

Background Quality Report

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Biannual Statistics – 6 April 2005 to 31 March 2017

The purpose of a background quality report is to inform users of the statistics about the quality of the data used to produce the publication, and any statistics derived from that data. It also discusses existing uses of the statistics and user requirements.

This assessment relates to the biannual 'Armed Forces Compensation Scheme' statistics published by Defence Statistics.

1. Introduction

1. This biannual Statistical Notice provides summary statistics on claims and awards made under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), paying compensation for injury, illness or death caused by Service.
2. The findings in these Statistics are presented in five sections:
 - Numbers of registered and cleared claims under the AFCS by latest recorded outcome- This section provides the overall numbers of claims registered and cleared under the scheme by the latest recorded outcome, broken down by claim type, financial year and quarter. This is provided to show the volume of claims that are dealt with under the scheme, the success rates associated with each type of claim and the key trends over time. This section will also include information on reconsiderations and appeals registered and cleared.
 - AFCS claim clearance times- This section presents the average (median) clearance times for all cleared claims, by claim type and financial year. This information is presented in order to show the average time that claimants have waited for their claim to be cleared.
 - Recipients of Lump Sum Payments and GIPs under the AFCS based on the outcome of their latest claim- This section gives further details (e.g. by tariff level, Service, age-group, tariff of injury grouping) for all Serving/ex-Serving personnel who have been awarded compensation for an injury/illness caused by service. Injury/illness claims make up the majority of all claim types and Defence Statistics deal with the highest volume of requests for this area. Therefore further details are provided on the latest claim outcome to deal with demand for information on these claims.
 - Recipients of Guaranteed Income Payments only under the AFCS- This section gives information on the number of people who are in receipt of ongoing compensation payments under the scheme (i.e Serving/ex-Service personnel with more severe injuries at tariff levels 1-11, and spouses/children in receipt of compensation as a result of a death caused by Service. It also provides a summary of demographic factors for these individuals. A GIP only begins when an individual leaves the Services and therefore this section is provided to show the number of people that are actually in receipt of a GIP, as opposed to the number who have been awarded a GIP.
 - AFCS expenditure- This section gives information on the amounts paid out to serving personnel in the form of lump sum awards and guaranteed income payments by financial year. It also provides information on survivor's guaranteed income payments by financial year.

3. These statistics present trends over time since the scheme began on 6 April 2005. These statistics were first released in September 2008 and subsequently published on a quarterly basis. Following the quarterly release in March 2011, Defence Statistics proposed a reduction in the frequency of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Official Statistic from quarterly reports to biannual reports (reporting on mid-financial year data in December and end of financial year data in June). The first biannual report was released in June 2011. These statistics were designated National Statistics in 2013, with the first National Statistic release in December 2013.
4. The latest statistics are published as National Statistics, adhering to the [UK Statistics Authority \(UKSA\)](#)¹ protocols on [pre-release access](#)².
5. Ad-hoc interrogation of the data used to compile these statistics is regularly undertaken by Defence Statistics in order to answer Freedom of Information requests, Parliamentary questions and internal queries from within the Ministry of Defence.

Scheme information and definitions

6. This section provides a summary of the AFCS. Full scheme information, including advice on how to submit a claim for compensation under the AFCS can be found on the [Gov.uk website](#)³.
7. The AFCS came into force on 6 April 2005 and is managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with all compensation claims administered by Defence Business Services (DBS) [Veterans UK](#)⁴. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces Pensions Scheme. Defence Statistics also publishes separate [annual WPS National Statistics](#)⁵ on claims and awards under the WPS.

Injury / Illness claims and awards

8. All current and former members of the UK Armed Forces, including reservists, may submit a claim for compensation under the AFCS for Service-attributable injury/illness since 6 April 2005. Unlike the War Pension Scheme, claimants can submit a claim for compensation whilst still serving. Individuals have up to seven years to make an injury/illness claim from the date of their initial injury/diagnosis. There are some exceptions to this such as late-onset illnesses. Claims for a late-onset illness can be made at any time after the event to which it relates, as long as it is done so within three years of seeking medical advice. A late onset illness is a malignancy or other physical disorder which is capable of being caused by an occupational exposure occurring more than 7 years before the onset of the illness. Late onset also covers mental disorders which are capable of being caused by an incident occurring more than 7 years before the onset of the illness.
9. Injury/illness claims are presented within the supplementary tables and the Statistical Bulletin in three groups: **In-Service claims** (those registered by serving members of the UK Armed Forces at the date of their claim); **post-Service claims** (those registered by former UK Service personnel at the date of their claim); and **medical discharge claims** which are automatically raised by the MOD for personnel medically discharged from Service where they meet the following criteria:
 - a) They have served more than two years' reckonable Service.
 - b) Their medical discharge was as a result of injury/illness due to Service on or after 6 April 2005. Where injury / illness was a result of Service prior to this date they will be considered under the WPS.

