

Ref: FOI2021/12211

DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

09 November 2021

Dear

Thank you for your email of 20 September to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), seeking information about expense claims.

On 13 October you requested the following information:

“ I have some questions for an FOI request I'm making on expense claims which I would appreciate your help with:

- 1. How many total expense claims did you process in 2020?*
- 2. How many total expense claims did you process in 2019?*
- 3. Have expense claims been rejected between March 2019-March 2020?*
 - If so, how many?*
- 4. Have expense claims been rejected between March 2020-March 2021?*
 - If so, how many?*
- 5. Have there been any investigations relating to expense fraud in your department between March 2019-March 2020?*
 - If so, how many?*
- 6. Have there been any investigations relating to expense fraud in your department between March 2020-March 2021?*
 - If so, how many?*
- 7. How many of these investigations have found a staff member at your department to be in breach of your rules relating to expenses?*
- 8. Has anyone who has been found to be in breach of expense rules been dismissed?*
 - If so, how many?*
- 9. Has anyone who has been found to be in breach of expense rules been prosecuted?*
 - If so, how many?*
- 10. What was the cost of fraudulent expenses to your department between March 2019-March 2020?*
- 11. What was the cost of fraudulent expenses to your department between March 2020-March 2021?*
- 12. Do you have a clear set of rules in regards to expenses in place at your department?*
- 13. Do managers go through training to enable them to spot potentially fraudulent expense claims?*
- 14. Have any invoices been paid that were later found to be fraudulent between March 2019-March 2020?*
 - If so, what was the value of each one?*
- 15. Have any invoices been paid that were later found to be fraudulent between March*

2020-March 2021?

- *If so, what was the value of each one?"*

On 20 October 2021 you clarified that you were requesting the information in relation to civilian personnel and refined your request to claims under travel and subsistence only.

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 MOD and I can confirm all of information in scope of your request is held

- In 2020, based on Travel and subsistence (T&S) claims, the MOD processed 214,523 expense claims
- In 2019, based on T&S claims, the MOD processed 528,648 expense claims
- Between March 2019 and March 2020, based on T&S claims, 1086 claims were rejected
- Between March 2020 and March 2021, based on T&S claims, 381 claims were rejected
- There were 221 cases investigated for expense fraud that were recorded by the MOD in FY 2019/20 (April 2019 – March 2020).
- There were 25 investigated for expense fraud that were recorded by the MOD in FY 2020/21 (April 2020 – March 2021).
- The cost of fraudulent expenses to Defence in FY 2019/20 (April 2019 – March 2020), was recorded as £11,566.74.
- The cost of fraudulent expenses to Defence in FY 20/21 (April 2020 – March 2021), was recorded as £3,123.40.
- Counter Fraud, Bribery & Corruption eLearning is mandated course that is an annual requirement. MOD civilian employees and military personnel who manage civilian staff are required to undertake this mandatory training course. Contractors are also required to undertake mandatory courses unless their contractual employer or command can demonstrate that they have completed equivalent training within the timescale.
- Between March 2019 and March 2020, six cases were later found to be fraudulent. Invoices may have been a contributory factor.
- Between March 2020 and March 2021, four cases were later found to be fraudulent. Invoices may have been a contributory factor.

In order to protect personal information governed by the Data Protection Act 1998, Section 40 (2) of the FOI Act has been applied to the information regarding the specific amounts of fraudulent invoices, due to the small number of cases involved, individuals could be identified if the amounts were listed separately. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

The final value of an individual case is recorded upon conclusion of that case and therefore cases closed in the requested timeframe have been used for this response

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