



**Welcome to the
The Independent Advisory Panel (IAP)
ANNUAL REPORT for 2018**



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1. Welcome and overall summary from the IAP Chair



Welcome to this year's Annual Report of the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) of the Army Foundation College, Harrogate (AFC (H)). I joined the IAP in January 2012 and became Chair last year.

In our role as independent observers to the College, we see the constant effort that goes into making sure that as many of the Junior Soldiers (JS for the remainder of this report) as possible who arrive at the College, graduate successfully at the end of their courses. We particularly notice how much the JS mature during their time at the College and become ready to progress their army careers after Graduation.

This report outlines the College's role, describes what the IAP is, summarises our work in 2018, highlights key issues for the College to address, discusses areas that we as an IAP wish to strengthen and concludes with our overall summary and recommendations.

It has been a busy year for the IAP. As well as our regular visits to talk to the JS and Permanent Staff (PS), we have contributed to a range of events and meetings, including external assurance visits.

We were delighted to see the OFSTED report released in May in which AFC(H) was inspected against the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) covering three distinct areas: outcomes for recruits and trainees, quality of welfare and Duty of Care and effectiveness of leadership and management. The College was graded as “Outstanding” in each category.

We have also worked closely with the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Richard Hall MBE, to promote openness and trust between the IAP and the College in the wake of the historic allegations of mistreatment of some JS leading to Court Martials of a number of Army Instructors (Permanent Staff) held earlier this year. The IAP was concerned last year about the lack of appropriate notification from the Army on this incident. Ultimately each Court Martial was either dismissed or “stayed” but the need to share key information on discipline and complaints in a timely way was highlighted by these events. I am pleased to report that an increasingly open culture between the College and the IAP exists and this is evidenced by prompt notification of incidents and frank conversations between IAP members, the Commanding Officer and members of the PS. The IAP is dependent on this level of openness in order to do our job in an informed and effective way.

During this year the IAP has also conducted a strategic review of how we work to ensure we continuously consider our effectiveness and make improvements. We have identified a number of themes and priorities for 2019 arising from this. These are detailed later in this report.

We are also increasingly aware of the need to ensure appropriate help and support for those JS who display emotional, psychological or mental health needs. It is increasingly understood that a significant proportion of young people in schools and colleges will require some specific help to manage such problems. The AFC is not immune to these issues and we wish to support the College and the wider army in any way we can on addressing this concern.

I am very grateful to every IAP member – there are ten in all – for the great enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment they bring in helping to ensure that every JS who is at the College is safe, well supported and given every encouragement and opportunity to succeed. In other words, that the Duty of Care is properly in place.

I also wish to thank Lt Col Hall MBE for his help, expertise and candour. We are welcomed wherever and whenever we visit and our reports are read and fully responded to. I also want to thank the other members of the HQ team and the PS of the College for their knowledge and input which is essential to our work with the JS.

Finally, and most importantly, I also thank the JS at the College for their openness about what they enjoy and what they find challenging and for their cheerful readiness to talk to us, whether it’s in the Lines, in the Cookhouse, on an Exercise or whilst studying in the Education Wing.

This report is aimed at current parents and families of JS in training, at any teenager thinking of coming to the Army Foundation College in the future and to anyone who wants to know about the IAP at Harrogate and our role. We are a group of civilians who can bring a “fresh

pair of eyes” and a “critical friend” approach to the training of the JS and we are determined to help the College continuously improve for the benefit of all there.

Angela Monaghan
December 2018

2. What is the “Army Foundation College”?



The AFC (H) at Uniacke Barracks outside Harrogate, North Yorkshire, trains future soldiers for all Army cap badges except the Royal Military Police, Military Intelligence and Queen Alexandra’s Royal Army Nursing Corps. AFC (H) is a totally purpose-built facility which opened in 1998 on the site of the former Army Apprentices College. Any school leaver aged between 16.5 years and 17.2 years can attend, providing they meet the entry criteria (see www.army.mod.uk/join). At any time, there are approximately 1100 male and female JS in training at AFC (H), overseen by over 400 permanent military and civilian staff. Non-military education and training of Junior Soldiers at AFC (H) is provided by TQ Pearson Ltd in the specialist Vocational Education Wing at the College.

