

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION ON THE AMENDMENTS OF MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OPERATIONAL CASUALTY OFFICIAL STATISTICS

MARCH 2015

INTRODUCTION

1. Defence Statistics (Health) currently produce three Operational casualty Official Statistics covering casualties in Afghanistan. Following the UK drawdown in Afghanistan the frequency of these publications will be reduced, subject to this consultation. The three publications are as follows:
 - [UK Service Personnel Amputation Statistics](#)
Currently produced quarterly, proposal to move to annually
 - [Afghanistan Very Seriously Injured \(VSI\) and Seriously Injured \(SI\) Tracking Statistics](#)
Currently produced bi-annually, proposal to move to annually
 - [UK Service Personnel Patient Treatment Statistics](#)
Currently produced monthly, proposal to move to quarterly
2. We are now seeking external users' views on the reduction in frequency and proposed changes of the MOD statistics. Further details on the proposed changes can be found in the consultation document.

BACKGROUND

UK Service Personnel Amputation Statistics

3. Defence Statistics has already reduced the frequency of reporting of Iraq amputation statistics to annual after performing a public consultation. With the reduction of casualties from Afghanistan, the number of amputees sustained as a result of injuries in the last two quarters (Q2 2014/15 and Q3 2014/15) was none and fewer than five retrospectively.
4. Reducing the frequency of reporting of Afghanistan amputation statistics to annual will give Defence Statistics the opportunity to explore other data sets. These include Medical Discharges and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, within which we believe there may be further UK Service Personnel amputees, that aren't in our current datasets.
5. As long as there is no objection during the consultation period to the reduction in frequency of the publication, the reduction to the report will proceed as planned. The last quarterly report will be published on 31 July 2015, from which point it will be an annual publication.

Afghanistan Very Seriously Injured (VSI) and Seriously Injured (SI) Tracking Statistics

6. With the reduction of casualties from Afghanistan, the number of VSI and SI casualties sustained has also reduced (six VSI/SI in the period March 13 to September 13 and four VSI/SI in the period October 13 to March 14).
7. Reducing the frequency of the publication will enable Defence Statistics to perform further analysis on length of care pathways, including investigating if there are any differences in length of care pathways with different outcomes (such as returning to duty or exiting the Services) and between injuries of different severity.
8. As long as there is no objection during the consultation period to the reduction in frequency of the publication, the reduction to the report will proceed as planned with the final bi-annual report published on 29 January 2015. The first annual report will be published on 28 January 2016.

UK Service Personnel Patient Treatment Statistics

9. Reducing the frequency of the publication will enable Defence Statistics to carry out further analysis on the level of burden casualties from Op HERRICK place on RCDM and DMRC. Currently, the publication presents the numbers treated at RCDM and/or DMRC so more in-depth analysis of the length of care pathways will enable us to report on the time spent at each facility. This will aid in future planning of medical care that is required for any future conflicts where the type of injuries sustained are comparable.
10. Even though the report will be released quarterly, the publication will present numbers by month. For each quarterly release three months of new information will be presented.
11. The report will also be extended to include statistical information on UK Armed Forces and Civilian personnel returning to the UK from Op TORAL¹ as a result of an injury or illness and who are treated at RCDM and/or DMRC. This will ensure the report provides the complete Afghanistan picture from 8 October 2007 to current day.
12. As long as there is no objection during the consultation period to the reduction in frequency of the publication, the reduction to the report will proceed as planned. The final monthly report will be published on 30 April 2015, from which point it will become a quarterly publication.

¹ The UK's post 2014 contribution to operations in Afghanistan under the NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION.

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSED CHANGES

13. There has been a significant reduction in Operational casualty numbers. The UK Role 3 medical facility at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan closed in September 2014. The force structure in Afghanistan has reduced to approximately 500 posts since 31 December 2014.
14. The numbers of Very Seriously Injured (VSI) or Seriously Injured (SI) casualties are continually decreasing (six in 2014), the last fatality due to hostile action was in December 2013 and the last death was April 2014.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CHANGES

15. Considering the reasons for the proposed changes, we now invite the feedback of our external data users:
- What impact will the reduction of the UK Service personnel amputation statistics from quarterly to annual have on you?
 - What impact will the reduction of the VSI and SI Tracking Statistics from bi-annual to annual have on you?
 - What impact will the reduction of the UK Service Personnel Treatment Statistics from monthly to quarterly have on you?

TIMINGS

16. This consultation will run for four weeks from 20 March 2014 to 17 April 2015.
17. If you have any comments on the proposed changes please send:

by e mail to: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQFOI@mod.uk

by post to:

Defence Statistics (Health)
Ministry of Defence
Oak 0 West, #6028
Abbey Wood North
Bristol
BS34 8JH

18. When sending your comments please include contact details (your name and either e mail address, postal address or telephone number) so that we can follow up if clarification is needed.

NEXT STEPS

19. We will publish a summary of responses, with key findings and planned changes on Gov.uk.
20. Please note by responding to this consultation we shall assume that you have given your consent for your responses to be made public.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

21. Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes².

² Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004