



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Our Reference: FOI2017/11469

Email: [REDACTED]

18 December 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email dated 11 November 2017 in which you have requested the following information:

"I would like to request information about the number of new recruits into the armed forces that have a reading age of 11 or under from the years 2010 to 2017.

Also, I would like to know the number of recruits to the armed forces with the reading age of 11 or under from 2010 to 2017 who improved their reading age after completing training within the military.

I would like this information to be supplied as either xls or csv (spreadsheet) formats. But, I would also like a word document with a summary too.

Please, could you make a clear distinction between each section of the military, i.e. statistics for the army separate from statistics for the navy etc and also for each year?"

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the MOD, and I can confirm that no information in scope of the request is held.

Section 16 of the FOIA sets out the duty on public authorities to provide advice and assistance, as far as it is reasonable to expect the public authority to do so, to anyone who is considering, or has made, a request for information to it.

The following information is provided under Section 16.

Royal Navy/Royal Marines

All officers joining the Royal Navy/Royal Marines are required to have GCSE English (or equivalent) at Grade C or above on joining, therefore this following information concentrates on Ratings/Marines.

With regard to recruits, the RN recruitment psychometric (RT) test for literacy does not test to the level being questioned on the FOI as the Naval Service (NS) does not need this level of detail and we do not routinely record new recruits reading levels on joining the Naval Service, the systems of psychometric testing in the literacy discipline do not go into this level of detail.

For your information however, the RT test consists of a 30 question multiple choice assessment and each applicant needs to achieve 10/30 in the literacy discipline regardless of prior qualifications attained. What we do record however, is what level of English qualification new recruits join with, this is recorded at either Level 1 (GCSE D-G, new grade 1-3) or Level 2 (Grade C or above or the new grade 4 - 9), we also record their maths qualifications in the same way.

All recruits are enrolled onto an apprenticeship programme, a fundamental part of which is functional skills in English and Mathematics at either Level 1 or 2. If individuals do not already possess a qualification at the same level (or above) in either English or Mathematics they undertake diagnostic tests to ascertain their skill level in those subjects. We use Basic Skill Builder software to measure this against Functional Skill competency criteria, but as far as literacy is concerned the outcomes do not break down the “reading age” of the learner.

As previously stated the Functional Skills are a fundamental part of the apprenticeship and as such are required to be attained in order to gain the apprenticeship, individuals are therefore supported until this is achieved. Additionally all learners are given the opportunity to progress to Level 2 Functional Skills either as part of an apprenticeship or via Learning and Development Centres accessible across the Naval Service.

With regards to tracking educational improvement through career, currently there is no system in place to capture this information, you may wish to be aware however, that this is something that is being investigated on a tri-service basis.

Army

National Literacy & Numeracy levels

Levels	Functional Skills	English, Welsh and NI Curriculum		Scottish Curriculum
Level 2	Level 2	GCSE A*-C (Grade 9-4 from Sep 17)		National 5
Level 1	Level 1	GCSE D-G (Grade 3-1 from Sep 17)		National 4
Entry Level	Entry Level 3	Standards expected of ages	9 - 11	National 3
	Entry Level 2		7 - 9	National 2
	Entry Level 1		5 - 7	National 1

Further Information concerning literacy and numeracy skills can be found at the below link:

http://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/25234.aspx

Royal Air Force

I can further confirm that, whilst attending the Pre Recruit Training Course (PRTC) and before they are offered a place in the RAF, recruits are required to take their Functional Skills (FS) examinations in Maths and English (or produce acceptable alternative educational proxies). Additionally on the PRTC they undertake the online Maths and English Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB) assessments and complete a Speaking and Listening exercise. If the individual does not reach Level 1 on the BKSB, this will be recorded and remedial workshops provided during Phase 1 Training. In line with the RAF Literacy and Numeracy Policy, it should be noted that the recruit cannot progress onto Phase 2 training until they have passed their relevant FS examinations to the required level of their chosen trade.

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-FOIIR@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,

(Original Signed)
Defence People Secretariat