



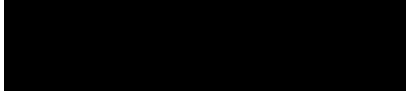
Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services

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Ref: FOI2021/06685

E-mail: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk



20 July 2021

Dear 

Thank you for your email of 23 June 2021 requesting the following information:

*"1) Mental Health related cases discontinued due to the death of the claimant.
B) Cause of death.*

*2) Cases discontinued due to the death of the claimant.
B) Cause of death.*

3) Identify any known relation of veteran suicide and the failings of Veterans UK

4) Elucidate the role of veterans UK medical advisors.

5) What constitutes Veterans UK medical advisers as 'independent'

6) Are Veterans UK medical advisors solely employed by Veterans UK?

7) The total number of Medical advisors employed by Veterans UK"

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 information in scope of your request is held.

1-1b) – Information not held.

2-2b) – Information not held

3) - Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act gives an applicant the right to access recorded information held by public authorities at the time the request is made and does not require public authorities to answer questions, provide explanations or give opinions, unless this is recorded information held. I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds no recorded information that would provide an answer to this question asked in your request.

4) - Veterans UK Medical Advisers (MA) provide evidence based medical advice to administrative staff in respect of claims under the War Pensions, Armed Forces Compensation and Armed Forces Pension Schemes.

5) - Veterans UK MAs are employed by Veterans UK, and as such are not viewed as independent.

6) - No - MAs are employed by Veterans UK, however a number do have other jobs outside of the Department which are carried out in addition to their Veterans UK role.

7) - There are 23 MAs employed by Veterans UK. However, two do not make decisions or give advice on claims, as they undertake medical boarding on Northern Ireland cases.

Under Section 16 of the FOIA (Advice and Assistance), the following points may be of interest to you.

1-1b and 2-2b - Veterans UK would not discontinue actioning a claim under the War Pension or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, following the death of a claimant, unless the next of kin formally requested the claim to cease. Action would continue as a posthumous claim.

4) - War Pension Scheme – The MA makes decisions on claims regarding entitlement and assessment of conditions deemed to be caused by or made worse by service.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme – The MA provides advice to the caseworker enabling them to make decisions.

Armed Forces Pension Scheme - The MA provides advice to the Decision Maker enabling them to adjudicate and award Ill Health Benefits.

5) - MAs are all fully registered and licensed doctors with medico-legal training notably in the relevant no-fault military compensation schemes ie the War Pension Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, along with the Armed Forces Pension Schemes. However, as employees of Veterans UK, they are not considered to be 'independent' in the same manner that doctors who sit on some panels at appeal hearings of the independent Pensions Tribunal are.

In addition, you may be interested to know that JSP 765 is the authoritative policy on the two schemes which make up the provision to pay compensation to members of the Armed Forces (Regulars and Reserves) and their dependants where injuries, illness or death is caused by Service. A link to the JSP can be found below which also contains links to the Independent Medical Expert Group (IMEG) reports.

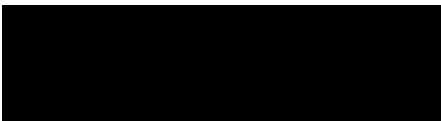
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927408/JSP_765.pdf

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,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Defence Business Services Secretariat