

# Background Quality Report

## Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Biannual Statistics – 6 April 2005 to 30 September 2016

The purpose of a background quality report is to inform users of the statistics about the quality of the data used to produce the publication, and any statistics derived from that data. It also discusses existing uses of the statistics and user requirements.

This assessment relates to the biannual 'Armed Forces Compensation Scheme' statistics published by Defence Statistics.

### 1. Introduction

1. This biannual Statistical Notice provides summary statistics on claims and awards made under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), paying compensation for injury, illness or death caused by Service.
2. The findings in these Statistics are presented in five sections:
  - a) **Section 1:** Overall numbers of initial claims registered and cleared under the scheme, broken down by claim type, financial year and quarter. This is provided to show the volume of claims that are dealt with under the scheme, the success rates associated with each type of claim and the key trends over time. This section also includes information on reconsiderations and appeals registered and cleared.
  - b) **Section 2:** Average (median) clearance times for all cleared claims, by claim type and financial year. This information is presented in order to show the average time that claimants have waited for their claim to be cleared.
  - c) **Section 3:** Demographic breakdowns of recipients of lump sum payments only under the AFCS following initial claim.
  - d) **Section 4:** Demographic breakdowns of recipients of Guaranteed Income Payments (GIPs) under the AFCS. A GIP becomes in payment when an individual leaves the Services and therefore this section presents only Service leavers in receipt of GIP. Those awarded a GIP but that were still in Service as at 30 September 2016 were not included. This section also provides demographic information on spouses/children in receipt of a Survivors' Guaranteed Income Payment (SGIP) as a result of a death caused by Service.
  - e) **Section 5:** AFCS expenditure. Annual total amounts paid out under the scheme in the form of lump sum awards, GIPs and SGIPs.
3. These statistics present trends over time since the scheme began on 6 April 2005 and further detail for the latest five quarters.
4. These statistics were first released in September 2008 and subsequently published on a quarterly basis. Following the quarterly release in March 2011, Defence Statistics proposed a reduction in the frequency of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Official Statistic from quarterly reports to bi-annual reports (reporting on mid-financial year data in December and end of financial year data in June). The first bi-annual report was released in June 2011.

These statistics were designated National Statistics in 2013, with the first National Statistic release in December 2013.

5. The latest statistics are published as National Statistics, adhering to the [UK Statistics Authority \(UKSA\)](#)<sup>1</sup> protocols on [pre-release access](#)<sup>2</sup>.
6. Ad-hoc interrogation of the data used to compile these statistics is regularly undertaken by Defence Statistics in order to answer Freedom of Information requests, Parliamentary questions and internal queries from within the Ministry of Defence.

## **Background**

7. The AFCS came into force on 6 April 2005. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces Pensions Scheme. Defence Statistics also publishes separate [annual WPS National Statistics](#)<sup>3</sup> on claims and awards under the WPS.
8. The AFCS is managed by Veterans UK. Full [guidance and policy information](#)<sup>4</sup> on this scheme can be found on the Gov.uk website.

## **Scheme information and definitions**

9. Individuals are eligible to claim under the AFCS for any injury/illness/death caused by Service on or after 6 April 2005. Individuals have up to seven years to make an injury/illness claim from the date of their initial injury/diagnosis. There are some exceptions to this such as late-onset illnesses. Claims for a late-onset illness can be made at any time after the event to which it relates, as long as it is done so within three years of seeking medical advice. Families have up to three years to make a claim as a result of a death caused by Service.
10. Under the AFCS, compensation payments include a tariff-based tax free lump sum for pain and suffering associated with the injury or illness, the size of which reflects the severity of the injury or illness. There are 15 tariff levels with associated lump sums. For more serious injuries, in addition to the lump sum, a tax-free index-linked income stream known as the Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP) is paid from service termination for life to recognise loss of future earnings due to the injury or illness. Under the AFCS, a claim can be made and awarded while still in Service.
11. Where death is caused by Service the AFCS provides an income stream known as the Survivor's Guaranteed Income Payment (SGIP). This is payable to the spouse, civil partner or adult dependant for life. Compensation is also paid to eligible children, known as the Child Payment (CP).
12. Injury claims include:
  - In-Service claims - those made by serving members of the Armed Forces.
  - Medical discharge claims - due to the complexities of the eligibility criteria for medical discharge claims, see paragraph 14 for more information on the process.
  - Post-Service claims - those made by former Service Personnel.
13. Survivors' claims include:
  - Death-in-Service – entitlement to compensation for surviving eligible partner and/or dependents is considered automatically by Veterans UK.
  - Death-post-Service claims - those made by surviving dependents of ex-Service Personnel who died after leaving Service.
  - Additional child claims - these claims are made for an additional child who was not included within the initial claim.

