



Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Ref: FOI2016/06527

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

14 July 2016

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Thank you for your email of 24 June in which you requested the following information:

Please could you provide me with any data you hold on the number of (i) gay men, (ii) gay women/lesbian, (iii) bisexual and (iv) heterosexual/straight people that are in the armed forces and how that number may have changed over time.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held. Please note the information provided only provides a partial picture of the diversity across the Armed Forces as it is not compulsory to record the information on sexual orientation on our Joint Personnel Administration database and only 11% of members of the Armed Forces have chosen to do so. Since November 2014 all Service personnel have however been encouraged to declare their sexual orientation, since this will give us a better understanding of the composition of our Armed Forces and help ensure our policies and practices fully support our personnel. Sexual orientation monitoring will enable Defence to create an environment where all personnel, irrespective of their sexual orientation, feel comfortable, valued and confident to remain.

The table below shows the data as at June 2016

Sexual Orientation	Number of Service Personnel
Gay Men	570
Gay Women/lesbian	530
Bisexual	290
Heterosexual/Straight	21,470

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.

Due to the lack of historic records on this subject we are unable to provide comments of how the numbers have changed over time.

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, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail 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 Freedom of Information 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