

Models and Partnerships for Social Prosperity

Military Academies

Tackling disadvantage, improving
ethos and changing outcome

A ResPublica Green Paper

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changing the terms of debate

ResPublica Green Papers

ResPublica Green Papers provide a discussion platform for single exciting ideas in public policy. The purpose of these short, provocative pieces is to outline an argument which could spark a debate and prompt feedback and deeper reflection on the topic. Published and disseminated on-line, Green Papers are used as a blueprint for future ResPublica activity.

This publication is part of a set of work encompassing reports, roundtables and conferences that addresses the problems of intergenerational deprivation and institutional disadvantage that compounds the lack of opportunities for too many children and young people in the UK. The overarching conviction uniting this work is that policy solutions capable of tackling these problems have to operate on the level of groups and communities as well as individuals. Past attempts at fighting destitution and disadvantage risk failure because they were designed to improve only individual life chances rather than to transform the outcome for deprived communities as a whole. Unhappily, the effect of many policies aiming to increase social mobility was to move a small number of individuals up the social ladder and leave their communities behind. With social mobility in the UK remaining at the level it was for those born in 1970 and the inequality gap haemorrhaging the aspirations of those at the bottom, a radical rethinking of public policy is needed.

We intend green papers to spark debate and more extensive work and research. We hope that this publication, which is the first in a series of Green Papers concerning the issue of education and skills, does just this.

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All opinions and any errors herein are ours and ours alone.

1 Overview

It is now commonplace to talk of intergenerational disadvantage and the social and educational dysfunction that cripples our most depressed areas. After the summer riots of 2011, we recognise the danger of losing many of our most vulnerable children and young adults to criminality or self-destructive behaviour. We also recognise that tens of thousands of our young people are becoming hopelessly trapped by lack of opportunity and education and many lack the sufficient skills or confidence to access the jobs market, let alone the discipline to hold down any position they might obtain.

One of the causes of our present discontents is that we have lost from our most disadvantaged areas the foundational moral institutions that can build the resilience, discipline and confidence that our children need. Whether it be community cohesion or an individual sense of focused purpose – it is vital we create for the 21st century, ethos driven institutions that can offer new paths to success as well as the social skills to realise these ambitions.

We need a new and systemic approach. We propose to constitute a new network or chain of transformative educational institutions, teaching exactly the skills and discipline required to alter outcomes for those who live in our most troubled towns and cities. In short, we need a new educational offer at scale to radically change the options for our young – we propose a whole chain of Military Academies officially backed by the Armed Services and delivered by the Cadet Associations to be constituted in our most troubled neighbourhoods. These institutions would generate hope and purpose via a new ethos and excellence driven educational offer.

In short, we propose a partnership in the delivery of education between the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Education. In practical terms, we recommend a chain of academies sponsored by the Armed Forces delivered with and by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCAs) using their practical experience and existing governance support.

The schools should be set up in each of the ten RFCA regions in England and Wales and located in those regions in areas with the greatest concentration of young people who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) or at risk of becoming NEET. (Although the Welsh Government has not adopted the Academy model, we commend the suggestion of Military Academies to the devolved administration in Wales). Initially we recommend a pilot of 10 academies - corresponding to the number of the regional RFCAs in England and Wales. Once a network spanning the geographical regions of England and Wales has been established, we suggest expanding the chain by concentrating on the so called 'NEET blackspots' – towns and cities where between 25% – 18% of the population aged 16 - 24 are NEET¹. Eventually, the programme might be extended to every Local Educational Authority area where local residents could petition the regional RFCA to set up a Military Academy. We believe that riot hit areas will be among those neighbourhoods that will particularly benefit from this initiative. Established Academies should offer a range of mentoring support 'services' open to youths from areas without Military Academies; moreover, they would be expected to run specialist Summer Schools intended to supplement and compliment the new £50 million Pupil Premium summer school programme to help the most disadvantaged pupils make the transition from primary to secondary school, announced by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg.²

Military Academies would create and teach from a unique curriculum, capitalising on the technical and vocational expertise already existing in the Armed Forces and developed through expanding the programme of training currently accredited by the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation (CVQO). The Academies would also be distinguished by their 'whole person education' approach: emphasising the importance of character formation and high ethical standards and values, besides the more traditional and vocational skills. As the current Academy programme pursued by the DfE allows, the school day at Military

¹<http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/Docs/Off%20the%20map%20-%20PEF%20snapshot%20FINAL.PDF>

²<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00199131/schools-to-get-even-more-pupil-premium-cash-this-year>

Academies would be longer with obligatory extra-curricular hours – which would ensure that students engage in sporting and community activities. The teaching would be delivered by graduates qualified to teach in the normal manner initially recruited into the Reserves' through University Officer Training Corps (and Naval and Air equivalents), as well as teachers who subsequently choose to join the Reserve Forces. Suitably qualified or experienced ex-regular service personnel would also be a vital part of the staff. Civilian teaching staff who express support for this unique approach founded in a military ethos should also be able to join. This exclusive line of teaching would be supplemented with an equally exceptional scheme for mentoring and pastoral care supported by retired or reserve military personnel.

