



Ministry
of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 03 March 2016 requesting the following information:

- *The numbers of UK Armed Forces personnel graded H1, H2, H3 or H4, in the most severely affected ear, at their last audiometry assessment between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015.*
- *Of these personnel, the number that had a code for NIHL entered into their primary healthcare patient record between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015*
- *The number of civil claims for compensation for noise induced hearing loss that have been brought by current and former members of UK Armed Forces. The number of these claims where compensation has been paid.*
- *Between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2015 (the latest data available) the number of claims by UK Armed Forces personnel for noise induced hearing loss made under the War Pension Scheme.*
- *Between 6 April 2005 and 30 September 2015 (the latest data available) the number of claims by UK Armed Forces personnel for noise induced hearing loss under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.*

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held by the MOD.

Between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015, **291,626** UK Armed Forces personnel had an audiometry assessment recorded on their primary healthcare patient record (DMICP). At the latest audiometry assessment in the time period, in the worst affected ear:

- **233,014** personnel were graded H1 (good hearing)
- **50,738** personnel were graded H2 (acceptable hearing)
- **6,718** personnel were graded H3 (impaired hearing)
- **1,156** personnel were graded H4 (poor hearing)

Of these **291,626** UK Armed Forces personnel, **1,732** had a code for noise induced hearing loss entered into their primary healthcare patient record between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015.

H grade and noise induced hearing loss figures are presented for UK Armed Forces personnel. This includes Regulars, Gurkhas and Reservists, trained and untrained personnel. There are personnel included in the analysis who are no longer serving.

As at 24 February 2016, a minimum of **12,622** claims for compensation for noise induced hearing loss have been brought by current and former members of UK Armed Forces employed by MOD. Compensation has been paid in **9,388** of these cases. Some claims are still pending so do not have an outcome.

Between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2015 (the latest data available) there were **16,080** claims by UK Armed Forces personnel for noise induced hearing loss made under the War Pension Scheme.

Between 6 April 2005 and 30 September 2015 (the latest data available) there were **330** claims by UK Armed Forces personnel for noise induced hearing loss under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note the following:

Civil claims figures are a minimum. There are 33 additional claims for which a review of the records would be required to establish if the claim was made by a member of the UK Armed Forces or a civilian.

Electronic Medical Record (DMICP)

The Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) was rolled out in 2007 and is the source of electronic, integrated healthcare records for primary healthcare and some MOD specialist care providers.

The electronic patient record has information that is Read coded. Read codes are a set of clinical codes designed for Primary Care to record the every day care of a Patient. They are part of a hierarchical structure and form the recognised standard for General Practice.

The following Read codes were used to identify NIHL from DMICP:

Underlying Code	Description
DMSACA03	Audiogram shows potential noise induced hearing loss pattern
DMSACM02	MO assessed - Screening audiometry consistent with mild NIHL
DMSACM03	MO assessed - Screening audiometry consistent with significant stable NIHL
DMSACM04	MO assessed - Screening audiometry consistent with significant progressive or rapid NIHL
DMSACS02	Specialist diagnosis - mild NIHL
DMSACS03	Specialist diagnosis - significant stable NIHL
DMSACS04	Specialist diagnosis - significant progressive or rapid NIHL
F5810	Unspecified noise effect on inner ear
F5811	Acoustic explosive ear trauma
F5812	Noise induced deafness
F5812	Noise-induced hearing loss
F581z	Noise effects on inner ear NOS

The overall audiometry assessment for each member of the Armed Forces presents a combination of their left ear and right ear assessments. Where there was a difference in the left and right assessments, the hearing grade was considered to be that of the 'worst ear' - for example, a right ear assessment of H2 and a left hear assessment of H3, was considered as H3.

Any data entered as free text only in the patients' medical record will not be included in the figures presented as this information is not available in the data warehouse.

There has been no clinical audit of the accuracy of the data recorded on the patient's record. Please note, UK Armed Forces personnel who had an audiometry assessment but who have since become registered at a MOD medical centre as a civilian have their Service number removed from their medical record and therefore are not included in the analysis.

War Pensions Scheme (WPS)

The War Pensions Scheme (WPS) provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by Service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005.

An annual Official Statistic provides summary statistics on claims, awards and recipients of pensions, allowances or other payments under the War Pension Scheme where disablement or death occurred as a result of Service prior to 6 April 2005. This is published on the Gov.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>. The latest update was provided on 4 June 2015.

Figures provided under the WPS include first claims and further conditions only.

Figures provided are sourced from data stored on the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS). The medical diagnosis code '5002' (noise induced sensorineural hearing loss) captured on the WPCS was used to determine claims for noise induced hearing loss. Many records have no medical diagnosis code entered. For these records a free-text search was conducted on claim condition details to search for claims containing the terms 'noise induced', 'NIHL' and a range of common misspellings. Please note that due to the free text nature of the condition information it is possible that some records with reference to noise induced hearing loss have not been identified, and therefore the figures supplied should be treated as a minimum.

In line with Defence Statistics' Rounding Policy for WPS data, all figures of five or more have been rounded to the nearest five.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS)

The AFCS came into force on 6 April 2005 to pay compensation for injury, illness or death attributable to Service that occurred on or after that date. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Pensions Scheme.

A biannual Official Statistic provides summary statistics on claims and awards made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, paying compensation for injury, illness or death caused by Service. This is published on the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>.

The latest version of the report was released on 4 June 2015.

Figures provided are sourced from data stored on the Compensation and Pensions System (CAPS). Claimed condition information is recorded on CAPS in a free-text field. To identify claims awarded for noise induced hearing loss, a free-text search was conducted for 'noise induced', 'NIHL' and a range of common misspellings. Please note that due to the free text nature of this data it is possible that some records with reference to noise induced hearing loss have not been identified, and therefore the figures supplied should be treated as a minimum.

In line with Defence Statistics' Rounding Policy for AFCS data, all figures of five or more have been rounded to the nearest five.

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/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)