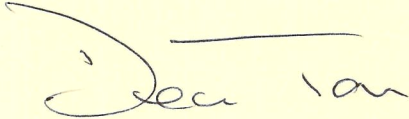


4-4-6

25 June 2025



Racial discrimination in the Armed Forces

Thank you for your letter of 6 May 2025 regarding accounts of racial discrimination experienced by personnel while serving in the Armed Forces.

You highlighted the Committee's concerns around racist bullying and harassment, the Ministry of Defence's response to such incidents, in particular, the efficacy of the Service Complaints system in addressing complaints of racial discrimination, and the behaviour and culture in the Armed Forces.

As you know, I take these concerning accounts extremely seriously and am clear that there is no place for the behaviour you describe in Defence. As I said to the Ministry of Defence team in my opening address in July last year, we have a culture that values everyone and I have zero tolerance for any abuse in the military or the Civil Service. I remain committed to that pledge.

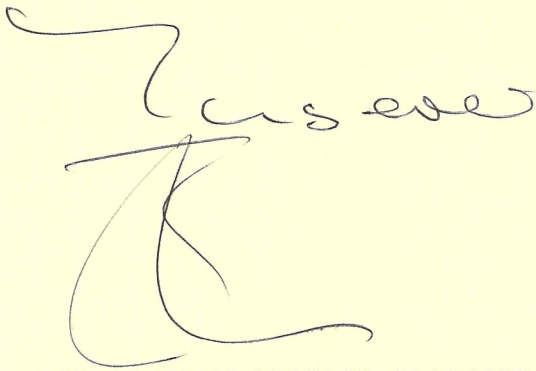
The Armed Forces have taken significant measures to address unacceptable behaviour in recent months and are making progress towards a culture that values everyone, although I acknowledge that we have more to do. As the Strategic Defence Review has recognised, *'the MOD must...prioritise the structural, behavioural and leadership barriers to the creation of a more representative and meritocratic workforce that resolutely delivers a more capable warfighting and deterrent force'*.

Further, as you will know, Defence Reform is setting the conditions for pan-Defence cultural change. Initial measures have included the establishment of a new Quad, with revised and clear accountabilities aligned to resources and responsibilities, enabling senior leadership to better drive cultural change to improve the lived experience for all our people, particularly those in underrepresented groups. Defence Reform is initiating work to develop and improve organisational behaviours, including codifying "One Defence", built around collaboration, innovation, managing risk, diversity and inclusion, and ethical behaviours. Parallel and supporting work is also being initiated in leadership across multiple levels of Defence, performance management, and improving Defence's interfaces and interactions with society.

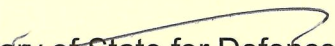
Mr Tan Dhesi MP
Chairperson
House of Commons Defence Committee

Finally, the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill is in the final stages of its passage through Parliament. The recruitment of an independent Commissioner is now underway, as the House were informed via written statement on 13 June. My expectation is that we will be able to make an appointment in early 2026. The creation of the Armed Forces Commissioner is a move of unprecedented support for our Armed Forces and their families, and the powers of the Commissioner will enable them to look into welfare matters across Defence, with broad but appropriate access to data, people, and sites. Within those powers the Commissioner would be able to fully examine and make recommendations on areas such as racial discrimination, and to have those reports laid before Parliament.

Please find enclosed a response from the Department to your questions. I look forward to working with you on this important issue and giving evidence to the Defence Committee.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Healey', with a large, stylized flourish below the name.

THE RT HON JOHN HEALEY MP



Secretary of State for Defence

MOD response to HCDC - Racial discrimination in the Armed Forces

Question 1: What actions are the Government and the single services taking to assess the extent of racial discrimination in the Armed Forces?

