



Mental health care can be provided to UK Armed Forces personnel in the primary care setting by the patient's own Medical Officer, similar to a General Practitioner (GP), or by specialist mental health clinicians at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services; this includes community mental health services at MOD Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH) for outpatient care or admissions to hospital as an in-patient.

This bulletin provides statistical information on mental health in the UK Armed Forces. The first section of this bulletin provides an overall summary of UK Armed Forces seen in all military healthcare for a mental health related reason. The second section provides a detailed summary of those seen by MOD specialist mental health clinicians.

Key Points and Trends 2021/22

 <p><b>1 in 8 (12.5%)</b></p> <p><b>UK Armed Forces were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2021/22</b></p>	<p>Some patients seen by their GP may require a referral for specialist mental health treatment :</p>	<p>Females sought help more than males, similar to that seen in the UK general population.</p> 
	<p><b>1 in 43 (2.3%)</b></p> <p><b>UK Armed Forces were seen by a specialist mental health clinician in 2021/22</b></p>	<p>The rate of <b>PTSD</b> among UK Armed Forces remains <b>low</b> at around 1 in 1,000 personnel</p>

1 in 8 (12.5%) UK armed forces personnel were seen by military healthcare services for a mental health related reason in 2021/22. This is a return to similar levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. It is possible a reduction in some routine and training activity during periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and contributed to the fall in 2020/21. As restrictions eased, and the use of remote and electronic consultations became established, rates returned to similar to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels in 2021/22.

Most patients who seek mental health care are managed by their GP, however some with more complex needs will receive treatment from specialist mental care providers. Rates of those requiring specialist mental health services rose in 2021/22 to 1 in 43 (2.3%), however remained below rates seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rate of those needing specialist mental health treatment was lower in the UK armed forces than that seen in the UK general population.

Personnel from all age groups accessed military mental healthcare and females sought help more than males, as seen in the UK general population.

The rate of PTSD among serving personnel remains low at 0.1%, which represents 1 in 1,000 personnel assessed with the disorder in 2021/22.

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### **Supplementary tables containing:**

- all data presented in this publication
- figures presenting UK Armed Forces personnel PTSD by gender and Psychoactive Substance Misuse due to alcohol by gender.
- tables presenting UK Armed Forces personnel by assignment type Regular, Reservist and Other
- more detailed information regarding each Service

will sit alongside this report on [the mental health statistics page](#).

This publication forms the single source of mental health statistics for UK Armed Forces personnel and is used within the Ministry of Defence as well as by external users including the general public, the media, academics and the charitable sector.

This publication will be used within MOD to monitor rates of mental ill-health and assist with policy making. It will also be used to facilitate research and to ensure MOD's accountability to the British public.

These statistics include serving personnel only. Information around Veterans claiming compensation for mental health reasons can be found in the [Armed Forces Compensation Scheme National Statistic](#). Research into Veterans mental health has also been conducted by the [King's College Centre for Military Health Research](#).

