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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

SERVICE PERSONNEL BOARD

TRI-SERVICE REVIEW OF THE ARMED FORCES POLICY ON HOMOSEXUALITY AND CODE OF SOCIAL CONDUCT

(A Paper by D SP Pol SC)

This paper reviews the Armed Forces policy on homosexuality and the introduction of the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct in the light of thirty months' experience since both were introduced in Jan 00. It concludes that there has been no discernible impact on operational efficiency and that the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct has been well received. It considers that no further review of the Armed Forces policy on homosexuality is currently judged necessary, as sexual orientation is now increasingly an integral part of the policy on diversity. However, Service personnel staffs will need to remain watchful for any reversal of current attitudes of toleration. It further recommends that the guidelines for applying the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct require some refinement.

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the ECHR judgement against the MOD at Strasbourg on 27 Sep 99, and the subsequent change of policy on homosexuality in the Armed Forces, the lifting of the ban on homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces was announced by the Secretary of State in Parliament on 12 Jan 00.

AIM

2. The aim of this paper is to review the revised policy on homosexuality and the introduction of the underpinning Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct within the three Services, in the light of thirty months' experience following the change of policy.

SCOPE

3. The three Services were asked to examine and report on the following main areas:

- (a) To provide the views of COs on the change of policy on Homosexuality and the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct.
- (b) Single-Service reactions to the policy change.
- (c) Identify the most commonly held concerns.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

- (d) To highlight any practical difficulties and details of any alleged cases of redress, victimisation or harassment following the policy change.
- (e) Single-Service handling and reaction to homosexual re-enlistments.
- (f) Offer feedback from the Tri-Service Equal Opportunities Training Centre.
- (g) The implications for diversity policy.

BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

4. The change in policy was reviewed in the light of experience in the Services during the first six months of operation. The conclusions of the review were reported to Ministers¹ and the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) and are included at Annex A for ease of reference. Although the handling of the announcement and the subsequent change in policy was generally hailed a success, and no real problems of harassment or victimisation were reported following its introduction, it was acknowledged that this may not have fully reflected that the change in policy did not command the universal approval of all Service personnel. It was recommended that there should be second review to reflect a further two years of operating the change in policy, which would be reported to Ministers and the HCDC.

VIEWS OF COMMANDING OFFICERS (COs) ON THE CHANGE OF HOMOSEXUALITY POLICY

HOMOSEXUALITY

5. COs views for each Service are as follows:

- a. **The Naval Service**. When first announced the change in policy was not openly welcomed by many, but reaction was generally muted. Since then it has been widely agreed that the problems initially perceived have not been encountered, and for most personnel sexual orientation is a 'non-issue'. It is thought that such changes were inevitable and logical as they reflect the society in which Armed Forces serve.
- b. **The Army**. The general message from COs is, that there appears to have been no real change since the new policy was announced. It appears that few homosexuals have decided to declare their sexual orientation and that they would prefer to keep their orientation private. However feedback from focus groups is that this may well be a subject that is dormant at present, but may need to be further considered when personnel are on operations.
- c. **RAF**. The overwhelming view of RAF COs is that the change in policy was overdue and represented recognition of the diverse culture in which we all live. All COs agreed that there had been no tangible impact on operational effectiveness, team cohesion or Service life generally. There had been no 'pink crusades' or rushes of 'coming out'. One CO commented that same sex

¹ D/SP Pol SC/50/1 dated 24 Aug 02.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

relationships had caused some initial concern, but that the situation had been ably managed.

THE ARMED FORCES CODE OF SOCIAL CONDUCT

6. **The Naval Service**. The revised code has been well received and it is considered that it puts homosexuality neatly into context, as it does not just cover homosexual relationships but instead provides clear guidance on all forms of relationships.

7. **The Army**. There has been a varied response from the COs and can be summarised as being:

a. The Code has been welcomed by all.

b. While the Code provides useful and balanced criteria against which to assess social conduct, concern was raised at how the policy is implemented. The need for consistency is viewed as essential. This may be difficult to achieve given that each incident will need to be judged on its own merits and the likelihood that different parts of the Services may apply different emphasis. The need for equity in enforcement is seen as a particular challenge.

c. A lack of understanding and education, mainly with those who have transgressed, of why Values and Standards are necessary.

