

CHAPTER 5

CAREERS COUNSELLING

POINT OF CONTACT - PART 4

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CHAPTER 5

CAREERS COUNSELLING

0501. Initial Commission Periods (Officers)

Details of officer commissions are at Chapter 48 [Section 1](#).

0502. Initial Engagement Periods (Ratings and Other Ranks)

a. Rating and Other Ranks join the Naval Service on a 12 year Engagement Stage 1 (ES1), with the possibility thereafter of transferring to an Engagement Stage 2 (ES2) - to 20 years' service or age 40, whichever is later - and then to Engagement Stage 3 (ES3). Chapter 48 [Section 2](#).

b. All RNR ratings join for an Initial Engagement of 5 calendar years with subsequent re-engagements every 5 years. Ratings over 40 will normally only be re-engaged until their 45th birthday. Separate application for an extension of service is required to serve beyond the normal retirement age of 45. More detail is at BR3 (2) Chapter 2. |

0503. Branch of Preference (BOP) - General Guidance

a. Some candidates will be totally unaware of which BOP they would like or are suitable for. Many will have only a limited knowledge of what they would like to do, and these candidates will need special and considerate counselling towards an appropriate BOP.

b. It is essential that, at the time of application, candidates are made aware of the full range of possibilities open to them.

c. Candidates who are considered suitable for a BOP which subsequently becomes over subscribed and is then closed to recruiting should be re-interviewed and an alternative BOP offered to them. However, the final choice of branch/category must be left to the candidate. The possibility of a subsequent branch transfer back to their original choice of BOP is never to be given to the candidate and is never to be offered as an inducement to choose a particular BOP. Candidates who do not wish to consider an alternative BOP are to be withdrawn and invited to re-visit the AFCO at a future date.

d. Candidates who are considered by Careers Staff to be more suitable for a branch/category other than the BOP chosen are to be carefully counselled and the alternative opportunities explained.

e. The final choice of branch/category must be left to the candidate.

f. RNR candidates are recruited to the Naval Service and only allocated on completion of Phase 1 training – approximately 9-12 months after attestation. They may express a preference for a particular specialisation but they are allocated as directed by NPT(RES) Branch Manager.

0504. Careers Advisers Recruitment Engagement (CARE)

a. Following the introduction of ICARAS it has become apparent that there is a requirement to clarify best practice for engaging with the candidate(s) prior to the Recruitment Test (RT). Consequently, Careers Advisers Recruitment Engagement (CARE) has been introduced and is to be undertaken by qualified personnel to enhance current practice and confirm that candidates are receiving the sufficient information prior to proceeding to RT.

b. The use of CARE will allow CAs to employ their skills to help determine the suitability of the candidate, enabling the candidate to have a balanced view of their BOP and mentor them accordingly. It will also allow the candidate to be best prepared for the various forthcoming tests and allow the CA to identify any possible issues that may arise.

0505. Ratings and Other Ranks - Statutory Right of Discharge

a. Ratings/Other Ranks enlisting in the Naval Service for the first time have a statutory right to claim discharge within their first 6 months' service, subject to completing 4 weeks effective service (excluding leave periods and any forfeited service) from date of entry. Recruits who exercise this right will be entitled to release no later than 14 days after giving notice in writing to their Commanding Officer. See Para 5403 [sub para a](#) for further details. Ratings/Other Ranks who re-enter the same service, e.g. ex RN re-entering the RN, do not have this statutory right however, former ratings entering the RM and vice versa will have this right of discharge.

b. Ratings/Other Ranks whose six month option point has passed, but who are still under the age of 18 years, now have a statutory right to end their service up until their 18th birthday by giving notice in writing to their Commanding Officer. In such cases, individuals may leave as of right, after a 3 month cooling off period, or earlier if agreed between the recruit and Service authorities - details are at Para 5403 [sub para b](#).

0506. Ratings and Other Ranks - Early Termination (following end of SITP)

Having completed 6 months service, or reached the age of 18 (if this comes after the end of the 6 month period), Ratings and Other Ranks must complete a minimum of 2½ years from the end of their Standard Initial Training Period (SITP) before they become eligible to exercise their right to give 12 months notice to leave their Service. Naval Nurses (Student) must complete 3 years service before they are eligible to apply for Early Termination. The SITP period varies from branch to branch and is shown in the Summary of Entry Standards. See [Chapter 53](#) for further details.

0507. Dietary Requirements (Health/Religion)

The Naval Service aims to cater for all special religious dietary requirements where possible and in general vegetarian options or halal or kosher meat may be provided. However, preparation of kosher food in strict observance of the Jewish faith cannot be guaranteed. Vegetarian, halal and kosher Operational Ration Packs are readily available when deployed on operations and exercises.

