



UNDERSTANDING ARMY OPPORTUNITIES

A Guide for Families and Educators



ARMY
BE THE BEST

EXPLORE ARMY CAREERS

The British Army offers a wide range of careers – many more than you might expect. From engineering and medical roles to music, logistics, and IT, there's something for everyone. Each career stream helps the Army work as one team, and every role makes a real difference.

To help you explore, we've made it easy to learn more about each stream. Simply click on the links below to find out what each path involves.

LOGISTICS & SUPPORT

Make sure soldiers have everything they need, wherever and whenever they need it.



IT & COMMUNICATIONS

Deliver crucial communications, IT, and intelligence to keep the Army connected and informed.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Provide specialist support in human resources, finance and legal, helping the Army run smoothly.



MEDICAL

Give vital medical care to people and animals, supporting health and wellbeing across the Army.



ENGINEERING

Repair, maintain, and set up vital equipment, ensuring the Army can operate anywhere in the world.



COMBAT

Play a key role in operations, from frontline defence to peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.



MUSIC & CEREMONIAL

Perform around the world with Army bands, bringing music to soldiers and special events.



TOP TIP

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR YOUNG PERSON ON CHOOSING A CAREER IN THE BRITISH ARMY

RESEARCH TOGETHER

- Explore different Army roles and career paths.
- Check entry requirements (age, fitness, education).
- Review benefits and challenges (travel, deployments, lifestyle).

DIFFERENT ROUTES INTO THE ARMY



ROUTE	REGULAR SOLDIER (JUNIOR ENTRY)	REGULAR SOLDIER (STANDARD ENTRY)	REGULAR OFFICER
AGE & TIMING	For ages 16–17* who want to start early and gain structured training while completing education.	For those 18+ who prefer to finish school/college first or want more time to prepare.	Usually requires being 18+ and having A-levels or a degree (or equivalent).
LOCATION	Army Foundation College Harrogate	Catterick, Pirbright or Winchester	Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
EDUCATION AND CAREER GOALS	Offers vocational qualifications and a stepping stone into the Army.	Focused on trade training and progression through ranks.	Leadership-focused, with faster career progression and responsibility from day one.
COMMITMENT AND LIFESTYLE	AFC Harrogate means living away from home at a younger age.	Regular soldier entry means a structured routine that builds discipline and grows independence.	Officer training is competitive and requires strong leadership and academic ability.
BASIC TRAINING LENGTH	20 - 40 weeks (depending on role)	12 - 14 weeks (depending on establishment/role)	42 weeks
STARTING SALARY	Over £26,000	Over £26,000	Over £41,000

*Junior Entry candidates can apply from the age of 15 years and 7 months.

TOP TIPS

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR YOUNG PERSON ON CHOOSING WHICH ROUTE TO JOIN

VISIT AND ASK QUESTIONS

- Attend open days for AFC Harrogate and Sandhurst.
- Speak to recruiters about each route.
- Ask serving soldiers and officers about their experiences.

PERSONAL READINESS

- Are you ready for responsibility and leadership now, or do you want to build experience first?
- Consider physical fitness, emotional maturity, and confidence.

APPRENTICESHIPS

**Real skills. Real qualifications.
Real opportunities.**

From day one of Army training, your young person will be learning job-ready skills while earning a full salary. Apprenticeships are built into Initial Trade Training (ITT), so they gain practical experience alongside world-class military training.

Apprenticeships cover a wide range of roles, including:

- **Engineering:** Technician, Fabrication & Welding, Aircraft Maintenance
- **Intelligence & Comms:** Intelligence Analyst, Network Engineer, Data Analyst
- **Logistics & Supply:** LGV Driver, Port Operative, Supply Chain
- **Medical:** Senior Healthcare Support Worker, Animal Care Assistant
- **HR & Business:** Business Administrator
- **Combat & Protective Services:** HM Forces Service Person, Aviation Ground Handler

Training is designed with employers and approved by industry regulators, so qualifications are recognised across the UK. Your young person will gain hands-on experience that counts towards their qualification and future career.



BENEFITS OF AN APPRENTICESHIP



TOP APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYER

The British Army is ranked No.1 in The Sunday Times Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers.



