



Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
United Kingdom

Telephone : +44 (0)20 721 89000

Our Reference: FOI20154/03624

24 April 2015

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) dated 4 April in which you requested the following information:

Can you help with a query about the psychiatric conditions that preclude enlistment into the armed forces?

AFCO Form 5 shows that the following psychiatric conditions would bar a person from joining the armed forces:

'Ongoing psychiatric illness. Psychosis. Schizophrenia. Obsessive-compulsive disorder. Autism. Personality disorder. More than one episode of deliberate self-harm of any type. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Alcohol, drug or substance dependence. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) unless free of symptoms and not requiring treatment for at least three years. Anorexia and bulimia.'

The army website says that only these conditions would preclude enlisting: 'Schizophrenia. Obsessive-compulsive disorder. Alcohol or drug dependence. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).' (<http://www.army.mod.uk/join/How-to-join.aspx>)

Can you please tell me which list of psychiatric conditions is correct, and why they are different?

Can you also say whether a candidate for the armed forces would have to share their full medical record with the armed forces as part of their pre-enlistment medical examination?

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

Both lists are 'correct' but the list of conditions shown on the Army website is meant to give indicative examples rather than be an exhaustive list of all possible conditions. The Online Medical Questionnaire that candidates complete near the start of the Army application process provides a more comprehensive list. This list is in accordance with the tri-Service entry standards (JSP 950).

With regard to your question on medical records, the Army request a full medical history from the candidate's GP prior to initial medical; it is scrutinised by medics prior to examination for excluding conditions. The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force contract seeks targeted advice from GPs regarding previous medical history based on findings of physical examination and comprehensive pre-entry self declaration questionnaires. Decisions regarding eligibility are based on this targeted evidence and physical exam. Both methods require fully informed consent from the candidate prior to seeking the evidence.

I hope that this information will be helpful to you.

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