0508. Religion and Religious Observances

a. The Naval Service places great importance on the spiritual development of Service personnel and is committed to giving individuals the opportunity to practise their religious observances wherever possible. A number of religious leaders act as advisers to the Armed Forces on matters of Christian and non-Christian religious requirements. Every reasonable effort is made for personnel to have contact with their religious leaders and visit places of worship (church, synagogue, mosque, temple). Wherever practicable, areas for worship will be made available in all Service establishments, including ships and submarines at sea.

b. Every effort will be made to allow the celebration of religious festivals/holidays (e.g. Yom Kippur, Easter, Christmas, Vai Sakhi, Eid Al-Fitr, Diwali, etc). In most circumstances, arrangements can be made for daily prayer although this may not always be practicable. Muslims will normally be allowed to fast during Ramadan. In operational conditions or when the physical demands on an individual are high and to fast may prove hazardous, fasting may not be permissible.

c. For more details see [Chapter 31](#).

0509. Specific Religious Dress

a. **General.** The Naval Service recognises the need to observe specific codes of dress in accordance with a number of religious beliefs. Specific rules are detailed below. In general, no exceptions are made to standard Naval Uniform regulations (see Part 6, specifically Chapter 38 [Section 2](#)). CNR should be contacted in the event of any doubt regarding what can and cannot be observed.

b. **Sikhs.** In the Naval Service, Sikhs are permitted to wear the five K's: Kara (steel bangle), Kesh (uncut hair), Kanga (small comb), Kaccha (special design knee length underwear) and Kirpan (small sword); male Sikhs may also wear a turban. However, some constraints regarding the wearing of a turban and keeping facial hair uncut do exist, as follows:

(1) *Turbans.* Some trades require specialist headgear to be worn, especially under operational circumstances. Examples of this are Commanders' helmets in armoured fighting vehicles, combat helmets, breathing apparatus (full hood) for fire-fighters, and flying helmets for aircrew in some types of aircraft. Turbans are incompatible with specialist headgear which must be worn on health and safety grounds. Male Sikh personnel can normally wear a patka under specialist headgear, however, this is not possible under a flying helmet which must be closely fitted to the contours of the head. Aircrew with long hair, male and female, may be required to have their hair cut short in order to achieve a satisfactory fit of a flying helmet.

(2) *Facial Hair.* For occupational or operational reasons, where a hazard clearly exists, personnel authorised to wear beards on religious grounds will have to be prepared to modify or remove their beards to such an extent as to enable the correct wearing of a respirator or breathing apparatus.

(a) *Aircrew.* It is unlikely that a male Sikh will be able to obtain an effective seal on his oxygen mask without trimming his beard.

(b) *Respirator*. An effective seal on a respirator can only be achieved when the skin is clean shaven. In an operational environment where there is an NBC threat, Sikhs or other personnel with beards will need to shave. However, when practising NBC drills, male Sikh personnel would not be required to shave their beards.

(3) Candidates attending some CNR courses will be required to wear protective headgear, but if a candidate refuses on religious grounds, they must be allowed to sit out that particular element of the exercise. It should be explained to any attendee who refuses to wear protective headgear that, were they to join the Naval Service, there may well be circumstances where they would be required to wear protective headgear. These pre-courses include but are not limited to:

- (a) PRNC(R) and RNLALCs.
- (b) CTCRM LALC.
- (c) CNR-sponsored outreach courses.

(4) POC and PRMC require helmets to be worn for parts of the course to comply with Health and safety standards and all must comply. Some of these tests are criteria pass or fail and must be done by all candidates on PRMC and POC. Additionally, non-attendance on areas of the courses would give an unfair advantage to a candidate who would be able to rest between activities. Other areas of PRMC and POC require full immersion in water in confined space. Long or loose hair could pose a safety risk if not fully tied up or covered.

c. **Muslim Men - Facial Hair.** For occupational or operational reasons, where a hazard clearly exists, personnel authorised to wear beards on religious grounds will have to be prepared to modify or remove their beards to such an extent as to enable the correct wearing of a respirator or breathing apparatus.

(1) *Aircrew*. It is unlikely that a male Muslim will be able to obtain an effective seal on his oxygen mask without trimming his beard.

(2) *Respirator*. An effective seal on a respirator can only be achieved when the skin is clean shaven. In an operational environment where there is an NBC threat, personnel with beards will need to shave. However, when practising NBC drills, male Muslim personnel would not be required to shave their beards.

d. **Muslim Women.** Muslim women are allowed to wear uniform trousers, rather than a skirt and may wear a hijab except when operational or health and safety considerations dictate otherwise. Long sleeve shirts can be worn with all forms of Service dress. Tracksuit bottoms may be worn for sport. All Naval Service personnel are required to achieve a basic swimming standard as part of their training. Although every effort will be made to ensure that these tests take place in an all female environment, it should be stressed to female Muslim personnel that this may not always be possible.

e. **Jewish Men.** A male member of the Jewish faith may wear a dark plain patterned yarmulke whenever he removes other head-dress.

