

26 March 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 15 February 2021 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), requesting the following information:

- “1. A copy of my full Army Service Document*
- 2. A copy of my full Army Medical Records (*
- 3. A copy of the Military Covenant which governs the service of any of any ex Service Person*
- 4. A copy of the Army Records for my entitlement to a Service Pension, with dates for entitlement and a cost estimate.*
- 5. A copy of the MOD procedure and any forms for claiming a Service Medical Pension – I suffer from PTSD and several medical conditions due to my service.*
- 6. Information in how the MOD can help me with the above under the Covenant Principle”*

A search has now been completed within the MOD for the information requested.

I should first explain that Questions 1,2 and 4 of your request relate to your personal data, and in order not to breach Data Protection principles, the Department, under section 40(5B)(a)(i) of the FOI Act, is unable to confirm or deny whether any information is held within the scope of this part of your request. This is because if held, this information would be exempt under Section 40 (2) of the FOI Act in line with Data Protection Legislation. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and not subject to a public interest test.

Notwithstanding the above, under Section 16 of the FOIA (Advice and Assistance), you do have the right to request access any personal data which may be held by the Department under the Data Protection Act 2018. As such, I have passed this part of your request to the Department's Subject Access Request (SAR) Team who will contact you in order to establish if any such information exists.

I am treating Questions 3, 5 and 6 as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

In answer to Questions 3 and 5, I can confirm 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 Assistance) you may be interested to know that the Military Covenant can be found at the link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578212/20161215-The-Armed-Forces-Covenant.pdf

Additionally, information regarding the Ministry of Defence compensation and pension schemes including the required application forms can be found at the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pensions-and-compensation-for-veterans>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pensions-and-compensation-for-veterans#veterans-uk-forms>

In answer to question 6, I can confirm that the Armed Forces charity Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (known as SSAFA) offers help and can be contacted via the link below:-

<https://www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help>

You may also find the Veterans Welfare Service to be of help. They provide free and confidential advice on a wide range of issues. Welfare Managers work closely with local authorities, voluntary organisations and all areas of the Department for Work and Pensions to assist individuals with the help and advice they need.

In normal circumstances a Welfare Manager would visit at home or at another, more convenient location if preferred. However, due to current Government advice on social distancing and to keep both customers and staff safe, home and face to face visits have been restricted to only those with exceptional need of support; telephone consultations, however, are still available. Should you wish to contact a Welfare Manager, you should contact the Veterans UK Helpline on 0808 1914218 and ask for contact from the Veterans Welfare Service. Alternatively, you may email Veterans-UK@mod.gov.uk and a reply or call back will be provided as quickly as possible.

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