CHAPTER 5

CAREERS COUNSELLING

(Sponsor: NAVY RA-DHd RA)

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Note. *Recruiting policy is being aligned across the Services and will transfer to JSP 545 on or before 1 Apr 27; no further policy amendments or additions will be made to BRd 3(1). Recruiting-related RNTMs and RIs will remain extant until incorporated to JSP545 or cancelled.*

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CHAPTER 5

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0501. Initial Commission Periods (Officers)

a. **Initial Commission Stage.** Following the New Employment Model, from 1 Apr 15, all Royal Navy officers join on a 12-year Initial Commission Stage (ICS), with the exception of:

(1) Direct Entry Medical, Dental and QARNNS Officers - 6 years.

(2) Medical and Dental Cadets - 7 years.

(3) Chaplains - 6 years. RN Chaplains hold the Sovereign's Commission but no Naval rank; their status is defined in BRd 2.

b. **Career Commission Stage (CCS).** For those joining on or after 1 Apr 15, or transferring from an ICS (or equivalent commission) after this date, transfer to a CCS. This automatically extends an officer's career through to 20 years' service from the date of entry or until age 40, whichever is the later (subject to retirement age).

c. **Full Commission Stage (FCS).** Full Commission Stage (FCS) further extends an officer's career to a retirement age of 55.

d. See chapter 48 for more detail.

0502. Initial Engagement Periods (Ratings and Other Ranks)

a. Ratings and Other Ranks join the Royal Navy 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). See chapter 48 for more detail.

b. All MR join for an Initial Engagement of 5 years with subsequent re-engagements every 5 years. Ratings/ORs over 40 will normally only be re-engaged until their 45th birthday. A separate application for an extension of service is required to serve beyond the normal retirement age of 55. More detail is at BRd 3(2), chapter 2.

0503. Profession and Role - General Guidance

a. Some candidates will be unaware of which professions and roles are available to them and may have limited knowledge of what they would like to do. These candidates will need specific and considerate counselling towards an appropriate profession/ role. All roles are outlined in the Careers' section on the Royal Navy website.

b. It is essential that, at the time of application, candidates are made aware of the full range of possibilities for which they are eligible and suitable. The Defence Aptitude Assessment will provide guidance on suitable roles, dependent on the candidate's achieved scores.

c. During career counselling, CAs must advise their candidates that not all roles may be available in every entry. If a candidate's first preference role becomes unavailable or is over-subscribed during their recruitment, the CA must advise them of this. CAs must not advise candidates that they will be able to transfer from their streamed role once in the Service.

d. Candidates who may be considered by Careers Staff to be more suitable for a profession/role other than the role chosen, based on eligibility and aptitude assessment, are to be carefully counselled and have alternative opportunities explained to them.

e. The final choice of profession/role must be left to the candidate. It must be a role for which they are eligible, suitable, and qualified. Waivers should not be authorised for over-subscribed roles.

f. RNR candidates are recruited to the Naval Service and only allocated on completion of Phase 1 Training – approximately 9 to 12 months after attestation. They may express a preference for a particular specialisation, but they are allocated as directed by the MR BM.

0504. Careers Advisers - Candidate Relationship Management (CRM)

a. In order to improve conversion rates of Expressions of Interest, enquirers will be initially categorised as per their Request For Processing (RFP) status. This categorisation will enable enquirers who have already decided on a role to have early interaction with Careers staff to start their recruiting journey without delay.

b. **Categorisation.**

(1) An 'Active' enquirer is an individual who is actively seeking a career in the RN; this could be online, a walk-in at an AFCO or at an event.

(2) A 'Passive' enquirer is an individual who has a latent interest in joining the RN, they too could be online, a walk-in at an AFCO or at an event.

(3) An 'Informed' enquirer is an individual who has researched their job choice and considers themselves to be eligible.

