



Ministry
of Defence

Ref: FOI2017/12382

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Reply to: [REDACTED]

6 February 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 30 November 2017 requesting the following information:

"Please may I have the information for the following?

Broken down over the last 10 calendar years - The total number of those who've applied for the armed forces (RAF/Navy/Army).

Of those, can I get the number of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Within the successful applicants, can I get the number of recruits who successfully passed their basic training, and those who did not and/or had to drop out?

Would it be also possible to get a break down of whether they were applying for an entry level position, or officer level?

Could I also get a break down of sex and age?

If the information is available, could I get a break down of the reasons for recruits not passing their basic training?"

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act).

I apologise for the time taken in replying to your correspondence.

I must advise that this request is exempt under Section 12 of the FOI Act because the detailed information requested is not recorded centrally, so it would be necessary to manually search each individual training or personnel record. As most of the files are archived they are likely to be held at TNT, but it would take a considerable amount of time to even determine how many are held there and how many may be held locally.

This would amount to approximately 23 days that this action would exceed the time and cost limit set by the FOI Act.

Even just one of our Services, has on average, 120 individuals each year who don't pass Phase 1 training, and at 10 minutes per individual record (to identify each individual, locate their record and then extract the information) it would take 19.5 hours to provide 1 years' worth of information (multiplying that by 10 for the full 10 years indicates 195 hours for just one Service alone).

Section 12 of the FOI Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act, public authorities are required to provide the requester with advice and assistance especially where a request for information exceeds the appropriate cost limit. Therefore, I can advise you that as your request covers a long period you may wish to consider shortening the duration considerably. I also advise that part of the data you require is already available the public domain, which may be of interest to you:

Tri service information on applications is available in our published service personnel statistics which are available at the link here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-2017>

Your attention is drawn to the relevant statistics in the Excel Tables 9a, 9b, and 9c which is the second link on that web page.

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 CIOFOI-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 Secretariat FOI