



Ministry of Defence

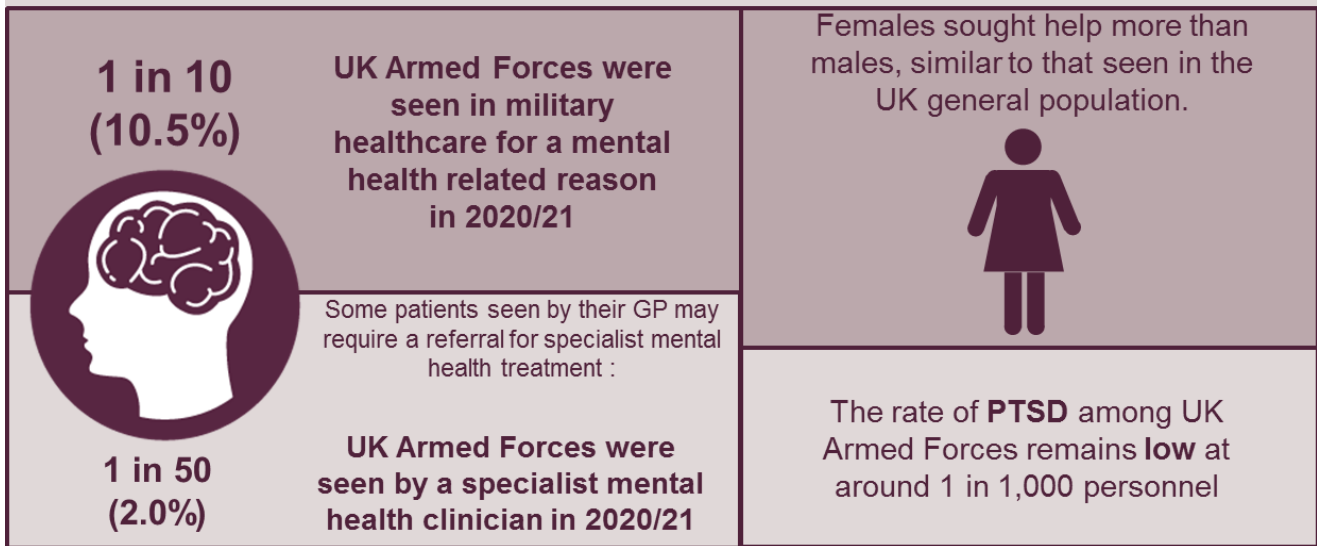
UK Armed Forces Mental Health: Annual Summary & Trends Over Time, 2007/08 to 2020/21

Published 17 June 2021

Mental health care can be provided to UK Armed Forces personnel in the primary care setting by the patient's own Medical Officer, similar to a General Practitioner (GP), or by specialist mental health clinicians at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services; this includes community mental health services at MOD Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH) for outpatient care or admissions to hospital as an in-patient.

This bulletin provides statistical information on mental health in the UK Armed Forces. The first section of this bulletin provides an overall summary of UK Armed Forces seen in all military healthcare for a mental health related reason. The second section provides a detailed summary of those seen by MOD specialist mental health clinicians.

Key Points and Trends 2020/21



1 in 10 (10.5%) UK armed forces personnel were seen by military healthcare services for a mental health related reason in 2020/21; a significant decrease compared to 2019/20. It is possible a reduction in some routine and training activity during periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and contributed to this fall.

Most patients who seek mental health care are managed by their GP, however some with more complex needs will receive treatment from specialist mental care providers. Rates of those requiring specialist mental health services also fell in the latest year to **1 in 50 (2.0%)**.

Previous rates of personnel seen by military healthcare services were broadly comparable to the UK general population however latest data for 2020/21 shows the rate of those needing specialist mental health treatment was **lower** in the UK armed forces than that seen in the UK general population.

Personnel from **all age groups** accessed military mental healthcare and **females** sought help more than males, as seen in the UK general population.

The rate of **PTSD** among serving personnel remains low at 0.1%, which represents **1 in 1,000** personnel assessed with the disorder in 2020/21.

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Background Quality Report:

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Supplementary tables containing:

- all data presented in this publication
- figures presenting UK Armed Forces personnel PTSD by gender and Psychoactive Substance Misuse due to alcohol by gender.
- tables presenting UK Armed Forces personnel by assignment type Regular, Reservist and Other
- more detailed information regarding each Service

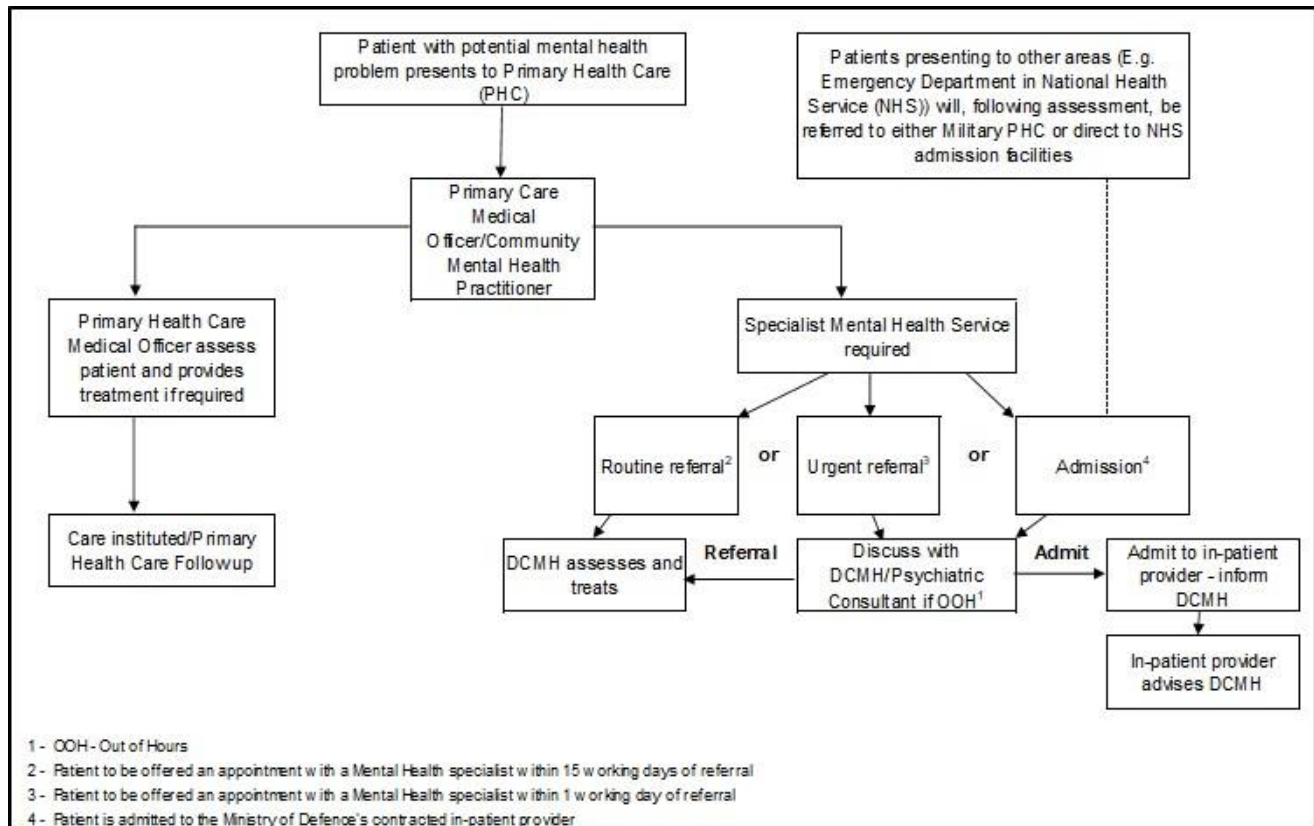
will sit alongside this report on [the mental health statistics page](#).

Introduction

Assessment and care-management within the UK Armed Forces for personnel experiencing mental health problems is available at three levels :

- 1) In Primary Health Care (PHC), by the patient's own Medical Officer (MO), similar to a GP.
- 2) In the community through specialists in military Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH).
- 3) In hospitals, either the NHS or the contracted In-Patient Service Provider (ISP).

The level of care a patient may require is determined by a number of factors, including the severity of symptoms and the degree of risk posed by the patient's current condition. The following diagram shows the pathways into mental health services in the UK Armed Forces :



The first section of this report summarises the totality of mental health in the UK Armed Forces by capturing those seen within any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason; including by clinicians in primary care and/or by specialist mental health clinicians at MOD Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH).

The second section provides a more detailed summary of initial assessments for care delivered by MOD Specialist Mental Health clinicians (MOD's DCMH for outpatient care, and all admissions to the MOD's in-patient care contractor).

The data is sourced from the MOD electronic medical records, entered by military clinicians. UK Armed Forces personnel who sought help from private practice were not included in this report.

Main Points

In 2020/21, the rate of UK Armed Forces personnel seen by military mental healthcare services fell compared to 2019/20. It is possible a reduction in some routine and training activity during periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and contributed to this fall.

- **1 in 10** (10.5%) UK Armed Forces personnel were seen by military healthcare services for a mental health related reason in 2020/21.
- Rates of mental disorders seen in military healthcare services have **fallen** since 2019/20.
- Most personnel seeking military mental health care go to their GP in the first instance. **1 in 10** (10.0%) of personnel were seen by their GP in the latest year.
- The majority of patients who seek mental health care are managed by their GP, however some with more complex needs will receive treatment from specialist mental care providers. Rates of those requiring specialist mental health services also fell to **1 in 50** (2.0%).
- The overall rate of mental health in the UK Armed Forces was previously **broadly comparable** to that seen in the UK general population.
- However, latest data for 2020/21 shows the rate of mental health for those needing specialist mental health treatment was **lower** in the UK armed forces than that seen in the UK general population.
- There were some conditions that were more likely to be managed by GP's such as sleep disorders, stress and low mood. Other conditions such as PTSD, depression and adjustment disorders were more likely to be treated by specialist mental health clinicians.
- Personnel from **all age groups** accessed military mental healthcare and **females** sought help more than males, as seen in the UK general population

Section 1: All mental health in the UK Armed Forces 2012/13 to 2020/21

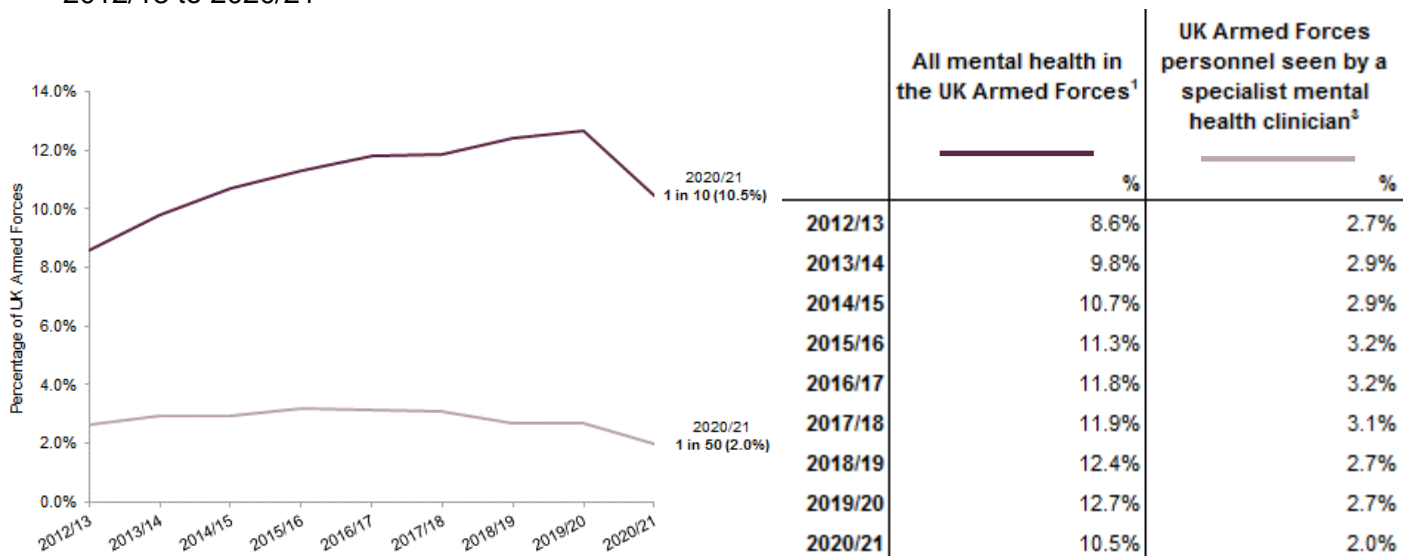
1 in 10 (10.5%)

UK Armed Forces personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2020/21

Rates of personnel seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason fell significantly in 2020/21

Section 1 of this bulletin presents information on UK Armed Forces seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason. This includes those seen by clinicians in primary care (GP's) and/or by specialist mental health clinicians at a MOD DCMH. Please note, this includes signs and symptoms of mental health as well as all [ICD-10](#) mental health disorders (a full list of the codes included in the analysis are detailed in the Background Quality Report (BQR) that accompanies this publication).