1. The Government routinely monitors Departmental survey and statistical data to understand the extent of racial discrimination and has made a clear commitment to addressing race inequity by *inter alia* developing legislation to enshrine the full right to equal pay in law. Defence is fully aligned with the Government approach and assiduously monitors a range of data across the workforce to establish trends and target interventions where required.
2. Turning to the Armed Forces specifically, Defence monitors results from the annual Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) and Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey (RESCAS), together with inflow and exit data, and informal and formal complaints, to understand the extent of racial discrimination in the Armed Forces, and where targeted interventions are needed. Monitoring of informal complaints takes the form of monthly updates between Commanding Officers and their Diversity and Inclusion Advisors as part of continuous climate monitoring. Diversity and Inclusion Advisors also complete an anonymised monthly summary that is accessed at single Service HQ level to allow for broader trend analysis. We also provide an 'Holistic Allies' training course which helps foster an environment where everyone can optimise their full potential. The course provides tools and techniques to enable effective allyship to make Defence as operationally effective as possible.
3. The latest data trends for inflow and outflow as at 1 April 2025 are at: [UK armed forces biannual diversity statistics: April 2025 - GOV.UK](#) and the 2025 AFCAS results are at: [Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey: 2025 - GOV.UK](#) In broad terms, the inflow and outflow data for the last 12 months indicates: an increase in inflow of EM personnel to the Regular and Reserve forces, an increase in the outflow of EM personnel from the Regular Forces, and a decrease in outflow from the Reserve Forces. For non-EM personnel, inflow to both the Regular and Reserve forces has remained stable. Outflow trends, however, show a decrease of 0.7% from the Regular Forces and a slight increase of 0.3% from the Reserve Forces. The AFCAS data indicates a small decrease from 2.6% to 2.2% of personnel who believe they have been subject to discrimination in a Service environment in the last 12 months on the grounds of: Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, and no change to the 0.3% who believe they have been subject to harassment in a Service environment in the last 12 months on the grounds of: Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
4. Turning to specific actions within the single Services;
5. The Royal Navy is taking the following action:
 - a. The Royal Navy conducts Climate Assessment (CA) surveys 3 months into a new Commanding Officer's tenure to provide an independent assessment of the lived experience and identify where changes are required which are prioritised through a D&I Action Plan. Additionally, the RN Cultural Insights Team carries out visits using workshops with a cross section of personnel and provides a report to the CO with recommendations to optimise how teams work together, focusing on behaviours.

Any findings that support wider organisational learning are captured centrally by the RN Culture and Leadership Team.

- b. Each term, the Second Sea Lord (2SL) hosts Breaking Down Barriers (BDB) sessions where attendees are given the opportunity to talk about their lived experience to 2SL and other Senior Leaders. A BDB session on Race was held during Black History Month and was well represented by serving UK EM and non-UK EM personnel.
- c. In February 2025, the RN's Deputy Race Advocate hosted a Listening Circle for the Training Management Group. Serving personnel representing both UK EM and non-UK EM personnel talked openly about their personal experiences of racial discrimination in the RN to allow the TMG to understand the issues and focus attention on how to prevent unacceptable behaviours in the training environment. The intention is to conduct similar sessions with other key stakeholders at least termly.
- d. As part of the RN's Whole Force¹ behavioural and cultural development, the RN Culture Blueprint was published in September 2024 and sets out the principles of transparency, trust and teamwork which will drive the outcomes of supportive environments, proactive leadership at all levels, and fair and timely processes and decision making. To ensure success, all personnel need psychological safety to raise complaints, and confidence that the RN is taking appropriate action. An encouraging increase in the number of complaints from across the Force indicates growing confidence to speak out and any recommendations are being driven as organisational learning.
- e. A Culture and Leadership 4* Chaired Committee reports directly to the NAVB on updates and progress with driving change across the organisation. The committee meets twice a year and is responsible for the oversight of delivery and continuous improvement of RN Culture and Leadership. It directs and manages culture change in the RN and reviews progress against Whole Force, identifying priorities and mandating change where necessary. It makes clear that responsibility for driving change and for setting the tone from the top falls to senior leaders and holds them to account using the expectations and framework set out in the RN Culture Blueprint.