- c) They have not been previously awarded under the scheme following an in-Service claim for the injury/illness/condition which led to their medical discharge. Prior to the Lord Boyce Review these cases were automatically registered as a medical discharge claim but later rejected. However, since the Review these cases are no longer automatically considered. See paragraph 24 for more details on the Review.
 - d) They are a member of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) 75 pension scheme; or they are a member of the AFPS 05 scheme AND are in receipt of Tier 2 or Tier 3 ill health benefits from that scheme. Further information on the [AFPS 05 ill health benefits](#)⁶ can be found on the Gov.uk website.
10. An initial decision is made by the MOD on whether to award each injury/illness claim. There are three outcomes to an initial injury/illness claim:
- a) Awarded: Injury/illness accepted as due to Service AND falls under one of the tariff levels (1-15).
 - b) Accepted- No award: Injury/illness accepted as due to Service but does not meet the minimum tariff level (15).
 - c) Rejected: Injury/illness not accepted as due to Service.
11. **Tax-free lump sum awards** are paid to Service or ex-Service personnel as compensation for pain and suffering for an injury or illness that is predominantly caused or made worse by Service. Lump sum awards can be made whilst the claimant is still in Service.
12. All injuries/illnesses considered to be Service-attributable are also awarded under a relevant tariff of injury table. There are nine tables which each cover the legislation surrounding the payment of compensation for 1. Burns; 2. Injury, Wounds and Scarring; 3. Mental Disorders; 4. Physical Disorders; 5. Amputations; 6. Neurological Disorders; 7. Senses; 8. Fractures and Dislocations; 9. Musculoskeletal Disorders. This legislation determines the tariff level at which each injury/illness should be paid compensation. The full [tariff of injury tables](#)⁷ are published online by Infolaw, a publisher of legal resources.
13. There are 15 tariff levels under which successful claimants are awarded, each reflecting the severity of the injury or illness. The lower numerical tariff levels (i.e. 1-4) reflect the more severe injuries/illnesses. Where a lump sum award has been made at tariff levels 1-11 (reflecting a more serious injury/illness), the claimant will also be awarded a tax-free index-linked income stream known as a **Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP)**. A GIP will then be paid from service termination for life to recognise long-term loss of earnings.
14. Tariff levels 1 to 11 are divided into four bands and they refer to the percentage used to calculate the annual amount of the GIP; 100% for Band A (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 1-4, 75% for Band B (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 5-6), 50% for Band C (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 7-8) and 30% for Band D (most severe condition awarded at tariff levels 9-11).
15. Service personnel awarded a GIP at 50% or above (Tariff Bands A-C) are eligible to apply for additional financial support via the **Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)**. The AFIP is a benefit to help with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability. The weekly AFIP payment is the same as the enhanced rate of the [Personal Independence Payment](#)⁸ (PIP) components and the highest rate of the [Disability Living Allowance](#)⁹ (DLA) components. Therefore ex-Service personnel already receiving the enhanced PIP or the highest rate DLA support may not apply to receive the AFIP since the benefits are the same.

Initial Survivors' claims and awards

16. Where death is caused by Service the AFCS provides an income stream known as the **Survivor's Guaranteed Income Payment (SGIP)**. This is payable to the spouse, civil partner or adult dependant for life. Compensation is also paid to eligible children whilst they are in full-time education, known as the Child Payment (CP). Eligible partners and families have up to three years to make a claim as a result of a death caused by Service.
17. **Survivors' claims** are presented within the supplementary tables and the Statistical Bulletin in three groups:
 - **Death-in-Service** – entitlement to compensation for surviving eligible partner and/or dependents is considered automatically by the MOD.
 - **Death-post-Service claims** - those made by surviving dependents of ex-Service Personnel who died after leaving Service.
 - **Additional child claims** - these claims are made for an additional child who was not included within the initial claim.

