Endnotes for ‘Soldiers at 16: Sifting fact from fiction’


2 Ipsos MORI, Nationwide poll conducted in July 2014 by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd, http://forceswatch.net/sites/default/files/IPSOSSurvey2014-Forces_age.pdf. Poll question: ‘In your opinion, what should be the minimum age to join the British army? Please answer regardless of whatever you believe the minimum age is at the moment.’ Figures calculated from the poll findings by excluding the ‘don’t knows’, at two per cent.

3 As the army still recruits about 2,000 16 and 17 year olds each year – about 80 per cent of the total – we focus on common misconceptions about the army in particular. (In 2012-13, the Army recruited 2,300 minors; in 2013-14, it recruited 1,770.) Ministry of Defence (MoD), Annual Personnel Report [2013, 2014 editions], https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-annual-manning-statistics-index.


5 As of 2015, the Education and Skills Act (2008) requires all young people aged 16 and 17 to continue to participate in education. Children in full-time employment must complete 280 guided learning hours of education annually, towards accredited qualifications. It is this part of the Act from which the armed forces are exempt. The exemption is specified in The Duty to Participate in Education or Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2013, SI 1205, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1205/regulation/8/made.


8 The full list of learning outcomes from the army’s Public Services Apprenticeship is: Maintain competence, knowledge and standards of conduct in public service; Work safely in public service; Work as a team member to deliver public service; Administer first aid; Use and maintain physical resources; Use communication systems in working contexts; Meet physical fitness requirements; Plan and navigate a cross country route; Operate and maintain small arms and team weapons; Perform ceremonial duties. Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards, HM Forces (England): Apprenticeship framework, pp. 18-19, http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/frameworkslibrary/downloader.cfm?FRID=FR02016.

9 In 2012-13, for example, 41% of enlisted minors joined the infantry, 9% joined the artillery, and 9% joined the armoured corps. Hansard. HC Deb, 10 June 2013, c10W.

10 Between 2010-11 and 2012-13, 36% of minors and 25% of adults who enlisted in the Army left during training, calculated as follows: Of those who enlisted in the army aged under 18, 1,050 dropped out of 2,400 recruits in 2010-11; 930 of 2,930 in 2011-12; 760 of 2,300 in 2012-13; total

11 The proportion of young people successfully gaining GCSEs at grades D-G in both English and Maths at age 15 has increased from 90.0 per cent in 2005 to 92.9 per cent in 2012. The proportion gaining grades A*-C in both subjects at age 15 has also increased from 43.3 per cent to 50.9 per cent in the same period. The proportion of those who failed to gain grades D-G in both subjects at age 15 but who did so by age 18 has increased from 6.4 per cent in 2008 to 8.2 per cent in 2012. The proportion of those who failed to gain grades A*-C in both subjects at age 15 but who did so by age 18 has increased from 7.2 per cent in 2008 to 10.1 per cent in 2012. Hansard: HC Deb, 7 November 2013, c336W.

12 The proportion of young people successfully gaining GCSEs grades D-G in both English and Maths at age 15 has increased from 90.0 per cent in 2005 to 92.9 per cent in 2012. The proportion gaining grades A*-C in both subjects at age 15 has also increased from 43.3 per cent to 50.9 per cent in the same period. The proportion of those who failed to gain grades D-G in both subjects at age 15 but who did so by age 18 has increased from 6.4 per cent in 2008 to 8.2 per cent in 2012. The proportion of those who failed to gain grades A*-C in both subjects at age 15 but who did so by age 18 has increased from 7.2 per cent in 2008 to 10.1 per cent in 2012. Hansard: HC Deb, 7 November 2013, c336W.


15 For every five soldiers under 18 recruited into the infantry each year, two previous infantry enlistees are leaving before they have completed four years’ service. For example, in 2011-12, 1,270 minors joined the infantry; in 2012, 560 infantry recruits who had enlisted as minors left the Army. Hansard: HC Deb, 19 January 2015; HC Deb, 13 May 2013 c99w.


17 British Legion, A UK Household survey of the ex-service community, 2014, pp. xii, 63-64.


21 Calculated value from Table 1 in D Macmanus et. al. ‘Violent behaviour in UK military personnel returning home after deployment’, *Psychological Medicine*, 2012, Vol. 42, pp. 1663–1673.


29 Child Soldiers International and ForcesWatch, *Young age at Army enlistment is associated with greater war zone risks*, 2013, http://child-soldiers.org/research_report_reader.php?id=699. Note that there was no statistically significant finding with regard to soldiers who enlisted at age 17.

30 Recruiters’ instructions state that recruits aged between 16 and 16½ must be given jobs in combat roles (or join as drivers in the logistics corps) and that those under 16¼ must only be given combat roles. British army (Recruiting Group), *Eligibility Quick Reference Guide*, 2015, p. 8, http://child-soldiers.org/research_report_reader.php?id=827. For evidence of the over-representation of the youngest recruits in the infantry, refer to D Gee, *The Last Ambush*, op. cit., p. 57.

32 For sources and detail, refer to D Gee, *The Last Ambush*, op. cit., p. 57.


37 Hansard: HC Deb, 9 February 2015 (223161); 24 March 2015 (227584).

38 Queen’s Regulations for the Army, 109.006.


40 A soldier who enlists as a minor may not leave during the first six weeks; may then leave until six months have passed since enlistment, provided that 14 days’ notice has been provided; and may then leave at three months’ notice, provided that the recruit has not turned 18 when the notice is given. Normally, the soldier may not then leave the army until their 22nd birthday, at the earliest. Directorate of Manning (Army), *Terms and conditions of service*, April 2015, http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/TermsOfService.pdf.

41 Directorate of Manning (Army), *Terms and conditions of service*, op. cit.

42 Soldiers who enrol onto certain training courses may first be required to extend their minimum period of service.

43 ITC Catterick figure derived by dividing by two the combined cost of Phase 1 and 2 training. Hansard: HC Deb, 2 September 2014, c214W.

44 For sources, refer to endnote Error! Bookmark not defined..  


Based on education provision at Army Foundation College (Harrogate), which consists of three Level 1 Functional Skills courses (English, maths, ICT), with the option of progressing to Level 2, and an apprenticeship in ‘Public Services’, which consists of basic soldier training and is not designed to support career progression outside the army. GCSEs are not available.


This calculation is based on the army’s intake to the trained strength in the 2013-14 financial year. Child Soldiers International and ForcesWatch (2014), op. cit.


In 2011-12, 1,470 soldiers aged 16 were recruited in a total intake of 10,480. In 2011 there were 286,634 marriages, of which 126 involved at least one party aged 16. Hansard: HC Deb, 8 December 2014 (217017); Ministry of Defence, UK Armed Forces Annual Personnel Report (Table 7), 2012; Hansard: HC Deb, 8 December 2014 (217017).


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