6. The Army is taking the following action:

- a. The Army conducts Climate Assessment (CA) surveys within 6 months of a new Commanding Officer's tenure to provide an independent assessment of the lived experience and identify where changes are required; these are then prioritised through an Action Plan. Where a potential concern is indicated by data from disciplinary matters, Service Complaints, or the SpeakOut hotline, an additional CA can be arranged for any unit.
- b. The Army's Cultural Measurement Framework acts as a one-stop source of all integrated and fused data from a variety of assessments, surveys and incident reporting to allow appropriate intervention and holding to account at all levels. A

¹ Whole Force refers to the combined military, civilian and contractor workforce.

recent addition provides a more detailed discipline dashboard to identify trends which are continuously monitored.

- c. Army Service Complaints data is collated for SCOAF's annual report; the Service has recently conducted a study on behalf of Defence into the over-representation of EM and female SP submitting SC, which is covered in more detail at Q4.
- d. Since 2023 the Army has delivered an annual baselining Teamwork Day, focusing on organisational culture using existing Army metrics to inform its focus. In addition, the 'Great Place to Work UK' benchmarking survey is used to compare the Army against similar organisations, helping to identify blind spots, comparative data and best practice.

7. The RAF is taking the following action:

- a. The RAF undertakes Climate Assessments (CA) on units within 6 months of a Commanding Officer taking post. CAs include a survey, followed by a visit which undertakes insight sessions across all ranks and grades. CAs result in a detailed report and a comprehensive action plan developed in cooperation with the Unit. If a concern is identified by a CA, a specific, bespoke visit is undertaken.
- b. Targeted interventions are made in response to trends identified within Continuous Attitude Surveys (AFCAS, RESCAS, People Survey), whilst Service Complaints are captured in an annual return to SCOAF within which direct racial discrimination is identified. D&I Advisors' data is also reviewed to identify emerging areas of concern and the RAF Inclusion Team maintains continuous engagement with D&I advisors on RAF stations to maintain oversight.
- c. The RAF Service Leavers Engagement Team engages Service personnel leaving on early termination to understand what factors may have influenced their decision. Anonymous feedback is captured to provide evidence to support future policy decisions.
- d. Work is also ongoing to build RAF data dashboards to consolidate all sources of information (disciplinary and administrative action, D&I advisor logs, inflow / outflow, Service Leavers engagement data etc) to allow holistic oversight, monitor trends and target interventions where required.

Question 2: What actions are being taken to address underlying issues of racial discrimination in the Armed Forces?

8. To acknowledge, highlight and tackle racial discrimination, in 2022 Defence implemented a dedicated Race Equity Programme comprising bespoke Action Plans for the Armed Forces and Defence Civil Servants. The Armed Forces Race Action Plan was launched on 30 November 2023 and set out actions to widen the Defence talent pool, demonstrate commitment to drive the cultural change required to improve the lived experience of Armed Forces personnel from ethnic minority groups, and articulate the enhanced operational capability to be gained from retaining and nurturing talent.

9. The Plan aims to support operational outcomes and ensure a more positive experience for ethnic minority colleagues within Defence and its actions are supported by the Defence and single Service Race Champions, relevant policy staffs, and Race Networks and advocates. Initiatives include:

- a. Establishing mentoring schemes.
- b. Developing suitable levels of sanctions for unacceptable behaviours.
- c. Improving declaration rates for EM staff.
- d. Reasonable measures to include more tailored recruitment to achieve a Level of Ambition of 17% EM inflow by 2030.
- e. Signing the Business in the Community Race Action Charter exchanging good practice across other member organisations, via survey compilation.
- f. Changes to the policy on Climate Assessments ensuring Commanding Officers are held to account for culture in within their unit.
- g. Bespoke support for women and EM candidates from application through to successful recruitment.