Our proposal for a new model of schooling offers one policy solution to the social ills that became manifest at the time of the riots. Looking at the educational background of the young people who took part in the riots, two-thirds were classed as having some form of special educational need (compared to 21% for the national average); more than a third had been excluded from school during 2009-10 (this compares with

Department for Education records showing 6% exclusions for all Year 11 pupils); and more than one in 10 of the young people appearing before courts had been permanently excluded from school.³ The Military Academies would open up new opportunities for those lacking hope and aspiration; they would change the cultural and moral outlook of those currently engulfed by hopelessness and cynicism.

Our proposal also makes suggestions for a long-term plan for utilising the talent and expertise that currently exists in the Armed Forces as well as a way of assuring and extending the future Reserves' intake. The programme would create an additional incentive for joining the UK's Reserve Forces by providing significant employment opportunities and a clear career path for those considering membership. Ultimately, our proposal suggests a way for extending the military ethos beyond its traditional confines so that it extends to those parts of society that could benefit the most from a renewed sense of purpose and aspiration.

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15426720>

2 Introduction

The summer riots of 2011 were interpreted by many as a testimony to the ‘brokenness’ of society and the loss of moral decency. For some time public discourse has been saturated with references to ‘ethical collapse’, ‘moral bankruptcy’ and a general sense of ‘social degeneration’. For the more troubled parts of our society it is clear that any ‘loss of moral compass’ has to be understood in a context of economic disadvantage, but also even more broadly, in terms of systemic institutional and cultural failure – the failure of education in schools, families at home and society at large. The key question now is how to address the root-causes of this failure and how to change the way we educate in our society.

A possible way of tackling this problem has been recently argued for by the former head of the army. In his lecture - ‘The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Morality and Welfare Today’ - General Lord Dannatt asked whether – *given that much of our society is pretty unstructured these days, and given that the military has the unique opportunity to educate its own into the importance of a proper moral understanding - then perhaps the military community may have a wider contribution that it can make to the Nation?*⁴

We believe that this should be the case. The Armed Forces can make an immensely positive contribution to improving the nation’s moral health. One way is through a direct involvement in educational provision. The partnership between schools and the Armed Forces proposed here presents a solution that will not only benefit disadvantaged children in areas lacking certain opportunities; it also creates a viable strategy for a meaningful expansion of the free schools and academies programme; proposes a new approach to vocational and technical training; and expands the career pathways in both teaching and the Reserve Forces of the United Kingdom while creating opportunities for retiring or wounded personnel. This proposal would put in place binding institutions that reconnect place, vocation and relationship, instilling foundational values at the base of our society, so that all may share and participate in the opportunities, hope and aspiration that will result. It offers an effective way to tackle apathy and revive civil ethos amongst those who have become so badly disaffected.

3 The extent of social educational failure

We believe that the riots were an expression of an economic, educational and cultural failure: the failure of an excessively unequal society, riddled with asset poverty and debt serfdom, welfare dependency and growing youth unemployment; the breakdown of families and human relationships. In some areas layer upon layer of our society is attenuating. We see clearly the failure of communities which often seem unable to disseminate and uphold moral standards; and the corresponding failure of schools which unfortunately have done very little to break the cycle of cultural and academic deprivation ingrained in certain areas for generations.

In many ways, the riots were a ‘pay-off’ of a rentier state that has concentrated wealth and stripped millions of ordinary Britons of their capital, denying them a path to assets, ownership and trade. The share of liquid wealth for the bottom 50% of the population had fallen to 1% in 2003, eroding the path to prosperity for those at the bottom.⁵ Not surprisingly given these shocking figures, an O.E.C.D. survey in 2010 found that Britain has the highest correlation between parental

⁴ http://www.hmforces.co.uk/armed_forces_news/articles/9683-former-army-chief-to-lecture-on-moral-standards-in-civilian-life

⁵ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/geography/research/pfrc/themes/psa/pfrc0914.pdf>

income and outcomes for children, and therefore the lowest rate of social mobility in the developed world.⁶ Pathology and deprivation stay in families across generations, or more accurately, are passed from a parent to a child - given that so many couples with children break up. Children in Britain are now more than three times as likely to live in one-parent households than they were in 1972; a third to a half of all British children will at some point live in a one-parent family; and a third of all British children at any one time are living with just one parent.⁷

UK poverty figures show that 52% of single parent families are below the Government-defined poverty line (after housing costs).⁸ Many parents and children require remedial help. State education does little to break these patterns of deprivation. Over 26,000 pupils leave school without any GCSEs and more than one in six, over 75,000 fifteen year olds, have a low level of literacy.⁹ Nearly 16% of all 16- to 24-year-olds in England are neither in education nor employment.¹⁰

All these facts taken collectively present a gloomy picture which provides a context for understanding the root causes of the summer riots. Understanding the significance of this context is prerequisite to finding a cure. The rioters were poor, 'ethically-skewed' and under-educated.¹¹ These problems can be tackled through access to a new vision of foundational education and mentoring, offering steady emotional support as well as exposure to a successful, transformative and ethical role model. There are a number of ways to tackle these problems and what we propose is not exclusive of other ideas and solutions, but one answer lies in a completely new moral and educational institution for the UK – Military Academies.