14. Medical Discharge Claims: Personnel medically discharged from Service will have a claim automatically registered under the AFCS if they meet the following criteria:
- They have served more than two years' reckonable Service.
  - Their medical discharge was as a result of injury/illness due to Service on or after 6 April 2005. Where injury / illness was a result of Service prior to this date they will be considered under the WPS.
  - They have not been previously awarded under the scheme following an in-Service claim for the injury/illness/condition which led to their medical discharge. Prior to the Lord Boyce Review these cases were automatically registered as a medical discharge claim but later rejected. However, since the Review these cases are no longer automatically considered. See paragraph 22 for more details on the Review.
  - They are a member of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) 75 pension scheme; or they are a member of the AFPS 05 scheme AND are in receipt of Tier 2 or Tier 3 ill health benefits from that scheme. Further information on the [AFPS 05 ill health benefits](#)<sup>5</sup> can be found on the Gov.uk website.
15. Spanning Cases: Spanning cases are claims considered first for entitlement under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, but passed to the War Pension Scheme where the cause or injury occurred prior to 6 April 2005. Between 6 April 2005 and 30 September 2016 there have been 11,976 spanning cases included within the Veterans UK workload but which are not reflected within these statistics.
16. Lump Sums: A tax-free lump sum payment is paid to a Service or ex-Service person as compensation for pain and suffering for an injury or illness that is predominantly caused or made worse by Service. The tariff has 15 levels, each with an associated lump sum amount which reflects the severity of the injury or illness. The lower numerical tariff levels (i.e. 1-4) reflect the more severe injuries/illnesses that are eligible for higher monetary awards.
17. Tariff levels 1 to 11 are divided into four bands and they refer to the percentage used to calculate the annual amount of the GIP; 100% for Band A (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 1-4, 75% for Band B (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 5-6), 50% for Band C (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 7-8) and 30% for Band D (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 9-11).
18. The Tariff (Tariff of Injury Table & Tariff Level): The tariff is separated into nine tariff of injury tables; injuries/illnesses grouped together by common factors, and each tariff of injury table is separated into tariff levels (1-15), depending on the severity of the injury/illness. The [tariff of injury tables](#)<sup>6</sup> are published online by infolaw, a publisher of legal resources.
19. If a claimant is not satisfied with the outcome of their claim they may lodge an appeal to an appropriate Tribunal. Where an appeal has been lodged and a reconsideration has not already been carried out, the agency must carry out a reconsideration of the original decision and notify both the claimant and the Tribunal of the outcome of the reconsideration. The request must be received within six months from the date of notification of the outcome of the reconsideration, or the original claim where no reconsideration has taken place. The Tribunal is totally independent from Veterans UK and their decisions are legally binding on both the appellant and Veterans UK. The Tribunal is bound by the rules of the scheme.
20. Outcomes:
- Awarded: Injury/illness accepted as due to Service AND falls under one of the tariff levels (1-15).
  - Accepted- No award: Injury/illness accepted as due to Service but does not meet the minimum tariff level (15).
  - Rejected: Injury/illness not accepted as due to Service.
  - New: The outcome was previously rejected but awarded on reconsideration/appeal.

- Increased: The tariff level previously reached is made higher on reconsideration/appeal.
- Maintained: The outcome previously reached is the same as the outcome reached on reconsideration/appeal.
- Reduced: The tariff level previously reached is made lower on reconsideration/appeal.
- Favourable Reconsideration: When a claimant has initiated an appeal before reconsideration has taken place, the reconsideration will be conducted before notification to the Pension Appeal Tribunal. If the reconsideration is in the claimants favour then the claimant can withdraw their appeal.
- Disallowed – Late appeal: Applications to appeal must be received by Veterans UK within 6 months of the last date of notification. E.g. Date of notification of an original claim or reconsideration.

21. Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP): On 8 April 2013 the Ministry of Defence (MOD), in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), introduced a new benefit called the [Armed Forces Independence Payment \(AFIP\)](#)<sup>7</sup>. The AFIP is a simplification of the financial support available for members of the Armed Forces who have been seriously injured as a result of Service since 6 April 2005. The AFIP provides eligible recipients with on-going payments to help with the additional costs associated with their injuries. Service personnel and veterans automatically considered eligible for receipt of the AFIP are those that are awarded a GIP at 50% or above.

22. In 2010 a review of the AFCS was conducted under the independent chairmanship of former Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral the Lord Boyce. The Review found the Scheme was fundamentally sound but required adjustment in some areas. A full summary of the [Lord Boyce Review](#)<sup>8</sup> can be found on the Gov.UK website. A principal amendment to the scheme was the increased lump sum award amounts assigned to the scheme's tariff levels (presented in **Table 1** below), with those awarded prior to the review also receiving a 'top-up' to make up the difference. Information presented within the Statistical Bulletin on the total amounts paid out under the scheme reflect the increased payments. In addition Veterans UK carried out an exercise to revisit previous awards and make additional payments. Please note that any changes made to the tariff levels following this exercise are not currently recorded on the live CAPS and are therefore not reflected in this publication. Therefore the tariff levels provided in Tables 9 and 10 reflect the pre-Review decision. Defence Statistics will update this information in future releases, once the data are available on the CAPS.

**Table 1: Pre- and Post- Lord Boyce Review Lump Sum Award amounts by Tariff Level, £**

Tariff Level	Lump Sum Awards	
	Pre-Review	Post -Review
1	570,000	570,000
2	402,500	470,000
3	230,000	380,000
4	172,500	290,000
5	115,000	175,000
6	92,000	140,000
7	63,825	90,000
8	48,875	60,000
9	34,100	40,000
10	23,100	27,000
11	13,750	15,500
12	9,075	10,000
13	5,775	6,000
14	2,888	3,000
15	1,155	1,200

## Methodology

### *Data Sources*

23. Most of the information presented within this Statistical Bulletin is sourced from quarterly AFCS data extracts from the Compensation and Pension System (CAPS) which is managed by Veterans UK, responsible for administering the scheme.
24. Defence Statistics also receive quarterly datasets from the Veterans UK finance team which are used to report on recipients of Guaranteed Income Payments. Information on the overall financial amounts paid out under the AFCS is also sourced from the Finance Team.
25. Information on those in receipt of the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) is recorded by Veterans UK in a standalone spreadsheet. This data has been used to provide the number of individuals in receipt of AFIP.
26. Deployment data are used to determine those awarded under the AFCS that have previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Defence Statistics maintains a database of individual deployment records from November 2001. Data prior to April 2007 was derived from the single services Operation Location tracking (OPLOC) systems and data since April 2007 is obtained from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. The data covers deployments on Op TELIC (2003-2009) and Op VERITAS/Op HERRICK (2001-2014).

### *Process*

27. The raw data extracts include non-genuine AFCS claims ('spanning', 'treat as never made' cases) which are removed by Defence Statistics prior to analysis. Spanning cases are claims considered first for entitlement under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, but passed to the War Pension Scheme where the cause or injury occurred prior to 6 April 2005. Between 6 April 2005 and 30 September 2016 there have been 11,976 spanning cases included within the Veterans UK workload but which are not reflected within these statistics. Treat as never made cases are those that have been registered under the Scheme but are later abandoned either due to the claim being entered in error or the claimant not proceeding with the claim.
28. Following the removal of non-genuine AFCS claims, Defence Statistics conduct a series of consistency checks on the data. For example, the numbers of records received is compared to the previous extract to ensure the total number is as expected. If any data quality issues are evident following receipt of data, Defence Statistics liaise with Veterans UK to determine whether any investigation is required.
29. The CAPS data are processed through a series of automated programming in a MYSQL database that produces a series of summary tables on AFCS claims and awards that are then used to populate final tables within the report. The tables within the report present information on claims and awards over the length of the scheme by financial year, as well as by quarter (for the latest five quarters). This enables both long-term comparisons (by financial year) and short-term comparisons (by quarter) to be made.
30. Since information on clearance times is a recent addition to the report, this information is produced manually (outside of the automated process). All closed genuine AFCS claims (claims with a 'cleared date' recorded on CAPS) were identified, and working days (to exclude weekends and bank holidays) between each claim being registered and cleared were calculated. Due to variations in the time taken to process each type of AFCS claim, average clearance times were calculated separately for each claim type: Injury/illness claims, survivors' claims, reconsiderations and appeals.