8. **RAF**. Whilst the majority of comments were positive, they ranged from the negative (caused problems in interpretation, highly subjective, not prescriptive enough), through the neutral (little impact at Station level), to the positive (excellent tool that ensures parity of treatment, a sensible and pragmatic approach and an identifiable baseline against which to measure social conduct). It should be noted that the RAF uses the Service Test as a yardstick for all types of personnel casework, not just for social misconduct.

SINGLE-SERVICE REACTION TO THE CHANGE IN ARMED FORCES POLICY ON HOMOSEXUALITY

THE NAVAL SERVICE

9. **Officers**. The majority view is that the new policy has not made any significant change to Service life. It was thought that, if asked, some would express disapproval of the change but many, particularly younger officers, would be neutral or positively welcoming of the change.

10. **Senior Rates and Warrant Officers and SNCO**. This stratum of naval society is considered to be one of the most traditional and, correspondingly, there remains some disquiet in the Senior Ratings' Messes concerning the policy on homosexuality within the Service. This has manifested itself in a number of personnel electing to leave the Service, although in only one case was the policy change cited as the only reason for going. Nonetheless, homosexuality is not a major issue and, to put the effect of the policy change into context, the introduction of Pay 2000 and pay grading caused a far greater reaction.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

11. **Junior Rates and Ranks**. The general feeling is that Junior Rates and ranks are more accepting of homosexuality, as the majority have friends/acquaintances who are homosexual, although some were polarised in their views. There was a mixed reaction as to whether homosexuals should be allowed to serve; some cannot understand why homosexuality is an issue at all, whilst others feel that the Service has created a difficult and volatile situation for them to deal with.

THE ARMY

12. **Officers**. There is general acceptance of the change amongst officers with many agreeing that the impact of the policy will have no significant impact upon units. There is a view that officers who have attended university have developed a more tolerant attitude to homosexuality and some officers also expressed a view that the effect of the changes introduced will only be noticed over a prolonged period.

13. **Warrant Officers and SNCOs**. Some reluctance amongst Warrant Officers and SNCOs to accept the change has been noted and there has been one recent incident of a homosexual WO's & Sgts' Mess member 'coming out' and this generated much discussion. A general view is that most soldiers still have very little direct experience of working alongside, or socialising with, homosexuals, and find the notion distasteful. However, the general attitude is that social acceptability is more dependent on character and personality rather than sexual orientation, and those with direct experience of serving with homosexuals are more inclined to be tolerant.

14. **Junior Ranks**. Views amongst Junior Ranks were more diverse with some reluctant to accept the policy change whilst the majority recognise the need to adapt. In general, Junior Ranks tend to be more liberal than their older colleagues although many have expressed particular concern over room sharing. One CO expressed a view that there is a resigned acceptance amongst Junior Ranks concerning the Army's homosexual policy, though there remains a continued sentiment across Junior Ranks that homosexuality undermines unit/team cohesion. This view was particularly prevalent within the Infantry.

15. **General Reactions**. The overwhelming consensus is that this policy change appears to have had little impact. The general impression is that there has been little change in attitude with those who were homophobic remaining so, albeit less overtly, whilst the views of more tolerant individuals is unchanged. Regardless of policy, homosexuals are not yet readily accepted by all, and this may influence an individual in deciding whether to expose his or her sexual orientation. More senior groups felt that the policy had little practical impact and was not a contentious issue; team dynamics are much more dependent on personality than on the sexual orientation of the individual, whereas more junior groups were more likely to feel threatened by the change in policy. Overall there is recognition that the change in policy is a response to European law, and there is little (or nothing) that can be done about it although the policy change is unlikely to change people's views on homosexuality. It is interesting to note that at a recent Infantry COs' Conference, the message came out clearly that 18 year olds joining the Infantry, whilst not accepting homosexual behaviour, were largely indifferent to it.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

RAF

16. **Officers**. Represented by COs views above (see Para 5.c.).
17. **Warrant Officers and SNCOs**. There was some evidence that a small minority of individuals – mainly SNCOs – privately believed that homosexuals had no place in the Service, but that they nevertheless adhered to the guidelines. The majority of COs believed time and education would resolve this minor issue.
18. **Other Ranks**. The issue of homosexuality is old news and a non-issue with other ranks. This group tends to be younger and reflects greater societal acceptance of homosexual issues.
19. **General Reactions/Key Observations**. The general reaction to the change of policy was muted. There remains a small minority who have not been receptive to the change in policy, most of whom appear to be senior NCOs. This is not unexpected given their age and length of service. Younger personnel of all ranks have apparently accepted the change easily. Most of those consulted during this review agreed that acceptance would improve with time and that Equal Opportunities (EO) and Diversity training would play a significant role in the process.