GAIN SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

Apprentices develop transferable skills to support their progress in the British Army and as a civilian.



OFFER 40+ APPRENTICESHIPS

They can do an apprenticeship in Medical, HR, Communications, Intelligence, Combat & more.



FREE HEALTHCARE & BENEFITS

Medical/dental care, 38 days leave per year, cheaper accommodation and more available for apprentices.



LEVEL 2 TO DEGREE LEVEL

Apprenticeships range from Level 2 (GCSE level) up to degree level, and are paid for by the British Army.



TRAVEL THE WORLD

Whether they're on deployment, adventurous training or competing in sports, they can travel the world.



STARTING SALARY £26,000+

Apprentices are paid a competitive starting salary from day 1 of basic training.



SPORTS & ADVENTUROUS TRAINING

Everyone is encouraged to play sport, with opportunities at all levels, from beginner to elite athlete.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Here's how the Army apprenticeship process works:

1 JOIN THE ARMY

Once your young person starts Initial Trade Training, their apprenticeship begins automatically. No separate application is needed.

2 LEARN AND EARN

Training combines military skills with practical, job-specific learning. They'll earn a full salary while studying.

3 COMPLETE THE APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeships run alongside Army training and usually take 12–36 months, depending on the level.

4 GAIN RECOGNISED QUALIFICATIONS

All programmes are approved by industry bodies, giving your young person qualifications that open doors in and beyond the Army.



APPRENTICESHIP LEVELS EXPLAINED



LEVEL 2 – INTERMEDIATE

This is the perfect starting point if you're new to the Army and want to build solid foundations. Equivalent to five good GCSE passes, it usually takes 12–18 months to complete. You'll gain practical skills while working in a real Army role, and if you need extra support with English or Maths, it's included. It's a great way to earn, learn, and grow your confidence.



LEVEL 3 – ADVANCED

Ready to take things further? Level 3 apprenticeships are equivalent to two A levels or a T Level and typically last 18–36 months. You'll develop deeper technical knowledge and hands-on experience in your chosen trade, building practical, work-based skills that set you up for long-term success. This level is ideal if you want more responsibility and a clear career path.



LEVEL 4 – HIGHER

For those aiming high, Level 4 apprenticeships prepare you for specialist roles and leadership opportunities. Equivalent to a foundation degree, these programmes usually take 18–36 months. You'll gain advanced qualifications and expertise while continuing to earn and progress in the Army. It's a strong step towards a professional career with real prospects.



LIFE IN THE BRITISH ARMY

Joining the Army isn't just about training – it's about building confidence, learning new skills, and making friendships that last a lifetime.

Here's what life looks like for our soldiers:

ACCOMMODATION

They'll begin training in safe and comfortable shared accommodation, with privacy measures in place. After training, they'll have their own room where they can relax at the end of the day.

FOOD

Three healthy meals are served each day, with choices for every dietary need. Shops are also available on-site for snacks and essentials.

WELLBEING AND SUPPORT

Their wellbeing matters. There are spaces to relax, socialise, and enjoy downtime – from games areas and cinemas to places for a quiet chat. Welfare teams are always there if they need support.

FREE MEDICAL CARE

Army life means staying fit and healthy. They'll have access to modern medical centres, doctors, nurses, dental care, and physiotherapy whenever they need it.

SPORTS AND FITNESS

From gyms and swimming pools to football pitches and climbing walls, there's something for everyone. They can try athletics, basketball, hockey, swimming, and more – or even discover a new sport.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY

We respect all beliefs. Multi-faith prayer rooms and chaplaincy support are available wherever they serve.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

They'll have access to libraries, IT facilities, and plenty of opportunities to learn new skills that will help them throughout their career.



THE BENEFITS OF AN ARMY CAREER

Beyond the day-to-day, the Army offers long-term advantages that give security, opportunity, and support for the future.

This includes:

COMPETITIVE PAY

Earn a salary that grows with rank and experience, plus extra pay for specialist skills and deployments.

PENSION & FINANCIAL SECURITY

A guaranteed pension scheme and financial support options for long-term stability.

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

Funded courses, apprenticeships, and recognised qualifications to boost future career prospects.