31. Information on AFCS claim clearance times has been presented as a median average with an inter-quartile range, rather than a mean average and standard deviation as these statistics are affected less by outliers. An outlier is an observation within a dataset that appears to be inconsistent with the remainder of the dataset.
- The median is the value in the centre of the data set when they are arranged from smallest to largest.
  - A quartile is any of three values (first/lower quartile, second quartile (median), third/upper quartile) that divides the sorted (from smallest value to largest value) dataset into four equal parts. The lower quartile (LQ) is the value that at which 25% of the values in the dataset will be below. The upper quartile (UQ) is the value that at which 75% of the values in the dataset will be below.
  - The inter-quartile range (IQR) is the range in which the middle 50% of the data points fall (i.e. the distance between the lower and upper quartile). The longer the inter-quartile range the wider the spread of data.
32. The median has been presented in these statistics as it better reflects the average typical experience for the individual making a claim. The accompanying Excel tables to this publication also present the mean average. The mean average has also been presented as it is used internally as a measure of performance on the management of cases.
33. Survival analysis has been used to investigate further the length of time between a claim being registered and cleared. This analysis has been carried out for each claim type: injury/illness claims, survivors claims, reconsideration and appeals.
34. Survival analysis is a statistical method designed to identify if two or more populations show differences in the rate of a "failure" event over time, and to predict the probability that a failure will or will not have occurred after a set period of time. The analysis takes account of open claims as well as cleared claims and is used to predict the probability that a claim will have been cleared by a certain point in time.
35. In the context of this report "Survival" does not refer to a death, but to the length of time taken for a claim to be cleared by Veterans UK. A "failure" will occur when a claim is cleared by Veterans UK, i.e. a decision is made on the outcome of the claim.
36. In order to provide specific figures for those who previously deployed on Op TELIC (Iraq) and Op HERRICK (Afghanistan), Defence Statistics' deployment data have been linked to AFCS data held on the CAPS. Prior to the introduction of JPA in April 2007, dates in and out of theatre are unreliable and therefore it is only possible to identify that a Service person has deployed and not when they deployed / returned from Operations. For this reason it has not been possible to identify personnel deployed on Op VERITAS (Afghanistan) between 6 April 2005 and the end of the Operation in March 2016.
37. There are 445 awards made to claimants deployed on Op TELI, and 80 awards made to claimants deployed on Op HERRICK where it was not possible to determine the specific date of deployment. Therefore there is a chance that these awards were made prior to individual's deployment.
38. Please note that person level deployment data for Afghanistan was not available between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005. Therefore, it is possible that some UK Armed Forces personnel who were deployed to Afghanistan during this period have not been identified in the figures provided.
39. Please note that **it is not possible to attribute injuries/illnesses to a specific deployment.** Therefore some of the individuals included in the figures provided may have claimed compensation for an injury/illness that did not occur during their deployment.

40. Data on those in receipt of the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) are sourced directly from Veterans UK. Defence Statistics carry out checks on the AFIP spreadsheet and ensure that only records for the relevant reporting period are included in the figure provided. AFIP records are also cross checked with AFCS claims data on CAPS to carry out validation checks.
41. Further validation checks are carried out after the data has been processed to ensure that all processes and queries have run correctly and the final numbers are an accurate reflection of data received from Veterans UK. Manual checks are then carried out on the final report to ensure that figures quoted in the commentary reflect those in the tables, and that the numbers sum to the totals provided.
42. The statistics are subject to routine revisions as CAPS is a live data system and historic data is amended between data extracts. These figures can be identified by a revision marker ('r'). Due to ongoing data validation, some figures reported in the publication are marked provisional ('p') and may be subject to change in future releases.