4 Recognising the potential of military training

In the aftermath of the riots, the government announced its intention to involve military personnel in schools. Unveiling his Education Bill, Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, revealed plans to establish 'boot camps' where expelled pupils could receive military-style education.¹² Speaking at last year's Liberal Democrat conference in Birmingham, Nick Clegg pledged £50 million investment to offer 100,000 disadvantaged children two weeks of summer school at the age of 11.¹³ Initiatives such as the Phoenix free schools – where training would be delivered entirely by ex-military servicemen – have been 'hailed' as a solution to 'gang cultures' that exist in parts of the UK.¹⁴

While these responses are underpinned by the right kind of instinct, they risk being too fragmented and partial to provide a comprehensive answer at scale to the current challenge. With an estimated 979,000 16-24 year old NEETs in England the scale of the problem indicates that a nation-wide approach is needed; one that goes beyond a 2 week summer school for 100,000 youngsters in its size and ambition.¹⁵ The proposal of boot camps and summer schools presents a positive contribution but not one sufficient enough to provide an answer commensurate to the size of the problem we

⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/mar/10/oecd-uk-worst-social-mobility>

⁷ http://www.opfs.org.uk/files/one-parent-families_a-profile_2009.pdf

⁸ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=hbai>

⁹ http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/client/downloads/BB_educational_failure.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/Docs/Off%20the%20map%20-%20PEF%20snapshot%20FINAL.PDF>

¹¹ Some 35% of adults participating in the riots were claiming out-of-work benefits, which compares to a national average of 12%; Of the young people involved, 42% were in receipt of free school meals compared to an average of 16%; Three-quarters of all those who appeared in court had a previous conviction or caution. For adults the figure was 80% and for juveniles it was 62%; 13% of those arrested overall in the aftermath of the riots were gang members but in London the figure was 19%. More than a third of young people who were involved in the riots had been excluded from school during 2009-10 - this compares with Department for Education records showing 6% exclusions for all Year 11 pupils. Perhaps most telling was 66 per cent of juveniles were classified as having some form of special educational need (compared to 21 per cent of all pupils in maintained secondary schools).

See <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/august-public-disorder-stats-bulletin-241011.pdf>

¹² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jan/30/michael-gove-boot-camps>

¹³ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2039821/Nick-Cleggs-response-riots--50m-summer-schools-disadvantaged-children.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.cps.org.uk/files/reports/original/111026194440-SomethingcanbedoneFinal.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/Docs/Off%20the%20map%20-%20PEF%20snapshot%20FINAL.PDF>

described in the former section – what is needed is a comprehensive method and a new chain of institutions to fight deprivation in the most desperate regions over a long period of time. The fixation on the disciplinarian measures with ‘zero-tolerance’, proposed by the Phoenix schools to be introduced in the UK, is perhaps not a sufficient solution either¹⁶. Enforcement of discipline without an attempt to diagnose and remedy the causes of behavioural misconduct tends not to work and can compound rather than address the problem leading to a further ‘victimisation of the victim’.¹⁷ We need a more comprehensive and a more balanced approach – one actually more attuned to current military approaches and thinking which had long ago eschewed the purely disciplinarian approach. For example, while short-time preparatory courses might be desirable to put children in a mind-framework conducive to learning, unless they are supplemented by a long term approach, their temporary benefits are likely to vanish when children return to their usual daily routines.¹⁸ While more long term, the disciplinarian approach underpinning the Phoenix programme is not an adequate response either: what troubled children need first and foremost – as evidenced by the success of the US based Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP)¹⁹ - is a feeling of security and structure in their lives. These children need mentoring to develop skills of resilience, responsibility and collaboration; above all, they need a renewed sense of hope and aspiration. Rather than discipline, Military Academies would be focused on an ethos of ‘reciprocity, hard-work and no shortcuts’ that fosters true internal discipline and creates deeper forms of resilience.

