

# A guide to employing reservists in the NHS



This document was produced in partnership with Health Education England, NHS Employers and the Ministry of Defence in September 2016.

Reproduced with permission of the Ministry of Defence in September 2016.

The NHS employs a significant number of staff who are volunteers in the Reserve Forces, giving up their time to train and serve alongside the Regular Forces. If you have reservists in your organisation, you'll know that they bring a wealth of skills and talents including decision-making, communication, leadership, team-working, and the ability to work under the utmost pressure.

Any workforce will be enriched by people of this calibre, whatever their role; the NHS is no exception. As employers we know you share our belief that the NHS has a responsibility to lead the way in embracing a workforce that in the future will include an increasing number of reservists, acting as a role model for employers operating in other sectors.

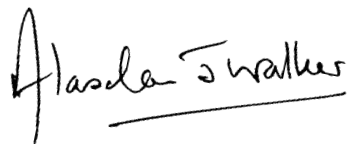
Since the publication of 'Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued', the NHS has committed to actively support the reservists we employ, including rolling out a number of supportive HR policies such as signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant.

We encourage employers to develop their recognition of the transferable skills, mind-set and experience reservists staff can bring to the workforce. This booklet, designed for managers, provides information on how you can best support the reservists in your teams, and deploy the skills they gain whilst in service to benefit your organisation and patients.

We hope that this booklet and the other resources we provide will help you draw on the talents of members of the Reserve Forces to deliver better care for patients and the communities we serve.



Sir Keith Pearson, Chair, Health Education England



Surgeon General Vice Admiral Walker OBE, Ministry of Defence



Daniel Mortimer, Chief Executive, NHS Employers

# Reservists

## What is a reservist?

### Group exercise – discussion

What do you think a reservist does? Do you know what their commitments are? Do you know what policies your organisation has in place to support members of the Reserve Forces?

Reservists are committed individuals who volunteer their time to serve with the Royal Navy, Army or Royal Air Force. Reservists, like full-time members of the Armed Forces, take part in military and civil relief operations.

Currently, there are around 24,000<sup>1</sup> trained reservists, and the Ministry of Defence aims to increase this to 35,000 by 2018/19. Around 4,000 of these reservists are clinical staff from medical services, such as consultant, surgeon, paramedic, GP, pharmacist, dentist, radiographer, nurse and medical technician.

Training commitments vary for reservists, but can be up to 27 days a year. This is completed on evenings and weekends, with the exception of the two weeks 'annual camp' when they will be absent from your organisation. As well as the Ministry of Defence paying the reservist for attending training and performing their duties, they will also receive an annual tax-exempt bounty for successfully completing their training commitments. In recognition of the value gained from training, many employers provide additional paid or unpaid leave, with the balance being made up from a reservist's spare time.

## Reservist insight



**Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Stuart Roberts**, is a trainee neuro surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham. Stuart has maximised the academic opportunities he has had in the reserves, which include publishing several research articles.



**Lieutenant Colonel Maggie Durrant** works for The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in Shropshire. She has served in Sierra Leone as the senior nursing officer within the Ebola Viral Disease Treatment Unit, deployed from December 2014 to March 2015.



**Corporal Rochelle Gopee** is an Emergency Department nurse from Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Rochelle wanted to help care for Armed Forces personnel and decided to join the RAF Medical Reserves. She balances her flourishing civilian career with her military life, believing that she has the best of both worlds.

<sup>1</sup>Provided by Ministry of Defence 2015

## Key points

- Talk to your NHS Reserve Forces Champion about your organisation's policies, your reservists' profiles and existing relationships with external contacts.
- Find out who the Commanding Officers are for your reservists.
- Find out who is your local Defence Relationship Management contact.
- Make links with external contacts, such as the local military units, your local Defence Relationship Management contact and any local Armed Forces networks to strengthen your support system and allow you to maximise the opportunities available.
- What is the best way to communicate your reservists' status to the rest of your team?
- Use your reservists' skills in the workplace.
- Ask your reservists questions and keep the conversation going!

## Top tips

*Find out more – ask your reservist(s) about their role in the Armed Forces:*

- What position do you hold?
- How long have you been a reservist?
- Where is your local unit?
- Have you ever been deployed on operations and what have you learnt from the experience?

*Ask HR:*

- How does the organisation record reservist status?
- Do you have a specific policy?
- Do you offer additional leave?
- How do you include reservists' training and experience into their appraisal?
- Has the organisation signed the Armed Forces Covenant or gained an Employer Recognition Scheme award?



# Training

## What type of training do reservists complete and how often?

### Group exercise – discussion

What training do reservists take part in? How could this benefit your organisation?

Reservists receive rigorous, world-class training and qualifications – both military and medical – including gaining clinical knowledge outside their normal field of work.

To provide the same amount of development that an average reservist receives in just one year of military service, an employer would have to purchase over £8,000 of commercial civilian<sup>2</sup> training.

