

ASSISTANT EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ADVISOR'S COURSE






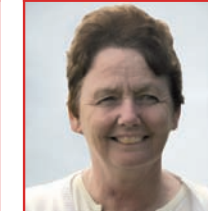
Are you aware that there is now a 3 day course at JEDTC Shrivenham for an Assistant Equality and Diversity Advisor (Assistant EDA)? This is an excellent course designed for JNCOs to assist with resolving E&D complaints and issues at as low a level as possible. Any unit who would like more information should consult 2008DIN07-032.

We would like to congratulate WO1 Storrs on being awarded a VCDS Commendation for all his hard work in being responsible for every aspect of this new course, from the concept, to setting it up, writing all the objectives and lessons and all associated organisation.

USEFUL REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Basically Fair – Respect for Others in the British Army (AC 64325, Edn 4 10/08)
- Bullying and Harassment – see it, hear it, STOP IT (DM(A)456/03/06)
- The Armed Forces Annual Report on Bullying and Harassment.
- The Chief of the General Staff's Equality and Diversity Directive for the Army (AC 64340)
- AGAI 59. Dress and Personal Appearance (Religious and Cultural Considerations)
- AGAI 71. Religion: The Chaplaincy Service and Voluntary Bodies.
- AGAI 75. Equality and Diversity Policy, Guidance and Instructions.
- 2009DIN01- 007. The Policy for the Recruitment and Management of Transsexual Personnel in the Armed Forces.
- JSP 763. The MOD Harassment Complaints Procedures.
- JSP 831. Redress of Individual Grievance: Service Complaints.
- British Army Cultural Guidance. A Regular Army Interim Guide for Commonwealth Citizens and their Families.
- British Army Chain of Command Guide Supporting Foreign and Commonwealth Citizens and their Families – Edn 3.
- Guide on Religion and Belief in the MOD and Armed Forces.
- Policy on the Care of Service Personnel under the Age of 18.

DM(A) EMPLOYMENT BRANCH

Col Employment	SO1 Employment	SO1 Diversity	SO2 Employment	SO2 Diversity	E1 Employment
					
Col Mark Abraham 94344 5251	Lt Col Mike Valenzia 94344 5338	Lt Col Colin Bulleid 94344 5350	Maj Mairi Thomson 94344 8930	Maj Sam Little 94344 5755	Mrs Margaret Miles 94344 8023

Who do we brief:

On a regular basis members of the team now brief: Senior Officers' Briefing Course (SOBC), Commanding Officers' Designate Course (CODC), Intermediate Command & Staff Course (Land)

(ICSC(L)), Late Entry Officers' Course (LEOC), Regimental Career Management Officers' Course (RCMO), Recruiting Officers' Course (ROC), the RSMs' Conference and RMAS. Should we include anyone else? Please let us know.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IN THE BRITISH ARMY



THIS ISSUE

- Service Complaints Commissioner
- Maternity Update
- LGBT
- Agreement between MOD and EHRC
- F&C Limits
- Brigade Collective E&D Training
- EDA Conference
- Assistant EDA Course
- E&D Reference Material
- Employment Branch

SERVICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSIONER

Dr Susan Atkins took up the post as the first independent Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces on 1st January 2008. Her recently published first Annual Report underlines her commitment to providing rigorous and independent oversight to improve the complaints system. She also acts as an independent point of contact for Service men and women and their families who wish to raise concerns.

She said: "My aim is to ensure that all Service men and women and their families have confidence in the complaints system and are treated properly. I have specific powers around equality and diversity complaints. Where I refer allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation the chain of command, up to and including the Defence Council has a legal duty to keep me informed about the handling of a complaint and the outcome.

"I have found a genuine commitment by leaders of all three Services to tackle and root out all forms of improper and unacceptable behaviour and an understanding of the contribution an effective complaints system can make. To turn that commitment into reality, a wholesale culture change is required. Too few soldiers have confidence in the complaints system. Of those who said they suffered from bullying or harassment in 2007, only 5% made a complaint. Rather than regarding complainants as a problem, those in command need to regard such complaints as a useful warning light, investigate and take action as necessary to ensure the effective operation of the team."



"In 2008 I set the Services some 3 year goals including, timeliness, good communication, evidence of significant increase in confidence and a reduction in the gap between levels of bullying and harassment reported in the Attitude surveys and levels of complaints. Anyone who feels they or a colleague are being treated unacceptably but does not feel able to make a complaint directly can come to me in confidence.

"I am working with the Services to ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly, at a level which can make fair decisions and make changes where things have gone wrong. Complaints are currently regarded as matters of individual redress not organisational improvement. They need to be about both."

