

## **Note to presenters**

The chain-of-command has primary responsibility for Employer Support. It is a Commanding Officer's responsibility to directly support the relationship between the Reservist and their employer, with higher level commanders providing direction, support and resources.

This presentation is intended for use by Unit Employer Support Officers, or other senior officers, to brief others in command and Unit administration positions.

It is, of course, only a template and may benefit from some tailoring to reflect your Unit's particular circumstances. Specifically, names and contact details for Unit points of contact should be added to the final section (on sources of support, advice and information).

# Employer Support

A briefing for commanders



# Purpose of this presentation

To brief commanders of Reservists on:

- Employer Support policy and organisation
- What all Reservists should know
- Sources of support, advice and information

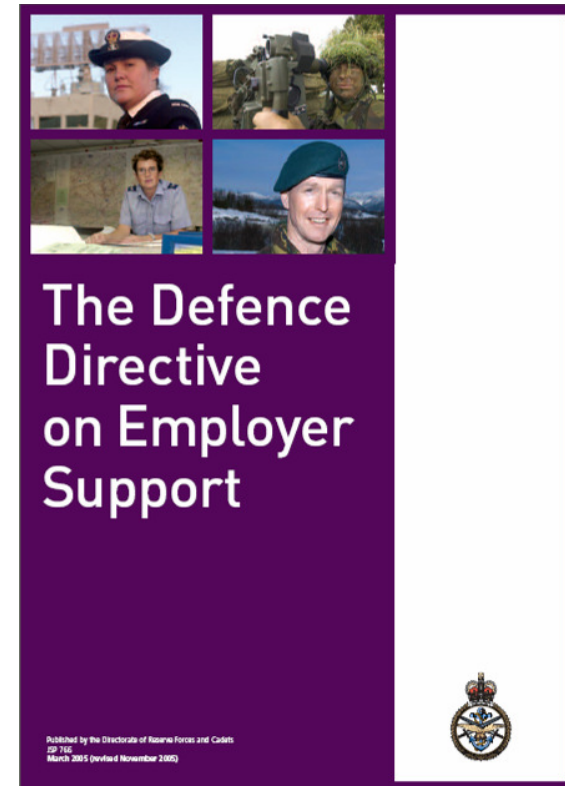
# Employer Support policy and organisation

- What is “Employer Support”?
- Why Employer Support is a command responsibility
- Employer Support responsibilities
- Key legal provisions and directives

# What is “Employer Support”

Employer Support is defined\* as:

“Activity which develops or sustains the relationships between the Armed Forces, Reservists and their employers so that employers will support the Reservists’ release for routine training and, when necessary, mobilisation.”



\*JSP766 – The Defence Directive on Employer Support

# Why Employer Support is a command responsibility

Civilian employers impact upon the Reserve Forces' ability to:

- **Recruit** – by not obstructing or discouraging employees wishing to join the Reserve Forces
- **Train** – by being flexible when needed to allow Reservists' to attend routine training including Annual Camp
- **Retain** – by making it possible for Reservist to balance their Reserve Forces and civilian employment commitments
- **Mobilise** – by not appealing against an employee being mobilised
- **Retain after demobilisation** – by welcoming back their employee and continuing to be supportive

# Employer Support: the layers of responsibility

Reservist	As the main day-to-day contact with his or her employer, the Reservist has the lead responsibility for managing their relationship with their employer
Commander	The Reservist's immediate commanders are responsible for ensuring that he or she is briefed on key Employer Support issues and for providing initial support to their Reservists
Unit	Units are required to devise and implement an Employer Support plan, provide assistance to Reservists when more detailed knowledge is needed, liaise with employers and maintain accurate employer records
Regional	The regional elements of the chain-of-command, the RFCAs and SaBRE's regional directors provide additional expertise and resources in support of Units, including liaison with employers
National campaign	Through a range of activities, the national SaBRE campaign aims to create an environment amongst employers within which Regional, Unit and Reservist level activity can flourish
National policy	The MOD (specifically the Directorate of Reserve Forces and Cadets) sets national policy for implementation through service chains-of-command

# Commanders' responsibilities

- Ensure that their Reservists understand the key issues relating to the employment of Reservists
- Ensure that their Reservists know that information and assistance is available and how to access it
- Encourage their Reservists to engage with their employers about their service with the Reserve Forces
- Ensure that their Reservists provide complete and accurate employer details and amend these when changes occur
- As early as possible, identify any problems Reservists are having with their employer and provide support to the Reservist as appropriate

# Key legal provisions and directives

- The Defence Directive on Employer Support (JSP766) sets out the roles and responsibilities for delivering Employer Support
- The Reserve Forces Act 1996 (RFA96) includes the legal provisions for mobilisation, including limits on the time for which Reservists may be mobilised and arrangements for exemptions and deferrals
- The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 (SOE85) provides Reservists with employment protection, including a requirement for demobilised Reservists to be reinstated
- Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 859 – The Reserve Forces (Call-out and Recall) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2005 (SI859) sets out the arrangements for financial assistance to employers when an employee is mobilised (it also covers payments to Reservists)

