

Independent Advisory Panel

Annual Report

April 2006 to April 2007



Army Training Regiment (Lichfield) Whittington Barracks

Published July 2007



Forewords

This Annual Report covers the first twelve month period since the inception of the Independent Advisory Panel and has seen a change in Commanding Officer at ATR (Lichfield) during that time. The Panel wishes to thank Lt. Colonel Jonathon Welch for his pragmatic and professional approach in establishing this IAP and Lt Colonel Gary Jackson for his continued support and enthusiasm since assuming command.

Panel members have been impressed at the positive attitude of recruits and also their generally high regard for the way the Army looks after their safety and wellbeing. An aspect which the Panel has found particularly significant relates to the comments from recruits' family members suggesting that the experience of training at Whittington Barracks has had a positive affect on the character, communication skills and general 'life outlook' of recruits when away from the Army.

We are hopeful that the work undertaken by the IAP will go some way to publicising the ethos and approach of the Army to training new soldiers and also highlight aspects where we believe improvements can be made. This report will allow those outside the military a better insight into what happens within. Panel members have had open access to the work of ATR (Lichfield) as well as the site itself and our focus over the first twelve months has been around the welfare of recruits and general health and safety.

Over the course of our work the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) formal inspection report has been the subject of some debate amongst Panel members. Some criticisms contained in the ALI report suggest that their inspectors have not fully accounted for the significant difference between the ALI's normal area of work, civilian education, and the environment of training soldiers for military action.

The Panel are hopeful that the IAP process will be utilised by the Army in the spirit in which it has been undertaken and that the findings will be shared within the senior ranks of the military and also with the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), Ministry of Defence and other appropriate bodies and individuals.

County Councillor Matthew Ellis

Chairman IAP for ATR (Lichfield)

Endorsement

I must record my thanks to the Independent Advisory Panel who have given up much more of their valuable time than anyone had envisaged when we embarked on this journey. Their professionalism and application has been beyond the call of duty.

The panel's work has already had a palpable impact on recruit training at Lichfield and I believe that it has wider applicability to general military life. This report allows us to take the next steps. In turn, it has brought the military much closer to an influential group of civilians, which must also be good for society. Not everything that the panel has reported has made comfortable reading but that has been its strength. The panel have jealously guarded their independence but have been critical friends throughout and this has made criticism much easier to accept and take forward positively. Finally, it is pleasing to see that many pre-conceptions of the Army have been dispelled along the way.

Lieutenant Colonel Gary Jackson MBE RE

Commanding Officer ATR Lichfield

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Panel members

Matthew Ellis (Chairman)..... Member of Staffordshire County Council for Lichfield Rural East

Richard Pawley (Vice Chairman)..... Theme park development Consultant

Jim Brady..... Assistant Director Lifelong Learning – Staffordshire County Council

Richard Hughes..... CEO – Tamworth Cooperative Society

Ian McSherry..... Operations Director – Drayton Manor Park

Steve Mould..... Chief Inspector of Police – Trent Valley Division, Staffordshire Police

John Wheatley..... Corporate Director – Tamworth Borough Council

Background

As part of implementing the recommendations contained in reports by the House of Commons Defence Committee and Adult Learning Inspectorate, the Army Training Regiment (ATR) has established an Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) for each of the Army's training facilities.

IAPs are non-statutory voluntary bodies. At ATR (Lichfield) the IAP consists of seven independent members drawn from business, the community and the public sector with support from three army representatives at ATR (Lichfield) including the CO.

The role of the army representatives is to advise the independent members on army procedure, particularly with regard to welfare and complaints, facilitate visits and offer general information and advice. The Panel receives administrative support from the regimental Staff Support Assistant.

The Panel's brief is to:

- Offer support and challenge to all aspects of the work of ATR (Lichfield)
- Provide advice and support to the CO on relevant issues, both local and national
- Act as a conduit for external communication with the local community
- De-mystify for the public the way in which the Army trains new soldiers
- Act as a 'sounding board' for the CO in all things to do with ATR (Lichfield)
- Where appropriate promote the Army's reputation locally and nationally
- Publish a publicly available Annual Report including any recommendations

The role of the IAP is to recommend and advise; it has no power to override the fundamental Army principle of self regulation vested in the CO and higher chain of command, nor does it have any responsibility over budgets, staffing or objectives.

The Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to reflect the perspectives of recruits about their experiences of training at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield. This report concentrates on the welfare and well-being of recruits during their training. It draws conclusions from both those interviews conducted in May 2006, which were the subject of an interim report produced in July 2006 and a further series of interviews conducted in the period September to March 2007. The Independent Advisory Panel will, on the basis of this report, make recommendations for improvement in the training programme.

Research Methodology

This report builds on the findings of the earlier interim report produced in July 2006. For this second phase of interviews with recruits the IAP determined to depart from the earlier methodology of conducting a large number of interviews with recruits on a single day and instead scheduled a series of interviews throughout the Autumn and Winter.

The process for the conduct of the interviews and the research instruments, a focus group questionnaire, an open questionnaire and a confidential individual questionnaire would remained broadly the same as used in the earlier report.

A further 60 recruits took part in the survey and interviews in this phase supplementing the interviews with 36 recruits previously giving a total of 96 interview participants.

In this phase of interviews the recruits were selected in troops of six at different stages in their training as follows:

- 6 recruits in week 2 of their training
- 12 recruits in week 4 of their training
- 12 recruits in week 6 of their training
- 12 recruits in week 7 of their training
- 12 recruits in week 10 of their training
- 6 recruits in week 12 of their training

Advisory Notes

The more flexible interviewing schedule may have led to some minor variances in the conduct of interviews. In addition, scores for the Focus Group questionnaire would indicate that some interviewers have encouraged consensus resulting in whole number scores, others have recorded proportional responses leading to fractional scores. Some researchers have recorded more detailed comments than others, however, any such inconsistencies appear not to have materially altered the evidence collected and thus the conclusions reached.

There is the potential for practice at the Army Training Regiment to have changed during the research period, eg it seems that fruit, that had been identified as an issue during May and again in September and October became more available later in the autumn.

