



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services
Secretariat
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FY5 3WP

Email: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.uk

Ref: FOI2022/04416

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

29 April 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 6 December 2022 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

“ I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the MoD:

- 1. The total number of armed forces veterans currently claiming an immediate pension (IP)*
- 2. The total number of veterans claiming the immediate pension under the age of 65*
- 3. The total number of veterans claiming the immediate pension receiving less than £20,000 a year, less than £15,000 a year, less than £10,000 a year and less than £5,000 a year from their pension*
- 4. The total number of armed forces veterans who have reached out to the MoD veterans team for homelessness support as well as the total number of veteran homelessness cases that the MoD have played a role in supporting, broken down by year since 2010.*

If the information is in excess of the cost of compliance limits in Section 12, please advise on how the request can be reduced, and likewise if anything in the request can be clarified do not hesitate to contact me.”

On 31 March 2022 you provided the following clarification:

“In terms of the age requirement, it would be helpful basically to have an age breakdown of those claiming immediate pension. We were hoping to understand how many claimants classed as working age (i.e. younger than average retirement age of roughly 65) right now were claiming their immediate pension as we have seen several cases of this. If we relate solely to AFPS75, as it seems most relevant to that issue with the lower age threshold, that would work, but ideally we want a way to gauge the number of working age veterans claiming immediate pension.

For 4, it would be the VWS apologies for not clarifying and it could be broken down, if the severity of intervention isn't covered in any way, by the total number of VWS welfare interventions by year since 2010.”

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. 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.

To determine whether a pension in payment was immediate or preserved in payment would require a manual search of all pension files. As there are around 370,000 pension files, this would far exceed the cost limit to carry out such a task. Furthermore, if immediate pensions could be identified, a manual search of those files would then be required to determine the amounts being paid.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Guidance) there is unfortunately no simple suggestion we can give to how you may wish to refine your request. The MOD only records if a pension is in payment or deferred. If you wish to request this information, then I will be happy to consider your request again.

It may also be helpful if I explain that AFPS75 pensions became payable at age 60. This means that should a service person leave with a deferred pension; it becomes payable before the 'average retirement age' of 65.

The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS) conduct a holistic assessment for each client's welfare issues. However, statistical data relating to those who are homeless is not recorded.

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)