

**PE1603/I**

AHDS Email of 7 October 2016

AHDS is a professional association for school leaders from Scotland's primary, nursery and ASN schools.

We understand the sentiments behind the petition as the Armed Forces are unique employers. However, we do not think that they should be treated differently from any other employer. We have no quibble with the suggestion that the armed forces should be required to explain "...the unique nature of the careers they offer, ensure political balance and a realistic representation of the role involved..." but if any guidance is developed along these lines it ought to apply to all employers visiting schools.

We have concerns about the information gathering suggested in the petition in that it would appear to be a new burden designed to land firmly on schools. This would run counter to the tackling bureaucracy agenda.

Similarly, we have concerns about the suggestion to require parental consultation before pupils are involved in activities where the armed forces are present. We have three main concerns with this. The first is that this requirement would potentially remove a useful learning opportunity for pupils to gain an understanding of the role of the armed forces as well as individual jobs within them. The second is to consider whether, in treating all employers fairly, this parental consultation would need to be extended to include visits from other employers (e.g. some parents may have reservations about visits from pharmaceutical companies, alcoholic beverage manufacturers, meat processors, etc.). Finally, such a requirement has the potential to create an issue for schools in terms of managing any pupils taken out of these sessions as schools do not have surplus staffing to allow this to be done simply.

Best regards,

Greg Dempster  
AHDS General Secretary