Members of the IAP have, through involvement in these interviews, become more confident researchers. It is therefore likely that respondents to the latter series of interviews have been more forthcoming in sharing their perspectives of their experiences during training. This has made the conclusions and recommendations of this report more, rather than less, valid.

The section of interviewees in the Troops of six in which they spend the majority of their training supports the intention to conduct this research with a representative sample. The IAP are confident that, despite having not selected individuals at random, those troops interviewed are representative of their peers. It is now clear that many of the trends in recruits' responses have been consistent with those expressed in May. The IAP are confident therefore that despite the relatively small sample size their overall conclusions and recommendations are based upon robust evidence.

Research Instruments

Three research instruments were employed:

- A structured Focus Group Questionnaire designed to stimulate group conversation and score shared perspectives on recruitment, induction and general welfare. (Appendices 1a to 1f)
- An Open Questionnaire focusing on the 'best' and 'worst' parts of the training experience and recruits' suggestions for improvements to the training programme. (Appendix 2)
- An Individual Confidential Questionnaire focusing on the well-being of recruits, relationships between recruits, staff and recruits and bullying. (Appendix 3)

Focus Group Responses

Respondents were asked to agree a response to statements based upon a four part scale:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | = | 1 |
| Agree | = | 2 |
| Disagree | = | 3 |
| Strongly Disagree | = | 4 |

The questionnaire and average score for each cohort of trainees is shown in Appendix 1.

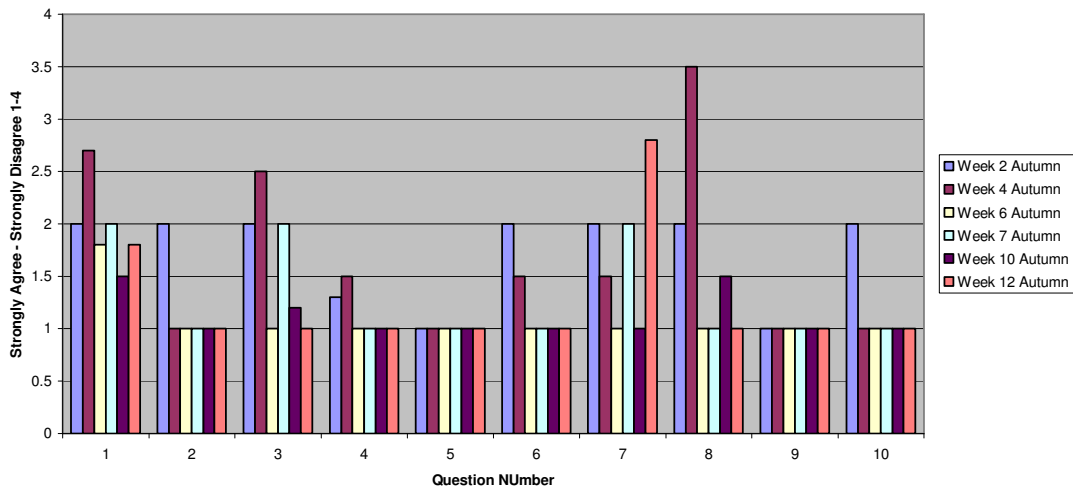
The statements and questions discussed by the Focus Groups were:

- 1 We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived.
- 2 We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us.
- 3 We knew the sort of problems that new recruits were likely to have.
- 4 When people got homesick there was good support easily available.
- 5 We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening.
- 6 We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying.
- 7 We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly.
- 8 The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers.
- 9 We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well.
- 10 Do you feel you are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base?



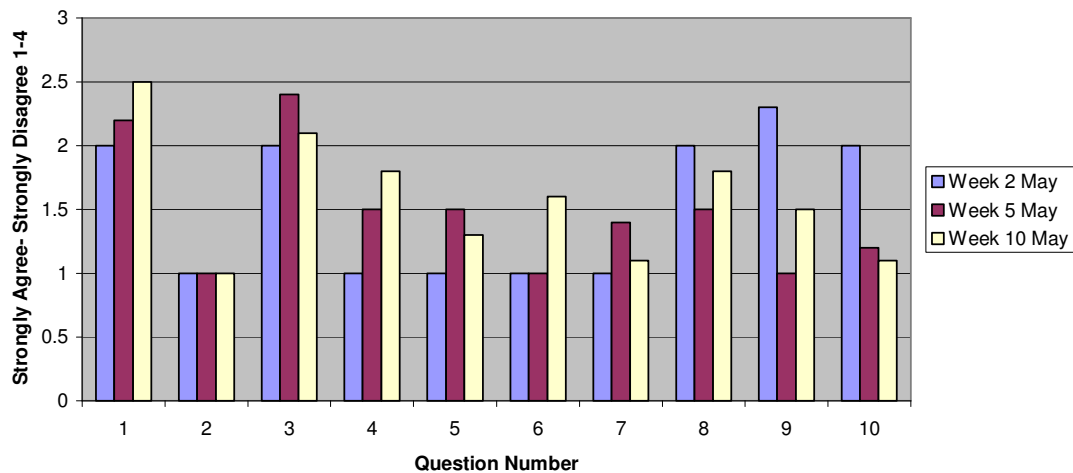
Week 10 recruits after exercise in combat dress

Focus Group Questionnaire



There are some similarities to the responses from May 2006 in that questions 1,3 and 8 seem to show consistently high levels of disaffection in comparison to the other questions. This would suggest that recruits are less well prepared and have lower levels of understanding of the types of problems they will encounter during training than is desirable. Question eight is about the balance of free time and work and has elicited consistent responses that would indicate that this balance is **not** 'about right', however recruits' narrative responses indicate a broad acceptance of the intensity of the course given the context of army life.

Focus Group Questionnaire



Disparities between the summer and autumn responses occur at questions 7 and 9. The responses to question 7 would seem to show that the Autumn cohort were much less confident that complaints were dealt with seriously and fairly. Narrative responses support this in suggesting that whilst complaints are listened to recruits see little evidence of action to address the issues. The Autumn cohort were much more certain that the Army looks after the health and safety of recruits well, however some narrative responses suggest that is not uniform across the recruits' experience.