10. Initiatives have been pursued to understand and address inequity. For example, the Joint Personnel Administration system ethnicity data fields have been expanded to enable better understanding of the personnel demographic when reviewing and/or developing new people policies. A D&I objective is also mandatory within all military appraisal reports to ensure accountability for creating an inclusive environment.

11. Turning to specific actions within the single Services;

12. The Royal Navy is taking the following action:

- a. **Race Action Plan.** Termly review of the RN Race Action Plan (RAP). This work is informed through the compilation of qualitative, and quantitative data to identify statistical inequalities that affect EM Service personnel, and identify issues or trends that require redress, by way of policy and process changes. One such example is a change to the process of recording academic qualifications of non-UK EM personnel to allow qualifications from their home country to be recognised, providing equity of opportunity.
- b. **Inclusion Allies Programme.** The Royal Navy Inclusion Allies programme was launched on 27 Jun 22 and is designed to create a culture where RN personnel have the skills, knowledge and confidence to support personnel from underrepresented groups whose voices may not be heard. It supports the RN in creating a culture that gives everyone the chance to be their best without fear or apprehension.
- c. **Promotion statistics.** Royal Navy promotion statistics are published annually, broken down by ethnicity and rank and available for all to see.
- d. **Career Analysis.** Career analysis is conducted for all EM personnel and includes an assessment of promotion prospects at each rank, and by branch, to ensure opportunities are equitable. The Engineer Ratings cohort has seen an increase in the number of EM personnel presented for promotion from 43 in 2019 to 82 in 2024. Additionally, of those presented for promotion, the number successfully selected in this branch has increased from 2.3% in 2019 to 4.3% in 2024.

- e. **Cultural Intelligence education and upskilling.** This is being rolled out at training and main shore establishments concurrently with a professional behaviours package. A federated approach of upskilling the RN's D&I Adviser network commenced in July 2024 and will encourage the empowerment of individuals in units and establishments.
- f. **Professional behaviours package.** This is now being delivered to all new Ratings during initial training and covers inclusion policies, workplace behaviours, and where to go for advice and support. This redesign will ensure a more in depth focus on what is meant by unacceptable behaviours and how to tackle them, as well as enhancing allyship and active bystander training. The lessons have significant student interaction, knowledge checks and discussion opportunities to enhance learning. Work to integrate this package into Officers Initial Naval training is in progress.
- g. **Recruit and Attract.** The RN Recruit and Attract team continuously monitors data insights from 'expressions of interest to applicant' and 'applicant to entrant' to support and improve the inflow of underrepresented groups. This includes bespoke face to face engagement opportunities, linking in-Service role models with potential and actual applicants to improve understanding of the Service lived experience. Experiential visits to RN establishments and ships support the preparedness of applicants for Phase 1 initial training and beyond. A multi-layered approach has been adopted with an increase in 'drop in' events to allow face to face engagement with potential applicants and 'gatekeepers,' such as family. Measurable success is demonstrated by recent data which illustrates an increase in the recruitment of EM from 4.8% in July 2021 to 12.8% in July 2024.
- h. **Dress and Appearance.** Royal Navy uniform policy has been extended to include the option for eligible individuals to wear Mess Dress variants that showcase non-UK cultural dress. Rules around hair have also been reviewed to benefit EM personnel and are now standardised across the RN.
- i. **Race Advocate.** The RN has a 2* Race Advocate who fosters inclusivity and equity for EM personnel and uses their position to raise awareness, support diverse communities, break down barriers and shape policies to promote a culture of belonging and a 'One Navy' mindset. They chair a termly Race Alignment meeting, bringing together Network representatives, policy staffs, and other key stakeholders to discuss the lived experience, and advocate for changes to policy and process.
- j. **Networks.** The Royal Navy have the Race Diversity Network and Commonwealth Network comprising of passionate volunteers who work closely with the other Networks to provide supportive environments for their people as well as mentoring and advocacy.