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

Experience different cultures and work overseas through training and operations.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Subsidised housing is available, along with childcare and relocation support for families.

DISCOUNTS & PERKS

Access to discounts on shopping, travel, and leisure through military schemes.

DISCIPLINE

Army life builds resilience, self-control, and strong habits that last a lifetime – skills valued in any career.

JOB SECURITY

A stable career with clear progression, regular pay, and long-term opportunities in a respected organisation.





No matter how long you have been serving or how old you are, your Mum still worries about you. The thing to take away is our soldiers are superbly well-trained, well-equipped and they are the most professional soldiers in the world. They are confident in their abilities. It can be a dangerous job, it often isn't – it is no more dangerous than other jobs in our economy. We are extremely proud of our apprentices.

COLONEL TERBLANCHE



TOP TIPS

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR YOUNG PERSON DURING ARMY LIFE

STAY CONNECTED

- Regular communication helps them feel supported – letters, calls, or video chats when possible.
- Send care packages with personal items and encouragement notes.

RESPECT THEIR SCHEDULE

- Army life is structured; be patient if they can't respond quickly.
- Avoid pressuring them during training or deployments.

LEARN ABOUT MILITARY CULTURE

- Understand ranks, routines, and expectations so you can relate to their experiences.
- Familiarise yourself with Army values and terminology.

ENCOURAGE RESILIENCE

- Remind them to use coping strategies for stress (exercise, journaling, talking to peers).
- Support mental health – normalise seeking help if needed.

BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK

- Connect with other military families for advice and emotional support.
- Join official Army family groups or forums.

PLAN FOR HOME VISITS

- Make the most of leave periods – create a welcoming environment.
- Respect their need for rest/downtime when they return.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MY YOUNG PERSON HASN'T GOT GREAT ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS – CAN THEY LEARN IN THE ARMY?

Yes. The Army is all about learning and development. They will have plenty of chances to build new skills. We offer financial support for further education and provide specialist courses that lead to recognised civilian qualifications.

WILL A YOUNG PERSON BE SENT TO WAR OR THE FRONT LINE?

Not every soldier's day-to-day role involves combat. Many jobs, like mechanics, chefs or engineers, are focused on other tasks. There may be times when soldiers are needed in combat environments, but not all roles are near the front line. Whatever their job, they will be fully trained and prepared.

DOES A YOUNG PERSON GET TIME OFF AND ANNUAL LEAVE?

Yes. During training, weekends and holiday breaks are built in. Once training is complete and they've joined their unit, they can go home at weekends if they don't have duties. Soldiers also get annual leave.

DOES A YOUNG PERSON HAVE TO SERVE FOR A MINIMUM TIME?

In the first four weeks of basic training, they can change their mind. After that, soldiers are expected to serve for four years, including training, but they can hand in their notice after three years. The majority of soldiers choose to stay for much longer.



WHAT PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES WILL A YOUNG PERSON HAVE?

Every Regiment and Corps offers a range of roles and trades, with clear paths for promotion and career progression. You can explore the **Army Role Finder** on the **Army Jobs** website to see what's possible.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A YOUNG PERSON LEAVES THE ARMY?

The Army invests in their future. They'll have opportunities to gain qualifications throughout their career – from apprenticeships and literacy support to degrees and even master's or PhDs. These skills are valued by civilian employers too.

HOW DOES A CAREER IN THE ARMY IMPACT ON A FAMILY/PERSONAL LIFE?

Being a soldier can mean time away from home, but the Army is committed to supporting families. Whether it's housing, childcare, pregnancy or flexible working, there's lots of help available.

HOW CAN I HELP MY YOUNG PERSON MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION?

We encourage families to learn as much as possible about Army life. There's plenty of support for parents and carers, including dedicated advisers at Army Recruitment Centres who can answer your questions.

CAN MY YOUNG PERSON TAKE THEIR PHONE?

Yes. They can use their phone in their own time. During training and working hours, like any job, they won't be able to use it – but they're free to make and receive calls when they're off duty.





When you look at the world, you do worry. But when I speak to Oscar about those worries, he reassures me and he's confident in what he's doing. When he's talking about Harrogate, the Army and what he's doing, he's completely different – he changes into this grown up. I'm really proud of him.

