



Ministry of Defence

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Defence Statistics (Health)

Ministry of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your letter of 11 November 2015 requesting the following information:

- *“How many medically discharged veterans return and live in West Cumbria, not names and addresses just an estimate number of veterans”*

After clarification from you on 26 January 2016 Defence Statistics agreed to provide the above information on the following areas:

- Main areas:-
“CA12 Keswick – CA13 Cockermouth – CA14 Workington – CA15 Maryport - CA18 Ravenglass - CA19 Holmrook- CA20 Seascale - CA21 - CA22 Egremont - CA23 Cleator- CA24 Moor Row- CA25 Cleator Moor - CA26 Frizington - ST Bees - CA28 Whitehaven.”
- Remaining areas:-
“Ca1,2,3,4, Carlisle - CA7 Wigton – CA8 Brampton - CA9 Alston - Ca16 Appleby- CA17 Kirby Stephen.”

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held. Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at Section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. This is also in line with Defence Statistics rounding policy, in which all figures of five or more have been rounded to the nearest five in order to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

There have been **45** UK Armed Forces personnel medically discharged between 2010/11 and 2014/15 with an address recorded as Cumbria. Of these:

- **20** had a postcode in the areas of CA12 – CA28 (excluding CA16 and CA17).
- **25** had a postcode in the remaining areas of CA1 – CA4, CA7 – CA9 and CA16 – CA17.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and assistance) you may find it useful to note the following:

Medical Discharges

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces as an Official Statistic publication. The next statistical release is due on 14 July 2016. The latest report can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>.

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the Armed Forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the Armed Forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

The information on cases was sourced from electronic personnel records and manually entered paper documents from medical boards. The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting is a secondary function.

Although Medical Boards recommend medical discharges they do not attribute the principal disability leading to the board to Service. A Medical Board could take place many months or even years after an event or injury and it is not clinically possible in some cases to link an earlier injury to a later problem which may lead to a discharge. Decisions on attributability to Service are made by Vets-UK (formally the Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency).

Location

Location of medically discharged veterans has been identified from two sources. If an individual is in receipt of Armed Forces compensation or pension their latest known postcode as recorded on the compensation and pension systems have been used (**30** individuals). Otherwise their home address postcode at time of leaving the Armed Forces as recorded on the Joint Personnel Admin (JPA) system has been used (**15** individuals).

Joint Personnel Administration (JPA)

Service Personnel are responsible for updating their personal record on the JPA system. The permanent home address field is not mandatory; therefore there may be individuals with a Cumbria address at point of exit that are not included in this response.

Pension and Compensation Schemes

The pension and compensation figures provided are based on data from two administrative systems. Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) data are sourced from the Veterans UK Compensation and Pension System (CAPS). WPS data are sourced from the Veterans UK War Pension Computer System (WPCS). Veterans UK are responsible for managing these systems and ensuring the quality of the data.

Not all individuals awarded under each of the schemes are included:

- AFPS does not include members that are not yet in receipt of their pension (deferred pensions).
- WPS includes only war disablement pensioners.
- AFCS includes only post-Service veterans.

The locations of recipients of an occupational pension and / or compensation in the UK were derived by individuals' postcodes as recorded on the CAPS and WPCS as at 31 March 2015.

An annual Official Statistic provides summary statistics on the location of Armed Forces Pension and compensation recipients by country, region, county, local authority, local health organisation and postcode district. This is published on the Gov.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/location-of-armed-forces-pension-and-compensation-recipients>. The latest publication was released on 4 June 2015.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering medical discharges and location of Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk.

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, 1st 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, <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)