Figure 1: UK Armed Forces personnel seen in a military healthcare setting¹ for a mental health related reason². Percentage of personnel at risk. 2012/13 to 2020/21



Source: DMICP

1. Recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH

2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders

3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

The rate of UK Armed Forces personnel seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason increased over time to 2016/17 and remained stable at around 1 in 8 of the UK Armed Forces population until 2019/20. In 2020/21 there was a statistically significant decrease in the rate to **1 in 10** of the UK Armed Forces (10.5%). During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021).

Most personnel seeking military mental health care go to their GP in the first instance. **1 in 10 (10.0%)** personnel were seen by their GP in the latest year.

The majority of patients who seek mental health care are managed by their GP, however some with more complex needs will receive treatment from specialist mental care providers. The rate of personnel seen for a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services rose over time to 2015/16, as seen for overall mental health presentations. Rates then fell in 2018/19 and remained stable at **1 in 37 (2.7%)** for the next two years. This fall in referrals may be the result of a change to the management of low risk patients with uncomplicated common mental health disorders within the MOD, introduced in September 2018. These patients are offered self-help and psychological interventions in primary care

and may therefore be successfully treated without need for referral to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services.

As seen with the presentation for overall military mental health in 2020/21, there was a statistically significant decrease in the rate of personnel seen for a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services to **1 in 50 (2.0%)**. Potential explanations for this fall are explored on the previous page.

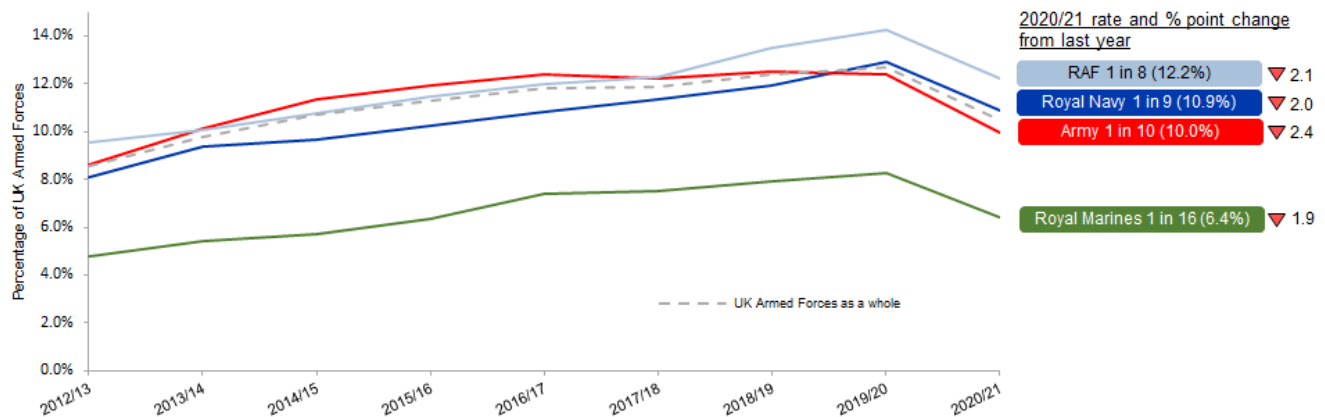
It should be noted that all personnel seen for a mental health related reason were counted in the overall rate of 10.5%. The majority were seen by their GP and included in the rate of 10.0% and a small proportion were seen by specialist mental health clinicians and counted in the rate of 2.0%. Personnel can be counted in both the GP and specialist services rates and therefore these rates are not mutually exclusive and cannot be added together. Please also note it is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record and therefore a rate of those managed solely by their GP cannot be provided.

Section 1: All mental health in the UK Armed Forces 2012/13 to 2020/21, by service

Higher proportion seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason in:
RAF

Lower proportion seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason in:
Royal Marines

Figure 2: UK Armed Forces personnel seen in a military healthcare setting¹ for a mental health related reason², by service. Percentage. 2012/13 to 2020/21



Source: DMICP

1. Recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH

2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders

The rising trend in mental health seen in the UK Armed Forces as a whole up to 2019/20 was also seen in each service with the exception of the Army, where the rate remained stable at around 12.4% from 2016/17 to 2019/20. The statistically significant fall in the rate seen in the UK Armed Forces as a whole in 2020/21 was also seen in each service.

Since 2018/19, the rate of **RAF personnel** seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason was **significantly higher** compared to the other three services whilst rates among the **Royal Marines were significantly lower** than the other services throughout the period presented.

The Royal Marines undergo rigorous training to ensure only the 'elite' go forward as Royal Marines (thus the selection process removes those that may be more susceptible to mental health problems). The tight unit cohesion that exists amongst the elite forces further supports the 'healthy worker' effect (personal communication with Def Prof Mental Health) and may also influence the lower rates of mental ill health in this service. In addition, high levels of preparedness may serve to lessen the impact of operational deployment experiences on mental ill health among the Royal Marines^b.

Section 1: All mental health in the UK Armed Forces, management of disorders

Overall rates of mental health in the UK Armed Forces were previously **broadly comparable** to those seen in the UK general population. In 2020/21, the rate of mental health for those needing specialist mental health treatment was **lower** in the UK Armed Forces than that seen in the UK general population

Disorders

It is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record, therefore it cannot be determined whether mental health treatment was delivered solely by the GP or whether the patient went on to also receive specialist care at a MOD DCMH. However, crude exploratory analysis suggests that some conditions were more likely to be treated by a GP, such as sleep disorders, stress, low mood and sexual dysfunction. Other conditions were more likely to be treated by specialist mental health services, such as PTSD, Depression and Adjustment Disorders.

Comparison to UK general population

Historic rates among UK Armed Forces personnel seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason were broadly comparable to those seen in the UK general population. In 2019/20, 12.7% of UK Armed Forces personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason. As a crude comparison, [the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014](#) carried out by NHS Digital shows that in England, 12.5% of adults reported discussing their mental health with a GP in the past year.

Published annual data for those seeking help from their GP for mental health related reasons and those referred to specialist mental health services in the UK general population for 2020/21 is currently unavailable. Published monthly information on referrals to mental health specialist services among [the UK general population](#) suggests referrals may be of a similar level to 2019/20. This contrasts with the statistically significant fall in rates of UK Armed Forces personnel seen by military mental healthcare in 2020/21 in both GP and specialist care. This decrease may partly be explained by differences between military and civilian life stressors on mental health. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to this fall in rates; military personnel were also not exposed to the loss of employment and income that may be contributing to mental ill-health among the UK general population in the latest year.

The following section of this bulletin provides more detailed analysis of those requiring the support of specialist mental health clinicians.

Section 2: Trends in UK Armed Forces mental health initial assessments at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services 2007/08 to 2020/21

1 in 50 (2.0%)

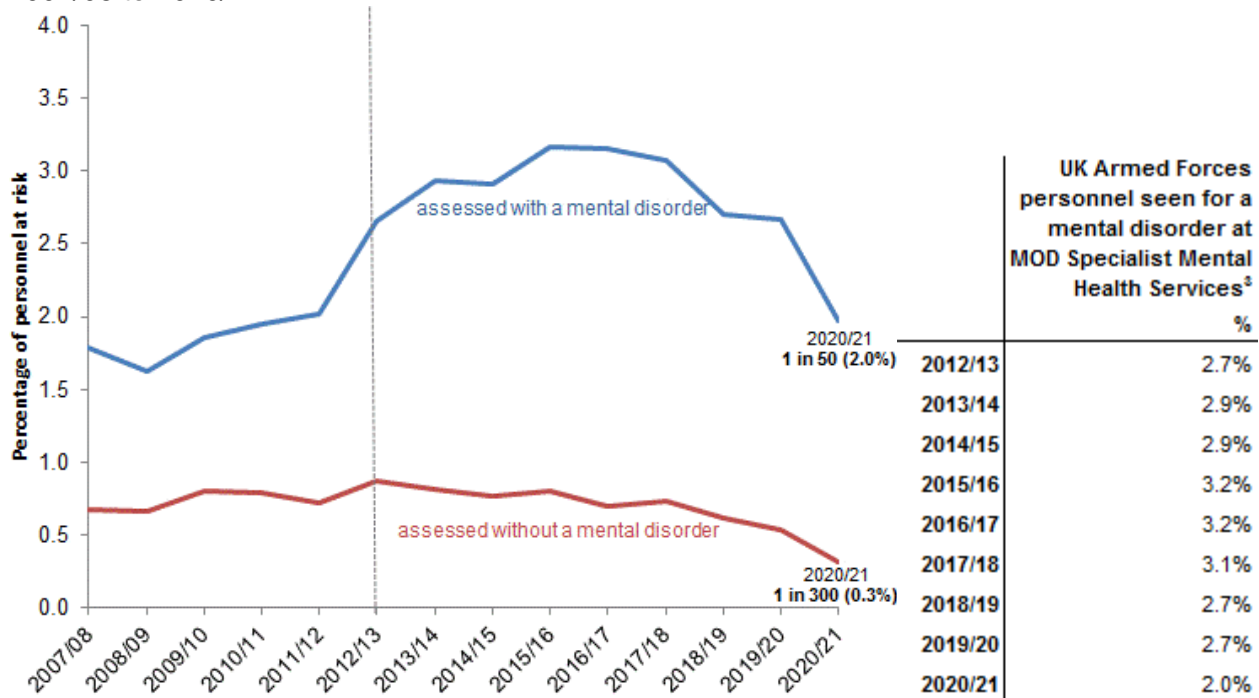
UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder in 2020/21 at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

Rates of those referred to specialist mental health care was **lower** than the UK general population

Section 2 provides a more detailed summary of those patients requiring treatment by specialist mental health clinicians at MOD Specialist Mental Health services. UK Armed Forces personnel may access specialist mental health care as an outpatient in the community at a MOD DCMH and/or as an in-patient in hospital via the MOD in-patient care provider. Clinician's record the patient's initial mental health assessment based on the presenting signs and symptoms. Some patients are assessed by clinician's as having no specific and identifiable mental disorder.

Figure 3: UK Armed Forces personnel presenting at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by initial assessment, percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2}.

2007/08 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database and DMICP

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)

The rate of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services increased year on year to 3.2% in 2015/16; it then remained stable before falling to a rate of 2.7% in 2018/19 and 2019/20. In 2020/21 there was a statistically significant decrease in the rate to **1 in 50 (2.0%)**.