There are two full-time residential courses at AFC (H):

- **A 49-week Long Course** (including eight weeks’ holiday) for those Junior Soldiers joining the Household Cavalry, Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Artillery, Infantry and some Royal Logistic Corps roles. There are two different entry points - September and March. Junior Soldiers who graduate from AFC (H) will progress to a short Initial Trade Training course (Phase 2) and then move into the Field Army as 18 year-old adult soldiers.
- **A 23-week Short Course** (including three weeks’ holiday) for those Junior Soldiers joining the more technical branches of the Army. These are Royal Engineers, Royal Signals, Army Air Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical

Engineers, Corps of Army Music and some Royal Logistic Corps roles. There are two different entry points - September and March. Junior Soldiers who graduate from AFC(H) will progress to a longer Initial Trade Training course (Phase 2) and then move into the Field Army as 18 year-old adult soldiers

JS graduate from AFC (H) every February or August each year, depending on when they joined a Short or Long Course.

3. What is the “IAP” and what do we do?

Independent Advisory Panels (IAPs) were created by the Ministry of Defence after the 2006 Inquiry into the deaths of four soldiers at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut in Surrey. As a result of the Inquiry’s recommendations, all under-18 JS training was moved into totally separate establishments instead of being alongside adult recruits. In due course, IAPs were introduced as a new source of assurance to JS, their families and the Army. The IAP has existed at AFC (H) since 2007 and the College is the only Army training establishment in the United Kingdom where all recruits are over 16 but under 18 on arrival, throughout their course and on departure.

Under the law, anyone under 18 is a minor and not an adult. As a result, they are entitled to a “duty of care” to protect them from all avoidable harm. *The role of the IAP is to help focus on that duty of care and on whether it is being delivered in the daily life of JS, whether in training, in the classroom, on the parade ground, in the gym, out on military exercises or in the living accommodation at AFC (H).*

Two IAP members, one female and one male, are attached to each of the five companies at the College and they produce a written report on any activity they observe. We can visit AFC (H) or an off-site training activity whenever we like. Our visits are a mixture of pre-arranged visits to enable us to speak to the JS within a normal training day and informal, i.e. not prearranged, when we might visit in the evening or at weekends. On every visit, a key part will be talking directly with the JS themselves about their experiences so far.



4. IAP members

IAP members are unpaid civilian volunteers, who can serve for a maximum of seven years. They are totally independent of the College and are recruited for the range of their expertise and experience in the commercial and industrial world, the public services and education. The majority of the members are parents themselves and they live in and around the Harrogate District. All have full legal Disclosure Clearance to allow them to work with under-18s.

See Annex 1 for a full list of IAP members at AFC (H) in 2018.

5. IAP activities in 2018

We are interested in the complete range of experiences offered to JS at the College, in how they respond to them and in how they are supported to succeed in the face of the challenges of their chosen course. Not just in learning how to live and work successfully as JS, or in learning to co-operate and function as a team and not just in the new skills they show, but also in their educational achievement and how they develop as young adults.

Their personal challenges may range from severe homesickness in the early weeks, to getting on with the other JS in their section or platoon, to meeting the physical demands of the course and in getting their kit in good order under time pressure. Every day they will be encouraged to try new experiences and do their best to succeed at them, overseen by the PS.

This year we particularly focused more visits to the JS whilst they were on Exercise (Otterburn in Northumberland, Ripon and York in North Yorkshire) and at times of expected additional pressure for the JS, such as within the first 6 weeks of each course and after holiday periods. We also visited during the evenings and at weekends, when the JS have personal administration duties to perform or free time for relaxation.

As part of good governance, we also spent some time thinking about how we could improve and maximise our effectiveness further. The outcomes from this work are described later in the report.