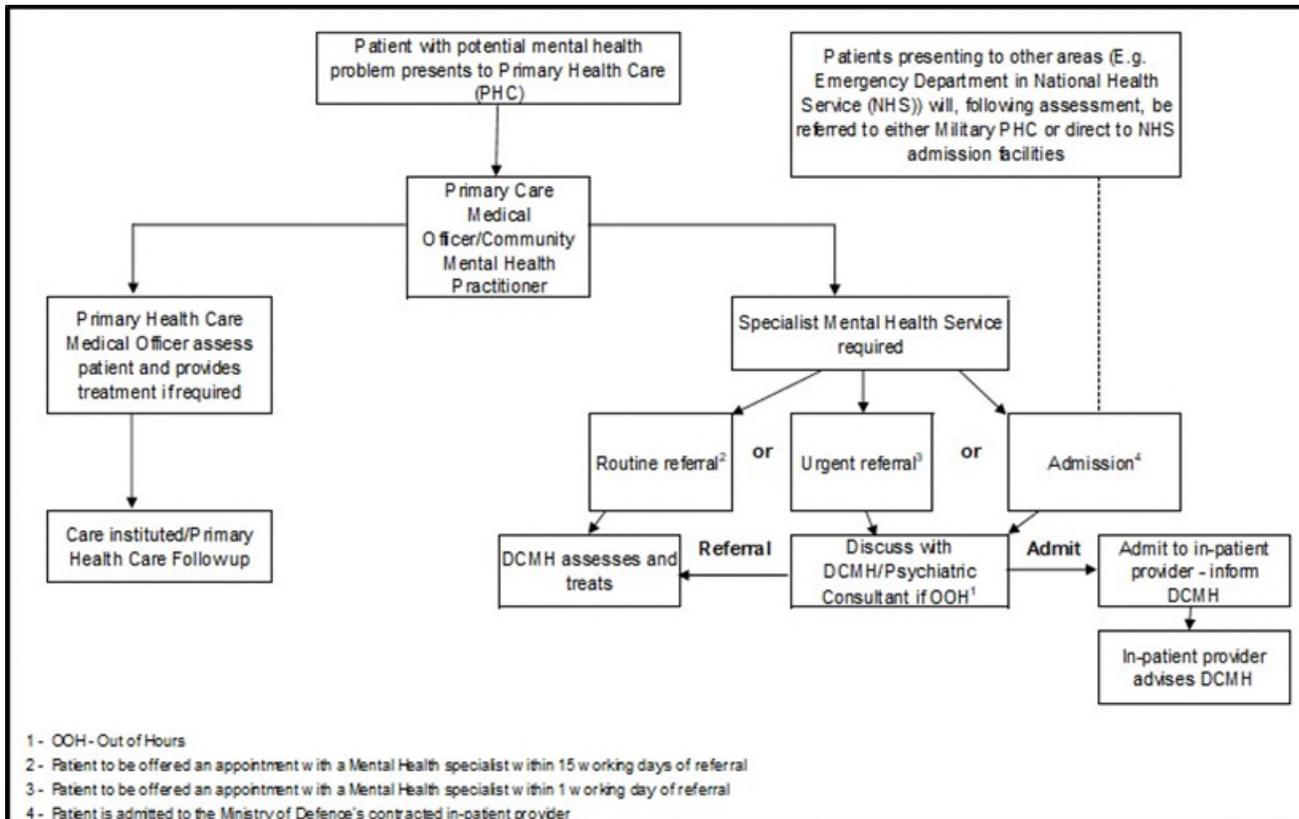
The [Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey](#) presents serving personnel's feedback on a variety of topics, including well-being.

## Introduction

Assessment and care-management within the UK Armed Forces for personnel experiencing mental health problems is available at three levels:

- 1) In Primary Health Care (PHC), by the patient's own Medical Officer (MO), similar to a GP.
- 2) In the community through specialists in military Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH).
- 3) In hospitals, either the NHS or the contracted In-Patient Service Provider (ISP).

The level of care a patient may require is determined by a number of factors, including the severity of symptoms and the degree of risk posed by the patient's current condition. The following diagram shows the pathways into mental health services in the UK Armed Forces:



The first section of this report summarises the totality of mental health in the UK Armed Forces by capturing those seen within any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason; including by clinicians in primary care and/or by specialist mental health clinicians at MOD Departments of Community Mental Health (DCMH).

The second section provides a more detailed summary of initial assessments for care delivered by MOD Specialist Mental Health clinicians (MOD's DCMH for outpatient care, and all admissions to the MOD's in-patient care contractor).

The data is sourced from the MOD electronic medical records, entered by military clinicians. UK Armed Forces personnel who sought help from private practice were not included in this report.

## Main Points

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The rate of UK Armed Forces personnel seen by military healthcare services for a mental health related reason increased in 2021/22, a return to similar levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase may be due to COVID-19 restrictions easing and the use of remote and electronic consultations becoming more established.

