



Ministry  
of Defence

**Ministry of Defence**

Defence Business Services Secretariat  
Room 6303  
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FY5 3WP

Ref: FOI2018/09997

Email: [DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk)

[REDACTED]

22 August 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your FOI Request of 25 July 2018 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

*"I would like to know the sum that was dispersed under the Lower Standard of Occupation Allowance during the financial year 2017/18 and if known the sum paid to claimants who not in an occupation, ie, retired."*

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

A search for information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that all the information is held. However, I have to advise you that we would not be able to answer your question without exceeding the appropriate cost limit.

Section 12 of the 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.

At 31 March 2018, there were 10,075 people in receipt of the Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation (ALSO). The records on current occupation are not held centrally and in order to fully comply with your request each record would need to be individually checked in order to establish if the claimant is "not in occupation" and to annotate the level of ALSO in payment. Allowing six minutes to locate, retrieve and extract the employment status of the claimant and to note the level of ALSO in payment would exceed the cost limit.

Under Section 16 of the FOIA (Advice or Assistance), the MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit, for example by restricting your request to the total amount spent on ALSO during the financial year 2017/18.

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.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.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,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

DBS Secretariat Team