Training commitments vary for reservists but can be up to 27 days a year, with the type and duration of training being dependent on which part of the Armed Forces they are with. Reservists complete their training mainly on evenings and weekends. All reservists will be asked to use 15 of their training days at their two weeks 'annual camp', which could be with the reservists unit or on an individual training course. They are usually given their training schedules a year in advance, allowing you to build these into your workforce planning.



**weekly training**  
around 2.5 hours,  
one evening a week.



**weekend training**  
spread throughout  
the year.



**annual camp**  
a 2-week training course, normally  
in the UK, sometimes overseas.

In recognition of the value gained from training, many employers provide additional paid or unpaid leave, with the balance being made up from a reservist's spare time.

As a reservist, they will continue to receive ongoing training. These skills will be transferable and will benefit their role and the organisation. The type of training they will receive includes:

- decision-making
- communication skills
- self-discipline
- leadership
- team building
- resourcefulness and perseverance
- specific courses, including Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) and Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS).

<sup>2</sup>Research conducted by Defence Relationship Management

## Top tips

*Find out more – ask your reservist(s) about the training they have taken part in or have planned:*

- What training have you had or are you doing?
- What are your training commitments for this year?
- What do you do with the local unit at evenings and weekends?
- Where have you previously been on your annual camp?
- Can the organisation take part in any training?

*Ask HR:*

- Can you record your reservists' training on ESR?
- Does the organisation have an additional leave policy in place to support this training?
- How can reservists pass on their training knowledge to the team?



# Mobilisation

## What is mobilisation and how do I manage this?

### Group exercise – discussion

What is your understanding of mobilisation and what are your responsibilities as a manager?

Mobilisation is when a reservist is asked to take part in an operational tour of duty, either in the UK or overseas. It can be for a few weeks or up to 12 months, depending on the role and specialism. The Ministry of Defence will always provide advance notification of mobilisation and aims to give a minimum of 28 days' notice for short-term deployments, and 90 days' notice is generally given for pre-planned deployments.

During mobilisation, there might be a period of pre-deployment training (PDT), which is then followed by the operational tour and post-operational tour leave (POTL). An example of a mobilisation and deployment timeline:



### The process

The Ministry of Defence uses a process known as intelligent selection. This not only looks at a reservist's individual skills, but also takes into account their personal and employment circumstances.

Once a reservist has been 'called up' for an operational tour of duty, their line manager will receive:

- a copy of the call-out notice
- notification of the date and likely duration of mobilisation and deployment
- details of employer and reservist statutory rights and obligations
- information about exemption and deferral of mobilisation
- information on financial assistance.

### Employers support

Employers have the right to appeal against or defer a reservist's mobilisation if this would seriously impact on their organisation.

Your organisation does not pay the reservist whilst they are mobilised as they will be paid by the Ministry of Defence. There is also a package of financial and wider support available for employers when a member of staff is mobilised. This allows employers to claim for:

- the cost of a temporary replacement if it's more than the reservist's salary; you may be able to claim up to £110 a day for each reservist mobilised
- advertising costs and agency fees for finding a temporary replacement
- five days' handover before and after mobilisation
- 75 per cent of the cost of specialist clothing for the person providing cover (up to £300)



- up to £2,000 training costs for the person providing cover
- overtime, if other employees cover the reservist's work
- any training the reservist needs when they return to work.



## Upon return

After a period of active duty, reservists are given a period of post-operational tour leave (POTL). If they want to return to work before the end of POTL, they must get permission from their Commanding Officer or the demobilisation centre.

You will receive notice from your employee as soon as they know when they can return to work. Your employee will inform you of their return to work date, which will be no later than the third Monday after their last day of service.

You are required to offer your employee the same type of job they were doing before they were mobilised, on the same terms and conditions. If the job no longer exists, you must notify your employee as soon as possible and look for a reasonable alternative.

## Key points

- What is the best way to communicate mobilisation of your reservist(s) to your team and the wider organisation?
- How can your team and the organisation benefit from your reservists' mobilisation experiences?

## Top tips

*Find out more – discuss mobilisation with your reservist:*

- How are you feeling about the tour?
- Do you know what your role will be?
- Do you need any additional support in your personal life?
- Will you be able to keep in touch while you are deployed?
- Would you like to involve occupational health when you return to work?
- How can we help to integrate you back into the team?

*Ask HR:*

- Does the organisation have a policy to support mobilisation?
- How do you need to be involved?
- Can you record reservists' deployment on ESR?

# Further information and support

## Employing reservists in the NHS

Want to learn more about reservists training and commitments? Visit [www.nhsemployers.org/reservists](http://www.nhsemployers.org/reservists), which contains all the information you will need to successfully manage and support members of the Reserve Forces.

## NHS Reserve Forces footprint map

This map has been developed to allow employers to view key information. This includes contact details for local Armed Forces units, whether your organisation has signed the Armed Forces Covenant or gained an award as part of the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, and details of local groups who can help NHS organisations increase their current level of reservist support.

