

Background Quality Report

Location of UK Armed Forces Pension and Compensation Recipients

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 Location of UK Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients¹ statistics published by Defence Statistics.

1 Introduction

1. This Statistical Bulletin provides summary statistics on the location of Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients by country, region, county, local authority, local health organisation, and postcode district.
2. The cohort of Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients is made up of the following;
 - Ex-Serving Armed Forces personnel in receipt of an occupational pension under one of the Armed Forces Pension Schemes (AFPS 75 and 05). This cohort **excludes** those in receipt under AFPS 15, please see 'coverage and user needs' section for more information.
 - Ex-serving Armed Forces personnel, war widow(er)s and other pensioners in receipt of a disablement pension under the War Pension Scheme (WPS).
 - Serving and ex-serving personnel that have been awarded compensation under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS).
3. **Please note** that the MOD does not hold data on the location of all veterans. Ex-Serving personnel who are not in receipt of an occupational pension under the AFPS, or that have not been awarded compensation under the WPS or AFCS on or prior to 31 March 2018 will not be included in these statistics. An estimate of the total number of veterans is available in the Annual Population Survey Official Statistic².
4. This Statistical Bulletin is published as an Official Statistic, adhering to the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)³ protocols on pre-release access⁴.

Background

5. There are several occupational pension schemes available to Armed Forces personnel. The data presented in these statistics cover the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 1975 (AFPS 75) and the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 (AFPS 05). AFPS 75 was introduced in 1975 and was closed to new entrants from 6 April 2005. AFPS 05 was the scheme applicable to those joining the Regular Armed Forces from 6 April 2005. Serving members of AFPS 75 were given an opportunity to transfer to AFPS 05 by 6 April 2006. A new scheme was introduced in 2015 (AFPS 15) for those joining the Regular Armed Forces from 1 April 2015 however these statistics currently do not report on them. More information on why AFPS 15 recipients cannot be included can be found in paragraph 21.

6. There are currently two compensation schemes for those injured or bereaved through service;
 - The War Pension Scheme (WPS) provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by Service from the start of the First World War in 1914 until 5 April 2005.
 - The Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) came into force on 6 April 2005 to pay compensation for injury, illness or death caused by Service on or after that date. Unlike the WPS, service personnel can claim for compensation under the AFCS whilst in Service.
7. The AFPS, WPS and AFCS are managed by Veterans UK⁵ within the MOD. Full guidance and policy information⁶ on pensions for veterans and compensation can be found on the Gov.uk website.
8. In addition to the 'location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients' statistics, Defence Statistics publish the following statistics;
 - Annual War Pension Scheme statistics⁷ detailing ex-serving personnel currently in receipt of a pension under the WPS, including a breakdown by region (figures as at the end of the financial year published in June).
 - Annual Armed Forces Compensation Scheme statistics⁸ detailing serving and ex-serving personnel that have been awarded compensation under the AFCS, including a breakdown by region (figures as at the end of the financial year published in June).
 - Annual UK Armed Forces Veteran estimates², using information captured within the Annual Population Survey, administered by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These statistics provide comparisons of estimated veteran and non-veteran populations residing in Great Britain on the following: people characteristics; regional location; health including smoking status; employment status; education and accommodation (housing).

Methodology

Determining Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients cohort

9. Information on those that are in receipt of an occupational pension under the AFPS (75 and 05), and those that have been awarded compensation under the AFCS is held on the Compensation and Pension System (CAPS). Information on recipients of an ongoing pension under the WPS is held on the War Pension Computer System (WPCS). The MOD is responsible for managing both systems and for the quality of the data. Defence Statistics receives monthly extracts from the CAPS and quarterly extracts from the WPCS. Extracts from both systems are processed by Defence Statistics and stored on a MYSQL database. The CAPS and WPCS data extracts used to compile these statistics are all as at 31 March 2018.
10. The CAPS data on recipients currently in receipt of an occupational pension under the AFPS (75 and 05), and the WPCS data on recipients of an ongoing pension under the WPS include only veterans (and dependants under the WPS). The CAPS data on recipients that have been awarded compensation under the AFCS however includes personnel that are still serving since claimants can claim whilst still in service. Therefore, in order to identify veterans from this cohort, the CAPS data were linked with MOD Armed Forces population data extracted from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system to determine those 'on strength' (i.e. in Service) as at 31 March 2018. This information has been used to compile the breakdown of AFCS recipients still in Service, and veterans AFCS recipients, as at 31 March 2018.
11. The CAPS records for recipients of compensation under the AFCS have been analysed to determine whether the recipient had subsequently died following their compensation award. Individuals with a date of death recorded on their CAPS record have been excluded. However, this information is only updated if DBS are notified of a death. Therefore, there may be individuals that have been awarded compensation under the AFCS and have later died that are still included within these statistics.

