

Ref: FOI2020/04889

26 May 2020

Dear

Thank you for your email of 16 April 2020 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), seeking information about the delivery of Veterans UK services during COVID-19 crisis.

You requested the following information:

“In order for us to gauge whether our client's case is likely to proceed, and those of our other many clients, I would appreciate if you could confirm how many caseworkers are currently working remotely and which departments they are in. This will assist us with how to send in our requests on all our files without flooding your system if no real work can be carried out at this time, other than routine work.

Further, could you also please confirm if any of your medical team and policy team are still working remotely, so we know if our cases are being advanced.

Lastly, is there any indication when more caseworkers/medical team members etc are likely to start working remotely.”

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 information in scope of your request is held.

At the time of writing, I can confirm there is a small team of up to 30 staff in Veterans UK accessing the workplace to ensure business critical services are being delivered, including any urgent payment queries and casework where the information is available to make decisions.

I can also confirm that one Medical Adviser (MA) is working remotely, providing medical advice on pensions cases as required, and the Veterans UK policy team is also working remotely.

Turning now to your question of when more caseworkers and MAs are likely to start working remotely. Veterans UK has been working together with the Trades Union to ensure there is a safe system of work in place to enable as many staff as possible to safely return to the office. I am pleased to say that protocols have been agreed and the number of staff accessing the workplace to process cases is increasing daily. These protocols are in accordance with Government guidelines.

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