## 2. Relevance

### Coverage

43. The data presented include all regular and reservist personnel who have claimed for compensation under the AFCS between 6 April 2005 and 30 September 2016. Individuals are eligible to claim under the AFCS for any injury/illness/death caused by Service on or after 6 April 2005.
44. Although the figures presented cover all claims registered during the reported time period, the figures do not represent all individuals who have sustained a Service related injury/illness during that time. This is because there can be a time lag between an individual's injury/illness and the date they make a claim. Individuals have up to seven years to make an injury/illness claim from the date of their initial injury/diagnosis. There are some exceptions to this such as late-onset illnesses. Claims for a late-onset illness can be made at any time after the event to which it relates, as long as it is done so within three years of seeking medical advice. Families have up to three years to make a claim as a result of a death caused by Service.
45. The figures presented on awards under the AFCS are based on awards made as a result of initial injury/illness claims only. Due to the complexities of the data held on claim outcomes at each stage of the claim process, it is not currently possible to follow through any claims that have reached the reconsideration/appeal stage. Therefore figures reported on AFCS awards currently present only the outcomes of initial injury / illness claims and **not the latest / final outcome** of each case.
46. Please note that some information on the outcomes of appeals made under the AFCS is not recorded on CAPS and is therefore not presented in this report. Veterans UK record all registered appeals on CAPS. However only outcomes at the first stage of the appeal process (First Tier Tribunal) are recorded on CAPS. Information on appeals that progress to further stages (e.g. Upper Tier Tribunal) are dealt with offline. Defence Statistics are planning to work with Veterans UK to investigate how final appeal outcomes are captured in order to improve the information presented in the future.
47. Veterans UK have migrated data from their interim system onto the CAPS. The interim system contains claims registered under the AFCS at the start of the scheme between 6 April 2005 and 31 October 2005. Please note that Veterans UK have only migrated successful interim system claims to the CAPS and therefore interim system claims that were rejected or

withdrawn are not included in the publication tables. For information, there were 115 injury claims and 25 survivors' claims rejected as recorded on the interim system.

48. In a given table, numbers of people for each financial year or quarter may not sum to the total number of people. This is because one person can make more than one claim spanning different quarters or financial years, but would only be counted once in the overall total.
49. This publication presents, for the first time (in Annex A Table 15), a breakdown of lump sum award recipients by gender. In order to align with reports produced in Defence Statistics (Health), including the War Pensions Scheme National Statistic, gender is a key demographic to present in order to enable comparisons between reports.

### **User Needs**

50. These statistics have been provided in response to an increasing number of requests for information about claims and awards under the scheme, including the number of individuals currently in receipt of compensation payments under the scheme and time taken for a claim to be cleared.
51. A range of information is requested including further details of claims and awards (e.g. by claim type or outcome) and further information on those awarded compensation (e.g. age and Service at time of award). Requests are also frequently made for information on AFCS awards made to specific sub-groups of people e.g. those who have been injured/deployed in Afghanistan, those who have been medically discharged for a specific condition, or those living in a particular area of the country. Defence Statistics are often able to link to other sources of data to provide this additional information.
52. In 2012 and 2013 Defence Statistics carried out an internal and an external consultation to review the War Pension Scheme (WPS) National Statistic and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Official Statistic to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. The consultations were prompted by the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health, which required a review of the content of the publications in consultation with users.
53. Following the consultations the majority of the recommendations were implemented. Recommendations included presenting numbers in terms of people as well as the number of claims and presenting information on numbers awarded who have been deployed.
54. Further additions have been made to these statistics during 2015 following public interest (in the form of Freedom of Information requests) and requests for information submitted by the House of Commons Defence Committee: information on clearance times, recipients of AFIP and total financial spend.

### **3. Accuracy**

55. Veterans UK are responsible for ensuring the quality of Compensation and Pension System (CAPS) data supplied to Defence Statistics. The CAPS is a large administrative database and is subject to the data quality issues of any large administrative system with data collated by a large number of staff for operational delivery purposes.
56. The main sources of potential error in the production of the AFCS statistics are as follows:
  - Incomplete data extracts from Veterans UK
  - Data processing errors resulting in incorrect data outputs
  - Manual error during production of report tables, graphs and commentary



