



# Ministry of Defence

Our Ref: FOI2015/01283

Your Ref:

Secretariat  
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2 March 2015

Dear

Thank you for your email of 2nd February 2015 requesting the following information:

*"On 6 January 2015 I requested the following information:*

*"For the past 10 years, can you provide, by year:*

*"a) The number of personnel in SSSA*

*"b) The total number of properties.*

*"c) The total cost of those properties to the taxpayer (broken down by rent, management fees, utilities, council tax if possible)*

*"d) The additional allowances that staff are entitled to due to living in SSSA, such as FIA.*

*"e) Where users work (e.g. 345 at Industry Partner sites, 4435 at MOD sites, 21 at RAF sites, 556 at Army sites ...)*

*"The same information for the Bristol Area for all years since the opening of MOD Abbey Wood, i.e. specifically the SSSA serving staff at MOD Abbey Wood.*

*"The expected costs of:*

*"a) Building an adequate mess facilities for the Service staff burden at MOD Abbey Wood within a reasonable distance noting the many nearby brownfield sites.*

*"b) Annual running costs (broken down by staffing, cleaning, security, utilities, council tax if possible)*

*"c) Any likely retained asset value after 20 years if it were to be sold.*

*"You confirmed that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) holds information on the subject I have requested but that you will not be able to answer my request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit as it would require at least some 4 working days of effort. This exceeds the allowable 3.5 working days.*

*"You state that:*

*"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. DIO currently hold around two years of full data on SSSA; to gain access to the 10 years being requested would warrant a request to our Contractor. There are also particular difficulties in obtaining information broken down by rent, management fees, utilities and Council Tax."*

*"I would like to refine my request as follows:*

- "a) please provide all readily available records (those retrievable within the time limit) to meet the original request, which is around two years*  
*"b) this information should be broken down as far as practicable, and*  
*"c) remembering specifically the information for the Bristol area relating to service personnel who are most likely working at MOD Abbey Wood,*  
*"d) if Cost/Benefit data for the provision of a Service mess facility in Bristol is not available, I would like either:*  
*"1. the report making recommendations to pursue the idea or otherwise, at least*  
*"2. written evidence that such an analysis has taken place and when it took place."*

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.

However you should be aware that the numbers included do come with several caveats.

Your question asked for our best assumption of those personnel working at MOD Abbey Wood. This is held at Annex A. To obtain this data we have searched for those individuals / properties defined as having an attachment to MOD Abbey Wood. In addition, we have also provided a list of those people living in Bristol as it can also be assumed the majority of those people would work in Abbey Wood.

You asked for information relating to costs to be broken down as far as possible. We are able to provide a total figure for Utility costs and estimates for Council Tax across the whole MOD estate but we are unable to provide these figures for specific regions.

As regards your request for detail of MOD's plans for messing facilities at Abbey Wood I have attached documentation at Annex B and Annex C relating to User Requirements for the same.

You will note that some of the information given falls within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 of the FOI Act (2000) as it relates to personal data.

Section 40(2) has been applied to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. 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.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat

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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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.org.uk>