As a manager it is important that you have all the information you need to be able to support a reservist. To help you do this we have created a set of five scenarios that provide useful information and tips.

**SCENARIO ONE**

A member of your team expresses an interest in joining the Reserve Forces or declares they are already a reservist. They would like to find out more about the support that is available from your organisation.

**What is a reservist? How can I support them in their choice?**

Reservists are committed individuals who volunteer their time to serve with the Armed Forces, and they take part in military and civil relief operations. The MOD will inform employers about employees who are reservists.

To gain an understanding of what a reservist is and their commitments, read our key facts on employing reservists in the NHS. For more information you can also talk to existing reservists, your organisation’s NHS Reserve Forces Champion, or your local military unit.

**Why do they want to become a reservist?**

It is important to explore why they want to be a reservist. They may have been encouraged by the support your organisation offers to reservists, experiences colleagues have had or they have been approached by the Reserve Forces as they carry a medical specialism.

Whatever the reason, joining the Reserve Forces is a huge commitment and a decision that should not be rushed. It is important that they discuss this with their family, think about what service they may join and whether they are prepared to be deployed to a different location at home or overseas, as well as what their responsibilities may be.

**How can this benefit my team?**

Having a reservist within your team can add tremendous value to your organisation. Through their reservist training they will have access to funded professional courses. This will help them to gain additional leadership and team working skills, as well as the opportunity to increase both their resilience and the ability to work under pressure.
What commitments do reservists have?

Reservists are committed to undertake ongoing training and can be called up for operational duties. Training commitments vary but are usually between nine and 27 days a year, and are completed on an evening and at weekends. As part of this, the reservist will take part in a two-week residential ‘annual camp’ where they will be absent from your organisation. To enable you to include this into your workforce planning, reservists will be given training dates a year in advance.

If your reservist has been called up and is being mobilised to take part in an operational tour of duty, you will receive advance notice (which will be a minimum of 28 days). Reservists can be deployed for periods lasting between a few weeks to 12 months, depending on their role and specialism. However, employers have the right to appeal against or defer a reservist’s mobilisation if it would seriously impact on your organisation.

Who do I need to inform? Do we have any organisational policies for reservists?

If a member of your team has declared that they are a reservist, you should inform your HR department as they can offer you advice and guidance. They will also have details of the relevant policies that support members of the Reserve Forces, which may include additional leave that is offered to your reservist(s) so they are able to meet their training requirements.

If your organisation does not have a policy that is specifically for reservists, you can refer to our model policy. This covers the legal framework, as well as support given during mobilisation and training.

It is important to know who your reservists are, and you can do this by recording their reservist status on their Electronic Staff Record (ESR). You can also record if they are mobilised or deployed, if another person is covering their role during mobilisation or when reporting a specific absence when it is due to reservist activity.

Does the employee want to share their reservist status with their colleagues?

It is important that staff feel encouraged to disclose their reservist status to colleagues, but it is their choice. To help demystify, promote and raise support for the Reserve Forces within your organisation, you could ask a reservist to share their experiences at a team meeting, in a blog or via the intranet. This will need to be cleared through their Commanding Officer first.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

— Find out more about Reserve Forces by looking at our key facts on employing reservists and the introduction to the Reserve Forces video.
— You can also look at the NHS Reserve Forces footprint map to locate your local unit, regional Defence Relationship Management (DRM) director and NHS Reserve Forces Champions.
— If a member of your team would like to become a reservist or they are deciding on which service to join, you can signpost them to the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force recruitment websites.
— If a member of staff has declared that they are a reservist, inform your HR department so they can signpost you to relevant policy documents. You can also refer to our model policy which provides examples of support given to reservists as well as information and useful sources.
— It is important that the reservists in your organisation feel supported, so follow up any initial discussions.

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