13. The Army is taking the following action:

- a. The Army Plan for Improving our Organisational Culture (APIOC) seeks over 5 years to address behaviours, attitudes and systemic issues relating to racial discrimination. This is complemented by improved complaints mechanisms and links to the service justice and administrative systems. The Deputy Chief of the

General Staff chairs the Army's Organisational Culture Campaign Board which holds 1 and 2* leads to account on the development and delivery of evidence-based initiatives to address areas of concern identified through the Army's Cultural Measurement Framework.

- b. **Race Action Plan** V1 was published in Jul 23 and provided a number of recommendations. Many actions focused on improving the recruiting process for EM soldiers and the use of data to better understand issues and trends. The implementation of mentoring schemes for EM personnel was one such successful initiative. The Army intends to produce V2 in 2025. This iteration aims to address systemic barriers and aligns with the insights gained from recent employment tribunals. The revised RAP will aim to target the root causes of racial inequality, hold leaders accountable for progress, and improve the lived experience.
- c. **Network Support.** The Army's Multicultural Network provides critical support to ethnic minority personnel, offering mentorship, advocacy, and a platform for sharing experiences.
- d. **Recruit and Attract.** The Army's Recruitment Partner recruit against EM LoA and KPIs, with specific marketing and nurture activities to support. An increase of 36 mil recruiters this year has also been implemented, focussing on EM and female recruitment.
- e. **Training.** Inclusion, Behaviours and Culture briefs are delivered from Initial training to through-career formal career courses, to highlight the importance of EDI and the role of leadership in fostering an inclusive culture. These sessions equip leaders to identify and challenge racist behaviours, promote allyship, and create fair and respectful environments.
- f. **Instructor Selection.** The Army has reviewed and restructured its selection criteria and broader training of Phase 1 initial training instructors to ensure the highest standards and understanding of training policy. Instructors at Army training establishments now receive tailored briefings on cultural awareness, highlighting the diversity of backgrounds they may encounter and how to build a supportive and respectful training environment. Training Regiments nominate 'cultural lead' trainers to support recruits and align with the MCN reps.
- g. **Reverse Mentoring Pilot.** The Army is currently piloting a reverse mentoring program to address the intergenerational gap and improve senior leaders' understanding of the experiences and perspectives of junior soldiers and civil servants. Although this initiative does not currently focus specifically on underrepresented groups, some of the mentors participating in the pilot are from such demographics. As a result, the program is likely to have a secondary impact in raising awareness of the challenges faced by ethnic minority personnel in service.
- h. **Army Race Champion.** The Army's 3* Race Champion has been instrumental at driving forward the Army's RAP, and securing engagement from the Army's Multicultural Network. He routinely reaches directly into the Army Inclusion Team, senior Defence leadership and civilian communities, responding quickly to address negative behaviours and unlock support and action when blockers, unique to the EM communities, are identified.

- i. **Army Litigation Coherence Steering Group.** Financial payments for racial discrimination cases are scrutinised by the Army Personnel Directorate to ensure lessons learnt are communicated and understood to prevent recurrence.

