



# Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence  
Abbeywood North  
Bristol  
BS34 8JH  
United Kingdom

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Telephone: 03067 984423

E-mail: [Def-Strat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk](mailto:Def-Strat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk)

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 25 July 2016 requesting the following information:

“Under the Freedom of Information Act, can you please advise how many RPAS Pilots have been diagnosed with PTSD or other mental health issues since 2012.”

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

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 Joint Service Publication 200 (JSP) in which numbers fewer than five are suppressed 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.

Between 1 January 2012 and 31 March 2016 (latest data available), **no** RPAS pilots have been assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for PTSD. In addition, **fewer than five** RPAS pilots have been assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for other mental health disorders in the same time period; however, it should be noted that these disorders may or may not have been related to work.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note the following:

The Government is absolutely committed to the mental health of our Armed Forces and veterans. We provide a wide range of support both during and after military service. Details on the support provided can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-support-for-the-uk-armed-forces>

## *Mental Health Data*

UK Armed Forces personnel have access to Specialist Mental Health Services, by referrals made by their GP, provided through MOD Department for Community Mental Health (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.

DCMH staff record the initial mental health assessment during a patient's first appointment, based on presenting complaints. The information is provisional and final diagnoses may differ as some patients do not present the full range of symptoms, signs or clinical history during their first appointment. The mental health assessment of condition data were categorised according to the World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10).

This response only captures the patients that were referred to a MOD DCMH or admitted to a MOD In-patient provider and 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 their GP or medical officer.

Defence Statistics receive data from DCMH and in-patient providers for all UK Armed Forces personnel from the following sources :

*DCMH*

- Between 01 January 2007 and 30 June 2014, data was provided by DCMHs to Defence Statistics in monthly returns.
- For the period 01 April 2012 to 30 June 2014, new episodes of care data were also sourced from the electronic patient record held in Defence Medical Information Capability Program (DMICP) in addition to those provided by DCMH in monthly returns.
- Since 01 July 2014, DMICP has been the single source of DCMH new episodes of care data.

*In-patient*

- Since January 2007, SSSFT and Gilead IV hospital Bielefeld have submitted relevant in patient records.

The information presented in this publication has been structured to release information into the public domain in a way that contributes to the MOD accountability to the British public but which doesn't risk breaching individual's rights to medical confidentiality. In line with JSP 200 (April 2016), and in keeping with the Office for National Statistics Guidelines, all numbers less than five have been suppressed and presented as '~' to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is less than five, the next smallest number (or numbers where there are tied values) has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

*Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system*

JPA is the most accurate source for demographic information on UK Armed Forces personnel and is used to gather information on a person's Service, Location Unit, Posted Unit, Sub Badge Cap Badge, JPA Regimental Corp and Position Name. A search for a JPA Regimental Corp of 'Flying (Pilot)' and a Sub Badge Cap Badge of 'Unmanned Air Vehicle – PILOT' or 'Remotely Piloted Air System – PILOT' was used to identify RAF RPAS pilots. A search for a Posted Unit of 'RN Reaper 39 SQN' and a Location of 'RAF Waddington Lincoln' and a Position Name of 'Reaper RN Pilot' was used to identify Royal Navy RPAS pilots. There were no Army RPAS pilots. JPA data extracted 26 July 2016.

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, 2nd 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, <https://ico.org.uk>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)