



United Kingdom, new pay to retain Special Forces operators: the Special Forces Remuneration Model (SFRM) is launched. More experience and qualifications, higher the remuneration.

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The United Kingdom is preparing a new remuneration system for its Special Forces with a very clear objective: **convincing the most experienced operators to remain in service and making a career within the UK Special Forces more attractive.**

The program is named **Special Forces Remuneration Model (SFRM)** and represents the evolution of a project initially called Special Forces Supplement Pay.

Its structure is illustrated in the latest report from the **Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB)**, the independent body that formulates recommendations to the British Government on military personnel remuneration.

The new model will affect **United Kingdom Special Forces (UKSF)** personnel and will be built on **20 different remuneration levels**, through which operators can receive an additional sum beyond their ordinary salary based on the skills they possess.

More experience and qualifications, higher the pay

The principle underlying the new system is relatively simple.

The supplementary remuneration will not be determined solely by military rank, but will take into account three fundamental elements:

specialization, qualifications, and experience gained within the UKSF.

The British Ministry of Defence thus wants to assign growing economic value to the capabilities developed during a career in the Special Forces.

The model originally presented in 2024 provided for 16 levels with different amounts. During program development, however, the structure was expanded to the current **20 levels**, characterized by standardized remuneration intervals.

The stated objective of the British MOD is to create a system sufficiently flexible to be updated over time according to operational needs and required skills.

SAS, SBS and SRR

The new system fits within the organization of the UK Special Forces, within which some of the most renowned units in the world operate, including the **22 Special Air Service (SAS)**, the **Special Boat Service (SBS)**, and the **Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR)**.

Already in the 2024 AFPRB report, the Ministry of Defence had emphasized how the existing remuneration system contributed positively to attracting personnel to SAS, SBS, and SRR selection courses and to retaining them subsequently in their respective specializations.

The problem identified by the MOD primarily concerned the fragmentation of various existing allowances and the need to better value particularly rare skills accumulated within the Special Forces.

It is not simply a matter of periodically replacing operators.

Training personnel capable of operating at the levels required by the UKSF means investing years in **selection, training, qualifications, and operational experience**. The loss of experienced personnel thus also represents a loss of capabilities that are difficult to replace in the short term.

The new system will replace several allowances

The Special Forces Remuneration Model is intended to replace various forms of **Recruitment and Retention Payment (RRP)** currently recognized for Special Forces components.

These include allowances related to the Special Forces proper, Special Reconnaissance, underwater systems operators, and Special Forces communicators.

In some cases, the new model will also replace current **Financial Retention Incentives (FRI)**.

It will therefore not be simply a one-off bonus to convince a soldier to sign a few additional years of service.

The SFRM will instead become a **structured additional component of remuneration**, paid in addition to normal military pay.

Communicators and medical personnel also included in the system

Another novelty concerns the expansion of the system to some highly specialized categories.

The British MOD has indeed provided for the inclusion in the new model of **Communicators and Medical components** who have completed a selection pathway recognized by the UK Special Forces.

The criterion chosen by the Ministry is important: military personnel belonging to categories that provide a **recognized UKSF selection pathway** will be able to enter the SFRM.

However, the system has been designed to allow for the addition of other professions in the future should it become necessary.

How much more will operators earn?

It is probably the most interesting point, but also one that requires greater caution.

The Ministry of Defence presented **indicative amounts** to the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body, but the figures corresponding to the 20 levels of the new model **have not been published in the accessible version of the report**.

The AFPRB further reports that the MOD anticipates that the amounts presented during program development will be further increased before its actual introduction.

It is therefore not possible to state, based on the available official documents, that an SAS operator will receive a certain annual bonus or a certain additional sum.

What is instead official is the structure of the system: **20 levels of supplementary remuneration linked to skills, qualifications, and experience within the UKSF**.

Operational by April 2028

The process had begun at least in 2024, when the British Government had approved in principle the replacement of certain Recruitment and Retention Payments of the Special Forces with the new **Special Forces Supplement Pay**, initially planned for April 1, 2026.

The subsequent review of the structure of the Special Forces, training pathways, and the remuneration model itself, however, led to the development of the broader **Special Forces Remuneration Model**.

In June 2026, the British Government thus accepted in principle the recommendation for introducing the 20-level model.

The deadline set by the Ministry of Defence now provides that the system be implemented **no later than April 2028**.

The battle to retain experience

Behind the reform is a problem that now concerns many Western Armed Forces: **retaining highly qualified personnel after investing enormous resources in their training.**

In the case of Special Forces, the problem assumes even greater dimensions.

A qualified SAS or SBS operator represents not simply a trained soldier, but the result of years of selection, specialized courses, advanced training, and experience accumulated in the field.

Experience and skills that can also have considerable value outside the Armed Forces, especially in the security, training, and private consulting sectors.

With the new system, London thus attempts to transform **experience and specialization into economic value**, progressively rewarding those who continue their careers within the UK Special Forces.

A choice that confirms how, in modern Special Forces, the ability to retain the most experienced men can be as important as that of selecting new ones.

News link: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2026-06-09/hlws98>