There is compelling evidence that:

- Recruits know how to access support and that they feel that there are sufficient sources of support available.
- Bullying is treated seriously and that recruits know what to do in the event of bullying.
- With the exception of week 2 recruits, all are confident that they can speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base.
- That recruits become more secure during their training and their levels of confidence in the Army's concern for their welfare and safety increase through the training period.

Detailed Summary of Findings

The focus group questionnaire elicited responses in five main areas:

- Accommodation and Subsistence
- Recruitment and Induction
- Health and Safety
- Training Programme
- Welfare, Relationships and Bullying

Accommodation and Subsistence

Significantly, no adverse comments about the standard of accommodation were made. However, the poor availability and functioning of showers is clearly a source of great dissatisfaction.

During the period of the research there were indications that recruits felt that the food was improving, that variety was greater through the introduction of a 28 day menu and that the greater availability of fruit, especially at the fourth meal was appreciated. However, also throughout this period there were sustained complaints about insufficient time to eat, poor availability of milk, rationing of fruit and suspect hygiene and food handling practices.

Older recruits felt especially hard hit by the two month delay in pay resulting in unwarranted pressure on those with existing debt including mortgage repayments.

Recruitment and Induction

Recruits felt generally well prepared and their expectations regarding the training period were largely met. However, there are persistent shortcomings in the accuracy of information provided for recruits prior to joining. There is conflict between information provided by recruiting offices, selection centres, the website and the Regiment itself. Recruits are still being advised to make unnecessary purchases of kit despite this being identified as a serious issue in July 2006. Information provided to commonwealth recruits is not consistent and presents a barrier to recruitment. There is duplication of paperwork between recruiting offices, selection centres and the Regiment leading to recruits providing the same information several times.

Significant issues emerged around the recruitment of commonwealth troops. One South African waiting in the UK to join the army could not work because his visa expired and had no means of supporting himself for four months prior to joining. One Canadian recruit had to be extraordinarily persistent as the Overseas Office erroneously advised that he would have to wait an additional six months. Only once the recruit threatened that the British Army would lose a quality recruit

did they relent. The question has to be posed, are less confident/persistent recruits being lost because of inflexible attitudes? When questioned about their persistence and why these recruits chose not to enlist in the armies of their home countries instead, given the difficulties they had experienced, they were adamant that they had been determined because they perceived and still believe that the British Army was the best in the world.

Health and Safety

There is a very high degree of consensus that the Army looks after the health and safety of recruits extremely well. This is especially evident in hazardous situations such as shooting, in Physical Training and on exercises.

However, where risk is less visible standards are not so high. There seem to be serious biohazard risks associated with the cleaning regime. Recruits are asked to re-use disposable gloves and routinely re-use the same materials to clean toilets and showers. Concern was also expressed that no utensils are provided to serve fruit and recruits have been asked to return fruit if they have taken more than one item despite having handled it.

Training Programme

The training programme is perceived as very well fit for purpose in “turning ‘civvies’ into soldiers”. Parts of the training programme are extremely popular including exercises, PT, shooting and the Battlefield Tour. Complaints centred around the organisation of the training programme with recruits’ suggestions for improvements including greater coherence of elements of the training programme so that recruits were not required to make several changes of kit each day, better use of time at weekends, more access to sport (inter-troop competitions at weekends) and physical training.

Welfare, Relationships and Bullying

Again there is a very high degree of consensus that the Army genuinely cares for the welfare of recruits and that there are sufficient support systems available to recruits. The health and medical facilities are highly appreciated. There is similarly a high degree of confidence in the Army’s anti-bullying stance and a very broad of consensus that complaints are dealt with promptly and appropriately. There were several reported instances of friction between recruits, but this was felt by recruits to be both normal and acceptable given the circumstances.

It seems clear that instances of bullying are ‘low-incidence’ and as such unlikely to be uncovered by this small scale research project, however two incidents of inappropriate behaviour by staff were reported. One involved PTIs laughing at two recruits who had fainted during PT and one of a recruit being force-fed on exercise.



Mealtime facilities are clean and spacious including a new pasta bar

Validation

In order to validate the responses of the Focus Groups supplementary information was collected through an open questionnaire as well as a confidential questionnaire.

Open Questionnaire

Responses to the open questionnaire were consistent with those of the Focus Groups.

The 'best bits' of the trainees experience were cited as the Battlefield Tour, PT and Sport and the 'worst bits' Drill, management of meal times and poor and insufficient showers. The most significant welfare problem mentioned was homesickness but recruits felt that there were sufficient sources of support. The IAP was especially impressed with the reported substantial degree of peer support. Recruits were confident that complaints were listened to, but less confident that they resulted in any action.

Recruits suggested a number of improvements to the training programme including:

- Coherent Training Programme ie all outdoor one day, all indoor on other days to minimise kit changes
- Published weekly or daily programme of training elements rather than being told at the last minute
- More PT
- More Sport (especially inter-troop events at weekends)
- More access to gymnasia
- Better access to IT facilities

Other comments included the observation that the training seems more geared to school-leavers and younger recruits and does not adequately recognise the maturity and relative independence of older recruits with more developed 'life-skills'. A consistent theme amongst older recruits was that preparation is focussed on young recruits straight from school. There was a problem for older recruits in receiving no pay until the end of basic training. Older recruits with debts or mortgages cannot pay them on £50 per week, also they were unhappy about having to pay for essential kit and saw it as an injustice some having experienced working environments where essential kit was provided by employers.

Individual Confidential Questionnaire

All recruits interviewed felt that the Army genuinely cared for their welfare and that there were sufficient sources of support available. Those welfare problems that did occur were generally related to homesickness or the financial struggle of older recruits servicing existing debts. There was broad agreement that staff responded quickly and appropriately to welfare problems as they arose.