SERVICE REACTION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ARMED FORCES CODE OF SOCIAL CONDUCT

THE NAVAL SERVICE

20. **Officers**. Comments received were mostly positive and the Code has been welcomed as a positive benefit. Its introduction was seen as a timely, considered and sensitive change to address a new climate in terms of relationships and issues of personal behaviour and sexuality. It has created an overall understanding of the importance of all relationships, especially in the need to respect, value and protect the rights of others. The Code is seen as a good guide and regulator for all relationships, and brought maturity to personal behaviour across the board. It has created a climate within which harassment, exploitation and sexism can be challenged and dealt with.
21. **Senior rates and Warrant Officers and SNCO**. No substantive comment.
22. **Junior Rates and ranks**. No substantive comment.

THE ARMY

23. **Officers**. Officers have a more active role in the application of the Code of Social Conduct and in the main considered it a positive development. The Service Test is regarded by most as a valuable clarification, although some officers did, however, express concern that the Service Test might be too vague and open to broad interpretation. They felt that this might result in its effectiveness being undermined. This applied particularly to issues of social misconduct.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

24. **Warrant Officers and SNCOs.** Warrant Officers and SNCOs' considered the guidance, sanctions and criteria to be helpful. There were strong feelings amongst this group that young soldiers should be taught the Armed Forces view on values and standards, as they are not inherent within the pool from which the Armed Forces recruit. There is a perception that commanders are not applying the Code with sufficient confidence and this could undermine its effectiveness.

25. **Junior Ranks.** Junior ranks generally accepted the Code on the basis that the Armed Forces needed to have values and standards that are more prescriptive than those in civilian society. Many JNCOs reflect the attitudes of society today, though they display greater understanding of the needs of the Service than might be assumed. This group did not necessarily reflect Armed Forces standards when joining, but they do have an awareness that a firm framework of conduct exists and that it should be maintained. A perception does exist that officers and WOs/SNCOs frequently breach the Code without action being taken against them.

RAF

26. **Officers.** Represented by CO views above (see Para 8).

27. **Warrant Officers and SNCOs.** No substantive comment.

28. **Other Ranks.** No substantive comment.

29. **General Reactions.** The introduction of the Code of Social Conduct was generally considered to be a positive step by all levels of RAF personnel. Nevertheless, there was some concern expressed that the guidelines were open to interpretation and subjective decision making, resulting in inequitable application across the Service of the policy and any resulting sanctions. This view was, however, in the minority and the RAF already has in hand a review of the administrative system of warnings and special reports to ensure equitable treatment irrespective of rank.

MOST COMMONLY HELD CONCERNS

30. **The Naval Service.** There are a few commonly held concerns, and none that is significant in the minds of naval personnel. The most important concern is the lack of privacy on board a ship or submarine, particularly in the confined living conditions in single sex messes, and anxiety over having to take communal showers.

31. **The Army.** Generally, there has been an acceptance of the need for change and, notwithstanding the fact that so far there has been no strong test of the policy, it is simply no longer regarded as a major personnel issue. One unit commented on the fact that the policy had given serving homosexuals more confidence, in that there was not a culture of harassment and unacceptability with regard to their lifestyle. Nevertheless, many COs commented that homosexuals would not necessarily 'come out'. There are some commonly held concerns, which include:

- a. Heterosexuals do not want to share rooms with homosexuals.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

- b. Privacy should be mutually respected and soldiers should not be compelled to share accommodation with persons of a different gender or sexual orientation.
- c. There is a strong feeling that toilets and showers should be separated as per male and female arrangements (a concern that should be overcome with Single Living Accommodation).
- d. A perception that operational effectiveness might be undermined if living in close proximity with homosexuals on operations.
- e. The eventual policy on partners' entitlement (with the homosexual dimension) to pensions and quartering is viewed as more socio-political, rather than a military initiative, and will require careful management if it is not to be divisive.