- **1 in 8** (12.5%) UK Armed Forces personnel were seen by military healthcare services for a mental health related reason in 2021/22.
- Rates of mental disorders seen in military healthcare services have **risen** since 2020/21, returning to similar levels seen in 2019/20.
- Most personnel seeking military mental health care go to their GP in the first instance. **1 in 8** (12.1%) of personnel were seen by their GP in the latest year.
- The majority of patients who seek mental health care are managed by their GP, however some with more complex needs will receive treatment from specialist mental care providers. Rates of those requiring specialist mental health services also rose to **1 in 43** (2.3%).
- The overall rate of mental health in the UK Armed Forces was **broadly comparable** to that seen in the UK general population.
- However, latest data shows the rate for those needing specialist mental health treatment was **lower** in the UK armed forces than that seen in the UK general population.
- There were some conditions that were more likely to be managed by GP's such as sleep disorders, stress and sexual dysfunction. Other conditions such as PTSD, depression and adjustment disorders were more likely to be treated by specialist mental health clinicians.
- Personnel from **all age groups** accessed military mental healthcare and **females** sought help more than males, as seen in the UK general population.

## Section 1: All mental health in the UK Armed Forces 2012/13 to 2021/22

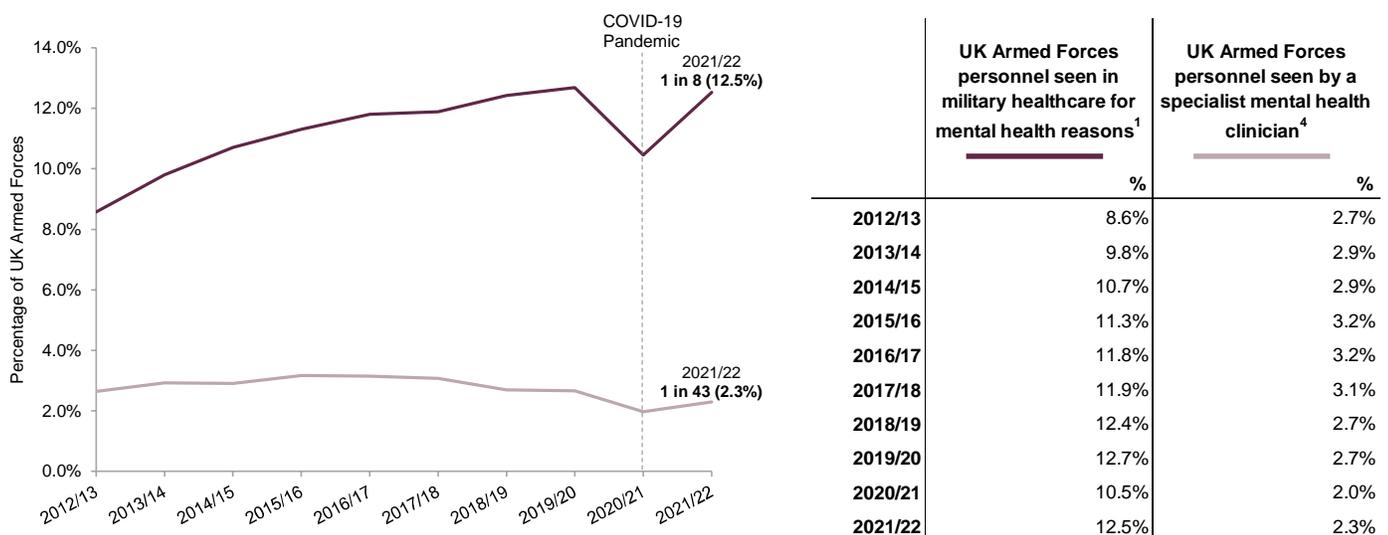
### 1 in 8 (12.5%)

UK Armed Forces personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2021/22.

In 2021/22 rates of personnel seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason returned to similar levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 1 of this bulletin presents information on UK Armed Forces seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason. This includes those seen by clinicians in primary care (GP's) and/or by specialist mental health clinicians at a MOD DCMH. Please note, this includes signs and symptoms of mental health as well as all [ICD-10](#) mental health disorders (a full list of the codes included in the analysis are detailed in the Background Quality Report (BQR) that accompanies this publication).

