



Ministry
of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 4 September, in response to my letter of the same date, in which you further clarified your Freedom of Information request, and asked for the following:

- 1. The number of Officers and Other Ranks (OR) currently on special diets to help them reduce weight.*
- 2. The number of Officers and OR who have failed Annual Fitness Tests (AFT) since 2015.*
- 3. I would also like details of the numbers of Army Officers above the rank of one star who have either not passed an AFT or failed to take one since 2015.*
- 4. I would like general information about what is done to assist Army personnel to reduce weight.*
- 5. The number of Officers and OR who were classified as being obese in April 2015, April 2016 and April 2017.*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held, and is provided.

Question 1

As advised in the response you received to FOI2017/05517 on 15 June, the information you have requested cannot be provided as it is not held.

Question 2

The number of Officers and OR who have failed AFT since 2015 is shown in the table below.

Rank	Number of Personnel
Officer (below 1*)	158
OR	3337

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may wish to be aware that participants who fail the AFT are, subject to medical opinion, retested after an appropriate period of rest (not less than 48 hours) and within seven days. Those who then fail the retest are to be referred for appropriate medical opinion with a view to commencing Reconditioning Training.

The number of Officers and OR who have passed an AFT having previously failed it since 2015, are shown in the table below.

Rank	Number of Personnel
Officer (below 1*)	92
OR	2082

Notes/caveats:

- AFT are undertaken by personnel under the age of 50 and in deployable units.
- This data does not track people, therefore we cannot categorically confirm that those recorded as having failed an AFT since 2015, are the same as those who retook and passed their AFT since 2015.

Question 3

No Officer above the rank of Brigadier has been recorded as failing an AFT or failing to undertake the AFT.

Question 4

It is a condition of service that our personnel must be fit and healthy and over 95% pass challenging fitness tests. All are educated in nutrition, diet and exercise in order to maintain a healthy weight, and in some circumstances additional measures are considered in order to achieve this.

Defence is also currently updating the policy for weight management which covers other aspects of weight management including prevention and individual support initiatives through multi-disciplinary teams (i.e. diet, fitness and healthcare support).

Question 5

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a simple index of height-weight and does not differentiate between weight that is associated with muscle mass and weight associated with body fat. Therefore, the relationship between BMI and body fat varies according to body build and composition. In order to obtain the BMI data and to be able confirm the number of personnel who were classified as obese (those with a BMI of 30kg/m² or above), information had to be extracted from two data sources. One of these is a legacy system that only has information recorded up until 31 March 2015.

As BMI is no longer considered the most accurate method of determining an individual's health status, the Armed Forces now use Body Composition Measure (BCM). This comprises of BMI and waist circumference, rather than BMI in isolation. Recent data concerning BMI is therefore limited. For example, as at 1 April 2017, of the 77,619 UK personnel trade trained (i.e. those who have completed their basic and trade specific training) with a valid BMI, 46% had a BMI recorded that was more than two years old.

The number of Officers and OR who were classified as being obese in April 2015, April 2016 and April 2017, are shown in the table below.

Year	Total British Army Personnel Trade Trained with a Valid BMI	BMI Above 30kg/m ²	
		Officers	Other Ranks
As at 1 April 2015	81,707	1167	6753
As at 1 April 2016	79,041	1160	6699
As at 1 April 2017	77,619	1173	6732

Notes/caveats:

- Please note that some of these personnel may have subsequently recorded BMI scores below the obesity threshold.
- Personnel with medical conditions or who appear underweight or overweight may have their weight recorded more regularly than those personnel who appear to be of an ideal weight.

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

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

Army Secretariat