The new mental health care pathway model adopted by the MOD in September 2018 which aims to treat low risk patients with common mental disorders in primary care may explain the reduction in referral rates from primary care to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services seen in 2018/19. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have

contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons in 2020/21 (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021).

Published annual data for those referred to specialist mental health services in the UK general population for 2020/21 is currently unavailable. However, published monthly information suggests referrals in [the UK general population](#) may be of a similar level to 2019/20. This contrasts with the statistically significant fall in rates of UK Armed Forces personnel seen by military specialist mental health services in 2020/21. This decrease may partly be explained by differences between military and civilian life stressors on mental health. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to this fall in rates; military personnel were also not exposed to the loss of employment and income that may be contributing to mental ill-health among the UK general population in the latest year.

It should be noted that comparisons with the UK general population are difficult for a number of reasons. Due to the nature of the role UK Armed Forces personnel undertake, in particular access to weapons; a patient's medical officer may refer at an earlier stage to specialised mental health services compared to the UK general population. In addition, the source of the UK general population statistic for mental ill-health also covers services such as Adult Learning Disability and Children/ Young People services which are not relevant to the UK Armed Forces population (these services accounted for just 6% of all secondary mental health service usage in 2019/20).

The lower rates seen among UK Armed Forces personnel accessing specialist mental health services compared to the UK general population may be due to the rigorous selection of individuals into the UK Armed Forces which may prevent those with more serious mental disorders joining the Services; as well as the role tight unit cohesion plays in maintaining good mental health. In addition, UK Armed Forces personnel who have a mental disorder which prevents continued Service in the military environment may be considered for medical discharge, thus more severe cases of mental health may not remain in the UK Armed Forces population.

Section 2: Demographic Risk Groups at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services 2007/08 to 2020/21

Higher presentations to specialist mental health services in 2020/21 seen in:

RAF Army Females Other Rank

Analysis in this section presents the number of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental health disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health services by demographic groups: service; gender; rank, age and deployment. Table 1 presents the findings for 2020/21 collectively.

Table 1: UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3,4,5,6}.
2020/21

| | 2020/21 | | percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel at risk |
|--|--------------|------------|---|
| | n | % | |
| Number of personnel assessed with a mental disorder at Mental Health Services | 3,157 | 2.0 | |
| Service | | | |
| Royal Navy | 463 | 1.7 | |
| Royal Marines | 90 | 1.3 | |
| Army* | 1,874 | 2.1 | |
| RAF* | 730 | 2.1 | |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 2,505 | 1.8 | |
| Female* | 652 | 3.8 | |
| Rank | | | |
| Officer | 357 | 1.2 | |
| Other Rank* | 2,800 | 2.2 | |
| Age | | | |
| Aged <20 | 198 | 2.1 | |
| Aged 20-24 | 620 | 2.1 | |
| Aged 25-29 | 607 | 2.0 | |
| Aged 30-34 | 618 | 2.2 | |
| Aged 35-39 | 499 | 2.1 | |
| Aged 40-44 | 343 | 2.1 | |
| Aged 45-49 | 170 | 1.7 | |
| Aged 50 + | 112 | 1.0 | |
| Deployment - Theatres of operation⁵ | | | |
| Iraq and/or Afghanistan ⁶ | 1,267 | 1.9 | |
| of which Iraq | 666 | 1.8 | |
| Of which Afghanistan ⁶ | 1,079 | 2.0 | |
| Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan | 1,890 | 2.0 | |

Statistically significant differences in rates in 2020/21:

- Higher in Army and RAF
- Higher in Females
- Higher in Other Ranks

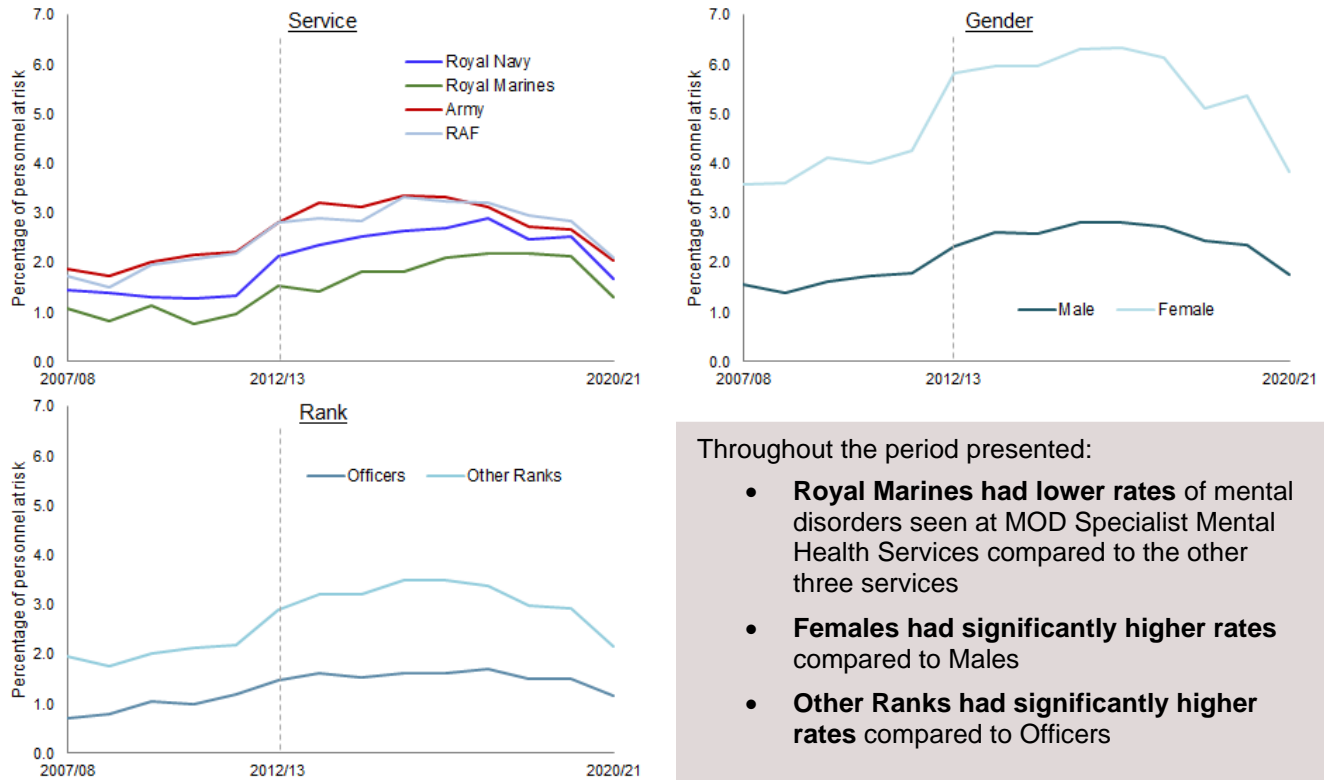
Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. "*" denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)
6. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).

The higher rates of presentation among the demographic groups seen in Table 1 were broadly similar to those seen in previous years. Figures 4 and 5 present rates for personnel assessed with mental disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among each demographic group since 2007/08 along with possible explanations for the differences observed.

Figure 4: UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3}.

2007/08 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

Similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole, a statistically significant decrease in the rate seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder in 2020/21 compared to the previous year was seen among each service, both male and females and both officers and other ranks.

Service

There was a rising trend in rates of mental disorder seen by specialist mental health clinicians in each of the services until rates began to fall in 2018/19.

Royal Marines had significantly lower rates of mental disorders seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services between 2007/08 and 2019/20. The possible explanations for this can be found alongside Figure 2 in Section 1 of this report. Whilst Royal Marines had significantly lower rates of mental health compared to the other Services, it had the steepest rise in rates from 2007/08 to 2019/20 compared to the other services. This rise may have been the result of MOD run campaigns aimed at reducing stigma throughout the period, including a specific Royal Marine initiative, Project REGAIN aimed at encouraging help seeking within the service, introduced in January 2017.

Gender

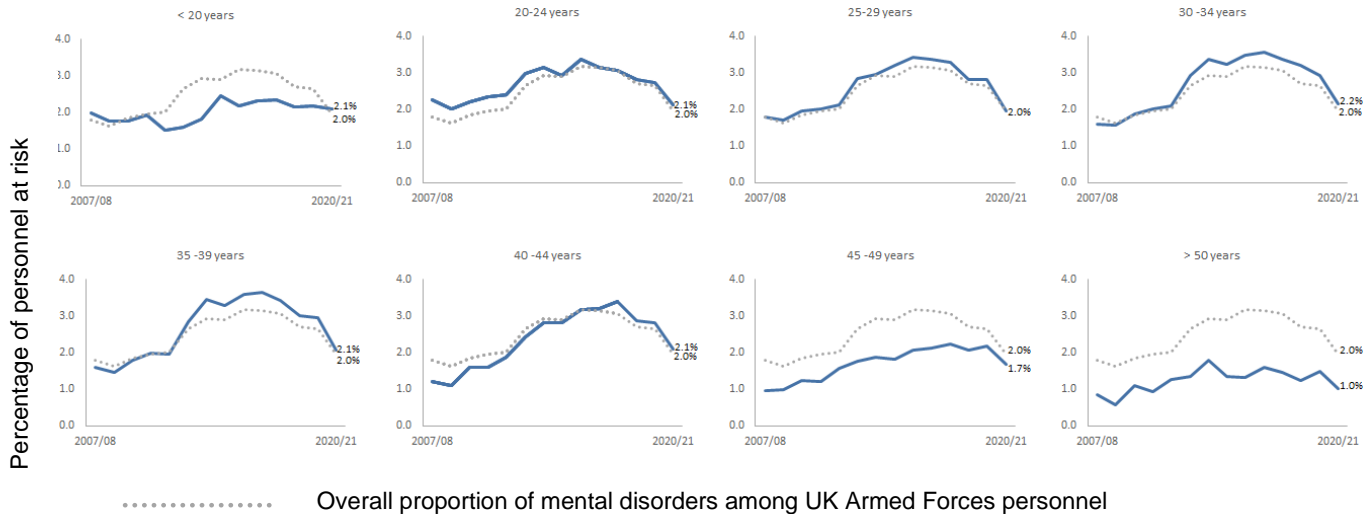
Rates of mental disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services in **females were significantly higher than males** across all years presented. This finding was replicated in the civilian population where females were more likely to report mental ill health than males. A study following up the mental health of adults suggested that this is because females were likely to have more interactions with health professionals^c. MOD has not investigated whether females in the UK Armed Forces have more interactions with health professionals than their male colleagues.

Rank

Other Ranks had consistently higher rates of mental disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services compared to Officers in the UK Armed Forces for all years presented. The differences between Other Ranks and Officers may be due to educational and/or socio-economic background, where both higher educational attainment and higher socio-economic background are associated with lower levels of mental ill health disorder^d. Most Officers (except for those promoted from the Ranks) are recruited as graduates of the higher education system, whilst the majority of Other Ranks are recruited straight from school, particularly for the Army.

Age

Figure 5: UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by age group, percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2} 2007/08 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Revised methodology from 2012/13 to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).

Between 2007/08 and 2019/20, rates of mental disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were **highest among those aged between 20-44 years**. This differed to the civilian population where young people aged 16-19 years had higher presentations to secondary mental health services^e. The reasons for these differences are unclear.

Similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole, a significant decrease in the rate in 2020/21 was seen among all age groups, except those aged under 20 where the rate remained stable. The social impact of the periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions may have been greater for younger people and may explain why rates among the under 20's have remained stable in 2020/21 whilst rates among all other age groups have significantly fallen (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry 2021). In 2020/21 those aged 50 and over had a statistically significantly lower rate of mental disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services compared to those aged between 16 and 49 years.