32. **RAF.** It was generally felt that concerns over change would continue to fade over time. However, the greatest concern expressed by married personnel was the possibility that, at some stage, same sex couples would occupy SFA and gain access to the same benefits and entitlements as married personnel. To a certain extent, these concerns ('impressionable' children growing up next door to a same sex couple and the erosion of family values) has been brought to the fore by the debate on unentitled partners. By way of balance, it was also recognised by some personnel, however, that this reflected the diverse society from which the RAF seeks to recruit. Nevertheless, given the number of Stations that have raised the issue of same sex partners and their inclusion in the wider RAF community, it was felt these concerns should be highlighted in this review. The RAF Chaplaincy Services have suggested that, whilst there may be some heterosexuals expressing discomfort about the change in policy, there has been a decrease in homosexual personnel presenting with problems. There is a strong impression that life is now easier for homosexual personnel.

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES AND DETAILS OF ANY ALLEGED CASES OF REDRESS, VICTIMISATION OR HARASSMENT FOLLOWING THE POLICY CHANGE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

THE NAVAL SERVICE

33. No practical difficulties have been encountered, although it has been suggested that training in interrogation involving strip-searching might cause difficulties. There has been a low level of incidents investigated by the SIB that involved activity that might be regarded as homosexual (in the context of assaults and threats), but this has not caused any statistical increase compared to earlier years.

THE ARMY

34. There have been no practical difficulties experienced by most COs; nearly all observed that the policy had yet to be fully tested. The lifting of the ban was generally unwelcome at the time, however it has now been accepted that it has made little or no impact. There have been isolated incidents with accommodation; prior to the policy soldiers asked to be moved to different accommodation for 'personality clash' reasons

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

but since the change of policy there has been greater openness. For example, there has been an incident where a soldier asked to be moved because he did not get on with a known homosexual in a two man room. When he moved to another room, the unit was faced with seeking another volunteer to share the room. To have placed another homosexual in the room would have given rise to 'partner issues' and leaving the homosexual in a room on his own would have been seen as preferential or discriminatory treatment.

35. **Bullying/Victimisation/Harassment.** Other than one serious case in 2001 concerning sexual assault, the unanimous response to the question on bullying was that it has not occurred, though one CO did make the point that this is a subject that soldiers will not readily discuss.

RAF

36. The general issue of accommodation was of some concern within the RAF, but comments related also to mixed sex accommodation, which was felt to be of equal importance to mixed sexuality sharing.

37. There had been one complaint of an unwanted homosexual approach that had been swiftly and effectively dealt with at unit level. There had also been one instance of complaint, following the breakdown of a same sex relationship, but this was resolved amicably. There had been no reported instances of harassment on grounds of sexual orientation.

SERVICE HANDLING/REACTION TO HOMOSEXUAL RE-ENLISTMENTS

38. **The Naval Service.** It is known that two officers and one rating have rejoined the RN, and all are now progressing well. Another application from an officer is currently being staffed. Shortly after the Lustig-Prean decision, staff recalled several telephone enquiries from personnel who had been discharged. The focus of these enquiries appeared to be to gain information to assist in a loss of earnings claim. Those who did make an application to re-join, were generally more concerned about the effects of their previous service, whether their seniority would count, training and their future employment. Their sexual orientation was a very minor issue, and has been a non-issue from the appointing drafting perspective. It was suggested that, provided individuals are fit and able to carry out their duties in full, they should be encouraged to rejoin or remain in the Service.

39. **The Army.** Although COs reported no known re-enlistments, the Army Personnel Centre were able to report that up to a dozen homosexuals who were discharged during the ban on homosexuality had applied for re-enlistment. Of these, only one had actually accepted the offer to rejoin, and it can be concluded that the others were simply testing the policy.

40. **The RAF.** The RAF set out to treat re-entrants to the Service after being discharged on grounds of homosexuality in exactly the same way as all other candidates for entry and re-entry. Sexual orientation was not an issue in considering applications, unless the applicant raised the subject. There is, therefore, no formal

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

record of such re-entrants and such knowledge as exists is based on collective corporate memory. It is known that two individuals successfully applied to re-join the RAF; also that another individual was refused entry because his former trade was in surplus. Min(AF) directed that this criterion for re-entry should be waived, but it was subsequently discovered, during the normal recruitment process, that the individual was below the required medical standard for re-entry. Min(AF) therefore accepted a recommendation that he should not re-enter the RAF. Those units that have received re-enlisted personnel reported no adverse reaction.

TRI-SERVICE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING CENTRE (TSEOTC).

