Ministry of Defence

ZigZag Information Pack

A guide to joining the Armed Forces as part of the ZigZag Career Pathway

Introduction

- Introduction
- Additional Role Information
- Commitment Levels
- Application Process
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Training
- Medical and Fitness Assessments
- Eligibility
- Contact Details

Introduction

What is the ZigZag Career Pathway?

The ZigZag Career Pathway is an innovative Defence initiative that offers novel ways of entry into the Armed Forces. It is a pilot programme, offering individuals the opportunity to apply professional skills in impactful fixed term Armed Forces roles, with a focus on qualifications and experience.

The pilot offers a career pathway that better reflects the skills, aspirations, and changing circumstances of today's workforce, creating more opportunities for diversification and upskilling to support career flexibility - enabling people with diverse backgrounds and changing circumstances to contribute to Defence while developing their own careers. It offers a choice of commitments, for periods of up to three years and roles that are designed around real skills gaps.

The pathway is open to civilians, veterans and reservists. Successful candidates will be supported with tailored onboarding, the right level of training, and a structured and supported induction into the Armed Forces environment.

Additional Role Information

Contract Type and Security Clearance

ZigZag roles are offered on a fixed term basis and subject to assignment duration for 3 years. Please note that the successful candidate will need to be a UK national and receive security clearence from the National Vetting Service. If you are successful, you will be a member of the Armed Forces for the duration of your employment and subject to Service Law.

Opportunity for Overseas Work

There may be voluntary opportunities during the 3-year commitment to work overseas or at other locations, subject to medical and fitness requirements being met. Those who accept a ZigZag post on ‘Full Mobility’ commitment should expect to be mobile and may be asked to travel/work away from home.

Medical and Fitness

All military roles require applicants to pass a medical and demonstrate the appropriate level of fitness to conduct the duties required. You will need to complete a self-declaration form during the application process and further medical and fitness assessments will follow. Depending on the type of commitment you take on and the role you are undertaking, the medical and fitness requirements may vary.

Working Arrangements

- This position is advertised circa 37 hours per week, depending on role. Please refer to the job advert. The Armed Forces do not pay overtime but Time Off In Lieu is available as compensation.
- Duties normally fall within standard weekday working hours. However, occasional after-hours work may be required, and you will be expected to work flexibly to support the outputs of the team.
- For ‘Partial Mobility’ commitment you may be expected to cover a broader region and assist the wider team when required. This may be UK wide but will not be more than 35 nights away from your normal residence.
- For Full mobility Commitments you can expect a mixture of the above within a defined base but deployable depending on the requirements of the post.
- You will be offered a mentor as part of a ‘buddy system’ on commencement of the job to provide support and advice throughout your engagement.

Commitment Levels

This role is available with some flexible working arrangements. You may be able to negotiate levels of commitment where appropriate, each of which comes with different requirements, benefits and entitlements. The difference between 'Full Mobility' commitment, 'Partial Mobility' commitment, and 'No Mobility' commitment entails the range of duties, pay, and liability for compulsory detachment from your normal place of residence. Each additional level of commitment comes with extra pay in recompense for the increased liability required.

No Mobility Commitment (NMC)	Partial Mobility Commitment (PMC)	Full Mobility Commitment (FMC)
Fulfils a limited range of duties usually restricted to your home location; you may be asked to be away from home for some limited duties and training, but this will be minimal. Your hours are normally restricted to regular working days.	Fulfils a full range of duties, normally based in your home location but with a liability for going away for up to 35 days in any one year. This attracts an additional 5% to the basic salary. Your hours are normally restricted to regular working days.	Fulfils a similar range of duties as a Regular service person, with the expectation of the same degree of flexibility. Over the course of a year you may be required to be away for a minimum of 35 days. This attracts an additional 14.5% to the basic salary and comes with entitlement to subsidised accommodation and the full range of allowances. The role is potentially fully deployable anywhere in the world, should that be required by the Service.

	NMC	PMC	FMC
Salary	Salary information can be found in the job advert for each role. Please note that the salary range aligns to commitment type.		
Non-contributory pension*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Subsidised accommodation** (charges apply)	No	No	Yes
Commuting travel	No (unless working in inner London)	No (unless working in inner London)	Yes
Medical provision (incl. prescription charges)	No	No	Yes
Dental provision (routine)	No	No	Yes

*Successful applicants will be automatically enrolled into the Amed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 unless they opt out
**Accommodation is only available on FTRS 'Full Mobility' commitments

Application Process

This vacancy is part of the ZigZag Careers Pathway. We welcome applications from civilians with no prior military experience, from all ex-service people (regardless of rank served), as well as current and former reservists. The role is advertised with a focus on the professional qualification and knowledge, skills and experience. To ensure fairness, previous military reports or previously held ranks will not be used when selecting candidates.

