CSSF Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

WPS and Defence

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WPS | Women, Peace & Security Helpdesk

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) Helpdesk, managed by Saferworld in partnership with Conciliation Resources, GAPS UK, University of Durham and the Women's International Peace Centre, was established in December 2021 to increase capability across the UK government on WPS policy and programming in order to make its work on conflict and instability more effective. If you work for the UK government and you would like to send a task request, please email us at wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk. If you do not work for the UK government but have an enquiry about the helpdesk or this report, please email us at enquiries.wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk.

Direct Audience:

This report would primarily be used by the Ministry Of Defence (MoD) Human Security policy team, as the co-owner of the UK's WPS National Action Plan (NAP) and the leading policy team within the MoD on the advancement of human security and, within this, WPS within and across defence from policy, strategy, planning and operations.

Suggested Internal Distribution:

The report will also be relevant to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's WPS team for the purposes of NAP development. Beyond this, the insights should provide rationale for further engagement with other teams in MoD Security Policy and Operations as well as in conversations with personnel from the Army, Royal Navy and Air Force.

Confidentiality Status:

None

Abstract

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has significant relevance to defence, yet tensions remain between defence and the normative foundations of the agenda drawn from the activism of anti-militarist civil society, who sought to end war, rather than making war safe for women. This report highlights that there is still significant scope for the engagement of defence with WPS in a way which is sensitive to such concerns; notably, through a focus on diversity and inclusion, engaging civil society as knowledge brokers of WPS, training and education, leadership and the role of gender advisors. It draws on a review of the extant literature and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to identify best practice and areas for future research.

Summary

The WPS agenda is encapsulated in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the nine follow-up resolutions. Civil society also retains an integral role as knowledge broker on WPS given its role in keeping the agenda alive through supporting its adoption and now implementation. The agenda can therefore be understood as broader than *just* the resolutions which are limited by the politics of the Security Council. The anti-militarist origins of WPS which sought not to 'make war safe for women' but to end war are illustrative of the tension between defence and WPS. Yet, as this report identifies, there are areas where defence has a role in implementing the WPS agenda. Five areas are identified as key to realising a transformative approach to WPS in defence:

- Diversity and inclusion: WPS should be understood not as a 'women's issue' but as an agenda relevant to all gender identities, which requires reflection on defence's own institutional barriers to the better representation of women and other minoritised groups.

- Engaging civil society: acknowledging civil society organisations are the knowledge brokers of WPS and can not only provide important support but also critique to strengthen the implementation of WPS in defence. NATO has spearheaded a Civil Society Advisory Panel which has lessons for other defence and security institutions seeking to engage civil society on WPS in a sensitive and non-exploitative manner.

- Training and education: highlighting the importance of operation-specific examples for training, in addition to the important role of professional military education for WPS which is being spearheaded through the use of the 'Sandhurst Approach' developed by the Department of Defence and International Affairs at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

- Leadership: ensuring leaders at an institutional and operational level have the knowledge needed to understand and champion WPS is critical to its application in defence. Sweden's Gender Coaching Programme offers a best practice example of how to mobilise defence leaders through ongoing professional development on WPS.

- Gender advisors: providing important institutional expertise on WPS. 'Gender focal points' are key to implementing WPS in the day-to-day work of defence at both an institutional and operational level. Yet training and resourcing can be an obstacle to realising their full potential.

Methodology and tools

This report draws on desk-based research consisting of a review of the extant academic scholarship and wider research related to WPS and defence. However, it should be noted that given the anti-militarist origins of WPS and resulting tensions in defence engaging with WPS, the literature is less expansive in this area than the wider application of WPS; for example, in relation to foreign policy. Therefore, the KIIs provided important insight into the practical application of WPS in defence. These were conducted with 16 individuals who are or who have worked to integrate WPS into defence for the UK or other states, alongside experts drawn from civil society, international NGOs and academia. Their insights are drawn upon throughout the report as appropriate.

- Lt Col Laura Cranston, HQ JFNZ GENAD/ UNSCR 1325 Women Peace and Security Implementation Officer, New Zealand Defence Force
- Thammy Evans, Atlantic Council
- Professor Toni Haastrup, Professor of International Politics, University of Stirling
- Llani Kennealy, Strategic Military Advisor, UN Women
- Lt Col Lena Kvarving, Section Head Education and Training Gender, Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations
- Matilda Lidström, Senior Gender Advisor to Head of Policy and Plans Department, Swedish Armed Forces
- Lt Col Leon Marshall, Human Security Focal Point, Navy N5 SO1 Commando Forces
- Lt Col Diana Morais, Head of the Gender Equality Office, Ministry of National Defence (Portugal)
- Dr Hanna Muehlenhoff, Assistant Professor of European Studies, University of Amsterdam
- Kinsey Spears, Doctoral Candidate, The Fletcher School
- Olena Suslova, Ukrainian Women's Consultative Centre
- Sarah Taylor, Policy Specialist, UN Women
- Rear Admiral Jude Terry, Director People & Training and Naval Secretary, Royal Navy
- Dr Maximillian Thompson, Deputy Head of Department, Defence & International Affairs Department, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
- Samantha Turner, Non-Resident Fellow, Stimson Centre

Background and introduction

JSP 985 'Human Security in Defence', published in December 2021, outlines the applicability of WPS to a number of defence issues including conflict-related sexual violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, human disaster relief, women's representation, the integration of a gender perspective and gender sensitive data/reporting. This builds on and replaces JSP 1325 which focused specifically on WPS. This report outlines further areas of engagement for defence in relation to WPS. Specifically, it takes a comprehensive approach to understand where the MoD can engage in WPS to add value to the implementation of the agenda and to identify ways in which it might seek to do so while remaining cognisant of the risks of such engagement. The report draws on best practice from other nations seeking to implement WPS into defence, along with identifying future areas of potential applicability warranting further exploration. It is structured around five issues identified as key to realising a transformative approach to WPS in defence: diversity and inclusion, engaging civil society, training and education, leadership, and the role of gender advisors and gender focal points.

