to an **Initial Commission** will normally be required to serve in the RAF for a period of 12 years Regular service followed by 4 years in the Royal Air Force Reserve of Officers. However, the initial period of service required may vary dependent on the branch; for example, those joining the Flying Branch on an **IC** will be required to complete 12 years Regular service followed by 4 years in the Reserve, **which will be extended to an Early Departure Payment Commission (EDPC) (see para 8) on successful completion of OCU/QFI/QHI training as appropriate.**

8. **Early Departure Payment Commission (EDPC).** An EDPC is initially based on the completion of a period of paid service that provides immediate financial benefits. Officers appointed to an EDPC will serve to the 20/40 point. The 20/40 point is defined as the date on which an individual reaches the age of 40 or the completion of 20 years reckonable service from the date of enlistment, whichever is later.

9. **Previous Service.** Candidates with previous service in any of the UK Regular Armed Forces will normally be required to serve on an IC for a period of 12 years from the date of re-instatement or re-employment.

10. **Further Service.** Subject to their continued fitness for service, on promotion to the rank of squadron leader (sqn ldr), Ground Branch officers will be required to accept Further Service to Length of Service (LOS)30, and Flying Branch Officers will be required to accept Further Service to Mandated End Of Service (MEOS) at age 60. Once in productive service, officers serving on an IC will be eligible to apply to transfer to an EDPC. Officers serving on an IC who are not promoted may apply to extend their Service by any period of whole years up to a maximum of 4 years at one time.

Rank on Entry

11. During IOTC recruits will hold the rank of Officer Cadet (Airman). Rank following successful graduation from IOTC and time promotion to flight lieutenant (flt lt) is dependent upon branch. Previous whole-time commissioned or non-commissioned service in any of the Armed Forces may also be taken into consideration. Details of rank, seniority and time promotion to flt lt are shown at Annex A.

Branches

12. **General.** It is not possible to give all the details you might want to know about each individual RAF branch within this document. Detailed information about each individual branch is contained in the Branch Information Sheets available from your AFCO or <https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment>.

13. **Choice of Branch.** When you join the RAF you join in a particular branch and you will normally be expected to remain in that branch for the duration of your service. Therefore, it is very important that you make the right choice of branch before you enter the RAF. However, in certain circumstances, and only where the needs of the Service are met, there may be opportunities to apply to transfer to an alternative branch. If you have any concerns about your current branch choice you should contact your nearest AFCO for advice and guidance.

Training

14. **Initial Officer Training.** The IOTC lasts 34 weeks (3 terms of 10 weeks with periods of 2 weeks leave in between) and is undertaken at the Officer and Aircrew Cadet Training Unit (OACTU), RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire. The aim of the course is to give you a good level of General Service Knowledge, to prepare you for your responsibilities as an officer and give you a sound platform for your future development. In addition to the purely Service subjects, the syllabus includes leadership training, management studies and physical education. IOTC is both physically and mentally demanding and it will be much easier if you are used to physical exertion. Failure to complete this course successfully will lead to your discharge (exit from the Service).

15. **Basic Professional Training.** After IOTC, most will be required to undertake a period of training in the professional duties of the branch for which they have been selected. The length and location of these training courses differ from branch to branch, and some are undertaken with personnel from the Army and Royal Navy, particularly where the branch exists in all 3 Services; AFCO staff can give you specific details. For all officers, retention of their commission is subject to the satisfactory completion of the basic professional training course. Officers who fail, or voluntarily withdraw themselves from their basic professional training will, ordinarily, have their commission terminated. However, depending on Service need at the time, they may be considered for re-selection to an alternative branch provided that a vacancy exists and they meet the entry criteria for that branch.

16. **Training Return of Service (Trg RoS).** All officers incur an initial Trg RoS of at least three years following completion of basic professional training. A Trg RoS is defined as 'a period of time that an individual who has undertaken a course of training shall be required to serve in order to give a reasonable return on the investment made by the MoD'. Some branches such as the Flying Branch incur longer RoS periods. Some types of additional training undertaken during the course of an officer's career may incur a further Trg RoS.