Application

All candidates must provide a CV and apply via the SERVE portal . After you submit your application, we will contact you after the closing date. If further information is needed for eligibility and security checks, we will contact you.

Your application and CV will be passed to a selection board for review. Your qualifications will be verified. You may contact the named point of contact at any point to gain further information.

Assessment

If you meet the relevant eligibility criteria you will be invited to interview. It is expected that interviews will be conducted in person, however this will be confirmed during the shortlisting process.

The interview will focus on three key areas: your skills, your professional qualifications, and your suitability for military service.

Following the interviews, we will select a preferred candidate.

Medical and Fitness Assessment

If you do not hold an in-date Defence Medical Assessment you will be asked to attend an in person medical screening with a Defence doctor prior to progression.

During this you will be required to pass a basic fitness screening.

Onboarding

On completion of the eligibility and suitability checks you will receive notification of your Terms and Conditions of service along with a job offer letter.

We will agree a start date, subject to completion of security and medical checks, and your ability to meet the training requirements of the role. When you start your new role, you will be paired with a mentor to facilitate your transition into the military.

Diversity and Inclusion

Our Vision
Defence harnesses the power of difference to deliver capability that safeguards our nation's security and stability.

Defence People Vision
Defence outputs delivered by the right mix of capable and motivated people that appropriately represent the breadth of the society we exist to defend, now and in the future.

Diversity & inclusion is relevant to everyone in Defence. It is about creating and sustaining an environment where people feel able to be authentic in the workplace; where everyone's needs are considered; and where people feel respected and able to achieve their full potential. The whole force - our service personnel, civil servants and contractors - are expected to play their part in building an organisation where difference is valued, and where every individual has a positive lived experience.

More information can be found here:

Royal Navy - Opportunities for All

Diversity and Inclusion | The British Army

RAF Recruitment | Diversity and Inclusion | Royal Air Force

Diversity and Inclusion Advisors
Every unit or establishment has one or more trained diversity & inclusion advisors who helps to ensure an inclusive culture in the workplace. They can provide support in cases where informal resolution or mediation is needed, and they can signpost to other organisations for advice and support.

Employee Support Networks
The Armed Forces have various employee support networks, for example:

Servicewomen's Network	BAME Network	LGBT+ Forum
Neuro Inclusivity Network	Faith & Belief Network	Parent's Network.

The Armed Forces values its links with external organisations which enable us to share ideas about improving inclusion and diversity best practice. All three Services undertake benchmarking and/or have partnerships with key external organisations:

- Business in the Community – signed up to the Race at Work Charter
- Stonewall – Workplace Equality Index
- Women in Defence – signed up to the Women in Defence Charter
- Social Mobility Foundation

Training

Your training will be tailored to your background and the specific requirements of your role. When you join, we'll assess your current experience and provide a structured, hybrid training program to help you succeed in your new role and work effectively within Defence. To give you an insight, we have listed some of your potential modules here for candidates who are applying for Limited and No mobility roles. This approach is designed to equip you with the right skills, ensuring you are workplace-ready as quickly and effectively as possible, without compromising on quality.
Please note: Full Mobility roles will require Phase 1 training to be completed. This requires you to meet the Medical and Fitness standards set for the phase 1 course you attend. More information can be provided.

Module 1: Online Learning (By Exception/service) *(Remote – Self-Paced)*
Your journey begins with remote learning designed to introduce the key principles of military life. This includes an overview of the Armed Forces, values and behaviours, leadership principles, and the responsibilities of a full-time Reservist. This online module helps you build a solid foundation entering a military environment.

Module 2: Military Familiarisation *(Residential – On Site)*
This in-person module helps you adjust to military life and expectations. It provides practical insight into how Defence operates and prepares you to work confidently and professionally within a military workplace. It's also a valuable time to connect with your peers and support network.

Module 3: Trade Training *(Role-Specific – Practical and Applied)*
This is the core of your professional development. Whether your role is technical, vocational, or operational, you'll receive high-quality, focused training that gives you the practical skills and knowledge required for your specific trade or profession.

Module 4: Leadership Development *(For Leadership Roles)*
If your role includes leadership responsibilities, you'll complete a tailored leadership module focused on people management, performance, and welfare. This prepares you to support others, lead effectively, and contribute to a positive team environment from day one.

