



Ministry
of Defence

de&s

DE&S Secretariat (LD & SE)

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Defence Equipment & Support
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15 August 2016

Our Reference:FOI2016/06442

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email dated 21 June 2016. You asked:

I would like to request details held centrally by the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall of complaints about food / rations in each of the last three years (2015-16, 2014-15, 2013-14) broke down by service, thanks.

On 17 June 2016, we wrote to you to acknowledge your email as a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act; to inform you that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) held information relating to your request and to explain that we believed the information fell within the scope of qualified exemption: Section 43 (*Commercial Interests*). As such it was necessary for us to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

We have now completed this work and I can tell you that we have concluded that Section 43(2) (Commercial Interests) of the FOI Act does not apply to your request.

It might be helpful if I first explained that MOD personnel in the UK and permanent bases overseas are primarily catered for through a number of Facilities Management contracts. Armed Forces personnel serving on operations, exercises and in HM Ships and Submarines, are catered for under a World Wide Food Supply contract (WWFSC).

With regard to the Facilities Management contracts I can confirm that no information about food complaints is held centrally. Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), it may be possible to provide information about complaints made at a specific named MOD site.

For the WWFSC contract, which would include Operational Ration Packs (ORP), we have identified three complaints from information held centrally by Defence, Equipment & Support, MOD Abbey Wood, Bristol that fall within scope of your request. Details of these are as follows:

- November 2013, RAF: A passenger found two pieces of bone while consuming an in-flight meal – braising beef, onion and mash.
- (Month not known) 2014, Army: During an Army exercise a millipede, 1.5 inches long was found in an ORP food packet.
- August 2015, Army: At the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre, Chicksands, Bedfordshire, a small piece of stone or gristle was found in a chicken and mushroom pie during consumption.

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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely


Secretariat
Defence Equipment and Support