



2016 RAUXAF

ROYAL AUXILIARY AIR FORCE

RAF FF SURVEY REPORT





Image caption: The first of the UK's F-35B Lightning II jets to be flown to the UK. RAF Photographer. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

“The Reserves are an essential part of our Armed Forces. They allow us to access skills and expertise found in the civilian world. Reserve personnel help to link the Armed Forces to society, and employers benefit significantly from the transferable skills that Reserve personnel bring to their businesses.

We will continue to grow our Reserves.....with increased investment in training and equipment and improved pay and conditions.”

Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review
2015 ‘A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom’, Chapter 4

Our 2015 survey of reservists encompassed PTVR, FTRS/ADC and other reserve cohorts. Acknowledging that some of the issues raised by different types of reservist were unique to their particular cohort, we have elected to run surveys: one for PTVR and one for FTRS/ADC and others. The latter will be issued in due course.

For this survey, we received 405 responses from RAuxAF personnel, approx. 13% of the Force, broken down as follows:

- Under 30 year old 13%
- 30 year old or over 87%
- Male 82%
- Female 18%
- Commissioned 14%
- Non-Commissioned 86%
- Married/Civil Partnership 59%
- In a relationship 23%
- Single 18%

Where appropriate, we have retained the same question set as last year in order to start to establish any emerging trends. And we also compare some of the responses with those from the latest Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey (RESCAS), released on 30 June 16.

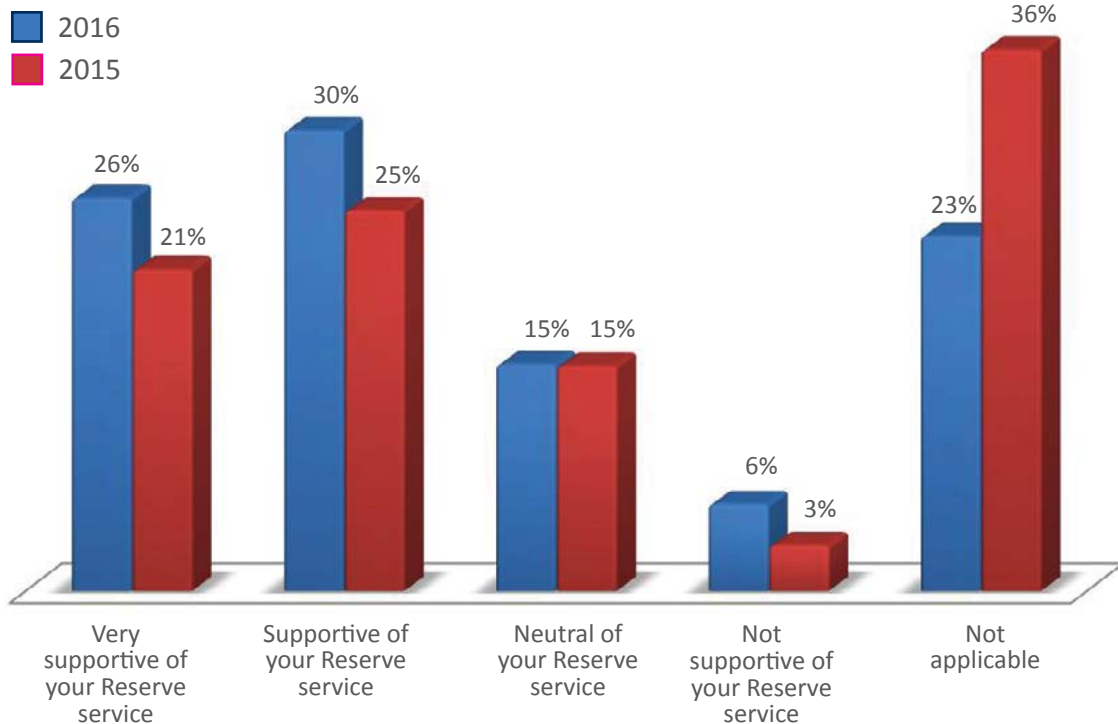
We are hugely grateful to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and especially for the comments and suggestions received, many of which at first glance are worthy of further consideration by those managing the RAuxAF. As always, we have tried our best to provide a balanced compilation of the comments received.

The responses and comments suggest that there are some predominant themes, many of which were raised last year as well:

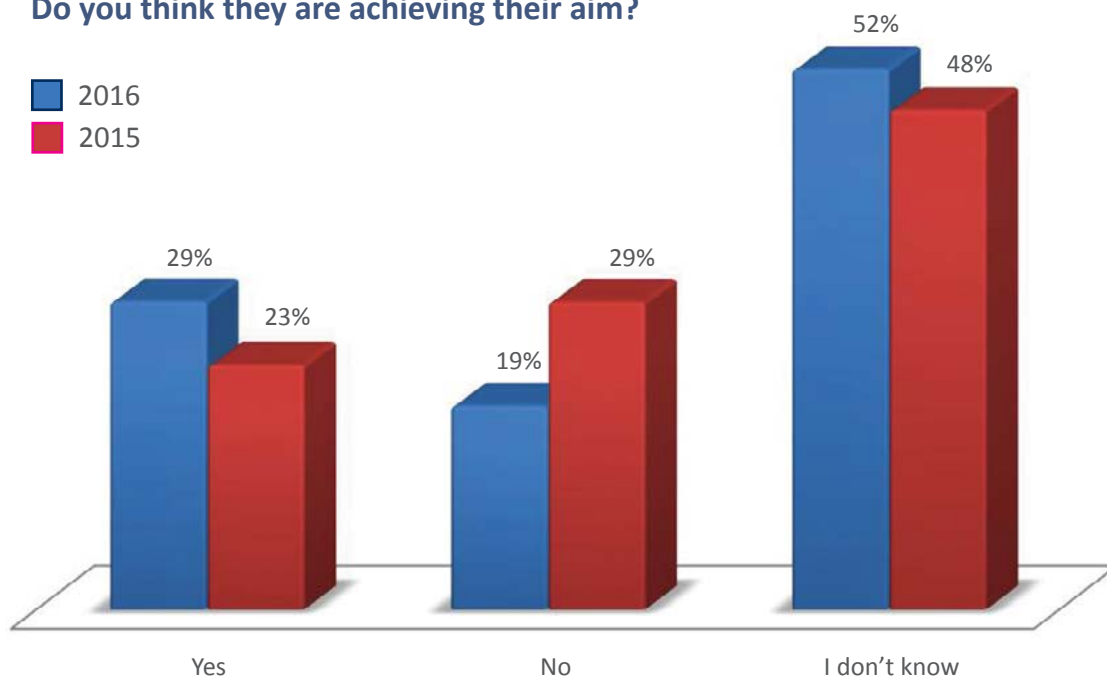
- Many have problems maintaining the support and understanding of their employer.
- There remains much frustration with administration, particularly JPA access and processes.
- Many suffer delays to pay and allowances.
- Many have issues with access to and availability of training.
- Some are frustrated by the poor utilisation of their civilian skills and qualifications.
- Acceptance by and integration with regular RAF personnel remains an issue for some.
- However, we were also struck once again by the number of personnel who quite simply love what they are doing.



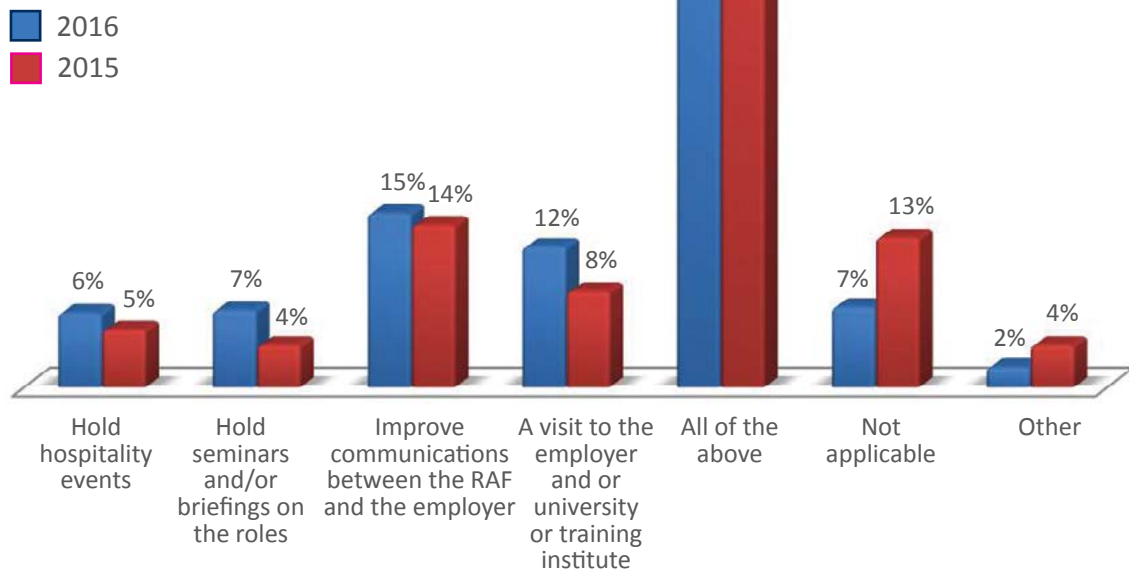
If you are currently employed by a civilian employer, at university or at a training institute, are they....



The aim of the Support for Britain's Reservists and Employers (SaBRE)/ Defence Relationship Management (DRM) organisation is to enlist employers' support for their personnel's membership of the Reserve Forces. Do you think they are achieving their aim?



What method would you suggest the RAF actively pursue, in order to boost the level of support provided by employers and or universities or training institutes?



ResCAS result

56% agree employer values their Reserve service

Sample comments received about employer support:

I would be interested in doing a talk about the reserves to my employer if a package could be put together for individuals to take to their employers to spread the word.

It might be useful to know where the reserves are coming from e.g., private sector, civil service, NHS etc. This could help focus engagement as all employers have different concerns/issues with regards to reserve training.

Employers need to be compensated in order to release people to fulfil their minimum training commitment. Without this - especially in today's economic climate - full employer support is not a reasonable request. This is particularly problematic for those of us that work shifts and/or in the public sector.

Perhaps a booklet for us self-employed to give to our employers to give in site into what we do & our responsibilities etc.

The entitlement afforded to employee's to contribute to the PTVR training requirements/ commitments should be the same regardless of employers. At the moment my employer allows me to use as many days off as necessary but refuses to pay me. Other companies will allow their employee's to be paid for all or a portion of the time they commit to their role as a PTVR and unfortunately there are employers that force their PTVR employees to use annual leave entitlements to fulfil training requirements. This seems unacceptable and should surely be one set legislation entitlement for all PTVR where this is concerned.

My Sqn writes to my employer once a year to let them know what we are doing over the year. I believe this is beneficial to me as it gives them I idea of what I do. As I get an extra eight days paid leave for Reserve Service, they actually have a right to know.

When I apply for new jobs I find most potential new employers are put off from hiring me due to me being in the reserves.

My employer allows me to take two weeks unpaid leave to complete my ACT...At a lower level my employer is not unsupportive but I don't think they really understand what a reservist is and how it can be a positive in what it can bring to my civilian employment.

Awareness of what the RAF Reserve is and the benefits to employers are still low outside the big companies.

There is a shortage of skilled nursing and allied health professional staff generally, and covering for the deployment of a skilled employee for a prolonged period is difficult. This means employers are less likely to encourage more than one reservist, and are not that supportive of training requirements. Big employers, such as the NHS Trusts, support at a management level, but the responsibility for covering the Reservist falls to the immediate line manager, and they are not so willing to be flexible. Many of our current reservists find it very difficult to get time off for training weekends because of this.

Make employers support reservists by changing the law.

I work for a civil service organisation that has a private enterprise equivalent. My terms and conditions restrict my participation in the reserves whereas the private sector is actively encouraged to contribute and release their employees. Lobby the minister to change the out-dated attitude of the civil service - specifically the Prison Service.

Make the benefits to employers more visible in the general RAF Reserves advertising. It should sell the reserves to employers as much as potential recruits.

The view of most employers is that having a reservists as an employee is of no benefit to them whatsoever and dread them being mobilised. We should be emphasising the great public service firms are doing by employing reservists and supporting them through their mobilisations. Employers only see the time away from their work place as opposed to the benefits the reservist brings back to the workplace.

I work as a Police Officer - a Home Office Department that holds a policy to support Reserve Forces. Each time I have been mobilised the Force has objected to mobilisation - myself and others. The attitude of individual managers in middle management is anti-reserves - they don't understand it, they don't want to understand it and they fail to see or don't want to see benefits of partnership with Reserves - despite it being policy and "Working in Partnerships" being buzz words. This needs feeding to ACPO through the Home Secretary and Defence Secretary as a must to support. If Home Office Departments cannot/will not support Reserves how can the Government credibly expect smaller employers to do so?

As an employer, I know there is little you can do to make the prospect of a member of staff being absent from work an attractive proposition. You could however make more effort to make skills and qualifications more transferable. If I have a military first aid qualification - why must I then go out and get a civilian one? An employer would appreciate not having to pay for reserves to complete expensive training if they have it already completed with the Military - this would improve employer / reserve relations no end.

I don't believe my employer understands how the Sqn works in terms of organised training weekends and legal obligations to release me if indeed there are any... I feel much of the literature sent to my employer wasn't relevant to my situation. Not only that but the tone of the information was rather negative, it seemed to be an instruction of how often I would require time away from work and the connotation was my employer would be powerless to prevent it. I think the initial contact an employer receives from the RAuxAF should be shorter and clearer in content and have the sole aim of alleviating inevitable concerns they have in terms of negative impact on their business/workplace/productivity.

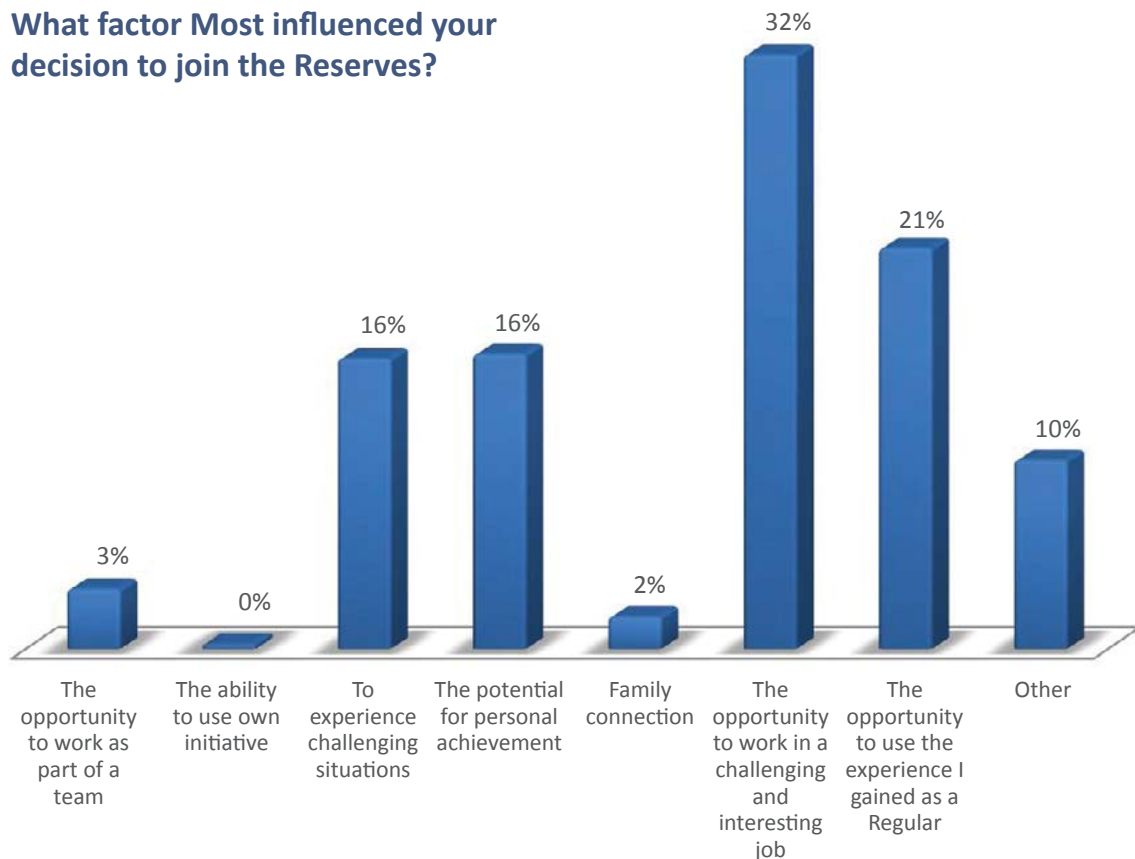
I work in government service. There seems to be inconsistency across the government agencies. Perhaps if government employees (police, ambulance, fire) were forerunners in accommodating and recognising reserve forces training this might be seen by private employers as a beneficial thing.

