



Ministry
of Defence

[REDACTED]
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Ref: FOI2017/05624

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[REDACTED]
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27 June 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 May 2017 in which you requested the following information:

'Under the FOI act,

- I would like details of the declared religions of service personnel, broken down by service, for the last two years.*
- I would like a breakdown of religions that are declared under the category entitled "All other religions": Baha'i, Druid, Kirati, Pagan, Rastafarian, Spiritualist, Zoroastrian and Wicca.*
- I would like figures for 2015, 2016 and 2017.'*

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

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds information in scope of your request. In response to the first part of your request, the declared religions of service personnel broken down by service can be found in the recent release of the biannual diversity statistics available on the GOV.UK website.

The Ministry of Defence is permitted to withhold information where an exemption is considered justifiable. As the information that you have requested is already available to the public we have assessed your request falls under the absolute exemption at section 21 – Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means – of the Act. Consequently, we are not obliged to provide you with this information.

With regard to the second part of your request, a breakdown of religions which are declared by Service Personnel under the category 'All Other Religions' can be found detailed in the Annex attached to this letter.

In relation to your request for figures of declared religions for Service Personnel for 2017, I can confirm that the Department holds the information that you are seeking, however, we are prohibited from supplying 2017 figures as this would be pre-empting national statistics, which will include the

data you have requested in the forthcoming release of the biannual diversity statistics. By releasing the 2017 statistics in advance would be in breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics Protocol 2, Practice 8, which states '*Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication*'. Relevant legislation in this case is the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008. Therefore, your request for information on declared religions for 2017 falls under the absolute exemption at section 44 (1)(a) – Information is exempt from disclosure if it is prohibited by or under any enactment – of the Act. Consequently, we are not obliged to provide you with this information.

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, Ground Floor, Zone D, 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

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section

	1 Apr 2015	1 Oct 2015	1 Apr 2016	1 Oct 2016
Other Religions	760	780	790	830
of which				
Bahá'i	~	~	~	~
Druid	10	10	10	10
Jainist	-	-	-	~
Kirati	60	70	80	90
Pagan	110	120	120	130
Rastafarian	140	140	150	160
Spiritualist	40	30	40	40
Wicca	20	20	20	20
Zoroastrian (Parsee)	~	~	~	~
Other Religions	380	380	380	380
RN/RM				
Other Religions	170	180	180	180
of which				
Bahá'i	-	-	-	-
Druid	~	~	~	~
Jainist	-	-	-	-
Kirati	~	~	~	~
Pagan	20	20	20	20
Rastafarian	30	30	30	40
Spiritualist	10	10	10	10
Wicca	10	10	10	~
Zoroastrian (Parsee)	-	-	-	-
Other Religions	110	110	100	110
Army				
Other Religions	430	450	460	480
of which				
Bahá'i	~	~	~	~
Druid	~	~	~	~
Jainist	-	-	-	-
Kirati	60	70	80	90
Pagan	70	80	80	80
Rastafarian	100	110	110	120
Spiritualist	20	20	20	20
Wicca	10	10	10	10
Zoroastrian (Parsee)	~	~	~	~
Other Religions	160	160	160	160
Royal Air Force				
Other Religions	160	160	160	160
of which				
Bahá'i	-	-	-	-
Druid	~	~	~	~
Jainist	-	-	-	~
Kirati	-	-	-	-
Pagan	30	20	30	20
Rastafarian	~	~	10	10
Spiritualist	10	10	10	10
Wicca	~	~	~	~
Zoroastrian (Parsee)	~	-	-	-
Other Religions	110	110	110	120

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri Service)

Notes:

In line with Office for National Statistics guidelines:

- Statistics are rounded to the nearest ten with numbers ending in five rounded up.
- To prevent the unintentional disclosure of an individuals identity, numbers smaller than five have been suppressed. Suppressed numbers are represented as ~.