14. The RAF is taking the following action:

- a. The RAF Race Action Plan (RAP) is under review, with the intent to publish later this year. The RAP aims to enhance D&I, recognising the need for progress in supporting EM colleagues. Key areas of focus include:
 - I. **Inclusion Training:** The RAF's 'Every Body Everyday' (EED) training package is a mandatory half day, facilitator led course for all RAF personnel. The RAF is working with Phase 1 basic training establishments to ensure that all recruits receive the EED training. The aim is to instil a culture of inclusivity from the outset, ensuring all personnel understand the foundations and where their responsibility lies in promoting a more inclusive environment. Public Sector Equality Duty Training will form part of the review to ensure Equality Impact Assessments are conducted as required.
 - II. **Internal Communication:** by improving the quality and quantity of internal communications, the RAF will ensure that information regarding D&I initiatives is effectively disseminated throughout the organisation to help address any gaps in understanding and foster a more inclusive culture.
 - III. **Inclusion Policies:** A comprehensive review of RAF inclusion policies, with a specific focus on those pertinent to EM, to ensure policies are equitable and free from discriminatory practices. This will help identify and rectify any systemic issues that may contribute to racial discrimination and support personnel in making informed decisions.
 - IV. **Climate Assessments:** the comprehensive programme of Climate Assessments across all RAF establishments provides a mechanism to gather data on inclusion-related matters. By understanding the current climate and challenges related to diversity and inclusion, the RAF can take targeted actions to address any underlying issues of racial discrimination.
 - V. **Inclusion Conference:** The RAF hosts a bi-annual Inclusion Conference and six-monthly D&I Advisor workshops which create a platform for open dialogue, sharing best practice, and recognising efforts towards inclusivity. These events can facilitate discussions on racial discrimination, promote awareness, and encourage collaboration on strategies to combat discriminatory practices.
 - VI. **Recruitment and retention:** A focus on enhanced mentoring schemes, talent management processes, appraisals and career pathway reviews, and targeted outreach efforts aims to promote diversity, support professional development, and attract a wider pool of applicants from under-represented groups to the RAF.
 - VII. **Culture Coherence.** The RAF is in the design phase of a campaign which will cohere work on culture and behaviours. The programme will focus on

leadership, data insights and training. A federated approach to data coherence will identify trends, hotspots and support targeted intervention where required whilst also measuring maturity and positive progress. Leadership and training pillars within the cultural domain will focus activity on re-energising and reinforcing RAF ethos and values to support attract, recruit and retention and unleash the full operational effectiveness of RAF teams.

Question 3: What is your assessment of the adequacy of the Service Complaints process for dealing with complaints of racial discrimination?

15. In 2022 MOD launched a number of initiatives to build independence and improve the quality of decision making in the Service Complaints (SC) system. These include Central Admissibility Teams, an independent Outsourced Investigation Service (OIS) and the use of Standing Decision Bodies outside a Complainant's direct chain of command.

16. All SC are submitted through a single-entry point and are reviewed for admissibility before being analysed and categorised. Racial discrimination is a main reporting category and is further categorised as direct or indirect discrimination. All Racial discrimination SC are investigated by an independent outsourced investigation team before being presented to a Decision Body for determination. Appeals can be made within the appeal window based on new evidence, material error in process or fact. Any Service person may submit a SC direct to the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces (SCOAF).

17. Additionally, the SC Assurance Framework between Defence and SCOAF was put in place in October 2024, to support building trust and confidence, transparency, and continuous improvement. It sets out the requirement for the single Services to undertake their own internal quality assurance to ensure the handling of SC meets the expected standard, together with a process for 'dip sampling' that enables the SCOAF to undertake periodic reviews of cases from each of the Services, identifying interventions to improve the handling of complaints.

18. Although the SCOAF has not yet stated that the system is efficient, effective and fair, she advised in her 2024 report that "The system is very close to being considered fair" and that "This has been achieved through a considerable effort from the Services to play an active part in designing solutions and making changes, and an increased commitment by the Ministry of Defence to deliver improvements" thus highlighting Defence's commitment to improving the SC system.

19. Through concerted effort, MOD has increased the standardisation and professionalisation of the SC system leading to reductions in the median time taken to handle SC (Handling times were reduced from an average of 25 weeks in 2022 to an average of 22 weeks in 2024). As evidence of a more independent and assured process, the SCOAF stated in her 2024 annual report "The Ombudsman does not currently have concerns over the impartiality and independence of the Service Complaints system²."

20. Additionally, as part of a series of changes to eradicate unacceptable behaviours in the military, and step-up support for women across UK Defence, a new Tri-Service complaints unit for the Armed Forces was announced on 18 March 2025.

² SCOAF Annual Reports | Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces page 13.

21. The new team will be independent of the single Service chain of command to provide individuals with greater confidence and help ensure that the most serious complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly and in a standardised way across the Armed Forces. This will see Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination related SC dealt with by a central team outside the single Service commands.