I have deployed on Op Herrick 3 times in 6 years and my employer has never been invited to any events or hospitality events or even shown any appreciation. 50% of my last six years of work has been spent supporting the RAF and my employers receive no support therefore they are not supportive of me. Who could blame them?



Image caption: A Royal Air Force C17 Globemaster transport aircraft awaiting its cargo at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan. RAF Photographer. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

What factor Most influenced your decision to join the Reserves?



A sample of the comments received:

The opportunity to go away but also the RAF has given me the confidence that normal life perhaps wouldn't have given me.

To serve my country

- *to push myself to my limits*
- *to meet new people*
- *to make my family proud*

Financial reasons. The tax free annual bounty was a recruiting factor.

Muscle memory.

After 31 years of service I obviously miss the uniform a little and the camaraderie that goes along with it. I am proud to be a member of the Reserves, however I would not have joined but for the incentives package.

To gain experience to join the regulars.

It's a second job; it brings in a much needed extra pay packet. We're in a recession, money is tight, and yet you don't even think of this as a viable reason to join the reserves within the survey? Its number one reason regulars are joining the reserves right now- incentive money.

I wanted to be challenged in ways not open in civilian life. To share experiences with new people and discover things about myself along the way. ..As I look now at the opportunities on offer to new recruits I don't see them having the same chances I enjoyed. There is less fun in the offing and we lose too many during the early months.

Joined to give something back to full-time service personnel to say thank you for their commitment and sacrifice. Also to make friends and challenge myself.

To do something different from everyday life, and to use those skills learnt in a war zone environment to prove to myself I can do what a regular does.

To serve my country in an organisation that helps shape global events that will be remembered by history.

There was something missing in my life that I missed from when I was in the regular Royal Air Force and Civvy Street just didn't have it.

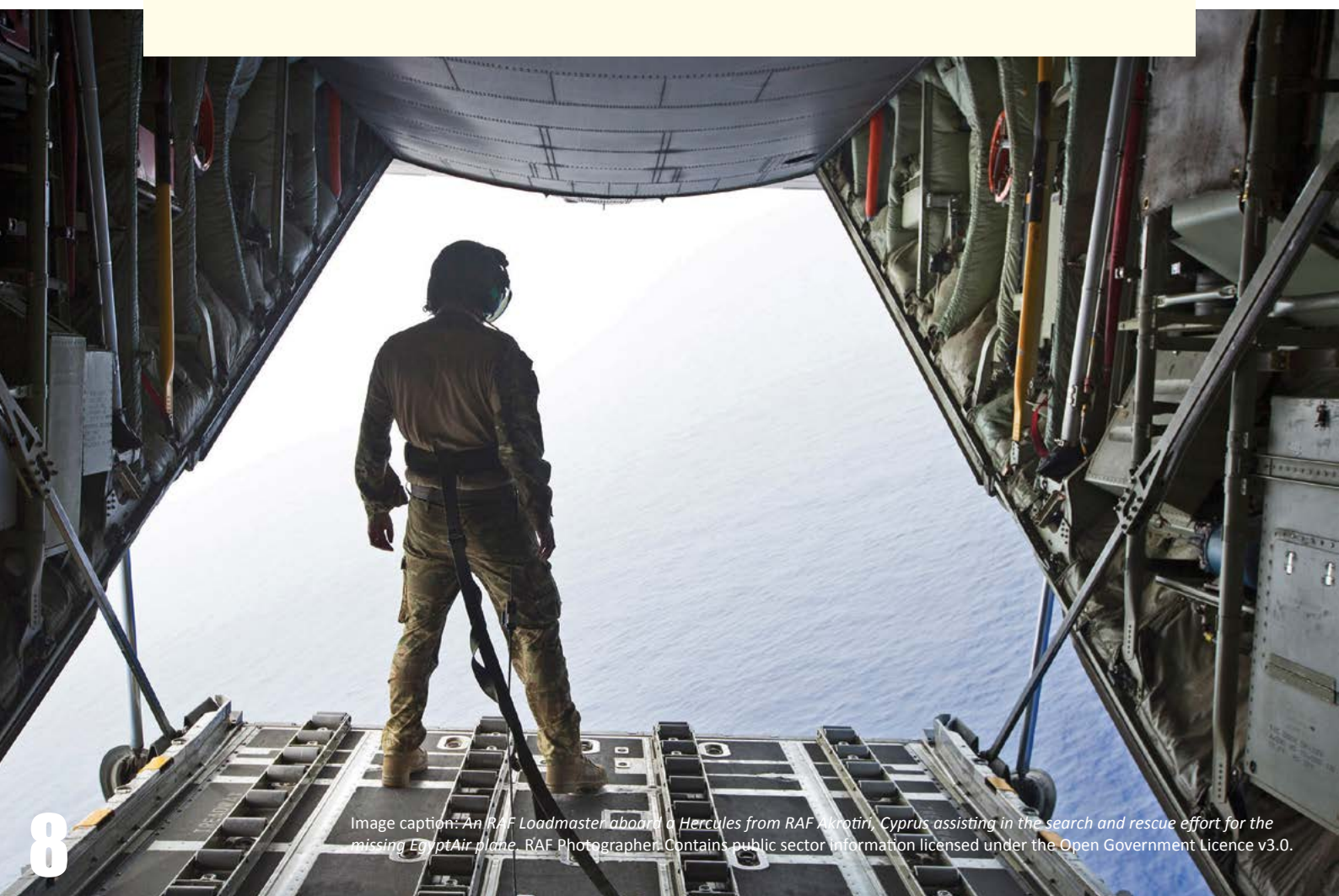
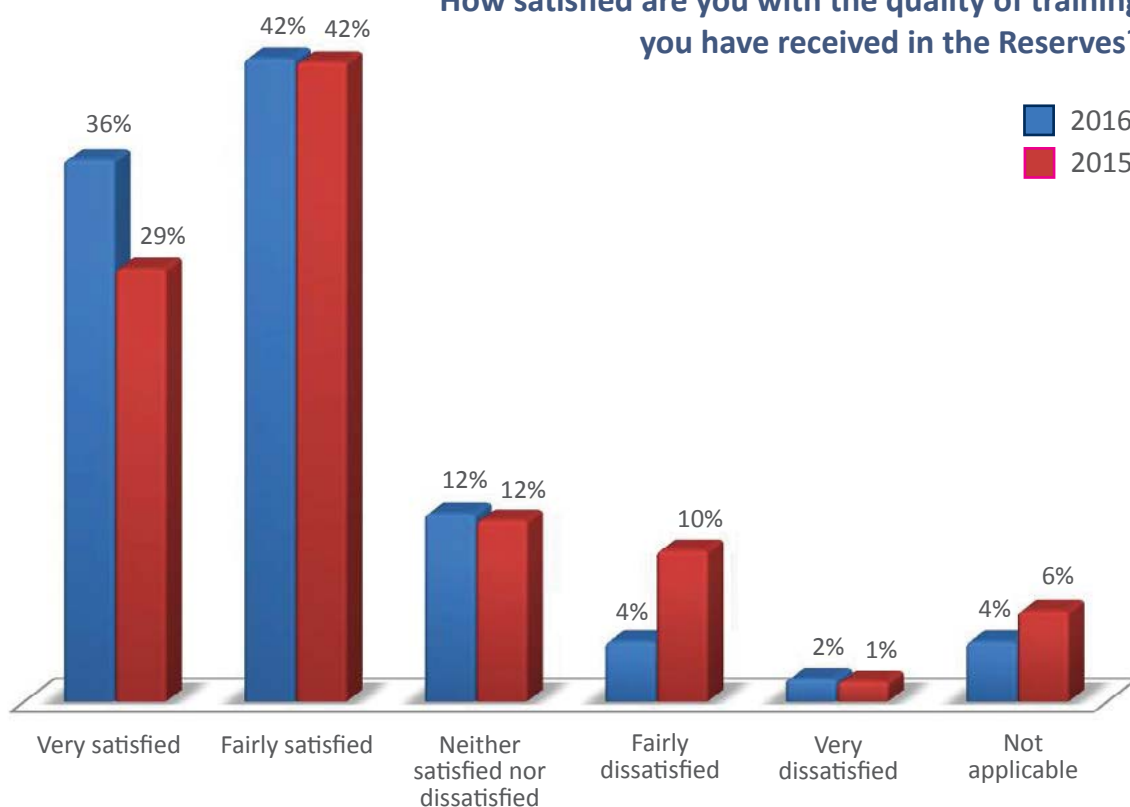
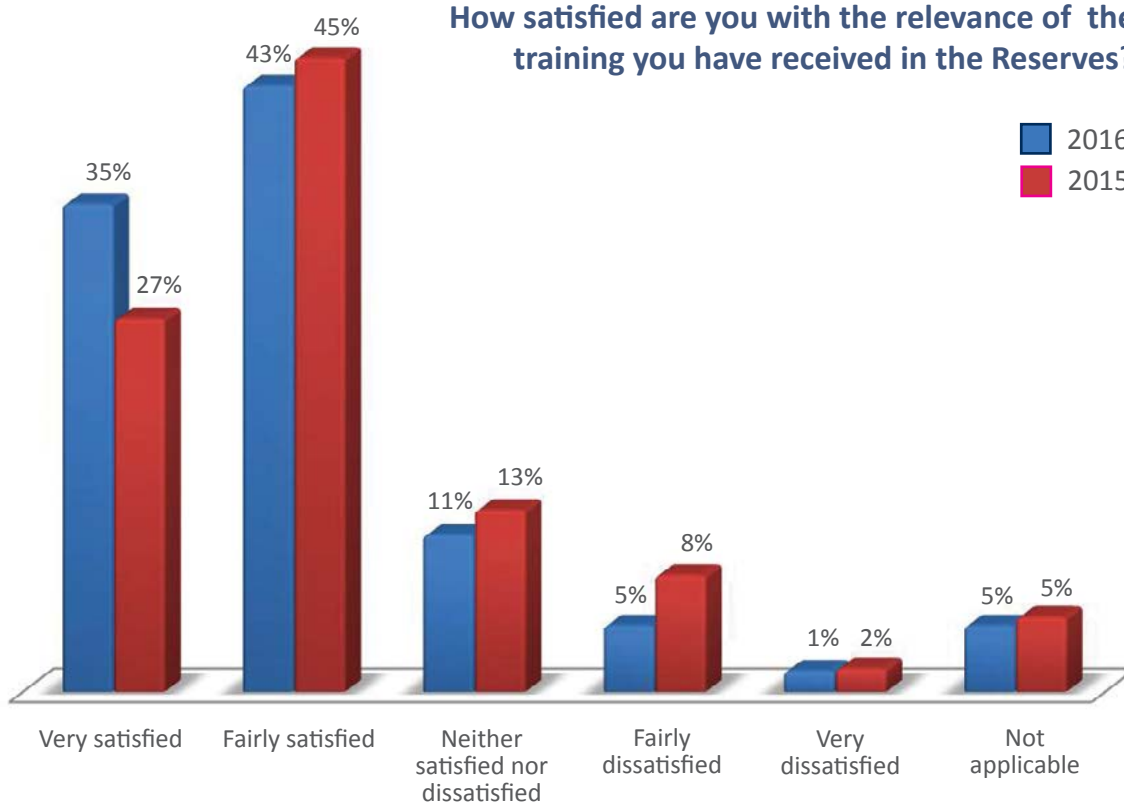


Image caption: An RAF Loadmaster aboard a Hercules from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus assisting in the search and rescue effort for the missing Egypt Air plane. RAF Photograph. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

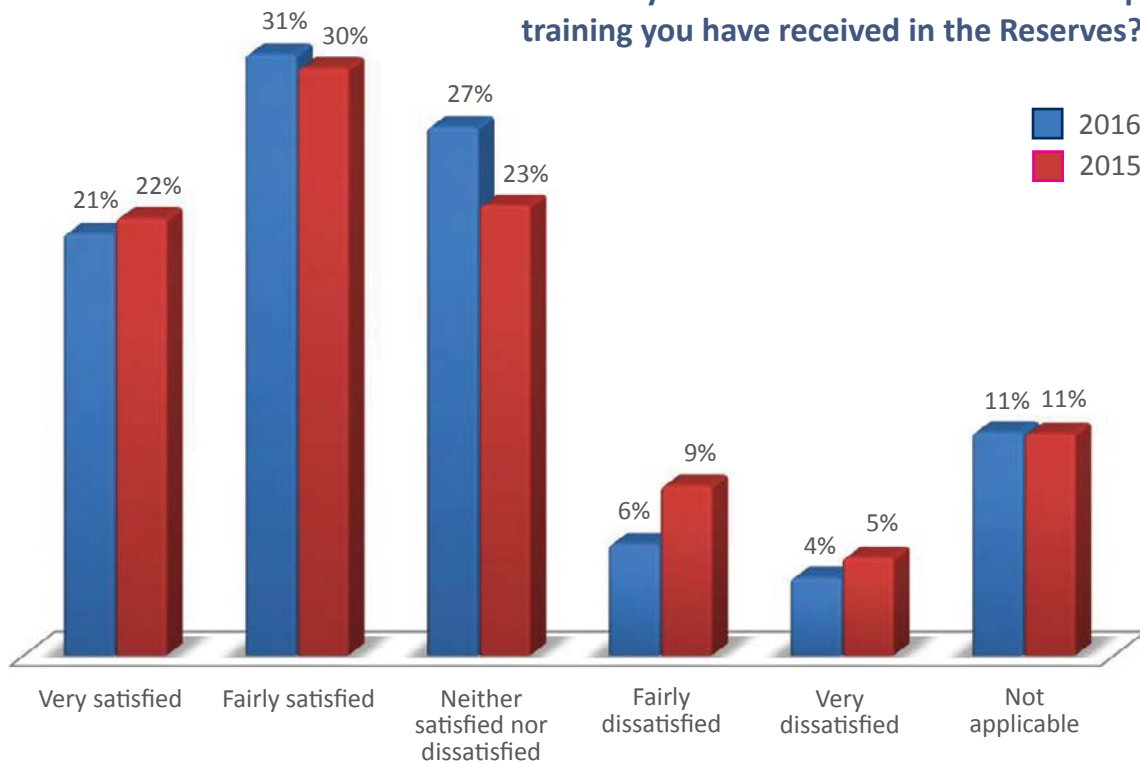
How satisfied are you with the quality of training you have received in the Reserves?



