

News story: Brigadier promotion for lifetime Reservist and Dstl employee

Andy's time as a reservist has been in addition to a full-time career, beginning as an electronics engineering apprentice before his time in Bosnia prompted the move to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). In 16 years at Dstl, Andy has worked in a number of areas, beginning with the replacement of the 'Wheelbarrow' – a bomb disposal remote control vehicle (RCV), then focusing on electronic countermeasures and IEDs and, most recently, undertaking a Masters in International Security and Strategy while at the Royal College of Defence Studies, with a focus on artificial intelligence.

Working for a defence executive agency can have natural parallels with reservist duties and Dstl recognises the value of reservists, providing 15 days' special paid leave for annual training commitments. Andy said:

Dstl's strength lies in its people and their individual knowledge, skills and experience. As the UK's leading government agency in applying science and technology to the defence and security of the UK, reservists are able to leverage their military experience to the benefit of Dstl. Quid pro quo, the Regular Armed Forces benefit from Dstl reservists, given their specific defence-related roles.

He also conveyed how operational service, both as reservists and as civil servants, highlights what a difference Dstl staff can make on the ground. Equally, as the first reserve officer to command a troop on live bomb disposal tasks, Andy brought back real insight to Dstl for what is needed on the front line in Bosnia, adding:

When I was deployed as a bomb disposal officer, I wasn't dealing with IEDs (like those deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan). My team and I were dealing with air dropped weapons (large unexploded bombs), unexploded mortars, booby-trapped grenades, rockets that had malfunctioned and thousands of mines, both anti-vehicular and anti-personnel left over from the War. Our biggest threat came from booby-trapped mines.



Andrew Wood – Royal Engineers Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment Commander alongside the Cluster Bomb Aimable Container.

As a reservist, Andy received the same training as his regular counterparts and when commanding troops the same high standards are necessary for safety and mutual trust:

Needless to say the sense of 'belonging' and team work in the Army is very strong, and arguably more so within explosive ordnance disposal.

He is still proudly representing the Army Reserve Force and he recently found himself at a 10 Downing Street breakfast reception with the Secretary of State for Defence, Gavin Williamson, to mark Reserves Day. After an impressive 36 years as a reservist, Andy takes up a new role next year as Deputy Director of Land Warfare Centre in Warminster.

[**News story: New fees for permission to**](#)

enter or disturb mining interests

The changes to fees will take effect from 1 October 2018 and all fees will be inclusive of VAT.

Fees are determined by:

- the area of application
- the number of boreholes
- the number of mine entries to be investigated or treated

The minimum fee for any application will be £111.00.

Area of application

For the area of application, the cost will be £111.00 per 0.1 hectare, up to a maximum of £2775.00 for 2.5 hectares or above.

Any number of shafts or adits within this area are included within the area fee.

Number of boreholes

Where boreholes are planned for initial investigation purposes only, these will be charged at £55.50 per borehole.

Should treatment then prove necessary, then a further application would be required to cover the whole treatment area at £111.00 per 0.1 hectare, but the initial application fee will be deducted from this.

Mine entries to be investigated or treated

Shaft and adit investigation or treatment will be charged at £111.00 each, when not included within the above applications.

Further information about fees

For further information regarding fees in connection with applications for permission to enter or disturb coal mining interests, please contact:

Coal Authority licensing and permissions team

Coal Authority
200 Lichfield Lane
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG18 4RG

Email

permissions@coal.gov.uk

Telephone

01623 637 339

Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:00pm

Friday: 8:45am to 4:30pm

[News story: Tune in to Companies House](#)

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In our [latest podcast](#) we speak to Nicola Reed, owner and manager of Lullabyz Nursery. Nicola talks about setting up her business, and how it's grown since opening in 2011.

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The podcast forms part of a series of [case studies](#) where we speak to small business owners. We find out about the challenges and advantages of owning your own business, and what advice they'd give to others.

Our next podcast will be published on 20 August. It's about corporate social responsibility (CSR) – what it is, why it's so important, and our responsibility as a government organisation to help the local community.

News story: Degree-level Apprenticeship in Economics

The Institute for Apprenticeships has now approved the Professional Economist Integrated Degree Apprenticeship for delivery.

A diverse range of employers from across the industry helped to design and develop the new standard, as part of the Professional Economist Apprenticeship trailblazer group, led by the Government Economic Service (GES).

Open to those with 3 A-Levels and an aptitude for maths, this 4-year integrated degree apprenticeship will create a new career route to becoming a professional economist. Once complete, apprentices will have a level 6 apprenticeship, an economics degree, along with the experience of 4 years on-the-job training.

For the GES, this is a new recruitment route into the profession. Apprentices will be provided with all the training to meet the high standards required of a government economist, through both formal and on the job learning, whilst earning.

This Standard is now open and available to all employers. For public sector organisations, the GES are leading on the procurement of a training provider partner, to be in place by mid-September 2018. Around 75 economist apprentices will be appointed across the Civil Service and wider public sector by August 2019, with training starting September 2019.

This new apprenticeship model is a key step in broadening the range of entry routes into the economics profession, and providing the opportunity for those from diverse backgrounds to embark upon a career in economics.

To find out more about this great opportunity, visit:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/professional-economist-degree/>

Press release: UK Visas & Immigration Freetown Visa Application Centre moves to a New Location

On 30 July 2018, UK Visas and Immigration's Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Freetown moved to a new premises. Customers making a new application should

attend their appointment at the new VAC. Customers who have still to collect their application will now need to report to the new address.

UK visa customers will continue to complete their applications and pay their visa fee online at Visa4UK/ Access UK in exactly the same way as before, and choose an appointment at the TLS Contact VAC in Freetown.

The Visa Application Centre in Freetown will be open every week day between 08:30hrs – 14:30hrs. Customers will be able to make appointments to submit visa applications in Freetown between 08:30hrs and 14:30hrs Monday to Friday.

As before, applications made in Freetown will be processed in line with UKVI's global customer service standards. All UK visa applications will continue to be decided by UK Visas and Immigration staff in a fair and objective process. Staff at the Visa Application Centre have no influence at all over the outcome of any visa application.

New Visa Application Centre Address

UK Visa Application Centre
TLS Contact
West African Sunshine Building
Gouji Property Development
Building No: 5
7 Lumley Beach Road
Aberdeen
Freetown