0510. Childcare Provision During and After Initial Training

- a. Providing care for a child or children as a married, single or lone parent is not incompatible with Service life nor is it a bar to entry into the Naval Service. However, life in the Naval Service makes unique demands upon all Service personnel and their families. All serving personnel are required to serve away from home for extended periods of time, often at short notice and no guarantees can ever be given about the pattern of working hours or the amount of time that will be spent away from home.
- b. Provision for full time care of children must be made which does not depend on the presence of the primary parent. If both parents are serving personnel, this will usually mean that a third person will have to be ready to take responsibility for child care since either or both parents might be required to serve away from home at the same time and at short notice.
- c. During the initial training period accommodation for families is not provided.
- d. **ACTION: CANDIDATES.** Candidates who are parents will have to demonstrate their ability to provide full-time child care, if required, at the Interview stage. There are many ways in which this might be provided. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides guidance over typical arrangements:
- (1) Child cared for by spouse/civil partner/partner/other relative.
 - (2) Child living with grandparents.
 - (3) Either of above supported by part-time child care.
 - (4) Full time nanny employed.
 - (5) Full time boarding school (but arrangements during holidays must be made).
- e. Single or lone parents must also think seriously about the provision of child care after the training period. Although family accommodation is available after initial training, no special arrangements can be made for working hours or assignments for single/lone parents and there will be many occasions when 24 hour child care is essential on a long term basis.

0511. Disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

- a. SpLDs are not a bar to entry, nor do they have to be declared. However, if applicants declare their SpLD, they are not allowed more time/assistance to complete aptitude tests.
- b. **ACTION - CAREERS STAFF.** Careers Staff must not attempt to diagnose SpLDs themselves or make reference to claimed SpLDs in recruiting documentation/MIS.
- c. As a general rule, if an applicant's level of literacy is not adequate enough to cope with completion of application forms and complete the Recruiting Tests (in accordance with the normal conditions and standards) then it is unlikely that their performance will improve sufficiently for them to complete training and deal successfully with the demands of a Service career.

d. RFA recruiting is not exempt from the employment law that allows the Naval Service to legally discriminate and exclude candidates for certain protected characteristics. RFA candidates who declare disability or learning difficulties will receive no adjustment to the assessment process or recruiting standards and will be required to meet the basic criteria. No additional allowance is to be made during the recruiting process for any declared disability or learning difficulties and each candidate's suitability for employment in the RFA measured against the current standards.

0512. Sexual Orientation

Candidates are not to be asked about their sexual orientation by the recruiter¹. Sexual orientation is regarded as a private matter for the individual. If at any stage during the recruiting process a candidate discloses the fact that they are heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual, this fact is not to be recorded by the recruiter.

0513. Transsexuals

a. Candidates claiming to be transsexuals are to be processed and treated like any other candidate. They must meet the same entry criteria for their chosen Branch of Preference as other applicants.

b. Individuals who are receiving medical counselling or treatment towards gender re-assignment should have their entry deferred until all treatments are complete. Those who have undergone gender re-assignment will continue to require hormone replacement therapy, but this is not a bar to entry (see 2009DIN01-07 Para 22.)

c. In cases where there are additional concerns, from either the candidate or the AFCO, candidates can be referred to the SMO SE. However, this is only to be done if the candidate consents to that line of referral.

d. All Personnel are reminded of the right to privacy – prohibition of disclosure of "Protected Information". Section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 establishes a right to privacy for the transsexual person in that it is a criminal offence for a person to disclose information that he or she has acquired in an official capacity about an individual's application for a Gender Reassignment Certificate or about the gender history of an applicant.

0514. Financially Supported Education Schemes and Awards

a. A range of financially supported education schemes and awards are available to candidates looking to join the Service in certain branches, including:

(1) Scholarship and Reserved Place Scheme: Eligibility, Selection and Progression.

(2) Defence Sixth Form College (DSFC)/Welbeck College: Entrance Requirements and Applications.

(3) Bursaries for University Study: Applications, Awards and Service Commitments.

1. The Recruit Trainee Survey and Potential Recruit Survey asks a question regarding sexual orientation, however these are anonymous. Any information collated will be used for research purposes only and will not identify with a candidate.

BR 3(1)

(4) Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS) for Engineering Students: Applications, Awards and Approved Degrees.

(5) Cadetships for Medical and Dental Students (Final 3 Years).

b. **Reference.** Explanatory detail regarding these schemes and awards is found at [Chapter 15](#).