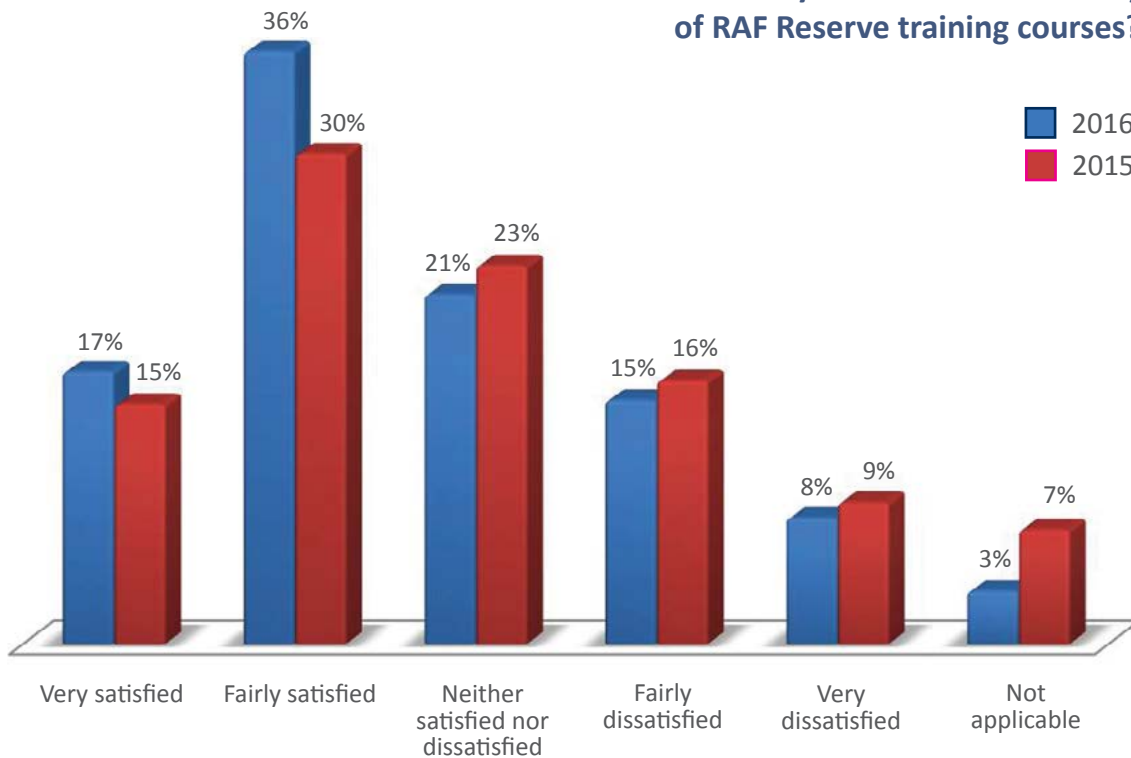
How satisfied are you with the relevance of the training you have received in the Reserves?



How satisfied are you with the amount of leadership training you have received in the Reserves?



How satisfied are you with the availability of RAF Reserve training courses?



ResCAS results

Training for current role

75% satisfied with the amount of training they have received for their current role

79% satisfied with the quality of training they have received for their current role

76% satisfied with the relevance of the training they have received

49% satisfied with the amount of leadership training they have received

Some of the comments received about training:

Some training is very good, some is shocking. There appears to be no consistency in the delivery of training to reservists. Additionally, not all reserve training is accredited by external bodies, which can leave you thinking that the course was a waste of time.

Due to the unit's recruitment pool being so large and our trade not being available at other stations that contain reserves, training is limited to one weekend a month. Much of this is consumed by going over old ground or completing mandatory training such as first aid. Mandatory training should take place outside of the core training programme. Furthermore, many of us complete such mandatory training with our own employers and even gain accredited qualifications. Therefore a more joined up approach with the public sector and employers should be sought to avoid such wasteful duplication.

The standard of teaching as compared to public sector institutions such as police, fire and ambulance is shockingly bad. I would urge the RAF to go and look at leadership programmes run elsewhere to see how junior leaders are being nurtured and developed.

I've been waiting to get on an FT1 course since 2014. Bumped off, cancelled and then completely stopped due to a change in the leadership team running the course. It's a joke.

There are currently no promotion courses available for RAF Regt which is holding back career development! Which may have an impact on retention? Doesn't seem to be any directive or time lines above Sqn level in what needs to be achieved or how it is to be achieved.

All the reserve Sqn's seem to have different ratios of FTRS / regular trade trainers which can impede the quality of training

During training weekends a lot of the phase 3's conduct station support. (Working on station). These tasks are often boring - again not very retention positive! I believe reserves need constant training due to the limited time that they get.

As a member of the RAF Regt I would like to see more courses available, we only seem to get team medic and bowman courses, would like to see more infantry courses such as mortars, sniper, SF cadre, etc.

With limited time available to train, training should be focused and relevant to role. There is far too much emphasis, and time expended, on periphery subjects that the lads cannot see the point of, other than to tick boxes on 'stats'. Human Factors, Working at Heights, Manual Handling - all annually! Yet a person trained to use ranges is trained once in their life and merely has to prove competency occasionally. Far more important! Linked to this, the RAF's reliance on IT and making troops do their business on IT is a major factor in dissatisfaction. The lads do not even have their own DII accounts due to expense, but are required to service their SJAR's etc as if they were a regular, with regular rules applied. Training for them is weapons, ranges, tactics, and vehicles - and when it is not programmed, attendance dips dramatically.

There appears to be no promotion courses available. As a Squadron we are struggling for JNCO's.

It's beginning to strain my employer's goodwill that so many courses I need to attend happen on weekdays. This involves me using days leave or relying on employer willingness to free me up. I feel that, with the regulars being paid 365 days a year irrespective of whether or not they work, there should be a compromise here with some courses being offered as part of weekend packages. It's getting frustrating to find that many courses involve me using my own leave or goodwill from work so that regulars can zip off Friday lunchtime each week as 'it's POETS Day'.

For me although the training we do is very good there has to be more integration with regulars. Sometimes the first time you have anything to do with the regulars is when you're deployed with them, and if they have had bad experiences with reserves you are judged in that category, which isn't fair. Whereas more integration would help to allay their fears that the reserves were bad.

The ILM training is the best two weeks training I have ever received. I use it in my normal job role and it is recognized. I use it in my reservist role too. Other trade training varies.

My next step is JOD1, but have been informed that they are all booked in advance now on an auto-booking system linked to Cranwell pass outs. Can I suggest keeping one or two vacancies for Reservists on JOD?

I would like more information on the variety of courses available to me.

Training commitment required is more than 'advertised' - I have 4 weeks required this year plus 5-6 weekends and large amounts of work to do at home in between. I didn't expect to do nothing between weekends but I feel the requirement was undersold when applying.

I do not believe that the number of ICSC (AR) and ACSC (AR) courses/places is enough to meet the SOTR (if one actually exists!). Moreover, the scheduling of these career enhancing courses is driven more by the availability capacity of the JSDC to facilitate the course (when there are no scheduled Regular courses) rather than when it is most likely to attract a Reserve audience.

There is an enormous amount of training required for those with no previous military experience to get up to standard: leadership skills, technical skills and military knowledge. With the current system, it takes years to cover the courses required, and those are abbreviated. Ideally, there should be some system in place to allow a Reservist extra time off work over and above the recommended 1 week special and 1 week unpaid leave, to get the courses required completed without having to use up all annual leave, thereby compromising rest and family time.

The quality of training is very mixed. Some is absolutely excellent. Some is simply not tuned to individuals' diverse learning styles. Other courses are not offered in modules to be made available at weekends when we train. Many of the routine mandatory training eg SERE, Equality and Diversity could be home study courses on line. Much more training could be "on the job" - making it interesting, exciting and useful.

All training dates are set up in plenty of time, the WO and other SNCO's keep in touch through email or telephone on a regular basis. Very organised structure.

There is a total lack of engineering training available at the weekends. I'm aware that most bases are now run on a 9-5 basis but there has been no provision made for training reserves outside core hours at all

Although training is generally well delivered, there is too much of a 'one size fits all' approach on my unit. Whilst it is difficult to cater for all levels of experience, there is little (if any) useful training for experienced personnel.

I think the RAF should adopt the RNR model when it comes to intelligence branch trades. Personnel join a local unit and after basic recruit training, they do their core military training, fitness etc at that local unit, but trade related training is primarily delivered at DISC. This model makes perfect sense as reservists can join any local unit, but can benefit from meaningful trade training in a realistic training environment, using real systems. Other trades would also benefit from this approach.

The training is based on regular RAF training courses. The basic trade courses are aimed at teenagers with little or no life experience; they could be improved if the reservist's skills and experience were taken into account. This would be more difficult to implement and manage than a "one size fits all" course but would allow more focused, and hopefully shorter, training courses. Basic training needs to be standard but trade training doesn't need to be. Weekend courses would be beneficial. Also early confirmation of a course place would assist in leave arrangements.

I feel that I would like to be given more responsibility for and during our Sqn training weekends. Having returned from ROIT with certain expectations of an Officers role and responsibilities I feel that these expectations are not fulfilled as they should or could during training weekends. I do however appreciate that there are a number of Officers within our Sqn and that fulfilling everyone's expectations over the limited training weekend is infinitely difficult.

Been in over 2 years and no trade specific training

Attendance at RAF bases to attend training Mon - Fri makes this prohibitive for many reservists with jobs when you take into account the course dates and travel time. Courses I have been on could have been shortened considerably as there is always a lot of down time during the course. In addition, large elements could be delivered remotely / online. Unfortunately my experience of the online courses on the new DII learning environment has not been positive as the platform is old fashioned and materials poor.

In the Logistics world, we've still got a long way to go to make our training courses 'Reservist-friendly'. This is particularly true for Phase 3.

The lack of role-specific training which I have received in my five years as a reservist is completely unacceptable. Excuses such as lack of numbers to run weapon training weekend packages or further training preparation are also unacceptable.

Training in my trade (Movers) is not valid externally. The regulars have NVQs and apprenticeships heaped upon them - we don't - even though we are required to reach exactly the same standards. Other squadrons gain certification that is valid externally.

Being employed by the NHS, I know how my civilian medical role works, however not having deployed, I don't know how my role would translate in the military. My squadron are very good with green training; however more military orientated medical training would be very welcome.

Training is generally based through the week, which means more time away from work. As a result I don't attend as many training courses as I want to.

FT courses and courses for example Small Arms Instructor courses have been cancelled year after year to an embarrassing extent. This has stagnated promotions and trade training which has taken its toll on retention and sent a negative message re the value of the RAF Regiment Reserves.

It's great that regular courses are open to us but, where courses consist of more than 15 days continuous training (e.g. JOTC), attempts should be made to offer a PTVR-friendly alternative (consisting of weekends and a 15-day camp). Other courses are split in such a way that they cannot be used for bounty-qualifying ACT (e.g. the DIAM consists of 3 days, a weekend off, then another 3 days but bounty rules only allow for one period of less than 5 days).

Training is generally high quality. Working as a civilian what is unacceptable is turning up for a course and finding it has been cancelled/you have been bumped off it. This happens all too often and having booked holiday off work is not appropriate.

Complete logjam on Regt. promotion courses. Very negative, flt filling up at the bottom, with no JNCO advancement. Seniors doing the best they can to cover for the weaknesses in the system but this is just papering the cracks and is relying on the good will of all those concerned to keep this moving. This represents biggest threat to retention within the flt at the moment.

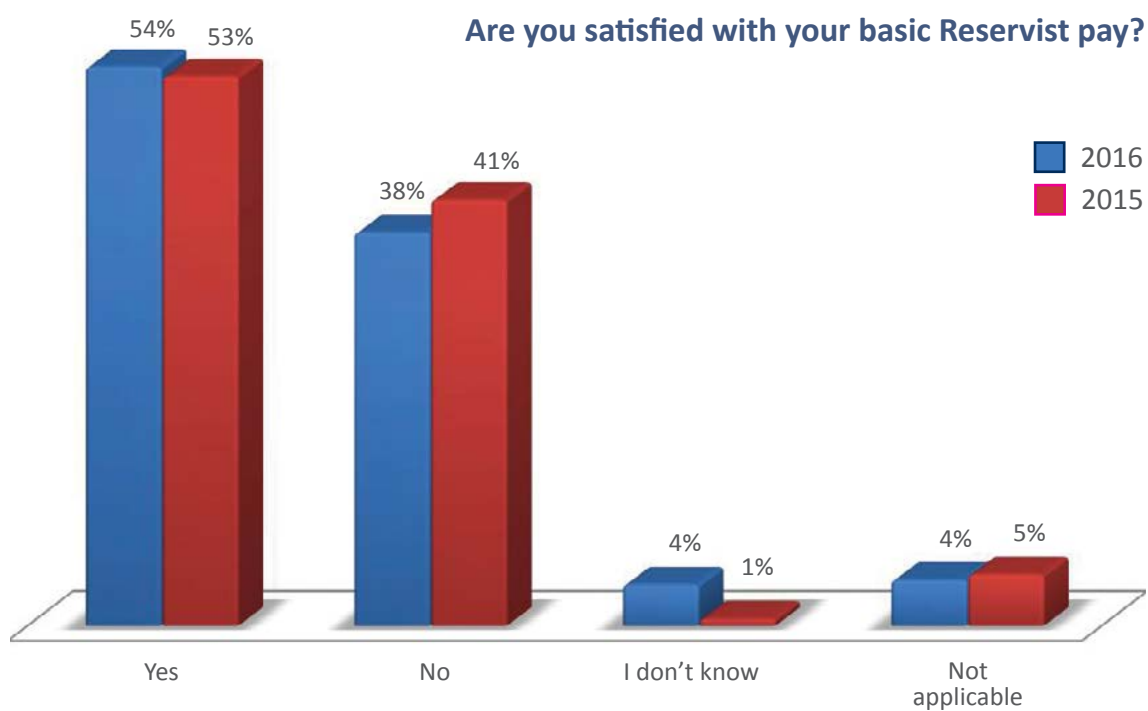
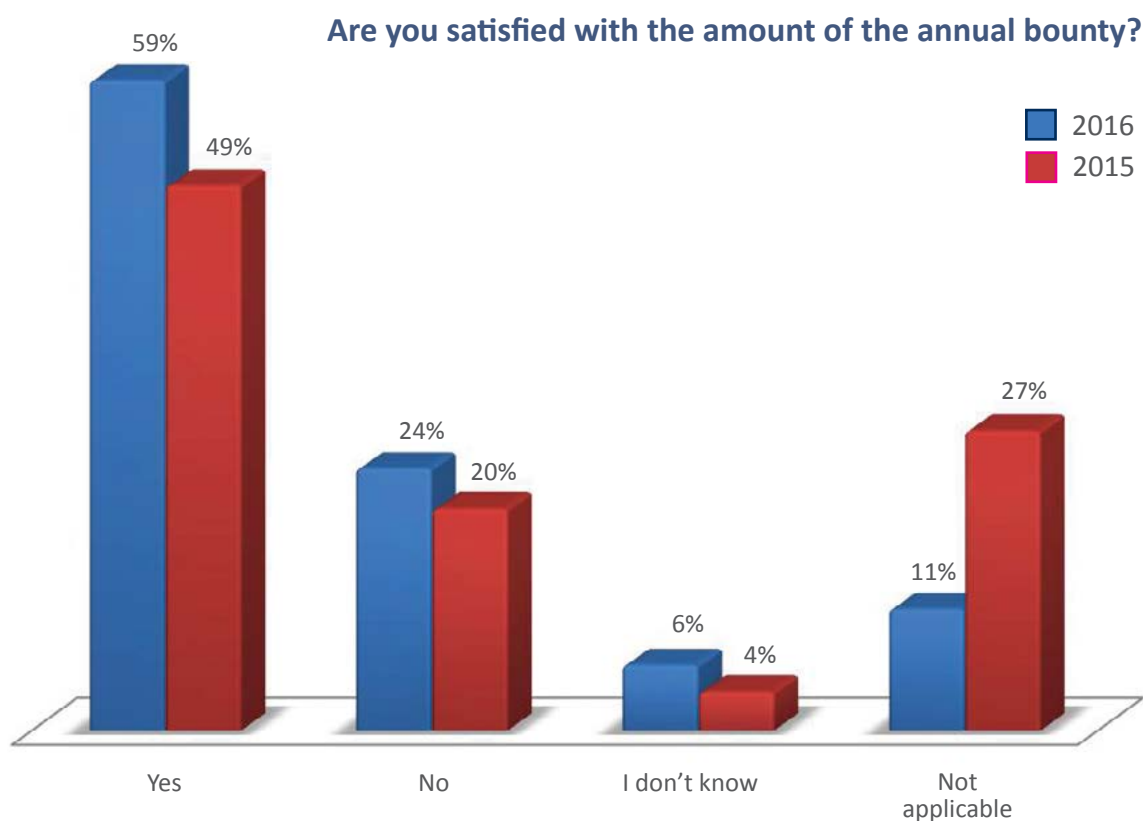
The training is haphazard at best. I am a former military police, current civil police - all told, 17 years in police - and there are NO courses available for me to find personal improvement and challenge. I am not used to assist in training new students, which is a waste of skills and knowledge.