Previous deployment

Previous releases of this official statistic have shown statistically significant higher rates of mental health disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services between 2013/14 and 2015/16 among UK Armed Forces personnel who were previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan compared to those who had not previously deployed there (see Figure 13 in supplementary web tables). Since 2015/16 there was no significant difference in the rates of mental health disorders between UK Armed Forces personnel who were previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan compared to those who had not previously deployed there. This comparison only includes deployment to Operation TELIC (Iraq), Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) and Operation VERITAS (Afghanistan) and does not include deployment to recent operations to Operation SHADER (Iraq) and Operation TORAL (Afghanistan).

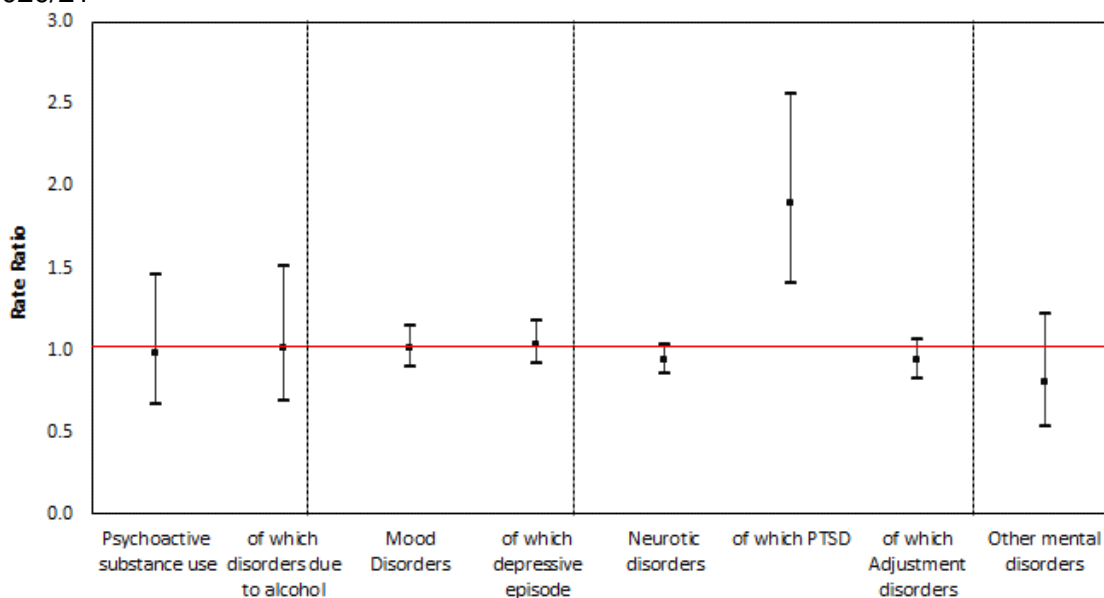
To investigate whether there were certain mental health disorders associated with deployment, rate ratios (RR) were calculated. The rate ratios provide a comparison of cases seen between personnel identified as having deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan and those who have not been identified as having deployed there. A rate ratio less than 1 indicates lower rates in those deployed than those not deployed, whereas a rate ratio greater than 1 indicates higher rates in those deployed than those not deployed. If the 95% confidence interval does not encompass the value 1.0, then this difference is statistically significant.

When looking at the specific mental disorders for those previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan, there were some statistically significant differences:

- **Rates of PTSD were higher in those who had previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan than those not deployed there (Figure 6).** In 2020/21, there was an increased risk of 90% for PTSD for service personnel previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Figure 6: UK Armed Forces personnel seen at the MOD's DCMH's, for Iraq and/or Afghanistan by mental disorder. Rate Ratio, 95% Confidence Interval^{1,2}.

2020/21



Source: DS Database and DMICP

1. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)

2. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).

Section 2: Trends in UK Armed Forces mental disorders at MOD DCMH 2007/08 to 2020/21

The most prevalent disorders diagnosed at a MOD DCMH were:

Adjustment Disorders

Depressive Episode

Other Neurotic Disorders

Rates of PTSD remain low at **1 in 1,000 (0.1%)** of UK Armed Forces serving personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH in 2020/21

Clinicians at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services record the patient's initial mental health assessment based on the presenting signs and symptoms, categorizing to World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10) mental disorders (more details can be found in the Glossary). A patient admitted to a MOD in-patient provider will be discharged to the care of a DCMH and therefore the data in this section presents the number of personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH by mental disorder.

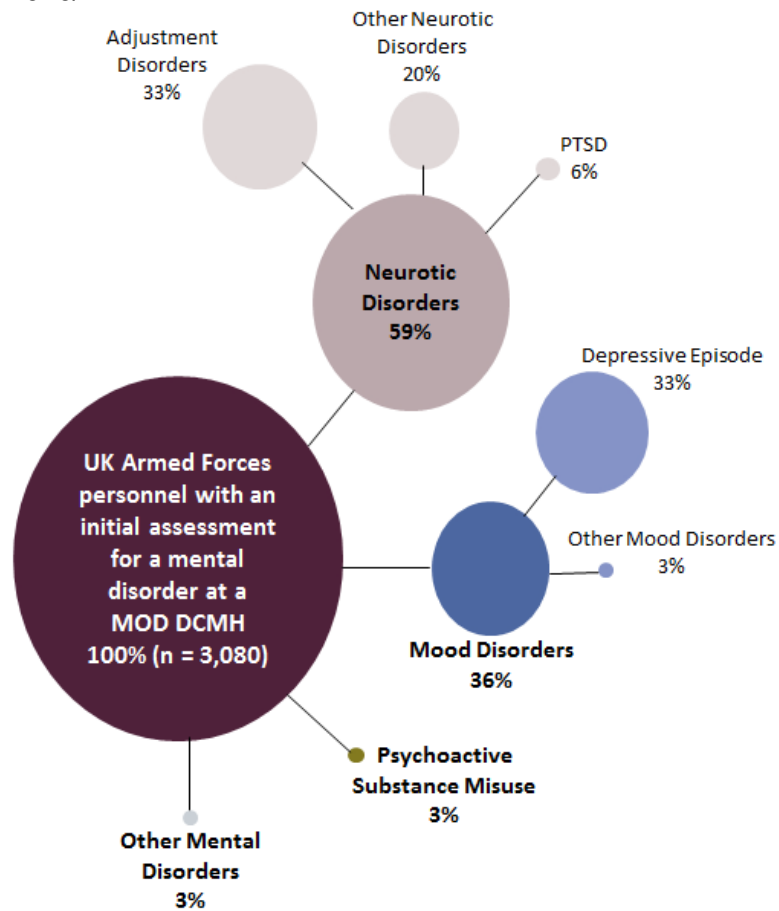
Neurotic Disorders (Adjustment, PTSD and Other Neurotic Disorders) were the most prevalent mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH among UK Armed Forces personnel in 2020/21 (accounting for 1.1% of the population or approximately 1 in every 100 personnel), with Adjustment Disorders accounting for a third of all mental disorders in the UK Armed Forces (Figure 7). Rates of Adjustment disorders were significantly higher than all other mental disorders in each year between 2007/08 and 2015/16 (Figure 8).

The finding that Neurotic Disorders were the most prevalent mental disorders among UK Armed Forces personnel is consistent with the UK general population. However, there were differences in the specific types of Neurotic Disorders most commonly seen within the UK Armed Forces and the UK general population. In the UK general population, Generalised Anxiety disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Phobias were the most common Neurotic disorders^d, whereas Adjustment disorder was the most common in the UK Armed Forces. Adjustment disorder is a short-term condition occurring when a person is unable to cope with or adjust to a particular source of stress such as a major life change, loss or event. The higher rates of Adjustment disorders seen in the UK Armed Forces compared to the UK general population may reflect the impact of Service life with routine postings every few years and operational tours. Another possible explanation is a clinician's diagnostic habit to assess UK Armed Forces personnel with a condition which is less prognostically serious (personal correspondence with DCA Psychiatry, 2014).

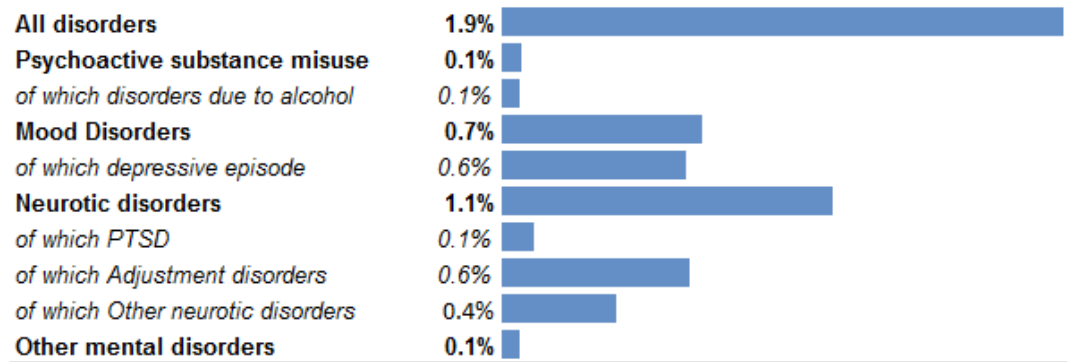
In 2020/21, Depressive Episodes remained the second most prevalent disorder and accounted for 33% of all mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH (Figure 7).

The proportion of initial assessments for PTSD and Psychoactive Substance Misuse in 2020/21 remained low at 6% and 3% of all mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH.

Figure 7: UK Armed Forces personnel mental disorders at initial assessment at MOD DCMH^{1,2,3,4} 2020/21



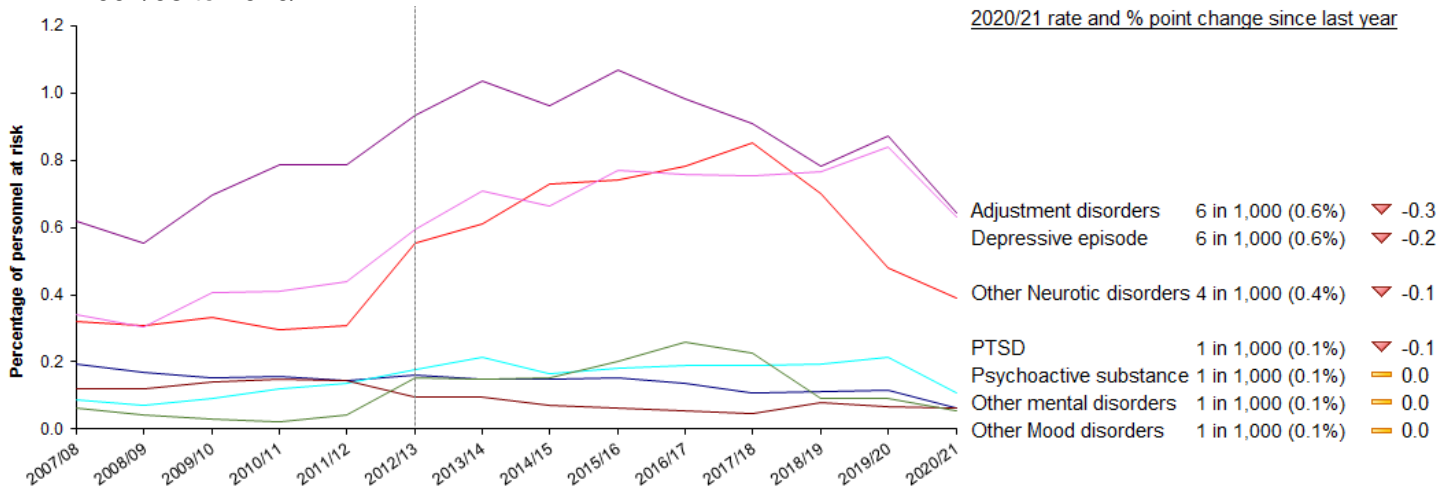
% of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at a MOD DCMH in 2020/21