Changes to Initial injury/illness and survivors' claim outcomes

18. The AFCS aims to compensate as early as reasonably possible. In most cases it is possible, on the advice of medical advisors, to determine the long-term severity of successful injury/illness claims and claimants are awarded in accordance with the appropriate tariff of injury table and tariff level. However in some cases it is not possible to make an early decision on the appropriate compensation amount. In these cases, successful claims will be awarded an interim award. Interim awards are designed for cases where an injury or illness is clear but its on-going effect is not. The MOD will provide claimants with some financial security pending their full and final award. Awards are reviewed after two years, via an **interim review**, and then if necessary again at four years, to see if a final award can be made.
19. Claimants may have been awarded under the AFCS for an injury/illness whilst in Service. If the claimants' Service has ended and the injury/illness has become worse or a further injury has developed, the claimant can undertake a **Service Termination Review** and an increased award may be given.
20. Claimants may have their claim reviewed (and subsequently increased) via an **Exceptional Review** if their injury/illness has become worse since the award was made.
21. All types of reviews discussed above are presented together within the Statistical Bulletin and accompanying Excel tables.
22. Where injury/illness and survivors' claimants are unhappy with the outcome of their claim they request for their claim to be reassessed by a different assessing officer, via a **reconsideration**.
23. If claimants continue to be unhappy with the outcome of their claim reconsideration they can then **appeal** to an independent tribunal. Where an appeal has been lodged and a reconsideration has not already been carried out, the MOD must carry out a reconsideration of the original decision and notify both the claimant and the Tribunal of the outcome of the reconsideration. The request must be received within six months from the date of notification of the outcome of the reconsideration, or the original claim where no reconsideration has taken place. The Tribunal is held by the [HM Courts and Tribunals Service](#)¹⁰ (England, Scotland and Wales) and the [Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service](#)¹¹ and totally independent from the MOD. Tribunal decisions are legally binding on both the appellant and the MOD. The Tribunal is bound by the rules of the scheme.

Reviews of the Scheme

24. In 2010 a review of the AFCS was conducted under the independent chairmanship of former Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral the Lord Boyce. The Review found the Scheme was fundamentally sound but required adjustment in some areas. A full summary of the [Lord Boyce Review](#)¹² can be found on the Gov.UK website. A principal amendment to the scheme was the increased lump sum award amounts assigned to the scheme's tariff levels (presented in **Table A1** below), with those awarded prior to the review also receiving a 'top-up' to make up the difference. Information presented within the Statistical Bulletin on the total amounts paid out under the scheme reflects the increased payments.

Table A1: Pre- and Post- Lord Boyce Review Lump Sum Award amounts by Tariff Level, £

Tariff Level	Lump Sum Awards	
	Pre-Review	Post -Review
1	570,000	570,000
2	402,500	470,000
3	230,000	380,000
4	172,500	290,000
5	115,000	175,000
6	92,000	140,000
7	63,825	90,000
8	48,875	60,000
9	34,100	40,000
10	23,100	27,000
11	13,750	15,500
12	9,075	10,000
13	5,775	6,000
14	2,888	3,000
15	1,155	1,200

25. In early 2016 the a further independent review, the Quinquennial Review, or QQR, was conducted to make sure that the scheme still remained fit for purpose and displayed the flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and environments.

26. Overall the QQR concluded that the AFCS remained on track and fit for purpose, with some areas needing improvement. It recognised that the scheme had evolved over the years, and had the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. The QQR team suggested a combination of building on existing measures and creating new ones for future improvements to the scheme. Government will consider the QQR and its recommendations in due course. The full Review findings can be found on the Gov.UK website: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/594470/AFCS_QQR_Web_Version-20170223.pdf

Methodology

Data Sources

27. Most of the information presented within this Statistical Bulletin is sourced from quarterly AFCS data extracts from the Compensation and Pension System (CAPS) which is managed by DBS Veterans UK, responsible for administering the scheme.

