

Military Service Replaced With Ballet for Kostroma Resident

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A military registration and enlistment office in the city of Kostroma has granted a local resident's request to replace his military service with a stint as a ballet dancer.

"The young man will do his alternative civilian service as a ballet performer of the Gubernsky Concert and Exhibition Center," the city's administration said in a statement Thursday.

Another youth who wanted his military service replaced with alternative service will become a paramedic in a regional children's hospital.

Young men aged 18-27 are liable for a year of military service in Russia, although there are exemptions for the sick, full-time students, fathers of two children and some other categories.

Military service remains extremely unpopular and draft-dodging is widespread. Some apply

for alternative civilian service, which lasts longer, instead.

Russia is carrying out a gradual transition to an all-volunteer professional armed forces, but the move has been hampered by the low prestige of a career in the armed forces, poor pay and conditions, and the rapidly falling number of young men due to Russia's demographic profile.

The Prosecutor General's Office found over 65,000 violations during last year's draft of conscripts for the armed forces, the office said in April.

Most violations were committed during draftees' medical examinations, with sick conscripts improperly drafted into the armed forces, while some young people were also illegally granted deferments.

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