



Ministry
of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref: FOI2018/10712



17 September 2018

Dear

Thank you for your email of 17 August 2018 requesting the following information:

1, Please could you provide the number of RAF Airmen and Officers who were subject to drug testing from 1 Jan 2014 – present.

- (a) Of those, how many tests indicated an Airman or Officer had misused drugs or substances?
- (b) If possible, please could you provide further information as to which drugs were found in these tests?
- (c) Of those who tested positive for misuse of drugs and substances and the investigation has been concluded were discharged as a result?

2, If RAF Reserves and Auxiliary personnel were not included in question 1, please could you provide the number of reservists and auxiliary personnel who were subject to drug testing from 1 Jan 2014 – present.

- (a) Of those, how many tests indicated an Airman or Officer had misused drugs or substances?
- (b) If possible, please could you provide further information as to which drugs were found in these tests?
- (c) Of those who tested positive for misuse of drugs and substances and the investigation has been concluded were discharged as a result?

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found in the table below and does include RAF Reserves and Auxiliary personnel:

Year	Number of drugs tests on RAF Personnel	Number of positive drugs tests		Number of personnel discharged as a result
		Airmen	Officers**	
2014	12,618	39	~	37
2015	12,450	30	-	27
2016	14,061	54	-	48
2017*	20,662	68	~	49

** As of 7 September 2018, 6 cases from 2017 remain ongoing.*

*** In accordance with the Data Protection Act and our obligations in relation to the protection of confidentiality when handling personal data, data less than or equal to 5 have been rounded, where "-" denotes zero and "~" denotes a number less than or equal to 5.*

The drugs identified in these tests include cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, benzodiazepines, steroids and norketamine.

Drug use is incompatible with military service and personnel are subject to random compulsory drug testing. This has always been our policy and, except in exceptional circumstances, personnel caught taking drugs can expect to be discharged.

The MOD conducts compulsory drug tests because substance misuse is incompatible with Service life and anyone who falls short of our high standards can expect to be disciplined. In a very small number of exceptional circumstances, second chances may be considered. This only happens where a Commanding Officer believes the individual meets the stipulated retention criteria. These are laid out in Joint Service Publication (JSP) 835 which also details the MOD's process for dealing with a positive CDT result. JSP 835 is available on the gov.uk website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425401/20131101-JSP835-V20-U.pdf

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that some individuals may test positive for multiple drugs or have more than 1 positive drug test.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely


HQ Air Command Secretariat