**Figure 1: UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting<sup>1</sup> for a mental health related reason<sup>2,3</sup>. Percentage of personnel at risk. 2012/13 to 2021/22**



**Source: DMICP**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders
3. The dotted line in 2020/21 represents the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

The rate of UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason increased over time to 2016/17 and remained stable at around 1 in 8 (12.0%) of the UK Armed Forces population until 2019/20. In 2020/21 there was a statistically significant fall in the rate to 1 in 10 of the UK Armed Forces (10.5%). In 2021/22 the rate returned to a similar level seen before the COVID-19 pandemic, to **1 in 8 (12.5%)** of the UK Armed Forces.

During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the 2020/21 fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons.

In 2021/22, as COVID-19 restrictions eased, and the use of remote and electronic consultation methods became established, the rate returned to a level similar to that seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most personnel seeking military mental health care go to their GP in the first instance. **1 in 8 (12.1%)** personnel were seen by their GP in the latest year.

The majority of patients who seek mental health care are managed by their GP, however some with more complex needs will receive treatment from specialist mental care providers. The rate of personnel seen for a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services rose over time to 2015/16, as seen for overall mental health presentations. Rates then fell in 2018/19 and remained stable at **1 in 37 (2.7%)** for the next two years. This fall in referrals may be the result of a change to the management of low risk patients with uncomplicated common mental health disorders within the MOD, introduced in September 2018. These patients are offered self-help and psychological interventions in primary care and may therefore be successfully treated without need for referral to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services.

As seen with the presentation for overall military mental health in 2020/21 and 2021/22, there was a statistically significant decrease in the rate of personnel seen for a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services to 1 in 50 (2.0%) in 2020/21. In the latest year, the rate statistically significantly increased to **1 in 43 (2.3%)**, however remained below rates seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Potential explanations for this are explored on the previous page.

It should be noted that all personnel seen for a mental health related reason in any military healthcare setting were counted in the overall rate of 12.5%. The majority were seen by their GP and included in the rate of 12.1% and a small proportion were seen by specialist mental health clinicians and counted in the rate of 2.3%. Personnel can be counted in both the GP and specialist services rates and therefore these rates are not mutually exclusive and cannot be added together. Please also note it is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record and therefore a rate of those managed solely by their GP cannot be provided.

## Section 1: All mental health in the UK Armed Forces 2012/13 to 2021/22, by demographics

Higher proportion of personnel seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason in:

**RAF and Royal Navy**  
**Females**  
**Other Ranks**

Lower proportion seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason in:

**Royal Marines**  
**Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)**

**Table 1: UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting<sup>1</sup> for a mental health related reason<sup>2</sup> by demographics, number<sup>3</sup> and percentage of personnel at risk<sup>4</sup>. 2021/22**