Further information about the Service Complaints Commission can be found at www.armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk or e-mail SCC@armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk

MATERNITY UPDATE

Health in Pregnancy Grant

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are introducing a new benefit for pregnant women, called the Health in Pregnancy Grant (HIPG). From April 2009 women who are at least 25 weeks pregnant and have received the appropriate health advice will be eligible to apply for the single payment; initially set at £190. Applicants will be given the application form from their health professional, normally a midwife but possibly a GP, who will sign it to confirm that the expectant mother has received appropriate health advice. The expectant mother will then post the application to HMRC who will process it and make the payment. Further details are available on www.hmrc.gov.uk/hipg.

How does this affect the Service Community?

While HIPG is normally only available to expectant mothers resident in UK, Service personnel and accompanying spouses and civil partners will be eligible wherever in the world they are based. Application forms and information packs may normally be obtained through the pregnant woman's health professional and arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the Service community can access them even if serving overseas.

Depending on the circumstances of the pregnant woman these are as follows:

- Those who receive healthcare from either NHS or Defence Medical Services should speak to their GP or midwife.
- Those serving in diplomatic posts overseas should use procedures in place for Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff.
- Those in outlying overseas locations should speak to their unit administration officer who will be able to order a form; where this is not feasible they should telephone the Health in Pregnancy Grant overseas helpline on 02920 501178.

HMRC recognise that applications from abroad can take longer to arrive and hence have waived the normal time limits within which applications should be received to be successful.

How will the payment be made?

The payment will usually be made to a UK bank account but can be issued as a cheque. A spouse or civil partner's bank account may be nominated to receive the money. For those without UK bank accounts, cheques can be cashed overseas in pay offices.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) ISSUES

The annual Pride London March will take place on Sat 4 Jul 09. This year military participation will be organised by the Army. The order of dress will be No 2 Dress plus medals. Details have been announced in 2009DIN01-100 to be published in May, but anyone who would like to take part should in the first instance go to www.proud2serve.net



AGREEMENT WITH THE EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (EHRC) AND THE MOD

The new agreement between the EHRC and the MOD is progressing and will shortly be signed, now that the preliminary visits to certain units have been completed. The exact details have still to be

worked out and agreed, but an external panel of senior experts will be set up to look at organisational issues along with a joint EHRC/MOD team to consider all aspects of Equality and Diversity.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SOLDIERS

On the 2 Feb 09 the Secretary of State for Defence agreed arrangements that limited the number of Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) personnel to a maximum of 15% of the trained strength of the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC), the Royal Army Dental Corps (RADC) and the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (QARANC).

The policy will not affect those currently serving within any of the affected cap badges. The only circumstances

where there may be an impact would be if a F&C soldier wished to transfer into a cap badge that already had F&C as 15% of its strength. The transfer would then have to be delayed until a vacancy arose.

Equally F&C citizens may still join the British Army but within the RLC, RADC and QARANC this may mean a longer wait to join the Corps of their choice.

BRIGADE COLLECTIVE E&D TRAINING

The Army's E&D Action Plan 2008 - 2010, endorsed by ECAB, called for Bdes to receive additional E&D Training to that mandated. This year we were able to organise training for 4 Bdes by the end of Mar 09 (4 Mech Bde, 1 Sig, 51 and 145 Bdes). We now have a further remit to hit the targets imposed by ECAB of at least 4 Bdes to receive training by 31 Mar 10 and so we have offered the same opportunity to the Army for its training year.

The training was and will be delivered by the same E&D Training Organisation (Just Resources Ltd) in the following format:

- The E&D Trg Team spend a week with a Bde HQ + Units to cover:
 - Top Management (Bde Comd, COs, Majs/Sub-unit Comds) 2 syndicates of 20 pax (total 40) - 1 day's training.
 - Middle Management (Jnr Offrs, WOs, SNCOs, Cpls) 20 syndicates of 20 pax (total 400) - 1 day's training - syndicates spread over a week. That is, 4 syndicates a day or 1 unit's worth of middle management per day.
 - Junior Level - 200 pax per day E&D Awareness Trg (total 1000 pax approx) - lecture theatre.

Further E&D Training (Scenario Based Training)

For those Bdes who have already received the above, we are now providing a further opportunity to build upon this training using scenario-based E&D training methods (based upon ECAB's original direction).

Further information may be obtained from SO1 Employment on 94344 5338

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ADVISORS' CONFERENCE

On 20 Oct 09 a conference for all Army Equality and Diversity Advisors (EDAs) will be held in Larkhill. The aim of the conference is to update all EDAs on current issues about E&D in the Army. Further details will be published in due course.