6. IAP reports submitted and issues discussed

In all, IAP members made over 40 visits to see JS in 2018. This is similar to the number of visits made in 2017. Any queries, compliments or recommendations for improvement their visit reports contained, and actions agreed in response, were recorded in the Action Log for transparency of accountability purposes. This Action Log is discussed at each half termly meeting between the IAP, the Commanding Officer, the Company Commanders and other key staff. An individual report is only “closed” when the IAP member who made the report is satisfied with the response. This year those meetings took place on 6 February, 10 April, 5 June, 18 July, 2 October and 5 December. In total, thirty recommendations generated an action in response. These included:

- Role modelling by PS needs to be fully accepted as part of the job and unit ethos.
The action in response was: the Commanding Officer reiterated in a statement to the PS that this was a crucial aspect of their leadership and made explicit links to his leadership direction to the PS at AFC (H).
- The use of bad language was noted.
The action in response was: the RSM led the re-emphasis of the College language policy to all. This states that bad language is not tolerated and disciplinary actions would result from persistent breaches.
- Items of clothing damaged on return to some JS from the laundry.
The action in response was: specific named staff were tasked to investigate this and make improvements.

There were a small number of recurrent issues appearing during the year on the Action Log.

These included:

- References to the identification of a growing need for more mental health support to support those JS who display emotional or other issues.
- The quality of food is seen as variable by the JS.
- Poor customer service at food service times reported by the JS.
- Timetabling difficulties and compression on the Short Course, leading to additional pressure on the PS, at times, and potentially impacting on the JS at “stress points” during the training programme.

The IAP is aware of the effort ongoing to address these issues at AFC(H) and, where additional support may be required, that these issues are being communicated along the chain of command beyond the College.

Other examples of comments contained in the IAP reports are as follows;

“It was interesting and informative to see a WAM (welfare) meeting in operation. I was impressed to see the concern shown for the wellbeing of all the JS who were discussed. It was apparent that significant effort goes into identifying any JS with problems and to finding the best possible solution to any issue”

“I was pleased to see that they were all positive about why they were here, focused on their career in the Army and enjoying the overall experience”

“The education provision is valued by the JS and is a central part of the transformational nature of the training programme for the JS. Standards are high. Staff are enthusiastic and committed”

Commendations and Improvements observed in 2018

- It is extremely pleasing to note the number of times that JS identify PS by name as a result of their exemplary leadership. We also see positive, professional and strong rapport between the JS and PS at every level.
- We see strong support for the JS at Section and Company level through the welfare system at AFC (H).
- The review of working or “sponsored” weekends for the JS at the College has been beneficial with more positive comments on the revised approach.
- We have noted the positive increase in PT provision, on the long course particularly, this year and especially commend the work on greater support (nutrition and PT) for those JS who hope to join the Parachute Regiment.
- We have also been invited to observe specific training exercises, including the revised rifle training exercise. We were pleased to see the high levels of planning,

supervision and support for the JS, from each other as well as from the PS, in all of these.

7. Themes and priorities for 2019 relating to the AFC(H)

- Good communication skills, in order to build confidence and rapport between the JS and PS, is essential. We see many fine examples of this but it can be improved further. Pre-training for PS should emphasise the role modelling expectations and the communication requirements for effectively developing in-coming school leavers into out-going JS.
- There is a need for clearer and repeated explanations to the JS at section level about aspects of daily life and training at AFC (H). This would include the use of the laundry, access to sports facilities at weekends and, more widely, the reasons for army rules and procedures, including the use of specific sanctions if these rules are not followed by the JS.
- There have been timetabling difficulties and compression within the Short Course leading to increased pressure on PS within the Company, at times.
- Maintaining as consistent approach as possible on the implementation of sanctions across Companies and ensuring that the College standard of mobile phone access time is understood by all JS and PS.
- Some negative comments about the quality, choice and service within the JRDF (Junior Ranks Dining Facility) appears regularly in feedback from the JS.

8. Themes and priorities for 2019 relating to the IAP

This year we spent some time looking at how we could improve our own effectiveness and build on our collective experience within the IAP. Our themes and priorities for 2019 derive from this. More detail is contained in Appendix 2.