12. The location of recipients of an occupational pension and/or compensation in the UK were derived by individuals' postcodes as recorded on the CAPS and WPCS as at 31 March 2018. Four separate methodologies were used to produce the summaries of recipients by region, county, local authority, local health organisation and postcode district.
 - Region information was compiled in line with the ONS' Regional classifications¹¹.
 - County, LA information and CCG group was compiled by linking individuals' full postcodes with the latest ONS census geography lookup tables¹² as at August 2016. Postcode district information was produced by grouping individuals by their postcode prefix (first three or four digits). Figures by postcode district are presented for valid UK postcode districts only (i.e. those that appeared in the above ONS census geography lookup tables).
13. The figures by postcode district have only been provided for England, Wales and Scotland. The information by postcode district has not been provided for Northern Ireland due to security concerns regarding the release of this information. All valid Northern Ireland postcodes have instead been presented as 'BT', Breakdowns by county, local authority and local commissioning group have been provided for Northern Ireland addresses.
14. In February 2016, the ONS postcode file contained different codes for Northern Ireland local authorities. This change was to reflect the district council areas (DCA) and electoral wards. This has resulted in fewer areas listed in Annex A, Table 3 and therefore is not comparable with reports published prior to 2016.
15. The category of 'Invalid UK postcode' includes records with a blank or invalid UK postcode. This category may also include records with an invalid overseas address. The number of records presented in the unknown category differs between Tables 1, 2 and 3. This is due to postcodes where the first half (e.g. BS34) is valid, but the full postcode is not. For these records, although it is possible to provide a summary by postcode district, the full postcode cannot be linked to the relevant data used to assign further location groupings e.g. county.
16. Since individuals can be in receipt of pension and/or compensation under more than one scheme, combined figures of all unique Service personnel, veterans and dependants have also been presented, with veterans presented as a subset.
17. It is important to note that the regional location information within these statistics for those awarded compensation under the WPS and the AFCS may not match the regional breakdowns as at 31 March 2018 presented within the WPS statistics⁷ and the AFCS statistics⁸, previously published on 28 June 2018. The regional information compiled for the WPS and AFCS National Statistic publications used only the postcode information as captured within the respective systems (the WPCS or the CAPS). However, when compiling these location statistics, it was identified that there were a number of people that appeared on both the WPCS and the CAPS with different recorded postcodes. In these instances, the postcode with the most recent effective date has been used. The postcode is based on the latest address provided to the MOD by the individual. Please note that the MOD may not always be notified of a change of address and therefore the 'current' location information for some individuals may be incorrect.
18. In previous reports, only countries with 10 or more overall recipients were included in line with Defence Statistics old rounding policy. In line with the new JSP200 suppression policy we have included all overseas locations in this report.

2 Relevance

Coverage

19. The majority of users who request information in this area are interested in the total number of veterans within a specific location. The MOD does not hold information on the location of all veterans. However, these statistics present a summary in relation to compensation and pension information that is held by the MOD on the location of known veteran cohorts.
20. These statistics exclude veterans who were not in receipt of an ongoing pension under the AFPS 75 and 05, and veterans who had not received compensation under the WPS or the AFCS as at 31 March 2018.
21. These statistics do not currently include ex-serving personnel in receipt of a pension under the AFPS 15. Data for this pension scheme are held on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system and it is not currently possible to separate those who are receiving their pension and those who currently have a deferred pension. Therefore, the overall number of AFPS recipients should be treated as a minimum.

User need

22. The 'location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients' statistics were developed following an increasingly high burden of requests for information from external users wanting to obtain lower-level detail regarding the current location of WPS and AFCS recipients than already published. In particular, requests from Local Authorities and CCGs, requesting estimates of serving and ex-serving personnel residing within their catchment area that have been awarded compensation as result of service-attributable injury or illness.
23. The increase in such requests has been primarily driven by the Armed Forces Covenant⁹, published in May 2011, which sets out the moral obligation of the nation to its members of the armed forces and their families. Supplementary to this is the Armed Forces Community Covenant¹⁰, encouraging local communities to support the armed forces community in their area and promote understanding and awareness of issues affecting the armed forces community. Therefore, public bodies such as Local Authorities, CCGs and non-profit organisations are keen to obtain an understanding of the numbers of potentially vulnerable serving personnel and veterans within their catchment areas that may require access to local support including health and social care services.