57. To ensure that potential errors are identified and resolved, Defence Statistics implement a series of data quality checks throughout the report production. These checks involve close liaison with Veterans UK when required, to ensure the accuracy of the figures published. Where there is concern over the accuracy of data, Defence Statistics will publish the information as provisional (p).
58. These statistics are subject to routine revisions as the CAPS is a live data system and historic data is amended between data extracts. These figures can be identified by a revision marker (r).
59. Numbers of registered claims in the most recent financial year are subject to change since claims with no recorded outcome, at the time of the data extract, may go on to be recorded as 'treat as never made' cases, and thus will be removed from analysis when later publications are produced. Therefore 2015/16 figures are presented as provisional within this publication.
60. Following a series of identified data quality issues in 2015, Defence Statistics set up a working group with colleagues in Veterans UK and DBS to continually review the quality of AFCS data. This working group continues to review data to ensure accuracy in reporting.
61. Since March 2016 Defence Statistics and DBS Vets UK have been investigating the data quality issues outlined in the Background Quality Report that accompanied the 6 April 2005 to 31 March 2016 Statistical Bulletin. The outcome or current status of these investigations are outlined below:

*Data quality issue - outcome data*

62. In the previously published report for data as at 31 March 2016, outcome data was presented as provisional due to concerns over the accuracy of outcome information recorded on CAPS for some claims. This issue has been resolved after working with Vets UK to complete investigations and amend any incorrect records. Amended figures are presented in Annex A with an 'r' marker.

*Data quality issue - reconsideration registration data*

63. The number of registered reconsiderations during the first six months of 2015/16 was lower than expected, based on the numbers registered in previous years. The numbers remained very low at the end of 2015/16 and during the first six months of 2016/17. The decision was therefore made to discontinue publishing the numbers of registered reconsiderations whilst Defence Statistics work with Veterans UK to investigate the underlying data.

*Data quality issue - pending registered claims*

64. A validation exercise was undertaken with DBS Vets UK to investigate pending claim records. Approximately 100 initial injury/illness claims were identified as incorrectly recorded as genuine claims in Annex A Table 1. These have now been removed from all relevant figures and affected figures have been presented with an 'r' marker. This validation exercise will be routine in the development of future Statistical Bulletins and therefore revisions will be reported as routine and marked with an 'r'.

*Methodology change - removal of additional claims*

65. When Defence Statistics began processing CAPS data to produce summary statistics on the AFCS, it was understood that registered events on the CAPS with the code 'AC' referred to additional claims. Therefore these events were reported as registered additional claims alongside registered initial claims, reconsiderations and appeals.

66. Since the release of the 2015/16 statistics in June 2016, Defence Statistics has discovered that 'AC' events on the CAPS do not reflect additional claims, but additional conditions claimed for by existing AFCS claimants. AFCS claimants that have already registered an initial claim may register a supplementary claim where they have experienced the onset of a new condition related to their original claim. Therefore additional condition events on the CAPS should be treated as an element of an existing claim and not a new claim event.
67. As at 31 March 2016 Defence Statistics had reported that there were 982 registered 'Additional Claims', and therefore had double-counted these as registered injury / illness claims within previous publications. Of the registered 'Additional Claims', 482 (49%) were awarded a lump sum only and 317 (32%) were awarded a lump sum and GIP. Note that the removal of these awarded claims from the dataset has resulted in the number of GIP awards as at 30 September 2016 (1,337) being less than the previously published number of GIP awards as at 31 March 2016 (1,663). All revised figures presented with an 'r' marker. Removing additional claims from the relevant tables has resulted in a 2% reduction in claims registered, cleared and awarded. This has had no impact on the trends presented.
68. The following tables within the Statistical Bulletin were affected by the error. Please note that historic numbers presented in this report have been updated, however previously published Bulletins have not been updated:
- Table 1 in Annex A incorrectly presented additional claims registered as a separate injury/illness claim type.
  - Table 2 in Annex A incorrectly presented additional claims cleared as a separate injury/illness claim type.
  - Table 6 in Annex A incorrectly included additional claims as part of the clearance times analysis.
  - Tables 11-16 in Annex A incorrectly included additional claims as part of initial claim outcomes.