Findings and analysis

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Contextualising WPS

The value of WPS to defence

Engaging defence with the WPS agenda remains one of the most underdeveloped parts of the implementation of WPS. Research on this aspect of the agenda is also significantly underdeveloped in comparison to the extensive body of work looking at WPS and foreign policy. This is in part because of the anti-militarist origins of much of the advocacy around WPS and a resulting concern that such work could lead to its co-optation by militarism, even if others argue that effective engagement with WPS by defence can support the transformation of institutional structures (True and Davis, 2018). This means that while there are tensions which need to be acknowledged between WPS and defence, there is scope for defence to engage with WPS in a sensitive manner which avoids the full militarisation of the agenda. Likewise, there will always be opposition to defence's engagement with WPS from some civil society actors central to the WPS agenda. The issues of women's representation in defence and the applicability of a gender perspective in operations are the obvious applications of WPS. Yet, it is important to stress that WPS in defence is about more than women's representation in the armed forces at home or abroad, something this report addresses.

The WPS agenda is encapsulated in UNSCR 1325, adopted in 2000, and the nine follow-up resolutions which focus on the four pillars of Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery. WPS has significant relevance to defence, yet in practice this has been the least developed aspect of the agenda, in part because of the anti-militarist advocacy which has been central to shaping the agenda. In considering the relationship of WPS to defence, it is therefore pertinent to consider this wider context and the origins of WPS. Issues related to the role of defence are rooted in the origins of the agenda, including the Beijing Platform for Action which emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 where the role of women in peace-making was promoted, providing the foundations for UNSCR 1325. It is important to note that while 2000 was the first time the Security Council had discussed the relevance of gender to peace and security, discussion between civil society and UN member states had been taking place for many decades on the topic. For example, at the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, the statement 'Looking Forward Strategies for the Advancement of Women' stressed concerns that women are excluded from political processes dealing with peace and conflict and that as a group they are particularly vulnerable in conflict (UN Economic and Social Council and Social, 1995). Indeed, as a result of strong advocacy from women's organisations, all four World Conferences on Women mentioned disarmament and macro security issues (Cohn, Hill and Ruddick, 2005).

Tensions between defence and WPS

The omissions and silences in the WPS resolutions, resulting from their passage through the Security Council, point to some of the challenges and tensions in defence engaging with WPS given the agenda's normative foundations. They also point to the importance of understanding the WPS agenda as more than the sum of the resolutions.

WPS is not only a global agenda, with its origins just as much in the Global South as the Global North (Basu, 2016), but also one rooted in civil society who have been and remain integral to keeping alive the aspirations for WPS, with an important role in holding governments to account for implementation (Björkdahl and Selimovic, 2019).

The adoption of Resolution 1325 came about in part thanks to the efforts of the NGO Working Group on WPS as they lobbied for, drafted and redrafted Resolution 1325 (Hill, Aboitiz and Poehlman-Doumbouya, 2009). This led to WPS being championed as a "feminist achievement" (Cockburn, 2011). Importantly, WPS was not envisaged as a tool to "make war safe for women" (Cook, 2009: 126), yet the journey of the agenda through the Security Council with implicit support for a militarised interstate system meant compromises were necessary to these feminist aspirations (Basu, 2016). These included an absence of a commitment to end war or establish an arms regulation system, despite these being foundational parts of the Security Council's brief (Cockburn, 2007).

Critically, the WPS agenda does not just concern women and nor should it be considered a 'women's issue'; it remains a topic which concerns and requires the engagement of all gender identities (Morais, Turner and Wright, 2022). Rather, it calls for the integration of a gender perspective, which concerns understanding the role not just of women (and femininity) but also men (and masculinities) and gender minoritised groups. The integration of a gender perspective is "a strategy to understand the power relationships between men/boys and women/girls. A gender perspective sheds light on who has access to and control of resources, and who participates fully in decision-making in a society. [Implementing a gender perspective can only be done following a gender analysis of the human terrain within the area of operations.]" (Ministry of Defence, 2019). In this way, we see how women's underrepresentation in peace and security has become an important aspect of WPS to address, but the application of a gender perspective requires far more than 'adding women and stirring'.

One of the key critiques of WPS relevant to defence is that the implementation of the agenda by many states in the Global North has been conducted with a focus on 'making war safe for women', through a focus within NAPs on identifying problems in 'other' third states, requiring the intervention of Global North expertise to 'solve' (Shepherd, 2016). This serves often to present women as victims whose agency is dependent on the support of the international community, rather than acknowledging women on the receiving end of WPS as agents in their own right who should be engaged as such (Achilleos-Sarll, 2020: 1663). It also presents a false binary in which problems are identified in the Global South and solutions in the Global North (Haastrup and Hagen, 2020), diverging from the intent of the WPS agenda as a civil society project which acknowledges the expertise of women on peace and security (Shepherd, 2016: 326). The practice of focusing on specific countries for WPS intervention reinforces this problematic framing, specifically through subjugating the security needs of these focus countries in the Global South to those of the NAP producing country (Muehlenhoff, 2022: 13).

