



Ministry of Defence

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Mr Joseph Delaney
request-595870-
b6020696@whatdotheyknow.com

2 September 2019

Dear Mr Delaney,

Thank you for your email of 7 August, requesting the following information:

- 1. Any information regarding the "Soldier Development Course" for recruits (recently featured on Youtube at Pirbright.) E.g. what depots operate the programme, it's duration, access to the course (is it by referral and/or by request), is it available to Officer Cadets or prospective enlisted candidates only, etc.*
- 2. Could you provide a summary of any other programmes operated by the British Army to address issues around health and fitness of recruit personnel given the wider societal issue of inactivity and obesity?*

Your correspondence is being treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the Department holds information relating to your request, and this can be found below.

1. Commencing in January 2017, The Soldier Development Course (SDC) is a 4 week course delivered by Initial Training Group and is specifically for other rank Army candidates who have come close to achieving the Basic Training entry standards for their chosen role. They may need to work on their physical fitness, their literacy or numeracy, their Body Mass Index, or wider personal development, or a combination of two of these factors. The course is designed to develop the candidate in their identified area and aims to bring them up to the entry level required to enter Basic Training.

There are currently nine SDCs being run throughout the Recruiting Year 2019/20, each with a course capacity of 48, held at Army Training Centre, Pirbright. The Army Assessment Centre assessors will invite suitable candidates on attendance on the SDC. Those candidates who are not quite ready to participate in a Development Course are offered a bespoke individual physical training programme, available via FitApp, and are recommended (and often rebooked during final interview) to return to Assessment Centre at a later date. There are also well established links with the Military Preparation College (MPC) and specifically the Motivational Preparation College for Training.

2. This information is exempt under Section 21 of the Act, as the information is reasonably accessible to you via other means. This was previously subject to Parliamentary Question, the answer to which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-10/200624/>

Under Section 16 of the Act (advice and assistance), you may find it useful to note that the Army also has programmes designed to support serving personnel, with both physical and mental fitness programmes.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Manning Leader
Army Secretariat