



Ministry  
of Defence

Ministry of Defence  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB

Ref: FOI2017/05193

Reply to: [REDACTED]

25 May 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 28 April 2017 requesting the following information:

- “1. For the last calendar year 2016 please state how many positive drugs tests were recorded following tests carried out on members of the armed forces and provide a breakdown of those positive tests by type or class of drug? How many individual people did these positive tests relate to.*
- 2. For the last calendar year 2016 please state how many positive drugs tests were recorded following tests carried out on members of (i) the army, (ii) the navy and (iii) the RAF and provide a breakdown of those positive tests by type or class of drug and the number of individual people that they relate to.*
- 3. For the 2016 figure of positive drug tests please provide a breakdown by army corps (as per the definition provided in Parliamentary Written Answer 190801). Please also provide this based on individual people rather than number of positive tests.*
- 4. For 2016 please state how many members of the armed services tested positive for anabolic steroids, how many of these were dismissed and which military corp had the highest number of these positives (please state the number as well as the corp).”*

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

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) holds information relating to your request. The data is presented in Annexe A to this letter.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act and our obligations in relation to the protection of confidentiality when handling personal data, the figures provided have been rounded to the nearest 10, where “-” denotes zero, “~” denotes a number less than or equal to five. When rounding up to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. Due to the rounding methods used, totals may not always equal the sum of the parts.

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/42540/1/20131101-JSP\\_835-V2\\_0-U.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/42540/1/20131101-JSP_835-V2_0-U.pdf)

The Army CDT Team administers the Armed Forces CDT on behalf of Defence and as such hold the collective data. Data is only held back to 2008. However, when data is reviewed over the period 2008 to May 2017, records show that the Armed Forces have conducted 1,140,884 individual tests returning 6,079 positive results. In percentage terms this equates to an annual percentage of 0.5%. We stand head and shoulders against our civilian counterparts if we compare our annual percentage against the [Crime Survey of England and Wales](#) return, which states that 8.4% of adults aged 16 to 59 had taken a drug in the last year. When drilling into our target population (16 – 25 year old), the Armed Forces average is far lower than the reported similar age group in the crime survey.<sup>1</sup>

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance Team, Ground Floor, Zone D, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the FOI Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat FOI

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<sup>1</sup> The Crime Survey reports the 16 – 24 year old respondents identified 18% of young adults aged 16 – 24 had taken a drug in the past year.

NB. As advised in the accompanying letter, these figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Zero is shown as "-" and "~" denotes a number less than or equal to five.

Positive Compulsory Drug Test (CDT) Results 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016

<b>Number Tested</b>	<b>Positive Individuals</b>	<b>Class A</b>	<b>Class B</b>	<b>Class C</b>
93830	740	630	170	40

Some individuals were found positive for more than one drug

Breakdown by Drug Tested for in each Service during 2016

<b>Drug</b>	<b>Navy</b>	<b>Army</b>	<b>RAF</b>
Amphetamine	-	10	~
Benzodiazepine	~	10	-
Cannabis	10	160	~
Cocaine	50	550	40
Ecstasy / MDMA	10	80	~
Heroin	-	~	-
Ketamine	~	10	-
Methyl Amphetamine	-	~	-
Psychoactive Substances	-	-	~
Steroids	~	30	10

CDT Results by Army Corps - 1 January 16 to 31 December 2016

<b>Army Corps</b>	<b>Positive</b>
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	10
Royal Engineers	70
Duke of Lancaster's Regiment	20
Foot Guards	50
Household Cavalry	~
Mercian Regiment	40
Parachute Regiment	20
Princess of Wales Regiment	10
Royal Anglian Regiment	20
Royal Armoured Corps	30
Royal Army Medical Corps	10
Royal Corps of Signals	40
Royal Logistic Corps	80
Royal Regiment of Artillery	60
Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	10
Royal Regiment of Scotland	60
The Rifles	40
The Royal Welsh	10
Yorkshire Regiment	30
Others (incl RMP & MPGS, RAVC, Dental Corp, ARTD)**	140

\*\* Royal Military Police / Military Provost Guard Service / Royal Army Veterinary Corps / Army Recruitment and Training Division

Number of Service personnel who tested positive for anabolic steroids in 2016

<b>Royal Navy</b>	<b>Army</b>	<b>RAF</b>
~	30	10

The Army Corps which had the highest number of personnel who tested positive for anabolic steroids in 2016 was the Foot Guards with fewer than 10 individuals. This is included in the table above.

As discussed in the accompanying letter, we cannot give specifics about individuals especially when numbers are low and could lead to individuals being identified. However the majority of Service personnel caught taking drugs can expect to be discharged.