



Ministry
of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 22 August 2019 requesting the following information:

“This concerns the medical discharge and medical downgrading of musicians in the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force over the 2008 - 2019 period. (By musician, I mean those whose primary trade is as a military musician or bandperson regardless of their trade title).

1. For each year from 2008 to 2018 inclusive how many musicians in each Service were medically discharged and what percentage of the musical manpower of each service did this number represent?
2. How many of those discharged (by year and each Service) were for musculoskeletal reasons?
3. As at 1 April 2019, how many musicians in each service were serving in a medically downgraded category of MLD or MND?
4. How many of these were for musculoskeletal reasons?”

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 information in scope of your request is held on UK Regular Armed Forces personnel.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In line with JSP200 Statistics Disclosure Guidance, numbers fewer than five are suppressed to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities; secondary suppression has been applied so numbers cannot be derived. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Table 1: UK Regular Armed Forces Musicians Medically Discharged, by financial year and Service, numbers and percentages¹

1 April 2008 to 31 March 2019

	Royal Marines			Army			RAF		
	n	%	Of which MSK ²	n	%	Of which MSK ²	n	%	Of which MSK ²
All	32	<1%	19	39	<1%	21	5	<1%	~
2008/09	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~
2009/10	~	<1%	~	0	-	0	0	-	0
2010/11	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~	0	-	0
2011/12	0	-	0	~	<1%	~	0	-	0
2012/13	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~	~	1%	0
2013/14	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~	0	-	0
2014/15	~	<1%	~	10	1%	5	~	1%	0
2015/16	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~	0	-	0
2016/17	6	1%	~	~	<1%	~	0	-	0
2017/18	~	<1%	~	~	<1%	~	0	-	0
2018/19	6	1%	~	7	1%	~	0	-	0

Source: DMICP, FMed 23s and JPA.

¹ Percentage of UK Regular Armed Forces musicians in service each year that were medically discharged.

² Personnel medically discharged with a principal condition of Musculoskeletal Disorders (M00 - M99) and Injuries (S00 - T98).

~ In line with JSP 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed.

As at 1 April 2019, **348** Musicians were medically downgraded (Medically Limited Deployable or Medically Not Deployable). By Service:

- **89** were in the Royal Marines; of which, **33** were downgraded due to a principal condition of Musculoskeletal Disorders and Injuries.
- **215** were in the Army; of which, **95** were downgraded due to a principal condition of Musculoskeletal Disorders and Injuries.
- **44** were in the RAF; of which, **nine** were downgraded due to a principal condition of Musculoskeletal Disorders and Injuries.

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

Musicians were identified by the following Regiment Corps:

- Royal Marines: 'Royal Navy Royal Marines Band Service' or 'Royal Navy Royal Marines Band Service (Officer)'.
- Army: 'Corps of Army Music'.
- RAF: 'Directors of Music' or 'Directors of Music 2000' or 'Music'.

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-empted 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.

Medical discharges and downgradings were identified as personnel who were medically discharged or downgraded with a principal condition coded as Musculoskeletal Disorders (M00 - M99) and Injuries (S00 - T98) in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related

Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The principal condition of discharge is the first principal ICD-10 code on the medical discharge documents.

The chapters of "Musculoskeletal Disorders (M00 - M99)" and "Injuries (S00 - T98)" have been included because musculoskeletal conditions can be present in both. For example: "Musculoskeletal Disorders (M00 - M99)" includes conditions such as arthritis and disc disorders. "Injuries (S00 - T98)" includes conditions such as injuries to the neck, and shoulder dislocations. Please note the chapter "Injuries (S00 - T98)" also includes conditions such as burns and frostbite.

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces as an Official Statistic publication. The last statistical release was on 11 July 2019 which presented data up to 31 March 2019. The latest report can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>.

Service personnel with medical conditions or fitness issues which affect their ability to perform their duties are assessed in Primary Care or referred to a Medical Board for a medical examination and review of their medical grading. A medical downgrading occurs when personnel are assigned a Medical Deployability Standard (MDS) of Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) or Medically Not Deployable (MND). The patient may be downgraded to allow for treatment and rehabilitation:

- Medically Limited Deployable (MLD): Personnel medically fit for duty with minor employment limitations. MLD personnel may have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all Medically Fully Deployable (MFD) requirements.
- Medically Not Deployable (MND): Personnel medically fit for duty with major employment limitations. MND personnel are not fit to deploy on Operations but may be deployable on UK based exercises and should be able to work effectively for at least 32.5 hours per week.

MDS was compiled using the Defence Statistics "derived" field which utilises a combination of the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) and Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) MDS.

The information on medical discharges was sourced from electronic medical records from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) and manually entered paper documents from medical boards. Information on medical downgrading was sourced from electronic medical records from DMICP. 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.

JPA is the most accurate source for demographic information for UK Armed Forces personnel and was used to gather information on a person's service and 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, 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 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