The MoD’s Current Involvement in the Education Sector

The MoD has a long-standing tradition of supporting educational activities. For instance, the Army in Education programme (AiE) offers a range of resources for curriculum-based lessons and activities that capitalise on the military training experience which can be downloaded by teachers; the University Officer Training Corps presents students with a unique opportunity to take part in military life and culture. Most notably, educational opportunities for young people are currently created by the Cadet Forces sponsored by the MoD. The four Cadet Forces, the Sea Cadets/ Royal Marine Cadets, the Army Cadets, the Air Cadets and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), have a history of working in a unique educational partnership with the schools²⁰. With 25,071 instructors and 137,903 cadets, the Cadet Forces are the largest youth organisation in the UK.²¹ The strategy to engage young people in a wide range of activities - from physical challenges to local community support - is paying off. Year after year, numbers of young people find their life chances, as well as their cultural outlook, transfigured by virtue of participating in the Cadet Forces. A study into the benefits to society of Cadet Force membership by Southampton and Portsmouth universities commissioned in 2010 confirmed that participation in this organisation develops a wide range of citizenship-skills and generates high levels of social capital: ‘results suggest that cadets tend to have high levels of respect for authority and others and high levels of self-esteem. They are likely to be committed citizens and have heightened aspirations’.²²

The need for the transfer of skills, expertise and discipline from the military to the civilian sector has also been acknowledged by the DfE. In February 2011, the Department for Education gave a £1.5 million grant to the charity SkillForce for the creation of three pilot schemes, allowing ex-service personnel to mentor young people in schools and expand the highly successful existing SkillForce programme that uses instructors from military backgrounds to work with disadvantaged youths in areas of high unemployment and deprivation, in over one hundred schools.²³ The Training and Development Agency has also been approached with the prospect of a bespoke undergraduate qualification in teaching

¹⁶ <http://www.cps.org.uk/about/news/q/date/2011/09/02/something-can-be-done-troops-in-our-schools-will-do-mor/>

¹⁷ <http://www.jstor.org/pss/40365259>

¹⁸ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-6494.7106001/abstract>

¹⁹ <http://www.kipp.org/>

²⁰ Currently there are 12909 cadets serving in the Sea Cadet Corps/Royal Marine Cadets; 35210 in the Air Training Corps; 44890 in the Army Cadet Force; 44894 in the Combined Cadet Force.

²¹ http://www.rfcacouncil.org.uk/cadets_and_youth.html

²² <http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/59FF3DA7-3C1B-4C6F-AC20-C3599DA917DC/0/FinalreportNovember08th.PDF>

²³ <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0074945/ex-military-to-be-inspiring-role-models-for-young-people>

for Armed Service Leavers who may have the essential skills and expertise but lack degree level entry qualifications.²⁴ Military Academies would be the ideal locale to further platform these initiatives.

These initiatives should be extended further to transform the moral culture of the nation. Indeed, following the suggestion of the Schools Commissioner - Dr Elizabeth Sidwell – every secondary school should have a military Cadet Force. The benefits of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is not ‘the province of the middle classes, it’s the province of every child’, in the words of Dr Sidwell²⁵. While currently there are good opportunities for some children and young people to reap the benefit of uniformed training – these should be extended to a greater number of children and young people, in particular, those living in the high NEET concentration areas. In order to provide a truly transformational experience for those who most need it – the Military’s involvement in education should be extended and systematised. As part of an on-going wider attempt to update the status and the role of Reserve Forces and Cadets’ Associations, the RFCA could provide an institutional platform for a nation-wide programme of military schools. Drawing on the already existing teaching expertise of its volunteers and harnessing the technical knowledge of the retired soldiers and, above all, capitalising on the ethos of those serving in the Reserves, Military Academies could provide a new educational and transformational home for both for troubled youth and for those with excellence and ability who otherwise would not be in a position to develop their talents.

5 Our solution: Military Academies

As argued above, we recommend a chain of Military Academies sponsored by the Armed Forces with the Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Associations (RFCAs) acting as an agent in the delivery of this programme. In order to establish a network spanning both England and Wales, we recommend an initial pilot of 10 academies - corresponding to the number of regional RFCAs in both countries. (Because education in Wales is controlled by the Welsh Government, we recommend that the devolved administration in Wales considers this proposal). Once the model is proved in each RFCA region, we suggest that the Military Academies network is extended to those areas in the regions with greatest concentration of young people who are NEET and at risk of becoming NEET – not in employment, education or training, or the so called ‘NEET blackspots’ – towns and cities where between 25% – 18% of the population aged 16 - 24 are NEET.²⁶ For instance, the London sub-regions of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, as well as Doncaster, Blackpool, Rochdale, Birmingham, Swansea and Newcastle. Eventually, the programme could be extended to every Local Educational Authority, where local residents petition the RFCAs to set up a Military Academy. We have suggested blending elements of the free schools and Academies pathway so that the scheme can embrace new institutions as well as existing failing schools that would like to take this Military route. In some ways, the eventual outcome will resemble aspects of the University Technology Colleges, but they will locate in the first instance in areas of high disadvantage in order that the talents found there are not wasted and the troubles faced can be properly and effectively addressed.