- Continue to focus on the Duty of Care and Welfare for JS at AFC (H). We will provide every support we can to the Commanding Officer and the leadership teams to ensure continued positive outcomes and experience for the JS.
- Build on the existing open and trusting communications between the IAP and the Commanding Officer by proposing the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the IAP and AFC (H), which will formalise and enshrine this open and transparent way of working for the future.

- Continue to highlight our view that longer leadership postings of the Commanding Officer and other key staff would be beneficial for continuity at AFC (H) and take additional steps to minimise risk of miscommunications at handover points.
- Formalise arrangements to ensure that IAP members understand the role of the Panel and are kept abreast of relevant developments potentially affecting the JS. We will, in particular, strengthen and update our knowledge of Safeguarding and mental health issues.
- Update our Terms of Reference to ensure the role of the IAP at AFC (H) is clear and fully fit for purpose. This, together with the Memorandum of Understanding, will set out the expectations about how we work with the AFC (H) leadership to share information and promote the highest standards of care and military training.



9. Summary for 2018

On the basis of our observations on IAP visits to AFC (H) during 2018, the IAP is confident that the Duty of Care to Junior Soldiers is actively embedded throughout the College. We also note the grading of Outstanding by OFSTED the three pillars of the CIF: outcomes for recruits and trainees, quality of welfare and Duty of Care and effectiveness of leadership and management. There has been an increasingly open culture at AFC (H), led from the top down, which benefits all and enables us to undertake our role in a more informed way. We would hope this continues with successive Commanding Officers.

10. Recommendations

- In the opinion of the IAP, the relatively frequent change of Commanding Officers and other senior staff at the AFC (H) every two years, means that there is a loss of leadership momentum and organisational memory. For an organisation so significant to the future Army, this represents a loss of potential. A longer period of command would be beneficial.
- The IAP sees a strong benefit in the AFC (H) having more input into the selection of key personnel such as Company Commanders and Senior Instructors. The College is well placed to identify the specific attributes required for these postings.
- The IAP believes it would be good practice from a governance perspective to agree a Memorandum of Understanding between the AFC (H) and the IAP. This would formally set out expectations of both parties and enshrine the current good practice on openness and the sharing of relevant information.
- We note the growing awareness of the emotional and mental health needs of a significant minority of young people. AFC (H) is also aware of the growing pressures relating to this and the need to make future provision as part of a modern welfare service at the AFC. We support this.



11. Commanding Officer's Response

The IAP continues to be the most effective of College mechanisms for understanding internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and I am extremely fortunate and grateful to have such expert analysis and feedback on an almost weekly basis. The IAP is a powerful advocate of the Junior Soldier (JS) and our Permanent Staff. They report what they see and hear, candidly, and they hold the College management team to account for word and deed. In the culture of openness, self-awareness, continuous improvement and respect that I demand of my organisation, they are, simply put, invaluable.

I am extremely proud of what the College has achieved in the last year. The pass rate of both the long and short courses reached an all-time high without any compromise to the high standards demanded of the JS. The instances of detected drug taking dropped to a record low, despite delivering four times the number of drug tests at much more targeted intervals. The College won the Carrington Drum, awarded to the unit that does the most for charity across the whole Army. And the College was adjudged to be outstanding by several external assurance inspections, including Ofsted. What I am most proud of though is the educational performance – of the JS and of the education provider, Pearson TQ. I made the delivery of education my priority this year. I see it as the unique selling point of the AFC (H); addressing the failed schooling, the lack of parental investment, the under-confidence and loss of self-belief of the JS. The College provides an almost unique opportunity to convince these young men and women that they can learn, that the ability to communicate and think critically is key to understanding how the world works and that, with renewed confidence, the College represents just the start of their life-long learning journey. The results are phenomenal – suffice to say, the educational distance travelled during military basic training makes the AFC (H) likely the most effective educational establishment in the country and most JS have secured all the qualifications the Army requires to reach the rank of Warrant Officer.

