

Response Document

Ministry of Defence Statistics Plan 2016/17 Consultation

Introduction

On 4th April 2016, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) opened a public consultation with users about proposals for collecting and publishing Official Statistics during 2016/17. Primarily, the consultation sought users' views on whether the proposals within the Plan to amend or release new Official Statistics had any impact or consequences on users' needs.

Consultation Outcome

Four responses were received from users during the consultation period which ended on 16th May 2016.

As the responses received did not raise any objections to the work set out in the Plan or to any adverse impact that the work may have on users' circumstances, the Plan will remain as proposed. However, these responses will help to shape the development of the next Plan. The following issues were raised in the consultation responses and are accompanied by a response from the MOD.

1. Reducing the release of statistics into the public domain impacts users' ability to find out about the MOD and Armed Forces Activities

The MOD follows the principles set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the Government Consultation Guidelines when conducting consultations on Official Statistics publications. Proposed changes to Official Statistics that may affect users are consulted on publicly to seek feedback and determine the likely impact these changes will have, but also to ensure that our statistics remain relevant and fit for purpose. The MOD's consultations, including those relating to Official Statistics, are advertised on GOV.UK, and where possible are brought to users' attention on the publication homepage, or in the publication itself.

MOD continually reviews whether the statistics meet users' needs. In some cases statistics are reduced in scope or stopped when they are no longer relevant. During 2015/16 the MOD ceased four publications and published three new Official Statistics and a number of one-off reports.

2. The MOD should be publishing information on the quantity and quality of equipment.

The MOD has recently run a [consultation](#) on the review of the Formations, Vessels and Aircraft National Statistics publication. The aim of this consultation is to identify whether the definitions and terminology, and coverage of the publication still meets users' needs and if not, how Formations, Vessels and Aircraft can be improved to better meet these needs. Once feedback has been analysed, the MOD will publish a formal response outlining any changes to the publication.

3. MOD expenditure and Defence dependent employment: Request for sub-regional and Local Enterprise Partnership level statistics, as well as statistics on apprenticeships and traineeships.

Initially estimates of MOD expenditure and Defence dependent employment will be published by region of the UK on the same basis as the previously produced MOD estimates on this subject, which ended in 2008. A data cleansing exercise is currently underway to validate and confirm the location of MOD expenditure. The results of this exercise will determine whether the granularity and quality of data will be sufficient to

publish estimates at sub-regional level and within Local Enterprise Partnerships and will be considered once the initial estimates, by region, have been published.

The employment data used in the calculation of the defence dependent estimates are based on information collected by the Office for National Statistics in their annual Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES). An employee in the context of this survey is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is paid directly from the payroll, in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme, although government supported trainees are excluded.

The MOD will not separately estimate/present traineeships as the data related to employment supported by MOD expenditure cannot be disaggregated in this way.

4. Request to separate mixed-race from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic category and include a breakdown of this by rank to identify promotion prospects.

A breakdown of statistics into Mixed, Asian, Black and Other categories, by grouped-rank, is published in Defence Statistics Biannual Diversity Statistics publication. This is available for Strength, Intake and Outflow statistics (see Excel tables 2, 7 and 12). Biannual Diversity Statistics is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-index>

These statistics are published by grouped rank only, and not by NATO rank, due to the need to prevent disclosure.

In addition, MOD does hold statistics on Country of Birth for Military personnel, however, these statistics have not been quality assured. The MOD does not receive many requests for this information and therefore does not proactively release it. However, to receive this information, a Request for Information can be submitted to MOD under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, see: <https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request>

5. Request to publish Clinical Commissioning Group level statistics to help planning of mental health services for the Armed Forces.

MOD is currently investigating the feasibility of presenting medical discharges by location with an aim to incorporate the information in the Medical Discharge Official Statistic due to be published in 2017.

6. Request for breakdown of complaints to Service Complaints Ombudsman (SCO; formerly Service Complaints Commissioner) every six months.

As part of its statistics work plan for 2015/16 the SCO committed to produce more frequent statistical releases in order to supplement the information released as part of the SCO Annual Report. Since July 2015 the SCO have published quarterly statistical updates outlining key findings and extant trends in SCO activity. These factsheets are available on the [SCO website](#) (latest to March 2016).

Further planned improvements to the SCO statistical process are outlined in the [SCO 2016/17 statistical work plan](#) and include on-going work with Defence Statistics to potentially establish the SCO as an Official Statistics producer, bringing it more formally under the remit of the 'Code of Practice for Official Statistics'.

7. Request for number of call-ups for each battalion during the year to plan annual leave etc. more effectively.

Due to the changing nature of call-ups and operations the MOD does not consider past call-ups as a predictor of future call-ups and so is not a reliable source for planning local services.

8. Request for employment outcomes of spouses of Armed Forces personnel.

Currently, resettlement and employment support is provided to Regular Armed Forces personnel who are leaving the Services through the Career Transition Partnership. The MOD is conducting a Spouse Employment Support (SES) Trial (one Air element UK based for RAF spouses, and one Joint Forces Command element based in Cyprus which includes spouses of all three Services). After the SES trial is evaluated and if a future decision is made on potential further provision, then we will look to incorporate the employment outcomes into the Annual Career Transition Partnership Official Statistic.