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Ref: FOI2020/04817

09 June 2020

Dear

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2020 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), seeking the below information:

"I am a research assistant at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. As part of a project, under the leadership of Professor Thomas Elston and Dr Tom Nicholls, I am looking to get hold of the workforce management information data for the years 2011-2020. In line with the government's transparency agenda, all government organisations are required to report their workforce management information on a monthly basis.

I am able to find much of the data for the Ministry of Defence - at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/workforce-management-information-mod> - but not the data for October 2014 and July 2019-January 2020. I am also unable to find this information for the Submarine Delivery Agency.

Please can you provide me with this data, or the link for me to find it myself?"

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 some of the information in the scope your request is held.

Firstly, regarding the data for October 2014, I can confirm that the MOD does not hold this information as records are only retained for two years.

Secondly, regarding the government's transparency data for July 2019 – January 2020, this information falls entirely within the scope of an absolute exemption under Section 21 of the FOIA as it is reasonably accessible by other means. As Section 21 is an absolute exemption, there is no requirement to consider the public interest in making the decision to withhold the information.

However, under Section 16 (Advice and Guidance), you may be interested to know the government transparency data for July 2019 – January 2020, has been published, and can be found at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-workforce-management-information-january-to-december-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-workforce-management-information-january-to-december-2019>

Lastly, regarding your request for data on the Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA.) Unfortunately, the MOD is unable to provide this information 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.

In order to fully answer your question, it would be necessary to extract separate SDA data from the MOD Main data (from the links above). This would involve the interrogation of each monthly headcount and the contingent labour numbers for each month. As the SDA was formed in 2018, there would be at least 24 months that would need to be interrogated, following this the MOD finance team would then need to extract these figures from the MOD Main data. This effort would unfortunately exceed the cost limit.

However, under Section 16 (Advice and Guidance) you may be interested to know that as the SDA is an agency, yearly accounts are published separately. Please find below a link to the SDA financial year 2018-2019:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/submarine-delivery-agency-sda-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>

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