



# Ministry of Defence

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Reference: **FOI2021/06521**

Date: **01/07/2021**

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email received by the Ministry Of Defence on 18/06/2021 requesting the following information:

**“Please could you provide me with any data you hold on the number of (i) gay men, (ii) gay women/lesbian, (iii) bisexual and (iv) heterosexual/straight people that are in the armed forces and how that number may have changed over time. Could you please provide me with the exact numbers that you hold relating to this?”**

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We have now completed a search for the information you requested and I can confirm that all information in scope of your request is held.

**Table 1: Strength of UK Regular<sup>1</sup> personnel by Sexual Orientation<sup>2</sup> as at 1<sup>st</sup> April**

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Bisexual	320	360	390	430	550
Gay Man	600	640	680	680	680
Gay Woman	450	480	500	520	570
Heterosexual/Straight	25570	24120	24800	26150	30440
Other	300	300	290	310	330
Unknown <sup>3</sup>	124560	120660	117770	117230	116720
<b>Total</b>	<b>149370</b>	<b>146560</b>	<b>144430</b>	<b>145320</b>	<b>149280</b>

<b>Declaration Rate</b>	19.6%	19.2%	20.0%	20.9%	23.4%
<b>Positive Declaration Rate<sup>4</sup></b>	18.2%	17.7%	18.5%	19.3%	21.8%

## Footnotes:

1. UK Regulars comprise Full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel, Gurkhas, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS), Locally Engaged Personnel (LEP), Non-Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), High Readiness Reserve (HRR) and Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) personnel. Unless otherwise stated, this includes trained and untrained personnel.
2. Sexual orientation as self-declared in JPA. It is worth noting that the declaration rate for sexual orientation is very low as it is not a mandatory field in JPA. (Positive declaration rates for each year can be seen in Table 1.)
3. Unknown includes those who indicated 'prefer not to say' and those who chose not to declare their sexual orientation.
4. Declaration rate includes all those who chose to declare a sexual orientation (including 'prefer not to say'). Positive declaration rate excludes those who declared 'prefer not to say'.

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 in line with disclosure control policy. Figures ending in 5 are rounded to the nearest 20 to avoid bias, 5 or fewer is represented by '~', 0 is represented by '-'.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In line with JSP200 Statistics Disclosure Guidance, numbers fewer than five have been suppressed to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities; secondary suppression has been applied so numbers cannot be derived. 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.

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.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering **Military Personnel** and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing [Analysis-Tri-Service@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Tri-Service@mod.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Analysis (Tri-Service)