# What all Reservists should know

- Why their employer matters to them as a Reservist
- Why their employer is told that they are a Reservist
- How to prepare for telling their employer
- What to say to their employer
- The benefits of employing a Reservist
- Their employer's rights
- Their rights as a Reservist
- How to develop their employer's support
- Sources of help for them and their employer

# Why their employer matters to them as a Reservist

- Some **contracts of employment** require employees to obtain their employer's permission before taking other paid work (including being in the Reserve Forces)
- To attend evening and weekend training, they might have to **leave work early or change shifts**
- Many employers give **extra time off** for training or Annual Camp – but it is entirely up to them whether they do so or not
- If they are called-up for **mobilisation**, employers have the right to apply for it to be cancelled or postponed, irrespective of what the Reservist wants
- If they are mobilised **they need their mind on the job** – not worrying about whether their employer is supporting them

# Why their employer is told that they are a Reservist

- The **more that employers know** about the benefits, rights and obligations associated with employing a Reservist, **the more supportive they tend to be**
- If their employer doesn't even know that they are a Reservist until they are mobilised, it is **unreasonable to expect them to support them** during and after their mobilisation
- Engaging with employers well before mobilisation provides the opportunity to **build their support**

# How they should prepare for telling their employer

Under the “Employer Notification” system, their employer will (except in exceptional circumstances) be told that their employee is in the Reserve Forces – but it is better that the news comes from the Reservist first. They should:

- read the materials available (described later) so that they understand the key issues
- check whether their employer has any written policies relating to the Reserve Forces or other similar activities
- check their contract of employment (if they have one) for any conditions on taking additional paid employment
- check whether there is any information about their employer in the SaBRE website ([www.sabre.mod.uk](http://www.sabre.mod.uk))
- ask you for advice if they have any questions or concerns

# What they should say to their employer

They should try to cover:

- the **benefits** to their employer of the training and experience they receive from the Reserve Forces
- the important **roles** of the Reserve Forces (including providing support for the UK emergency services in the case of a major incident)
- the **safeguards** for employers – their employer's rights
- their employer's **obligations** – the Reservist's rights
- where their employer can go for **information and advice**

# The benefits of employing a Reservist

- Many employers see supporting members of the Reserve Forces as part of their **social responsibility**
- Reservists may be able to obtain **qualifications** useful to their employer (in driving or first aid, for example)
- However, the main benefits are in the “**soft skills**” which are developed through their training and their experience while mobilised, including **team-working, self confidence, communication, leadership and management**
- Reservists are often given **responsibility for people, equipment and activities** at a much younger age than in their civilian work

# Their employer's rights: exemption or deferral

- If you they are called-up for mobilisation, their employer can apply for an exemption or deferral (i.e. for the mobilisation to be cancelled or postponed) if their employee's mobilisation will cause serious harm to the business or organisation
- Their employer does not need the Reservist's agreement to make such an application.
- Their employer has a right of appeal to an independent tribunal if the application is turned down

# Their employer's rights: financial support

- If a Reservist is mobilised, their employer can **claim most costs** incurred back from the Ministry of Defence
- This can include:
  - one-off costs (such as advertising for a temporary replacement)
  - ongoing costs (such as extra overtime costs) up to £110 per day their employee is mobilised
  - when the Reservist returns to work, costs of training he or she requires because they have been away
- Employers **cannot claim** for any “consequential losses”, such as a loss of sales – if the employer thinks that this is a serious issue they should apply for an exemption or deferral

# Their rights as a Reservist: job protection

- It is a **criminal offence to dismiss someone** because they are in the Reserve Forces
- However, a Reservist could be disciplined by their employer for being in **breach of contract** if their terms of employment specifically say that they can't be in the Reserve Forces or take other paid work
- When they are demobilised, their employer is legally required to **give them their job back** – provided that they have followed the appropriate procedures
- If this is not practicable (for example, because of a company reorganisation) their employer is required to offer them a reasonable alternative

# Their rights as a Reservist: pay and benefits while mobilised

- The MOD will pay them either their military or civilian rate of pay, whichever is the higher (up to the equivalent of £200k/year, or more for some medical specialists) – so there is no need for their employer to continue paying them anything while they are mobilised
- Reservists can also claim from the MOD for benefits (such as a company car) that their employer stops providing while they are mobilised
- The MOD will pay an employer's contributions to any company pension scheme, provided that the Reservist continues with the employee's contribution

# How they should develop their employer's support

- If they want time off for training, or need to rearrange shifts, they should make sure that they arrange it with their employer **as far in advance** as possible
- If their employer has any **questions or wants to know more**, the Reservist should either provide the information or direct their employer to one of the sources of help we'll cover later
- If their employer is interested, the Reservist should **make use of events** such as employers' visits to training to give them a better understanding of the Reserve Forces