28. Defence Statistics also receive quarterly datasets from the DBS Veterans UK finance team which are used to report on recipients of Guaranteed Income Payments. Information on the overall financial amounts paid out under the AFCS is also sourced from the Finance Team.
29. Information on those in receipt of the AFIP is recorded by DBS Veterans UK in a separate Excel spreadsheet. This data has been used to provide the number of individuals in receipt of AFIP.
30. Deployment data are used to determine those awarded under the AFCS that have previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Defence Statistics maintains a database of individual deployment records from November 2001. Data prior to April 2007 was derived from the single services Operation Location tracking (OPLOC) systems and data since April 2007 is obtained from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. The data covers deployments on Op TELIC (2003-2009) and Op VERITAS/Op HERRICK (2001-2014).

Data Extraction and Manipulation Process

31. The raw data extracts from the CAPS include non-genuine AFCS claims ('spanning', 'treat as never made' cases) which are removed by Defence Statistics prior to analysis. Spanning cases are claims considered first for entitlement under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, but passed to the War Pension Scheme where the cause of injury or onset of illness occurred prior to 6 April 2005. Between 6 April 2005 and 31 March 2017 there were 12,025 spanning cases included within the AFCS claims processing workload which were not reflected within these statistics. Treat as never made cases are those that have been registered under the Scheme but are later abandoned either due to the claim being entered in error or the claimant not proceeding with the claim.
32. Following the removal of non-genuine AFCS claims, Defence Statistics conduct a series of consistency checks on the data. For example, the numbers of records received is compared to the previous extract to ensure the total number is as expected. If any data quality issues are evident following receipt of data, Defence Statistics liaise with DBS Veterans UK to determine whether any investigation is required.
33. The CAPS data are processed through a series of automated programming in a MYSQL database that produces a series of summary tables on AFCS claims and awards that are then used to populate final tables within the report. The tables within the report present information on claims and awards over the length of the scheme by financial year, as well as by quarter (for the latest five quarters). This enables both long-term comparisons (by financial year) and short-term comparisons (by quarter) to be made.

Calculating Clearance Times

34. Clearance times calculations are conducted separately to the automated process. All closed genuine AFCS claims (claims with a 'cleared date' recorded on CAPS) were identified, and working days (to exclude weekends and bank holidays) between each claim being registered and cleared were calculated. Due to variations in the time taken to process each type of AFCS claim, average clearance times were calculated separately for each claim type: injury/illness claims, survivors' claims, reconsiderations and appeals.
35. Information on AFCS claim clearance times has been presented as a median average with an inter-quartile range, rather than a mean average and standard deviation as these statistics are affected less by outliers. An outlier is an observation within a dataset that appears to be inconsistent with the remainder of the dataset.
 - The median is the value in the centre of the data set when they are arranged from smallest to largest.

- A quartile is any of three values (first/lower quartile, second quartile (median), third/upper quartile) that divides the sorted (from smallest value to largest value) dataset into four equal parts. The lower quartile (LQ) is the value that at which 25% of the values in the dataset will be below. The upper quartile (UQ) is the value that at which 75% of the values in the dataset will be below.
 - The inter-quartile range (IQR) is the range in which the middle 50% of the data points fall (i.e. the distance between the lower and upper quartile). The longer the inter-quartile range the wider the spread of data.
36. The median has been presented in these statistics as it better reflects the average typical experience for the individual making a claim. The accompanying Excel tables to this publication also present the mean average. The mean average has also been presented as it is used internally as a measure of performance on the management of cases.
37. Survival analysis has been used to investigate further the length of time between a claim being registered and cleared. This analysis has been carried out for each claim type: injury/illness claims, survivors claims, reconsideration and appeals. Survival analysis is a statistical method designed to identify if two or more populations show differences in the rate of a "failure" event over time, and to predict the probability that a failure will or will not have occurred after a set period of time. The analysis takes account of open claims as well as cleared claims and is used to predict the probability that a claim will have been cleared by a certain point in time. In the context of this report "Survival" does not refer to a death, but to the length of time taken for a claim to be cleared by the MOD. A "failure" will occur when a claim is cleared by the MOD, i.e. a decision is made on the outcome of the claim.

