

## REVIEW OF MILITARY FORMATIONS, VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT NATIONAL STATISTICS

### BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) currently publishes the [Formations, Vessels and Aircraft National Statistic](#) on an annual basis. This publication contains statistics on:

- Vessels in the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.
- Militarily-useful British-registered vessels.
- Formations in the British Army, Army Reserves, Fleet Air Arm, Royal Air Force (RAF), Royal Auxiliary Air Force and selected Joint Units.
- Forward Available Fleet sizes by type of aircraft in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm, RAF and Joint Helicopter Command.

Following an internal review of equipment statistics, which looked at the content of this publication as well as requests for information received by the department, the MOD is now seeking feedback from users via this public consultation.

### AIM OF THE CONSULTATION

The aim of this consultation is to identify whether the Definitions and Terminology, and Coverage of the publication still meets users' needs and if not, how Formations, Vessels and Aircraft can be improved to better meet these needs.

### Definitions and terminology

1. Formations, Vessels and Aircraft presents equipment statistics by Service, which reflects their ownership. We would like feedback on whether this is a useful way to categorise the equipment, or if these should be re-categorised to land/sea/air, reflecting their use.

**a. How useful do you find the current categorisation of equipment by Service?**

**b. Should we re-categorise equipment statistics by 'Land', 'Sea' or 'Air'?**

2. A variety of operational terms are used to categorise equipment in requests for information. For example some requests ask for numbers of 'in-service' equipment, as well as those in the 'Forward Fleet' and 'Depth Fleet'. We currently present aircraft numbers by 'Forward Available Fleet'. Within the publication, there is no indication of which vessels or aircraft are 'in-service' and we are not aware of a consistent definition of 'in-service'. However statistics on an 'in-service' basis appear to be of interest with a number of recent PQs relating to aircraft and vehicles requesting data on this basis. We would like to ascertain whether there is a user need for the statistics to indicate whether the equipment is operational, and in what way.

**a. How useful is it to present aircraft statistics under:**

- i. The current definition used in the publication: 'Forward Available Fleet'?**
- ii. Other standard definitions e.g. Forward Fleet, Depth Fleet (see Annex A for full description)?**
- iii. Another or new definition of 'in-service' (see Annex A for full description)?**

- b. Should similar terms be used to present statistics on Sea and Land equipment? If yes, would it be useful to present this as a subset of the total numbers of equipment types?**

## **Coverage**

3. The review identified some user demand for statistics on land equipment. Whilst the MOD publishes some statistics on land equipment<sup>1</sup> these are not inclusive of all MOD land equipment, and also include obsolete vehicles. We are therefore proposing to introduce land equipment statistics as part of this publication but would like feedback on:
  - a. Should the proposed land equipment statistics be limited to the following: tanks, combat vehicles and artillery systems?**
  - b. What other types of land equipment would you like to see included in this publication and why?**
  - c. What other types of sea equipment would you like to see included in this publication and why?**
  - d. What other types of air equipment would you like to see included in this publication and why?**
4. The internal review has so far been unable to identify a demand for statistics on UK Armed Forces formations (e.g. numbers of squadrons, regiments.) The information is obtained from various sources which takes time to compile and present. Information on the formations of the Armed Forces is made available to the public via each Service's website. The Service websites are updated to reflect current formations and structures, whereas the publication tables are in a fixed format which may not reflect the current situation.

We are inviting feedback on whether the tables relating to formations are relevant, useful and timely. If we cannot identify a user need for this information to be included within the statistical bulletin, we are proposing to cease publication of these statistics.

  - a. Do you require statistics on the numbers of military formations of the UK Armed Forces? If so, what are they used for?**
  - b. Would cessation of the statistics relating to Armed Forces formations have any impact or consequences on your circumstances we should take into account?**
5. **More generally, what other information would you like to see in our equipment statistics?**

---

<sup>1</sup> [Vehicle and Aircraft Holdings within the scope of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty](#)

## TIMINGS

This consultation will run for 6 weeks, from 29<sup>th</sup> March to 9<sup>th</sup> May. This consultation complies with the Government's Code of Practice on Consultations.

## RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

If you have any comments on the proposed changes, please complete the online consultation form: <https://surveys.mod.uk/index.php/546614?lang=en>

If you have difficulties completing the online version, or would prefer to email/post your responses, please use the following contact details:

**Post:**

Defence Statistics  
(WDS),  
Ministry of Defence,  
Floor 3 Zone K,  
Main Building,  
Horse Guards Avenue,  
London, SW1A 2HB.

**Email:** [DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Consult@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Consult@mod.uk)

When sending your comments please include contact details (your name and either email address, postal address or telephone number) so that we can obtain clarification if required.

## NEXT STEPS

After your feedback has been analysed, we will publish a summary of responses, with key findings and planned changes on the Consultation page on GOV.UK.

## ANNEX A

The definitions below have been taken from published responses to Parliamentary Questions or Freedom of Information requests.

**Forward Fleet:** Comprises aircraft which are serviceable and those which are short-term unserviceable. Short-term unserviceable aircraft are undergoing minor works, forward maintenance or any other unforeseen rectification or technical inspection work that can arise on a day-to-day basis.

**Depth Fleet:** Comprises aircraft which are undergoing planned depth maintenance, upgrade programmes and fleet management temporary storage, but excludes those which are redundant, declared as surplus or awaiting disposal.

**In Service:** Comprises aircraft which provide effective support and includes all aircraft barring those which are redundant, declared as surplus or awaiting disposal.