*Methodology change - in field used to identify number of people*

69. Defence Statistics has always used the 'member number' field held on the CAPS as a unique identifier for AFCS claimants. However, since the release of the 2015/16 statistics in June 2016, it has been identified that it is possible for personnel to have more than one member number. This has resulted in a slight over count in previous Statistical Bulletins of the number of people with registered, cleared and awarded claims under the AFCS. The methodology has now been amended and claimants' National Insurance number is now used as a more reliable unique identifier.
70. This error affected all tables within Annex A, though the impact of this error is considered to be minimal, with the removal of 45 claimants that had been counted more than once between 6 April 2005 and 31 March 2016. Improving the methodology resulted in a <1% decrease in the overall number of people with registered, cleared and awarded claims as at 31 March 2016, and has had no impact on the trends presented.

## **4. Timeliness and Punctuality**

### **Timeliness**

71. Data are provided to Defence Statistics on a monthly basis. From September 2008 to March 2011 figures were published on a quarterly basis. Following user consultation the frequency of publication was reduced from quarterly to biannual from June 2011.

72. Figures as at 31 March and 30 September are published in early June and December respectively. It takes four weeks to extract, validate and process data extracted from CAPS. It takes a further six weeks to compile and quality assure the report.

### **Punctuality**

73. The National Statistics reports have all been published on time to meet pre-announced release dates. Future publication dates will also be announced on the Gov.UK at least one month in advance.

## **5. Accessibility and Clarity**

### **Accessibility**

74. The statistics can be accessed through the Gov.UK website at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>.

75. 24 hour pre-release access to the report is available to a limited distribution list within MOD. The full list can be found in the pre-release access list available on the Gov.UK website:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list>.

### **Clarity**

76. Users with an interest in the key findings can read a short summary of main messages within the Introduction of the report. The report is then split into six distinct sections to help users navigate their way through the publication.

77. Microsoft Excel versions of all AFCS report tables are also available on the Gov.UK website alongside each published report.

78. A glossary of key terms is provided in the Statistical Bulletin.

## **6. Coherence and Comparability**

### **Coherence**

79. CAPS is the administration system for the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme; there are no other data sources from which information is being presented. However, Veterans UK create management information from the CAPS. Veterans UK and Defence Statistics work closely to ensure the management information and the statistics within the National Statistic are consistent.

## **7. Trade-offs between output quality components**

80. Defence Statistics minimise the cost to Government of producing these statistics through using data already collated for operational delivery purposes within the MOD's administrative system. As a large administrative system, data quality across fields is of varying quality and completeness and this limits the information available to customers in our statistics and requests for information.

## 8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

81. In reference to the UK Statistics Authority report, [The Use Made of Official Statistics](#)<sup>9</sup>, the AFCS statistics are used by:
- (i) Government – Policy Making
  - (ii) Government – Policy Monitoring
  - (iii) Local Government – Service Delivery
  - (iv) Academia – Facilitating Research
  - (v) Charities – Service Delivery

### Description of Users and Usage of Statistics

82. The AFCS statistics have been published in response to user demand. Interest has come from internal MOD policy makers, Parliament, Government Departments, the third Sector, academics, the media, and the general public.
83. The AFCS statistics are used by the following groups of customers:
- AFCS policy teams use these statistical publications as a basis for policy making. Veterans UK use these figures for background information and for planning purposes e.g. estimating the volume/workload for different types of claims. These statistics allowed Veterans UK to forecast the financial implications of proposed changes to the AFCS as part of the 2010 AFCS Review.
  - External organisations such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local Government and Armed Forces charities (e.g. RBL) use the reports and location figures as part of estimating and planning veteran casework provision e.g. to assess the numbers and needs of Service personnel and veterans in their local area.
  - AFCS statistics are also used by the media to give context to reports on Armed Forces Compensation.
84. The publication of the statistics also plays an important part in ensuring the Department's accountability to the British public.
85. AFCS questions from outside the MOD (e.g. FOI requests) tend to ask for more detailed information on the data provided e.g. age, Service, location breakdowns. Defence Statistics receive a high volume of requests asking for information on compensation paid out for particular conditions, and also for information on the financial amounts paid out in compensation to particular subsets of individuals. Defence Statistics also receive a high volume of requests from external organisations e.g. NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and charities, who use breakdowns by detailed location for estimating the number of veterans in particular regions of the UK.
86. Following the MOD's launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2011, Defence Statistics received an increasing volume of requests from within the MOD, local Government departments and CCGs for information on the number of veterans by location. This was required to assist with planning for the needs of Service personnel and veterans in each specific area of the UK.
87. To meet these requirements Defence Statistics compiled information on the numbers of Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), War Pension Scheme (WPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) recipients with summaries by location. This was initially published in November 2011, and Defence Statistics has continued to publish annual updates, with the latest statistics on the [Location of Armed Forces Pension and Compensation recipients](#)<sup>10</sup>, as at 31 March 2016, published on the Gov.UK website.