3 Accuracy

Coverage

24. Data on all individuals currently in receipt of a pension under the WPS are held on the WPCS. The CAPS captures information on all recipients of an occupational pension under the AFPS 75 and AFPS 05 schemes and recipients of compensation under the AFCS. Therefore, we assume 100% coverage of these cohorts.
25. The CAPS data include all recipients of compensation under the AFCS between the start of the scheme (6 April 2005) and 31 March 2018. This includes individuals that have later died (of related or unrelated causes). Identifying those that have subsequently died relies on the MOD having been informed of their death. Therefore, these statistics may be over-counting the number of recipients of compensation under the AFCS (and subsequently, the total number of all recipients and veterans) where the MOD have not been informed of an individual's death.

26. The accuracy of the location of armed forces recipients of pension and compensation is harder to ascertain. Individuals' locations are determined by their postcode as recorded on the WPCS or the CAPS. Postcode fields on both systems are non-mandatory, free-text fields. Therefore the accuracy of reported locations relies on a valid and accurate postcode having been entered. This also relies on individuals' address information remaining up-to-date on the relevant system. Recipients of lump sum awards (without an ongoing guaranteed income payment) under the AFCS are unlikely to update their address details once their claim has been settled.
27. Overall there were 477,681 individuals captured within the data for the three schemes. Of these, 66,086 (14%) records had no postcode information, or an invalid UK postcode captured on the relevant systems as at 31 March 2018. These 66,086 records do not include known overseas recipients, as these individuals have been identified based on region and country codes within the data.

Revisions Policy

28. Revisions will be made to these statistics to improve the usability and relevance when necessary. Reasons for revising figures include:
 - (i) Acquiring new information relating to already published results;
 - (ii) Improvements to methodology and selection of data sources;
 - (iii) Identification of significant errors.

Any revisions to historic data can be identified by a revision marker ('r') and will only be discussed if such revisions are considered to have an impact on the findings.

4 Timeliness and Punctuality

Timeliness

29. These statistics are published on an annual basis, five months after the reference period. This is to allow time for the AFCS and WPS data to be collated, analysed and quality assured (to be published separately – see paragraph 8) prior to the development of these statistics.

Punctuality

30. These statistics have been published to schedule. Future publication dates will be announced on the statistics release calendar¹³ published on the gov.uk website at least one month in advance.

5 Accessibility and Clarity

31. Users of these statistics can access the latest and previous publications and accompanying Microsoft Excel tables on the gov.uk website. The previously published report (as at 31 March 2017), published in July 2017 received 1,775 unique web hits.

6 Coherence and Comparability

Coherence

32. The address recorded for each recipient can vary between the AFPS, AFCS and WPS datasets. Therefore, we compare the address effective dates to ensure that the latest address is used for each pension/compensation recipient.
33. This method differs for location information summarised in the WPS and AFCS National Statistics, where the location is based on the latest address recorded on each of their respective datasets (the WPCS and the CAPS).

Comparability

34. Defence Statistics (Health) has used the same regional definitions (e.g. local authority and NHS groups) as the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This enables comparisons to the overall numbers in each area. Comparisons are also possible with other Defence Statistics publications that present location breakdowns e.g. the stationed locations of Armed Forces personnel presented in the Tri Service Quarterly Location Statistics¹³ and annual UK Armed Forces Veteran in Great Britain estimates².
35. Annual UK Armed Forces Veteran in Great Britain estimates, using information captured within the Annual Population Survey (APS), presents estimated numbers of veterans by location by Country, Region and County (these estimates exclude those residing in Northern Ireland). Due to small numbers, it is not possible to estimate the numbers of veterans at lower geographical levels. However, by using the same ONS definitions it is possible to compare these statistics with the estimates produced by the APS data for England, Scotland and Wales at Country, County and Region level.
36. In 2017 that there were 2.5 million veterans estimated to be living in Great Britain, using data from the Annual Population Survey..

Comparability Over Time

37. These statistics are a snap shot in time of the locations of those that are in receipt of an occupational pension under the AFPS, those in receipt of a pension under the WPS and living recipients of compensation under the AFCS. These statistics have not been developed to intentionally compare the numbers of individuals or veterans within these cohorts over time. However, users can compare between publications to see how numbers have changed between one report and the next.

