



Ministry  
of Defence

**Defence Business Services**

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REF: FOI2020/13684

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21 December 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 25 November 2020 requesting the following information:

- "1. How many service personnel in the Ministry of Defence up to and including 5th April, 2005 were medically discharged with their Principal Invaliding Condition listed as 'PAIN IN CERVICAL, THORACIC AND LUMBAR SPINE' ? (All further questions are up to this date also)*
- 2. What were the % award received by those individuals once medically discharged? ie-(example 6-14%-4578 personnel / 15-19%-3500 personnel / 20%-8765 personnel / 30% etc and so on up to 100%)*
- 3. Please also detail the data for 'common' % awards for 2 or more but not many fairly minor ailments to moderate injuries/pain listed as the Principal Invaliding Condition?*
- 4. How many personnel were medically discharged with 'LOW BACK PAIN' as the Principal Invaliding Condition and what was the % award on medical discharge? ie-(example 6-14%-4578 personnel / 15-19%-3500 personnel / 20%-8765 personnel / 30% etc and so on up to 100%)*
- 5. How many personnel were medically discharged undiagnosed? And of them, how were the % awards determined?"*

The Ministry of Defence requires further information in order to determine how to answer your request. In particular we require clarification on parts of the FOI request asking about the War Pension Scheme (WPS).

Under the WPS, individuals can be awarded for multiple conditions under one claim. Claims can also be made for conditions unrelated to a medical discharge. In cases where disablement is due to more than one injury, a composite assessment of the degree (percentage) of disablement is made by reference to the combined effect of all injuries. On the medical certificate of entitlement, the overall assessment is given and individual

assessments are assigned to each accepted condition. However, where it is not possible to separate the effects of two or more conditions, a combined assessment is given for these particular conditions.

In relation to parts 2, 3 and 4 of your FOI question, please could you clarify whether you are interested in:

- The percentage disablement awarded for the condition the individual was medically discharged for.

Or

- The total percentage disablement awarded for the war pension. Please note this may include other conditions not related to the medical discharge.

Please could you also clarify what you are referring to in part 3 of the FOI where you ask about “data for 'common' % awards for 2 or more but not many fairly minor ailments to moderate injuries/pain listed as the Principal Invaliding Condition”?

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it useful to note the following:

When service personnel are medically discharged, the principal condition of discharge is the first principal ICD-10 code on the medical discharge documents. Contributory causes of medical discharge are all other principal conditions and any contributory conditions on the medical discharge documents. If principal condition of discharge is requested, the figures supplied would be based on the first principal ICD-10 code on the medical discharge documents.

Please note, it is not possible to identify the severity of the injury/illness attributed to a medical discharge without manual review of medical records. If your clarification requires the manual search of records, then it may exceed the appropriate cost limit. If the appropriate cost limit is exceeded, we will provide advice on how you can reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

The MOD holds electronic information on regular personnel medically discharged from the UK armed forces since 1 January 1995. Service personnel medically discharged with a principal condition of pain in cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine, and low back pain can be identified. Please note that lumbar spine pain would also be included within low back pain. For information the MOD publishes annual official statistics on regular service personnel medically discharged from the UK armed forces:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>

The MOD holds information on personnel who have claimed for no-fault compensation under the War Pension Scheme (WPS) for Service-attributable illness/injuries sustained prior to 6 April 2005. Note that electronic information is only held for claims registered since 1 April 2003. Paper claim records would have to be manually searched to determine any claims registered prior to 1 April 2003. Personnel may claim compensation under the WPS for illness and/or injury unrelated to the conditions leading to the medical discharge.

For information the MOD publishes annual official statistics on WPS claims and awards:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>

Please note, if your clarification requires the manual search of personnel, medical or compensation claim records, then it may exceed the appropriate cost limit. If the appropriate cost limit is exceeded, we will provide advice on how you can reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

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*