Several instances of friction between recruits were reported which were not seen as problematical by recruits who felt that they were inevitable given the circumstances of people living under pressure in close proximity. Of more concern were the instances of inappropriate behaviour of some staff outlined earlier in this report.

Several recruits reported concerns that some of their peers were not 'pulling their weight' and felt unjustly treated when group punishments were meted out. However, there is a high degree of consensus that recruits felt fairly treated overall.

The suggestions for improvements correlate well with those earlier in the report. Again poor showers, conflicting and inaccurate recruitment information and requests for more sport and fitness activities were recurring themes.

Bullying was not seen by recruits as a cause for concern. There was no evidence that the Army was tolerant of bullying or failed to respond appropriately when it occurred. Significantly the recruits themselves expected a degree of friction between trainees and were tolerant of personality clashes that resulted in friction between troops.

Interviews with Family and Friends of Recruits

To further validate the findings of the focus groups and questionnaires it was considered appropriate to 'test' the outcomes by asking the families and friends of recruits about their impressions of the training regime.

It would also raise opportunities for further issues to be identified from an alternative point of view.

Methodology

In general ATR (Lichfield) holds 'Pass Out' parades every two weeks for recruits who have successfully completed their initial training.

The Panel considered that as families and friends attend and have free time in between activities, it would be a good opportunity to talk with many of them. Panel members attended the parade day and talked entirely informally with approximately 30 groups of relatives.

Family groups were approached by Panel members wearing IAP identification and a brief summary of the work of the Panel was given. Questions were asked in an informal manner; examples of which were:

- Have you noticed any changes in him since starting the training?
- Was it what he expected from what he was told at the recruitment stage?
- Were you comfortable that you would be able to contact him in the event of, for instance, a family crisis?
- Has he been homesick and if so do you feel the Army helped him through it?
- Has he had any serious problems, and if so, have they been taken seriously and dealt with accordingly?
- Has he mentioned if he has witnessed bullying of any kind?
- Do you think the Army has his welfare as a priority?
- What do you think he has enjoyed the most and what has been the worst thing?
- Are you pleased he decided to do this and has it changed your view of the Army?

Note: Family and friends relates to successful recruits at the end of their initial training.

Family and Friends Responses

The overall response from family groups to taking part was very positive.

A significant number of comments were made praising the principle of the IAP and showing some surprise that the Army would put such a mechanism in place. A number of family members mentioned Deepcut or Catterick as being of concern and surmised that the issues at those establishments were the reason for initiatives like the IAP.

All family groups suggested that they were fully aware of how to make contact in the event of emergency citing 'comprehensive' information and a letter from the CO as 'reassuring'.

It was noted on several occasions that recruits had suggested there was a lack of payphones and a lack of privacy around those that are available.

Families of non UK recruits commented on the considerable cost, because of the requirement for multiple visits from abroad in the run up to starting training. They also commented that recruits who had few or no friends in the UK felt they had to leave the barracks during weekends off. It was reported that some felt sufficient pressure to leave that they ended up paying to stay in external accommodation. This appeared to be the case earlier in the course prior to forming closer relationships with other recruits.

IAP Recommendations

- The Army should review literature given to recruits prior to joining and upon induction for consistency. This should include a review of kit lists and ensure coherence of information from whatever source including recruitment offices, selection centres, overseas offices and the Army websites
- The Regiment should review procedures at mealtimes to allow sufficient time for recruits to eat their meals
- The Regiment should urgently review and improve the supply of sufficient and appropriate materials for cleaning toilets and showers
- The Regiment should recognise the insufficiency of showers and commit to improvement
- The IAP should bring to the attention of the Regiment the two identified instances of inappropriate behaviour
- The Regiment should consider re-arranging the elements of the training programme to minimise unnecessary changes of kit
- A mechanism to report back to recruits the changes resulting from complaints and feedback should be considered
- The Army review procedures for the recruitment of commonwealth soldiers and remove barriers that are potentially inhibiting such recruitment
- The Army should open discussion with the appropriate government departments to make arrangements to allow potential recruits from the Commonwealth to work in Britain up to their entry date

Commanding Officer's Commentary on IAP Questions Raised

1 Review of advisory literature: *We agree with this and have reviewed our own literature over the last 3 months. We have placed the most up to date information on our website and have asked recruiting group to amend their literature. We have sent out our latest info to all ACIOs in the UK. We are still getting some recruits turning up who have been given older information but this is reducing; too slowly for me, but it is improving.*

2 **Review procedures at mealtimes:** *This is always a source of problems for us as the programme is so dense and lessons do run late from time to time. The key is communication between training teams and the catering staff and I remind each training team about the importance of this aspect of morale at the start of every course. Unless material is removed from the course (and the pressure exists to increase it instead) this problem will persist and we will continue to try to mitigate its impact.*

3 **Review and improve the supply of sufficient and appropriate materials for cleaning toilets and showers:** *The QM conducts regular checks to ensure that cleaning materials are available and appropriate. There is no shortage of the basic materials. Success relies on training teams checking regularly that materials are stocked and serviceable. This has improved significantly.*

4 **The ATR should recognise the insufficiency of showers and commit to improvement:** *I think that we have always recognised the insufficiency but I also recognise that our requests for money to be spent improving provision fall on deaf ears. Our imminent closedown means that we do not receive infrastructure improvement other than for statutory requirements.*

5 **The IAP should bring to the attention of the Regiment the two identified instances of inappropriate behaviour:** *Intelligence on any instance of behaviour not meeting the required standard is welcome and will always be properly and quickly assessed. I certainly hope that the panel's information was relayed to the unit as soon as it came to light.*

6 **The ATR should consider rearranging the elements of the training programme to minimise unnecessary changes of kit:** *We reduce changes to the minimum necessary. The programme decisions are a balance of many factors of which the turbulence caused by uniform changes is but one. We do recognise the problem though and in fact we issue one uniform set less than all of the other ATRs as we conduct our drill lessons in combat dress rather than have a separate form of dress known as 'drill order'. On the specific recommendation by the recruits interviewed, days of all inside separated from others all outside are not ideal: mornings inside and afternoons outside work better from an instruction point of view.*

