



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services

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REF:FOI2020/12788

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9 December 2020

Dear [REDACTED] Thank you for your email of 20 November 2020 requesting the following information:

I would like to submit a following FOI request for information regarding two Medical Examiners used by the MOD/Veterans UK AFCS.

- 1 What is Dr John Saunder's medical credentials and is he either a Vascular Surgeon (Vascular medicine specialised) or is he a Neurologist/Neurosurgeon?*
- 2 What is Dr Lauren Tidman's medical credentials and is she either a Vascular Surgeon (Vascular medicine specialised) or is she a Neurologist/Neurosurgeon?*
- 3 Do Veterans UK's Medical Examiners solely work for the MOD or are they paid a fee on a case-by-case basis?*
- 4 Also, if their evidence given in an AFCS case contradicts a specialist in let's say an area of not their specialist medicine would this supersede the guidance given by the specialist to the patient? And is the MOD accountable regarding this if the patient chooses to neglect the specialist advice and refer to Veterans UK medical examiners opinion?*

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. In response to your requests we can confirm the following:

1. Dr John Saunders medical qualifications are: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB), Member Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP), Diploma

Sports Medicine Society Apothecaries (DSMSA), Master of Law (LLM). He is not a vascular surgeon/specialist nor a neurologist or neurosurgeon.

2. Dr Lauren Tidman's medical qualifications are: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB). She is not a vascular surgeon/specialist nor a neurologist or neurosurgeon.
3. The Medical Advisers are employed by the MOD and are salaried.
4. Veterans UK Medical Advisers do not examine claimants and are known as Medical Advisers not Medical Examiners. The role of the Veterans UK Medical Adviser is to provide medical advice to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) decision makers in answering claims to the Scheme.

Medical Advisers have no therapeutic role in patient/claimant care and therefore the claimant should be guided entirely by their treating specialist/clinician in matters of patient care. If the decision maker requires assistance with medical aspects of the claim, they can request the opinion of the Veterans UK Medical Adviser. They have specific training in the legislative aspects of the AFCS as well as their own background medical knowledge and experience.

The decision makers are guided by the Medical Adviser's advice in reaching a decision in AFCS as the Medical Advisers have specific training and experience in the legislative aspects of the AFCS as well as the medical aspects of the case.

In summary the patient/claimant should not neglect the specialist advice of their treating clinician in favour of the Veterans UK Medical Adviser as Medical Advisers have no therapeutic role in their case.

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