



Head Policy Legacy  
Policy Legacy (FOI) Team  
Headquarters 38 (Irish) Brigade  
British Forces Post Office 825

Telephone: 028 [REDACTED]  
E-Mail: 38X-PolicyLegacy-FOI-Mailbox@mod.uk



Reference: FOI: 2017/005713

Date: 5 July 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – VARIOUS QUESTIONS – NORTHERN IRELAND SECURITY  
GUARD SERVICE (NISGS)**

Further to your e-mail dated 5 June, I can confirm that your request for information has been considered under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA 2000), and the process is now complete. I apologise that we were unable to complete your request within the statutory 20 working days.

You asked the following the questions:

**1. "In the last 10 years, How many complaints have there been in relation to the wearing of Combat Body Armour (CBA) in the NISGS?"**

HQ NISGS are aware of 6 complaints.

**2. "How many days sickness have been due to musculoskeletal disorders in the last 10 years in the NISGS?"**

I am unable to provide this information as there is no specific Human Resources Management System (HRMS) sick absence category on musculoskeletal disorders. Under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Duty to provide advice and assistance), I can confirm that there is a HRMS category Muscle and Bone, however, this is a broader category than the specific information you have requested. The Muscle and Bone category covers areas such as back ache/pain, sciatica, arthritis/osteoarthritis, knee problems, spondylosis, joint pain, prolapsed/slipped disc, lumber strain, muscle pain, gout, ruptured tendon and Repetitive Strain Injury. Defence Business Services (DBS) can provide calendar days for sickness under the Muscle and Bone category. If you believe that that data could answer your query then you will need to submit a new request.

**3. "Date of last Health and Safety review in relation to suitability of the current CBA for guarding in N Ireland. Specifically in relation to human factors and the body armour itself potentially causing harm?"**

I am not aware of any overarching Health and Safety review in relation to the suitability of the current Enhanced Combat Body Armour (ECBA) for guarding in Northern Ireland. Under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Duty to provide advice and assistance), I can confirm that DC IPT and HQ Army are responsible for ECBA standards & policy. ECBA is issued as a force protection measure and while it is the MOD's responsibility to provide such items it is the recipient's responsibility to ensure that they are issued with correctly fitting items and that they care

their issued equipment correctly. Where an NISGS officer experiences discomfort or has a health issue related to the wearing of ECBA, they must seek advice from their Line Management chain to determine; if the ECBA is the appropriate size, fitted correctly and whether referral to Occupational Health (OH) is required. HQ NISGS has produced a generic risk assessment form for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and units are required to conduct and review the Unit Risk Assessment for PPE, (including ECBA); annually, following an accident or near miss and following significant changes to the task. Most recently generic risk assessments pertaining to the wearing of PPE have been reviewed by HQ NISGS in August 2013, April 2015 and September 2016.

**4. "How many Accident Reporting form (510)s in relation to the CBA over the last 10 years have been submitted?"**

The information you have requested is only available from 2013 onwards and as the numbers are very small there is a potential for individuals to be identified. Therefore, I consider the information you have requested constitutes personal information, and is exempt under Section 40 (2) by reason of the first condition under Section 40 (3) (a) (i), as disclosure would contravene data protection principles under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 98). This is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test to be conducted in order for this information to be exempt from disclosure.

**5. "How many Near Miss Reporting Forms have been submitted in relation to back pain/ musculoskeletal within the NISGS?"**

The information you have requested is only available from 2013 onwards and as the numbers are very small there is a potential for individuals to be identified. Therefore, I consider the information you have requested constitutes personal information, and is exempt under Section 40 (2) by reason of the first condition under Section 40 (3) (a) (i), as disclosure would contravene data protection principles under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 98). This is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test to be conducted in order for this information to be exempt from disclosure.

**6. "How many current duty posts are adapted for Civilian Security Officers grade 5 on return from sickness at all locations within the NISGs?"**

The posts themselves are not adapted given their operational function, however temporary workplace adaptations specific to the individual's needs are considered and implemented where practicable. All CSO5s returning to work following a period of sick absence are managed on a case by case basis, in accordance with MOD Absence & Attendance Management Policy & Procedures, with advice from OH and DBS Civ Pers.

**7. "How many unarmed posts are there in the NISGS?"**

All NISGS Civilian Security Officers (CSO) 4 and 5 posts are armed. Only 23 posts are established as unarmed.

**8. "How many NISGS Officers are currently on a phased return with light duties outside of the NISGS in other MOD areas in N Ireland?"**

As the numbers are very small there is a potential for individuals to be identified. Therefore, I consider the information you have requested constitutes personal information, and is exempt under Section 40 (2) by reason of the first condition under Section 40 (3) (a) (i), as disclosure would contravene data protection principles under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 98). This is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test to be conducted in order for this information to be exempt from disclosure.

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](mailto: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 ,