Personal Development Opportunities

17. **Personal Study.** The RAF, as far as practicable, supports all personnel who wish to undertake further development opportunities, by providing access to courses of study, some financial assistance, and other practical support. Service personnel have the opportunity to enrol on courses and work towards qualifications through local colleges or by distance learning, and special arrangements exist for study with the Open University. In addition, most stations have a Learning Centre, which will provide additional learning opportunities for RAF personnel.

18. **Adventure Training (AT).** There are two adventurous training (AT) schemes which are available to RAF personnel: the RAF Adventurous Training Scheme (RAFAT) which covers expeditions worldwide and the Joint Service Adventurous Training Scheme (JSAT) which encompasses AT qualification courses and expeditions which are open to personnel from all three Services. Further opportunities exist within RAF Force Development Training which often uses the medium of AT. The RAF has several AT Force Development Training Centres around the UK and Germany and also runs an AT related 'Eagles Scheme' which offers various personal development training exercises which are held globally.

Promotion

19. Promotion to the rank of sqn ldr and beyond is by competitive selection and is based on merit and individual performance. The performance of officers is reported upon by their line management on an annual Appraisal Report and this report forms the basis of assessing their suitability for promotion. **All officers are eligible to be considered for promotion to the rank of sqn ldr; however, promotion to the substantive rank of sqn ldr will be conditional upon acceptance of service to LOS 30 for Ground Branch officers and MEOS for Flying Branch officers.**

Pay and Allowances

20. **General.** Full details of the rates of pay, which are reviewed annually, are available at <https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment>. On initial entry into the RAF, cadets will be paid the New Entrant Rate of Pay (NERP) for the duration of IOTC. Thereafter personnel will progress to the next pay level appropriate to their branch, as determined by the RAF.

21. **Recruitment & Retention Pay (RRP).** Certain types of duties attract **RRP**, for example RRP (Flying) and RRP (Parachute Jump Instructor). To attract the payment Service personnel have to qualify for the duties and have a continued liability to undertake them.

22. **Allowances.** A range of allowances are available to reimburse Service personnel for expenditure incurred in the course of duty, to compensate for specific circumstances arising from military service, such as separation, and to provide partial reimbursement of expenditure incurred for a particular activity, e.g. continuity of education allowances.

23. **Uniform.** Uniform and essential items of kit are issued free on entry. Replacement uniform is at the cost of the individual whenever it becomes unserviceable through fair wear and tear. Operational kit is issued free with proof of a deployment order.

24. **Get You Home (Early Years).** Personnel serving in the UK who are under 18 years of age or who are undertaking IOTC may be granted return travel journeys to restricted destinations in the **United Kingdom** or Irish Republic, subject to an annual maximum entitlement.

Food and Accommodation Charges

25. Personnel who live in accommodation provided by the Service are required to pay to live there. Personnel occupying either Service Family Accommodation (SFA) or Single Living Accommodation (SLA) are charged at a rate which is determined by the type and/or grade of accommodation occupied. Personnel will be required to live in SLA during IOTC and in most cases during basic professional training and will also pay a standard food charge for the meals that are provided. Both the accommodation charge and the standard food charge are deducted directly from an individual's pay.

26. After initial training, personnel who live in Service accommodation will continue to pay for their accommodation and, depending on the unit they are assigned to, will either continue to pay a standard food charge or will pay for their meals at the time they are

taken. Personnel who are married but serving unaccompanied and living in SLA will not incur an accommodation charge.

Leave

27. Leave may be taken when and in what periods the individual chooses, **subject to the approval of the Chain of Command**; however, the demands of operations sometimes mean that leave may be cancelled or dates amended. The main types of leave available are as follows:

- a. **Annual Leave.** The normal allowance for annual leave for all personnel is 38 working days. This includes the 8 UK-wide Public Holidays.
- b. **Post Operational Leave (POL).** POL is a period of leave awarded to personnel to recognise the stresses and strains that Operational Deployments bring to them, their families, and friends and is granted in addition to the Annual Leave Allowance. Personnel are awarded one working day of POL for every 9 calendar days deployed.
- c. **Relocation/Temporary Relocation Leave.** Relocation Leave is an authorized period of absence granted to Service personnel posted between locations on non-operational tours of duty to facilitate the settling in/relocation process for themselves and for their dependants and is in addition to annual leave.
- d. **Terminal Leave.** Designed to assist resettlement, Terminal Leave is granted to qualifying Service personnel at the end of their service. Those leaving prematurely may, at the discretion of their Commanding Officer, be granted some leave depending on the amount of time they have served.
- e. **Miscellaneous Leave.** Other leave that may be available to eligible personnel includes maternity, paternity, **shared** parental and adoption leave or a career break of up to 3 years. Further details will be available from your Unit Human Resources section at the appropriate time.

