



Ministry of Defence

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

Our Reference: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

16 June 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your e-mail to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) dated 30 May 2017 in which you requested the following information:

1. With reference to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Order 2011 please provide:
 - a. Mental Disorder - The definition and/or criteria which is used by assessors in order to determine whether an individual has received an "adequate course of appropriate best practice treatment" for a mental disorder? (i.e. does AFCS use NICE guidelines?).
 - b. PTSD - If different to above, the specific definition and/or criteria which is used by assessors in order to determine whether an individual has received an "adequate course of appropriate best practice treatment" for PTSD? (ie does AFCS use NICE guidelines?).

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. I can confirm the MOD does hold some data in scope of your request which is provided in the Annex below.

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

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) is a full and final no-fault compensation scheme with awards made for injuries and disorders which, on balance of probabilities, are caused or predominantly caused or worsened by qualifying Service (i.e. military service on or after 6 April 2005). The aim of a full and final award is to provide, as early as possible after the claim, financial certainty so that the recipient can engage fully with treatment and rehabilitation with a view wherever possible to resuming a full life amongst family friends and at work.

Awards comprise a lump sum derived from a tariff arranged in nine tables of categories of injuries and disorders likely to be seen in a military population. For those most seriously injured the award also includes an income stream, the Guaranteed Income Payment which aims to act as income replacement/enhancement where the disabling effects of the accepted condition are likely to adversely affect functions relevant to suitable civilian employment.

The award reflects the disabling effects of the injury over the person's lifetime when he/she is in an optimum medical state (i.e. has had an adequate course of appropriate medical treatment). In regard to mental health disorders this is achieved when the person has engaged with, committed to and completed an evidence-based best practice intervention. Disorders which may be caused by military service are the common mental health disorders such as anxiety states, adjustment disorder, some types of depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Best practice guidelines from a number of expert bodies, including the National Institute For Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) are available for these conditions and are known to be effective in veterans leading at least and in most cases, to functional improvement.

The scheme's approach to mental health disorders followed scrutiny of the evidence, findings and recommendations made by the Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) in their 2013 report and accepted by the then Minister for Veterans. IMEG is a non-departmental expert body. The report does not specify a particular set of best practice guidance that should be followed but in the UK NICE guidelines may well be followed by treating clinicians. In deciding whether a claimant has met the criteria, account is taken of the disorder, the particular intervention and comment on progress and prognosis by the treating clinician.

To assist your enquiry under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) of the FOI Act I have placed below a link to the IMEG 2013 report on medical and scientific aspects of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/imeg-report-on-medical-and-scientific-aspects-of-the-armed-forces-compensation-scheme>