

DMS20: A guide for military trainees

An introduction to the most significant review of military healthcare in a generation

What is it?

'DMS 20' is a report published in 2013 by the Surgeon General. It is the result of a comprehensive review of how operational health care is delivered by the Defence Medical Services (DMS). The report sets out a vision for **what the DMS should look like in the year 2020**, outlining changes in its size, structure, and composition that are needed in response to recent advances in military medicine, the changing nature of contemporary conflict and current financial constraints. It is the medical component of the Future Force 20 review.

How is it changing?

Reduction in overall size: Total Armed Forces personnel are reducing by about 20% across all services. The Medical Services will undergo a reduction, although at 11%, this is a smaller reduction than the wider Services. The Royal Navy, is staying roughly the same as it was. The Army is reducing by 12%, while the Royal Air Force is seeing a 17% reduction in total numbers.

Why does it apply to me?

For **medical trainees** in the regular or reserve forces who wish to understand how the Defence Medical Services will evolve over the next decade, DMS 20 is the place to go. It is also vital reading for those regular trainees yet to decide on their future specialty, as DMS 20 outlines the intended staffing levels across all consultant cadres in the three services. There is significant change planned - some specialties are expanding, some retracting. If you are determined to have a long career in the military, DMS 20 can help you make a strategic career choice and you should speak at an early stage to your single Service Career Manager and Consultant Adviser or Defence Consultant Adviser.

How will it affect my career?

A comprehensive discussion of tri-Service specialty numbers and possible competition ratios is beyond the scope of this synopsis and for some specialties there is a very different single Service picture. For full details access the report on the Defence Deanery website or via your single Service representatives.

The reserve component: DMS 20 adopts the 'Whole Force Concept' which optimises the most cost-effective balance of reserve, regular, contractor and civilian manpower. Regular Forces will continue to provide the reactive force deploying rapidly to provide medical support to evolving operational requirements. However, an increased number of reserve personnel will be recruited to provide the adaptive force, providing the necessary manpower to sustain the mission once medical support has been established.

Emerging capabilities: DMS 20 outlines a greater role for medical support to Special Forces and a return to contingency operations. It is also supporting Defence Academia by increasing the number of Defence Professors to lead and coordinate military medical research, while continuing in their deployable roles. The review identifies a need to improve CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) capabilities, specifically in training, clinical diagnosis, outbreak investigation, disease surveillance, and casualty hazard management. Finally, recognising the value of the Enhanced MERT (Medical Emergency Response Team) in improving outcomes in Afghanistan, all Emergency Medicine Consultants will be trained in this specialist area.