Practical barriers to defence engaging with WPS

A key barrier to the effective implementation of WPS in defence is the comparative lack of research on WPS and defence. This means that the applicability of WPS and a gender perspective is not tested in all operational environments and for all security issues, including new and emerging threats, and more research is needed to determine its applicability. This is all the more pressing given the increasingly complex strategic environment, including the rise in attacks below the threshold of conflict, in which many state and non-state actors operate at the local and international level, in some cases exploiting gendered insecurities or perpetrating conflict-related sexual violence.

The application of WPS and a gender perspective in defence has the potential to foster a holistic understanding of security, beyond a sole focus on the state to incorporate the gendered individual, understanding how they are impacted by security threats (Morais, Turner and Wright, 2022). As JSP 1325 states:

> *The implementation of UNSCR 1325 will spark deeper analysis, broader plans and more effective operations. By ignoring this area, or viewing it as a humanitarian agenda, we are missing the clear link between the security of the individual and an enduring stability for all. (Ministry of Defence, 2019)*

In spite of the relative infancy of research and understanding on the applicability of WPS to defence, WPS is being increasingly deployed across the wider function of defence in a variety of contexts with a recognition that a gender perspective has the potential to add value. For example, US Space Command and US Cyber Command have employed their first WPS personnel (US Government, 2022). This understanding of the application of WPS and a gender perspective to new threats, including cyber, is critical. For example, the issue of disinformation and misinformation and its use in warfare has become particularly pressing given Russia's geopolitical communications have been identified as being entangled with, and exploiting, global gender politics (Edenborg, 2021). The NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives is seeking to address this knowledge gap by bringing together partners and allies to share best practice. Its 2022 conference, to be held in October, will discuss the relevance of a gender perspective to the issues of hybrid threats and disinformation.

In the humanitarian space there are particular challenges to engaging defence actors, beyond engagement with WPS specifically. Notably, the red lines between defence and humanitarian agencies' roles, whereby the role of the military should be clearly delineated from the humanitarian response. However, there is also the potential for a gender perspective to positively inform defence and security sector approaches to issues such as pandemic responses. For example, through "developing guidance and supporting training on providing gender-sensitive and rights-based security for healthcare workers, and prioritizing access to sexual and reproductive health as a security concern" (Davies and Harman, 2020; Smith, Herten-Crabb and Wenham, 2021: 5). In the response to the Ebola crisis, a gender perspective was essential as women were more susceptible to the disease which could be transferred sexually, but men had disregarded the information provided on prevention because of cultural pressures (Evans, 2020).

Key Takeaways on Contextualising WPS

- Tensions will always exist between the normative aspirations for WPS and defence engagement with the agenda, yet defence as a central actor in peace and security has a crucial role to play in supporting its implementation.

- There is the potential for defence to apply WPS and a gender perspective to the full range of its tasks, but more research is needed to understand its applicability.

- Incorporating WPS and a gender perspective into defence could support defence engaging in the humanitarian space in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

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WPS and Defence in Practice

Defence is one part of a whole of government approach to WPS. WPS has applicability to the full remit of government action, internal and external, which makes coherence between these two elements essential. In focusing on WPS and defence it is necessary to be aware of this wider context. This also means that integrating WPS into defence should not necessarily expand the scope of defence's current remit or lead to increased militarisation. Likewise, there are also challenges to engaging with WPS sensitively if it is defence leading the normative direction of a state's WPS action, instead of foreign affairs, which would be an example of the militarisation of WPS. Rather, there are specific areas where WPS concerns are applicable and can be integrated into defence which this report considers, notably diversity and inclusion, engaging civil society, training and education, leadership, and the role of gender advisors.

In practice there are a number of ways in which states have engaged with the WPS agenda in defence. One key aspect is international engagement, which lends itself to the global nature of the WPS agenda. This could come bilaterally, for example through defence cooperation, or in multilateral fora, at the UN or through NATO at an operational or institutional level. To support this, international engagement is one line of effort in the Australian Defence Force's engagement with WPS (Australian Defence Force, 2020). Many NATO members and partners seeking to implement WPS in defence actively engage with the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives through its annual conference. This provides a unique and highly valuable fora for the representatives of Ministries of Defence and armed forces to share lessons and best practice with other NATO members and a range of partners on the integration of WPS into defence (Wright, Hurley and Gil Ruiz, 2019). The UK, as one of the founding members of what was originally the Committee on Women in NATO Forces, has benefited from such knowledge sharing in the past (Wright, Hurley and Gil Ruiz, 2019). Seconding gender advisors to NATO offers another opportunity both to promote and learn lessons on WPS and defence at an international level; for example, the UK currently seconds the International Military Staff Gender Advisor.