7 **A mechanism to report back to recruits the changes implemented as a result of their complaints and feedback should be introduced:** *At the end of every course at my farewell address I personally tell recruits what is changing and how.*

8 **The Army should review procedures for the recruitment of Commonwealth soldiers and remove barriers that are potentially inhibiting:** *I haven't heard of too many barriers being erected to slow recruitment and feel poorly placed to comment on the bureaucratic hurdles that the Army or Home Office erects. My concern is that recruits in training have the support they need to feel secure and realise their potential.*

9 **The IAP should select recruits for future interviews to ensure a random sample:** *Agreed.*

10 **The IAP should consider undertaking a review of accommodation:** *Agreed but recognise how little impact this is likely to have and that I could not do much about your findings or recommendations beyond the trivial or procedural.*

11 **An anonymised case study of the recent incident that has led to the suspension of staff should be produced:** *Disciplinary and administrative actions are now complete and I am very happy to discuss the handling of the case with the Panel.*

12 **The Army should ensure prompt payment of recruits' salaries and consideration should be given to ensuring all recruits have bank accounts to enable BACs payments:** *All recruits open accounts as part of the induction process in week one, without exception.*

13 The ATR might consider access to productive and enjoyable weekend activity for recruits and should the provision of competitive sporting events: *A better programme of weekend diversion and competition has been initiated by the Unit Welfare Officer with considerable success. Recruits have recently qualified at RYA level 1 in dinghy sailing and regularly participate voluntarily in activities such as rock climbing, mountain biking and clay pigeon shooting*

Questions

1 Is all of the kit and equipment that recruits are advised to purchase prior to the induction actually used during the training programme? *All items on the kit list published on our web site are required. See my point under the first recommendation. The problem lies with lists issued by other organisations in the recruiting chain, Recruiting Group for example. RG's 'Green Book' has a kit list that asks recruits to bring waterproofs. The regiment invested a lot of money to buy good waterproofs for recruits when they go on adventurous training and their battlefield tour so we do not have these items on our kit list. I have raised this issue through my chain of command to deal with info from other organisations.*

2 What is the rationale and background to the revised policy on the availability of alcohol to recruits on the post? *Firstly, it is important to know that all other initial training establishments do not allow alcohol at all. My approach is that we should be encouraging sensible alcohol consumption. Hence we impose a '2-can rule', which is a limit known to all across the Army; it tends to be the limit of intake when one is deployed on operations with tours either 'dry' or on '2-can'. Recruits may therefore have a couple of beers in the NAAFI when they have the time (not U18s though). Off site there is no drinking because experience tells us that we let ourselves down with consequent disciplinary and image problems when things go wrong in public. Sensible intake is necessary as recruits in Phase 2 can drink as much as they like in their down time. We advise on nutrition and substance abuse and recently held a men's health day that also increased awareness of alcohol abuse and promoted low/no alcohol drinks - some of them reasonably tasty.*

3 What is the rationale for the system where recruits pay the cost of the Battlefield Tour in advance only to have these costs reimbursed? *Successful completion of recruit training leads to the award of a 'Personal Skills Certificate' at NVQ Level 2. The Battlefield Tour is a significant part of this award and recruits' standard learning credits offset much of its cost. I would like to see these costs, currently borne by recruits until they are reimbursed late in their training, taken into our core budget.*



Week 6 and 8 recruits helping the community with sandbagging properties during extensive flooding in parts of Lichfield

Appendix 1 a

| Week 2 responses (6 recruits) SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=4 | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|---|------------|---|---|----|
| Induction | | | | | |
| 1 | We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Happy with food variety (28 day menu) and there is plenty of it. Supply of fruit limited. Poor water pressure. Unreliable heating.</i> | | | | |
| 2 | We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: After about 3 days we knew the ropes. A card by each bed has the detail of where to get help.</i> | | | | |
| 3 | We knew the sort or problems that new recruits were likely to have. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Each recruit received a booklet Two recruits met with some week 7 recruits prior to arrival for a briefing (this could be a good practice recommendation).</i> | | | | |
| Welfare During the Training Period | | | | | |
| 4 | When people got homesick there was good support easily available. | 1.3 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Seen little homesickness. Email is free.</i> | | | | |
| 5 | We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: All very comfortable that bullying issues would be addressed.</i> | | | | |
| 6 | We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: All were confident that this would be 'stamped on' as the army doesn't want bullies. However, PT staff can be severe and sometimes laugh at recruits. One recruit was shocked when a PTI laughed at a trainee who had fainted.</i> | | | | |
| 7 | We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Few complaints so far.</i> | | | | |
| 8 | The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: First week is a shock, after that it's ok.</i> | | | | |
| 9 | We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Nil</i> | | | | |
| 10 | We feel we are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Nil</i> | | | | |

Appendix 1 b

| Week 4 responses (12 recruits) SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=4 | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|---|------------|---|---|----|
| Induction | | | | | |
| 2 | We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived. | 2.7 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Kit list issued led to unnecessary or incorrect purchases (almost universal comment). Torches not supplied... had to buy them. Fitness levels far lower than expected. Many said too low.</i> | | | | |
| 2 | We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Well briefed.</i> | | | | |
| 3 | We knew the sort or problems that new recruits were likely to have. | 2.5 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: 18hr days. Ironing!</i> | | | | |
| Welfare During the Training Period | | | | | |
| 4 | When people got homesick there was good support easily available. | 1.5 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Would use friends/troop rather than other support, but were aware.</i> | | | | |
| 5 | We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: 'Briefed'.</i> | | | | |
| 6 | We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying. | 1.5 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Army is very strong on support, no evidence of bullying.</i> | | | | |
| 7 | We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly. | 1.5 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Time available for eating is insufficient. Timings should be varied to avoid bottlenecks. Aware of cookhouse complaints book. Limited variety, too little fruit. Bread and milk in short supply.</i> | | | | |
| 8 | The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers. | 3.5 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: No real free time due to other pressures - Ironing is an issue! (however the recruits weren't asking for more free time) Poor showers</i> | | | | |
| 9 | We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Nil.</i> | | | | |
| 10 | We feel we are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Would be hesitant about criticising staff to a more senior officer.</i> | | | | |