Determining awarded claimants who previously deployed to Iraq and / or Afghanistan

38. In order to provide specific figures for those who previously deployed on Op TELIC (Iraq) and Op HERRICK (Afghanistan), Defence Statistics' deployment data have been linked to AFCS data held on the CAPS. Prior to the introduction of JPA in April 2007, dates in and out of theatre are unreliable and therefore it is only possible to identify that a Service person has deployed and not when they deployed / returned from Operations. For this reason it has not been possible to identify personnel deployed on Op VERITAS (Afghanistan) between 6 April 2005 and the end of the Operation in March 2016.
39. There were 445 awards made to claimants deployed on Op TELIC, and 80 awards made to claimants deployed on Op HERRICK where it was not possible to determine the specific date of deployment. Therefore there is a chance that these awards were made prior to individual's deployment.
40. Please note that person level deployment data for Afghanistan was not available between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005. Therefore, it is possible that some UK Armed Forces personnel who were deployed to Afghanistan during this period have not been identified in the figures provided.
41. Please note that **it is not possible to attribute injuries/illnesses to a specific deployment.** Therefore some of the individuals included in the figures provided may have claimed compensation for an injury/illness that did not occur during their deployment.

Determining AFIP recipients

42. Data on those in receipt of the AFIP are sourced directly from DBS Veterans UK. Defence Statistics carry out checks on the AFIP spreadsheet and ensure that only records for the relevant reporting period are included in the figure provided. AFIP records are also cross checked with AFCS claims data on CAPS to carry out validation checks.

2. Relevance

Coverage

43. The data presented include all claims for compensation under the AFCS registered between 6 April 2005 and 30 September 2016 by regular and reserve UK Service personnel and their dependants following injury/illness/death potentially caused by Service on or after 6 April 2005.
44. Although the figures presented cover all claims registered during the reported time period, the figures do not represent all individuals who have sustained a Service related injury/illness during that time. This is because there can be a time lag between an individual's injury/illness and the date they make a claim. Individuals have up to seven years to make an injury/illness claim from the date of their initial injury/diagnosis. There are some exceptions to this such as late-onset illnesses. Claims for a late-onset illness can be made at any time after the event to which it relates, as long as it is done so within three years of seeking medical advice. Families have up to three years to make a claim as a result of a death caused by Service.
45. Please note that some information on the outcomes of appeals made under the AFCS is not recorded on the CAPS and is therefore not presented in this report. All registered appeals are recorded on the CAPS. However only outcomes at the first stage of the appeal process (First Tier Tribunal) are recorded on CAPS. Information on appeals that progress to further stages (e.g. Upper Tier Tribunal) is held offline, i.e. not on the CAPS. Defence Statistics are planning to work with DBS Veterans UK to investigate how final appeal outcomes are captured in order to improve the information presented in the future.
46. DBS Veterans UK have migrated data from their interim system onto the CAPS. The interim system contains claims registered under the AFCS at the start of the scheme between 6 April 2005 and 31 October 2005. Please note that Veterans UK have only migrated successful interim system claims to the CAPS and therefore interim system claims that were rejected or withdrawn are not included in the publication tables. For information, there were 115 injury claims and 25 survivors' claims rejected, as recorded on the interim system.
47. In a given table, numbers of people for each financial year or quarter may not sum to the total number of people. This is because one person can make more than one claim spanning different quarters or financial years, but would only be counted once in the overall total.
48. This publication presents, for the first time (in Annex A, Table 15), a breakdown of lump sum award recipients by gender. In order to align with reports produced in Defence Statistics (Health), including the War Pensions Scheme National Statistic, gender is a key demographic to present in order to enable comparisons between reports.

User Needs

49. These statistics have been provided in response to an increasing number of requests for information about claims and awards under the scheme, including the number of individuals currently in receipt of compensation payments under the scheme and time taken for a claim to be cleared.
50. A range of information is requested including further details of claims and awards (e.g. by claim type or outcome) and further information on those awarded compensation (e.g. age and Service at time of award). Requests are also frequently made for information on AFCS awards made to specific sub-groups of people e.g. those who have submitted a compensation claim following an injury sustained in Afghanistan, those who have been

medically discharged for a specific condition, or those living in a particular area of the country. Defence Statistics are often able to link to other sources of data to provide this additional information.

51. In 2012 and 2013 Defence Statistics carried out an internal and an external consultation to review the War Pension Scheme (WPS) National Statistic and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Official Statistic to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. The consultations were prompted by the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health, which required a review of the content of the publications in consultation with users.
52. Following the consultations the majority of the recommendations were implemented. Recommendations included presenting numbers in terms of people as well as the number of claims and presenting information on numbers awarded who have been deployed.
53. Further additions have been made to these statistics during 2015 following public interest (in the form of Freedom of Information requests) and requests for information submitted by the House of Commons Defence Committee: information on clearance times, recipients of AFIP and total financial spend.