Another aspect is doctrine at all levels, which has an important part to play in integrating WPS into defence, but is not sufficient on its own and requires both resourcing (a key challenge across many national contexts) and the requisite knowledge to operationalise it. In the UK, JSP 985 Human Security in Defence is a best practice example at the policy level, supporting the translation of WPS at a high-level to defence, and it has helped support other nations in the development of their own doctrine, for example, New Zealand. The Australian Defence Force has developed doctrine specifically focused on operationalising gender at the level of military operations – in strategic guidance, documents, doctrine and operational directives and orders (Prescott, 2020). The development of doctrine at all levels matters because,

> *The lack of specifically annotated military or defence level examples of the incorporation of gendered analysis in operational policy and plans in order to achieve strategic military and political outcomes, makes it difficult for planners to formulate and present commanders with courses of action and an understanding of effects that they can action and implement (Evans, 2020)*

To support the operationalisation of WPS in defence, in addition to the NAP and high-level doctrine, a number of states have sought not only to translate the applicability of WPS to defence at a policy level (for example, as JSP 985 does) but also to provide areas of focus and action. This demonstrates transparency and openness, providing a route for civil society to monitor defence's work on WPS. For example:

- Australia has a Defence, Gender, Peace and Security Mandate which translates WPS into defence and includes six specific lines of effort with activities associated with each of them and is an example of best practice. These are: 1) policy and doctrine, 2) education and training, 3) personnel, 4) mission readiness and effectiveness, 5) international engagement and 6) governance and reporting (Australian Defence Force, 2020).
- Ireland has a Defence Action Plan with specific objectives and actions to provide a measure of accountability (Irish Defence Forces, 2020).
- Sweden has a military-strategic level WPS policy which details what the NAP entails for the military in terms of specific actions.
- The US Department of Defence's WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan established core objectives for WPS (US Government, 2022).

Key Takeaways on WPS and Defence in Practice

- The engagement of defence with WPS should be viewed in the context of a whole of government approach and be sensitive to its own remit.

- Opportunities to engage internationally to share best practice on WPS and defence have formed an integral part of many states' engagement, specifically through the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives.

- Doctrine at all levels, including the translation of a NAP to defence, is an important component of implementing WPS in this space.

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Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion is an area of concern for the WPS agenda and is a key focus of WPS and defence work across different national contexts, specifically in supporting defence to become an inclusive and diverse working environment which supports both the recruitment, retention and promotion of women but also other minoritised groups. This issue has been acknowledged at the highest levels.

> It is mission critical for defence, if we are to safeguard the security, stability and prosperity of our nation, that we recruit and retain the most able people drawn from the broadest diversity of thought, skills and background. (Letter of 24 July 2020, signed by the Chiefs of Staff cited in House of Commons Defence Committee, 2021)

Yet, women (and other minoritised groups) remain significantly underrepresented in defence, in particular at leadership levels as compared to other policy areas. This is because efforts to 'add women and stir' are rarely successful if they do not consider and challenge embedded gender hierarchies and power structures which take a particular form within defence institutions (Carreiras, 2006).

There are therefore significant limits to a focus on only the integration and better representation of women at the expense of also offering "a deeper critique of the ways in which military and defence policy continue to be informed by dominant notions of masculinity" (Eichler, 2020: 155). This matters because in failing to consider structural barriers to women's recruitment, retention and promotion, limits are imposed on efforts to work towards women's full and meaningful participation in defence and broader peace and security structures (Vermeij, 2020).

In certain conflict situations, including Afghanistan, women soldiers have been important for establishing new forms of dialogue with conflict-affected women; for example, through Female Engagement Teams and thus supporting the application of WPS in defence. However, this should not be interpreted as correlation with a natural ability of all women to carry out such "care work" (Bergman Rosamond, 2014: 45), and it is necessary to challenge assumptions that women soldiers bring unique attributes by extension of their gender, and that men do not 'naturally' possess such qualities (Woodward and Winter, 2006, 2007; Kronsell, 2012; Hurley, 2018). Likewise, the recruitment or deployment of women is not a means to address diversity and inclusion issues, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, which requires institutional level change (Kronsell, 2012).

A number of states have targets for the recruitment of women, in line with the UK's current "30% women by 2030" goal, and this has been common practice for many NATO nations far predating WPS, yet states have consistently struggled to meet such goals (Wright, Hurley and Gil Ruiz, 2019). In New Zealand, no targets are in place for the recruitment of women; rather, the focus has been on ensuring they are an inclusive and therefore an attractive employer. Australia has adopted specific targets (25% of the Navy and the Air Force, and 15% of the Army must be women by 2023). However, importantly, this has been accompanied by a significant set of policy interventions to support the transformation of the masculinised culture to facilitate the recruitment, retention and career progression of women, and to ensure gender expertise is integrated throughout the Australian Defence Force's work at all levels of seniority (Coomaraswamy, 2015: 138). The Australian Defence Force's implementation of WPS has been recognised by the UN as an example of best practice (Coomaraswamy, 2015: 138).

In an international context, the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations is seeking to identify and overcome barriers to women's deployment as military or police in UN peacekeeping operations. Often there can be a perception that the armed forces are a less inclusive employer due to their opt outs from equalities legislation; these should be reviewed regularly to ensure the rationale still stands. For example, in the UK, the armed forces are exempt from the Equalities Act 2010 for reasons of operational effectiveness, while in Ireland the armed forces have exemption from parts of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018.

A level of self-critique and reporting on issues related to diversity and inclusion is an important part of institutional reform in line with WPS to support the better representation of women and other minoritised groups. For example,

- Canada has commissioned an Independent External Comprehensive Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (Government of Canada, 2022).
- The 2019 Wigston Review which reported on inappropriate behaviours in UK defence identified problems and recommended a series of actions to address them (Wigston, 2019).