Appendix 1c

| Week 6 responses (12 recruits) SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=4 | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|---|------------|---|---|----|
| Induction | | | | | |
| 1 | We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived. | 1.8 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Well prepared but our expectations were raised above reality. There is confused information between recruiting centre and joining instructions regarding items to be brought with us. The website conflicts with both! Eg regarding waterproofs and pictures/personal radios recommended in 'green book' are not allowed on the base. Hidden costs and purchases are not made clear (tracksuits/ties/trip to Belgium) Commonwealth troops found upon arrival in UK that they could have joined in their country of origin, but had been told at home that they needed to travel to UK first.</i> | | | | |
| 2 | We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Very well informed. Some trainees had joined because of family pressure and did not themselves really wish to become soldiers. The army dealt with these troops as well as possible.</i> | | | | |
| 3 | We knew the sort of problems that new recruits were likely to have. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: The selection centre could have dealt with much of the paperwork that is done here. Much duplication between recruiting office, selection centre and ATR.</i> | | | | |
| Welfare During the Training Period | | | | | |
| 4 | When people got homesick there was good support easily available. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Most support is in the troop between friends.</i> | | | | |
| 5 | We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Introduced during first week.</i> | | | | |
| 6 | We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: The Army would deal with this promptly but discretely; we are confident that the guilty parties would be dealt with.</i> | | | | |
| 7 | We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Food is of poor quality and little variety, not enough although we now have a fourth meal including fruit. They have taken complaints about food seriously, but fruit still seems to be rationed. Vegetables are overcooked. We would like to see a complaints book in the Mess which showed what action had been taken. Cutlery and plates are not washed well; there are food residues. There are no utensils to pick up fruit and we have been told to replace fruit we have handled.</i> | | | | |
| 8 | The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: We expected a more physical course and less time off. Maybe the 14 week course is just a 12 week</i> | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|------------|--|--|--|
| | <i>course done in 14 weeks. There is room for advice on how best to use free time to take pressure off ourselves.</i> | | | | |
| 9 | We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Except for food handling and cleaning. There are real biological hazards. Rubber gloves used for cleaning both showers and latrines. These should be disposable but have to be re-used.</i> | | | | |
| 10 | We feel we are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Would be hesitant about criticising staff to a more senior officer.</i> | | | | |

Appendix 1d

| Week 7 responses (12 recruits) SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=4 | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|---|------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Induction | | | | | |
| 3 | We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: The Lincoln Recruitment Centre was identified as providing poor preparation. List of items to bring was poor. Items were purchased that were not needed.</i> | | | | |
| 2 | We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: The Army provide support and mean it as do the WRVS and Padre</i> | | | | |
| 3 | We knew the sort of problems that new recruits were likely to have. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: We had to find this out from other troops. There were problems 6 left and 2 were back-trooped</i> | | | | |
| Welfare During the Training Period | | | | | |
| 4 | When people got homesick there was good support easily available. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: None</i> | | | | |
| 5 | We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Yes, there is zero tolerance. Would go to section commander or sergeant or WRVS. Would be dealt with by peer group first then up chain of command</i> | | | | |
| 6 | We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Yes, lots of input, genuine about it</i> | | | | |
| 7 | We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly. | 2.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Confident but not yet tested. Are aware of the procedure</i> | | | | |
| 8 | The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Saturday and Sundays are working days but with no real work to do</i> | | | | |
| 9 | We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well. | 1.0 | | | |
| | <i>Comments: Staff are manic about safety on ranges</i> | | | | |
| 10 | Do you feel you are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base. | 1.0 | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| Comments: None | | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|

Appendix 1e

| Week 10 responses (12 recruits) SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=4 | | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|--|------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Induction | | | | | |
| 4 | We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived. | 1.5 | | | |
| | Comments: Recruiting Officers were very accurate and detailed. Told to bring PT, sports and swimming kit that was not required | | | | |
| 2 | We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: Very useful and informative, it was felt that NCOs were genuine and approachable | | | | |
| 3 | We knew the sort or problems that new recruits were likely to have. | 1.2 | | | |
| | Comments: In free time we should get more chance to speak to our peer-group | | | | |
| Welfare During the Training Period | | | | | |
| 4 | When people got homesick there was good support easily available. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: People helped each other out. When some wished to leave there was support | | | | |
| 5 | We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: Yes, very clear messages re anti-bullying and harassment within troop and from staff | | | | |
| 6 | We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 7 | We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: We have 'whinge' open sessions which tackle problems. Food is edible but not wonderful, choice is limited. Fruit is more available especially at fourth meal | | | | |
| 8 | The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers. | 1.5 | | | |
| | Comments: Saturday and Sundays are working days but with no real work to do | | | | |
| 9 | We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: Sick Parade and watching and checking for injury | | | | |
| 10 | Do you feel you are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |

Appendix 1f

| Week 12 responses (6 recruits) SA=1, A=2, D=3, SD=4 | | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|--|------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Induction | | | | | |
| 5 | We had been well prepared and knew what to expect when we arrived. | 1.8 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 2 | We knew soon after arrival where we could get help if things were going wrong for us. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 3 | We knew the sort of problems that new recruits were likely to have. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| Welfare During the Training Period | | | | | |
| 4 | When people got homesick there was good support easily available. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 5 | We knew what to do if we found that bullying was happening. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 6 | We are confident that the Regiment deals promptly and well with bullying. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 7 | We are confident that any complaints we have are treated seriously and fairly. | 2.8 | | | |
| | Comments: Numerous | | | | |
| 8 | The balance of pressure and work to free time is about right bearing in mind we need to be soldiers. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 9 | We are confident that the Regiment looks after our health and safety well. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |
| 10 | Do you feel you are able to speak in confidence to the welfare agencies on the base. | 1.0 | | | |
| | Comments: None | | | | |

