



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Statistics (Health)
Ministry of Defence
Oak 0 West
Abbey Wood North
Bristol BS34 8JH
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2015/06137

Telephone: +44 (0)30679 84423

E-mail: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk

6 October 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 9 July 2015 requesting the following information:

"Please could you provide me with the following information:

The number of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of obesity between 1 January 2007 and 31 March 2015, split by Service and calendar year.

The last recorded weight category prior to medical discharge of the last 10 UK Regular Armed Forces personnel medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of obesity, prior to 1 April 2015.

The number of UK Regular Army personnel recorded as failing a personal fitness assessment at the end of the six month reporting period on each 1 April and 1 October from 1 April 2011 to 1 April 2015.

The number of UK Regular RAF personnel recorded as failing a personal fitness assessment at the end of the six month reporting period on each 1 April and 1 October from 1 April 2011 to 1 April 2015.

The number of UK Regular Royal Navy personnel recorded as failing a fitness assessment at the end of the six month reporting period on each 1 April and 1 October from 1 April 2011 to 1 April 2015.

The number of UK Regular Royal Marine personnel currently recorded as failing a fitness assessment.

The number of UK Regular Royal Navy, Army and RAF personnel on strength as at 1 April 2015 whose last recorded Body Mass Index (BMI) indicated that they were (i) overweight or (ii) obese."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held. Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. This is also in line with Defence Statistics rounding policy, in which numbers fewer than five are suppressed in order to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. 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.

Table 1 shows the number of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of obesity between 1 January 2007 and 31 March 2015, split by Service and calendar year.

Table 1: UK Regular Armed Forces Personnel medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of obesity, 1 January 2007 and 31 March 2015, by Service and calendar year, Numbers¹

Reporting Service	All Years	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 ²
Naval Service	12	~	0	~	~	~	~	~	~	0
Army	50	~	~	~	6	13	9	8 ^P	~ ^P	~ ^P
RAF	6	0	0	~	~	0	~	~	0	0

Source: FMED23 and Joint Personnel Administration (JPA)

¹ Data presented as “~” has been suppressed in accordance with Defence Statistics’ rounding policy.

² Includes data from 1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015 only.

^P Data is provisional and subject to change

The last recorded weights of the last ten personnel medically discharged prior to 1 April 2015 with a principal or contributory cause of obesity were:

1. 136 kilograms
2. 83 kilograms
3. 100 kilograms
4. 143 kilograms
5. 111 kilograms
6. 130 kilograms
7. 146 kilograms
8. 114 kilograms
9. 126 kilograms
10. 133 kilograms

Please note this is the **last recorded** weight for these personnel; the actual weight of these personnel may have increased or decreased prior to medical discharge.

Table 2 shows the number of UK Regular Royal Navy Personnel that failed their most recent fitness test at the end of each six month reporting period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015.

Table 2: UK Regular Royal Navy Personnel that failed their most recent fitness test at the end of each six month reporting period, 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2015, by six month reporting period, Number and Percentage.

	1 Oct 10 - 31 Mar 11	1 Apr 11 - 30 Sept 11	1 Oct 11 - 31 Mar 12	1 Apr 12 - 30 Sept 12	1 Oct 12 - 31 Mar 13	1 Apr 13 - 30 Sept 13	1 Oct 13 - 31 Mar 14	1 Apr 14 - 30 Sept 14	1 Oct 14 - 31 Mar 15
Failed tests (n)	48	106	309	383	469	375	456	389	308
Failure rate (%)	3	2	4	4	4	4	5	5	3

Source: Navy Fitness Information Software System (FISS) and Joint Personnel Administration (JPA)

Table 3 shows the number of UK Regular Army Personnel that failed their most recent Personal Fitness Assessment (PFA) at the end of each six month reporting period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015.

Table 3: UK Regular Army Personnel that failed their most recent PFA at the end of each six month reporting period, 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2015, by six month reporting period, Number and Percentage.

	1 Oct 10 - 31 Mar 11	1 Apr 11 - 30 Sept 11	1 Oct 11 - 31 Mar 12	1 Apr 12 - 30 Sept 12	1 Oct 12 - 31 Mar 13	1 Apr 13 - 30 Sept 13	1 Oct 13 - 31 Mar 14	1 Apr 14 - 30 Sept 14	1 Oct 14 - 31 Mar 15
Failed tests (n)	2,915	2,715	2,223	2,360	2,230	2,032	1,779	1,773	1,779
Failure rate (%)	6	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3

Source: Army Fitness Information Software System (FISS)

Table 4 shows the number of UK Regular RAF Personnel that failed their most recent fitness test at the end of each six month reporting period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015.

Table 4: UK Regular RAF Personnel that failed their most recent fitness test at the end of each six month reporting period, 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2015, by six month reporting period, Number and Percentage.

	1 Oct 10 - 31 Mar 11	1 Apr 11 - 30 Sept 11	1 Oct 11 - 31 Mar 12	1 Apr 12 - 30 Sept 12	1 Oct 12 - 31 Mar 13	1 Apr 13 - 30 Sept 13	1 Oct 13 - 31 Mar 14	1 Apr 14 - 30 Sept 14	1 Oct 14 - 31 Mar 15
Failed tests (n)	1,126	757	835	518	541	330	421	367	441
Failure rate (%)	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	2

Source: RAF Fitness Information Software System (FISS)

As at 1 July 2015, **eight** UK Regular Royal Marines personnel were recorded as failing their most recent fitness test.

