



Ministry
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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 7 February 2022 in which you requested the following information:

I am writing to request information relating to suicides and attempted suicides at the army's Catterick garrison.

Specifically:

Since 1st November 2019 - to date this request is processed:

*- The number of suicides committed by any personnel on Catterick garrison grounds including any committed off grounds by personnel who are based/registered at Catterick.
(Including the suicide committed on the night of 4th February 2022)*

- The number of attempted suicides committed by any personnel on Catterick garrison grounds including any committed off grounds by personnel who are based/registered at Catterick.

Please detail the month and year of all of the suicides and suicide attempts.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held and is below. Please note, section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. This is also in line with the Joint Service Publication 200 (JSP 200), in which numbers fewer than five are suppressed in order to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. 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.

Q1 response:

In the period 1 November 2019 to 15 February 2022 (latest data available), there have been **two** coroner confirmed suicides among UK Army personnel who were based at Catterick Garrison at the time of their death. The deaths occurred in January 2020 and in July 2020.

In addition, there were a further **four** deaths among UK army personnel who were based at Catterick Garrison where the mechanism of injury suggests suicide but are awaiting a coroner's inquest. One death occurred in August 2021; one in September 2021 and two in February 2022¹.

Q2 response:

We have interpreted your request for data on 'attempted suicides' to mean incidents of self harm. The definition for self harm is a deliberate intent to inflict damage or alter oneself which does not result in death. This includes incidents of self-injury and self-poisoning but excludes those with thoughts of self-harm or suicidal ideation.

Between 1 November 2019 and 31 October 2021 (latest data available), there were **94** UK army personnel based at Catterick Garrison with at least one incident of self harm recorded using the initial Notification of Casualty (NOTICAS) reporting system and/or electronic medical record². Please note, it is not possible to differentiate between new episodes and the on-going treatment of a self harm episode from the available data, thus this response presents the total number of personnel who had at least one self harm record whilst based at Catterick Garrison.

Table 1 shows the month and year of the first self harm record for each of the 94 UK army personnel who self harmed whilst based at Catterick Garrison between 1 November 2019 and 31 October 2021.

Table 1: Self harm among UK Army personnel based at Catterick Garrison by month of first incident, numbers

1 November 2019 to 31 October 2021

	All	94
2019	November	7
	December	~
2020	January	7
	February	~
	March	~
	April	~
	May	~
	June	~
	July	~
	August	~
	September	7
	October	6
	November	5
	December	~
2021	January	~
	February	~
	March	~
	April	~
	May	~
	June	~
	July	7
	August	~
	September	7
	October	~

¹ It is the coroner's role to determine cause of death and it would be highly inappropriate to speculate

² Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP)

~ in line with JSP200, numbers fewer than five have been suppressed to avoid disclosure of individual identities.

Notes:

1. Defence Statistics Health compiles the Department's authoritative deaths database for all UK Armed Forces personnel who died whilst in Service going back to 1984. Information is compiled from several internal and external sources from which we release a number of internal analyses and external National Statistics Notices. The information presented has been compiled from data held by Defence Statistics on 16 February 2022.
2. When providing statistics on suicides, Defence Statistics Health rely exclusively on the information provided by coroners in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland, and the Procurator Fiscal in Scotland. This ensures the Department's objectivity, as all accidental deaths and those resulting from violent action must be referred to these officials for investigation. For sake of brevity these sources of information have been labelled collectively as "coroner's verdicts". There is an obligation for all accidental deaths, and those resulting from violent action, to be referred to these officials. Inquests are usually held within a few months of the death, but occasionally a few years may elapse, therefore some recent deaths may not have clearly defined causal information.
3. The information presented includes coroner-confirmed suicides in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the publication of National Statistics. The National Statistics definition of suicide includes deaths given an underlying cause of intentional self-harm or an injury/poisoning of undetermined intent. In England and Wales, it has been customary to assume that most injuries and poisonings of undetermined intent are cases where the harm was self-inflicted, but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves and thus given an open or narrative verdict by the coroner.
4. Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment.
5. Defence Statistics Health produce an annual National Statistic on Suicide in the UK Armed Forces which is released at the end of March every year and available at the link below.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-suicide-and-open-verdict-deaths-index>
6. Data presented in this analysis are records of self harm identified through the initial notification of casualty (NOTICAS) reporting system and read codes entered in the Defence Medical Information Capability Program (DMICP).
7. From the available data it is not possible to differentiate between new episodes and the on-going treatment of a self harm episode, thus this response presents the number of incidents recorded.
8. There are known difficulties in accurately capturing self harm episodes common to the UK general population and military populations. The reporting of self harm is dependent on when the self harm is identified and brought to the attention of the appropriate parties either by the individual themselves seeking help or if discovered by a third party. Potential barriers to seeking care include:
 - The associated stigma relating to self harm
 - The mechanism they use to self harm; some of which may not be visible
 - It may be possible for the individual to treat themselves at home (for example cuts)³.
9. Notification of Casualty (or "NOTICAS") is the name for the formalised system of reporting casualties within the UK Armed Forces. The NOTICAS reports raised for casualties contain information on how seriously medical staff judge their condition to be. They are not strictly medical categories but are designed to give an indication of the severity of the injury or illness to inform what the individual's next of kin are told.
10. Initial NOTICAS casualty reporting system data was used as it covers incidents where personnel have been admitted to an NHS Emergency Department and where the next of kin has been informed.
11. Information supplied by the Defence Business Services, Knowledge and Information Management Information Centre of Excellence (DBS KI MICOE) highlighted incidents where the DSH box was ticked. In addition to these, NOTICAS incidents where a free text search of the comments section highlighted it was a DSH related incident was also included. Free text search included the words 'Deliberate', 'Self Harm', 'Deliberate Self Harm' and 'DSH'.
12. Defence Medical Information Capability Program (DMICP) is the MOD electronic integrated primary health care record for UK Armed Forces personnel. DMICP was rolled out in 2007 and legacy medical data for currently serving personnel was migrated across during rollout. In April 2013, DMICP templates began to capture detailed information about the self harm event, prior to this there were no means of identifying separate self harm events/episodes among personnel.
13. Primary care data, as captured on DMICP were used to compile the response where the following DSH related read codes were entered; DMS4691, DMS4692, DMS4693, DMS4698, DMS4707, DMS4708, DMS4710, DMS4711, DMS4713, DMS4714, DMS4716, DMS4717, DMS4719, DMS4720, DMS4722, DMS4723, DMS4725, DMS4726, DMS4729, EMISCSE4TK-1, TK-2, TK-4, TK-5, TK60, TK601, TRIQQIN7, U2, U200, U200-1, U200-2, U201U202-1, U204-3, U208, U20B, U21, U2-1, U22, U2-3, U29, U290, U2B, U2C, U2D, U2E and U2y.
14. Please note if the self harm incident were recorded as free text only in the patient medical record the information does not transfer into the central data warehouse, thus was not available for analysis. It would require many hours of a clinician's time to review the patient records to code the information and thus make the information centrally available; in the timeframe required to provide the analysis, this was deemed to be disproportionate effort.

3 McAllister, M. (2003). Multiple meanings of self-harm: A critical review. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 12, 177-185.

15. There has been no audit of the clinical accuracy of the DMICP data entered in the patient record and no validation of the patient record with data held in the data warehouse.
16. Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system is the most accurate source for demographic information on UK Armed Forces personnel.

A service persons location was identified using the 'location unit' field in JPA. Anyone with 'Catterick Garrison' as a location has been used in this analysis.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, 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.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,

Workforce & Operations Team
Army Policy & Secretariat