The role of the Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Associations (RFCAs)

The Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations (RFCAs) have evolved since their inception (as Territorial Associations in 1908) to become the MoD’s principal source of support for Reservists, University Units and Cadets in communities. In

²⁴http://www.pathfinderinternational.co.uk/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1060

²⁵<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/8999455/Military-cadet-forces-in-every-school-says-schools-commissioner.html#.TwlzmODJW3k.facebook>

²⁶<http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/Docs/Off%20the%20map%20-%20PEF%20snapshot%20FINAL.PDF>

addition to the provision and maintenance of facilities, they assist in recruiting, employer support and welfare; they also employ and manage the permanent staff of the Army Cadet Force. With their strong connections to the Lieutenancy, they are well established in the regions, drawing on their extensive volunteer network to engage with local communities, business and civic authorities to build a strong support base and to provide a vital link between the public and Defence.

In recent years the RFCAs have been asked by the MoD to extend their support network to include other parts of the Defence community, such as injured servicemen and veterans; they currently assist in work with the Army Recovery Capability through their established links with employers, charities and education. Already providing support for Outreach programmes and established youth providers, such as SkillForce, they are now working collaboratively within Youth United, at both national and regional levels, to ensure that the traditional, established youth movements' interests are sustained and grow within and alongside other Government initiatives.

The RFCAs established regional connections and their experience in both promoting and supporting the work of Reserves and Cadets offer a significant capacity for bringing together the main components of a successful Military Academy. Moreover, they have the experience and expertise to contribute to a sound governance regime.

Curriculum and the Delivery Method

Our proposal is underpinned by a conviction that we need to utilise the existing skills and inspire personal development in the Reserves and all members of the Armed Forces. At the same time, we need to find an educational home for both troubled youths and talented students from disadvantaged areas – one where they can flourish and have both the discipline and freedom to attain a whole range of new skills.

The Military Academies would deliver a unique programme of study and mentoring. With regard to the curriculum, the foundational objective would be to utilise the technical and specialist knowledge acumen already existing in the Armed Forces; insofar as behavioural objectives are concerned, the delivery of pastoral care would be based on personalised relationships with the staff members and a unique mentoring scheme focusing on mutual respect and the enforcement of rule-governed behaviour. We would also hope that, capitalising on the ethos of the Cadet Forces, the Academies would nurture a sense of community and mutual care.²⁷ Academies would also seek to facilitate pathways into future jobs for their students through a range of apprenticeship schemes delivered in partnership with Defence and other manufacturing firms. Teaching would be delivered by qualified teachers recruited from the existing pool in the Reserves, university students who would favour and select the hybrid nature of a military and educational career or ex-military personnel accredited through an up-skilling programme that we outline as part of our proposal.²⁸ The Academies would also recruit civilian teachers who had an intention of joining the Reserves. Initially, to meet the recruitment targets, Military Academies might rely on a 'supply' of teachers graduating from training programmes targeting deprivation areas such as the Teach First programme. Eventually, we would wish to establish a steady career path into teaching for students joining the Reserves at universities through the University Officer Training Corps, the University Royal Naval Units and University Air Squadrons, the equivalent Naval and Air-Force training units. The RFCAs would be able here to use its experience of working with civilian organisations to increase enrolment of students to pursue this attractive career pathway.

In terms of mentoring duties, retired servicemen and women – both regular and reserve - would be invited to participate in the mentoring scheme, provided they completed an induction programme. This mentoring scheme could be delivered in partnership with youth organisations and charities experienced in working with troubled young people, such as, for instance, the Princes Trust/Fairbridge. The Armed Service Mentors would be expected to inculcate in students a range of soft skills, not necessarily by enforcing a specific kind of behaviour but by providing role models, developing personal

²⁷ <http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/59FF3DA7-3C1B-4C6F-AC20-C3599DA917DC/0/FinalreportNovember08th.PDF>

²⁸ See section on the Benefits for the Armed Forces Personnel

and lasting relationships with individual students and running extra-curricular activities, such as sport and community outreach. In this sense, mentors would provide a framework conducive to learning and personal development, drawing on the skill of the military and other successful youth mentoring programmes.

A military background can be a huge asset when it comes to the delivery of pastoral care to troubled youths. A US review of the successful Troops to Teachers scheme in a report by the GAO for the US Congress revealed that over 80% of “Troops” are men and 40% minorities.²⁹ One can infer that the profile of the Reserve volunteers is likely to ‘unsettle’ the current status quo where teaching is increasingly delivered by white females. Indeed, as the US experience indicated, the servicemen involved in school education in difficult inner-city schools are more likely to come from the same culture and context as the students.³⁰ These factors are conducive to the development of camaraderie and mutual trust between students and their mentors. Trust building, mentoring and pastoral support – in addition to the delivery of extra-curricular activities and discipline enforcement - would form the core duties for the servicemen not directly involved in teaching. The continuous and stable relationship with a mentor - accompanied by a structured routine and enforcement of transparent rules – would provide pupils with the sense of stability they often lack at home. The servicemen would also be a source of inspiration. A growing body of research shows that, with their experience of military training, servicemen command respect from students and provide excellent role models, especially for those students who come from broken or troubled families.³¹

The Academies would also offer an attractive range of extra-curricular activities. Working with mentors as well as the Cadet Forces, pupils would be encouraged to excel in sport as well as to participate in regular outdoor activities. As part of a community outreach programme, students would be expected to engage in community projects in their local area.