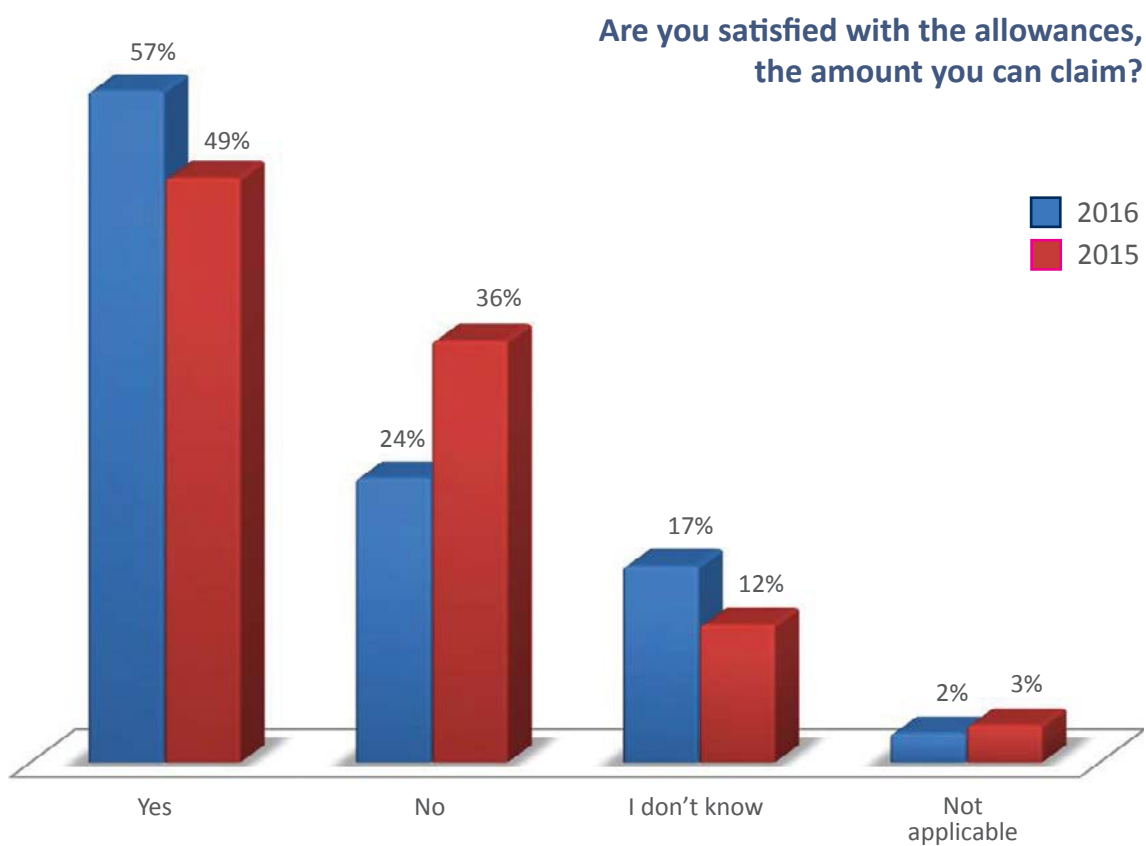
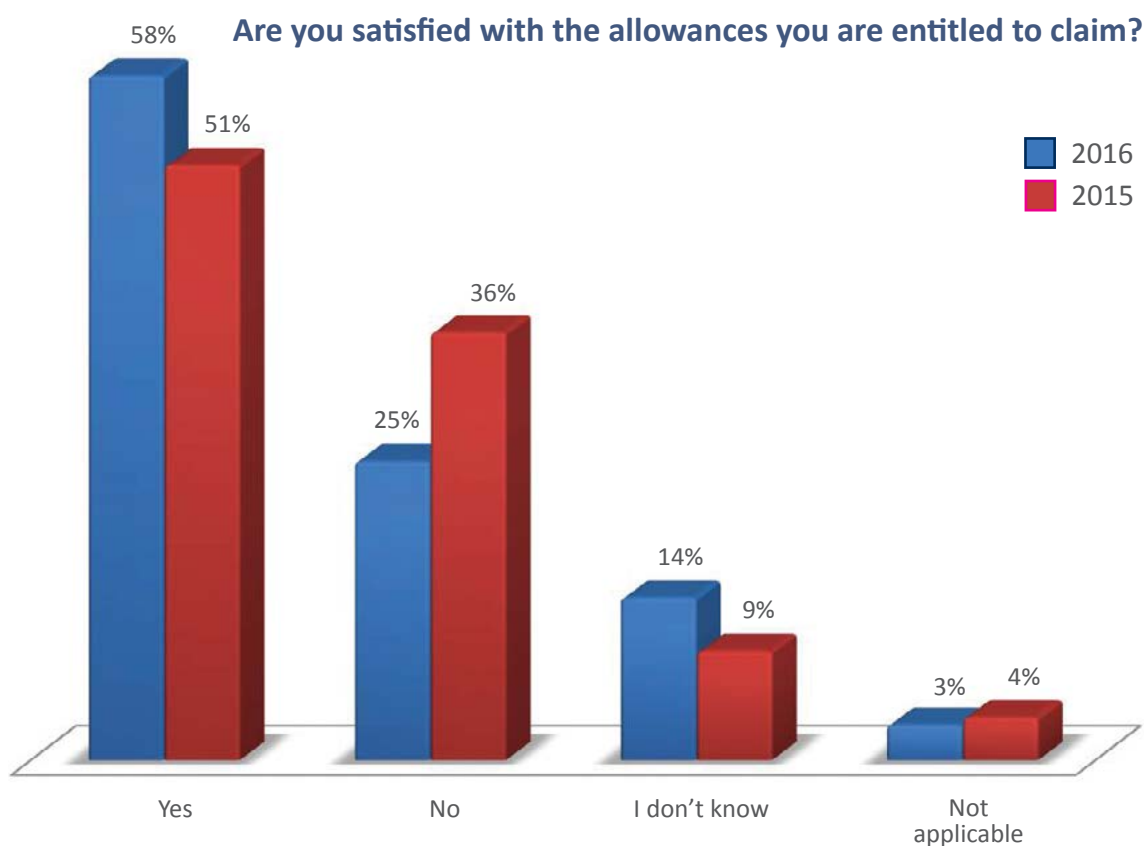
Each year of service there are more “essential requirements” training wise to fulfil for bounty - this will certainly affect retention in future - the harder the RAF makes life for its reserves, the less reserves, it will attract.

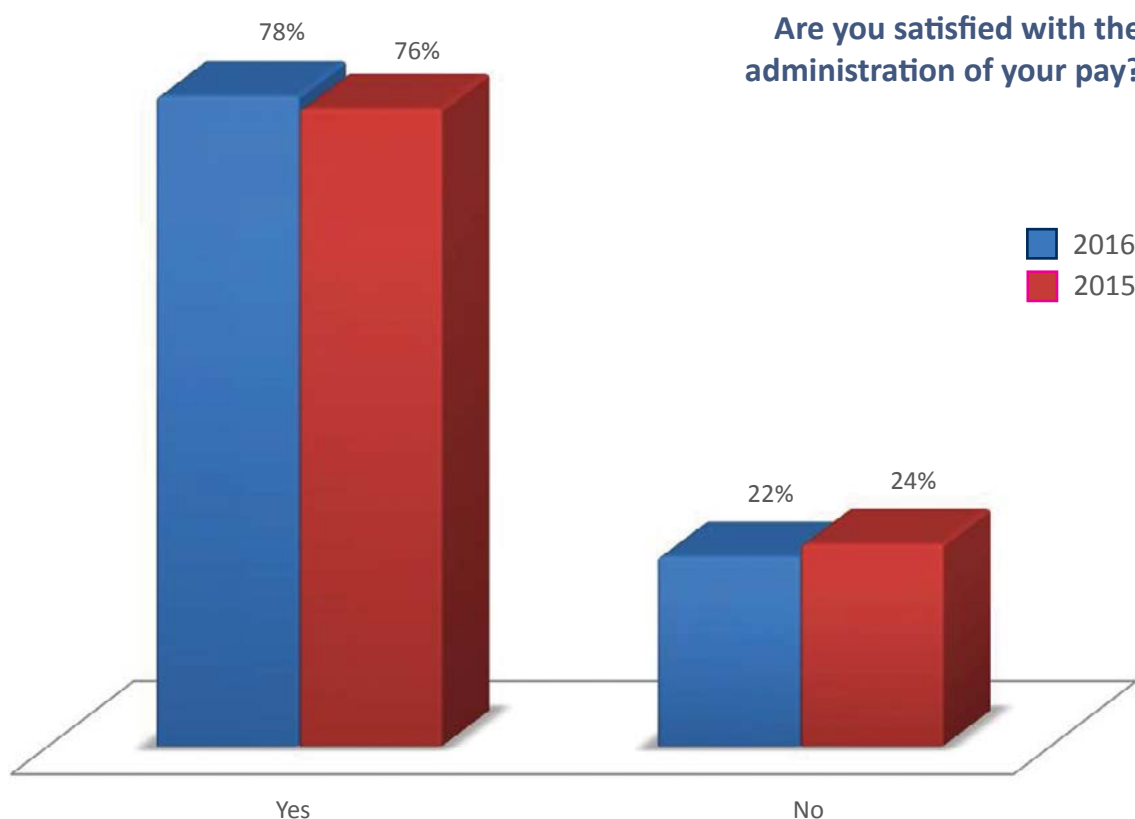
The availability of training courses doesn't seem to be well structured or communicated currently. I know that we are struggling with FT courses for our more senior SAC's and our JNCO's which is frustrating them and indicates to us that RAuxAF isn't the priority that it was suggested it would be though the recent changes.

More clarification on learning credits would be beneficial. Should reservists be eligible for these, it would offer up further opportunities for deployment (i.e. language courses, etc.)









ResCAS results

Pay

48% satisfied with their pay

68% satisfied with their annual bounty

Allowances

47% satisfied with their expense allowances (for travel etc)

Pay administration

63% satisfied with the admin support within their unit

Some of the comments received regarding Pay and/or Allowances:

We are requested to do our ACT for which we only get our normal reserve pay; I have to take unpaid leave, which means when I do my ACT I am at a loss financially. I think we should be paid our civilian wage - so similar to when we are deployed.

Expenses too hard to claim and too bureaucratic. Pay is less than regulars, effectively, as paid 1/365th of their annual salary per day, whereas no regular, outside of ops, would ever work 365 days pa.

The bounty should be linked to performance rather than attendance. Merely attending selected weekends does not indicate operational competence.

Not enough admin staff to cope when sickness and deployments kick in. Full time RAF support not good enough. There should be another full time reserve post on the squadron to assist. This is not instead of the full time RAF staff

Pay and allowances have become a nothing more than a mockery. I find it difficult to believe that it has become so complicated to even receive your basic pay on time or at all. HTD allowances not being paid for over 6 months - and being told it is a system error month after month is what I can only assume to be a cover up for someone's incompetence. As a Reservist, JPA access is not generally a viable method of claiming allowances because, for example, I would have to conduct a 120 mile round trip to claim them. To then have to claim the HTD. The system currently is a farce and I strongly believe being a Reservist is perceived as a hobby and not a part time job and our income is not seen as important as a Regular.

Administration at Sqn level is first class. Admin by PSF is lacking, they fail to understand that the Reserves have limited or no access to JPA, MOSS, etc.

Since joining the Sqn I have lost over £12k & can no longer afford to be part of the Sqn so reluctantly I'm being forced to leave

The general pay should definitely be increased... This weekend for example. I worked an intense 19 hour day and was paid £43 ... This works out to £2.26 per hour... This would be unacceptable in a civilian environment and is not a great retention incentive for PTVR's.

Bounty: the annual award should be incremental with an increase after every 5 additional years' service - currently it is capped after 5 years and there is therefore no financial incentive for PTVR to stay further than 5 years. This is exacerbated by the recent introduction of ex Reg Pers joining as Reservists and receiving £10,000 after 3 years' service. PTVR bounty needs restructuring in line with this initiative.

Home to Duty: pence paid per mile is far less than HMRC guidelines and should be increased accordingly.

Reservists are not entitled to LSA for ex deployments whereas their regular counterparts are. This is because MoD believe that as a reservist you volunteer to be separated from your family! There is a lack of parity of treatment across the pay field including X Factor and it is part of service which makes me as a 30 yr served ex regular officer a second class person.

It is extremely difficult to keep track of payments, as allowance claims do not appear on a payslip, and just randomly get added to one's bank account without detail on what has been paid. Some of the admin is excessive - claiming mileage allowance for travel in one's own car requires a whole host of paperwork, to confirm that military transport is not available. I have missed out on several claims for travel because this paperwork was not processed in time by the squadron admin staff.

Whilst I am not in the RAF for the money, per se, the disparity between my civilian and military pay, for the same job, is ridiculous. I do find myself questioning just how much the RAF really values my skills and contribution, and whether they are honouring their commitment to treat me with respect and act with integrity as set out by R.I.S.E., when they pay me £45/day for a job that I get £267/day for in the civilian sphere...

Why can't I have a JPA account?

Very little parity with regulars. No 'golden carrot' to stay in for 10 years, 15 years, 20 years etc. Money being thrown at the regulars to join the reserves (many of whom are very open about leaving after three years after they've cashed in with no chance of being deployed), but no extra money for reservists- how do you think that makes us feel? No retrospective pension for those who have served for years, or even the ability to 'buy-in'- thanks a lot.

Our junior ranks are routinely out of pocket when they undertake a course. That's scandalous. Expecting our junior ranks to pay up front for hotel accommodation and then claim it back on JPA is wrong. It puts our lowest paid in a difficult position.

Nothing is paid on time! This causes big morale issues as months can go by where no payment is made even for routine training due to poor administration and ridiculous monthly pay cut off dates, we are expected to fork out up front for things and then wait for recompense – Message: GROW UP AND START LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD, PEOPLE HAVE BILLS TO PAY AND LIVES TO GET ON WITH!!!!

Any pay queries are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Squadron admin are very organised and accurate when it comes to pay and allowances. Support of Unit personnel staff is outstanding. They are helpful, informative and approachable. More money would always be very nice but I'm very satisfied with the package provided to me, transitioning from Regular, FTRS to PTVR. I'm currently very happy with all the arrangements and the support I receive.

Pay by and large is well administered and accurate but JPA is a nightmare to reservists accessing it to make a claim. Many do not claim missed meals, travel or subsistence through ignorance of the allowances or for fear of making a mistake or lack of confidence.