Termination of Service

28. **Statutory Right at Commencement of Service.** All cadets who have not previously enlisted in the RAF have a statutory right to claim their discharge (exit from the Service) within their first 6 months of service from their date of enlistment, **known as** Discharge as of Right (DAOR). This is subject to a requirement to give 14 days notice in writing and to have completed 28 days service.

29. **Voluntary Withdrawals (VW).** Those personnel who have passed the point of DAOR (paragraph 28) but who have yet to complete **Phase 2 Training** may apply for VW from their training with a view to exit from the Service. Personnel who fall into this category have no right to leave the Service in this way. However, if by exception it is deemed in the interests of both the individual and the Service, authority to exit may be granted.

30. **Discharge for Compassionate Reasons.** Where the RAF accepts that there are extreme compassionate reasons which make it essential for an individual to leave the Service, exit will normally be granted.

31. **Early Release.** Officers may request to be released before the end of their period of commissioned service. However, this is not a right and the RAF may impose waiting periods (of up to 12 months), depending on the prevailing manning situation at the time of application. Early release will not normally be granted where a Training Return of Service (Trg RoS) has been incurred **and has not yet been fulfilled**.

32. **Pregnancy.** In recognition of the particular challenges that may be faced by pregnant Servicewomen, the Armed Forces offer supportive arrangements to enable them to accommodate pregnancy and maternity absence within their careers. Full details of the maternity scheme run by the Armed Forces are available from Unit Human Resources staff. An officer who becomes pregnant will be given the option of either:

- a. a period of maternity leave before returning to duty, or
- b. exit from the Service.

In either case, the officer will normally be allowed to remain on duty prior to the start of maternity absence. The Health and Safety of the pregnant officer and unborn baby, and subsequently the mother and newborn baby, are paramount and will be safeguarded in accordance with UK law through the processes contained in the current maternity regulations.

Pension, Terminal and Resettlement Grants

33. **Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015.** Personnel who enter RAF service on or after 1 Apr 15 automatically join the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 (AFPS 15) unless they choose to opt out. AFPS 15 is a non-contributory scheme. Your pension entitlement starts accumulating from your first day of paid service and you will be eligible to receive pension benefits provided you have completed at least 2 years qualifying service. Your pension is calculated using a system called Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE). Every year, the MOD adds an amount equal to 1/47th of your annual salary for that year, to your individual 'pension pot'. Your pension pot starts to accumulate from your first day of paid service and is carried forward into each year where it grows slightly to ensure that it tracks inflation and maintains its value. This growth, known as indexation, is based on the Average Weekly Earnings index and is similar to money in a bank account earning interest. This process is repeated every year until you leave the Armed Forces.

34. **Resettlement Grant.** The Resettlement Grant is paid to Regular members of the Armed Forces who leave the military after 12 years relevant service but before they qualify for any other form of immediate pension or Early Departure Payment (EDP) benefits. It is not linked to your pension entitlement but it is intended to help you adjust to civilian life.

35. **Early Departure Payment (EDP).** Regular service personnel who reach the age of 40, and having completed a minimum of 20 years relevant service, qualify on discharge for an EDP. The EDP consists of a tax-free EDP lump sum equivalent to 2.25 times the Deferred Pension (see para 36) and a monthly taxable EDP income. The EDP monthly income is 34% of the value of your annual Deferred Pension. For each year served beyond the 20/40 EDP point, the value of the EDP will be increased by 0.85% of your Deferred Pension. EDP increases annually in line with an inflation index, currently this is the Consumer Price Index. The EDP remains in payment until your State Pension Age, when it ceases and the Deferred Pension comes into payment.

36. **Deferred Pension.** If you leave the Armed Forces having completed at least two years qualifying service or because a transfer value payment has been accepted by the Scheme Administrator, you will be entitled to a Deferred Pension. This is paid at the Deferred Pension Age (linked to your State Pension Age). Your Deferred Pension will increase annually in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) when you leave Service. Providing you are aged 55 or over you can apply to have your Deferred Pension paid early, subject to an actuarial reduction, which reflects the fact that the pension will be paid over a longer period.