In schools, just like in the Armed Forces, leadership is the key to success. The choice of head teachers leading the Academies would therefore have profound consequences for the future of these institutions. We would recommend that accomplished military leaders are targeted and encouraged to apply for the head positions in Military Academies. Interestingly, English-speaking countries have a history of many of their brightest and best reserve army officers coming from the teaching profession. The late Professor Richard Holmes was the head of the TA from 1997-2000.

The Summer School in the Military Academies

Every first-year entrant would begin his/her academic year with a Summer School focused on group activities and team bonding. The core activities would focus on emotional and physical development. The objective of this would be to reorient newcomers to a world with different rules and structures. The intended effect of this induction would be the so called ‘levelling influence’, or a removal of any preconceptions carried over from the past. According to academic research, this levelling influence or the ‘new start’ assumption has a major role in increasing the chances of achievement and success for those from underprivileged backgrounds.³² Indeed, for this reason, the military training has often served as an engine of social mobility.³³ The Summer-School training would be also intended to initiate bonding between students and their future mentors.

The Summer School would be open to children from other schools. Evidence shows that a large part of the achievement gap between the children from disadvantaged and prosperous families is caused by what happens outside of school hours. For this reason, the Academies would operate with the extended hours school day, with civic or sporting activity augmenting the schools role as an engine of civic solidarity. Summer holidays present here a particular issue because

²⁹ <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06265.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.odu.edu/ao/news/media.php?todo=details&id=26054>

³¹ [http://www.train-me-to-be.co.uk/Troops-to-Teachers\(2364817\).htm](http://www.train-me-to-be.co.uk/Troops-to-Teachers(2364817).htm)

³² <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2096353>

³³ <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-71198-13614/unrestricted/danette3.pdf>

the absence of structured activities over a long period of time can leave disadvantaged children exposed to harmful influences. For this reason, the Armed Service Summer School should be open to all at risk. Indeed, according to Sutton Trust estimate, the benefit/cost ratio of primary summer camps can be as high as 13:1.³⁴ The mentoring and teaching methods of the Military Academies specifically tailored to tackle problems related to disadvantage, could only enhance this positive outcome.

Benefits for the Armed Forces Personnel

There are many prospective beneficiaries of our proposal. Insofar as the Armed Forces are concerned, the outlined scheme would benefit the Reserves through offering a fully developed hybrid teaching/military career pathway and it would offer retired servicemen and women, who often leave the services in their thirties or forties, a chance to train as teachers and expand career possibilities for current members of the Reserves. Our aspiration would be to emulate the success of the Troops to Teachers programme - a U.S. Department of Education and Department of Defense scheme which helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed. This programme operates on a national level where registrations are processed and funding managed and on a state level where the states are responsible for certification and employment. An evaluation programme carried out in 2007 revealed that, in the 13 years since its inception, the programme has helped train and place 9,500 veterans into public school classrooms where there is very real need for such teachers.³⁵ Impressive in its scale and achievement as it is, the Troops to Teachers programme is not the only existing scheme enabling the military to be involved in education. Australia, for example has a highly successful military school, King's School, Parramatta. Based on the number of alumni who had received a top Order of Australia Honour, the school has consistently ranked in the top ten of Australian teaching institutions.³⁶

Emulating the success of the overseas precedents, our proposal would open up a range of opportunities for the members of the Armed Forces, while unlocking already existing skills. The aim would be to create a number of attractive career pathways into teaching and youth mentoring. One of many benefits of our model is that – while it is radical - it would use already existing structures. Working in partnership with a vocational education accrediting organisations such as City & Guilds and the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation, the proposed programme would develop a progression scheme using the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

The QCF - through the award of credit for units and qualifications - provides more flexible routes to gaining full qualifications than traditional routes and enables progression to be achieved in smaller more attainable steps through the accumulation of credit. For example, enabling the accumulation of credits in sport coaching and youth mentoring, the model proposed here would make it possible for the Reserve Forces' members to create a progression route to an 'Award' in Youth Mentoring and a further pathway to a 'Certificate' in Teaching. The QCF would also allow for a formal recognition of the technical and engineering expertise of the military personnel.

