



Ministry  
of Defence

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Date: 18/12/2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 08 December 2014 requesting the following information:

*"I would like to submit a freedom of information request. I wanted to know how many armed forces personnel have been diagnosed with mental illnesses since the start of 2011. I would like the figures broken down year by year and by different forces - Army, RAF, Royal Navy etc."*

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 the information on the subject you have requested. We are defining the number of personnel diagnosed with a mental health disorder as those who were assessed with a mental disorder at a MOD Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) or in-patient provider. The response does not represent the totality of mental health problems in the Armed Forces as some patients can be treated wholly within the primary care setting by a patient's GP.

Between 01 January 2011 and 30 June 2014 (latest date for which data is available) **14,501** UK Armed Forces personnel had a new episode of care for a mental health disorder at a MOD DCMH or in-patient provider.

**Table 1** presents the information broken down by Service and year. Patients are counted once in each year in which they had at least one episode of mental disorder. As such, the sum of the years will not sum the total amount of personnel assessed with a mental disorder. It should be noted that an individual may have more than one episode of care at a DCMH or have an episode of care at a DCMH as well as be admitted to an in-patient facility.

**Table 1. UK Armed Forces personnel new episode of care at a MOD DCMH or admission to MOD In-patient provider with a mental health disorder, by Service and year, 2011-2014<sup>1</sup>. Numbers.**

Year	UK AF assessed with a mental health disorder <sup>1</sup>				
	Royal Navy	Royal Marines	Army	RAF	
<b>All</b>	<b>14,501</b>	<b>1,743</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>9,338</b>	<b>3,086</b>
2011	3,927	434	77	2,502	914
2012 <sup>2</sup>	4,806	529	126	3,074	1,077
2013	5,076	601	105	3,346	1,024
2014 <sup>3</sup>	2,593	346	66	1,649	532

Source:

DCMH: January 2010 – March 2012 DS database, April 2012 – June 2013 DS database and DMICP<sup>a</sup>

In-patient: January 2010 – March 2013 SSSFT and Guys and St Thomas' Hospital, April 2013 – June 2013 SSSFT and Gilead IV Hospital

1. Excludes 210 personnel where initial assessment of disorder was not supplied at the time of admission.

2. Change in methodology (see section 16 Advice and Assistance)

3. Data between 1 January 2014 and 30 June 2014.

Between 01 January 2011 and 30 June 2014, **210** UK Armed Forces personnel were admitted to one of the MOD in-patient providers and an initial assessment of mental disorder was not supplied. Of these :

- **26** were Royal Navy personnel, six in 2011, five in 2012, 11 in 2013, and five in 2014.
- **Five** were Royal Marines personnel, three in 2011, one in 2012, and one in 2013.
- **161** were Army personnel, 60 in 2011, 46 in 2012, 51 in 2013, and 20 in 2014.
- **20** were RAF personnel, six in 2011, five in 2012, four in 2013, and five in 2014.

Therefore the numbers provided in **Table 1** are considered to be a minimum.

**Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance)** I can advise that statistics on UK Armed Forces mental health, including financial year and service breakdowns since 2007/08, are routinely published at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/defence-mental-health-statistics-index>. The next publication is on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

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.

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

- Prior to April 2012, the information captures all new episodes of care provided by DCMH to Defence Statistics in monthly returns.
- Since April 2012, the statistics capture all new episodes of care recorded in the MOD patient electronic record (DMICP) in addition to monthly submissions provided by DCMH to Defence Statistics.

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

<sup>a</sup> Defence Medical Information Capability Programme

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.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering mental health in the UK Armed Forces and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: [DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk](mailto: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](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 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) [REDACTED]