



Ministry
of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 31 January 2020, requesting the following information:

- “1. How many claims have been made in the last five years for 'Blast injury to ears' either in AFCS or WPS?
2. How many have been denied?
3. How many claims have been made in the last five years for 'Noise Induced Hearing Loss' either in AFCS or WPS?
4. How many claims have been denied?
5. How many claims for 'Brain injury' of all types have been made either in AFCS or WPS?
6. How many claims have been denied?”

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.

Parts 1 and 2 – Blast injury to ears:

During the five-year period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019 (latest data available) there were:

- 122 claims registered under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) for blast injury to ears, of which 7 (6%) were rejected.
- 307 claimants under the War Pension Scheme (WPS) for blast injury to ears, of which 60 (20%) were rejected.

Parts 3 and 4 – Noise induced hearing loss (NIHL):

During the five-year period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019 (latest data available) there were:

- 1,495 claims registered under the AFCS for NIHL, of which 582 (39%) were rejected.
- 6,347 claimants under the WPS for NIHL, of which 228 (4%) were rejected.

Parts 5 and 6 - Brain injury:

Defence Statistics has interpreted your request to be referring to claims registered in the last five years, as per parts 1 to 4. During the five-year period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019 (latest data available) there were:

- 216 claims registered under the AFCS for brain injury, of which 85 (39%) were rejected.
- 404 claimants under the WPS for brain injury, of which 151 (37%) were rejected.

Under Section 16 (advice and assistance) you may wish to note the following:

War Pension Scheme

The WPS provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005. The WPS is managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with all compensation claims administered by Defence Business Services (DBS) Veterans UK.

Condition information is recorded on the War Pension Computer System (WPCS) in the form of a medical diagnosis code and a free-text medical diagnosis description. The code and description are based on the medical evidence and diagnosis obtained from the GP once a claim has been registered with DBS Veterans UK. Electronic information is held for all awarded claims since 1 April 2003.

Defence Statistics Health publish statistics on claims and awards made under the WPS. The latest publication presents statistics as at 31 March 2019 which was published on the Gov.uk website on 27 June 2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>. The next update (as at 31 March 2020), is due to be released in June 2020.

The following free-text search terms were used to determine individuals who claimed under the WPS for the above conditions.

As some records do not have a diagnosis code, a search was also carried out of the free text description for the following terms:

- **Blast injury to ears:** blast injury to ear, blast injury to left ear, blast injury to right ear, blast injury to both ears, acoustic trauma and noise trauma.
- **NIHL:** Hearing loss, loss of hearing, deafness, deaf, damaged hearing and hearing damaged.
- **Brain injury:** brain injury, skull fracture, brain haemorrhage, subarachnoid haemorrhage, sub arachnoid haemorrhage, concussion and mild traumatic brain injury.

In addition, the following diagnosis codes were also searched for:

- **Blast injury to ears:** no diagnosis code available
- **NIHL:** 5002
- **Brain injury:** 1004

The WPCS contains information on each claimed condition. Since Individuals can claim compensation for multiple conditions at the same time, it is not possible to determine which conditions were claimed for within a single claim. Therefore, figures presented in this response include the number of claimants, and rejected claimants, and not separate claims.

Claimants who claimed compensation for multiple conditions (e.g. more than one condition relating to NIHL) that were both awarded and rejected were considered successful, since the claimant received financial compensation, and were excluded from the rejected figures.

Since claimed condition information is predominantly held in free-text format for the WPS, figures should be treated as a minimum, due to potential spelling errors and claimants entering different terminology on their claim form.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

The Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) came into force on 6 April 2005 to pay compensation for injury, illness or death attributable to service that occurred on or after that date. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Pensions Scheme.

AFCS data is sourced from the Compensation and Pension System (CAPS) which is

administrated and managed by DBS Veterans UK.

Data were extracted from the CAPS as at 31 March 2019 to inform the latest published National Statistics, as published on the Gov.uk website on 27 June 2019:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>

The next update (as at 31 March 2020), is due to be released in June 2020.

For injury/illness claims made under the AFCS, there are four possible outcomes:

- **Awarded lump sum only:** An immediate one-off lump sum payment compensating for a less severe injury/illness not expected to have any significant permanent effects on the claimant's future earning capacity. Lump sum only awards are made at tariff levels 12-15.
- **Awarded lump sum plus GIP:** In addition to a lump sum payment, an ongoing Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP) is awarded for a more serious injury/illness (awarded at tariff levels 1-11). A GIP is payable for life, to recognise future loss of earning capacity, with the first payment made once the claimant has left service (following an in-service claim), or from date of claim clearance (following a post-service claim).
- **Accepted - no award:** Service-attributable injury/illness isn't severe enough to be awarded a tariff level and therefore no financial compensation is awarded.
- **Rejected:** Claimed injury/illness is found not to be attributable to service.

The following free-text search terms were used to determine claims registered under the AFCS.

A search was carried out of the free text description for the following terms:

- **Blast injury to ears:** blast injury to ear, blast injury to left ear, blast injury to right ear, blast injury to both ears, acoustic trauma and noise trauma.
- **NIHL:** Hearing loss, loss of hearing, deafness, deaf, damaged hearing and hearing damaged.
- **Brain injury:** brain injury, skull fracture, brain haemorrhage, subarachnoid haemorrhage, sub arachnoid haemorrhage, concussion and mild traumatic brain injury.

Information presented in this response does not match figures in the AFCS National Statistic, which presents the number of conditions awarded for NIHL. Please note that in the AFCS National Statistic, conditions awarded for NIHL also include conditions awarded for blast injuries.

In this response, figures include all claims registered, and rejected, under the AFCS. Individuals can submit multiple claims for similar injuries/illnesses. Where this has occurred, the individual will have been counted more than once.

Claims for multiple conditions (e.g. more than one condition relating to NIHL) that were both awarded and rejected were considered successful, since the claim resulted in financial compensation, and were excluded from the rejected figures.

Since claimed condition information is held in free-text format for the AFCS, figures should be treated as a minimum, due to potential spelling errors and claimants entering different terminology on their claim form.

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 Statistics Health