MANDY - PARENT



TOP TIPS

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR YOUNG PERSON ON CHOOSING A CAREER IN THE BRITISH ARMY

UNDERSTAND THEIR DECISION

- Ask why they want to join the Army.
- Listen without judgment and show respect for their choice.

ENCOURAGE PREPARATION

- Support physical fitness and healthy habits.
- Help them prepare for aptitude and fitness tests.
- Consider cadet programs or pre-Army training.

DISCUSS EDUCATION & SKILLS

- Confirm qualifications needed for their chosen role.
- Encourage development of leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

TALK ABOUT REALITIES

- Discuss time away from home and potential risks.
- Explore coping strategies for stress and maintaining family connections.

OFFER EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Reassure them you respect their choice.
- Stay positive but realistic about challenges.

CONNECT WITH RESOURCES

- Visit official recruitment websites (e.g., jobs.army.mod.uk/base/careers-toolkit/).
- Attend open days or speak to recruiters together.
- Join military family support groups.

APPLICATION PROCESS

From applying online to getting a start date – here are the key stages, what your young person needs to do, and how you can help at each point.

1 APPLY ONLINE

Register interest and **complete the online form** to start the Army journey and get confirmation on what roles they can apply for.

Candidate: Create an account, fill in all sections honestly, and choose a path – Regular or Reserve Soldier/Officer.

How you can help: Sit with them while they apply, check details are correct, and make sure their login is saved safely.

2 ELIGIBILITY & MEDICAL

The Army reviews answers and medical information to decide if they can move forward.

Candidate: Answer every question honestly and upload any documents requested.

How you can help: Gather GP notes if needed and remind them honesty is vital for safety and progress.

3 MEET YOUR RECRUITER

A recruiter is assigned to guide them and keep things on track.

Candidate: Respond promptly to calls and messages, and set goals for fitness and paperwork.

How you can help: Plan time for training and admin, and keep a simple checklist of tasks.

4 ARMY BRIEF

They'll attend an information session at the local Careers Centre to learn more and leave with a clear plan for the Assessment Centre.

Candidate: Go with ID, bring questions about roles and training, and take notes.

How you can help: Arrange travel and talk through the plan afterwards.

5 ASSESSMENT CENTRE

This two-day visit includes a full medical exam, fitness and mental tests, team exercises, and a career discussion.

Candidate: Pack essentials, rest well, and follow recruiter advice – attitude and teamwork matter.

How you can help: Check documents, help with packing, and encourage calm confidence.

6 FINAL CHECKS

Background and reference checks are completed before an offer is made.

Candidate: Keep contact details up to date and respond quickly to any requests.

How you can help: Provide reference details and keep paperwork organised.

7 OFFER & START DATE

They'll receive joining instructions with timings, kit list, and travel details.

Candidate: Read the pack carefully, confirm acceptance, and keep preparing.

How you can help: Go through the pack together, arrange transport, and celebrate this milestone.



RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Discover everything you need to know about Army life, careers, and opportunities. These resources make it easy to explore what's out there and how to take the next step.



ARMY RECRUITMENT CENTRE

Find a **Careers Centre** to get support through each stage of the journey.



AFC HARROGATE FILM

Watch this **short film** to learn more about the Army Foundation College in Harrogate.



ARMY JOBS WEBSITE

Visit the **Army Jobs website** to explore different roles and to ask your questions.

YOU BELONG HERE



THE PARENT PERSPECTIVE

Listen to **The Parent Perspective podcast** episode dedicated to the Army.

A careers podcast



RIVER PROCESS MAP

View our **interactive map** to learn more about each stage of the Army application journey.



PARENT & GUARDIAN SUPPORT

Visit our **dedicated page** to explore other parent's voices and resources.



If I had to sum it up in one sentence, it would be this: Yes, they will be challenged; yes, they will face things you would rather they didn't, but we will prepare them for every bit of it, and they will surprise you. So, watch them with pride. Watch them grow, change, and discover their worth. One day, you'll look back at how you feel now and smile. And maybe, just maybe, you'll write something like this for parents who are right where you are now, desperate for them to know what you know.

ANDY - PARENT




ARMY
BE THE BEST