41. The MoD policy on homosexuality is discussed during Senior Officers' Seminars and EO Advisers courses. The overwhelming majority of attendees now see homosexuality within the Armed Forces as a non-issue and are content with the policy and the management implications. Occasionally, personal reservations are expressed in discussion, but such views are not representative of the majority. There have been very few management or disciplinary problems highlighted by attendees, and it is evident that in the vast majority of units across the services, sexual orientation is viewed as irrelevant. The Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct is regarded as a sensible and pragmatic management tool and the concept of behaviour, rather than sexual orientation, being the key factor is a widely accepted principle.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSITY POLICY

42. **Recognition of the Armed Forces Lesbian and Gay Association (AFLAGA).** The Services are agreed that there is no harm in engaging with organisations such as AFLAGA in a Centre-led dialogue when the need arises. However, official Departmental recognition of AFLAGA would set a precedent and potentially open the door to a range of other minority and special interest groups to seek similar recognition. The Services feel, therefore, that official recognition for such groups should be resisted.

43. **Positive Recruitment in the Gay press.** Service attitude varied as follows:

a. **The Naval Service.** The Naval Service consider that current recruitment policies and practices are adequate. In view of the general press interest in Armed Forces issues, and the activities of certain pressure groups, homosexuals are now generally aware that the three Services are fully committed to diversity and that they are welcome to apply for recruitment. A greater recruiting profile in the 'pink press' might run the risk of upsetting the generally balanced attitude towards recruitment within the Naval Service and generate unhelpful coverage in the more salacious newspapers.

b. **The Army.** In terms of recruitment, the Army feel there is a need to target resources for the greatest impact. The Army are intending to conduct a wide-ranging scoping study to determine the size of the potential recruiting pool and the general attitudes prevalent in society towards service in the Armed Forces before deciding whether it would be worthwhile actively recruiting from the

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

homosexual population. The issue remains sensitive, and the Army would have to consider the wider ramifications of adopting such a policy.

c. **RAF.** The RAF feel there may be some merit in placing recruiting advertisements in the gay press just as, for example, they advertise through various media aimed at ethnic minority communities

On balance, there is muted enthusiasm and little need to target male or female homosexual personnel in recruitment efforts. The Services diversity policy sends a clear message that the Armed Forces do not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Provision of Specialist Welfare Support

44. Service views are as follows:

a. **The Naval Service.** The change in policy had not been an issue for the Naval Personnel Family Services (NPFS), and the transitional arrangements went remarkably well. NPFS observes non-discriminatory practices, and co-operated in distributing and displaying AFLAGA posters. Since the change in policy, of 4000 general referrals to NPFS(West)'s office, there has been only one approach from a serving person who sought advice about the policy on homosexuality. The Naval Support Line also receives very few calls from personnel seeking advice about homosexual issues. Of the 2952 questions dealt with by staff since the service began in May 1999, only 14 related to gender issues, a category under which questions about homosexuality would have been recorded. However, this category is not restricted to homosexual issues, and it is not possible to provide data specifically about questions relating to homosexuality. In light of this evidence, it is considered that there is no requirement for specialist welfare support purely for homosexual personnel.

b. **The Army.** It is assessed that there is no requirement to provide any additional welfare support for homosexuals. The Army are confident that existing provision is adequate, without the need to single out any minority group.

c. **RAF.** In the recruiting context, there have been no reported instances of candidates asking for advice on welfare support available to homosexual personnel. Within the Service, there is no data available to confirm or deny a specific need for any social support provision over and above that which already exists. The RAF has adopted a socially inclusive view of its community and, as such, the provision of social support is for everyone regardless of sexual orientation or status. As part of the overall support package, the Community Support Website has a direct link to the AFLAGA Website. The general view is that, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is no requirement for specialist welfare support for homosexual personnel.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY OF SERVICE VIEWS

THE NAVAL SERVICE

45. The overall response appears to be a positive one, particularly to the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct. Initially, there was a mixed reaction to the change of policy, but the change has been accepted with few problems experienced. The personal experiences of Service homosexuals, however, is that in general they still feel isolated and unsupported by an organisation which has no real understanding of their particular needs and no conviction to reinforce policy by providing practical support to homosexual personnel. It is believed that continued education and time will resolve these issues.