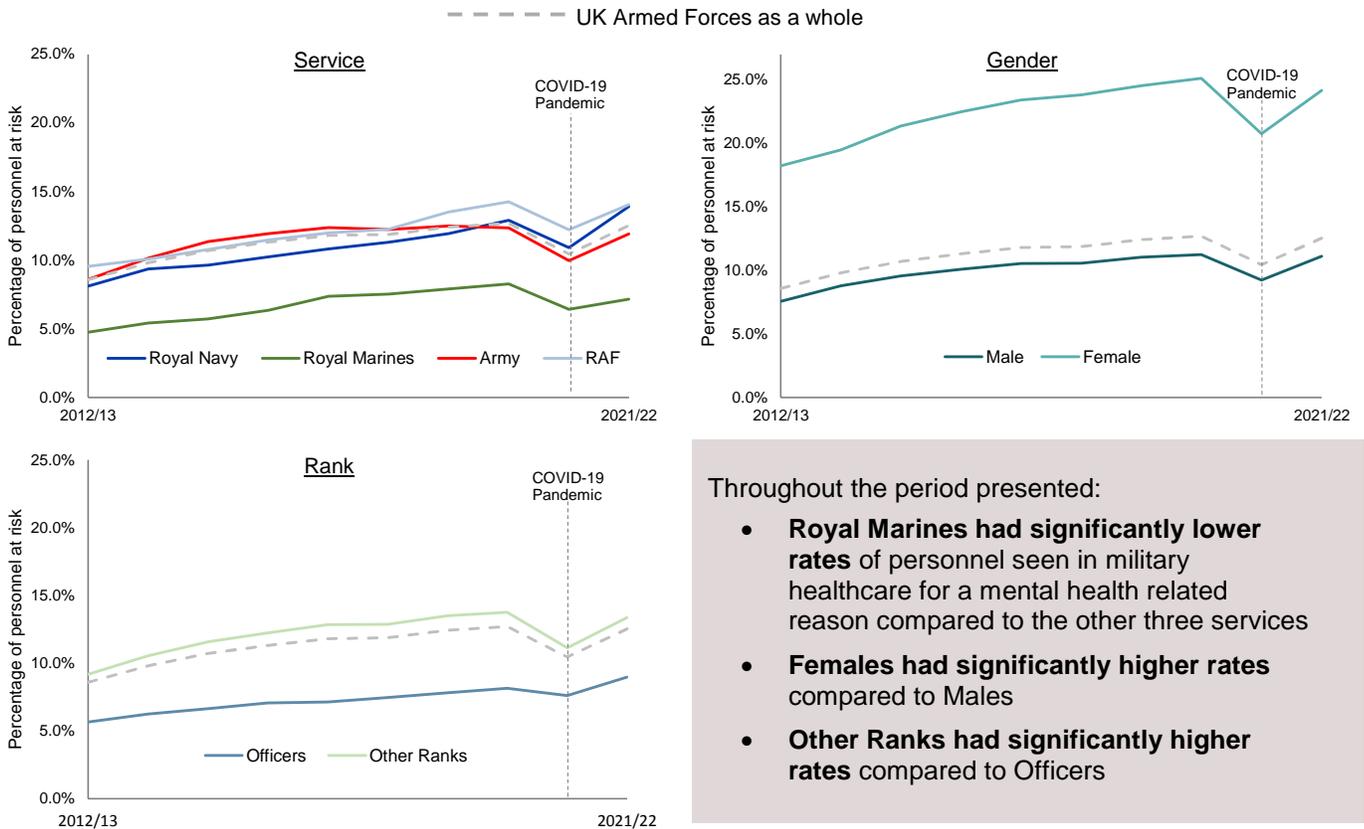
Number of UK Armed Forces personnel seen in a military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason	2021/22		percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel at risk	Statistically significant differences in rates in 2021/22:
	n	%		
<b>Service</b>	<b>20,318</b>	<b>12.5</b>		
Royal Navy*	3,929	13.9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher in RAF and Royal Navy</li> </ul>
Royal Marines	504	7.3		
Army	10,989	11.9		
RAF*	4,898	14.1		
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	16,094	11.1		
Female*	4,224	24.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher in Females</li> </ul>
<b>Rank</b>				
Officer	2,774	9.0		
Other Rank*	17,545	13.4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower in ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>				
Aged <20	1,399	14.7		
Aged 20-24	4,093	13.3		
Aged 25-29	3,815	12.4		
Aged 30-34	3,764	13.3		
Aged 35-39	3,411	14.1		
Aged 40-44	2,512	14.5		
Aged 45-49	1,341	13.6		
Aged 50 +	1,119	9.7		
<b>Ethnicity<sup>4</sup></b>				
Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)	1,408	7.4		
White (including white minorities)*	18,661	13.1		

**Source: DMICP**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders.
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one recording of a mental health related reason in a year and change age group, rank or service will be counted once in each sub-category. Also demographic information may be missing for some personnel.
4. "Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)" includes all ethnic groups, excluding the white ethnic group.
5. "\*" denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).

The higher rate of presentation among the demographic groups seen in Table 1 were broadly similar to those seen in previous years. Figures 2 and 3 present rates for personnel seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason among each demographic group since 2012/13.

