



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Ref: FOI2018/10720

Reply to: [REDACTED]

14 September 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 17 August 2018 requesting the following information:

"I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and would like the following information provided:

- 1)
 - i) *To know whether or not your department asks Senior Civil Service staff to do unconscious bias training in relation to race?*
 - ii) *To know whether or not your department offers unconscious bias training to Senior Civil Service staff in your department in relation to race?*
 - iii) *To know what percentage of Senior Civil Service staff in your department have undergoing some form of unconscious bias training or racial awareness training?*
 - iv) *Has any assessment been done to see the level of unconscious bias by race for Senior Civil Servants in your department?*
 - v) *The results of any assessment to see the level of unconscious bias by race for Senior Civil Servants in your department.*
- 2) *Summary details of the unconscious bias and racial awareness training offered to Executive Officers in the Civil Service of your department?"*

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Following a search of our records I can inform you that the MOD holds information within the scope of your request.

The answers to Part 1 of your request are set out below

- i. All Senior Civil Service (SCS) staff are required to undertake unconscious bias training every three years or in the first six months if joining as new SCS. The focus of the training is on promoting inclusive leadership and challenging, preventing and removing issues of unconscious bias around the workplace and in decision making.

- ii. The answer to ii is above.
- iii. Racial awareness training is available to all employees across the Civil Service via the Civil Service Learning online platform. The data requested at this part of FOI Request FOI2018/10720 is not currently held as a percentage because the training record held on each individual's personal record is personal data retained for use by them and their Line Managers only. The Department has not established percentile data for this, and we are not required to create new information in order to respond to FOI requests. However your attention is drawn to the additional information provided under Section 16 further down in this letter.
- iv. No assessment has been undertaken although our SCS are required to have a personal Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan and are held accountable for its delivery through the annual performance management process.
- v. No such assessment has been undertaken.

Regarding Part 2 of your request I can advise you that unconscious bias training is offered to all Civil Servants, in every Department across the grades, from AA to SCS. This is mandated by the Cabinet Office, which means that every Civil Servant should undergo this training. The objective is to help staff understand unconscious bias and how it affects attitude and behaviour. Once a staff member has undertaken this training, the individual will understand what unconscious bias is, how it influences individuals, and the techniques that are available to help identify, challenge, prevent and remove areas of unconscious bias in the workplace.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act I provide the following additional advice regarding Part 1iii of FOI Request FOI2018/10720:

It is now mandatory for all SCS to have a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Objective. Under this new requirement, all SCS will make a commitment as part of their People/Capability objective to deliver an element of MODs D&I strategy. This should show clearly what the jobholder will do in terms of creating an inclusive workplace culture, increasing the capability of teams. The MOD Diversity and Inclusion objective is:

- a. *"I will actively contribute to the delivery of the Defence D&I Strategy 2018 – 2030 by leading and promoting diversity and inclusion and delivering the required activities and actions in my personal D&I Action Plan. A guide to writing the personal D&I action plan is provided. I will champion equality of opportunity, facilitate constructive challenge, and foster good relations in the workplace contributing to the development of an inclusive organisational culture that values and respects different perspectives and drives innovative thinking and high performance, leading to a strong, motivated, engaged and resilient Defence community."*

Race awareness is also available to all Civil Servants, including MOD staff. It equips managers and colleagues with the knowledge and confidence to:

- challenge stereotyping and prejudice
- handle complaints of racism
- remove barriers to progression
- provide appropriate support to ethnic minority employees

The aim is to ensure better decision making and a more inclusive and diverse Civil Service. When trained, staff will be able to:

- describe the common issues, fears and misapprehensions faced by ethnic minority staff in society and the impact this can have in the workplace
- challenge incorrect assumptions and inappropriate behaviour, including racial stereotyping, discriminatory behaviour and racist comments

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). 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