



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services
Secretariat Team
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Ref: FOI2020/06125

E-mail: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

23 June 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email 27 May 2020 requesting the following information:

“Can you please provide the following information in an electronic format:

- Number of successful Forces Help To Buy applications for properties with a SY postcode over the last 5 years.*
- Number of successful Forces Help To Buy applications for properties with a TF postcode over the last 5 years.*
- Number of applications for the Forces Help To Buy scheme from serving personnel with a SY postcode.*
- Number of applications for the Forces Help To Buy scheme from serving personnel with a TF postcode....”*

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 all the information you have requested is held. However, I have to advise you that we would not be able to answer your questions without exceeding the appropriate limit.

This is because the postcode for an application is not recorded centrally and the data would need to be retrieved manually from an individual's service record. To locate, retrieve and extract the information in scope of your request from all applications for the last five years would equate to approximately £168,240 of effort.

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.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) it would be usual for the Department to suggest a refinement to enable you to obtain some of the information, in the scope of your request. However, just for the last reliable month for which figures are available, 673 applications would need to be interrogated. This would result in 112 hours of work at a cost of £25 per hour, amounting to £2,804 for the month of March 2020 alone, which would again breach the cost limit. In view of this, no suitable refinement can be offered on this occasion.

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 Business Services (Secretariat)