**Figure 2: UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting<sup>1</sup> for a mental health related reason<sup>2</sup>, by demographics. Percentage 2012/13 to 2021/22**



**Source: DMICP**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders.

The rising trend in mental health presentations seen in the UK Armed Forces as a whole up to 2019/20 was also seen in each service with the exception of the Army, where the rate remained stable at around 12.4% between 2016/17 and 2019/20. For each service, there was a fall in rates in 2020/21, followed by a rise in 2021/22. Rates for the Royal Navy increased more steeply in 2021/22 compared to the other three services; the reasons for this are unclear.

In 2021/22, the rate of **Royal Navy and RAF personnel** seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason was **significantly higher** compared to the other two services. Rates among the **Royal Marines were significantly lower** than the other services throughout the period presented.

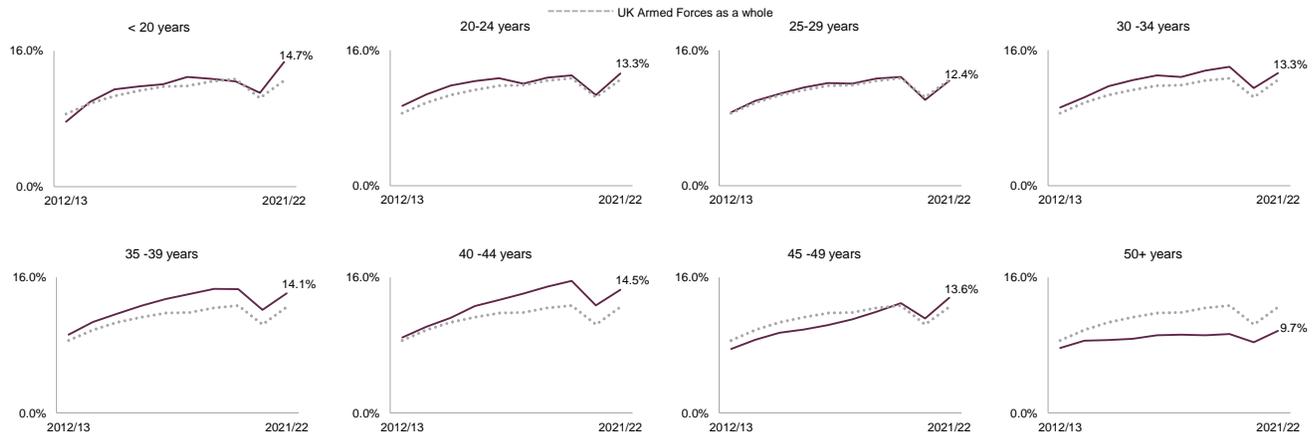
The Royal Marines undergo rigorous training to ensure only the 'elite' go forward as Royal Marines (thus the selection process removes those that may be more susceptible to mental health problems). The tight unit cohesion that exists amongst the elite forces further supports the 'healthy worker' effect (personal communication with Def Prof Mental Health) and may also influence the lower rates of mental ill health in this service. In addition, high levels of preparedness may serve to lessen the impact of operational deployment experiences on mental ill health among the Royal Marines<sup>b</sup>.

The return of overall rates in 2021/22 to levels similar to that seen pre-pandemic was also seen in both Male and Female personnel, and Officers and Other Ranks.

Rates among Females were significantly higher than Males throughout the period presented. This finding was replicated [in the civilian population where females were more likely to report mental ill health than males \(see Section 3 for further details\)](#).

Rates among Other Ranks were significantly higher than Officers throughout the period presented. The differences between Other Ranks and Officers may be due to educational and/or socio-economic background, where both higher educational attainment and higher socio-economic background are associated with lower levels of mental ill health disorder<sup>d</sup>. Most Officers (except for those promoted from the Ranks) are recruited as graduates of the higher education system, whilst the majority of Other Ranks are recruited straight from school, particularly for the Army.

**Figure 3: UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting<sup>1</sup> for a mental health related reason<sup>2</sup>, by age group. Percentage. 2012/13 to 2021/22**



Source: DMICP

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders

The return of rates of mental health in 2021/22 to levels similar to that seen in 2019/20 in the UK Armed Forces as a whole was also seen in each age group.