THE ARMY

46. **Homosexuality**. The change in policy on homosexuality has been accepted by the majority of ranks, although many remain suspicious of homosexuality in general. The actual impact of the change has been very low, due largely to maintenance of the status quo, and the anticipated consequences of change being exaggerated. Accommodation is a sensitive subject and causes concern amongst those in vulnerable situations, and in units where combat teams may operate in isolation, such as the Infantry, whereas units from the supporting Arms seem more able to tolerate the inclusion of homosexuals. Many feel that the policy has still to be fully tested, and that there is a possibility of greater problems arising during High Intensity Operations. Some officers have suggested that homosexuality should be discussed as part of the EO programme if we are to gradually increase the willingness to integrate homosexuals into the Army. The Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct has provided timely assistance in dealing with issues associated with homosexual misconduct, while ensuring that they are judged on the same criteria as any other form of unacceptable social behaviour.

47. **Introduction of the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct**. The Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct has been welcomed by all as the 'line in the sand' that is there for all to see. Everyone is in agreement that the practical and common application of the Code is critical to the maintenance of operational standards and Service ethos in the face of changing social conditions. The inherent strength of the Code is its application to all with complete diversity whatever colour, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Not all see its application as equitable or consistent.

RAF

48. Within the RAF, the general view was that the change in policy was inevitable and is 'yesterday's news'. The response to the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct and its Service Test was mixed, but the amendments to the RAF system of warnings and special reports should rectify a number of underlying concerns. A small minority of staff remain unconvinced about homosexuals serving in the RAF, but are not overt in their views and this is felt to be largely a generational issue. Finally, the need to highlight the concerns of the wider RAF community with regard to the possible future integration of same sex couples into Service Families Accommodation (SFA) was a strongly held opinion. This could be a major source of concern when the partners

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

issue is openly debated and there is a need to be prepared for a reaction if same sex couples are included.

CONCLUSIONS

49. COs of all three Services generally concur that there has been no tangible impact on operational effectiveness, team cohesion or Service life as a result lifting the ban on homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces.

50. The Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct has been well received. Some concerns were expressed that guidance notes for COs may not be prescriptive enough and may, therefore, lead to some inconsistency in its application.

51. All personnel have accepted that a change in policy was inevitable and has had little impact on Service life. Whilst sexual orientation remains a private matter, little difficulty for the future is foreseen. Team dynamics were deemed to be more dependent on personality than sexual orientation.

52. Reported cases of bullying or harassment involving activities that might be regarded as homosexual are very rare.

53. Those few personnel previously discharged because of their sexual orientation who have since rejoined the Armed Forces have been re-assimilated into Service life with little difficulty.

54. No specific homosexual issues have been raised by Senior Offices or students attending EO briefings or courses at TSEOTC.

55. Concerns have been registered that, should same sex couples be granted the same entitlements as married heterosexual couples (in particular to SFA), there may be significant educational and presentational issues to be addressed to avoid a homophobic reaction from other SFA residents.

56. No further formal review of the Armed Forces policy on homosexuality is currently judged to be necessary as sexual orientation is increasingly part of Armed Forces diversity business. However, Service personnel staffs should remain watchful for any reversal of current toleration.

57. No special welfare provisions are required for homosexual personnel – the existing welfare infrastructure provides an inclusive service for all.

RESTRICTED - MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

58. It is recommended that the SPB:

- a. Notes the conclusions of the Review.
- b. Agrees that tri-Service work is put in hand to review the guidance notes to COs in applying the Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct.
- c. Agrees that the conclusions of the Review are reported to Ministers and the HCDC.

Annex:

A. Conclusions of the Aug 00 review of the Armed Forces Policy on Homosexuality and Code of Social Conduct.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE AUG 00 REVIEW OF THE ARMED FORCES
POLICY ON HOMOSEXUALITY AND CODE OF SOCIAL CONDUCT

1. The results were reported to be encouraging. The principal conclusions were as follows:

- a. The change of policy has been introduced smoothly and with fewer problems than might have been expected.
- b. Commanding officers have not reported any significant issues and the revised policy has been assimilated into Service life without any perceived adverse impact or effect on operational effectiveness.
- c. The new Code of Social Conduct for the Armed Forces, with its associated Service test, has been well received and is proving a useful tool for commanders in dealing with issues of personal behaviour.
- d. The success of the Departmental communications strategy re-affirmed the need to treat the presentational aspects of potentially controversial policy decisions or announcements as an integral part of the overall policy process.
- e. No changes to the revised policy on homosexuality or the Code of Social Conduct are considered necessary at the present time.
- f. No further action is required on the content of the Service education or training courses at the present time.
- g. A further low key review, based on tri-Service management assessments, is recommended to take place in two years time.