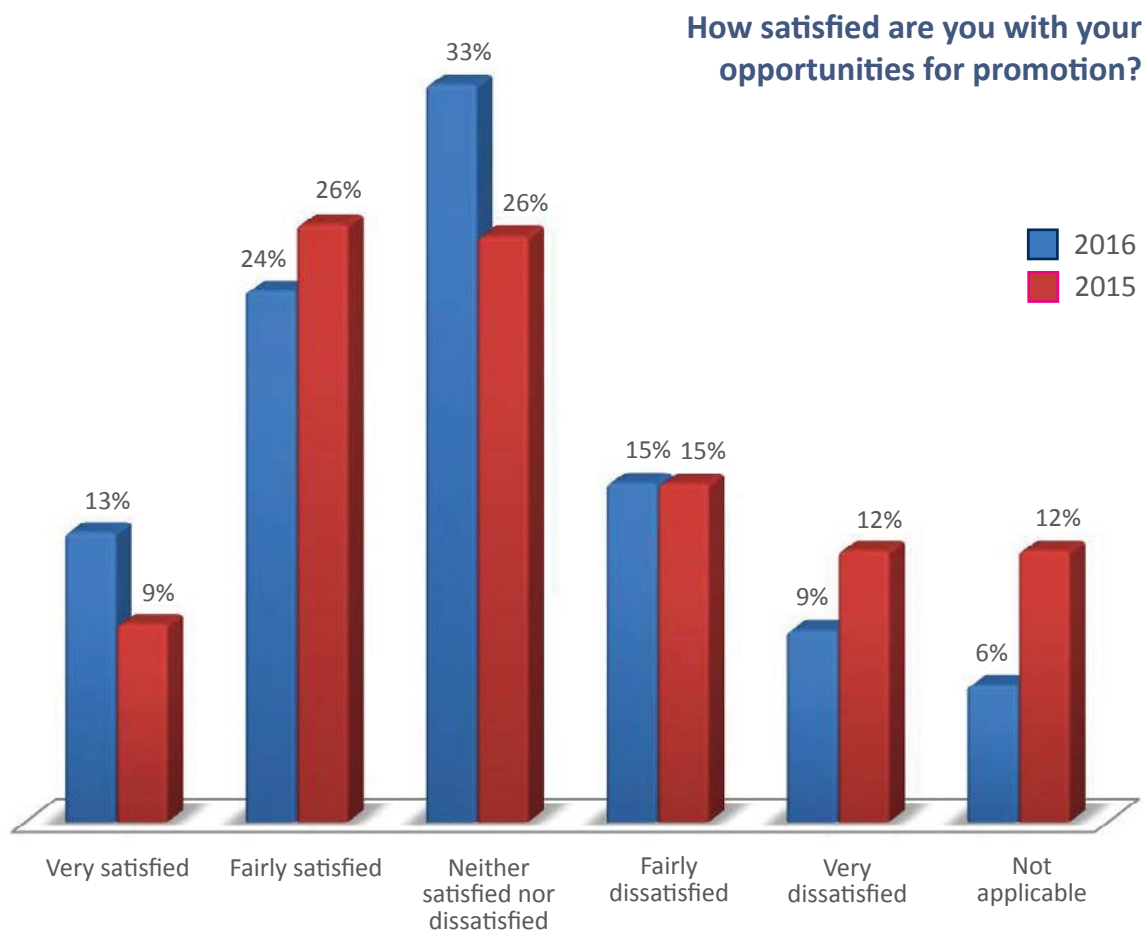
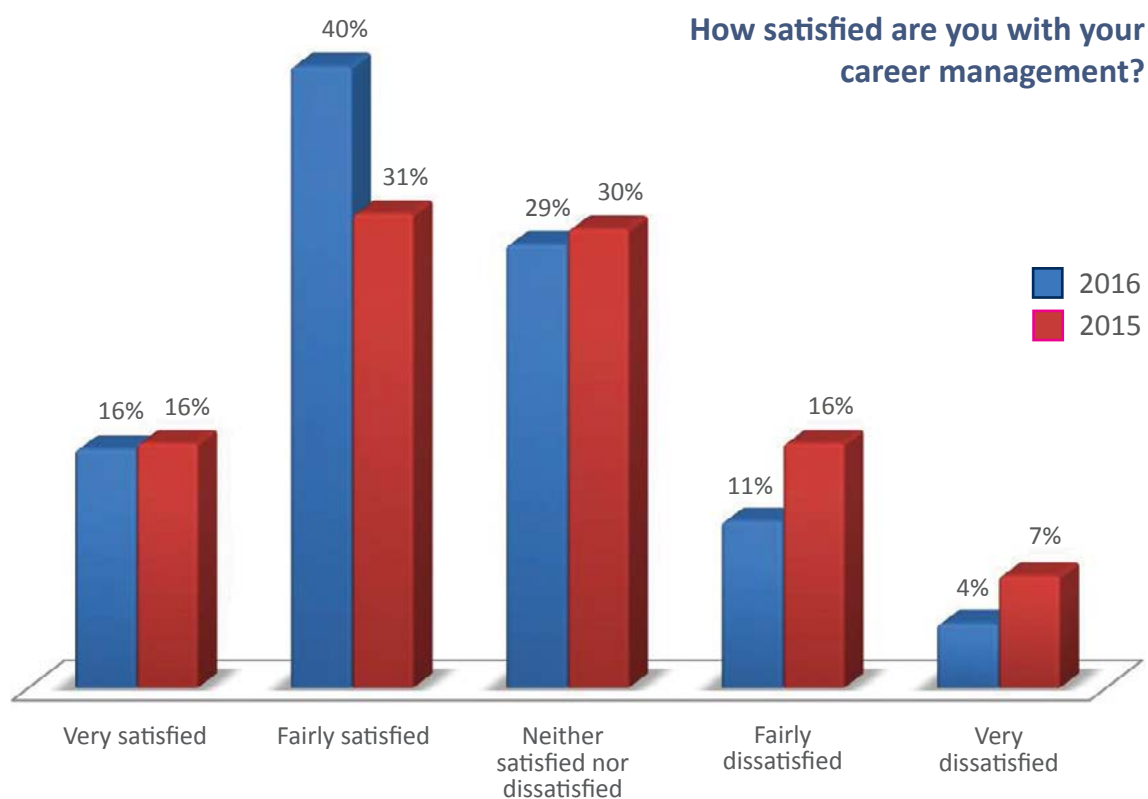
My unit provides a good level of service when it comes to pay administration, but there have been several incidents recently where the JPA system has provided an unacceptable level of service to us Reservists. I was owed over £800 in pay for reserve forces work I had undertaken, and I had to wait 3 months to receive it. If a member of the Regular RAF was not paid for three whole calendar months, then questions would most certainly be asked in Parliament - so why should this be acceptable for Reservists? This does not seem to reflect the Whole Force Concept...

The Reserve Force is still being run like a charity- attendance based on commitment and goodwill of reserve and employer. The US Model provides firmer laws to protect reservist's civilian jobs and, importantly to ensure attendance. The US model also is very attendance positive in that it pays two days' pay for every day worked on weekends and has added bonuses such as tax free pay and very generous Per Diem allowances. The party line from UK is that they will not invest to that extent.....Then prepare to suffer with retention and struggle to recruit.

Payslips are an enigma most of the time.

The RAF does not seem to appreciate that the reserves is a secondary role - to work 5 days then 2 with reserves then your next week at work. I hear a lot of regular staff say "it's only a weekend". It is not. It is working 12 days without a break. This is NOT recognised in the pay rates/ bounty rates. The increasing number of things that must be "in date" to get bounty is ridiculous - 3 years ago it was fitness in date and 27 days done - now there are an increasing number of "annual tests" which we are told are "requirements" - even though there is very little opportunity to complete these tests - even less without travelling 200 miles each way (and of course, you must have business insurance on your car to claim your days travel). There is also a dispute to what is a "training day", with some days worked "not bounty qualifying"?? This is much more of an issue as training days are reduced from 36 available per year, down to 24 per year. If the RAF considers that people have lives, family, holidays, work...then this does make 27 days through the year a challenge for any professional people. I do not advocate a reduction in days - but an increase in opportunity to take part in training.





ResCAS results

Career management

54% satisfied with career management within their unit

Development & progression

56% satisfied with the opportunities for personal development

42% satisfied with the opportunities for promotion

Some comments received regarding career opportunities in the RAF Reserves:

My Squadron has been told that there is now a limit imposed by Honington, on the numbers of non Commissioned officers it can have. This is having a detrimental effect on the retention of senior members of the Squadron.

There is no career management in the reserves that I have noticed, only what you do yourself. Is there a reserves desk officer? I honestly don't know. What role do RFMC have in career management? There is very little opportunity for promotion from SO3 to SO2 and beyond.

Career opportunities are not discussed.

I'm in my last year and will have served 36 years as a reservist of one form or another - VRT, PTRS, FTRS. Not once in all that time has anyone conducted a formal career counselling session with me.

Almost no prospect of any officer getting beyond Flt Lt - but RNR and AR get automatic Lt Cdr/Major.

Length of time stuck in junior officer ranks is not made clear.

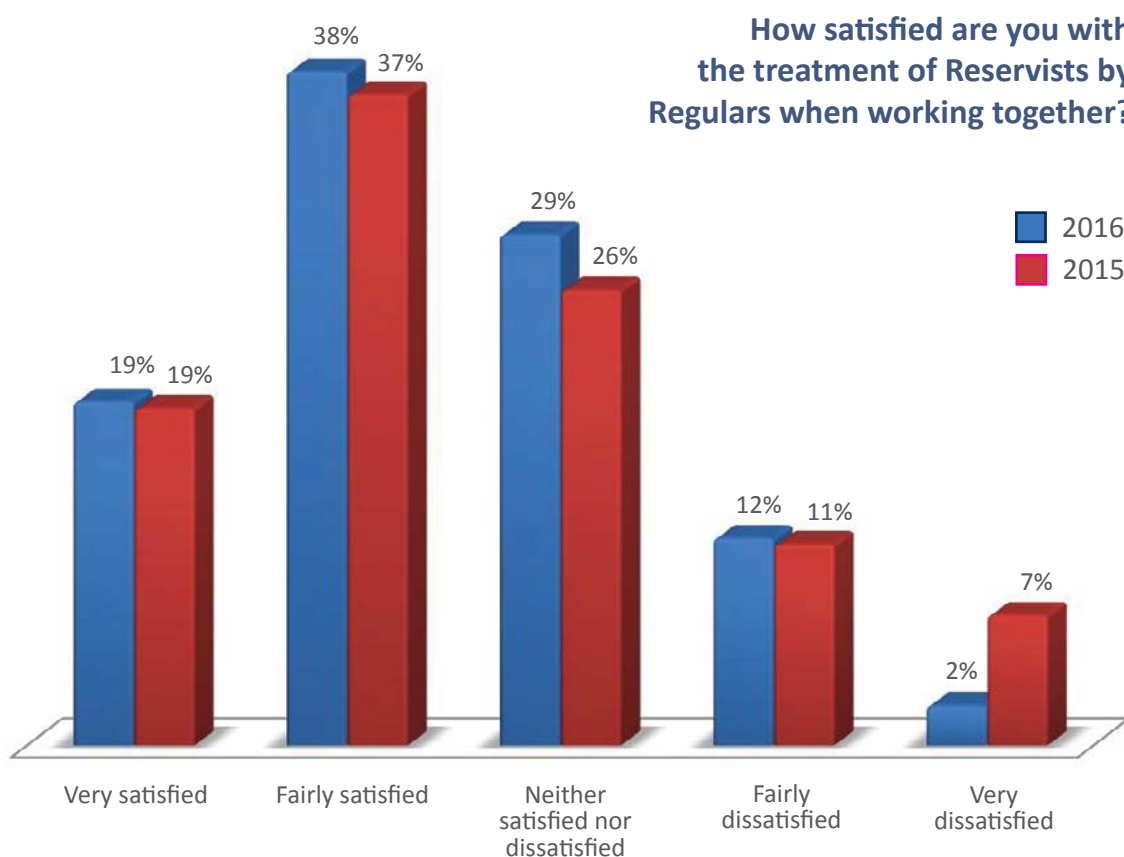
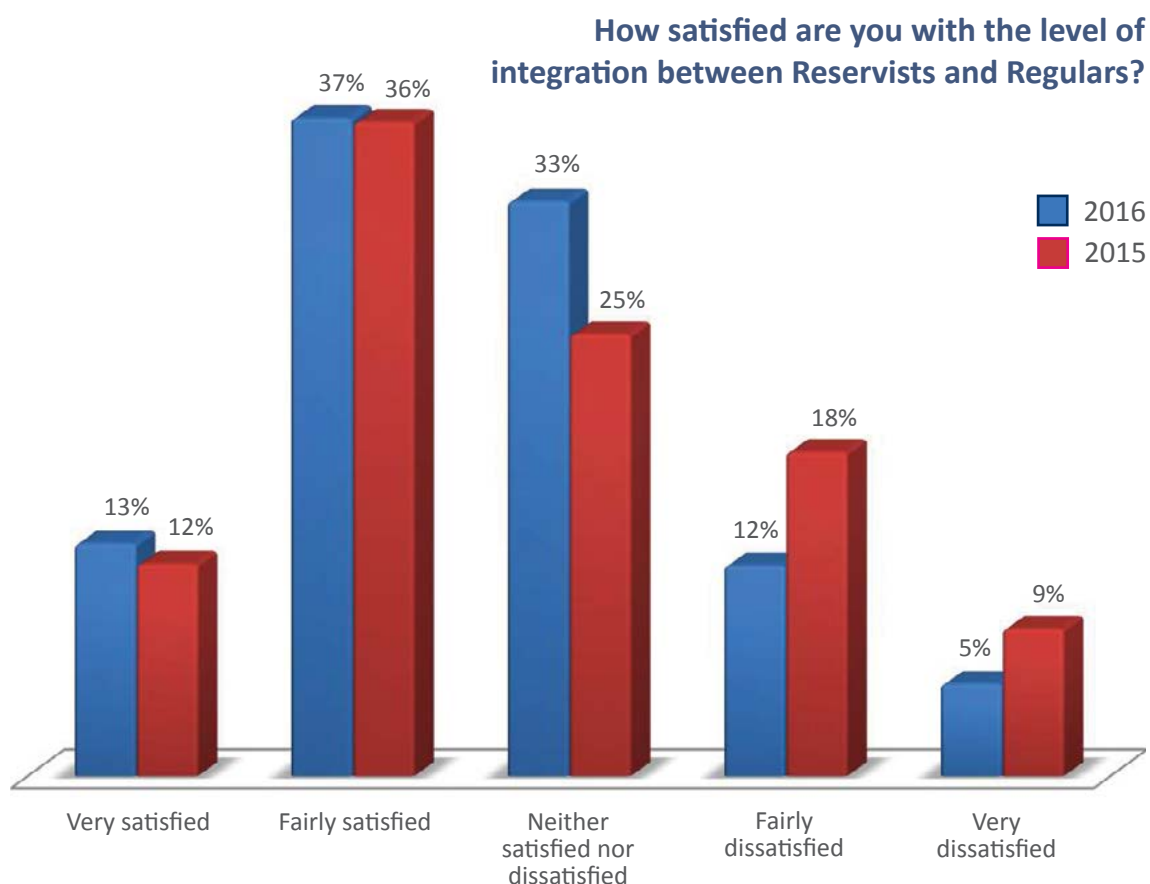
I have been a FS since 2008 with positive promotion recommendations more or less every year, yet there are no opportunities for progression in the RAuxAF. Most of the WO roles are filled by AD or FTRS and FS is effectively dead man's shoes...I also find the approach to NSAR ratings completely inconsistent and now find myself being compared to regulars rather than reservists in the same rank and trade. I am most dissatisfied with the situation and am actively seeking to transfer into the Army Reserve as a result.

