

This document provides the handbook for Defence Recovery Capability assurance visits.

Part one of the handbook is the assurance framework, part two is the assurance visits guidance. Both parts of the document exist to help in the preparation for, implementation and conduct of, assurance visits for wounded injured and sick military personnel.

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## Introduction

1. This assurance framework will be used in Ofsted's assurance of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Defence Recovery Capability (DRC) provision for wounded, injured and sick (WIS) personnel employed in the Armed Forces.
2. WIS personnel are either regular or Reserve personnel who, because of injury or illness, are unable to carry out their normal duties. The DRC and the single Services should provide a suitable recovery pathway within which all serving WIS personnel can receive appropriate support to make a return to duty, or transition to a properly supported civilian life that makes best use of their skills and abilities.
3. The recovery pathway provides the structure for individual support from the point of wounding, injury or sickness to a recovery outcome of either return to work within the military or a transition to a properly supported and appropriately skilled civilian life. The recovery pathway should complement the clinical pathway and support an individual through a tailored recovery plan.
4. The DRC is delivered through three separate, but related, single Service Recovery Pathways (SRPs), with the Army, as the largest Service, taking the lead responsibility. Support and resources are provided by a number of charitable partners, chief amongst which are Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.
5. Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted Specialist Inspectors (inspectors) will conduct assurance visits. This framework, and the handbook, sets out some of the ways inspectors will seek evidence, and describe the typical but not indicative evidence they will consider to arrive at key findings during DRC assurance visits.

## The purpose of assurance visits

6. Assurance visits to all providers and participants in the DRC have two purposes. First, to evaluate the extent to which the DRC provides a suitable and appropriate environment for military personnel to complete their recovery and, when ready, prepare for a return to service life or successful transition to civilian life. Second, to provide clear findings about the quality of the provision, and about the outcomes for WIS personnel in achieving sustainable work and/or personal living goals.
7. Inspectors will take into account the experiences of WIS personnel or groups of WIS personnel and, where appropriate, the experiences of their families and/or carers. Inspectors will not make a separate judgement about equality, diversity or safeguarding. Instead, they will fully consider equality, diversity and safeguarding within the context of activities, while reaching their findings on each aspect of the DRC provision.

## The main findings and overall effectiveness

8. The main areas for judgements made during assurance visits are as follows:
  - impact of management activities and interventions.
  - quality of the WIS experience.

- personal development.
- outcomes for WIS personnel.

9. Inspectors will also reach a summative finding about the overall effectiveness of the recovery experience, which will lead to a judgement on the overall effectiveness of the provision.

## Part one: the assurance framework

### The impact of management activities and interventions

#### The success and impact of each Service, the chain of command and/or partner providers to secure and effectively manage and evaluate the delivery of recovery pathway activity

10. Inspectors will evaluate the impact of management interventions to improve the provision and activities by examining, where relevant, the extent to which the Service, partners, leaders and managers:
  - a. demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what individual WIS personnel can achieve, whilst promoting high standards of welfare and duty of care.
  - b. promote effective communication and information management between the Services and all partners and specialist agencies, families and carers in ways that support and enhance the individual's recovery pathway
  - c. improve activities through rigorous performance management, performance analysis and self-assessment supported by appropriate professional development
  - d. ensure that residential provision is effectively and efficiently managed within the stated expectations of welfare and duty of care in the Armed Forces, where routines and procedures are clear, well-established and operate consistently to provide an orderly and safe environment
  - e. ensure that resources are sufficient and effectively and efficiently managed, that staff are appropriately trained and that disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks have been completed where required
  - f. make constructive use of users' views and complaints to effect continuous improvement
  - g. recognise and promote equality and diversity in planning and caring for individuals, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow any gaps in participation and achievement between different groups of WIS personnel
  - h. ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to maintain the safety and well-being of all personnel and of their families or carers.
  
