

Ref: FOI2020/02505

20 March 2020

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Dear

Thank you for your email of 2 February 2020 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

*“I would be grateful if you could let me know if and on how many occasions since 2005, that the 'death in service payment' has been paid out to more than one family member/civil partner of the deceased. Have any families / partners been paid the death in service payment twice?”*

And your email of 21 February 2020 clarifying your request as follows:

*“Thank you for your reply to my question. I did amend it later to try and make it clearer, this was the amendment:-*

*I would be grateful if you could let me know if and on how many occasions since 2005, that the 'death in service payment' has been paid out to more than one family member/civil partner of the deceased. In other words has the payment ever been paid out twice in relation to the death of one soldier?*

*So in answer to your question I am asking about military personnel.”*

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the MOD and I can confirm all the information in scope of your request is held. However, I have to advise you we would not be able to answer your questions without exceeding the appropriate limit.

Section 12 of the FOI 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, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it.

Defence Statistics reported there were 1,758 in-Service deaths between 2005 and 31 March 2019. Reported in-Service deaths for 2019/20 have not yet been published.

In order to fully answer your questions, we would be required to interrogate 1,758 files to establish which would be in scope of the request, taking at least 293 hours. At the rate of £25 per hour, this would equate to approximately £7,325, exceeding the appropriate cost limit for one question alone.

However, under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), the Department may be able to provide some information in the scope of your request if you were to refine your request by limiting the time period significantly to reduce the number of cases to be examined. It might also help if you were to specify whether you were interested one particular branch of the Services, ie Army, Navy or Royal Air Force, or whether the statistics you require cover all the branches. Although it is not guaranteed that your refined request may fall within the cost limit, we would be happy to look at it again.

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](mailto: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