The pace of innovation, experimentation and improvement has been impressive too. We have developed Project ACHILLES to better prepare Parachute Regiment JS for their next stage of training, with better than hoped for initial results. We have rewritten the final three field exercises to provide much more effective development of soldiering skills. We have completely redesigned the Physical Training programme – marking the greatest change in training design since the College began. We have added a new 4-day map-reading exercise, added exciting new activities to the Sports & Skills programme (Horse Riding for example) and established an annual overseas sports tour (rugby to South Africa in 2019). Our pastoral care processes have further improved too; the risk conference process is more thorough and auditable, care leaver entitlement is better understood, the Welfare Agency Meeting is more accurate and with much better statistical analysis and the provision of activity to combat homesickness has been delivered with much greater precision and effect.

There is always more that can be done however and the College, through its 'continuous improvement' process is relentless in its identification and rectification of weakness. I recognise all the areas for development in section 7 above:

- Our induction and professional development weeks are kept under constant review and we will introduce more serials to improve the communication style demanded of the staff and to ensure emotive issues such as group punishments and mobile phone access are standardised.
- We will formally align periods in the programme to reinforce and confirm routine and daily life in the College.
- We will continue to champion the preservation of the short course to not less than 20 weeks, but acknowledging that course dates are programmed by our higher HQ.
- We will continue to work with the contractor to ensure the best possible level of service within the Junior Ranks Dining Facility. New facilities and equipment have recently been installed which will remove some of the traditional grumblings, but there is more that can be done to remove some of the frictions that occur between JS and contracted kitchen staff.

I fully support the recommendations identified at section 10 too. I have argued that the College be allowed to run a potential instructor briefing day to better inform the Field Army about the nuance of an assignment to the AFC (H). I await authorisation from my higher HQ. Most crucially, I am convinced that the College would benefit from a mental health support worker. While no JS is unsafe because of his or her mental state, I believe that we could improve the outcomes for trainees even further with on-site access to counselling. This issue has been elevated to my higher HQ.

In closing, for a large proportion of this year the College has hosted an embedded documentary team. Focussing on 7PI, Cambrai, they followed the short course from arrival to graduation and then into Initial Trade Training. The cameras have had unfettered access to all aspects of the course and observed the highs and lows on a daily basis. At the time of writing I have seen the rough edits and I believe it to be an extremely accurate portrayal of life as a JS. Therefore, I could not be prouder of what the College does; the staff, the courses, but above all the young men and women we have the privilege to train.

Annex 1: IAP members in 2018

Alamein Company: **Angela Monaghan** is the Chair of the IAP. She is a Registered Nurse and was the Chief Nurse at Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust for 13 years. She continues to work part time for the NHS in Yorkshire. She is the mother of two young adults and was appointed in January 2012 and became Chair in June 2017.

Alamein Company: **Richard Corby** is a Chartered Surveyor with wide experience in the property sector and is the director in charge of the Leeds office of a national practice. He has also been a trustee of Leeds Counselling for over 20 years. Appointed in August 2014.

Burma Company: **Ann Mannion** is a Project Manager, with extensive experience managing IT and business change in the Financial Services and Legal sectors. Appointed May 2014.

Burma Company: **John Parker** is a retired businessman with extensive international experience, most recently in the healthcare sector. He was for nine years Chair of By the Bridge, a private fostering business. Appointed September 2014.

Cambrai Company: **Sarah Nattress** is a Chartered Accountant who was a Director at PricewaterhouseCoopers. She specialised in Government and Public Services assignments and was the national lead for the firm's contract to quality assure Work Based Learning for young people, including within the Armed Forces. Appointed in August 2015.

Cambrai Company: **Mark Roberts**, is the Vice Chair of the IAP. He undertook a series of senior marketing roles before founding his own speciality beer company and becoming a significant employer within the local area. Appointed July 2014 and became Vice Chair of the IAP in June 2017.

