



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Statistics (Health)
Ministry of Defence
Oak 0 West (#6028)
Abbey Wood North
Bristol BS34 8JH
United Kingdom

Telephone [MOD]: +44 (0)30679 84423
Facsimile [MOD]: +44 (0)1179 319634
E-mail: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk

Reference: FOI2014/05777

correspondence dated: 10 October 2014

Date: 13 November 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 10 October 2014 requesting the following information:

1. For each of the following financial years (2008/09) (2009/10) (2010/11) (2011/12)(2012/13) and (2013/14) please provide me with the following information.

i. How many claims you pay out during that financial year (regardless of when the incident took place or the claim was lodged) for personal suffering from Post Traumatic Stress and how many related to service in (a) Afghanistan or (b) Iraq?

ii. What was the total value of those claims, and what was the single highest payment during that financial year.

2. In each calendar year from 2007 to 2013 please provide a breakdown of the numbers of service personnel assessed by the MoD as suffering from a mental health problem. Please break the numbers down by the rank of the patient and the type of mental health problem. Please ensure under the type of mental health problem that you include alcohol misuse, PTSD, depressive episode, adjustment disorder, drug misuse – add as many other different categories as you are able to.

3. In each calendar year from 2007 to 2013 please state the total time spent in hospital days, and the total inpatient episodes of UK Armed Forces personnel suffering from mental disorders including PTSD.

4. A Parliamentary Written Answer [Ref: 112047] [20 Jun 2012 : Column 1041W] provided detail on the number of committed and attempted suicides by serving members of the armed forces. Could you please provide me with updated tables in relation to this question.

5. Can you please provide me with up to date figures showing the number of service personnel and ex-service personnel who have committed suicide in each of the last ten calendar years?

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

I am writing to confirm that MOD holds some of the information on the subject you have requested. However, I have to advise you that we will not be able to answer your request for the information which MOD holds without exceeding the appropriate cost limit. This is because to locate, retrieve and extract information in scope of your request would involve the manual search of records for all Armed Forces personnel who have been awarded for PTSD and have previously deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in

order to determine whether the PTSD award may be attributable their deployment. This will take more than eight months of effort.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) I can advise that MOD hold raw data from which we could consider providing the following information if requested.

War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

The War Pension Scheme (WPS) and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) attributes injuries and illnesses to Service, not deployment on operations. However, under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) I can advise that the MOD hold data on successful AFCS claimants and disablement pensioners in receipt of a War Pension and could consider providing the following information if requested:

- The number of claimants awarded under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) for PTSD that had previously deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan (though we cannot attribute previous deployment to the claim).
- The number of disablement pensioners currently in receipt of a War Pension for PTSD.
- The total spend each financial year on benefits awarded to disablement pensioners for PTSD under the War Pension Scheme.

Further background information on the WPS and the AFCS can be found within published statistics on the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipient-index>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>

Mental Health

We are able to provide you, for the period 1 January 2007 – 30 June 2014 with:

- The number of UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment at a MOD Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) for a mental health disorder, broken down into disorder type and Officer/Other Rank status.
- The number of UK Armed Forces personnel with an admission to the MOD in-patient provider for a mental health disorder, including PTSD.

Statistics on new episodes of care and those treated at an in-patient facility for mental health disorders for UK Armed Forces personnel since 2007/08, including those previously deployed to Afghanistan, are routinely published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/defence-mental-health-statistics-index>

Suicide

- The number of UK Armed Forces suicides and open verdict deaths among serving personnel.

More detailed analysis on suicides in the UK Armed Forces can be found in the following National Statistic publication produced by Defence Statistics at the end of March each year.

Suicide and Open Verdict Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces 1984 - 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-suicide-and-open-verdict-deaths-index>

The MOD does not hold information on the number of suicide and open verdict deaths among **all** ex-serving personnel. MOD do, however, hold information on the cause of death (including suicide) among veterans of the 1982 Falkland campaign and the Gulf 1990/91 conflict. Under section 16 of the Act

(Advice and Assistance) I can advise that MOD hold raw data from which we could consider providing the following information if requested.

- The number of suicide and open verdicts deaths among Falkland Army veterans, as at 31 December 2013.
- The number of suicide and open verdicts deaths among Army veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf conflict and Era Army comparison group, as at 31 December 2013.
- Statistics on the Falklands deaths and 1990/91 Gulf and Era deaths are published on the Gov.uk website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/causes-of-deaths-among-the-uk-armed-forces-veterans-of-the-1982-falklands-campaign>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/causes-of-deaths-that-occurred-among-the-uk-veterans-of-the-199091-gulf-conflict>

Please contact me if you would like to refine your request or require advice on doing so.

UK Armed Forces personnel have access to specialist mental health services, by referrals made by their GP, provided through MOD DCMH or MOD In-patient providers. DCMH are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care services at MOD 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 South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation trust (SSSFT). UK based Service personnel from British Forces Germany (BFG) were treated at Guys and St Thomas Hospital in the UK up until April 2013 and from this date, at Gilead IV hospital, Bielefeld, under a contract with Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen Family Association (SSAFA) through the Limited Liability Partnership.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) recognises mental health illness as a serious and disabling condition and has committed £7.4 million to ensure there is extensive mental health support in place for those who need it.

We are working to address the perception of stigma attached to mental ill-health and people's reluctance to seek help. Support is available throughout the Chain of Command and Defence Medical Services for serving personnel who feel they might be suffering from mental ill health. They can also approach military welfare officers, padres and unit welfare organisations as well as the Big White Wall, an online mental well-being service available to serving personnel and their families on a 24-hour basis. There is also a 24-hour helpline with Combat Stress so serving personnel can seek help at any time.

We expect about 20 to 25 per cent of all Armed Forces personnel to have a common mental health disorder, which is broadly similar to the rates in the civilian population. While it is difficult to predict what may happen in the future, ongoing research together with the large number of mental health initiatives that have been implemented over the past ten years means we can be confident that we have first class systems in place to offer help and assistance to those serving personnel and veterans that need it.

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, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)