The QCF would also facilitate a smooth transition to teaching for students already serving in the Reserves. Currently, around 3,500 students serve in UK University OTCs, typically for around two years. Last year, however, only 219 joined the Regular Army and 62 the TA, leaving a large number of students needlessly lost to the services. Utilising the already existing skills-base and potential in the Reserves - our proposal would provide a good incentive for joining the Reserves as well as continuing in service. Above all, the challenge of improving life chances for the troubled youths is likely to 'inject' the Armed Forces with a new and wider sense of purpose.

³⁴<http://www.suttontrust.com/research/the-mobility-manifesto/>

³⁵http://www.civicventures.org/publications/policy_papers/pdfs/troops_teach.pdf

³⁶ In 2010 *The Age* reported that The King's School ranked equal seventh among Australian schools, based on the number of alumni who had received a top Order of Australia honour.

<http://www.kings.edu.au>

Benefits for the Education Sector

The approach proposed here also provides a solution to some problems deeply entrenched in the education sector in the UK. Over 50% of teachers currently leave the profession within three years of qualifying.³⁷ Current research shows that there are a number of factors accounting for high teacher turnover. This said, to a large extent the majority of premature departures are caused by the frustration with the workplace atmosphere and the problems with controlling discipline in the class room.³⁸ The benefit of our proposal is that – being military personnel or working in partnership with servicemen – teachers in the Military Academies are likely not to suffer from this drawback to the same extent, as evidenced in the success of the Troops to Teachers programme.³⁹

Interestingly, the proposed model provides indirectly a solution to the criticism that introducing a narrow curriculum will have the cost of ‘neglecting’ the individual talents and interests students might have. The on-going review of the National Curriculum reveals that the main objection to the narrow-based curriculum is that it precludes certain groups of students from the benefits of the ‘whole person education’ enjoyed by those in the independent sector who have an exposure to a broad range of subjects. Our proposal however carries a potential to achieve the whole-person education outcome in virtue of the method of delivery, without introducing extra subject areas. Without compromising the academic rigour in the core subjects, personal mentoring and involvement in extra-curricular activities facilitated by the service teachers could have the effect equivalent to that of the broad curriculum learning. Hence, our proposal promises to create educational opportunities previously only open to those born into privilege.

It is hoped that the Armed Service schools would also greatly minimise the impact of the reduced funding for FE teacher training and make a positive contribution to increasing the number of apprenticeships.

In virtue of championing the already existing vocational expertise, the programme of Military Academies could provide an institutional core of the vocational training in the areas of mechanics, technology and engineering in the UK. Through its involvement with defence and manufacturing sectors, the Academies would be able to access and teach units from the QCF which provide a good fit with apprenticeships, aiding progression to a full apprenticeship once a young person has entered work.

By expanding the programme of free schools and academies as well as facilitating progression to apprenticeships and other vocational training opportunities, our proposal would help to implement the agendas announced in ‘Excellence in Teaching’ and ‘The Skills for Growth’. This proposal sits firmly within the laudable initiatives of both Michael Gove and John Hayes and we see it as a way of complementing their current policy initiatives.

³⁷<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2002/jun/14/schools.uk>

³⁸<http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Turnover-Ing-01-2001.pdf>

³⁹ <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06265.pdf>

6 Conclusion: Revitalising the reserves, rescuing the young, helping society

Revitalising the Reserves

'Our Reserve Forces are in decline and urgent actions are needed to reverse this trend' - this is the main conclusion of a July 2011 report by the Independent Commission reviewing the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces.⁴⁰ The Reserves in the UK account for less than 15% of the UK's Total Armed Force, which makes for a very unfavourable comparison with other nations such as Australia, Canada or the US, where the Reserves constitute between a third and half of their forces. 'The Future Reserves 2020' report rightly offers a multifaceted diagnosis of the factors responsible for the decline of the Reserves. Insofar as the recruitment of volunteers is concerned, it emphasises that 'the offer...is ceasing to attract a sustainable Reserve because of the much reduced opportunities for individual and collective training as well as the lesser prospects for promotion and command'.⁴¹ As noted in a report of the All Party Parliamentary Reserve Forces Group – 'Recognising the Opportunity' - these diminished development opportunities have a particularly adverse effect on officer recruitment.⁴² The existing reviews of the Reserves also emphasise that the Reserve Forces are failing to make the most of the civilian skills of the volunteers, thereby eroding further the motivational base of potential recruits. Indeed, the problem of the under-utilisation of the existing capabilities within the Reserves and the need to call upon niche skills of the volunteers – have been already highlighted in the 'Strategy Review of Reserves' in 2008.⁴³ Not surprisingly, the Commission responsible for the 'Future of the Reserves 2020' report stressed the need to restructure the Reserve Forces to make the most efficient use of the existing skills base; it also called for 'innovative ideas to harness the Nation's talent more cost-effectively'.⁴⁴ Our proposal is such an idea. In line with the suggestion of the 'Future of the Reserves 2020' report that 'we should exploit the potential for innovative partnerships between Defence, Education and Industry to optimise the sharing and development of human talent', we propose a mutually beneficial partnership between the educational and military sectors⁴⁵.

