



Ministry of Defence

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

Our Reference: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your e-mail to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) dated 24 January 2017 in which you requested the following information:

1. Over the period 2012-16 inclusive, the total number of drug tests performed, broken down by year and service (Army, Navy, RAF, Other).
2. Over the period 2012-16 inclusive, the number of positive drug tests performed, broken down by year and service (Army, Navy, RAF, Other).
3. Over the period of 2012-16 inclusive, the cost to the MOD of performing drug tests, broken down by year and service (Army, Navy, RAF, Other).

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

The MOD is unable to comply with your request under Section 12 of the FOI Act. Section 12 makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. This limit is specified in FOI regulations and for central Government is set at £600. An initial scoping of your request has identified that in order to identify the cost of drug tests from 2012 onwards would involve recalling 5 years of archival material from the MOD's archiving service. To then locate, retrieve and extract relevant data would exceed the £600 cost limit that applies under Section 12 of the Act.

Section 16 of the FOIA sets out the duty on public authorities to provide advice and assistance, as far as it is reasonable to expect the public authority to do so, to anyone who is considering, or has made, a request for information to it. Some of the Data you have requested is reasonably accessible to you by other means. It is already in the public domain at the following address: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/555925/RED_FOI2016_08187.pdf

You may wish to consider narrowing your request to a particular timescale or just one Service. However please be aware that a revised request may still be cost exempt. If you wish to make a revised FOI please use the e-mail address: cio-foi@mod.uk

Drug misuse is incompatible with life in the Armed Forces and will not be tolerated, it is considered incompatible with military service and operational effectiveness. Personnel caught taking drugs can expect to be discharged. The MOD has a policy of Compulsory Drug Testing, which seeks to reinforce the message that drug use by Service personnel is unacceptable.

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