3. Accuracy

54. DBS Veterans UK is responsible for ensuring the quality of Compensation and Pension System (CAPS) data supplied to Defence Statistics. The CAPS is a large administrative database and is subject to the data quality issues of any large administrative system with data collated by a large number of staff for operational delivery purposes.
55. Further validation checks are carried out after the data has been processed to ensure that all processes and queries have run correctly and the final numbers are an accurate reflection of data received from DBS Veterans UK. Manual checks are then carried out on the final report to ensure that figures quoted in the commentary reflect those in the tables, and that the numbers sum to the totals provided.
56. The main sources of potential error in the production of the AFCS statistics are as follows:
 - Incomplete / incorrect CAPS data extracts
 - Data processing errors resulting in incorrect data outputs
 - Manual error during production of report tables, graphs and commentary
57. To ensure that potential errors are identified and resolved, Defence Statistics implement a series of data quality checks throughout the report production. These checks involve close liaison with DBS Veterans UK when required, to ensure the accuracy of the figures published. Where there is concern over the accuracy of data, Defence Statistics will publish the information as provisional (p).
58. These statistics are subject to routine revisions as CAPS is a live data system and historic data is amended between data extracts. These figures can be identified by a revision marker ('r'). Due to ongoing data validation, some figures reported in the publication are marked provisional ('p') and may be subject to change in future releases.
59. Numbers of registered claims, particularly those registered in the most recent financial year are subject to change since claims with no recorded outcome, at the time of the data extract, may go on to be recorded as 'treat as never made' cases, and thus will be removed from

analysis when later publications are produced. These figures are not marked as provisional since any revisions are routine (and marked with an 'r').

60. Following a series of identified data quality issues in 2015, Defence Statistics set up a working group with colleagues in DBS Veterans UK to continually review the quality of AFCS data. This working group continues to review data to ensure accuracy in reporting.

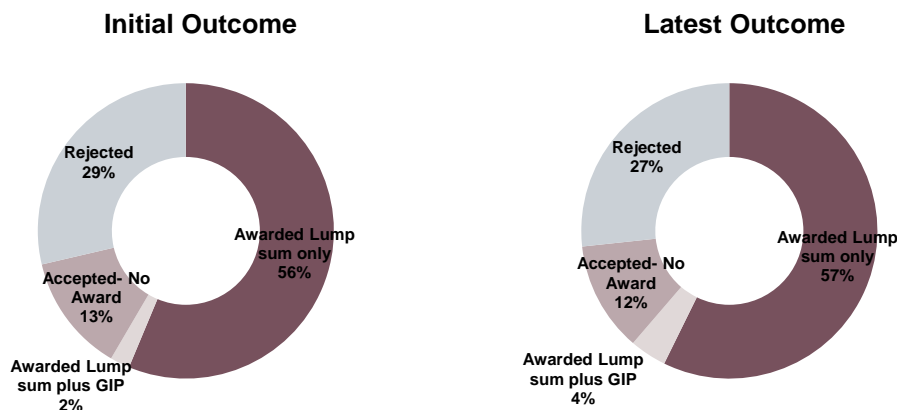
Change in methodology to improve accuracy on reporting of claim outcomes

61. Prior to the March 2017 AFCS National Statistics Bulletin injury/illness claim and survivors' claim outcomes were determined from the outcome of the initial claims, as recorded on the CAPS. Due to the complexities of the data held on claim outcomes at each stage of the claim process, it was not possible to 'track' claims through any subsequent activity to determine any changes in claim outcomes. However, the methodology has now been amended. Initial claims with no further activity (i.e. no subsequent reconsiderations, appeals etc.) retain their initial outcome. Initial claims with further activity are analysed to determine the highest tariff level awarded following their initial outcome. Please note that this methodology assumes that changes in awards will always result in an increased or maintained tariff level.

62. As at 31 March 2017 there were 147 awards reduced following a reconsideration, appeal or review since the start of the scheme. Therefore the change in methodology may have resulted in the latest reported outcome for these cases to be higher than in reality, assuming that the outcome was not subsequently increased following a later event. However, these cases represent 0.2% of the 72,726 registered claims during this time and any over-reporting on awards for these cases will not change the key stories or trends in the data. Therefore any risk of misreporting is outweighed by the benefits of reporting on the latest outcome of AFCS claims which is more accurate for users, since it is expected that some initial claim outcomes may naturally change over time (as discussed on page 4).