The rise in rates in 2021/22 was highest amongst those aged under 20 years compared to other age groups. This was driven by **significantly higher rates** amongst **Army personnel aged under 20 years** compared to other age groups. The social impact of the periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions may have been greater for younger people and may partially explain the increase in rates among the under 20's (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry 2021).

Since 2017/18, the rate of those aged 50 or over seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason was significantly lower compared to all other age groups.

### Ethnicity

In 2021/22, **white personnel (including white minorities)** were statistically significantly **more likely** to be seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason than **ethnic minority personnel (excluding white minorities)**. This finding was also seen in the UK general population (see Section 3 for further details).

## **Section 1: All mental health in the UK Armed Forces, management of disorders**

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### **Disorders**

It is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record. Therefore it cannot be determined whether mental health treatment was delivered solely by the GP or whether the patient went on to also receive specialist care at a MOD DCMH. However, crude exploratory analysis suggests that some conditions were more likely to be treated by a GP, such as sleep disorders, stress and sexual dysfunction. Other conditions were more likely to be treated by specialist mental health services, such as PTSD, Depression and Adjustment Disorders.

The following section of this bulletin provides more detailed analysis of those requiring the support of specialist mental health clinicians.

## Section 2: Trends in UK Armed Forces mental health initial assessments at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services 2007/08 to 2021/22

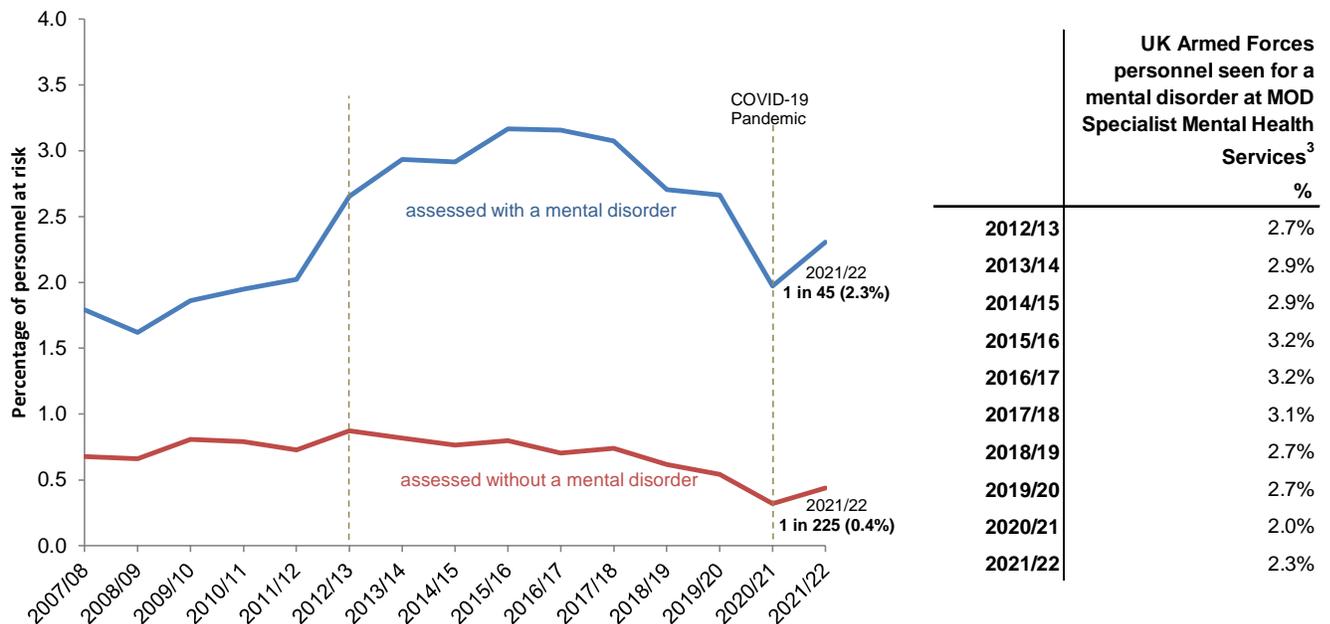
### 1 in 43 (2.3%)

UK Armed Forces personnel were assessed with a mental disorder in 2021/22 at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

The rate of those referred to specialist mental health care was **lower** than the UK general population.