(4) An 'Ill-informed' enquirer is an individual who needs further careers guidance and should not yet submit an application.

c. It is vital to ensure that all eligible 'Active' enquirers are handed off as soon as they have made their RITS application to a CA for immediate processing. Enquirers who are confident they want to join the RN but are uncertain of their preferred profession, should be offered early interaction with a CA.

d. It is vital to ensure all 'Passive' and 'Ill-informed' enquirers are nurtured throughout the process and sufficiently engaged by the Contact Management Centre (CMC) and Recruiting Staff to make an informed career choice prior to commencing the application process.

e. Failure to make contact with enquirers is a main reason for loss of potential recruits. The CMC is contracted to adopt a multi-communication approach over a number of days to maximise success. This involves a combination of e-mail, text, and telephone contact. Specific effort is made to contact potential candidates for Recruitment Priority Group (RPG) roles.

f. **Withdrawal of Application.** If attempts to contact the candidate are not successful, or the candidate fails to respond to confirmed contact, iaw ROM the Recruiting Information Technology System (RITS) record is to be withdrawn three days after the final contact attempt[1].

g. **Medical Advice.** Should the potential candidate, during discussion, disclose further medical information relating to a specific condition, the CA must clearly state that they are not medically trained and cannot offer advice on medical conditions that could be a bar to entry. The CA must halt the conversation and refer the Candidate to the relevant Annex in JSP 950 6-7-7 Section 4. SEMC can be contacted for advice associated with this Reference.

h. The CA is to advise the candidate that they will be able to discuss all medical issues and concerns in detail during the Face to Face medical at their CPC or MedFit, which are conducted by qualified medical staff.

0505. Ratings and Other Ranks - Statutory Right of Discharge

a. Ratings/OR enlisting in the RN for the first time have a statutory right to claim discharge within their first 6 months of service, subject to completing 4 weeks of 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 paragraph 5404). Ratings/ORs who re-enter the same service e.g., ex RN re-entering the RN, do not have this statutory right. Former RN ratings entering the RM and vice versa have this right of discharge.

b. Ratings/ORs whose 6 month option point has passed, but who are still under the age of 18 years, 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 after a 3 month 'cooling-off period', or earlier if agreed between the recruit and Service authorities (see paragraph 5404).

[1] Number of attempts will vary according to candidate circumstance but must be at least 5 over a period of no less than a month. Attempts to contact the candidate should be made over all mediums available.

0506. Ratings and Other Ranks - Early Termination (Following End of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Training)

Having completed 6 months of service, or reached the age of 18 (if this comes after the end of the 6 month period), ratings and ORs must complete a minimum of 2.5 years' service from the point of becoming Gained to Trained Strength (GTS) before they are eligible to exercise their right to give 12 months' notice to leave the Service. Naval Nurse (Student) personnel must complete 3 years' Return of Service before they are eligible to apply for Early Termination (as outlined in chapter 53).

0507. Dietary Requirements (Health/Religion)

The RN aims to cater for all special religious dietary requirements where possible; generally, vegetarian options or halal / kosher meat is provided. Preparation of kosher food in strict observance of the Jewish faith cannot be guaranteed. Coeliacs and gluten intolerant sailors can be provided gluten-free options in many working environments (in line with medical limitations), but the possibility of minor cross-contamination cannot be excluded. Vegetarian, halal and kosher Operational Ration Packs are available when deployed on operations and exercises.

0508. Religion and Religious Observances

a. The RN 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 UKAF 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 (e.g. a church, synagogue, mosque, temple etc.). Wherever practicable, areas for worship will be made available at all Service establishments, including in HM ships and submarines at sea.

b. Every effort is made to allow the celebration of religious festivals/holidays. 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 fasting may prove hazardous, adherence may not be permissible.

c. For more details see Chapter 31.

0509. Specific Religious Dress

a. **General.** The RN 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 chapter 38, section 2). R&A HQ should be contacted in the event of any doubt regarding what can and cannot be worn.

b. **Sikhs.** In the RN, Sikhs are permitted to wear the 5 K's[2]; male Sikhs may also wear a turban. Some constraints regarding the wearing of a turban and keeping facial hair uncut do exist, and are 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 may 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. Any aircrew with long hair may be required to have their hair cut short in order to achieve a satisfactory fit of an aircrew 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 them 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 a Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threat, all personnel with beards will be required to shave. When practicing CBRN drills or damage control drills, however, male Sikh personnel do not need to shave their beards.

(3) Candidates attending a R&A acquaint or pre-joining 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 RN, there will be circumstances where they would be required to wear protective headgear. These pre-courses include but are not limited to:

(a) Candidate Preparation Course; RM (OR only) and RN (rating only).

(b) Officer Selection Course RM.

(c) Royal Marine Band Service (RMBS) Audition

(d) Any RN Look At Life courses.

[2] Kara (steel bangle), Kesh (uncut hair), Kanga (small comb), Kaccha (special design knee length underwear) and Kirpan (small sword).

