



Ministry  
of Defence

**Ministry of Defence**

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Ref: FOI2021/06779

Email: [DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk)

20 July 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 25 June 2021 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), further to the previous reply to Ms Parsons of 17 June 2021. The wording of the original request was as follows:

- “1. How many staff complaints of bullying or other grievances have been made against other staff working in the Ministry of Justice during 2020?”*
- 2. How many staff complaints of bullying or other grievances have been made against other staff working in the Ministry of Justice during 2021?”*
- 3. How many staff complaints of bullying or other grievances have made against The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP during 2020?”*
- 4. How many staff complaints of bullying or other grievances have made against The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP during 2021?”*
- 5. Please confirm the number of times no action was taken in relation to staff complaints of bullying or other grievances during 2020.*
- 6. Please confirm the number of times no action was taken in relation to staff complaints of bullying or other grievances during 2021.”*

On 25 June 2021 you provided the following clarification:

- “1. Our freedom of information request is addressed to the Ministry of Defence. The reference to the Ministry of Justice in points one and two in our letter dated 10 June 2021 is a mistake. Please read these points as referring to the Ministry of Defence rather than the Ministry of Justice.*
- 2. By ‘staff’ we are referring to civil servants only.*
- 3. By ‘action’ we are referring to any of the following:*
  - a. A formal disciplinary investigation taking place;*
  - b. A disciplinary hearing being held with the alleged perpetrator; or*
  - c. Disciplinary action taken, including but not limited to:*
    - i. Verbal warning;*
    - ii. Written warning;*
    - iii. Suspension; and/or*
    - iv. Dismissal of the alleged perpetrator;”*

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 some of the information in scope of your request is held. However, I must advise you that we would not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit.

Section 12 of the FOIA makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate cost limits, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

Unfortunately, grievance categories recorded in the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) are not specific enough to answer your request. To answer your request would require a manual search through each recorded case in order to determine which were relevant to the questions you are asking. To carry out such a task would involve a manual check of circa 300 HRMS records. At a conservative estimate of 30 minutes per file, this would equate to 150 hours. At the rate of £25 per hour, this is equal to approximately £3,750 worth of effort, exceeding the appropriate cost limit. Additionally, because of the way data is recorded, in some cases we may not be able to find the information requested.

Under Section 16 of the FOIA (Advice and Assistance) the department may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you were to refine your request by limiting the time period of data you are asking for, and reducing the number of questions which in turn would reduce the number of cases to be examined.

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](mailto: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)