



Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Our Reference: FOI2015/05276

30 June 2015

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 15 June 2015 requesting the following information:

In a Parliamentary Written Answer published [Ref: 142900] [7 Mar 2013 : Column 1126W] you provided details on the recorded sexual orientation of recruits to the armed services. Could you provide me with updated figures and also state what exactly RTS Phase 1 and RTS Phase 2 are? If a person wanted to work out the number of homosexuals in the armed services would adding the total from RTS 1 and RTS 2 provide an accurate figure? Do you have any other data on the sexual orientation of people in the armed forces? If so could you provide me with that data as well.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act). In regard to your request on sexual orientation, the information is exempt under Section 21 of the FOIA, because it is reasonably accessible to you by other means. It is already in the public domain at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recruit-trainee-survey>

The Recruit Trainee Survey (RTS) is a tri-service attitude survey administered to gauge Phase 1 recruits' and Phase 2 trainees' backgrounds, perceptions of training, facilities, food, support, fairness of treatment, general perceptions of the course and hopes for the future. Phase 1 training introduces recruits to the Armed Forces, teaches basic military skills and is only conducted in single Service schools. Subsequently, Phase 2 training delivers specialist trade or technical training and prepares the rating, soldier and airmen/women for their first appointment in the Armed Forces. Over the twelve-month survey period, individuals are given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire at the end of Phase 1 training, as well as at the culmination of all Phase 2 training courses they may attend. The statistical results are treated separately by phase in the report.

The Ministry of Defence encourages diversity at all levels. The option for Service personnel to declare their sexual orientation is not a new facility. This has been available since November 2011, to trainees as part of the Recruit Trainee Survey (RTS) and Cadet Officer Survey. This was an interim solution pending an upgrade to our Joint Personnel Administration database (JPA). This upgrade was completed in November 2014 and all Service personnel have been encouraged to declare their sexual orientation. The declaration includes a "prefer not to say" option.

Making a declaration is not mandatory but collecting data where individuals are willing to give it will give us a better understanding of the composition of our Armed Forces and help ensure our policies and practices fully support our personnel. Sexual Orientation monitoring will enable Defence to create an environment where all personnel, irrespective of their sexual orientation, feel comfortable, valued and confident to remain.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act (Advice and Assistance) you may be interested to learn that a recent FOI request was published providing current statistical data on sexual orientation. Further information is available through the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-responses-released-by-mod-week-commencing-15-june-2015>

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,

Defence People Secretariat FOI