

Ref: FOI2020/02964

31 March 2020

Dear

Thank you for your email of 2 March 2020 requesting the following information:

"I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information.

- 1) *Can you tell me how many bullying and harassment complaints were made by staff in your department in the calendar years:*
 - a. 2016
 - b. 2017
 - c. 2018
 - d. 2019
 - e. 2020 to date
- 2) *Of the complaints identified in the answers to Q1a-e, can you identify whether they relate to government ministers or civil servants?*
- 3) *Can you give me data on the outcomes of the complaints identified in the answers to Q1a-e, e.g. was disciplinary action taken and if so what was it?*

If you are encountering practical difficulties with complying with this request, please contact me as soon as possible (in line with your section 16 duty to advise and assist requesters) so that we can discuss the matter and if necessary I can modify the request."

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 Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

However, I have to advise you that we will not be able to answer your request for the number of complaints of bullying made by staff in the department without exceeding the appropriate limit. This is because information on the specific nature of an alleged misconduct is not held centrally. Therefore, every case where a complaint or misconduct allegation has been raised would need to be examined to determine which complaints related to bullying.

I can advise that staff are encouraged to report incidents of bullying, poor behaviour or perceived wrongdoing. Any form of bullying or harassment is not tolerated, and any cases reported are addressed, and support is in place for those individuals who raise a complaint

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note the MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request relating to the numbers of complaints of bullying from staff in the department if you consider reducing or refining your request considerably to bring the cost of compliance under the limit. In order to do this, you may wish to consider shortening the time period. 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). 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