> ### Key Takeaways on Diversity and Inclusion
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> - WPS is far more than a 'women's issue'; instead, it calls for the transformation of peace and security, including at an institutional level, to support diversity and inclusion.
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> - Undertaking internal reviews into institutional culture and implementing their recommendations to make defence an inclusive employer are ways in which defence can support WPS in practice.
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> - Ensure regular reviews of opt-outs from equalities legislation to ensure the rationale remains still stands.

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Engaging Civil Society

Civil society remains central to the WPS agenda and its implementation, including by holding governments to account for their commitments (Basu, 2016). As a result, it can be claimed that the agenda

> *Lives in civil society, because it is nurtured and kept alive by the various civil society entities—both individual and collective—that are committed to the realisation of the hard-fought commitments that are represented in WPS principles and practices across the world. (Mundkur and Shepherd, 2018)*

Civil society therefore acts as the knowledge broker of WPS (Björkdahl and Selimovic, 2019). Despite this, not all ministries of defence engage with civil society on their WPS work, either at the NAP development level or through providing ongoing monitoring and scrutiny. In part, this is because some WPS civil society actors are wary of engaging with defence institutions, which they feel run counter to the WPS agenda (Wright, 2022); yet others are open to engagement, viewing their role as that of 'watchdog' to provide a supportive but critical lens to defence's engagement with WPS which otherwise might be missing. Outside of the operational setting, defence is less well versed in engaging external actors and this provides a further barrier to engagement. The value of doing so for defence at an institutional and operational level is the ability to bring different perspectives into play which might not be heard in a military setting, in order to foster more effective human-centred decision making acknowledging gendered differences in lived experience. However, in order to support productive relations with civil society in the spirit of WPS, an ethics of care is needed to ensure these relationships do not become exploitative; for example, failing to follow through on promises for action. Trust and openness are therefore integral to ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship.

At an operational level, engagement with women and civil society brings extra complexities for the WPS agenda. On the surface it seems to support the goal of WPS to increase the participation of women in peace and security. In addition, the use of Female Engagement Teams (or similar) can provide an important gender perspective for a mission. Yet, the use of FETs can also be exploitative and extractive if the longer term impact of their use on the security of the women engaged is not considered, for example, in ensuring promises made to women on the receiving end of FET interviews are upheld, running counter to the WPS agenda (Keally McBride and Wibben, 2012). In such a case, women's security is put second, failing to challenge state-centred approaches to security. Moreover, civil society engagement in policy consultations on the ground does not preclude policies or outcomes that are notably at odds with the insecurities and realities facing women and girls (Drumond and Rebelo, 2020: 464) and needs to be more than a 'tick box' exercise.

There are a variety of approaches currently in use to facilitate civil-military engagement on WPS.

- In Ukraine civil society actors have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chief of the General Staff and in other localised areas of operation to facilitate cooperation both on an ongoing and an ad hoc basis.
- At NATO, the establishment of a Civil Society Advisory Panel (CSAP) on WPS in 2014 was significant, providing an example of best practice. CSAP is the first time the Alliance has formally consulted civil society in any policy making process (Wright, 2022). NATO's CSAP has faced challenges, notably building trust, but as the table below summarises, an external study of CSAP has identified key lessons for defence institutions to consider when engaging civil society (Wright, 2022).

Lessons on the if, when and how of engaging civil society in line with WPS

- Consider motivations for engaging civil society. To improve future policy? Or to legitimate/publicise current policy/approach? The latter is going to limit engagement from the outset.
- Be transparent and open about purpose and goals.
- Set and manage realistic expectations for your organisation and for civil society.
- Value civil society's time and expertise (give sufficient notice for scheduling meetings, and account for travel time).
- Fund your commitment appropriately (travel, food, etc., but not an honorarium).
- Remove bureaucratic obstacles or mitigate/explain.
- Provide space for civil society to work together on their own to shape their ideas.
- Ensure diverse representation beyond the 'usual suspects' reflective of the issue area e.g. type of civil society actor and geographical location.
- Accept civil society's red lines.

Adapted from (Wright, 2022)

Academia, often engaged as part of civil society on WPS, is another important knowledge broker on WPS in its own right and has the potential to contribute to bridging the knowledge gap on WPS and defence. Yet there is less scholarship and engagement on WPS in defence than other areas, for example, foreign policy. In part, this can be attributed to the reluctance of some WPS scholars to engage with defence institutions, yet this does not present the whole picture. A number of scholars see their role in relation to those working on WPS in defence as that of "critical friend" (Holvikivi, 2019; Wright, Hurley and Gil Ruiz, 2019; Woodward et al., 2020), opening up space for critique and dialogue and accounting for the possibility of institutional change (Duncanson and Woodward, 2016).

However, the closed nature of many defence institutions and militaries presents an additional barrier to researching them (Woodward et al., 2020; Catignani and Basham, 2021), contributing to the dearth of scholarship on WPS and defence. Yet, there are examples where engagement between academia and defence does happen; for example, NATO is a best practice example. NATO has been open to researchers studying its WPS work, through fostering a culture of openness in respect to WPS work, where practical and possible, to enable scholarly engagement (Wright and Hurley, 2017). In the UK context there are significant barriers to researching defence, which especially impacts WPS work, given its often necessary qualitative focus. Notably, the long timescales (often over a year) for ethics approval, a lack of understanding of qualitative methods and the social sciences, unclear guidance and, in some cases, Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee overreach (Woodward et al, 2020; Catignani and Basham, 2021; Military Spouse Critical Research Network, 2022).

The barriers to academia's engagement with defence on WPS perpetuate another key challenge to its implementation: effective monitoring and evaluation which captures and measures the impact of WPS work in defence at an institutional and operational level. Academia has the potential to help address this gap, through providing important insight and critique of current WPS practice, and developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework. This would involve going beyond just collecting numerical data (for example, counting the number of women engaged), to engage with in-depth qualitative measures analysing the effectiveness of WPS action and its propensity to support institutional change. A key challenge to realising this is appropriate resourcing.

Key Takeaways on Engaging Civil Society

- Civil society actors are the knowledge brokers of WPS and can provide important insight and constructive critique on the work of defence on WPS.

- It is possible for defence to engage civil society in a sensitive and constructive manner on WPS to strengthen their work on the agenda.

- Engagement between defence and academia on WPS provides one opening for addressing the comparative lack of knowledge and research on WPS and defence as compared to other policy areas.

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Training and Education

Education is another important component to implementing WPS in defence. Yet, while training is often mandated or addressed in NAPs (including the UK NAP), education is not, and where training focuses on the short term through practical application, education is a longer term process focused on "knowledge and the development of reasoning and judgement" or "learning to do" versus "learning to know" (Thompson and Melancon, 2023).

There are a number of areas where WPS is applicable to training, both in terms of how gender advisors and gender focal points are trained and supported in their roles (as discussed below) and in terms of wider training, including pre-deployment training. A number of KIIs emphasised the importance of operationally relevant examples to convey the relevance and importance of WPS (Cooper, 2021). This was perceived to be more effective when it was a military person doing the training, who 'knew the language', rather than a civilian. A further challenge was that gender training is often perceived to be the first piece of training dropped either due to time constraints or a lack of personnel able to deliver it, thus undermining its efficacy (Cooper, 2021). Both Australia and Sweden incorporate WPS commitments into training, although in some instances not always using gender perspective or WPS language, but instead drawing out the principles inherent in the agenda. The national and more localised context is therefore important to understand when approaching how to integrate WPS either using the language of WPS or the principles. For example, the integration of WPS into the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) curriculum, discussed in detail below, shows it is possible to integrate WPS explicitly into training and education to good effect.

Professional military education (PME) is a key site for the implementation of WPS in defence and should be treated as a core capability. To support this,

> *Gender-based analysis needs to be presented as a cross-cutting analytical tool and should be integrated across the PME curriculum. Gender-based analysis should not be treated as a special-interest topic for those who self-select based on their interest. (Cooper, 2021)*

In the UK, the focus of the 2018 NAP is on training, rather than education. However, in the build up to JSP 1325, the Department of Defence and International Affairs, one of the three academic departments that make up the academic faculty at the RMAS, sought to integrate WPS into its curriculum. There have been a number of challenges to this work, including limited time, ensuring professional relevance, and cultural awareness given the international intake of RMAS. To address this, RMAS has developed an innovative final summative assessment constituting a critical component of the wider commissioning course, consisting of a group conflict analysis report and a human security individual assessment. These are accompanied by a compulsory reflections class where students read one another's conflict analysis reports and critique them (Thompson and Melancon, 2023). The 'Sandhurst Approach' is an example of best practice of WPS in education, moving beyond its inclusion on the curriculum as a tick box, or one class which can easily be dropped, to make it a fundamental part of students' learning. Beyond the academic focus, at RMAS they have also focused on integrating WPS into the practical elements of officer training through a practical RMAS exercise, 'Ex Templar's Triumph', which asks the Officer Training Corp "to plan and conduct stabilisation operations in a fictional conflict with a large 'civilian' population". This is important because

Officers need to be able to explain to their troops why it is important to take into consideration issues of human security [and WPS] even in tactical field operations and therefore a simple focus on training is not sufficient. (Thompson and Melancon, 2023).

Training exercises, including with NATO and other joint exercises, are another opportunity to demonstrate the value of a gender perspective for operations. WPS is increasingly incorporated into training exercises; for example, the Australian-US biennial joint training exercise 'Talisman Saber' includes the role of gender advisors and highlights the relevance of gender to situational awareness (Prescott, 2020: 28).

Many countries train partner countries troops, and this is a further opportunity to integrate WPS. In addition, the Prevention pillar also has particular applicability here. For example, there is a risk that without appropriate vetting in place that the armed forces personnel being trained could be suspected of human rights violations, including sexual violence (Allen, 2020: 5). Another area of applicability in this respect is how training materials are used, with measures needed to ensure "surveillance training and materials aren't used in attacks on civilians or reprisals against civil society, including women's organisations" (Allen, 2020: 5).

Key Takeaways on WPS and Training and Education

- Training on WPS and specifically the value of a gender perspective is critical and should seek to include operationally relevant examples where possible.

- Integrating WPS into PME offers an important avenue for creating a future knowledge base for defence leaders.

6
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Leadership on WPS

Leadership on WPS is key to realising its implementation. In the context of defence, many of the individuals in leadership positions are likely to be men, given the gendered composition of the armed forces (Carreiras, 2006). Therefore, men have a valuable contribution to make in WPS implementation, and it is important that WPS is understood as a leadership issue, not a "women's issue" (Morais, Turner and Wright, 2022).