## Strengths and Weakness in Relation to User Needs

88. Defence Statistics has carried out consultations to review the War Pension Scheme (WPS) National Statistic and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Official Statistic to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. The consultations were prompted by the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health, which required a review of the content of the publications in consultation with users. (paragraph 26)
89. A consultation was carried out with internal stakeholders in September 2012. Based on the feedback received during the internal consultation, an external consultation was run alongside the release of the AFCS Official Statistic on 6 December 2012. This gave an opportunity for external customers to give feedback on the proposed changes to the AFCS and WPS publications.
90. During 2015/16, the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Official Statistic had over 2,100 hits via the Gov.UK website.
91. The key strength of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme data is the efficient methods adopted to capture AFCS data extracts. Validation checks are undertaken to ensure that the information provided in the reports is accurate.
92. The key weakness is that Defence Statistics have to rely on the level of detail that Veterans UK manually enter for each claim. There are also no other data sources that can be used to validate the information provided to Defence Statistics. Furthermore, a great deal of the information is recorded in free text fields.
93. Users external to the MOD are encouraged to give feedback via email ([DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk)).

## 9. Performance cost and respondent burden

### Operational Cost

94. Between 1 April 2016 and 30 September 2016 the production of AFCS statistics has required approximately 0.58 FTE to produce these mid-year statistics for 2016/17. This was broken down into the following:
  - Time taken to validate and resolve methodology issues – approximately 4 days.
  - Time taken to produce AFCS national statistic (including report and process development and ) – approximately 15 days
  - Time taken to respond to approximately requests for information (including internal adhoc, FOI requests and PQs) - approximately 40 days
  - General correspondence with Veterans UK and policy areas – approximately 5 days
95. The AFCS report uses an administrative data source which is already collected by the MOD. Therefore, the main operational cost to production of the statistics is liaison with Veterans UK, for quality assurance and data interpretation.

## 10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

96. Defence Statistics have data access agreements with Veterans UK with respect to obtaining the CAPS data extracts. All Defence Statistics staff involved in the production have signed a declaration that they have completed the Government wide Responsible for Information: General User training and they understand their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and the Official Statistics Code of Practice.
97. Only individuals who produce these statistics have access to the underlying data. Defence Statistics ensures that the AFCS data are kept confidential by holding this data on a secure server.
98. In line with the directives of the JSP 200, disclosure control is conducted on all statistical information provided by the MOD to safeguard the confidentiality of individuals. Within these statistics a risk of disclosure has been considered to be high where numbers presented are fewer than three. In cases where a risk of disclosure exists, one of three appropriate disclosure control methods have been applied:
- a) Figures have been suppressed: In most cases where there may be a risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than three have been suppressed and marked as '~'. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is fewer than three, secondary suppression has been applied where the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.
  - b) Figures have been grouped: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression, columns and/or rows have been grouped together in order to present larger numbers.
  - c) Figures have been rounded to the nearest five: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression and it has not been possible to group columns and/or rows, figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

## 11. References

1. UK Statistics Authority (UKSA): <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>
2. UKSA Protocols on Pre-Release Access: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/pre-release-access/>
3. War Pension Scheme Statistics:
4. Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-compensation/armed-forces-compensation-what-you-need-to-know#payment-arrangements>
5. Armed Forces Pension Scheme (2005) Ill Health Benefits: [AFPS 05 ill health benefits](#)
6. AFCS Tariff Of Injury Table: <http://www.infolaw.co.uk/mod/docs/AFCS-2014-04-07.pdf>
7. Armed Forces Independent Payment: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faq-on-the-armed-forces-independence-payment>
8. Lord Boyce Review: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/27395/9780101779821\\_afcsreview\\_20100216.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/27395/9780101779821_afcsreview_20100216.pdf)
9. The use made of Official Statistics: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/archive/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf>
10. Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/location-of-armed-forces-pension-and-compensation-recipients>

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