Module 5: Workplace Induction *(Location-Based)*
Your training concludes with a structured induction into your specific workplace. You'll meet your team, understand local processes and expectations, and see how your role fits within the wider Defence mission. This phase helps you hit the ground running.

Medical and Fitness Assessments

Applicants need to meet certain medical and fitness standards to be able undertake the required training and role. Applicants will be required to complete a self-declaration on application.

Before entering service, all successful applicants must consent to the sharing of their NHS medical records and complete a medical examination at a military establishment to document their health status upon entry. This consent allows for an informed assessment of employment and occupational health risks. If the medical review determines that you lack the functional capability to perform either your training pathway or your role for medical reasons, Defence Primary Health Care (DPHC) will be consulted to conduct a Fitness for Work Assessment (FWA).

Your commitment offer ('Full', 'Partial', 'No', Mobility) and the medical standards may vary, dependent on requirements and training for the role. Applicants can be assessed as:

Medically Fit Deployable (MFD)

Medically Limited Deployable (MLD): You may have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all medically fully deployable (MFD) requirements. You should be able to undertake full time employment in place of work and not impose a significant and/or constant demand on the medical services if deployed. There should be no limit in your ability to function wearing personal protective equipment demanded of the environment, your Career Employment Group, and rank.

Medically Not Deployable (MND):
You are fit for your branch/trade and limited UK operations, which means you may have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all MLD requirements above.

Applicants who do not meet the medical standard but are considered highly desirable due to their suitability and qualifications for the post may also be accepted in accordance with relevant Service Policy.

Eligibility

To be employed in a ZigZag role you will be required to join the Part Time Voluntary Reserve (unless you are ex-Regular) for the duration of your employment. We will guide you through this process once you have been selected as a suitable candidate.

Criterion	Details
Age*	**Army Candidates:** 18 - 43 years old. Applicants up to 49 years old may apply for Officer roles. Trained ex-Regulars and former Reserves up to 55 years old (Officers) and up to 52 years old (Other Ranks) may apply. https://jobs.army.mod.uk/army-reserve/ **Royal Navy Candidates;** 18-56 years old. https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/joining-process/eligibility **RAF Candidates:** 18-54 years old. https://recruitment.raf.mod.uk/life-in-the-raf/life-as-a-reserve **Age waivers up to age 60 can be applied in certain circumstances.**
Nationality	British citizen, Irish citizen, Commonwealth citizens who have been resident for 5 years in the UK, as mandated in JSP 440. Some specific roles may have stricter nationality/security restrictions.
Residency	Generally, you must have lived in the UK for a certain period, depending on nationality and security requirements.
Health & Fitness*	There is a minimum medical and fitness standard required depending on the role and your previous experience. Individuals will be assessed for the role by a medical professional. Pre-joining medical and fitness assessments are required.
Criminal Convictions	Some criminal convictions may bar you from joining - each case is assessed individually.
Education	Some roles require basic qualifications (GCSEs not always essential). Specific qualifications required for the ZigZag role you are applying for will be identified in the job advert. Officer roles typically require: 35 ALIS points from seven GCSEs or equivalent, including at least a grade C/4 in English language, mathematics and either a science or foreign language. 72 UCAS Tariff Points from a maximum of three A-Levels (or four Scottish Highers), excluding General Studies, and the specific qualification required for the ZigZag role you are applying for. Alternative qualifications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Tattoos and Piercings	If you have a tattoo that is either offensive or visible on a passport photo (head and face) you will not be eligible to join. Body piercings that significantly alter appearance, like large flesh tunnels, are not permitted.

**For more information, please visit the Royal Navy / Army / RAF career websites*

Contact Us

If you have any questions or would like to know more, please contact:

NavyPeople-ZigZagCareers@mod.gov.uk

If you feel your application has not been treated fairly and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact **NavyPeople-ZigZagCareers@mod.gov.uk** in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the MoD, you can contact the Complaints and Governance Team in writing:
Army: The Complaints & Governance Team Recruiting Group Headquarters Building PK 21 Trenchard Lines Upavon Wiltshire SN9 6BE.
Royal Navy: Recruitment and Attraction Complaints and Feedback, Room 202, Building 1/080, Jago Road, HMNB Portsmouth, Hampshire, **PO1 3LU**
RAF: Recruiting Operations complaints: SO3 Rec Ops Adastral Hall RAF Cranwell SLEAFORD Lincolnshire NG34 8GZ

When submitting your complaint, it is important that you provide us with as much information as possible so we can fully investigate your complaint as quickly as possible.