



# Ministry of Defence

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

Our Reference: FOI2017/06155



1 August 2017

Dear ,

Thank you for your e-mail to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) dated 27 June 2017 in which you requested the following information on the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS).

The Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) Report and recommendations on medical and scientific aspects of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (dated 17 May 2013) stated the following recommendation on page 23:

"D. Manual for clinicians: providing evidence in the scheme:

37. Finally we recommend production of validated manual/guidance for clinicians providing evidence on mental health disorders in the Scheme. This would cover general aspects and challenges of mental health disorders and their attribution – diagnostic pitfalls - PTSD – through life history – at risk vulnerability, predisposing precipitating and maintaining factors - corroborative evidence – how to detect under-reporting or elaboration - how to assess severity - focus on function - best practice treatment – psychometric outcome measures."

1. Can you please provide:

- a. Confirmation that this recommendation was acted upon?
- b. If yes, please provide a copy of the validated manual/guidance for clinicians.
- c. If no, which person/department/role took the decision to ignore the IMEG recommendation?
- d. If no, on what grounds did the person/department/role decide to ignore the IMEG recommendation? (ie too expensive too produce etc)
- e. If no, was the IMEG and the Secretary of State for Defence contacted in order to inform them that IMEG recommendation was not implemented?

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A review of our data holdings has been completed, and I can confirm that the MOD does hold some information within the scope of your request; this is provided in the annexes at the end of this letter.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence People

The Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) Report and recommendations on medical and scientific aspects of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (dated 17 May 2013) stated the following recommendation on page 23:

"D. Manual for clinicians: providing evidence in the scheme:

37. Finally we recommend production of validated manual/guidance for clinicians providing evidence on mental health disorders in the Scheme. This would cover general aspects and challenges of mental health disorders and their attribution – diagnostic pitfalls - PTSD – through life history – at risk vulnerability, predisposing precipitating and maintaining factors - corroborative evidence – how to detect under-reporting or elaboration - how to assess severity - focus on function - best practice treatment – psychometric outcome measures."

Can you please provide:

**1. Confirmation that this recommendation was acted upon?**

- A. This has not yet been achieved. The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Order 2011 provides no fault compensation for injury due to or worsened by AFCS service on a balance of probabilities. Injury includes illness, defined in the Order as "a physical or mental disorder included either in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)". These classifications set out the criteria for diagnosis of the various disorders. This is especially important for mental health disorders as they are subjective with no objectively verifiable features.

Publication of new ICD and DSM mental health classifications was expected in 2014 or 2015. In fact while the fifth edition of the DSM has now been published, the latest edition of the ICD is not expected until 2018. Other factors in the delay include a requirement to routinely review and reflect as appropriate the significant volume of new peer-reviewed published studies on military mental health, including on best practice clinical management and causation which have emerged since 2013. The Fourth IMEG Report is due by the end of October 2017, that will include further comment on military mental health and it is intended that work on the clinician guidance, overseen by IMEG, can begin then.

**2. If yes, please provide a copy of the validated manual/guidance for clinicians.**

- A. Please see reply to question one.

**3. If no, which person/department/role took the decision to ignore the IMEG recommendation?**

- A. No such decision was taken.

**4. If no, on what grounds did the person/department/role decide to ignore the IMEG recommendation? (i.e. too expensive too produce etc.)**

A. No such decision was taken.

**5. If no, was the IMEG and the Secretary of State for Defence contacted in order to inform them that IMEG recommendation was not implemented?**

A. The Secretary of State for Defence was not informed of the postponement. The IMEG will be taking the recommendations forward in the fourth report in October and so they are aware that the recommendations have not been implemented.