(4) Certain RM selection activity mandates the wearing of helmets to comply with Health and Safety standards, with some elements being mandatory completion by all candidates. Additionally, non-completion of all activities may give an unfair advantage as that candidate would be able to rest between activities. Other areas of RM selection mandates full immersion in water in a 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 CBRN threat, all personnel with beards will be required to shave. When practising CBRN or DC drills, however, male Muslim personnel will 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 may be worn with all forms of Service dress. Tracksuit bottoms may be worn for sport. All RN 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 another 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 RN. Life in the RN, however, 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, which does not depend on the presence of the primary parent, must be made. If both parents are serving personnel, this will usually mean that a third person will have to be ready to take responsibility for childcare, since either or both parents might be required to serve away from home at the same time and at short notice (see part 7, chapter 58, paragraph 5807).

c. During Phase 1 Training, accommodation for families is not provided.

d. Candidates who are parents will need to demonstrate their ability to provide full-time childcare, if required, at the interview stage of the recruitment process. 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 childcare.

(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 childcare during and after Phase 1 training. Although family accommodation is available after initial training, no special arrangements can be made for working hours or assignments for single or lone parents, and there will be many occasions when 24 hour childcare 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. If a SpLD is declared, the candidate will not be entitled to more time or assistance to complete aptitude tests or other recruitment activities.

b. Careers Staff must not attempt to diagnose SpLDs themselves or make reference to claimed SpLDs in recruiting documentation. The severity or impact on RN entry standards will be assessed during the medical process.

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 DAA (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 RN to legally discriminate and exclude candidates with 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 is measured against the current standards.

0512. Sexual Orientation

Candidates are not to be asked about their sexual orientation by the Recruiter. 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 transgender, this fact is not to be recorded by the Recruiter.

0513. Transgender

a. Candidates identifying as transgender are to be processed and treated in the same manner as any other candidate. They must meet the same entry criteria for their chosen role 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. For those who have undergone gender re-assignment and continue to require hormone replacement therapy, this is not a bar to entry once they have affirmed gender (JSP 889, part 1).

c. In cases where there are additional concerns, from either the candidate or the CA, candidates can be referred to the SMO SE. The candidate must provide confirmed consent for this line of referral.

d. All personnel are to be reminded of the right to privacy and prohibition of disclosure of ’Protected Information’. Section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 establishes a right to privacy for the transgender person; it is a criminal offence for another person to disclose information that they have 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 considering a career in the Service in certain roles, including:

(1) A-Level Scholarship Scheme: eligibility, selection and progression to DSUS or UCE possible. For engineer officer candidates only.

(2) Defence STEM Undergraduate Scheme (DSUS) commenced in Sep 22 and replaced DTUS in supporting engineer officer candidates through universities.

(3) UCE is a scheme for high achieving A-Level students, which enables them to enter BRNC on completion of A-Levels and then conduct an engineering degree while salaried.

(4) Cadetships for medical and dental students (final three years).

b. Further explanatory detail regarding these schemes and awards may be found at Annex 10A.

0515. Accelerated Apprentice (AA) Scheme

a. Eligibility criteria for the AA Scheme are documented in chapter 9, para 0916.

b. **Terms of Service.**

(1) **Length of AA Career.** Due to the predicted future requirement within the engineering role, an Engagement Stage 1 (ES1) standard career of 12 years will be made to Accelerated Apprentices. Candidates will be transferred to NEM Engagement Stage 2 (ES2) on completion of their probation requirements – this will take them to 20 years' length of service or age 40, whichever is later.

(2) **Maximum Age at Joining.** The age ceiling for applicants is 39 years of age.

(3) **Minimum Time to Serve Before Eligible to Submit Notice.** A period of 30 months must have elapsed from achieving GTS before a successful applicant can submit their notice.

(4) **Gains to the Trained Strength.** Candidates will be considered as GTS on completion of INT(R), LRLC, LETQC/LAETQC and subsequent streamed training. Under normal conditions without back-classing or other delay, this is approximately 24 months after joining the RN.

(5) **Entitlement to Role Transfer.** Successful applicants are not entitled to role transfer whilst UTS or during their MTS period. But thereafter, subject to normal transfer rules, i.e. need for staffing clearance/needs of the Service, they may do so. Note - Achievement of staffing clearance is considered unlikely as they are joining as specialists to a shortage category.