
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2026 No. 166

DEFENCE

**The Royal Air Force Terms of Service
(Amendment) Regulations 2026**

<i>Made</i>	- - - -	<i>24th February 2026</i>
<i>Laid before Parliament</i>		<i>2nd March 2026</i>
<i>Coming into force</i>	- -	<i>23rd March 2026</i>

The Defence Council makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by section 329(1), (2) and (3) of the Armed Forces Act 2006⁽¹⁾.

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Royal Air Force Terms of Service (Amendment) Regulations 2026.

(2) These Regulations come into force on 23rd March 2026.

(3) These Regulations extend to England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the British overseas territories except Gibraltar.

Amendment of the Royal Air Force Terms of Service Regulations 2007

2.—(1) The Royal Air Force Terms of Service Regulations 2007⁽²⁾ are amended as follows.

(2) After regulation 5 insert—

“The foundation engagement

5A.—(1) A person who has reached the age of 17 years and 42 weeks may be enlisted in the Royal Air Force for a term of not less than 12 months nor more than 24 months air force service from the relevant date (a “foundation engagement”).

(2) A person enlisted on a foundation engagement under paragraph (1) has the right, after the expiration of 6 months from the relevant date, to determine their service by giving 28 days’ notice in writing to their commanding officer.

(1) [2006 c. 52](#). There are amendments to section 329 which are not relevant to these Regulations. See section 328(5) for the definition of “prescribed”. The Defence Council is treated as if it were a Minister of the Crown for the purposes of the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 ([c. 36](#)) by virtue of section 373(2) of the Armed Forces Act 2006.

(2) [S.I. 2007/650](#); relevant amending instruments are [S.I. 2014/3068](#) and [2024/1059](#).

(3) Regulation 14 shall not apply to a person enlisted on a foundation engagement.

Conversion of terms of service from foundation engagement to notice engagement

5B. A person in air force service enlisted on a foundation engagement may, after giving notice in writing to the competent air force authority and if the competent air force authority signify their approval in writing (“the notice of approval”), be treated as if he had enlisted on a notice engagement under regulation 4 for a term of service specified in the notice of approval being a term of not less than 3 years nor more than 12 years air force service from the relevant date.”.

24th February 2026

Louise Sandher-Jones
Harvey Smyth
Members of the Defence Council
Ministry of Defence

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations are made under the Armed Forces Act 2006 (c. 52) and amend the Royal Air Force Terms of Service Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/650).

Regulation 2 provides for a new type of engagement, which enables persons who have reached the age of 17 years and 42 weeks to be enlisted for a term of air force service of between 12 and 24 months. Those who have enlisted on such an engagement have the right under this regulation, after the expiration of 6 months from their date of enlistment, to be discharged from air force service with no reserve liability by providing 28 days' written notice to their commanding officer. A person on a foundation engagement may be treated as if they had enlisted on a notice engagement where written approval of the competent air force authority is obtained.

A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen.