

THE RAF IS GENDER NEUTRAL

Rule Changes to Allow Beards in the Royal Air Force

FROM 1 September 2019, all serving members of the Royal Air Force will be allowed to grow a beard thanks to a change in the dress regulations. Following a decision by the Air Force Board, a new policy will be introduced which allows all RAF personnel to grow a smart, neatly trimmed, full set beard, subject to approval from their commanding officer. Describing the driver for the change, Chief of Staff for Personnel, Air Vice-Marshal Chris Elliot CBE, said: “The new policy aims to promote our position as a diverse and inclusive employer, enabling better recruitment potential from across society whilst maintaining the high standards of appearance that are the foundations of the Royal Air Force,“ Under the previous policy, beards were only allowed on religious or medical grounds. The new policy will detail the application process and the type of facial hair allowed, but only full-set beards that are kept short and neatly trimmed will be permitted. For those individuals who grow a beard as a tenet of adherence to faith, the policy remains unchanged and a beard may be grown in excess of generally permitted characteristics. The chain of command retains the authority to determine the requirement for an individual to shave or modify their facial hair, based on the occupational, operational and safety requirements at that time. The policy aims to promote inclusivity by ensuring that membership of the RAF is representative of modern-day society whilst supporting the retention of highly skilled serving personnel. The change 2 is part of a wider review of a number of personnel related policies which included a change to the RAF tattoo policy made in May 2019.

RAF goes gender-Neutral as aviators replace airmen

The RAF has ditched the terms “airmen” and “airwomen” in favour of the gender neutral title “aviator”. The decision was quietly announced in the November issue of AirClues, an official RAF magazine, in a section about safety objectives. It reads: “By the way, if that’s the first time you’ve heard the term ‘aviator’ ... then get on board. No longer does it mean just aircrew, but the term ‘aviator’ has now replaced the generic term of ‘airman’ to bring right up to date the way we should describe all of our personnel in a modern and appropriate manner.

RAF Promotes Use Of Gender-Inclusive Pronouns

The Royal Air Force is promoting the use of gender-neutral pronouns to encourage inclusion and diversity across the service. Alternative pronouns to 'he', 'she', 'him' and 'her' include 'Ze', 'Per' and 'Hir'. The language system will be launched within the service rank and title protocol, which could have previously seen female officers referred to as 'Sir'. Under the new environment, a Leading

Aircraftman could be referred to as a Leading Aircraft-Per. A Royal Air Force spokesperson said: "The RAF actively promotes diversity and inclusion throughout its ranks in a number of ways. "The open and transparent sharing of chosen pronouns is one way we can be an inclusive employer." The RAF Gender Network launched in July this year, and has already hosted webinars on gendered language and organisational change.