Appendix 2 Focus Group Interview Questions – Open Questionnaire

| Question | Week | Responses |
|---|------|---|
| What are the best bits of the army experience so far? | 2 | |
| | 4 | Being with the lads, physical exercise and live firing, go-karting, anything not drill, Belgium Trip |
| | 6 | |
| | 7 | France and Belgium battlefields, Ypres etc. freedom from camp. Learning about war. Mixing with other people, the camaraderie, PT and Sport |
| | 10 | Battlefield Tour, shooting, making new friends |
| | 12 | PT, Shooting, Adventure Training |
| What are the worst bits? | 2 | |
| | 4 | Drill, 3 Mile runs, 4am wake-up, time management around meals, poor showers |
| | 6 | |
| | 7 | Waiting around, coldness – winter |
| | 10 | Early Mornings |
| | 12 | Drill, food, lack of milk |
| What welfare problems have come to light so far? | 2 | |
| | 4 | Homesickness, (poor) food quality and variety. Lack of choice for later meals. Key issue around time available to eat |
| | 6 | |
| | 7 | Lack of toilet paper, insufficient showers per troop |
| | 10 | None |
| | 12 | None |
| How were these problems dealt with? | 2 | |
| | 4 | Just endured. Complaints book in cook house |
| | 6 | |
| | 7 | N/A |
| | 10 | N/A |
| | 12 | N/A |
| If you were CO what would you change about the training programme experience? | 2 | |
| | 4 | |
| | 6 | |
| | 7 | Managing lesson programme. That is all outdoor one day rather than using two kits in one day. More sport and fitness up to week 7. Option for access to the gym. More group activities, eg group competitions, inter-troop sports events. Improve showers |
| | 10 | More shooting, more sport, more thought put into the training programme |
| | 12 | More PT and have it spaced out over 14 weeks Mark (?) Shooting available during free time |

Appendix 3 Individual Confidential Questionnaire

(All responses recorded)

| Question | Week | Responses |
|---|------|--|
| 1 Are there any extra types of help and support that should be available? | 2 | No x 2 Welfare is adequate No, everything is fine None, I think there is sufficient help available No, I think there are enough |
| | 4 | No x 3, not really. Yes, Salvation Army and Padre. No I can think of 3 types of support that exist already and they do very similar jobs. No, we have several choices of people to talk to and I feel that is enough. No there is enough support available. |
| | 6 | No x 5 I feel that there is sufficient help and support available. Only on my ironing |
| | 7 | No x 2 No, there are plenty of services available I think the support available is more than adequate. I personally think that extra support is provided |
| | 10 | No x 2 Not really I don't think so Sports activities at weekends, because its really boring on weekends More internet accessible computers – always too busy to get on |
| | 12 | All the help you need is available at the ATR No I think there is enough – the best people to talk to are your friends in the Troop No I feel there are sufficient welfare services in and out of the chain of command to help No there is enough help and support available |
| 2 Can you identify any welfare problems that have happened during your time here? | 2 | No x 4 Not that I know of Homesickness initially, but after you settle in you just get on with it |
| | 4 | No x 8 Yes, another recruit who very desperately did not wish to continue the service. He probably could have stood less pressure at home to join |
| | 6 | No x 8 |
| | 7 | No x 2 I have not been aware of any issues No, any minor ones have been dealt with straight away None of my own, some people found that they struggled with financial commitments with only |

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| | | being paid into the bank after two months |
| | 10 | No x 3 No, fast acting Corporals & Medical staff. |
| | 12 | No x 2 If people have required help it has been given e.g. compassionate leave. No, people have obviously had problems but there are people who listen and solve problems quite easily |
| 3 Did this affect you personally or someone else? | 2 | No x 5 [homesickness] affects most of the troop |
| | 4 | No x 6. Someone else |
| | 6 | No x 8 |
| | 7 | No x 3 Someone else |
| | 10 | No x 2 Both |
| | 12 | Others. No x 3 |
| 4 Describe any problems between recruits or recruits and staff | 2 | There have been a few issues between recruits, but its just characters clashing None x 3 No problems NO problems we are treated in a way that turns us from civvies into soldiers |
| | 4 | No x 5, its fair, there is no system for a section to identify members who are not pulling their weight without singling them out as weaker or unwilling members. Only problem between recruits is that some are more immature than others and a bit of conflict can result |
| | 6 | Just a slight lack of discipline in some recruits None x 5 One occurrence of a recruit not taking an order and back-chatting |
| | 7 | None Other than small scuffles caused by so many people living and working together for seven weeks nothing serious. There is no real problem the staff seem to adapt their way of thinking to the person involved. Personality clashes between recruits, nothing serious. Arguing; tensions get high under pressure, but that's about it |
| | 10 | Some tension between recruits due to prolonged periods of time in confined quarters There was an incident of bullying between recruits which was well handled by staff. Some recruits don't pull their weight so can cause problems for the troop, staff hand out group punishment – individuals should face tougher punishment for their mistakes. Personality clashes between recruits – cockiness |