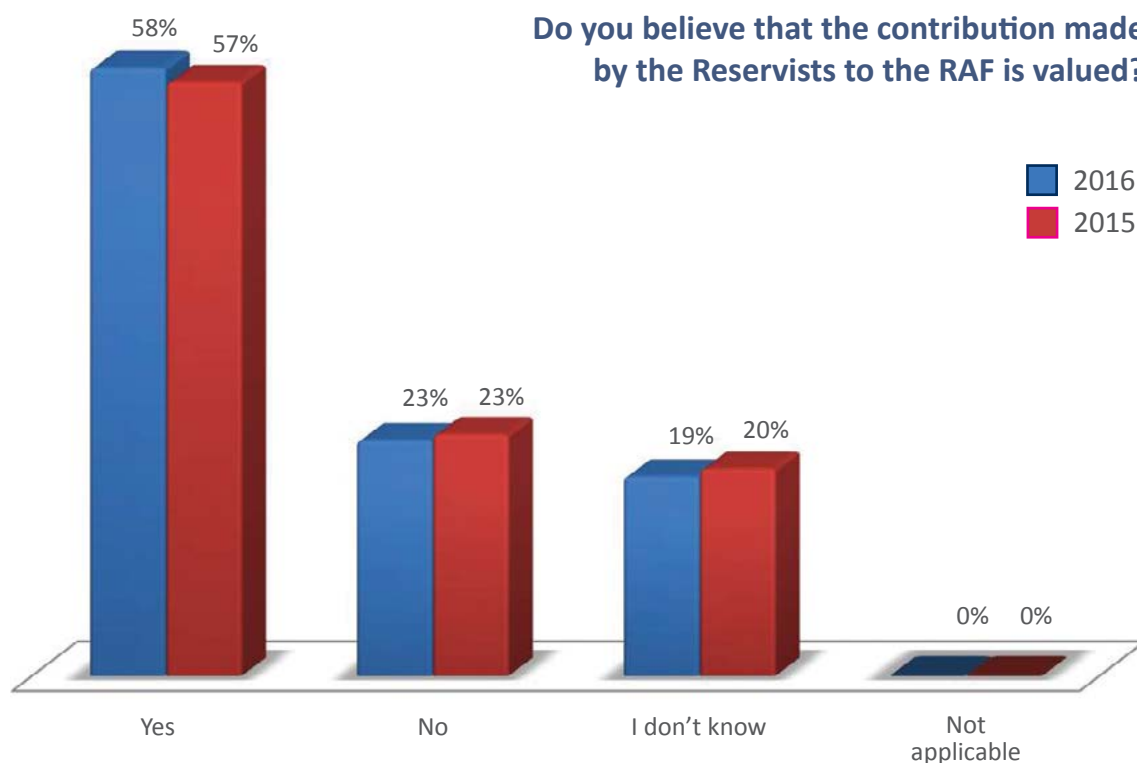
The situation will only get worse, as ex regulars join due to the incentive scheme, so someone needs to do some serious thinking about how career expectations can be met in the future. My employer is now questioning what I actually get from the reserves, and consequently asking what the benefits are for them. Considering I am a 1 level Civil Servant, working closely with MoD on reserves recruitment and employer/ministerial engagement, they do not think I am getting much benefit at all and see the benefit primarily being one way. My employer is one of the most supportive in the country (as a result of my efforts) and will continue to support Defence, but they are no longer convinced that my time in the Reserves is really beneficial at all. They are now fully supportive of me applying for a transfer to the Army Reserve as they see the limitations of RAuxAF in my scenario.*

I am satisfied that opportunities exist for promotion to Cpl, but there is very little opportunity for lateral progression or any out of trade courses. There is certainly no avenue for transferring of skills and I fear we lose people from the reserves rather than trying to attract leavers into a different role.

I was on a promotion course. It was cancelled at the last minute. I would have been promoted, but 2 years later, still no course availability!

Regular - Reservist integration





ResCAS results

Regular-Reserve Integration

41% agree they feel valued by Regulars

52% agree they feel valued by society

Note: 74% of Regulars rate the contribution of Reserves as valuable

Comments regarding Reservist and Regular integration:

Much more could be done in terms of base facilities available on weekends i.e. gyms, shops and bars, all often inaccessible at weekends. Reservist accommodation usually worst on camp...

The integration has changed over the years. In 2001 the regulars would not even speak with a reserve let alone want to work alongside us as they thought we were trying to take their jobs. Now you wouldn't know if it was a regular or reserve you were working alongside.

Once regulars get to see you are actually committed, do a full time job as well as this and have to do weapons and fitness test twice a year they usually come around to the fact that reservists have twice as much to do much of the time.

Full time RAF personnel are having a hard time seeing their posts go and being taken over by reservists. There is some resentment in my opinion.

I don't think that some regulars respect reservists at times. Just attended a nursing conference for RAF nurses where it was quite obvious that reservists were in the minority and the regulars thought they were far superior to reservist and civilian nurses even though they mainly work in the NHS! Very disappointing.

Every time a Reservist is deployed with Regulars they have to prove themselves. Most Reservists would rather be called up and deploy with their own Sqn rather than be deployed with a regular where they are not appreciated.

Whole Force. Really?? Nothing in its planning stages is done with this in mind - like Pay or SJAR's. The reserve element is announced afterwards only when they realise they gave it no thought, and then because it's been rushed, it is bodged. We seem increasingly distant, far more so than when we were working together constantly on operations.

It has taken 10 years for my Sqn to obtain a level of equality with the regulars in the trade and this is due to hard work of all reservist personnel and a continual mobilisation of Sqn personnel since 1998. Any watering down of reservist training will impact on this close relationship.

Reservist are valued by those whom have experienced working with then and not valued by those that have not.

I believe at a high level reservists are very much valued but I don't feel like that when working with them on shift/out of area. This is particularly younger members of the regulars, I don't think they understand what a reservist is all about and therefore the attitude towards us can be negative.

On deployment I felt we were very well accepted and integrated. There was a respect for our civilian experience. Recognition and integration with regulars has improved markedly during the time I have been involved. Generally regular / reserve integration works well in the RAF and certainly better than in the Army Reserve.

My Regular counterparts are very open about the value that our Sqn adds to the Regular RAF and as such Pers on our Sqn often feel highly valued.

I have had the opportunity to work alongside Regulars in a variety of guises, from sport competitions to teaching mental health to working in Ops centres. The response from the personnel I have worked with has been very positive. It is up to us to use our integrity and values and step up to the task, and get the job done.

There are still pockets of resistance in the RAF. Unfortunately, these people won't be persuaded and we'll just have to work around them. The lack of Reserves awareness within the RAF is still way too high. Much work still needs to be done in this area.

Valued by the top brass but not by middle management.

We are valued generally, Regulars just need educating at all levels (strangely, particularly at commissioned level) that Reservists are experienced, educated and useful people who may know better than them on some things and that knowledge, skills should be used and valued, not feared.

I support the Typhoon Force HQ and am treated exactly the same as everyone else in the HQ. If anything, my contribution is even more greatly appreciated as I am a PTVR and they respect my commitment.

The attitude has changed to a far more positive acknowledgement of reservists working alongside regulars. The more we work together the more those old misconceptions go away.

I think that the Regular Forces are going to have to change their working practices and culture somewhat if we are to successfully create more opportunities for reservists to train and work alongside regular forces. It still feels like two distinctly separate Air Forces; one which works from Monday to Friday lunchtime, and the other which works on Saturdays and Sundays.

Civilian employees of the MOD/RAF usually have a problem with reservists, not regular RAF personnel.

One Force, we should be indistinguishable. Regulars will always look down their noses at us that's fine - I went out and proved myself and earned their respect. That attitude will never change and I would not want to see any top down edict to attempt to force through an attitude change. Makes it more fun when they realise "the Civvy" is out soldiering them.

Integrated training is a must between the 2. Look at the USA and Australia

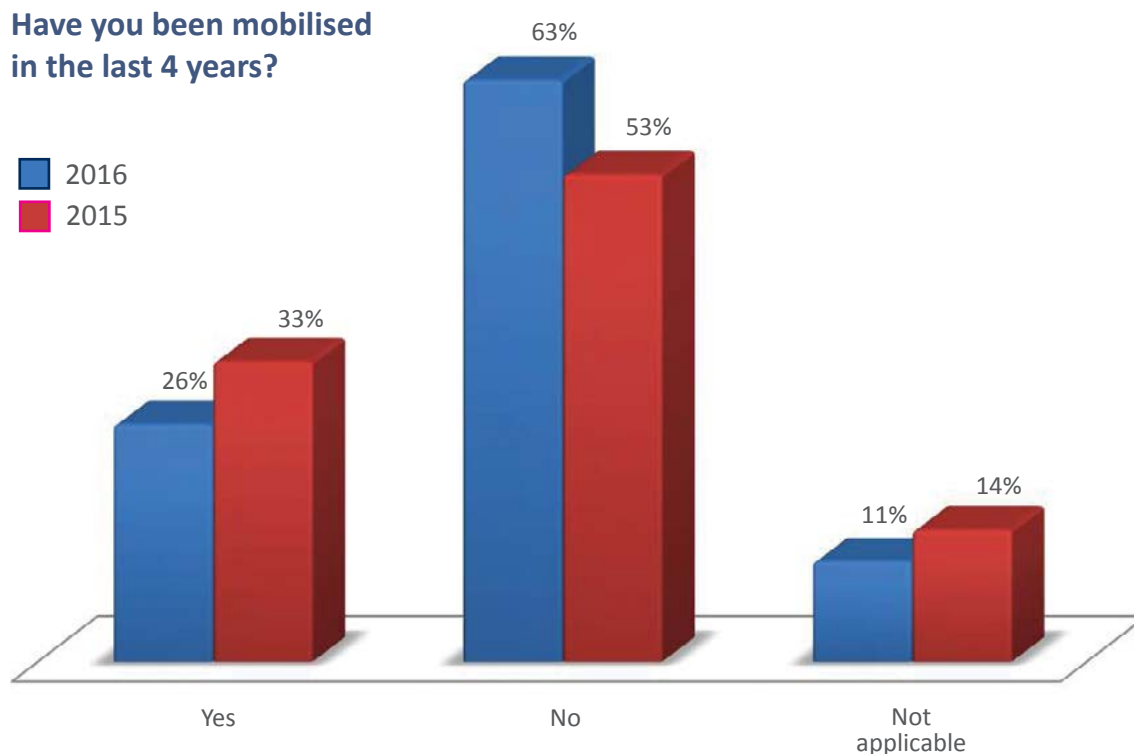
I feel that although the one force ethos is now the working practice ,at grass roots level reservist are tolerated at best.

I think that regulars are unable to empathise with the effort a reserve goes through to do his PTVR job. A reserve works all week then travels (sometimes hours) to his RAF place of work to work all weekend. Regulars get 38 days holiday per year and don't understand/care that reserves generally have to take their training (ACT) period out of their holiday allowance.

The level of respect is fairly low particularly when there is no previous military background.



Have you been mobilised in the last 4 years?



Comments regarding mobilisation:

Whilst I felt adequately prepared for mobilisation, much of the skillset that I needed had been gained over years of service within other military organisations. If I had deployed with only what the RAF had given me, it would have been an even steeper learning curve in theatre and consequently a longer time period before I became effective.

Employer concerned that being away will affect my return to work and the skills required to continue in the business.

Short notice mobilisation (2 weeks' notice) Difficult to arrange childcare at such short notice.

Had to fight the Regular CoC at every turn. Treated like children and constantly felt like we were in the way.

My previous regular experience was not taken into account by the Sqn I deployed with. Had it been I would have been of more value to them.

When do I get to go?

My clinical skills and knowledge are not used by the RAF. There is a general failure by the military to use the senior qualifications for nurses in emergency care and practitioner roles in secondary care.

I was mobilised Jan 2015 for 4 months to backfill a post for a Regular mobilised for Op Kipon. My paperwork arrived at my Employer HR Dept only 2 weeks before my mobilisation date. The paperwork had not been proof read or amended prior to being sent to reflect my mobilisation. It made reference to a 6 month call-up, pre-deployment training and PODL, all of which I had to assure my employer were incorrect.

I have volunteered for deployment 3 times (in support of exercises in Jordan and Kenya and for Op TORAL). Each time I have experienced difficulties unique to Reservists that have resulted in the deployment being cancelled. I have had the dates extended at very short notice (I was due to take unpaid leave from work and extending the dates made it financially unviable for me to do this); after signing onto the new terms and conditions that enable me to be mobilised in support of exercises a dispute between JHC and the Sqn over whether I would be paid my civilian wage or my Reservist wage resulted in the Sqn pulling me from the exercise; my Op TORAL deployment dropped off without any notification. I have now been informed that I will be mobilised end of 2016; however my previous experiences have led me to treat this with some degree of scepticism.

Lack of opportunities for short term mobilisation, for example to provide cover for exercises.

My employer is now asking questions about my obligation - and we collectively of RAF Reserves Manning, Unit and self-need to ensure employers see the benefit through how the RAF protects the UK's commercial interests. Preparation for mobilisation is a curate's egg. A lot of time wasted as Preparatory Instructions change, ARTS testing facilities fail, medical centres fail to prepare themselves ahead of reservists taking precious time to visit them

One of the benefits of "Intelligent Mobilization" has been the amount of notice that I have received of my call-up. It generally works out to be approximately 12 months' notice, which means I am able to give my employer plenty of advanced notice of my departure on mobilisation, which allows them/me to plan ahead and ensure that my absence causes minimal disruption to the routine running of the business. One of the disadvantages of "Intelligent Mobilization" is that having been given lots of advanced notice of the intention to mobilize me, the initiation of the mobilization process was overlooked...the actual mobilisation and deployment was conducted in a rushed panic at the last minute meaning that I had no opportunity to spend a final few days with my family on leave before I was hastily bundled off to Afghanistan.

Initially so proud and so pleased to be back in full time. Quickly changed to the most frustrating and demoralising period of my 33 years in uniform.

It takes forever to issue mobilisation papers even though the Squadron were able to tell me about it months ago and issue me a letter confirming, most people don't get their actual papers until a few weeks before their mob date.

Mobilisation process is relatively straightforward. Pre-deployment training is done with the regular unit I have been supporting at the time and has been relevant and sufficient. Some of the little peculiarities of being a mobilised reserve could be explained to the regular hierarchy better however, such as leave within the mobilisation period, which they never seem to be able to get their head round.

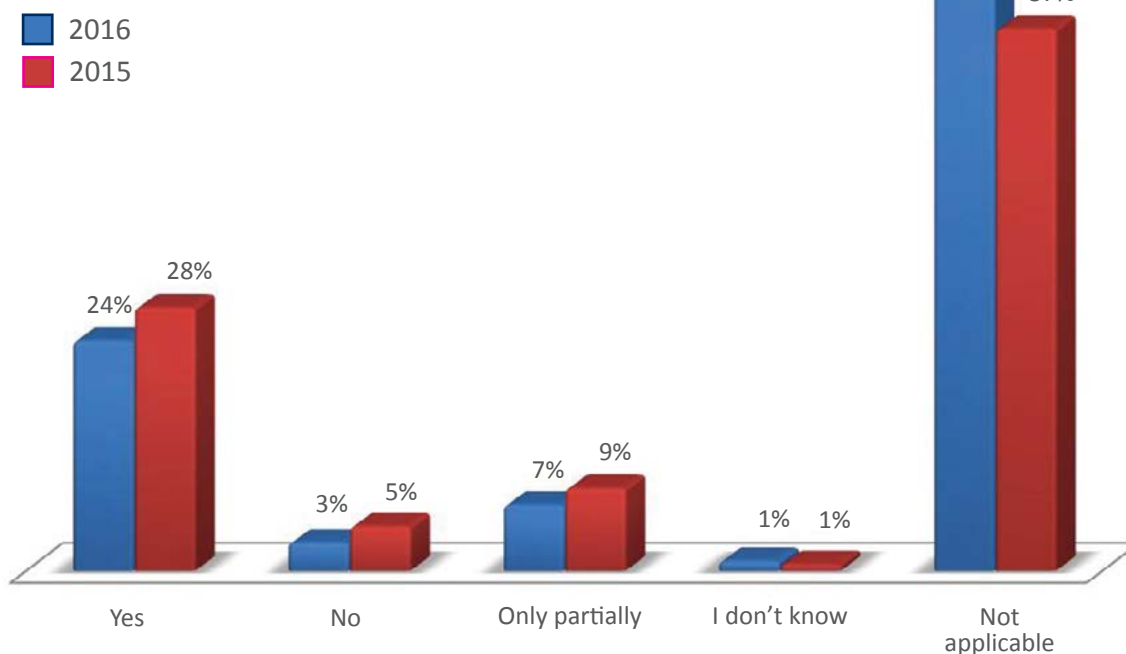
PDT proved to be an exercise of attrition - it was turned into a course as opposed to a process, where an agenda to reduce numbers was present and where a CRA could have been utilised to mitigate injury or other issues it was not - standards were introduced that have not been utilised before or since that were applied to reservists to their detriment. There were several examples of inequality and unfair discrimination at play to reduce the employability of reserves that have taken a toll on retention across FP Sqn since as a direct result.

