



Ministry of Defence

Ref: FOI2017/00125

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13th January 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 4th January 2017 requesting the following information:

- '1. How many service complaints did the Royal Navy receive in the year 2016?*
- 2. Of that number how many of those complaints initiated a direct intervention (i.e. a letter) from the Commodore, Naval Legal Service offering an informal resolution?'*

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds some information in scope of your request.

In response to your first question, there were **208** Service Complaints in the Naval Service from the 1st January 2016 to the 31st December 2016.

In response to your second question, during 2016, the number of informal resolution proposals made to complaints in the form of the letter described in your question totalled **10**, however, under section 16 of the Act – 'Duty to Provide Advice and Assistance' you may wish to be aware of the following further related information:

- Commodore Naval Legal Services (CNLS) is just one of the Navy Command HQ Officers who are, on occasion, invited to consider proposing a resolution to complainants where it is considered that a swift and pragmatic solution to resolve a grievance may be possible.
- The Naval Service introduced this innovation in 2011 and it remains consistent with tri-Service Service Complaint handling policy principles where *"Every effort should be made, where appropriate, to resolve a complaint informally."* (Joint Service Publication, JSP 831, Part 1, Chapter 1, paragraph 5 refers).
- In this regard the Navy's innovative practice has been referred to in favourable terms in a number of Service Complaints Commissioner/Ombudsman Annual Reports since 2011 and has subsequently been adopted by the Army and RAF. Such offers are always made on a 'without prejudice' basis.

- The majority of resolution proposals made in this way are accepted by complainants as an effective and efficient means of addressing the issues raised in their complaint by providing an acceptable remedy to the wrong that occurred.

A link to JSP 831 Part One – Redress of Individual Grievances: Service Complaints can be found below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/493915/20160119-JSP_831-Final_Part_1_Directive_for_Publishing_-_O.pdf

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, Ground Floor, ZoneD, 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

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section