Source : DS Database and DMICP

1. Percentages in the graphic may not sum 100% due to some personnel presenting with more than one disorder and thus are counted within each disorder they have presented with.
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
4. The percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder differs from that presented in Figure 3 as here only includes personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH in 2020/21, whereas Figure 3 includes personnel assessed at both a MOD DCMH and/or an in-patient provider

Figure 8: UK Armed Forces personnel mental disorders at initial assessment at MOD DCMH, percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3,4}. 2007/08 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database and DMICP

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

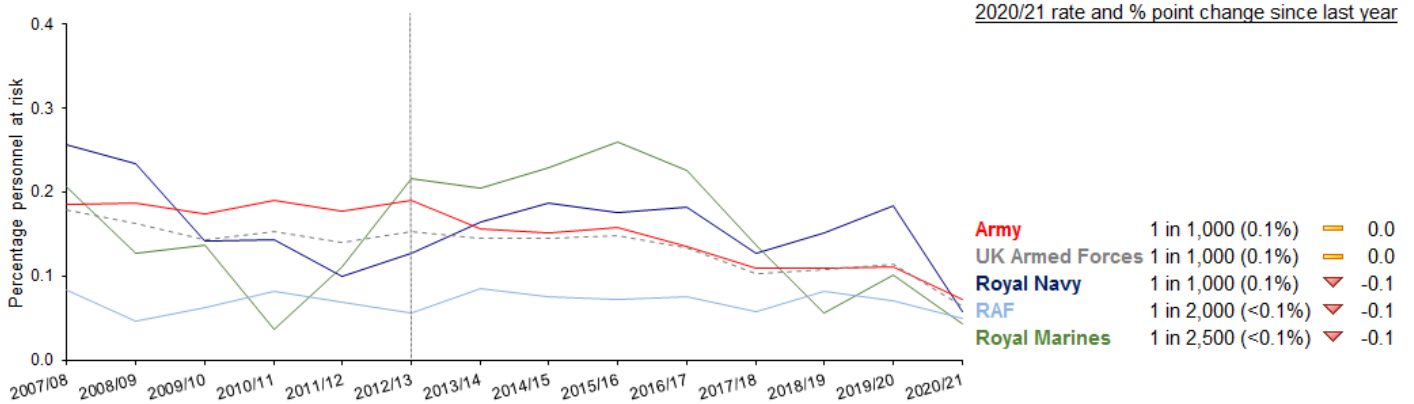
The rate of Other Neurotic disorders has continued to fall since 2017/18. This may be the result of the new care model introduced in 2018 which sees low risk patients with less complex presentations of common mental disorders being offered self-help and psychosocial interventions in primary care before assessment for referral to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services. This may have had an impact on referral rates for specialist intervention for stress-related disorders that fall under the Other Neurotic category, with crude exploratory analysis suggesting these disorders were more likely to be treated solely within the primary healthcare setting.

In 2020/21, rates among each disorder fell in line with the overall fall in mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH.

Despite media attention focusing on prevalence of **PTSD** and **Psychoactive substance misuse due to alcohol** in the UK Armed Forces, Figures 9 and 10 shows that these disorders remain **low** with around 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) serving UK Armed Forces personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH. Figures 9 and 10 present the differences in the percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel within each Service assessed with psychoactive substance misuse due to alcohol and PTSD respectively.

Psychoactive Substance Misuse due to Alcohol

Figure 9: UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment at the MOD’s DCMH, for psychoactive substance misuse due to alcohol, by Service, percentage personnel at risk^{1,2,3}. 2007/08 to 2020/21



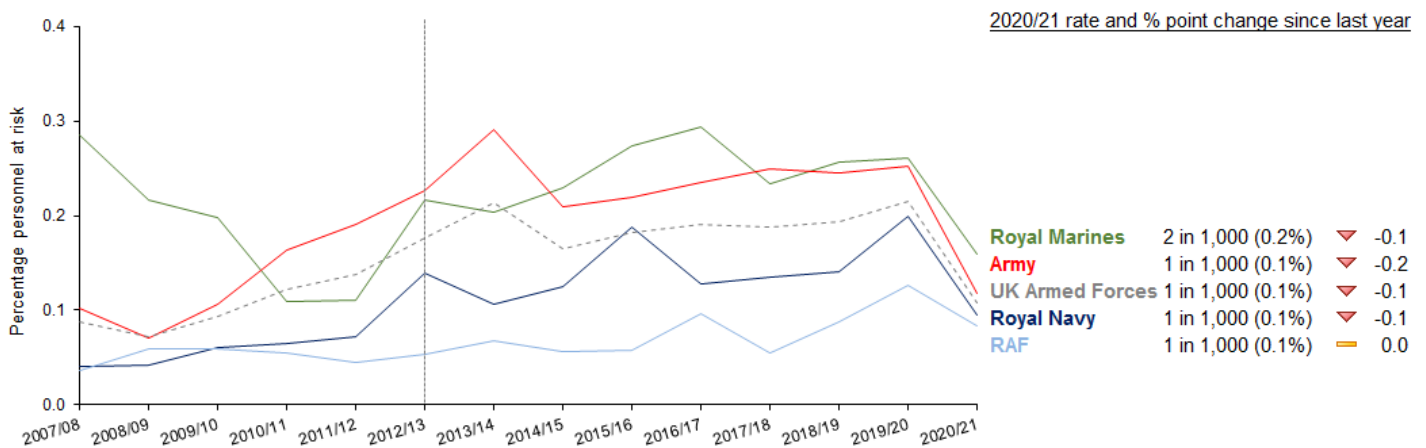
Source : DS Database and DMICP

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

Despite the overall low number of initial assessments for Psychoactive Substance Misuse for Alcohol, there were differences between the Services over the period presented. Rates for alcohol misuse have remained stable among Royal Navy, Army and RAF personnel since 2007/08, however a different pattern was seen among Royal Marines, with rates increasing between 2010/11 and 2015/16 before falling to less than 0.1% in 2020/21. Please note, the number of Royal Marines assessed with this disorder remain small (less than five in 2020/21) and so caution should be taken in interpreting these findings. In 2020/21, the rates of Psychoactive Substance Misuse for Alcohol were similar for each Service at around 0.1% (1 in a 1,000 personnel).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Figure 10: UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment at the MOD’s DCMH, for PTSD by Service, percentage personnel at risk^{1,2,3}. 2007/08 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database and DMICP

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

The Army and Royal Marines had the highest proportion of personnel assessed with PTSD at a MOD DCMH during the fourteen-year period presented. Figure 6 in this report shows that deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan resulted in an increased risk of a subsequent assessment of PTSD in the UK Armed Forces.

The rate of serving personnel assessed with PTSD **remains low at 0.1%** of UK Armed Forces personnel in 2020/21, equivalent to 1 in 1,000 personnel.

Section 2: Number of new episodes of care among UK Armed Forces personnel at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services 2016/17 to 2020/21

Personnel may have more than one episode of care in a year. To understand clinical activity and prevalence of mental health disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services, it is important to present the total number of new episodes of care. This is of particular use to MOD's policy areas and other internal users of this bulletin.

Table 2: UK Armed Forces new episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by Service provider, initial assessment, numbers and percentage personnel at risk^{1,2,3}. 2016/17 to 2020/21

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of new episodes of care | | | | | |
| New episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services¹ | 6,692 | 6,639 | 5,710 | 5,544 | 3,996 |
| <i>At a DCMH</i> | 6,381 | 6,336 | 5,402 | 5,234 | 3,779 |
| <i>At a MOD in-patient provider</i> | 311 | 303 | 308 | 310 | 217 |
| <i>Episodes assessed with a mental disorder²</i> | 5,521 | 5,411 | 4,717 | 4,658 | 3,458 |
| <i>Episodes assessed without a mental disorder²</i> | 1,160 | 1,221 | 980 | 871 | 523 |
| <i>Missing mental disorder information³</i> | 11 | 7 | 13 | 15 | 15 |
| Percentage of personnel at risk | | | | | |
| New episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services¹ | 4.2 | 4.2 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 2.5 |
| <i>At a DCMH</i> | 4.0 | 4.0 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 2.4 |
| <i>At a MOD in-patient provider</i> | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| <i>Episodes assessed with a mental disorder²</i> | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.2 |
| <i>Episodes assessed without a mental disorder²</i> | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| <i>Missing mental disorder information³</i> | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT, BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)

2. Clinician's initial assessment based on presenting symptoms (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)

3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

There was a statistically significant decrease in the rate of new episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services in 2020/21 to 2.5% of UK Armed Forces personnel.

In 2020/21, **3,634** UK Armed Forces personnel had **3,996** new episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health services. There were 3,779 new episodes at a MOD DCMH and 217 new episodes at MOD In-patient providers.

Breaking this information into initial assessments for mental health disorders at a MOD DCMH during 2020/21, there were:

1,812 personnel with 1,901 new episodes of care for Neurotic Disorders. Of which:

- 1,028 personnel with 1,078 new episodes of Adjustment Disorder.
- 173 personnel with 175 new episodes of PTSD.

1,103 personnel with 1,146 new episodes of care for Mood Disorder. Of which:

- 1,010 personnel with 1,053 episodes of Depressive episodes.

98 personnel with 100 new episodes of Other Mental Disorders.

104 personnel with 110 new episodes of Psychoactive Substance Misuse. Of which:

102 personnel with 108 episodes of Psychoactive Substance Misuse due to alcohol.

Following a consultation in 2017 the production of more detailed tables presenting episodes of care data and rates have been ceased. Previous releases of the tables can still be found on [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

Annex A1: Royal Navy personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2020/21

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1 in 9 (10.9%) Royal Navy personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2020/21 | 1 in 59 (1.7%) Royal Navy personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2020/21 | Higher presentations seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among: Females Other Ranks | The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were: Depressive Episode Other Neurotic Disorders |
|--|---|---|---|

In 2020/21, 10.9% of Royal Navy personnel (around 1 in 9) were seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason, similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole. This was a statistically significant decrease in the rate from 12.9% in the previous year. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021).

In 2020/21, 1.7% (approximately 1 in every 59) Royal Navy personnel were assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services; a statistically significant decrease from 2.5% in the previous year. Rates of mental disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among the UK Armed Forces as a whole also had a statistically significant decrease from the previous year.