I had an amazing experience working shoulder to shoulder with my regular colleagues, who were excellent mentors and also recognised the additional contribution and knowledge of other areas I could bring to the team.



Image caption: A Merlin helicopter hovers over Royal Air Force reservists with RAF Benson's 606 (Chiltern) Reserve Squadron during an Underslung Load Course at Benson airfield on 21st March 2013. RAF Photographer. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

When mobilised, were your skills and/or abilities used adequately/appropriately?



ResCAS results

Mobilisation

Welfare support

Satisfaction with the support received from the RAF when they were last mobilised - 67%

Satisfaction with the support their family received from the RAF when they were last mobilised - 48%

Satisfaction with the support they were offered via their station/ squadron when they were last mobilised - 61%

Satisfaction with the adjustment/ decompression process before returning to the UK - 50%

Satisfaction with the deployment welfare package - 54%

Satisfaction with the utilisation of their skills during their last mobilisation - 69%

Comments about utilising military skills:

I feel that my own (and other ex-regulars) skills are not being fully utilised, and maybe something should be done to identify personnel such as myself who have additional skills and Qs that could be put to use where units have a shortfall in their own personnel due them being deployed on Ops. Could look at compiling a database of people's civilian skills that could be of benefit to the wider Air Force in support of their operations.

I feel that they should look at civilian skills and qualification and see if there could be roles that could be filled out side of the Sqn.

I feel that they should look at civilian skills and qualification and see if there could be roles that could be filled out side of the Sqn.

Yes - on deployed Ops the RAF is using my skills pretty well. I can have reach into all sorts of areas at different levels of seniority. However, the "blue suited" RAF fails to ask and involve reserves in how to change processes, manage and own risk so that processes are smooth - as befits a 21st century business and as is essential to a 21st century fighting force that needs to win every time.

I hold a number of qualifications that are not utilised by the Sqn.

I am an Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Consultant and only a small percentage of my skills are being used.

Most recently the FP Force in particularly the RAF regiment has exploited and sought opportunity for RAuxAF Regt Reserves both in the UK and on Operations overseas. I myself am scheduled to deploy imminently, which will provide me with an opportunity to employ my skills and gain valuable experience. Equally, and based on feedback from several of my colleagues whom are also currently deployed; these opportunities have been well received and are a solid of example of the Whole Force working.

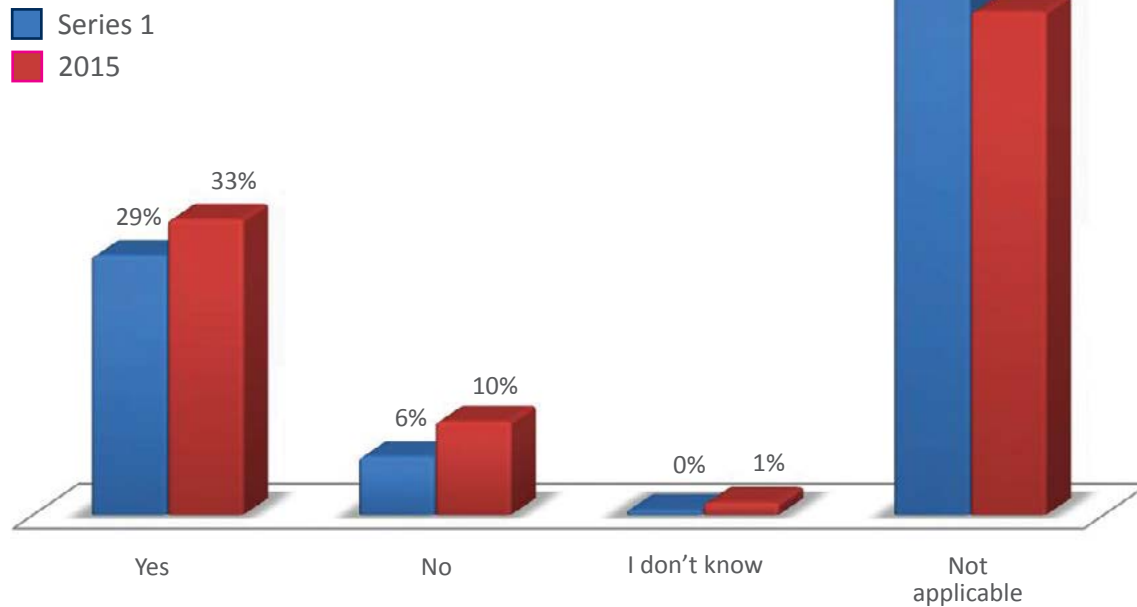
Many civil qualifications not used or recognised by military, for instance I have full LGV/PCV both acquired whilst serving but I can't use them now. I also had to do a 10 day course at Leconfield to drive a Landrover ! A waste of my time and military resources.

Former Royal Marine, former military police, current civilian police officer. None of my skills are utilised, none are even recognised e.g. continual PST re-qual while qualified in civil police, interview trained in civil police and previous military police - none of this recognised.

I am a qualified teacher and was not allowed to instruct as I had not attended a 3 week instructors course. I had however completed a 4 year B.Ed. Hons degree and taught for 35 years. I'm also qualified in Physical Education and have a post grad MSc but couldn't run the fitness tests or take PT yet they accept my driving licence as fit to drive their vehicles.

I think we could be used better, I'm not sure about military skills but reservists offer a very different skill set to the regulars, particular with regard to the Regiment where the older, more experienced demographic makes us good for interaction with civilian populations etc, probably better than 19-25 year olds whose primary experience is within the RAF. The combination of the reservist experience and military training should put us in good stead for roles. I'd imagine particularly in country with any kind of national emergency.

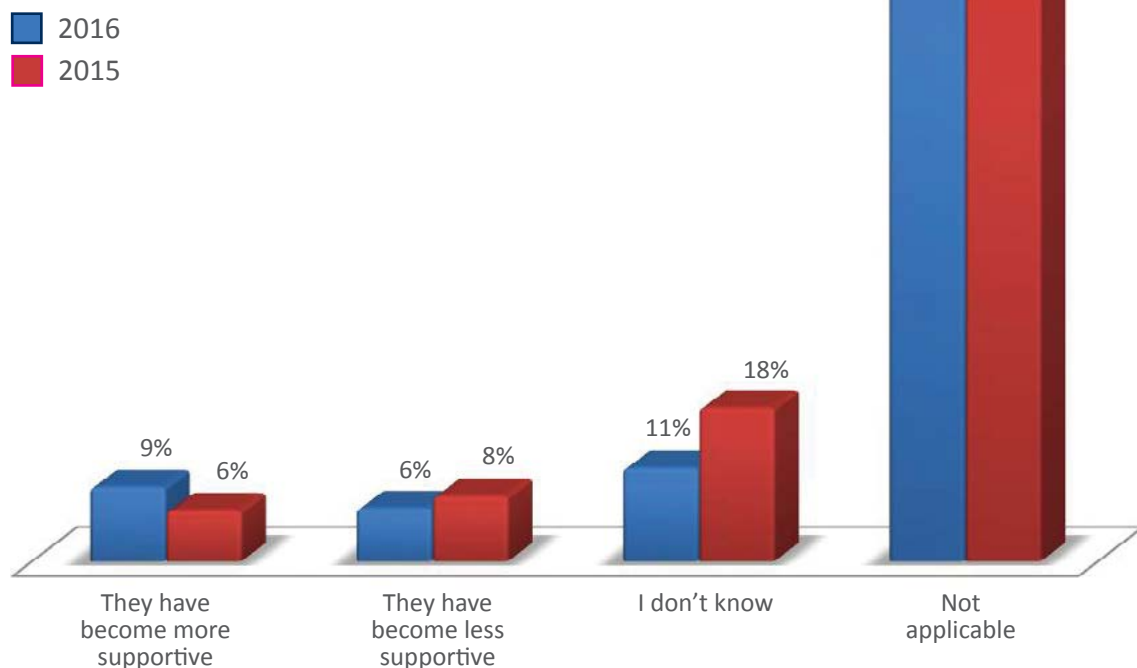
If you have been mobilised, do you feel that you were adequately prepared for mobilisation?



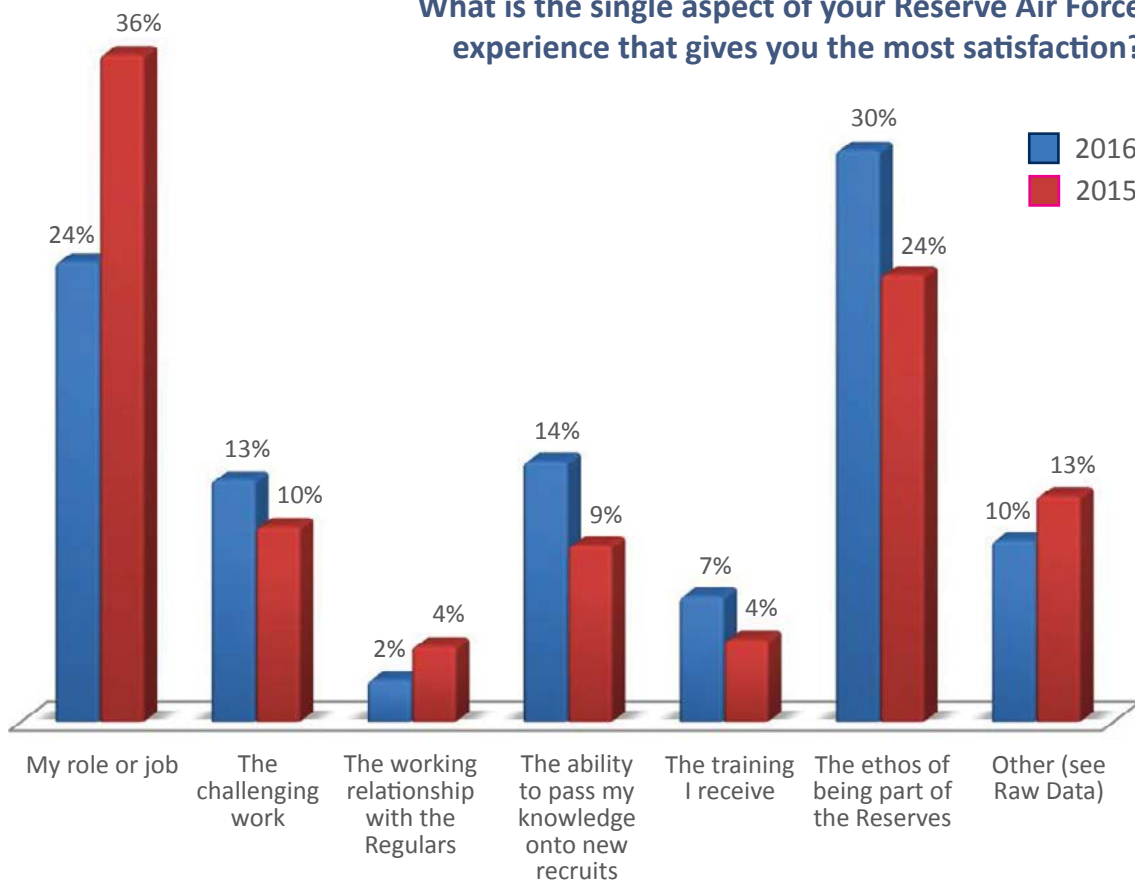
ResCAS results

Satisfaction with their pre-mobilisation briefings/information 67%

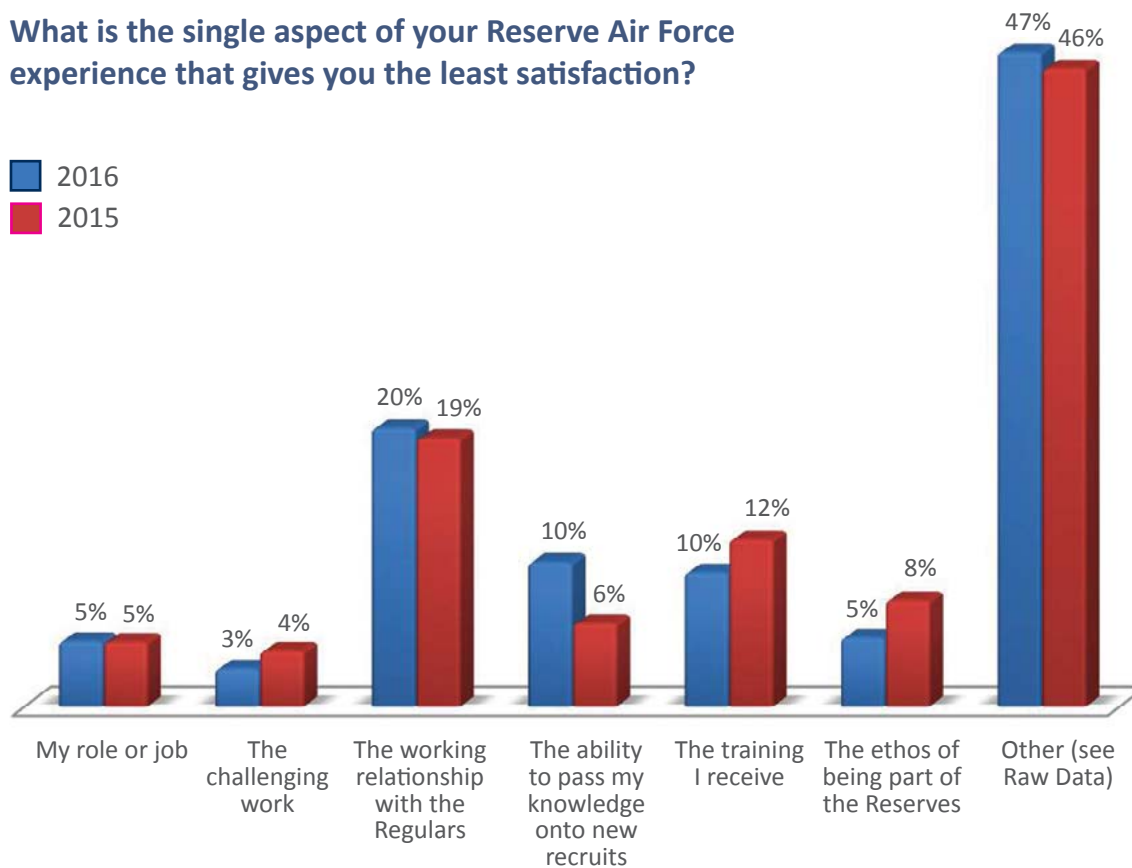
If you have been mobilised, do you feel that your employer's views towards you changed as a result?



What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the most satisfaction?



What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the least satisfaction?



What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the most satisfaction?