Peninsula Company: **Peter Chambers** was once a Junior Soldier himself before being commissioned into the Royal Engineers. He then became Head of Strategic Development for BT and now runs a coaching and mentoring business. Appointed September 2017.

Peninsula Company: **Rajinder Richards** is a qualified Solicitor with many years of experience in Civil Litigation. She has extensive knowledge of Court procedures, and has a keen interest in Mental Health Law and Welfare rights. She has also served on North Yorkshire Police Authority, Harrogate Borough Council's Standards Committee and was an Associate Hospital Manager. Appointed June 2017.

Waterloo Company: **Caroline Hatton** is a non-practicing barrister with experience in the public and private sectors, she has worked as an in-house legal advisor for a large

membership organisation in the business sector and for a Regional Health Authority. She recently served as a non-executive director within the NHS. Caroline also volunteers at a local primary school helping children struggling with their reading. She has two grown up children and lives in High Birstwith. Appointed June 2016.

Waterloo Company: **Carl Nelson** is the founder and director of a community interest company providing vocational training to young people in the Harrogate district who are excluded from mainstream education. He is a former police officer, latterly serving as a Detective Sergeant on a Major Crime Team. He is the parent of a JS who graduated from the AFC (H) in March 2017. Appointed in September 2017.



Annex 2: IAP Objectives for 2019

Our primary objective remains that of monitoring and supporting the Duty of Care to the JS at AFC (H). We will continue to support the College in its ambition to continually improve and provide the best and safest experience for the JS in training.

Additionally, this year we spent some time as a group looking at aspects of our own work which could be improved and strengthened.

We identified five areas on which to focus in 2019 and these are:-

- a. There is currently a strong, open and trusting relationship between the IAP and Commanding Officer and HQ team but the short leadership tenure (posting) of key staff including the CO role (generally two years) does lead to loss of organisational memory and potential inconsistency of leadership approach.**

In response to this potential weakness, the IAP will:

1. Continue to highlight the issue and argue that longer leadership tenures have considerable benefits in running such a prestigious organisation as AFC (H).
 - Request handover meeting with each incoming and outgoing OC, 2IC and CSM to understand and agree and set expectations about the role of the IAP at Company level and below.
2. Request “start-up “meetings with each incoming OC, 2IC, CSM and Company assigned IAP member; again to understand and set expectations about the role of the IAP.
3. Initiate a permanent Memorandum of Understanding, to be agreed between the AFC (H) and the IAP, which will formally set out the roles of both parties including that of mutual transparency and openness.

- b. The IAP is aware that existing IAP members, and those who are new to the role, may need support and guidance as to the extent of the Panel’s Duty of Care responsibilities and the framework for safeguarding at the AFC (H) and of the statutory bodies.**

In response the IAP will:

1. Update our Terms of Reference.
2. Create an IAP new member induction process.
3. Appoint an IAP safeguarding liaison contact and ensure safeguarding procedures are explicitly communicated e.g. through a regular report to the IAP.
4. Provide a regular safeguarding briefing /update for all members to cover the law and procedures locally.

- c. The IAP needs to ensure that it identifies and maintains the skills and experience necessary to uphold the Duty of Care and fulfil the Panel’s Terms of Reference.**

In response the IAP will:

1. Consider potential gaps of skills and experience in the IAP and seek to address these well in advance of new member recruitment.
2. Identify training opportunities, e.g. on mental health issues.

- d. It is possible in the future that the IAP feels that it has been allowed insufficient access or information to properly fulfil its Duty of Care responsibilities.**

In response the IAP will:

1. Review bi-monthly meeting agendas and include explicit standing agenda items on items of perceived risk, e.g. safeguarding, mental health and discipline.
2. Create a Memorandum of Understanding on the role of the IAP.

- e. There is a possibility that the IAP raises concerns from visits or through access to information and these concerns are, in the view of the IAP, insufficiently responded to by the AFC(H).**

In response the IAP will:

Revisit the bi-monthly meeting agenda between the IAP and the AFC (H) to include recurrent issues and continuous, sustained improvement.