For Royal Navy personnel seen in specialist mental health services:

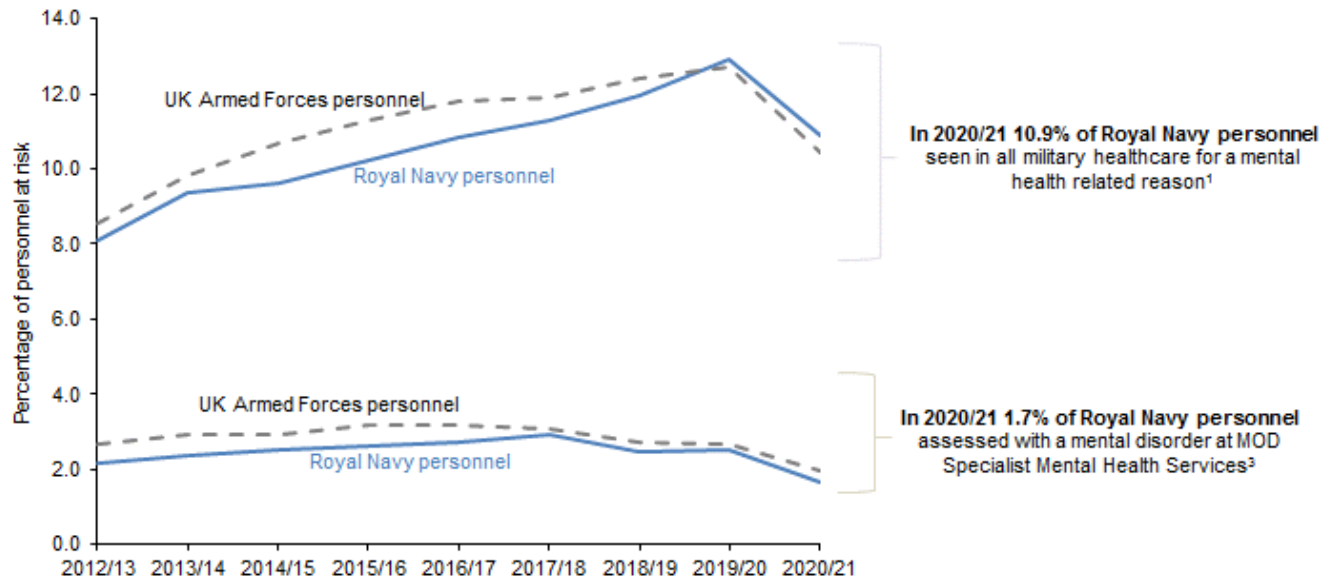
There were statistically significant higher presentations in certain demographic groups in line with the findings for the UK Armed Forces as a whole:

- Females
- Other ranks

Depressive Episodes and Other Neurotic Disorders were the most prevalent condition among Royal Navy personnel assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

Figure A1.1: Royal Navy personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.
2012/13 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

Table A1.2: Royal Navy personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3,4,5,6}.
2020/21

| | 2020/21 | | percentage of Royal Navy personnel at risk |
|---|---------|---|--|
| | n | % | |
| Number of Royal Navy personnel assessed with a mental disorder at Mental Health Services | | | |
| | 463 | | 1.7 |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 361 | | 1.5 |
| Female* | 102 | | 3.0 |
| Rank | | | |
| Officer | 75 | | 1.2 |
| Other Rank* | 388 | | 1.8 |
| Age | | | |
| Aged <20 | 21 | | 1.4 |
| Aged 20-24 | 90 | | 1.7 |
| Aged 25-29 | 92 | | 1.7 |
| Aged 30-34 | 85 | | 1.8 |
| Aged 35-39 | 74 | | 1.9 |
| Aged 40-44 | 42 | | 1.6 |
| Aged 45-49 | 36 | | 1.7 |
| Aged 50 + | 24 | | 1.1 |
| Deployment - Theatres of operation⁵ | | | |
| Iraq and/or Afghanistan ⁶ | 98 | | 1.5 |
| of which Iraq | 71 | | 1.4 |
| Of which Afghanistan ⁶ | 48 | | 1.5 |
| Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan | 365 | | 1.8 |

Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. "*" denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)
6. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).

Annex A2: Royal Marine personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2020/21

1 in 16 (6.4%)

Royal Marines personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2020/21

1 in 76 (1.3%)

Royal Marines personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2020/21

The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were:

Depressive Episode

Other Neurotic Disorders

The rate of Royal Marine personnel seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason was significantly lower than the other three services and the UK Armed Forces as a whole across the entire period. In 2020/21, the rate fell significantly to 6.4% of Royal Marine personnel (around 1 in 16). A statistically significant decrease was also seen in the rate among the UK Armed Forces as a whole. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021).

The overall rate of Royal Marine personnel presenting to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services with a mental disorder in 2020/21 was 1.3%; statistically significantly lower than the Army and RAF. This was a statistically significant decrease from 2.1% in 2019/20. Rates of mental disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among the UK Armed Forces as a whole also had a statistically significant decrease compared to the previous year.

For Royal Marines seen in specialist mental health services:

Previous deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan was a predictor of mental disorders in the Royal Marines in 2009/10 and the last six years.

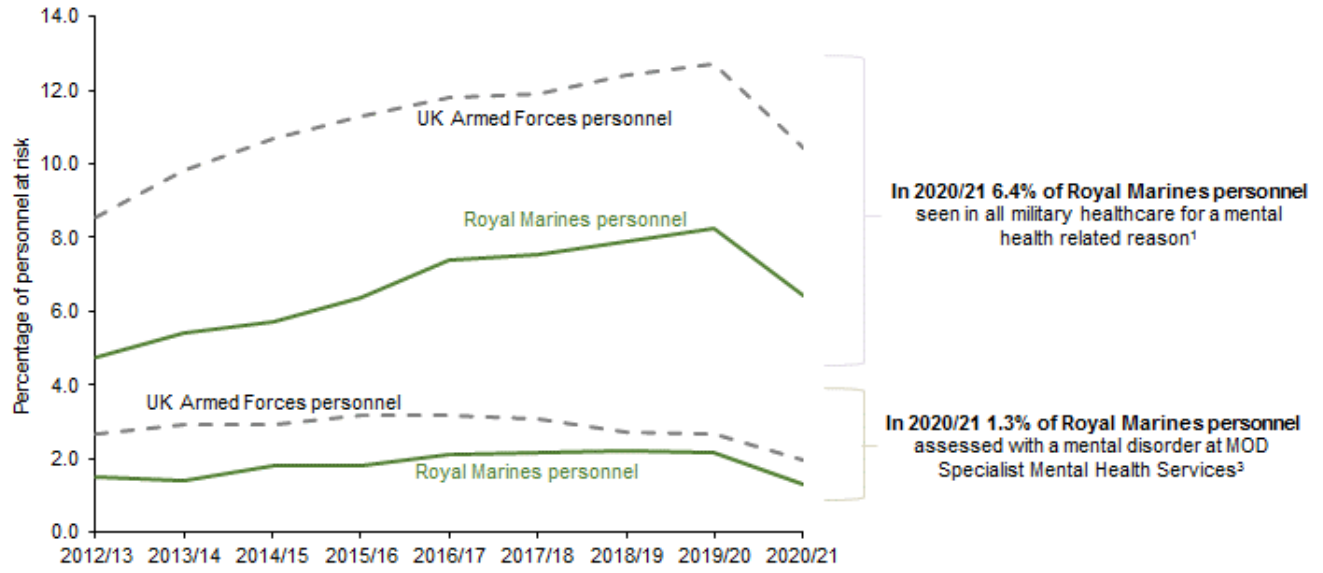
Unlike for the overall UK Armed Forces, there was no significant difference in rates if mental disorder in the Royal Marines between gender, rank and age group.

Depressive Episodes and Other Neurotic Disorders were the most prevalent conditions among Royal Marines assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

Figure A2.1: Royal Marine personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.

2012/13 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

Table A2.2: Royal Marine personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3,4,5,6}.
2020/21

| | | 2020/21 | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------|-----|--|
| | | n | % | percentage of Royal Marine personnel at risk |
| Number of Royal Marine personnel assessed with a mental disorder at Health Services | | 90 | 1.3 | |
| Gender | | | | |
| | Male | 85 | 1.3 | |
| | Female | 5 | 4.1 | |
| Rank | | | | |
| | Officer | 8 | 0.9 | |
| | Other Rank | 82 | 1.4 | |
| Age | | | | |
| | Aged <20 | ~ | 0.8 | |
| | Aged 20-24 | 6 | 0.4 | |
| | Aged 25-29 | 16 | 1.0 | |
| | Aged 30-34 | 21 | 1.5 | |
| | Aged 35-39 | 26 | 2.8 | |
| | Aged 40-44 | 11 | 2.1 | |
| | Aged 45-49 | 6 | 1.6 | |
| | Aged 50 + | ~ | 0.6 | |
| Deployment - Theatres of operation⁵ | | | | |
| | Iraq and/or Afghanistan ^{6*} | 50 | 1.9 | |
| | of which Iraq* | 25 | 2.1 | |
| | Of which Afghanistan ^{6*} | 44 | 1.9 | |
| | Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan | 40 | 0.9 | |

Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)
6. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).
7. In line with the JSP 200 directive on statistical disclosure control, figures less than 5 have been suppressed "~" (refer to BQR for more information).

Annex A3: Army personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2020/21

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 in 10 (10.0%) Army personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2020/21 | 1 in 49 (2.1%) Army personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2020/21 | Higher presentations seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among: Females Other Ranks | The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were: Adjustment Disorders Depressive Episode |
|---|---|---|---|

In 2020/21, 10.0% of Army personnel (around 1 in 10) were seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason, similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole. This was a statistically significant decrease in the rate from 12.4% in 2019/20. A statistically significant decrease was also seen in the UK Armed Forces as a whole. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021).

The overall rate of Army personnel presenting with a mental disorder to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services was 2.1% in 2020/21; similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole. This was a statistically significant decrease from 2.7% in 2019/20. Rates of mental disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among the UK Armed Forces as a whole also had a statistically significant decrease from the previous year.

For Army personnel seen in specialist mental health services :

There were statistically significant higher presentations in certain demographic groups in line with the findings for the UK Armed Forces as a whole:

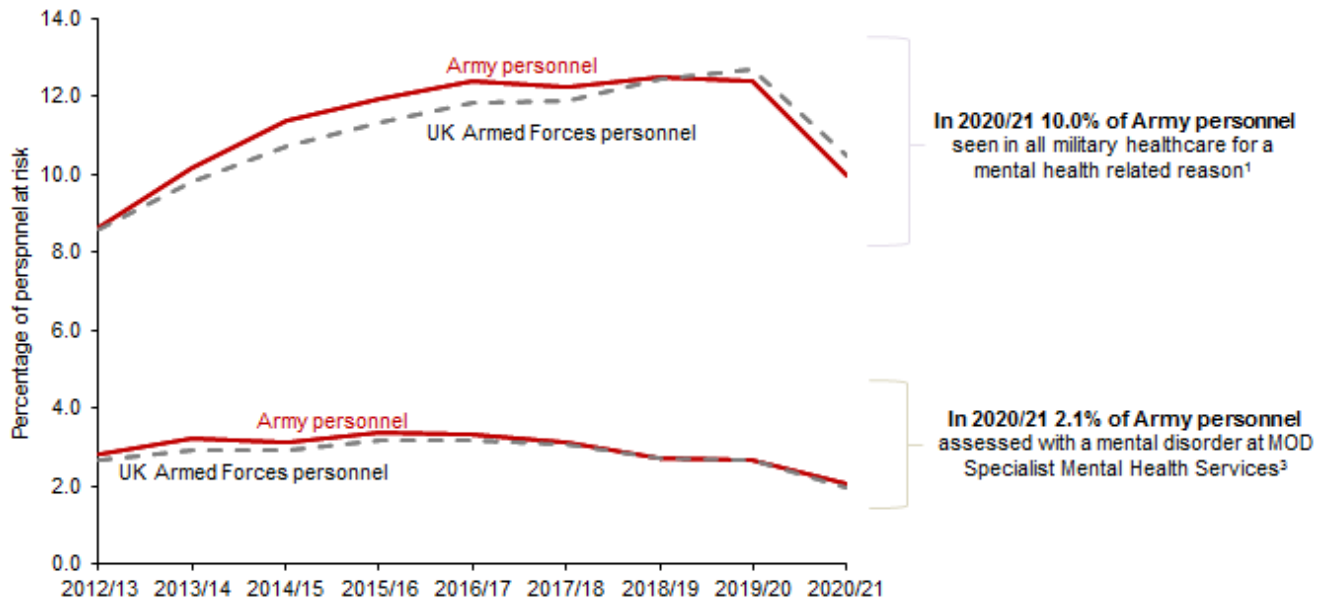
- Females
- Other ranks

Adjustment Disorders and Depressive Episodes were the most prevalent conditions among Army personnel assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

Figure A3.1: Army personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.