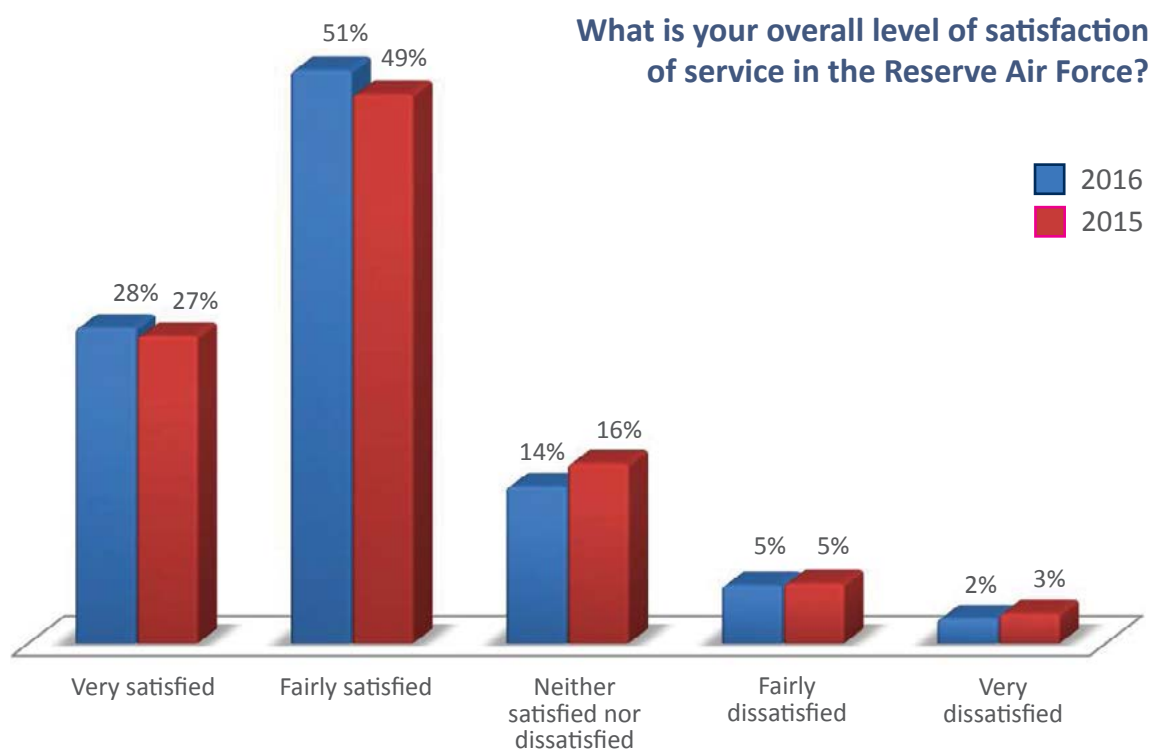
Other:

- Working with other highly trained committed reservists
- Being part of HM Armed Forces
- My mates/ Camaraderie
- The ability to remain part of the RAF having left the Regulars
- Being able to deploy
- Travel
- When I do have an opportunity to work with the Regulars forces, or to serve on Operations, it is the feeling that I am actively contributing to the delivery of Air Power and making a difference (albeit a small one, perhaps)
- Serving my country in my own limited way in my own personal time
- Nothing - I do intend to leave - I expected it to be "the training I receive" But I'm afraid it has not worked out, to date. Closest is "working with regulars"
- The knowledge that I have made a real contribution to operations

What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the least satisfaction?

Other:

- Poor administration
- Very poor facilities and lack of facilities being open when we are in on weekends
- The differences that still remain between regulars and reservists re pay, allowances and pensions
- The problems fitting it in
- The disparity between the way paramedics and nurses are treated, paid and employed will eventually cause the loss of paramedics to Army Reserve units. Given that a basic paramedic is treated as at least an equal to a basic nurse in terms of remuneration within the NHS, the RAF are failing to recognise the quality of some of their paramedic staff who in the NHS are employed at a level higher than nurses. Whilst it is clearly an edict from on-high, it will result in the loss of staff over time
- Lack of available resources at unit level at weekends such as open shops bars etc
- Having to take time off work to do things which could be organised at weekends e.g. fitness test, IRT Mod 1, tailors for fitting of No1 uniform
- Long recruitment process nearly gave up
- The lack of use of my skills and expertise in anything other than backfilling or posts that cannot be filled by regulars as there is a shortage within the JHC of SO2 manpower
- Limited opportunity for AT
- The amount of time outside of the advertised commitment I must spend to remain up to date
- The total lack of career management
- My employer
- Returning from ROIT, where I was very active learning about Leadership and the roles of an RAF Officer and unfortunately feeling on return to normal Sqn activity an anti-climax
- Fitting courses around my civilian job
- Lack of use of the skills we're taught. Lack of faith in us
- The lack of transferrable qualifications
- Limited opportunity for promotion
- Lack of issued kit to carry out duties
- The dismal accommodation when you give up your weekend to attend training
- What we are for is poorly defined



Comments regarding Reserves experiences:

Generally excellent. There are some financial and organisational problems that restrict my taking full advantage of the opportunities presented.

To stay in, I would like to see efficient administration alongside a supportive and interesting career. Accommodation is also poor.

On deployments, my experience was that reservists were not given the same opportunities as it's not their main job!

Exceptionally long recruitment process (over 2 years!)

It is my impression that the RAF / Government are more interested in numbers rather than retention / development of reserves.

Back in the 90's I was a regular on Regiment Reserve Sqn, we had a full Sqn and all the kit we needed to train with. Now, in 2016, we have no Green Fleet, no radios and not all the weapon systems to train with. How are we to retain people if we cannot train them properly?

Recently, a large number of our recruits walked away from training due to being told that they could not be paid for their work that weekend

I wish I had joined years ago!

Budgets are short, we have no vehicles, the vehicles we are mandated to have no one will provide, rules and regulations are choking the whole process - it's an embarrassing mess.

I have enjoyed the learning experience and have gained many new skills. The immediate staff are beyond reproach and have supported my development fully.

The routine (and often blunt) application of 'policies' designed for RAF Regular personnel, or indeed for an RAF Reserve Component of yesteryear, which takes little or no account of the realities of modern (and future) Reserve service is at best very frustrating and at worst disenfranchising.

What is it with the Capita medical? How come so many people fail and then become magically fit in a matter of weeks? There is obviously some problem with the standards they expect - it was certainly the most involved medical examination I have ever been subjected to!

I have been a reservist for more than 26 years, and I would recommend the experience to everyone, it has changed my life, my family's life, and I wouldn't be a better person without the RAuxAF in my life.

At some point in the future, the RAF will finally understand that we will NEVER be interchangeable but, actually interoperable is still pretty good, particularly if the Reserves are allowed to concentrate on niche capabilities.

It would be nice to see some tangible change come about from all these surveys. No trade related weekends, and told not to turn up at a weekend if we have no need to be there. But expected to do a 200 mile round trip just for a 20 minute fitness test.

I have loved every bit of the last 18 years even the bad stuff helped me to grow. The people we have lost and the way everyone came together has inspired and moved me. I feel part of a history and tradition that endures and I am proud to have been able to contribute and the people I have worked with.

Training was slow to start due to being one of the first attested to a new squadron but I understand the issues and things are improving greatly. I'm proud to be there from the start.

I feel it would benefit the reserves to offer medical and dental treatment to reservists.

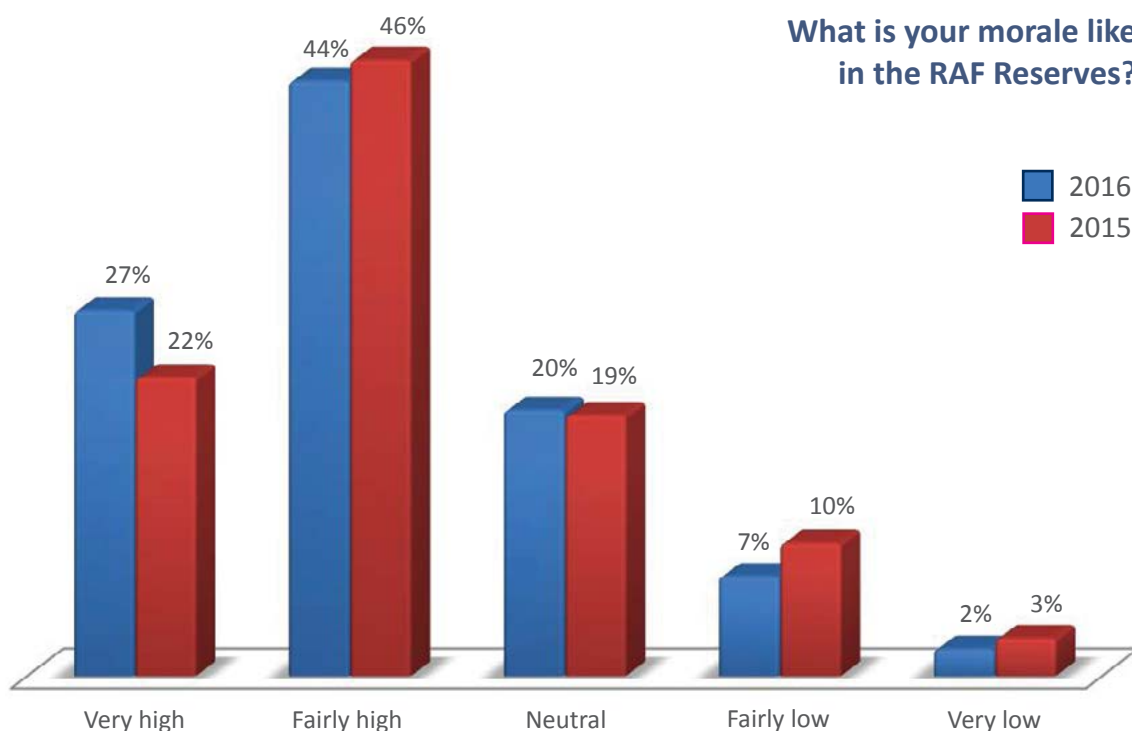
I have been in over 10 years and the permanent staff are fantastic and have made a number of good friends. The effort they put into things is commendable.

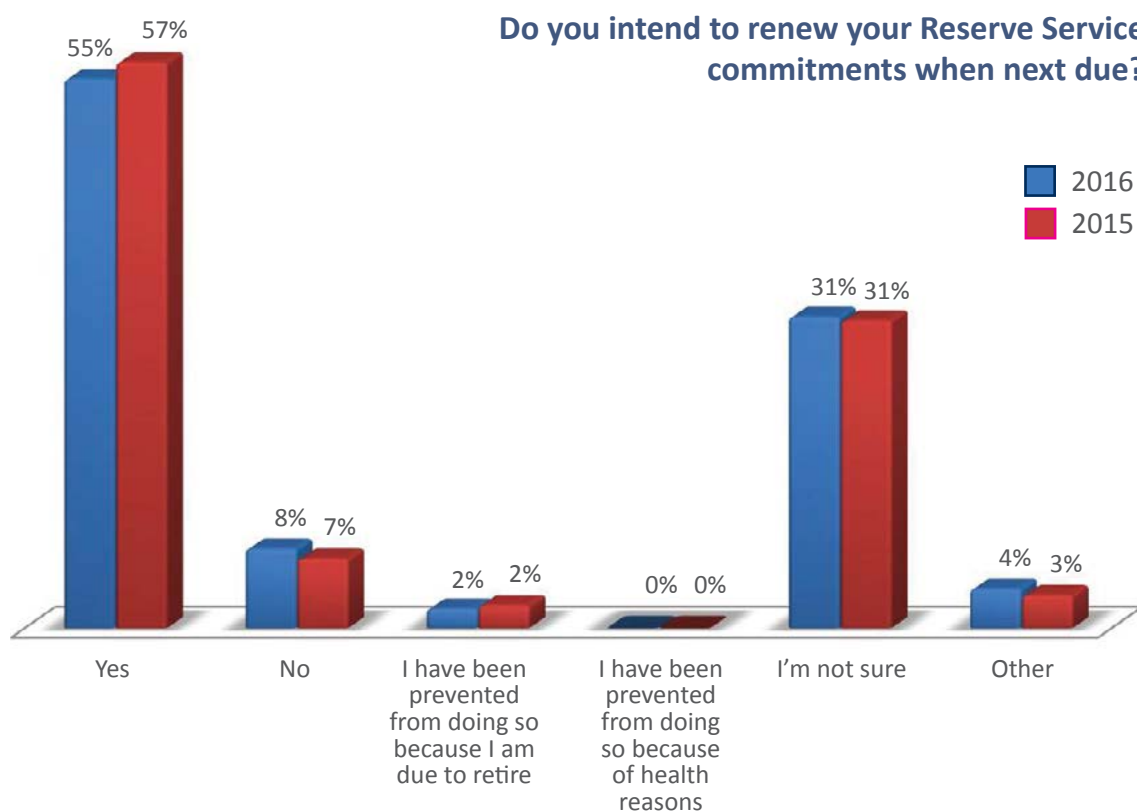
Have done the aeromedical course and qualified as flight nursing but do not get the chance to utilise the skills I have learned as instead of doing ACTs should be able to do a 2 week placement in aero med.

I am approaching 5 months service and feel really happy. Knowing that my contributions are welcomed and respected by the regulars.

Attendance has dropped massively in recent times at my squadron. Numbers on paper will be high, attendance is low. When volunteers are asked for tasking, they accept, hear nothing for 2 weeks - they cannot plan their already busy lives. Thereafter, do not apply again. Lack of consideration for reservists full time commitments to family and employer.

I love being part of the RAF, and I very much enjoy the time spent on the squadron and the people I serve with. I feel we have the capability to carry a skill set that would enable us to be used more flexibly.





Some comments about renewal:

I would only continue on the basis of training and pay improving which i will remain optimistic about.

I do think that it's great to recruit from such a wide age range (18-55) and diverse backgrounds. There is a good balance of those with military and non-military backgrounds too. I'd like to see more in the way of encouraging younger recruits to serve (e.g. transitioning from cadets and University Air Sqn's/Officer Training Corps, etc).

The lack of financial recognition for long service when compared to ex-regulars receiving a £10000 golden hand shake. The lack or recognised long service towards a pension and the increase in bureaucratic and administrative actions have made the reserve forces less appealing.

I belong to a very established Sqn and our manpower has only gone up by 1 in a year. The RAF has to look at better retention methods which are outside the Sqn's control. Manning have to visit the Sqn's to appreciate the full view of the reservist.

Please do something for paramedic rank progression and leadership. You may have difficulty in paramedic retention if not careful. I feel the regular RAF paramedics have the same problem. Opportunity to attach to specialist groups would be interesting. (SF, JCTTAT??).

I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute and would highly recommend anyone joining the reserves, such a great experience.

Some comments about renewal:

I have applied to renew my commission this year and hope that I will find the challenges that I need. I have considerable experience and still wish to support the RAF, however I am under no illusion that should it not be utilised I will not renew. With the lack of parity of pay and allowances and the view of the reserves held by the regular SNCO and JNCO cadre I would not recommend the reserves to others or those leaving regular service.

I have been very pleased with my decision to join the RAF Reserves, I have learned a lot, tested myself and accomplished things that I hadn't expected I would several years ago. I have gained a significant pride in myself through my achievements to date and I sense my family have this in me also. I expect and hope that there will be significant future opportunities for me to grow in confidence, ability and experience within the Reserves.

There is time yet for issues to be resolved and the commitment to reserve forces appears to be increasing. Employers are largely clueless about the RAF Reserves and the positive impact that having a reservist can have for the civilian work role and their business. Maintaining a commitment to the RAF Reserves is a tough one as there currently isn't any support from many civilian employers written into work contracts.

I am proud to be a reservist. I try hard; I apply myself to be the best I can be in my role as a gunner, leader and instructor. I have served in more ways than I expected. I like to fly the flag as a reservist, particularly when challenged by the negative regular attitude, and it flies high. Involve and invest or the Government will fall way short of its aspiration for Reserve Forces. Things could be so much better with some smart investment.

There's a lot of uncertainty at the moment, especially with operational deployments drying up, but there is still a feeling that we are in a growth area that has a future. I am told that things will improve soon.

Retention appears to be becoming a problem. I am approaching 30 years' service in 3 different trades and I have always been able to sell the role. However, it is now becoming increasingly more difficult to keep personnel as the recruitment advertising is misleading regarding the reservist experience e.g. sport, AT.

I love being part of the reserves and think it's a highly reputable and professional organisation to be part of. I'm proud to be part of the Reserves and will certainly be renewing my service when it's due.



Image caption: A C130J Hercules aircraft from 47 Sqn RAF Brize Norton flying over the water during Exercise Valley Commando at RAF St Athan, South Wales.. RAF Photographer. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.



ROYAL AIR FORCE Families Federation

Investigate | Influence | Change



The RAF Families Federation
13-15 St Georges Road
Wittering
Peterborough
PE8 6DL

Telephone: 01780 781650
Website: www.raf-ff.org.uk



RAF FF SURVEY REPORT