63. **Figure A1** compares claim outcomes when considering initial outcome only and the latest outcome using data as at 30 September 2016, as an example.

Figure A1: AFCS cleared injury/illness claims by initial and latest outcomes, percentages
6 April 2005¹ to 30 September 2016



Source: Compensation and Pension System
1 The AFCS began on the 6 April 2005.

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness

64. Data are provided to Defence Statistics on a monthly basis. From September 2008 to March 2011 figures were published on a quarterly basis. Following user consultation the frequency of publication was reduced from quarterly to biannual from June 2011.
65. Figures as at 31 March and 30 September are published in June and December respectively. It takes four weeks to extract, validate and process data extracted from CAPS. It takes a further six weeks to compile and to quality assure the report.

Punctuality

66. The National Statistics reports have all been published on time to meet pre-announced release dates. Future publication dates will also be announced on the Gov.UK at least one month in advance.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility

67. The statistics can be accessed through the Gov.UK website at the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>¹³.
68. 24 hour pre-release access to the report is available to a limited distribution list within MOD. The full list can be found in the pre-release access list available on the Gov.UK website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list>¹⁴.

Clarity

69. Users with an interest in the key findings can read a short summary of main messages within the Introduction of the report. The report is then split into six distinct sections to help users navigate their way through the publication.
70. Microsoft Excel versions of all AFCS report tables are also available on the Gov.UK website alongside each published report.
71. A glossary of key terms is provided in the Statistical Bulletin.

6. Coherence and Comparability

Coherence

72. The CAPS is the administration system for the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme; there are no other data sources from which information is being presented. However, the MOD produced internal management information from the CAPS. DBS Veterans UK and Defence Statistics work closely to ensure the management information and the statistics within the National Statistic are consistent.

7. Trade-offs between output quality components

73. Defence Statistics minimise the cost to Government of producing these statistics through using data already collated for operational delivery purposes within the MOD's administrative system. As a large administrative system, data quality across fields is of varying quality and completeness and this limits the information available to customers in our statistics and requests for information.

8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

74. In reference to the UK Statistics Authority report, [The Use Made of Official Statistics](#)¹⁵, the AFCS statistics are used by:

- (i) Government – Policy Making
- (ii) Government – Policy Monitoring
- (iii) Local Government – Service Delivery
- (iv) Academia – Facilitating Research
- (v) Charities – Service Delivery

Description of Users and Usage of Statistics

75. The AFCS statistics have been published in response to user demand. Interest has come from internal MOD policy makers, Parliament, Government Departments, the third Sector, academics, the media, and the general public.

76. The AFCS statistics are used by the following groups of customers:

- AFCS policy teams use these statistical publications as a basis for policy making. The MOD uses these figures for background information and for planning purposes e.g. estimating the volume/workload for different types of claims. These statistics allowed the MOD to forecast the financial implications of proposed changes to the AFCS as part of the 2010 AFCS Review.
- External organisations such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local Government and Armed Forces charities (e.g. RBL) use the reports and location figures as part of estimating and planning veteran casework provision e.g. to assess the numbers and needs of Service personnel and veterans in their local area.
- AFCS statistics are also used by the media to give context to reports on Armed Forces Compensation.

77. The publication of the statistics also plays an important part in ensuring the Department's accountability to the British public.

78. AFCS questions from outside the MOD (e.g. FOI requests) tend to ask for more detailed information on the data provided e.g. age, Service, location breakdowns. Defence Statistics receive a high volume of requests asking for information on compensation paid out for particular conditions, and also for information on the financial amounts paid out in compensation to particular subsets of individuals. Defence Statistics also receive a high volume of requests from external organisations e.g. NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and charities, who use breakdowns by detailed location for estimating the number of veterans in particular regions of the UK.

79. Following the MOD's launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2011, Defence Statistics received an increasing volume of requests from within the MOD, local Government departments and CCGs for information on the number of veterans by location. This was required to assist with planning for the needs of Service personnel and veterans in each specific area of the UK.

80. To meet these requirements Defence Statistics compiled information on the numbers of Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), War Pension Scheme (WPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) recipients with summaries by location. This was initially published in November 2011, and Defence Statistics has continued to publish annual updates, with the latest statistics on the [Location of Armed Forces Pension and Compensation recipients](#)¹⁶, as at 31 March 2016, published on the Gov.UK website.