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| | | <p>from recruits towards staff Nothing major just disagreements – the slackers among the troop that don't put in 100%</p> |
| | 12 | <p>Some recruits don't get on with each other and some of the recruits give some of the staff a reason to have a problem e.g. not obeying orders. Different staff have different standards which causes problems between troops and other staff. None x 2 The main problem is that there are different staff who have different rules and procedures etc so it can get confusing when training staff aren't reading from the same book Some recruits get sick of being with other recruits 24/7</p> |
| 5 Can you give any examples of when staff treated recruits unfairly | 2 | No x 6 |
| | 4 | Recruit force-fed on exercise, No x 5 |
| | 6 | <p>No x 6 PTI laughing at 2 recruits when they fainted. Yes, when me and another lad fainted the PTIs laughed at us and told us to stand up</p> |
| | 7 | <p>No x 4 No, they have always treated us fairly</p> |
| | 10 | No x 5 |
| | 12 | <p>No, recruits are always treated the way they deserve – fair punishments are handed out. No x 3 No, staff hate everyone! So everyone gets treated equally and fairly given that discipline is obviously a big part of the job</p> |
| 6 What could be done better? | 2 | <p>Change the training timetable to have less time off during the week and better arrangements ... Nothing x 4 We cannot see ourselves; its up to someone of higher rank to judge this</p> |
| | 4 | <p>More time to shower after PT, food & shower time as it is limited, food in the canteen, increase number of showers in the block, vegetables could be cooked less so that there is some goodness. The days are long and hard but it is to be expected from the Army so nothing really. The information provided (or not) before joining was either lacking or conflicting ie different hand outs telling you what to bring; pay deductions; church</p> |
| | 6 | <p>Do more team activities such as sport Food x 2. Nothing x 2. Serviettes could be placed on tables for people to use. Cook house could be laid out better</p> |
| | 7 | <p>Better financial support and parts of the course that take older people into account Nothing really, most things run smoothly Allow troops to do extra bits of fitness</p> |

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| | | More activities, section camps on weekends |
| | 10 | Nothing Nothing really I don't know Organisation of lessons e.g. PT before scoff instead of lessons so that there is less rush for the showers. Individual punishment harder for those that mess up, instead of section or troop having to pull them together |
| | 12 | More information could be given to recruits on what they are doing during the working day, instead of always being told at the last minute. More PT and shooting, possibly more exercises. More similarities in how troops are treated in comparison to other troops. Food organisation so that there is something to fall back on if something goes wrong. More of a fitness regime. More showers in block – one is not enough Nothing except food needs to be improved |
| 7 Do you feel that you have witnessed or experienced 'bullying' at all? How? | 2 | No x 3 No, none at all None, I do think that if there is bullying there are more than enough people to turn to Yes, but mildly, nothing that has gone out of control, just banter |
| | 4 | No x 6 |
| | 6 | Yes, one recruit being bullied, but correct measures were carried out. Yes, but indirectly and was dealt with immediately. Yes, one lad was slightly picked on, but he did bring it on himself so that sort of cancels it out in a way. A little between recruits which was sorted out straight away. No x 4 |
| | 7 | No x 2 I have not Minor scuffles, no serious bullying, none aimed at myself Not really bullying, there have been a few scraps and things and they were sorted there and then |
| | 10 | An individual was picked on without the people realising that they were taking it too far- It took other recruits to make it known then it stopped. Yes Two lads on one another, poor marching – dealt [with] immediately Just in the first week between a recruit and two other recruits but it was dealt with swiftly and fairly with no victimisation afterwards. No |

| | | |
|--|----|--|
| | 12 | <p>Small amounts have happened, but a lot was self-inflicted and bullies were back-trooped so were dealt with properly.</p> <p>No</p> <p>I have not seen any major bullying while I've been here</p> <p>No, people have obviously felt hostility from other recruits at times, but this is all for personal reasons such as the way people conduct themselves. There is no indiscriminate bullying</p> |
|--|----|--|

Appendix 4 Documentation presented to recruits

Individual Confidential Questionnaire (IAP only)

This questionnaire can be completed anonymously. You need not complete all the questions - only those that you have not felt comfortable discussing in the group.

When completed, fold your questionnaire and place in the envelope provided.

- 1 Are there any extra types of help and support that should be available?
- 2 Can you identify any welfare problems that have happened during your time here?
- 3 Did this affect you personally, or someone else?
- 4 Describe any problem between recruits or recruits and staff?
- 5 Can you give any examples of when staff treated recruits unfairly?
- 6 What could be done better?
- 7 Do you feel you have experienced or witnessed 'bullying' at all? How?

If you do want to talk further about any issue in confidence with a civilian member of the IAP please complete your name and mobile details below.

You will receive a text reply to arrange further.

Name.....

Mobile.....



ARMY

Army Training Regiment (Lichfield) Independent Advisory Panel

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INITIAL TRAINING GROUP

Information for Participants on the Focus Group with IAP Members

Taking part in the focus group is appreciated by Panel members and it will help to inform our understanding and to make recommendations on the training regime at Whittington. We are doing so to maximise, for recruits and the Army, the benefits of the way training is carried out.

The focus groups will last approximately 40 minutes. You will meet, informally, two civilian members of the IAP and there will normally be six participants who will comment, as a group, on a number of statements about your experience of the Army.

Examples like: The meals you have at Whittington Barracks are of high quality
The experience so far is what you expected from the recruitment process

The above may not be the ones you will be asked, but as a group, you will decide whether you:

Agree Strongly; Agree; Disagree; Disagree Strongly; Don't Know

You will also have the chance to add individual comments if you wish to.

IMPORTANT: Anything that an individual says will be treated in the strictest confidence

**UNLESS: It refers to serious illegality of some description
The serious wellbeing of any person is involved
Something is likely to bring the Army into serious disrepute**

It is very important that you tell us exactly what you think about your experience so far without any fear of difficulties in doing so.

We will only consider if something should be formally reported if it is very serious.

After the main part of the focus group you will also be asked to complete a questionnaire. You will not have to give your name on it unless you wish to do so. It will be placed in an envelope and nobody will have any idea who filled in which questionnaire.

Thank you very much for taking part in this process. It will assist in the way the Army train new recruits and it could improve the experience for both you and those who train in the future. We look forward to seeing you in due course.

Independent Advisory Panel Members.

Any issue you want to discuss with us in confidence contact xxxx xxxxxx xxx

Future Work Programme

ATR (Lichfield) is due for closure in mid 2008.

The Panel intend to carry out interviews with officers and NCOs to assist with further validation of what has been found from recruits and also assess what ATR (Lichfield) is like from the point of view of staff members.

Further family and friends interviews will take place at Pass Out Parades over the final few months and statistical work will be undertaken around the numbers of recruits who drop out of training at different stages.

The Panel will produce a final closing report in April next year.

With other Independent Advisory Panels continuing their work elsewhere in the UK and new ones being established, consideration will also be given to producing a guide to assist future work of IAPs in general.