2012/13 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH

2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders

3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

Table A3.2: Army personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3,4,5,6}.
2020/21

| | | 2020/21 | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | n | % | percentage of Army personnel at risk |
| Number of Army personnel assessed with a mental disorder at Mental Health Services | | 1,874 | 2.1 | |
| Gender | | | | |
| | Male | 1,535 | 1.9 | |
| | Female* | 339 | 4.1 | |
| Rank | | | | |
| | Officer | 167 | 1.1 | |
| | Other Rank* | 1,707 | 2.2 | |
| Age | | | | |
| | Aged <20 | 141 | 2.2 | |
| | Aged 20-24 | 414 | 2.4 | |
| | Aged 25-29 | 367 | 2.0 | |
| | Aged 30-34 | 373 | 2.2 | |
| | Aged 35-39 | 282 | 2.1 | |
| | Aged 40-44 | 178 | 1.9 | |
| | Aged 45-49 | 75 | 1.5 | |
| | Aged 50 + | 51 | 1.0 | |
| Deployment - Theatres of operation⁵ | | | | |
| | Iraq and/or Afghanistan ⁵ | 801 | 2.0 | |
| | of which Iraq | 398 | 1.9 | |
| | Of which Afghanistan ⁶ | 711 | 2.0 | |
| | Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan | 1,073 | 2.1 | |

Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)
6. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).

Annex A4 RAF personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2020/21

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1 in 8 (12.2%) | 1 in 47 (2.1%) | Higher presentations seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among: | The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were: |
| RAF personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2020/21 | RAF personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2020/21 | Females Other Ranks | Adjustment Disorders Depressive Episode |

In 2020/21, 12.2% of RAF personnel (around 1 in 8) were seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason. This rate was statistically significantly higher than the other three services and the UK Armed Forces as a whole. This rate was a statistically significant decrease from 14.3% in 2019/20. A statistically significant fall was also seen in the rate for the UK Armed Forces as a whole. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021).

The overall rate of RAF personnel presenting to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services with a mental disorder was 2.1% in 2020/21; a statistically significant decrease from 2.8% in 2019/20. Rates of mental disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among the UK Armed Forces as a whole also had a statistically significant decrease from the previous year.

For RAF personnel seen in specialist mental health services:

There were statistically significant higher presentations in certain demographic groups in line with the findings for the UK Armed Forces as a whole:

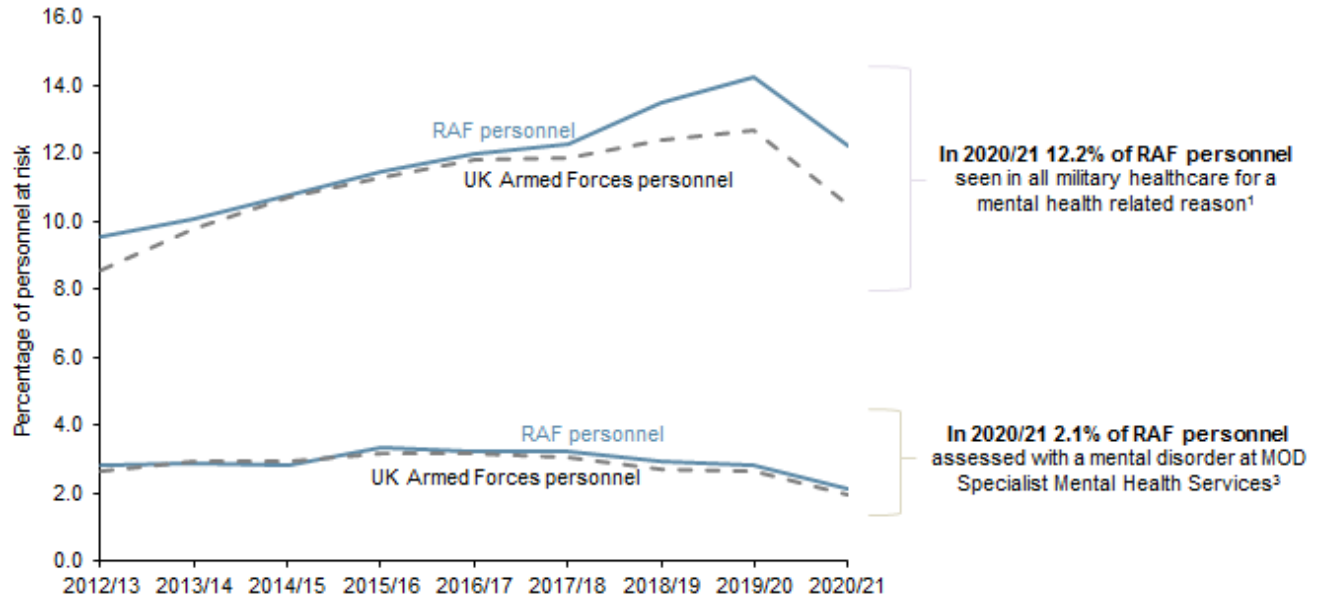
- Females
- Other ranks

Adjustment Disorders and Depressive Episodes were the most prevalent condition among RAF personnel assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

Figure A4.1: RAF personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.






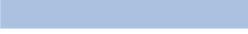











2012/13 to 2020/21



Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

Table A4.2: RAF personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk^{1,2,3,4,5,6}.
2020/21

| | | 2020/21 | | percentage of RAF personnel at risk |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------|-----|--|
| | | n | % | |
| Number of RAF personnel assessed with a mental disorder at Mental Health Services | | 730 | 2.1 |  |
| Gender | | | | |
| | Male | 524 | 1.8 |  |
| | Female* | 206 | 4.0 |  |
| Rank | | | | |
| | Officer | 107 | 1.3 |  |
| | Other Rank* | 623 | 2.4 |  |
| Age | | | | |
| | Aged <20 | 34 | 2.8 |  |
| | Aged 20-24 | 110 | 2.1 |  |
| | Aged 25-29 | 132 | 2.2 |  |
| | Aged 30-34 | 139 | 2.3 |  |
| | Aged 35-39 | 117 | 2.0 |  |
| | Aged 40-44 | 112 | 2.7 |  |
| | Aged 45-49 | 53 | 1.9 |  |
| | Aged 50 + | 35 | 1.1 |  |
| Deployment - Theatres of operation⁵ | | | | |
| | Iraq and/or Afghanistan ⁶ | 318 | 1.9 |  |
| | of which Iraq | 172 | 1.8 |  |
| | Of which Afghanistan ⁶ | 276 | 1.9 |  |
| | Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan | 412 | 2.3 |  |

Source : DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)
6. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).

Glossary

Admissions In-patient admissions to the MOD mental health in-patient care providers.

All mental health is defined as those seen for a mental health related issue in either primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.

Army the British Army consists of the General Staff and the deployable Field Army and the Regional Forces that support them, as well as Joint elements that work with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Its primary task is to help defend the interests of the UK.

Assessed without a mental disorder A few patients present to DCMH with symptoms that require the treatment skills of DCMH staff, whilst not necessarily having a specific and identifiable mental disorder as defined under ICD-10.

Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) is the MOD electronic medical record.

Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) DCMH are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care service at sites in the UK and abroad.

Electronic medical record is where all UK Armed Forces healthcare data is stored. The system is known as DMICP.

FTRS (Full-Time Reserve Service) are personnel who fill Service posts for a set period on a full-time basis while being a member of one of the Reserve Services, either as an ex-regular or as a volunteer. An FTRS reservist on:

Full Commitment (FC) fulfils the same range of duties and deployment liability as a regular Service person;

Limited Commitment (LC) serves at one location but can be detached for up to 35 days a year;

Home Commitment (HC) is employed at one location and cannot be detached elsewhere.

Each Service uses FTRS personnel differently:

- The Naval Service predominantly uses FTRS to backfill gapped regular posts. However, they do have a small number of FTRS personnel that are not deployable for operations overseas. There is no distinction made in terms of fulfilling baseline liability posts between FTRS Full Commitment (FC), Limited Commitment (LC) and Home Commitment (HC).
- The Army employ FTRS(FC) and FTRS(LC) to fill Regular Army Liability (RAL) posts as a substitute for regular personnel for set periods of time. FTRS(HC) personnel cannot be deployed to operations and are not counted against RAL.
- The RAF consider that FTRS(FC) can fill Regular RAF Liability posts but have identified separate liabilities for FTRS(LC) and FTRS(HC).

Gurkhas are recruited and employed in the British and Indian Armies under the terms of the 1947 Tri-Partite Agreement (TPA) on a broadly comparable basis. They remain Nepalese citizens but in all other respects are full members of HM Forces. Since 2008, Gurkhas are entitled to join the UK Regular Forces after 5 years of service and apply for British citizenship.

International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10) is the standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes. The following ICD 10 Chapters have been included in this report:

- **F10 to F19 Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance misuse, including alcohol.** A wide variety of disorders that differ in severity (from uncomplicated

intoxication and harmful use to obvious psychotic disorders and dementia), but that are all attributable to the use of one or more psychoactive substances (which may or may not have been medically prescribed).

- **F30 to F39 Mood affective disorders, including depressive episodes.** Disorders in which the fundamental disturbance is a change in affect or mood to depression (with or without associated anxiety) or to elation. The mood change is usually accompanied by a change in the overall level of activity; most of the other symptoms are either secondary to, or easily understood in the context of, the change in mood and activity. Most of these disorders tend to be recurrent and the onset of individual episodes can often be related to stressful events or situations. Includes Manic and Bipolar affective disorders, Depressive and recurrent Depressive episodes and other mood affective disorders.
- **F40 to F49 Neurotic Stress related and somatoform disorders, including PTSD and Adjustment disorders.** This includes mental disorders characterized by anxiety and avoidance behaviour, with symptoms distressing to the patient, intact reality testing, no violations of gross social norms, and no apparent organic aetiology. 'Other neurotic disorders' are mostly made up of reactions to stress and anxiety disorders that do not include adjustment disorders or PTSD.
- **F00 to F09, F20 to F29 and F50 to F99 are presented as 'Other mental health disorders'.** This includes, disorders grouped together on the basis of their having in common a demonstrable etiology in cerebral disease, brain injury, or other insult leading to cerebral dysfunction; schizophrenia, personality disorders and eating disorders.

In-patient services are provided through eight NHS trusts in the UK which are part of a consortium headed by the Midlands partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) and at Gilhead IV Hospital, Bielefeld, Germany under a contract with Guys and St Thomas Hospital in the UK up until April 2013 and from this date the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) through the Limited Liability Partnership.

Mental health related diagnosis codes are the way mental health data is stored in the electronic medical record. The list of codes include all disorders under Chapter V (F00 to F99) of ICD-10 as well as other signs and symptoms of mental health.

Mental disorder Patients assessed by clinicians at a MOD DCMH or in-patient provider with a mental and behavioural disorder categorised under Chapter V (F00 to F99) in ICD-10.

Military healthcare setting represent primary care and MOD Specialist Mental Health Services.

Military Provost Guard Service (M P G S) provides trained professional soldiers to meet defence armed security requirements in units of all three Services based in Great Britain. M P G S provide armed guard protection of units, responsible for control of entry, foot and mobile patrols and armed response to attacks on their unit.

Mobilised Reservists are Volunteer or Regular Reserves who have been called into permanent service with the Regular Forces on military operations under the powers outlined in the Reserve Forces Act 1996. Call-out orders will be for a specific amount of time and subject to limits (e.g. under a call-out for warlike operations (Section 54), call-out periods should not exceed 12 months, unless extended.)

MOD Specialist Mental Health Services encompass the delivery of care through MOD's DCMH for outpatient care, and all admissions to the MOD's in-patient care contractor. It does not cover mental health care for patients treated wholly in the primary care setting by GP's.

New episodes of care New patients; or patients who have been seen at a DCMH but were discharged from care and have been referred again. This represents the level of clinical activity/prevalence and does not represent the number of personnel assessed as an individual may have more than one episode of care.