22. The Royal Navy had no concluded complaints formally recorded as directly attributable to racism in 2024 or 2025 to date. Further, SCOAF has not overturned any Royal Navy SC and the Service has not lost any employment tribunal cases relating to race matters in the last 3 years. We have confidence that the system is fit for dealing with complaints of racial discrimination.

23. The Army view is that the SC system allows for specific visibility of racial complaints through its categorisation of race/ethnicity driven discrimination which enables targeted action. It further categorises these into specific ethnicity cohorts and draws a comparison with white Service personnel for additional analysis on sub-categories. This data may contribute alongside other information sources to indicate the level of trust in the Chain of Command in reporting complaints of racial discrimination and therefore contributes to the assessment of the racial climate within the workplace.

24. Complaints of a racial nature from Army Service personnel are investigated by the Outsourced Investigation Service to ensure independence and impartiality. Such SC tend to be complex and may involve multiple witnesses and respondents resulting in a more extensive process. A recent improvement is an enhanced assurance mechanism that sees APSG track completion of recommended admin action where a BHD SC has been upheld.

25. Any evidence indicating that activity has crossed a criminal threshold results in an immediate pause to the SC process and is referred to the Service Police for investigation. Outcomes can result in disciplinary and/or administrative action before subsequent completion of the SC including Decision Body recommendations.

26. The RAF has the lowest overturn of admissibility decisions by SCOAF of the single Services and the lowest number of cases presented to SCOAF following the SC appeals process. We are therefore very confident that the SC process is fit for purpose for dealing with complaints of racial discrimination and any other type of complaint. Whilst bullying, harassment and discrimination complaints generally take longer because investigations are routinely more complex, the appeal rate is <5% and the subsequent upholding of appeals is <2% which provides confidence that the Decisions Bodies are getting it right.

Question 4: What data is collected on reports of, and Service Complaints related to, racial discrimination?

27. The SCOAF reports on the SC system annually, which includes data provided by the single Services and a detailed level of statistical tables of all types of complaint; these are publicly available on the SCOAF website: [Annual Statistical Tables | Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces](#). The single Services also collect data on incidents of racial discrimination through climate assessments, Service leavers data, and Service discipline and administrative records. These include allegations of criminal, non-criminal conduct, and misconduct that include a racial element.

28. EM Service personnel are proportionately represented in SC overall, with 13% of EM Service personnel overall and 13% of Service Complaints raised by EM personnel. However, the SCOAF raised concerns in her 2024 Report regarding the over-representation of EMs within Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination complaints: “There remain serious concerns around the experiences of those who have cause to raise complaints about bullying, harassment and discrimination, particularly when female and ethnic minority Service personnel are disproportionately affected³.”

29. The single Service Secretariats record more granular detail on Racial Harassment or Discrimination such as whether the complaint was fully upheld, partially upheld, upheld, withdrawn or stayed. The categorisation allows for data visibility into specific ethnicity cohorts and draws a comparison with white Service personnel.

30. In September 2024, in response to a SCOAF recommendation, the Army delivered a review into the overrepresentation of Women and EM Service personnel in the SC system. The SC Transformation Team is collaborating closely with the other Services to finalise a detailed implementation plan and make a recommendation as to whether actions are to be coordinated centrally or at a local level within each Service. In future, studies will be conducted biannually to facilitate ongoing enhancements.

31. The single Services also record allegations of criminal, non-criminal conduct, or misconduct, that contain a racial element identified via a SC. These are investigated by the relevant authority (Service Police, Civil Police or the Chain of Command). Following legal advice, an arguable case is dealt with either by Courts Martial, Summary Hearing, or Major Administrative Action.

32. Work is ongoing to build data dashboards which pull together the different sources of information (Disciplinary, administrative action, D&I advisor logs, inflow and outflow rates, Climate assessment data and Service leavers’ engagement data) to allow holistic oversight, trend monitoring and targeted interventions as required.

³ [SCOAF Annual Reports | Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces](#) page 15.