7 Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

38. Timeliness and cost versus accuracy is the most notable trade-off for these statistics. The latest statistics relied on quality data for over 470,000 individuals across the three schemes. It is not possible to validate the address information for all individuals. Therefore Defence Statistics have to rely on the quality of the data captured on the WPCS and the CAPS.
39. Where individuals are present on both the WPCS and the CAPS, address comparisons are made and the latest address recorded is retained where the address information is different. Where there is no postcode information recorded, or the postcode information is invalid, records are simply recorded as not having a valid UK postcode.

8 Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The use made of location of pension and compensation recipients statistics

40. In reference to the UK Statistics Authority report, The Use Made of Official Statistics, these Statistics are known to have been used in the following ways:
- (i) by Local government and NHS Groups - Resource allocation
 - (ii) by third sector organisations – Lobbying support

Local government and NHS group – Resource allocation

41. These statistics are used by local authorities and NHS Groups to estimate the number of potentially vulnerable veterans within their catchment areas. This enables them to estimate costs and resources required to provide specific local services.

Third sector organisations – Lobbying and funding support for services

42. These statistics have been used by a wide variety of third sector organisations. Examples include the Royal British Legion, local mental health charities, local enterprise partnerships, local employment services, and local housing charities. All organisations have used these statistics to obtain estimates of local veterans to be used as a resource for funding bids for specific service provision, or to assist with planning of potential services that may be required within their catchment area.

Obtaining Information on User Needs

43. Following the release of the first statistics in November 2011, a record has been kept of all queries, including requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and parliamentary questions, which have asked for information on the location of pension and compensation recipients. User engagement has primarily been focused on veterans within each location. Therefore these statistics also present the number of individuals within each location (as recorded across the three pension and compensation schemes), to include separate totals for veterans.

Strengths and Weaknesses of these statistics in relation to Users

44. Many users of these statistics enquire about information on the location of all veterans residing in a specific location. These statistics do not meet this user need. The MOD does not hold information on the current location of all living persons that have ever served within the armed forces.
45. Whilst these statistics do not include all veterans, many requests for information received by the MOD are targeted initially at just veterans that have been awarded compensation under the WPS and/or the AFCS for Service-related injury/illness. Therefore these statistics enable local authorities and NHS groups to gain a better understanding of potentially vulnerable veterans that are more likely to require access to local Health and Social Care service. These location statistics also include veterans that are in receipt of their occupational pension under the AFPS and are therefore of pensionable age.

9 Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

46. Annual updates of the location statistics take one member of staff two weeks to prepare, including data preparation, validation and report writing.
47. Most of the data required are obtained from existing administration systems and have already been extracted and processed for the production of the annual WPS National Statistics and the Biannual AFCS National Statistics. There is only a small marginal cost to obtaining and

linking additional ONS location lookups and producing lower-level information on pension and compensation recipients, which was also a requirement prior to the publication of these statistics due to the high volume of external requests for such information.

10 Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

48. The raw data used for producing the location statistics includes personal details and addresses of those in receipt of pensions and compensation. The data is stored in a MYSQL database and can only be accessed by analysts involved in producing the location statistics. All MOD, civil service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All published outputs are at a high level of aggregation so there are no disclosure issues.
49. 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 two 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.

11 References

1. **Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/location-of-armed-forces-pension-and-compensation-recipients>
2. **Annual population survey UK Armed Forces veterans residing in Great Britain:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-population-survey-uk-armed-forces-veterans-residing-in-great-britain>
3. **UK Stats Authority (UKSA):** <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>
4. **UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) protocols on pre-release access:**
<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/pre-release-access/>
5. **Veterans UK:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk>
6. **Pensions for veterans - Defence and armed forces guidance:**
<https://www.gov.uk/pensions-and-compensation-for-veterans>
7. **War Pension Scheme Annual Statistics:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>
8. **Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Annual Statistics:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>
9. **Armed Forces covenant:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>
10. **Armed forces community covenant:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant/armed-forces-community-covenant>
11. **ONS Regional Classifications:**
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/administrative/england/government-office-regions/index.html>
12. **ONS Census Geography lookup tables:**
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/products/census/lookup/index.html>
13. **Statistics Release Calendar:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>
14. **Tri-Service quarterly location statistics:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/location-of-all-uk-regular-service-and-civilian-personnel-quarterly-statistics-index>
15. **Health and Social Care Information Centre ODS Postcode Files:**
<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/data/ods/datadownloads/pcodedata>
16. **MOD Statistics Plan:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ministry-of-defence-draft-statistics-plan>
17. **The Royal British Legion Household Survey 2014:**
<http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/campaigns/household-survey-2014>

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