Of the UK Regular Armed Forces personnel on strength as at 1 April 2015:

- **9,996** Royal Navy personnel had a last recorded Body Mass Index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9 (overweight) and **2,552** had a BMI over 30 (obese).
- **35,198** Army personnel had a last recorded Body Mass Index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9 (overweight) and **5,828** had a BMI over 30 (obese).
- **7,498** RAF personnel had a last recorded Body Mass Index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9 (overweight) and **1,551** had a BMI over 30 (obese).

Please note that the MOD use body composition in their health risk assessments which comprises of BMI and waist circumference (WC), rather than BMI in isolation. BMI is a simple index of height-weight and does not differentiate between weight that is associated with muscle mass and weight associated with body fat. Therefore, the relationship between BMI and body fat varies according to body build and composition.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may wish to note:

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces as an Official Statistic publication. The latest report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>.

Weight

The last recorded weights of the last ten personnel medically discharged prior to 1 April 2015 with a principal or contributory cause of obesity were taken from the individual's electronic patient record on the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP). The DMICP programme commenced during 2007 and comprises an integrated primary Health Record (iHR) for clinical use and a pseudo-anonymised central data warehouse. Prior to this data warehouse, medical records were kept locally, at each individual medical centre. By 2010, DMICP was in place for the UK and the majority of Germany. Rollout to other overseas locations commenced in November 2011.

DMICP is a live data source and is subject to change. Date of extract of weight information: 30 July 2015.

Medical Discharges

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc.) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the Armed Forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the Armed Forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

The information on cases was sourced from electronic personnel records and manually entered paper documents from medical boards. The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting is a secondary function.

Although Medical Boards recommend medical discharges they do not attribute the principal disability leading to the board to Service. A Medical Board could take place many months or even years after an event or injury and it is not clinically possible in some cases to link an earlier injury to a later problem which may lead to a discharge. Decisions on attributability to Service are made by the Defence Business Services (DBS) (formerly Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency).

The tables in this FOI response have been scrutinised to ensure individual identities have not been revealed inadvertently. In line with Defence Statistics' rounding policy for health statistics (May 2009), and in keeping with the Office for National Statistics Guidelines, all numbers less than five have been suppressed and presented as '~'. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is less than five, the next smallest number (or numbers where there are tied values) has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

In 2013/14, Defence Statistics did not receive all the Army discharge paperwork which confirms that an individual has medically discharged and the cause information for the discharge. Therefore, Army medical discharge figures for 2013, 2014 and 2015 are provisional and should be considered a minimum. The affected figures have been annotated in **Table 1** with a "p" marker (please see the Annual Medical Discharges in the UK Regular Armed Forces Background Quality Report for further information).

Principal cause is the first principal coded cause on the medical discharge paperwork (F Med 23). Contributory cause contains all other principal coded causes and any contributory coded causes on the medical discharge paper (F Med 23).

Fitness Testing

Royal Navy fitness testing information is taken from the Navy Fitness Information Software System (FISS) for the period 1 October 2010 – 30 September 2014 and the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) for the period 1 October 2014 – 31 March 2015.

The Navy Fitness Information Software System (FISS) was used to obtain information on whether the test was passed for Royal Navy personnel between 1 October 2010 and 30 September 2014. For the period 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015, fitness testing information has been taken from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). Royal Navy personnel have been counted as failing a fitness test if they failed at least one element during the reported period.

Army fitness testing information is taken from the Army FISS.

The Military Annual Training Test (MATT2) Policy was introduced in August 2008 (last amended in April 2013) and details the basic level of physical fitness testing for all Officers and Soldiers, in order to ensure that individuals are prepared for the physical and psychological demands of combat.

There are two elements of the MATT2 Policy:

- Personal Fitness Assessment (PFA). The PFA is in the format of press-ups, sit-ups and aerobic test, taking the form of a run or a MSFT (Multi-Stage Fitness Test) and requires a pass at the gender fair level equivalent to a PFA 'green'. Inability to attain a pass in any of the three elements will be deemed a fail and require remedial action in accordance with the current Fitness Test Failure Policy.
- Annual Fitness Test (AFT). The AFT consists of an 8 mile loaded march in 2 hours carrying a load determined by an individual's Career Employment Group (CEG). It is conducted in combat clothing and boots.

RAF fitness testing information is taken from the RAF FISS.

In October 2007 the RAF initiated a new Fitness Strategy to meet the need of improving fitness levels throughout the RAF for reasons of general health and operational effectiveness. The Air Force Board has given unequivocal support to the call for improved fitness throughout the Service and has recognised that this will only be achieved by a change of culture, and that the success will depend on personnel at all levels taking responsibility for effecting the change.

There are three main elements to the Fitness Strategy;

- The requirement for all personnel to undertake regular exercise
- For all personnel to take responsibility for not only their own fitness, but also for the fitness of their subordinates
- An enhanced RAF Fitness test (RAFFT)

Royal Marines fitness test information was taken from JPA.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Information on the BMI of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel on strength as at 1 April 2015 was taken from the Navy FISS, the Army FISS, the RAF FISS and DMICP. The BMI data from each of these systems was compiled, and the most recent information (prior to 1 April 2015) was used to determine an individual's BMI category.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk

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, <https://ico.org.uk/>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)