



Ministry  
of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2019 requesting the following information:

“To whom it may concern,

I should be grateful if you would provide statistics regarding the medical discharge of RAF officers for the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019, specifically:

1. The number of medical discharges for mental health conditions;
2. The number of medical discharges for mental health conditions in which stress at work, including in the operational environment, was a factor.

I should also be grateful if you would provide me with a complete electronic copy of the latest edition/iteration of AP9012 - RAF Stress Management and Resilience Policy (Sponsor: HQ Air SO1 Recovery).”

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held on UK Armed Forces Regular personnel.

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2019, **55** UK Armed Forces RAF Officers were medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of Mental and Behavioural Disorders<sup>1</sup>. Of these, “stress at work”<sup>2</sup> was a principal or contributory cause in **fewer than five** medical discharges.

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<sup>1</sup> Identified by ICD-10 chapter: Mental and behavioural disorders (F00-F99).

<sup>2</sup> Identified by ICD-10 codes Z56.6 and Z56.3.

**Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note:**

Medical discharges were identified as personnel who were medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of discharge coded as the following in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10):

- Mental and Behavioural Disorders (F00-F99).
- "Stress at work": ICD-10 codes Z56.6 (other physical and mental strain related to work) and Z56.3 (stressful work schedule).

The principal condition of discharge is the first principal ICD-10 code on the medical discharge documents. Contributory causes of medical discharge are all other principal conditions and any contributory conditions on the medical discharge documents. Both principal and contributory causes have been included to give a better understanding as to the prevalence of medical discharges due to traumatic brain injuries.

Medical discharges are the result of several specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc) concluding that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the Armed Forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the Armed Forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

The information on cases was sourced from electronic personnel records from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) and manually entered paper documents from medical boards. The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting is a secondary function.

Any data entered as free text only in patients' medical record will not be included in the figures presented as this information is not available in the data warehouse.

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, 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 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.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics Health