Leadership on WPS requires a grasp of the core principles and applicability of WPS to defence work, which is why training and education is so important at all levels, including continuing professional development at the highest leadership levels, which is the best practice adopted in Sweden through their Gender Coaching Programme (discussed below).

Acknowledging the predominance of men in defence, some defence institutions have specifically targeted men to support WPS (for example, the Australian Defence Force has a Male Champions of Change initiative), but there should be caution before utilising such an approach if it is not accompanied with training and education, given it can reinforce existing gendered assumptions about men and women's roles. The UN's HeForShe campaign is a key example of men leading on gender and equality (and the participation element of WPS) which has been replicated in defence settings, including NATO, and has been successful in galvanising a number of leaders to come out in support of gender equality.

However, there are challenges with this particular setup, which even with the best intent can turn into hollow virtue signalling if it is not supported with sufficient WPS training and education. This happens when HeForShe Champions are held up as exemplary individuals, with a focus on the issue being a few 'failed' 'bad' men working against gender equality. The issue is therefore understood as an individual one, rather than leadership creating the space to reflect on and address the institutional barriers to gender equality (and more broadly realising the WPS agenda) (Duriesmith, 2018).

It is important that leadership on WPS, including from men, seeks to look at structural issues and understands it as more than a 'women's issue' but as something which is about challenging existing institutional cultures to make them more inclusive. For example, men leading on WPS in defence often face a particular form of resistance, where they and their work on WPS is belittled in a gendered manner. This quote from a man championing gender and WPS at NATO points to some of the challenges:

> other people are not convinced, even my colleagues make a lot of jokes about me: 'You are 'genderman', have you shaved your legs?' These are jokes, but sometimes, inside their brains, there is some kind of truth. They don't believe in this. Now seeing a man [doing this work], I think they will open their eyes a little bit more. (Wright, Hurley and Gil Ruiz, 2019)

Women, in contrast, are often assumed to understand 'naturally' or to be champions of WPS because they are women, which also undermines the agenda because it requires both training and education to understand and implement (Wright, 2016). Leadership on WPS in defence is therefore subject to gender stereotypes, which can be damaging to such work. This reinforces the importance of continuing professional development to support leaders in addressing these challenges.

The importance of leadership on WPS in an operational context is illustrated by the case of European Union (EU) support for security sector reform in Afghanistan. A study by Nadine Ansorg and Toni Haastrup (2018) identified how the EU successfully considered the gendered insecurities brought on by the conflict, along with identifying the sources of gendered inequalities. The mission also supported the recruitment of women police officers into an institution typically dominated by men. Crucially, individual leadership played an important role, specifically Pia Stjärnvall, Former Head of Mission for the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) Afghanistan, and a number of high-ranking officials within the Afghan government. Stjärnvall brought her expertise on gender and Afghanistan to bear on her role leading Europol (in a previous position she had been instrumental in ensuring Finland's support for the Afghan NAP on WPS). In EUPOL she identified the key actors who she would need buy-in from to successfully implement gender mainstreaming. As a result, she built relationships both with the Afghan government and civil society, along with gaining political support for certain aspects where necessary. The importance of building local knowledge into EUPOL's work through the employment of a local gender and human right's expert, in order to ensure the work was both gender-sensitive and inclusive, was another means to ensure wider 'buy in' for the work.

The knowledge of leadership on the relevance and applicability of WPS is pertinent to its success in defence, at both an institutional level and in operational settings. There are a number of examples of initiatives which can support this:

- Sweden's Gender Coaching Programme is an example of best practice. Leaders in its defence force commit to ongoing professional development through, among other things, attending up to 10 days of seminars a year and writing their own action plans for implementing a gender perspective into their work. This has a significant advantage for mainstreaming WPS, and means that when gender relevant work crosses their desk, the gender advisor does not need to start from scratch in explaining the relevance of gender, enabling a more sophisticated and advanced operation/institution specific engagement.
- Likewise, the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operation's Key Leaders Seminar offers an opportunity for learning on WPS, networking and also, specifically, understanding how to advocate on WPS at political and military strategic level.
- The Chief of Defence Network's WPS network is another example where senior leaders can engage with each other to share best practice and challenges of WPS implementation in defence.

Key Takeaways on Leadership and WPS

- There is considerable value in supporting men as leaders on WPS given men hold many of the senior leadership roles within defence. However, this means understanding WPS as more than a 'women's issue' and acknowledging that men can face particular resistance when championing WPS.

- Continuing professional development and support for defence leaders on WPS provides an important means to implement the agenda from the top down and enables effective championing which moves beyond superficial virtue signalling.

7

Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points

The positioning of gender advisors in support of key leaders can also be a significant leverage of support for WPS in defence; for example, the Chief of the Australian Defence Force has a gender advisor (Coomaraswamy, 2015: 138). More broadly, gender advisors and gender focal points provide an important role in implementing WPS not only at an institutional but also operational level; while gender advisors have the more specific subject matter expertise, gender focal points are integral to the day-to-day implementation of WPS in defence. The Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) provides gender training for both NATO and UN gender advisors through a two week Gender Advisor (GENAD) course and this is required pre-deployment training for all NATO and UN GENADs.

