



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services

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Ref: FOI2020/00032 & FOI2020/00062

23 January 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 19 November 2019 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

FOI2020/00032

“This is an information request relating to specific absence days.

- *What were the staff attendance rates on the following dates:*
 - o *10 July 2018*
 - o *11 July 2018*
 - o *12 July 2018*
 - o *15 April 2019*
 - o *16 April 2019*
 - o *7 May 2019*
 - o *28 May 2019*
 - o *24 July 2019*
 - o *25 July 2019*
 - o *26 July 2019*
 - o *27 August 2019*

If Section 12 limitations arise, please fulfil the request for London-based staff only.”

FOI2020/00062

Thank you for your email of 20 November 2019 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

“This is an information request relating to total absence days.

Please itemise the information for 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19:

- *The total number of absence days taken by members of staff.*
- *The average number of absence days taken by members of staff.”*

If Section 12 limitations arise, please fulfil the request for London-based staff only

Your additional email of 9 December 2019 clarified that *"I am referring to civilian staff based in the Ministry of Defence's Whitehall office"*

Your second email of 2 January 2020 in response to our request to clarify if by absences you meant sick absence, annual leave, special paid leave, time off in lieu or a combination of them all, *"to clarify, by absence days I am referring to all the forms of leave you have outlined in your response"*.

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

However, 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.

The recording of all forms of absence outlined above is not held centrally. The Ministry of Defence Main Building, in Whitehall, London, houses 3,300 staff and to answer your question it would be necessary to contact the line manager of each staff member in order to locate, retrieve and extract this information. As such, this would mean for 3,300 contacts at five minutes per contact this would equate to 36.6 working days thus would exceed the cost limits.

Due to Defence Business Services' document retention policy, records are only held for two years so any information prior to January 2018 is not held.

However, under Section 16 (Advice and Guidance), the Department may be able to provide some information in the scope of your request if you were to refine your request to the number of employees who took sick absence alone. 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)