11. To evaluate the quality and impact of management activities and interventions on the provision of development and support for WIS personnel, inspectors will consider whether:
  - a. there is a clear statement of principles, translated into effective practice
  - b. leaders promote very high standards in a positive and supportive culture that aspires to excellence
  - c. the DRC provision is effectively and efficiently managed; routines and procedures are clear, well-established and operate successfully to provide an orderly and safe community in which WIS personnel are supported towards the successful achievement of qualifications and in the development of their personal, social and employability skills

- d. managers have ensured that there are sufficient staff to provide appropriate welfare and duty of care to WIS personnel, whether they are deployed and supervised effectively, and have received high-quality training, development and support for their roles
- e. there is continuous monitoring of the quality of all of its DRC provision and its impact on WIS personnel, and managers can demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement
- f. complaints are managed well, and managers take account of individuals' views to improve the quality of the experience
- g. diversity and individual needs are recognised in planning and providing appropriate welfare and duty of care for individuals, and all are accorded equality of opportunity
- h. there is good communication between leaders and managers, families, carers, recovery staff and, where relevant, others who contribute to supporting an individual
- i. records are comprehensive and securely stored
- j. safeguarding is effective, including the arrangements for keeping WIS personnel safe and protecting them from harm; and the effectiveness of the arrangements for protecting them as vulnerable adults, countering bullying and dealing with poor behaviour
- k. the single Service standards are met.

## **Personal Development**

### **The successful development of skills and capacity to make an appropriate transition as identified by the individual and his/her chain of command; enabled according to need through the DRC.**

12. Inspectors will evaluate the personal development of WIS personnel by examining, where relevant, the extent to which they:
- a. operate within an agreed individual recovery plan involving attendance at events and meetings as appropriate
  - b. develop employability and/or independent living skills that enable them to take best control of their lives, working with their families and/or carers as appropriate
  - c. all personnel make informed choices about next steps based on timely and appropriate information and guidance mapped against their individual recovery plan
  - d. develop the self-confidence and skills to become more self-assured, to manage their own feelings and behaviour, to relate well to others, and to realise that they have the potential to be successful within or beyond life in the Armed Forces.

13. To evaluate personal development, inspectors will consider the following matters and their impact on the individuals' development and gather evidence by:

- a. talking with WIS personnel, their families/carers and to the staff who care for and look after them
- b. looking at records, case studies or other evidence the provider may offer; and considering the progress WIS personnel make in their recovery, personal and social development
- c. taking into account the starting points of the WIS personnel when they took up their individual recovery plans
- d. considering the work undertaken to help these individuals achieve their full potential through working towards their personal recovery outcomes
- e. evaluating the recovery progress and how effectively the support that personnel receive helps them to be successful in their recovery compared with their starting points and with their peers on the same or similar programmes
- f. considering individuals' social development, including the extent to which they enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other, and are tolerant of others with or without injuries or disabilities and of people from different races, religions and sexual orientations
- g. evaluating the personal development, self-esteem, independence, confidence, employability skills and financial management skills of personnel
- h. taking into account the behaviour of WIS personnel and how well they respect the rights of others in the community to be treated with care, respect and understanding
- i. evaluating individuals' satisfaction and contentment with the welfare and duty of care experience, including the extent to which they take advantage of what is on offer by developing new talents, skills and interests
- j. considering individuals' contributions to the recovery community and how their views have affected it
- k. evaluating individuals' awareness of a healthy lifestyle and its impact on their recovery
- l. evaluating how well WIS personnel and their families are prepared for a successful transition to independence, employment, or for the next stage of their life.

## The Quality of the WIS experience

### The extent to which the provision ensures a quality experience for WIS personnel and their families in facilitating an individual's recovery

14. Inspectors will evaluate the quality of the WIS experience, by examining the extent to which leaders and managers within the Defence Recovery Pathway:

- a. ensure that individual recovery plans are established and fit for purpose to provide agreed activities in sufficient breadth, depth and relevance so that they meet the needs and interests of individuals and provide them with the skills and independence to make a successful recovery
- b. ensure that staff from the Services and all partner organisations have consistently high expectations for recovery and promote equality, diversity and safeguarding through all activities
- c. use all available information to frequently re-focus recovery plans to ensure recipients receive the support they need, sharing this information, where appropriate, with the individuals' families, carers and welfare and medical personnel
- d. provide high quality and suitable welfare support in environments appropriate to individual recovery plans.