[www.nhsemployers.org/reserveforcesmap](http://www.nhsemployers.org/reserveforcesmap)

## NHS Reserve Forces Champions

In partnership with the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Health, the champions' scheme has been created to increase the awareness of reservists within the NHS, and to highlight the benefits to employers. These champions are based within NHS organisations, can be a useful source of knowledge and can be found on the footprint map.

[www.nhsemployers.org/reservechampions](http://www.nhsemployers.org/reservechampions)

## Model policy for employing staff in the Reserve Forces

NHS Employers has developed a model policy which sets out the key information for employing a reservist. This model can be embedded within your flexible working policy, or adopted as a stand-alone policy.

[www.nhsemployers.org/reservistmodelpolicy](http://www.nhsemployers.org/reservistmodelpolicy)

## Key facts on employing reservists in the NHS

This reservist fact sheet tells you all you need to know about having members of the Reserve Forces as part of your workforce – from the training commitments to how to manage mobilisation effectively.

[www.nhsemployers.org/reservistkeyfacts](http://www.nhsemployers.org/reservistkeyfacts)

## Blogs

Want to know more about what reservists do? NHS Employers has a variety of blogs from all three services in the Armed Forces. Read about the skills and experiences they have gained from working in the Ebola treatment facility in Sierra Leone, to operating in Camp Bastion, Afghanistan.

[www.nhsemployers.org/blog](http://www.nhsemployers.org/blog)

## 'Developing people for health and healthcare toolkit'

We have published a toolkit for those who volunteer abroad. The toolkit provides a framework which allows you to collect evidence about new employee skills and competencies. This then allows employers to reflect on how these can be used in the workplace.

[www.hee.nhs.uk/improving-care-volunteering-abroad](http://www.hee.nhs.uk/improving-care-volunteering-abroad)

## Emotional wellbeing toolkit

We find it much easier to recognise and engage in conversations about physical health, but often find talking about emotional wellbeing more of a challenge. This toolkit can help staff to check their own wellbeing or speak to and support colleagues with their emotional wellbeing.

[www.nhsemployers.org/howareyoufeelingNHS](http://www.nhsemployers.org/howareyoufeelingNHS)

# Consolidate your learning

Test your knowledge by answering the following questions – answers can be found on page 12.

1. NHS reservists form part of which services within the Armed Forces?

.....  
.....

2. How many training days is a reservist committed to complete?

.....  
.....

3. When does reservist training take place?

.....  
.....

4. What type of training and skills do reservists gain?

.....  
.....

5. How much notice do employers receive once their reservist has been asked to be mobilised?

.....  
.....

6. Are employers legally required to release their reservist(s) for mobilisation?

.....  
.....

7. Name two things that employers can claim for when their reservist(s) are deployed.

.....  
.....

8. Are you required to provide the same role to your reservist upon their return?

.....  
.....

9. Who can you contact for support and more information?

.....  
.....

# Consolidate your learning – answers

## 1. NHS reservists form part of which services within the Armed Forces?

NHS reservists are members of the Defence Medical Services branch of the military, and are from all three services – Royal Navy, Army and the Royal Air Force.

## 2. How many training days is a reservist committed to complete?

Reservists can be committed to completing up to 27 days a year. The type and duration of training will be dependent on which part of the Armed Forces they are with.

## 3. When does reservist training take place?

Reservists complete their training mainly on evenings and weekends. All reservists will be asked to use 15 of their training days at their two weeks 'annual camp', which could be with the reservists unit or on an individual training course.

## 4. What type of training and skills do reservists gain?

- Decision-making
- Communication skills
- Self-discipline
- Leadership
- Team building
- Resourcefulness and perseverance
- Specific courses, including Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) and Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS).

## 5. How much notice do employers receive once their reservist has been asked to be mobilised?

The Ministry of Defence aims to give a minimum of 28 days' notice for short-term deployments, and 90 days' notice is generally given for pre-planned deployments.

## 6. Are employers legally required to release their reservist(s) for mobilisation?

Employers have the right to appeal against or defer a reservist's mobilisation if this would seriously impact on their organisation.

**7. Name two things that employers can claim for when their reservist(s) are deployed.**

- The cost of a temporary replacement if it's more than the reservist's salary; you may be able to claim up to £110 a day for each reservist mobilised
- Advertising costs and agency fees for finding a temporary replacement
- Five days handover before and after mobilisation
- 75 per cent of the cost of specialist clothing for the person providing cover (up to £300)
- Up to £2,000 training costs for the person providing cover
- Overtime, if other employees cover the reservist's work
- Any training the reservist needs when they return to work.

**8. Are you required to provide the same role to your reservist upon their return?**

You are required to offer your employee the same type of job they were doing before they were mobilised, on the same terms and conditions. If the job no longer exists, you must notify your employee as soon as possible and look for a reasonable alternative.

**9. Who can you contact for support and more information?**

- Your HR department
- Your NHS Reserve Forces Champion
- Reservists in your organisation
- NHS Employers reservist team
- Defence Relationship Management contact
- Your local military unit.



# Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

# Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