Strengths and Weakness in Relation to User Needs

81. Defence Statistics has carried out consultations to review the War Pension Scheme (WPS) National Statistic and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Official Statistic to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. The consultations were prompted by the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health, which required a review of the content of the publications in consultation with users.
82. A consultation was carried out with internal stakeholders in September 2012. Based on the feedback received during the internal consultation, an external consultation was run alongside the release of the AFCS Official Statistic on 6 December 2012. This gave an opportunity for external customers to give feedback on the proposed changes to the AFCS and WPS publications.
83. During 2016/17, the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Official Statistic had over 4,300 unique web hits via the Gov.UK website.
84. The key strength of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme data is the efficient methods adopted to capture AFCS data extracts. Validation checks are undertaken to ensure that the information provided in the reports is accurate.
85. The key weakness is that Defence Statistics have to rely on the level of detail that Veterans UK manually enter for each claim. There are also no other data sources that can be used to validate the information provided to Defence Statistics. Furthermore, a great deal of the information is recorded in free text fields.
86. Users external to the MOD are encouraged to give feedback via email (DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk).

9. Performance cost and respondent burden

Operational Cost

87. During 2016/17 the production of the biannual AFCS statistics required approximately 0.4 FTE to produce these mid-year statistics for 2016/17. This was broken down into the following:
- Time taken to develop latest outcome methodology – approximately 20 days.
 - Time taken to validate data and – approximately 2 days.
 - Time taken to produce AFCS national statistic (including report and process development) – approximately 25 days.
 - Time taken to respond to approximately requests for information (including internal ad-hocs, FOI requests and PQs) - approximately 30 days.
 - General correspondence with within the MOD, to include DBS Veterans UK and policy areas – approximately 4 days.

88. The AFCS report uses an administrative data source which is already collected by the MOD. Therefore, the main operational cost to production of the statistics is liaison with Veterans UK, for quality assurance and data interpretation.

10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

89. Defence Statistics have data access agreements with Veterans UK with respect to obtaining the CAPS data extracts. All Defence Statistics staff involved in the production have signed a declaration that they have completed the Government wide Responsible for Information: General User training and they understand their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

90. Only individuals who produce these statistics have access to the underlying data. Defence Statistics ensures that the AFCS data are kept confidential by holding this data on a secure server.

91. In line with the directives of the JSP 200, disclosure control is conducted on all statistical information provided by the MOD to safeguard the confidentiality of individuals. Within these statistics a risk of disclosure has been considered to be high where numbers presented are fewer than three. In cases where a risk of disclosure exists, one of three appropriate disclosure control methods have been applied:

- a. Figures have been suppressed: In most cases where there may be a risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than three have been suppressed and marked as '~'. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is fewer than three, secondary suppression has been applied where the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.
- b. Figures have been grouped: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression, columns and/or rows have been grouped together in order to present larger numbers.
- c. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression and it has not been possible to group columns and/or rows, figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

11. References

1. UK Statistics Authority (UKSA): <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>
2. UKSA Protocols on Pre-Release Access: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/pre-release-access/>
3. Armed Forces Compensation Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-compensation/armed-forces-compensation-what-you-need-to-know>
4. Veterans UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>
5. War Pension Scheme Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>
6. Armed Forces Pension Scheme (2005) Ill Health Benefits: [AFPS 05 ill health benefits](#)

7. AFCS Tariff Of Injury Table: <http://www.infolaw.co.uk/mod/docs/AFCS-2014-04-07.pdf>
8. Personal Independence Payment: <https://www.gov.uk/pip/overview>
9. Disability Living Allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/dla-disability-living-allowance-benefit>
10. HM Courts and Tribunals Service: <https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/upper-tribunal-administrative-appeals-chamber>
11. Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service: <http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-gb/tribunals/pensionsappeal/Pages/PensionsAppealTribunal.aspx>
12. Lord Boyce Review: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/27395/9780101779821_afcsreview_20100216.pdf
13. Armed Forces Compensation Scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>
14. Ministry of Defence Pre-Release Access: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list>
15. The use made of Official Statistics: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/archive/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf>
16. Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/location-of-armed-forces-pension-and-compensation-recipients>
17. Armed Forces Independent Payment: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faq-on-the-armed-forces-independance-payment>

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