15. To evaluate the quality of the WIS experience, command, welfare and duty of care and support for WIS personnel, inspectors will consider the following matters and their impact on the individuals' development and support:

- a. the quality of pastoral support for individuals, including the impact of induction and initial assessment for new personnel, the effectiveness of links between pastoral and recovery staff in supporting the individuals' personal and recovery development
- b. the impact of experienced staff in providing WIS personnel with welfare and duty of care
- c. the physical environment; the quality welfare and duty of care for WIS personnel's health and physical, mental and emotional well-being; and the guidance and support provided to WIS personnel
- d. the availability, uptake and quality of support for WIS personnel on personal matters
- e. the quality and appropriateness of individual recovery plans, and their effective implementation
- f. the range and appropriateness of activities available to WIS personnel, including work placements and work shadowing
- g. the quality and effectiveness of arrangements for promoting and sustaining individuals' health and well-being
- h. the quality, availability and uptake of the catering arrangements and how these contribute to healthy lifestyles
- i. the quality of the welfare and duty of care accommodation (either on- or off-site), premises and facilities, including the arrangements for making WIS personnel comfortable and keeping their possessions safe
- j. the procedures for ensuring that all service personnel, including those with supervisory responsibilities for WIS personnel, receive appropriate access to welfare support
- k. the appropriateness of arrangements for WIS personnel to keep in touch with families and friends
- l. the effectiveness of interactions between medical, clinical and the recovery pathway

- m. the extent to which single Service standards are met.

### **Outcomes for WIS personnel**

**The successful transition of WIS personnel to a realistic, fulfilling and sustainable return to duty or civilian life, agreed between the individual and his/her chain of command, enabled according to need through the DRC.**

16. Inspectors will evaluate the outcomes for WIS personnel, and examine where relevant, the extent to which:

- a. all WIS personnel progress from their individual starting points towards the outcomes and objectives identified in their individual recovery plans
- b. personnel successfully attain relevant qualifications, take part in courses or experiences that help them to progress to the next stage of their transition, into courses leading to qualifications, and/or into jobs suited to their abilities, expectations and needs
- c. an individual's well-being and fitness are enhanced as a result of their experiences.

17. To evaluate the quality of the outcomes for individuals, inspectors will consider the following matters and their impact on the individuals' development and gather evidence by:

- a. exploring the extent to which all WIS personnel, in agreement with their chain of command and their families, have set realistic outcomes and objectives relative to their starting points
- b. investigating how personnel review and evaluate their progress against agreed objectives and outcomes in their individual recovery plans, and amend these where necessary, as their recovery pathway evolves
- c. examining whether all personnel are able to make appropriate informed choices about next steps based on timely and relevant information and guidance
- d. evaluating the impact and appropriateness of advice and guidance to establish expectations and to set appropriate and realistic outcomes for individuals and their families
- e. reviewing the extent to which personnel attend courses and recovery events in a timely manner, and how this allows them to make suitable progress towards their outcomes and objectives.

### **Overall effectiveness**

**The extent to which all the elements of the DRC cohere effectively to ensure the needs of the individuals and the Service are fully met.**

18. In making judgements about overall effectiveness, inspectors will consider the combined impact of all aspects of the WIS provision. They will take into account:

- a. the impact of the provision on ensuring personnel achieve their agreed recovery plan outcomes
- b. the impact of the experience and the quality of welfare and duty of care, on the recovery process, personal development and well-being of all WIS personnel
- c. the effectiveness with which all stakeholders safeguard WIS personnel and their families and promote their welfare
- d. the effectiveness with which the DRC provision and individual recovery plans are organised and managed between partners
- e. the ways WIS personnel and their families and/or carers view their experience
- f. the progress made since any previous assurance visit.

## **Part two: guidance for inspectors and staff in DRC settings.**

### **Conducting DRC Assurance Visits**

#### **Introduction**

1. In 2014, the MoD commissioned Ofsted to develop a DRC assurance framework for use during visits to assess the provision of the recovery pathways for all wounded, injured and sick (WIS) personnel employed in the Armed Forces. WIS personnel may be either regular or Reserve personnel who, because of injury or illness, are unable to carry out their normal duties.
2. The DRC is a MoD-led initiative delivered in partnership with Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion, together with a number of small and larger charitable organisations. The single Services, through the DRC, should provide a suitable recovery pathway to all serving WIS personnel. Such recovery pathways take an individual from the point of wounding, injury or sickness to a recovery outcome, which is either a return to military service or an effective transition to a civilian life that makes best use of their skills and abilities. The Army takes lead responsibility but each Service manages their recovery pathways differently. The recovery pathways complement clinical pathways and should support individuals through a tailored individual recovery plan.