Non-Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS) are members of the Army Volunteer Reserve Force employed on a full-time basis. The NRPS comprises Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, Non - Commissioned Officers and soldiers posted to units to assist with the training, administrative and special duties within the Army Reserve. Typical jobs are Permanent Staff Administration Officer and Regimental Administration Officer. Since 2010, these contracts are being discontinued in favour of FTRS (Home Commitment) contracts. NRPS are not included in the Future Reserves 2020 Volunteer Reserve population as they have no liability for call out.

Number of Personnel represents the number of individuals with an initial assessment at MOD Specialist Services. An individual may have more than one episode of care, but the individual will only be counted once in the number of personnel.

Officer An officer is a member of the Armed Forces holding the Queen's Commission to lead and command elements of the forces. Officers form the middle and senior management of the Armed Forces. This includes ranks from Sub-Lt/2nd Lt/Pilot Officer up to Admiral of the Fleet/Field Marshal/Marshal of the Royal Air Force but excludes Non-Commissioned Officers.

Operation HERRICK is the name for UK operations in Afghanistan which started in April 2006. UK Forces are deployed to Afghanistan in support of the UN authorised, NATO led International Security Assistance Force (IASF) mission and as part of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Operation SHADER is providing military support to the US led Coalition to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

Operation TELIC is the name for UK operations in Iraq which started in March 2003 and finished on 21 May 2011. UK Forces were deployed to support the Government's objective to remove the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to his neighbours and his people and, based on evidence available at the time, disarm him of his weapons of mass destruction. The Government also undertook to support the Iraqi people in their desire for peace, prosperity and freedom.

Operation TORAL started 1 December 2014, is the UK's post 2014 contribution to operations in Afghanistan under the NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION.

Other Ranks Other ranks are members of the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force who are not officers but Other Ranks include Non-Commissioned Officers.

Personnel at Risk is defined as the number of serving UK Armed Forces personnel eligible for mental healthcare. This includes regular UK Armed Forces personnel, Ghurkhas, Military Provost Guard Staff, mobilised reservists, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Non-regular Permanent Staff.

Primary care is the level of healthcare provided by a General Practitioner (GP) or medical officer. This does not include specialist mental health care.

Rate Ratio (RR) provides a comparison of cases seen between personnel identified as having deployed to a theatre and those who have not been identified as having deployed to either theatre. A rate ratio less than 1 indicates lower rates in those deployed than those not deployed, whereas a rate ratio greater than 1 indicates higher rates in those deployed than those not deployed. If the 95% confidence interval does not encompass the value 1.0, then this difference is statistically significant.

Royal Air Force (RAF). The Royal Air Force (RAF) is the aerial defence force of the UK.

Royal Marines (RM) Royal Marines are sea-going soldiers who are part of the Naval Service. RM officer ranks were aligned with those of the Army on 1 July 1999.

Royal Navy (RN) The sea-going defence forces of the UK but excludes the Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service (RFA).

Specialist mental health care clinicians are those that provide care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services. These include; psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, mental health social workers and occupational therapists.

SSSFT , now MPFT, is the Midlands partnership Foundation Trust which heads up the consortium providing in-patient care through eight NHS trusts in the UK.

Strength is defined as the number of serving UK Armed Forces personnel.

Treated solely in primary care refers to those patients who have not been seen at a MOD DCMH in the 6 months before or the 9 months after being seen in primary care with a mental health related diagnosis.

UK Regulars are full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding FTRS personnel, Gurkhas, Naval activated Reservists, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guarding Service (M P G S) and Non-Regular Permanent Service (NRPS). Unless otherwise stated, includes trained and untrained personnel.

Data, Definitions and Methods

Data Sources

Section 1 – All mental health seen in a military medical healthcare setting

All data has been sourced from MOD's patient electronic medical record (DMICP).

Section 2 – MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

Defence Statistics receive data from DCMH and in-patient providers for all UK regular Armed Forces personnel from the following sources:

For DCMH data:

- Between 01 January 2007 and 30 June 2014, the report captures data provided by DCMHs to Defence Statistics in monthly returns.
- For the period 01 April 2012 to 30 June 2014, new episodes of care data was also sourced from the electronic patient record held in Defence Medical Information Capability Program (DMICP) in addition to those provided by DCMH in monthly returns.
- Since 01 July 2014, DMICP was the single source of DCMH new episodes of care data.

For in-patient data:

- Since January 2007, SSSFT and Gilead IV hospital, Bielefeld have submitted relevant in-patient records.

Data Coverage

Section 1 – All mental health

This section includes all UK Armed Forces personnel, Regular and Reserves, who have a mental health related diagnosis code entered into their electronic medical record.

Mental health related diagnosis data entered into their electronic medical record is only available from April 2012. The data covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2021.

Mental health related diagnosis codes have been included if they sit within chapter V (Mental, Behavioural and Neurodevelopment disorders) of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10). ICD-10 is the standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes. Some codes that fall outside of this chapter have been included in the analysis, these are signs and symptoms that can relate to mental health. These have been included on the recommendation of clinicians working within the MOD. The full list of codes included are presented in the Background Quality Report (BQR).

Section 2 – MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

The data in this report include regular UK Armed Forces personnel, Ghurkhas, Military Provost Guard Staff, mobilised reservists, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Non-regular Permanent Staff as all of these individuals are eligible for assessment at a DCMH.

DCMH staff record the initial mental health assessment during a patient's first appointment, based on presenting complaints. The information is provisional and final diagnoses may differ as some patients do not present the full range of symptoms, signs or clinical history during their first appointment.

A number of patients present to DCMH with symptoms that require the treatment skills of DCMH staff, whilst not necessarily having a specific and identifiable mental disorder. These cases are referred to as "assessed without a mental disorder".

Methodology

Section 1 – All mental health

It is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record and therefore a rate of those managed solely by their GP cannot be provided. A crude methodology has been used to enable exploratory analysis to identify patients treated solely in primary care for their mental health issue. This is those who have not been seen at a MOD DCMH in the 6 months before or the 9 months after being seen in primary care with a mental health related diagnosis.

Section 2 – MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

DCMH are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care services at sites in the UK and abroad. All UK based and aero-medically evacuated Service personnel based overseas requiring in-patient admission are treated by one of eight NHS trusts in the UK which are part of a consortium headed by the Midlands partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT), was SSSFT; UK based Service personnel from British Forces Germany are treated at Gilead IV hospital, Bielefield under a contract with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) through the Limited Liability Partnership. When presenting in-patient data in this report, the data include returns from both contract providers.

Due to the methodology changes implemented in July 2009 and in July 2013, when looking at trends over time for new episodes of care across the series of published reports, it is advisable to note:

- Prior to 2009/10, only an individual's first attendance at a DCMH or an in-patient provider were included in the data submitted by DCMHs to Defence Statistics.
- Since 2009/10, the report captures all new episodes of care provided by DCMH to Defence Statistics in monthly returns.
- Since 2012/13, the report captures all new episodes of care recorded in the MOD patient electronic record in addition to monthly submissions provided by DCMH to Defence Statistics.

Changes made to the methodology in July 2009 and July 2013 can be read in more detail in the [Background Quality Report \(BQR\)](#).

Rates

Rates enable comparisons between groups and over time, taking account of the number of personnel in a group (personnel at risk) at a particular point in time. **The number of events (i.e. mental disorders) is then divided by the number of personnel at risk per annum and multiplied by 1,000 to calculate the rate per 1,000 personnel at risk.**

Percentage

Previous publications of this report have provided rates alongside numbers to provide context and comparison between groups. This information is still available in the Excel file accompanying the release of this report, however, due to user feedback, this publication now provides a focus on the percentage of the population at risk. This is calculated in the same way as the rate per 1,000 but multiplying by 100 instead of 1000, i.e. **the number of events (for example mental disorders) is then divided by the number of personnel at risk per annum and multiplied by 100 to calculate the percentage of personnel affected.** The percentages presented have been rounded to one decimal place.

The information presented in this publication has been structured to release information into the public domain in a way that contributes to the MOD accountability to the British public, but which doesn't risk

breaching individual's rights to medical confidentiality. In line with JSP 200 Statistics (April 2016), and in keeping with the Office for National Statistics Guidelines, all numbers less than five have been suppressed and presented as '~' to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is less than five, the next smallest number (or numbers where there are tied values) has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data presented in this report

A key strength of this report is the presentation of the number of Service personnel who have been seen for a mental health related reason, as reported by clinicians. The inclusion in this report of data direct from the legal electronic patient record improves the robustness and integrity of the underlying data. As the data is held in a pseudo-anonymised format in the DMICP data warehouse, patient consent is not an issue. A further strength is the use of the pseudo-anonymised patient identifier to enable validation of data therefore improving accuracy and enabling linkage to deployment records to identify any effect of deployment on mental health in the UK Armed Forces. In addition, the tables in this report have been scrutinised to ensure individual identities have not been revealed inadvertently.

Mental disorder types reported here are the clinician's initial assessment during a patient's first appointment within military healthcare, based on presenting complaints, therefore final diagnosis may differ as some patients do not show full range of symptoms, signs or clinical history during their first appointment. It should also be noted that the clinician's primary diagnosis is reported here, however patients can present with more than one disorder. It is also not unusual for a patient to be given more than one diagnosis. For those seen in primary care, it was not possible to identify which disorders were the primary diagnosis and which were the comorbid conditions. Therefore, all diagnosis, regardless of whether it was the primary or comorbid condition, have been included in the all mental health analysis.

A further weakness with this data is that it is not currently possible to report those treated solely within primary care from those requiring specialist mental health services as it is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record.

Changes in methodology in 2009/10 and 2012/13 also make it difficult to compare data over time. In addition, DMICP is a live system and extracts for this report are taken six weeks after the end of the reporting period. Therefore, any amendments to records or late data entries may be excluded from this report.

More detailed information on the data, definitions and methods used to create this report can be found in the [Background Quality Report \(BQR\)](#).

References

- a. McManus S, Bebbington P, Jenkins R, Brugha T. (eds.) (2016) Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014. Leeds: NHS Digital.
- b. Sundin J., Jones N., Greenberg N., Rona R., Hotopf M., Wessely S., and Fear N. (2010) Mental Health among commando, airborne and other UK Infantry personnel *Occupational Medicine*, 60, 552-559.
- c. Singleton N, Lewis G (2003). Better or Worse: A longitudinal study of the mental health of adults living in private households in Great Britain, *Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO): London*.
- d. Meltzer H, Singleton N, Lee A et al (2002). The social and economic circumstances of adults with mental disorders, *Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO): London*.
- e. [Mental Health Bulletin: 2019-20 Annual Report: NHS Digital](#).
- f. [NHS Digital Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics](#)

Further Information

Symbols

~ In line with JSP 200 (April 2016) to ensure individuals are not inadvertently identified suppression methodology has been applied to reduce the risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than five have been suppressed and presented as '~'. Where there was only one cell in a row or column that was fewer than five, the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

Revisions

There are no regular planned revisions of this bulletin. Amendments to figures for earlier years may be identified during the annual compilation of this bulletin. This will be addressed in one of two ways:

- Where the number of figures updated in a table is small, figures will be updated and those which have been revised will be identified with the symbol "r". An explanation for the revision will be given in the footnotes to the table.
- Where the number of figures updated in a table is substantial, the revisions to the table, together with the reason for the revisions, will be identified in the commentary at the beginning of the relevant chapter / section, and in the commentary above affected tables. Revisions will not be identified by the symbol "r" since where there are a large number of revisions in a table this could make them more difficult to read.

Occasionally updated figures will be provided to the editor during the course of the year. Since this bulletin is published electronically, it is possible to revise figures during the course of the year. However, to ensure continuity and consistency, figures will only be adjusted during the year where it is likely to substantially affect interpretation and use of the figures.

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