Rescuing the Young

Most obviously and straightforwardly, our proposal benefits the young who have grown up in deprived areas, both those who are talented and those who are troubled. We live in a society where more than one in five of those from deprived homes believe that 'few' or 'none' of their goals in life are achievable (compared to just 5% of those from affluent families). The pervasive lack of aspiration and hope is painfully evident in that one in four young people from poor homes feel that 'people like them don't succeed in life'.⁴⁶ A tangible imprint of this dire situation is that 16% of all 16- to 24-year-olds in England are neither in education nor employment.⁴⁷ Each NEET young person costs the taxpayer £97,000 over the course of their lifetime, at an overall annual cost of £3.65 billion; by way of contrast the annual budget of the Territorial Army is only some £350 million.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ [http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/88_FutureReserves_2020_\(1\).pdf](http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/88_FutureReserves_2020_(1).pdf)

⁴¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2011/DEP2011-1259.pdf>

⁴² <http://www.reserveforcesparliament.com/upload/upload11.pdf>

⁴³ http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F2C31DAE-FBC2-4236-8586-BA0214C07941/0/strategic_review_of_reserves.pdf

⁴⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2011/DEP2011-1259.pdf>

⁴⁵ [http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/88_FutureReserves_2020_\(1\).pdf](http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/88_FutureReserves_2020_(1).pdf)

⁴⁶ http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PovertyReport_170511.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/Docs/Off%20the%20map%20-%20PEF%20snapshot%20FINAL.PDF>

⁴⁸ <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf>

Helping Society

The benefits of the proposed Military Academy programme could be considerable. Potentially, they could translate into reduced costs for taxpayers in a range of areas, including employment, health and criminal justice. The focus on vocational qualifications and apprenticeships fits well with the Government programmes to develop practical skills and reduce high levels of youth unemployment. Insofar as crime and justice are concerned, as emphasised in the research undertaken on behalf of the Youth Research Forum - The Development of the Moral Compass – ‘The values children are taught are their best protection from the influences of peer pressure and some of the temptations of consumer and criminal cultures’⁴⁹. Helping children and the young develop ethical behaviour as part of their school education can have far reaching societal effects.

To conclude, the benefits of the proposal outlined here are many: it is a tangible opportunity to improve the life chances and opportunities of our young people and a real way to reinvigorate the Reserve Forces that have for too long been in decline. Above all, it presents a unique opportunity to put in place ethos driven institutions promoting excellence and opportunity in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

⁴⁹ <http://www.policyreview.tv/conference/588.html>

7 Recommendations

- The Department for Education should recognise the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations, acting as an agent of the Armed Forces, as a sponsoring body for Academies.
- The Department for Education should ask the governing national body of the RFCA to submit a proposal to set up a chain of Military Academies in England and Wales.
- Recognising that the involvement of the military reserve and ex-military personnel in schooling is a transformative policy response to social deprivation and educational underachievement – on behalf of the Armed Forces, the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations should submit a sponsorship application to the Department for Education proposing to establish a chain of Military Academies – starting with a pilot of 10 institutions in each of their respective regions in England and an approach to the Welsh legislature asking how such a project might be realised in Wales - either by setting up new institutions or taking over failing schools to create a military variant.
- Community outreach should be undertaken by the RFCAs in order to identify locations where local residents might petition the Armed Forces to set up Military Academies. In all regions chosen for the pilot scheme, local communities should be informed about and consulted on the plan at an early stage in order to enhance the legitimacy of the Military Academies and shape them according to the needs of their local communities.
- The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCAs) should expand and enhance its operational capacity and establish a network of contacts with stakeholders to be involved indirectly in facilitating the infrastructural backing for the Military Academies, such as universities with a student reserve and third sector organisations working with troubled youths and wounded personnel. The RFCAs should publicise the programme among military personnel.
- The key to the success of the Military Academies is their unique curriculum and the mentoring scheme. A consortium comprising experienced military personnel, the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation, education specialists and third sector organisations working with troubled youths should be set up in order to produce clear guidance on teaching and mentoring methods.

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Models and Partnerships for Social Prosperity

This publication is an output of ResPublica's 'Models and Partnerships for Social Prosperity' workstream, one of the three core workstreams of the ResPublica Trust.

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In 2012 this workstream will encompass our research into new models for private, public and third sector partnerships and delivery of public services, including innovative approaches to welfare, health and social care, education, social housing, employment and skills. Drawing on a number of recent legislative developments - most notably, the Localism Act, the Open Public Services White Paper and the Public Services (Social value) Bill - the importance of social value in commissioning and service delivery is fundamental to our work.



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