#### **Assurance of the DRC**

3. Ofsted MOD inspectors are either Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), or directly contracted Ofsted Specialist Inspectors. The MoD and Ofsted prescribe the qualifications and experience required by all inspectors, the initial and continuing training they should receive, and the standards they are required to meet. Inspectors will have extensive experience of working with the Armed Forces; most will have been involved with the MoD through Welfare and Duty of Care inspections of initial training. All inspectors have full security clearance.

#### **Purpose of assurance visits**

4. Assurance visits provide an independent external evaluation of the effectiveness of the recovery pathways, and identify areas for improvement. Judgements will be based on the range of evidence available to inspectors, which they evaluate against a national framework presented in part two of this handbook.
5. Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which the DRC provides a suitable and appropriate environment for military personnel to complete their recovery and/or make a successful transition to civilian life.

6. Visits will provide qualitative findings about the effectiveness of the recovery pathways and the outcomes for WIS personnel in the areas of achieving sustainable work and/or achieving personal living goals.
7. Visits will support and promote improvement by judging the WIS experience against a clear DRC Assurance Framework (set out in part one of this handbook) and by monitoring the progress and performance of aspects of the DRC provision over time. In response to context and setting, inspectors will adjust the focus of assurance visits to ensure relevance and impact, identifying precise actions to underpin recommendations.
8. Inspectors will provide challenge and support to the senior leaders and managers who are responsible for DRC by:
  - adjusting the frequency of assurance visits, with reference to previous outcomes and risk assessments
  - deploying resources where improvement is most needed or where an assurance visit can add greatest value
  - taking account of users' views, including current and former WIS personnel, their families, staff and employers
  - encouraging all partners to focus on the needs of users and the needs of the DRC partnership.
9. In the organisation and conduct of visits, inspectors will:
  - provide clear and timely communications
  - make use of existing data, documentation and systems of the DRC partnership to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on staff
  - respect the confidentiality of information about individuals, their families, and their recovery plans
  - arrive at findings based on sound evidence
  - conduct visits with integrity, courtesy and transparency
  - produce clear, accurate and timely reports that provide WIS personnel, their families, the MoD and partners with an authoritative, independent assessment of the quality of the provision provided by the DRC partnerships.
10. Assurance visits to active units and stations, together with visits to government organisations and the charities, will promote improvement in the effectiveness of the DRC provision by:
  - identifying best practice through feedback and annual reporting

- recommending priorities for future action and, when appropriate, checking subsequent progress
- increasing units' and establishments' capacity to evaluate their own effectiveness, by offering professional challenge and constructive dialogue
- providing an independent account of the effectiveness of the recovery pathways and the success of WIS personnel in achieving a suitable outcome.

### Promoting improvement through assurance visits

11. Inspectors will carry out their work in ways that encourage partnerships to improve, to be user-focused and to be efficient and effective in the use of resources. Assurance visits will:

- raise expectations for standards of performance and effectiveness across the DRC
- provide challenge and give leaders and managers the information and impetus to act when weaknesses are identified and improvements needed
- clearly identify strengths so that these may be shared across the DRC
- promote rigour in the ways that individuals contribute to the DRC, to MoD steering groups, and evaluate their own performance, thereby enhancing their capacity to improve
- assure the progress and performance of all partners, providing challenge and support to senior leaders and managers.

### The DRC assurance framework

12. Inspectors will use the assurance framework, detailed in part one of this handbook, to evaluate key aspects of the DRC according to the needs of WIS personnel. Inspection and reporting will focus on the following framework areas:

- **The overall effectiveness of the DRC provision** as a summary judgement based on the four contributory aspects listed below.
- **The impact of management activities and interventions;** the success and impact of each Service, the chain of command and/or partner organisations to secure and effectively manage and evaluate the delivery of recovery pathway activities

- **The quality of the WIS experience**; the extent to which the provision ensures a quality experience for WIS personnel and their families in facilitating an individual's recovery
- **Personal Development**; the successful development of skills and capacity to make appropriate transition as identified by the individual and his/her chain of command
- **Outcomes for WIS personnel**; the successful transition to a realistic, fulfilling and sustainable return to duty or civilian life

### Selecting locations for assurance visits

13. Ofsted will consult with the Defence Working Group to identify locations providing support for WIS personnel from across Defence and the supporting charities. Inspectors will select locations for assurance visits using a range of criteria including, but not limited to:

- indicative numbers of WIS personnel supported at the setting
- reports from other internal Defence organisations, and care and welfare concerns raised by users or other interested parties.