The recruitment and training of gender advisors and gender focal points is integral to realising their effectiveness as key conduits of WPS in defence at an institutional and operational level as distinct from other specialisms (e.g. human security or legal advisors). At least 30 armed forces have created a gender advisor role: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018: 55).

Despite this recognition there remain challenges to realising the efficacy of such a role, reflected in a number of the KIIs. For example, many nations struggle to fill gender advisor positions either in their own forces or as contributions to international missions (Wright, 2016). The Australian Defence Force has sought to address some of these issues through establishing its own gender advisor training course, providing it with an expansive pool of deployable gender advisors with the requisite gender expertise (Prescott, 2020: 27). Yet, more broadly,

> *GENADs are often appointed from junior levels and lack the rank and military experience to affect change in the organisation and shape institutional leadership commitment. (Brown et al., 2022)*

This puts them at a disadvantage on what is a challenging and complex specialism to navigate, particularly given resistance to change which can be brought about by the WPS agenda. Further, in some instances women are placed into gender advisor roles by merit of being women, on the assumption that women 'know gender', framing gender as a synonym for women and further undermining their position through narrowing WPS to a 'women's issue' (Wright, 2016; Morais, Turner and Wright, 2022). These institutional barriers were reflected in the KIIs with a number noting that wider networks of gender advisors provided important support for their roles, where sometimes institutional support or their positionality within their own defence structure, was limited. Australia has sought to address this through regular meetings of its gender focal points to feedback issues, learn lessons and crowd source solutions.

The quality of GENAD training also varies depending on national context (Bastick and Duncanson, 2018). There is a tendency for GENAD training to "focus on technical knowledge rather than equipping GENADs with the skills required to do their job" (Brown et al., 2022). Yet, effective GENAD training programmes are important both for knowledge building and for "network building, information sharing and international cooperation" (Brown et al., 2022). The NCGM is an example of best practice for its gender training because of its focus on operational examples which demonstrate the clear applicability of a gender perspective. However, a challenge in the NATO context is that NCGM (although NATO's Department Head for gender training) is hosted outside of NATO in Sweden (even if this is soon to change), meaning it was not possible for NCGM to draw on classified examples in more specialised trainings. A report from Monash University has identified best practice for takeaways in term of how GENADs should be trained (see table below).

Following their training, GENADs should be equipped to:

1. Demonstrate technical knowledge of the WPS agenda and its operation,

2. Identify relevant policy frameworks regarding gender and advise on their integration into military processes and outputs,

3. Undertake a rapid gender analysis of conflict or crisis contexts,

4. Develop and support gender responsive military policy and practice,

5. Establish respectful relationships with civil society and civilian partners as appropriate, and

6. Articulate the value of gender responsive approaches to colleagues and partners.

    Replicated from (Brown et al., 2022)

Beyond training, there are significant barriers to realising the efficacy of the increasing pool of GENADs situated globally, primarily in terms of their position in the institutional or operational hierarchy, how they are resourced and the support of leadership. A Global Review carried out by Monash University found that,

Despite an increase in the number and quality of courses, training is considered insufficient for GENADs to effectively carry out their duties. (Brown et al., 2022)

Key Takeaways on Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points

- Gender advisors and gender focal points (as a specific specialism distinct from other topics) are important for the institutional and operational implementation of WPS. Gender advisors provide more specific subject matter expertise, while gender focal points are integral to the day-to-day implementation of WPS in defence.

- Creating networks for gender advisors and gender focal points to feedback and learn from each other on their work supports the institutionalisation of key lessons on WPS and defence.

- Training is important, but gender advisors and gender focal points require resourcing to carry out their roles and the support of leadership.

8
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Overarching Recommendations on WPS and Defence

Contextualising WPS:

1. Support and learn from other allies' efforts to understand the applicability of WPS to defence as an emerging area for WPS. For example, through attending and contributing to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives or exploring seconding opportunities with the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations.

WPS and Defence in Practice:

2. Create a defence-specific WPS mandate which translates the high level NAP and relevant JSP 985 provisions into actions and assigns responsibility for their implementation.

3. Invest in the development of specifically annotated examples of gender analysis in operational policy and plans to support planners in formulating courses of action for commanders.

Diversity and Inclusion:

4. Understand WPS as about more than women's representation at home and abroad, even as addressing issues related to diversity and inclusion remain key to its implementation in defence.

Engaging Civil Society:

5. Consult civil society as a key WPS knowledge broker in an appropriate and sensitive manner on defence's engagement with WPS; for example, the development of a specific Defence and WPS Mandate.

6. Create opportunities to engage academia on defence's WPS work to generate future research addressing knowledge gaps and providing critique to enhance defence's WPS implementation through gathering in-depth qualitative data.

Training and Education:

7. Ensure WPS training includes operation-specific and relevant examples to demonstrate its relevance.

8. Support the further integration of WPS into professional military education to support the leaders of tomorrow to understand its relevance to the full remit of their work.

Leadership on WPS

9. Create a programme of continuing professional development on WPS for senior leaders to ensure they grasp the relevance and applicability of WPS to their work, can utilise gender advisors effectively, and provide effective and appropriate championing.

Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points:

10. Acknowledge WPS and a gender perspective as a specific and specialised set of expertise which requires gender advisors and gender focal points to implement.
11. Create a network of gender advisors across operational and institutional areas, with regular opportunities for them to connect to share lessons, best practice and problem solve.

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