# Sources of help for them and their employer

All **Reservists** should know that:

- Information, advice and support for them is available through their normal **chain-of-command / unit HQ**
- The **SaBRE website and helpline** provide general information on employer issues for Reservists

And make sure that their **employer** knows:

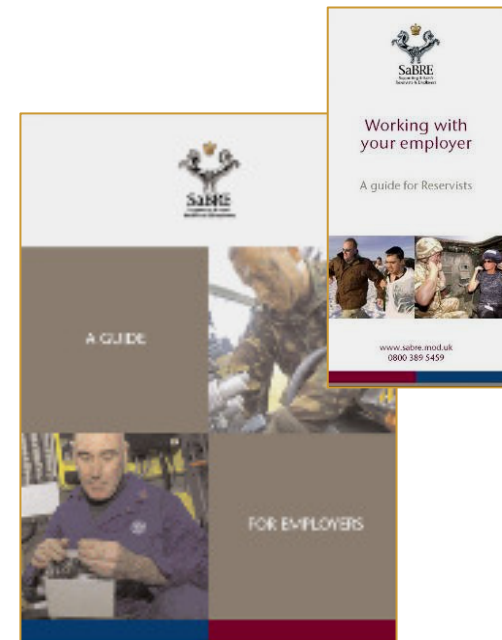
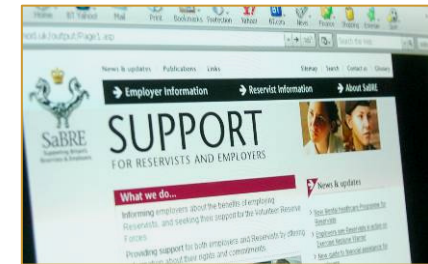
- About the **SaBRE website and helpline**, which also provide information for employers
- How to contact someone in their **employee's Unit**

# Sources of support, advice and information

- Sources for Reservists
- Sources for employers
- Sources for commanders

# Sources of information for Reservists & employers: SaBRE

- SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers) is the Ministry of Defence campaign which supports the relationship between Reservists and their employers
- SaBRE's website ([www.sabre.mod.uk](http://www.sabre.mod.uk)) provides a wide range of information for Reservists and for employers
- It also includes downloadable versions of many publications, including two key ones: "A guide for employers" and "Working with your employer: a guide for Reservists", which all Reservists should know about



# Sources of information for Reservists & employers: SaBRE

- Also on SaBRE's website is a **list of some supportive employers**, showing whether they have a written policy on Reservists and whether they provide time off for Annual Camp
- Reservists and employers can call SaBRE's confidential helpline (**0800 389 5459**)
- The **Regional SaBRE Campaign Directors (RSCDs)** are also available for telephone or face to face discussions with employers or Reservists if required (their contact details are on the SaBRE website or available from SaBRE's helpline)

Name	Head Office	Time Off	HR Policy
SABMiller plc	Woking	YES	YES
Sage (UK) Limited	Newcastle upon Tyne	YES	YES
Sainsbury's Supermarkets	London	YES	YES
SCC plc	-	NO	NO
Scottish + Newcastle	Edinburgh	YES	YES
Scottish and Southern Energy	Perth	YES	NO
Serco Group Plc	Hook	-	YES
Severn Trent Water Ltd	Birmingham	YES	NO
Shell (UK)	-	YES	YES



# Sources of information for Reservists & employers: Units

- If a Reservist is encountering a specific problem and needs more detailed help or advice, he or she should start by requesting assistance through their **chain-of-command**
- Within each Unit there should be an **officer with responsibility for employer support** who can provide assistance directly or via the Reservist's commander
- The Unit's Employer Support Officer (who may use this or another title) can **liaise directly with employers** when appropriate
- He or she is also able to draw upon **additional specialist support** if required, including legal advice, SaBRE, senior officers and other employers

# Sources of information and help for commanders

- The **SaBRE website** provides extensive general information which will answer many questions
- There is a **communication pack** which includes template presentations you can give (they are also available from the SaBRE website at [www.sabre.mod.uk/resources](http://www.sabre.mod.uk/resources))
- Further advice is available from the **Unit Employer Support Officer**, who is also responsible for managing any cases where Unit support is required
- You can also call the **SaBRE helpline** or your **Regional SaBRE Campaign Director** if you need help in addition to that provided by your Unit

# Summary

- Employers impact upon recruitment, retention, training and mobilisation
- The better informed an employer is, the more supportive they are likely to be
- Reservists are the main point of contact with their employers and need to understand the key issues – or, as a minimum, where they or their employer can go for help
- There is considerable information and support available to you



**SaBRE**  
Supporting Britain's  
Reservists & Employers

[www.sabre.mod.uk](http://www.sabre.mod.uk)

0800 389 5459