### Confidentiality and conduct

14. Inspectors conducting the assurance visits will uphold the highest professional standards in their work and treat everyone they encounter during visits fairly and with respect. Inspectors will:

- have appropriate safeguarding and security clearance
- maintain impartiality and declare any potential conflict of interest
- respect confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their recovery plans
- evaluate provision in line with the assurance framework, basing evaluations on sound evidence
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety concerns
- ensure reported judgements are fair and reliable.

15. Inspectors will observe practice and may need to talk to staff, WIS personnel and families/carers without a third party present. Inspectors will make every effort to protect interviewees' anonymity but have a duty to pass on disclosures that raise serious safeguarding concerns, or potential criminal activity.

### **Selection and scheduling of assurance visits**

16. Inspectors will conduct a series of annual assurance visits. Visits will be made to establishments and settings involved with DRC including:

- individual single-service units managing WIS personnel including; Army garrisons or barracks, Royal Air Force (RAF) stations, Royal Navy and Royal Marine bases
- Defence and tri-service establishments
- personnel recovery units (PRUs)
- personnel recovery centres (PRCs)<sup>1</sup>
- centres run or managed by charities
- the Recovery Career Services (RCS)
- the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and other organisations delivering services and support to WIS personnel.

17. Inspectors will notify establishments or settings at least 10 working days before a visit. Inspectors will contact the commanding officer or the designated point of contact for WIS personnel by telephone to plan the visit and agree arrangements. Inspectors will arrange their own transport and accommodation.

18. The duration of visits will depend on the scale and range of activities taking place, normally one or two days. During an assurance visit, inspectors will meet with WIS individuals and a range of personnel including, but not limited to:

- COs/OCs or managers of establishments or settings
- key staff involved in the management of WIS personnel,
- relevant members of unit health and welfare committees, or equivalent bodies responsible for reviewing the progress and individual recovery plans of WIS personnel

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<sup>1</sup> Details of the PRC can be found at [www.gov.uk/defence-recovery-and-personnel-recovery-centres](http://www.gov.uk/defence-recovery-and-personnel-recovery-centres)

- families and/or carers of WIS personnel
  - those delivering recovery courses and activities, and any other partners involved in the DRC process.
19. Inspectors may accompany personnel recovery officers (PROs), unit welfare officers (UWOs) and visiting officers during their home visits to WIS personnel. Team members may contact WIS personnel and, where appropriate, their families, via email or telephone, to ensure that the views and experiences of users and carers/families contribute to evidence about the effectiveness of the recovery pathways, progress made and the success of the outcomes.
20. Inspectors will focus closely on the experience of WIS personnel in their recovery pathways and, during the visit, will require unrestricted access to any relevant military and civilian personnel involved in provision of recovery pathways. If selected individuals are not available during a visit alternative arrangements may be made. Inspectors may use case studies of individuals or groups of WIS personnel to gather evidence.
21. Whenever possible, inspectors will observe activities, recovery events and interactions with WIS personnel to understand the quality, impact and effectiveness of such activities.
22. Inspectors will not arrive at formal grading of provision, but will evaluate and make judgements relating to a range of evidence including:
- the views and experiences of WIS personnel and their families
  - individual recovery plans, records and documents relating to recovery events and activities
  - personal development and support materials
  - accommodation and settings for recovery activities
  - the views of staff and managers involved in the recovery process
  - information technologies and any adaptive technologies used in delivery of support and development to WIS personnel.
23. Inspectors will use data and management information to consider the effectiveness of the recovery pathways and the success of outcome for WIS personnel. The sources and type of data used will depend on the establishments and settings visited.
24. At the end of each visit, inspectors will provide brief oral feedback to senior staff about their findings, with an outline of strengths and areas for improvement. Inspectors will subsequently write a letter summarising these findings. These letters are subject to

internal moderation by Ofsted and will not be published but will be shared with relevant MOD personnel. An annual report will summarise the findings from visits each year.

## **Complaints**

25. Complaints or concerns about any aspect of an assurance visit should be raised with the lead inspector, in order to gain an immediate resolution.
  
26. Wider concerns, or those that cannot be resolved during the assurance visit, should be communicated through the single Service DRC chain of command, the Head of Service Personnel Support, or Head of Training Education Skills Recruiting and Resettlement (TESRR) as appropriate so they can liaise with Ofsted to seek a resolution.