37. **Full Pension (serving to age 60).** If you have at least two years qualifying service and you serve until age 60 you will be entitled to claim your pension immediately. Once in payment, your pension will increase annually in line with CPI. You will not receive an EDP because your pension benefits will be payable immediately upon leaving the Armed Forces. AFPS 15 will not automatically pay you a pension lump sum, however, you can create a tax-free lump sum by 'surrendering' a part of your annual pension. This is known as commutation. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) currently allow up to 25% of your overall pension benefits to be taken as a lump sum.

38. **Transferring Benefits to AFPS 15.** If you were a member of another registered and unconnected occupational pension scheme with another employer before joining the Armed Forces, or if you have a personal pension, you can request to transfer the value of some, or all of those benefits into AFPS 15. Any transfer request must be made within 5 years of leaving the previous employer and within 12 months of becoming a member of AFPS 15. Further conditions will apply, dependant on your specific circumstances. More information can be found in the booklet "Your Pension Scheme Explained - AFPS 2015".

Resettlement

39. To assist personnel leaving the Service, the RAF, together with the RN and Army, operate a resettlement service in partnership with Right Management (formerly Coutts Consulting Group plc). The full provision, which is generally available to those who have served for 6 years or more, includes one-to-one counselling and advice, briefings, job related training and a job finding service. Those who have served for 4 or more years are eligible for job finding support. Personnel are generally entitled to resettlement advice (but not training or other support) whatever the reason for exit or length of time served with the RAF. Furthermore, subject to completing at least 12 years relevant service personnel may also receive a tax free Resettlement Grant.

Reserve Service

40. Where their terms of service include a reserve commitment personnel will, on completion of RAF Regular service, be transferred to the Royal Air Force Reserve. Full details of the reserve commitments are contained in RAF Form 308a/ 308c, which is issued on enlistment. During Reserve service personnel may be required to attend training for not more than 16 days each year. In addition, individuals may be required to attend for prescribed periods of non-continuous training, none of which will exceed 36 hours without their consent.

41. At the end of RAF Regular service, all personnel have a liability to be recalled for permanent service under section 68 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996, when it appears to Her Majesty that national danger is imminent or that a great emergency has arisen, or in

the event of actual or expected attack on the UK. This recall liability continues for 18 years from the date personnel are discharged, or transferred to the Royal Air Force Reserve, or until age 55 if this is sooner. This 18-year period includes any time spent in reserve service.

Diversity and Inclusion

42. The Royal Air Force's Diversity and Inclusion Policy, commensurate with the MoD Unified Diversity Strategy, maintains that all personnel should be treated fairly, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or social background. The Policy goes further than the mere elimination of unlawful discrimination. It recognises and values individuals from diverse backgrounds who bring fresh ideas, knowledge, experience and talent. This enables the Armed Forces to recruit from the widest possible base, helping to achieve and sustain our manning needs and maintain operational capability and combat effectiveness.

Annex:

A. Standard Junior Officer Rank Progression in the Functional Branches.

Standard Junior Officer Rank Progression in the Functional Branches.

Serial No	Cohort	Branch(es)	OC	Plt Off	Fg Off						Overall Time to Flt Lt
			Pay Level ¹								
			5		6		7		8		
1	Flying Branch	Flying (Pilot/RPAS(P)/ WSO)	✓	→	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Officer cadet service + 2 ½ years
2	Ground Branches (excluding Engineer Branch)	Ground Branches	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Officer cadet service + 3 ½ years
3	University graduate - BEng or equivalent	Engineer Branch (AS and CE)	✓	→	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Officer cadet service + 2 ½ years
4	University graduate - MEng or equivalent	Engineer Branch (AS and CE)	✓	→	✓	✓	✓	→			Officer cadet service + 1 ½ years

Notes:

1. All entrants complete IOTC as officer cadets (OC) enlisted on Airmen's terms and are commissioned upon graduation.

¹ Each column, except that of officer cadet, represents a 6 mth period. Officer Cadet equates to the length of time spent on IOTC.