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See national lottery.co.uk for  
the raffle winners

Friday, November 2  
One winner of the  
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# WE DON'T NEED FOREIGN LEGION

## Army recruits halted by red tape



CHIEF: Gavin Williamson

**ARMY rookies have slammed a plan to allow foreign recruits direct entry.**

by JACK ANDREWS

They say chronic squaddie shortages are due to a "bonkers" application process. Wannabe soldiers say the staff crisis is not down to a lack of willing volunteers but the chaotic way young Brits have to sign up to the Ministry of Defence. Michael Sutton, 22, applied to join the Army in 2017 and, having completed the online form, waited nine weeks to get a re-

sponse. Two months later he was told his details had been lost and was asked to re-apply. Michael, now an apprentice carpenter in Cardiff, said: "I was devastated, quite frankly. My world fell apart, all I ever wanted to do was join the Army. "Loads of people in Wales would join the Army as there are no jobs. At the time I applied I'd dozens of mates who applied at the same time, but just two were given a place. It is bonkers when they say people don't want to

join. Some of my mates waited for months and when they asked what was happening they were told to re-apply as their application had been lost. "It is pathetic. Why can't you just go into a recruiting office and sign up?" When Michael did finally hear back he was rejected because of the extreme eczema he suffered as a child. MP Mark Francois, who sits on the House of Commons Defence Select Committee, recently revealed that the outsourcing giant Capita, was paid millions to recruit soldiers. But that led to fewer than one in 10 applicants being successful in the first quarter of this year. Mr Francois told the committee last month: "The Army is withering on the vine because it is being starved of recruits because these people haven't got a clue what they are doing. "This is affecting our ability to fight." The MoD - under current Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson - will drop a requirement for applicants from Commonwealth countries to have lived in Britain for five years in a bid to increase numbers.

## £1bn boost to benefit

AN extra £1billion to help claimants moving on to Universal Credit has been unveiled by the Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey. She made the announcement after criticism over the rollout of the new benefit system. The minister said it would help the self-employed, disabled people and those moving over from older benefits such as Jobseekers' Allowance. She told the Commons: "This is a department that listens."



**LAWLESS London is to be flooded with hundreds of emergency officers after four murders in five days.** Met Commander Stuart Cundy told of the move as London Mayor Sadiq Khan, above, warned it could take 10 years to end the knife-crime epidemic.

## Blunders 'kill mums'

**MOTHERS and their babies are dying or suffering serious injury because of a lack of staff training, a report says.** The Baby Lifeline charity claimed more than three quarters of baby deaths and injuries probed by watchdogs were avoidable. Founder Judy Ledger said: "Mothers and babies are still needlessly dying, or suffering serious injury, because of a lack of relevant training in the NHS."