Section 2 provides a more detailed summary of those patients requiring treatment by specialist mental health clinicians at MOD Specialist Mental Health services. UK Armed Forces personnel may access specialist mental health care as an outpatient in the community at a MOD DCMH and/or as an in-patient in hospital via the MOD in-patient care provider. Clinician's record the patient's initial mental health assessment based on the presenting signs and symptoms. Some patients are assessed by clinician's as having no specific and identifiable mental disorder.

**Figure 4: UK Armed Forces personnel presenting at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by initial assessment, percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2</sup>.**  
2007/08 to 2021/22



Source: DS Database and DMICP

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).

The rate of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services increased year on year to 3.2% in 2015/16; it then remained stable before falling to a rate of 2.7% in 2018/19 and 2019/20. In 2020/21 there was a statistically significant decrease in the rate to 1 in 50 (2.0%), followed by a statistically significant increase in 2021/22 to **1 in 43 (2.3%)**.

The new mental health care pathway model adopted by the MOD in September 2018 which aims to treat low risk patients with common mental disorders in primary care may explain the reduction in referral rates from primary care to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services seen in 2018/19. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons in 2020/21 (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021). As COVID-19 restrictions eased in the latest year, and the

use of remote and electronic consultation methods became established, rates rose. However, rates remained below those seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please see Section 3 for comparisons to the UK general population.

## Section 2: Demographic Risk Groups at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

Higher presentations seen in:

**Females**

**Other Ranks**

**White (including white minorities) ethnic groups**

Analysis in this section presents the number of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental health disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health services by demographic groups: service, gender, rank, age and ethnicity. Table 2 presents the findings for 2021/22 collectively.

**Table 2: UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>.**  
2021/22

	2021/22		percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel at risk	
	n	%		
<b>Number of personnel assessed with a mental disorder at Services</b>	<b>3,741</b>	<b>2.3</b>		Statistically significant differences in rates in 2021/22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower in Royal Marines</li> <li>• Higher in Females</li> <li>• Higher in Other ranks</li> <li>• Lower in ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)</li> </ul>
<b>Service</b>				
Royal Navy	567	2.0		
Royal Marines	103	1.5		
Army	2,261	2.4		
RAF	810	2.3		
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	2,950	2.0		
Female*	791	4.5		
<b>Rank</b>				
Officer	429	1.4		
Other Rank*	3,312	2.5		
<b>Age</b>				
Aged <20	284	3.0		
Aged 20-24	786	2.5		
Aged 25-29	724	2.4		
Aged 30-34	692	2.4		
Aged 35-39	566	2.3		
Aged 40-44	401	2.3		
Aged 45-49	195	2.0		
Aged 50 +	112	1.0		
<b>Ethnicity<sup>4</sup></b>				
Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)	238	1.2		
White (including white minorities)*	3,471	2.4		

**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. "\*" denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. "Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)" includes all ethnic groups, excluding the white ethnic group.

The demographic breakdown (**Table 2**) of those requiring specialist mental health care at MOD Specialist Mental Health services is similar to those being seen in all military healthcare for a mental health related reason presented in Section 1 of this bulletin (**Table 1**).

The rate for:

- **Royal Marines** were significantly **lower** compared to the other three services
- **Females** were significantly **higher** compared to Males
- **Other Ranks** were significantly **higher** compared to Officers
- Those **aged 50 or over** were significantly **lower** compared to other age groups
- **Ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities)** were significantly **lower** compared to white personnel (including white minorities).

However, there were some differences between patients seen in specialist mental healthcare compared to any military healthcare setting:

- The rate of **Army** personnel requiring specialist mental health care was significantly **higher** than the Royal Navy. However, the rate of Royal Navy personnel being seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason was significantly higher than the Army; the reasons for this are unclear.

### Previous deployment

Previous releases of this official statistic have shown statistically significant higher rates of mental health disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services between 2013/14 and 2015/16 among UK Armed Forces personnel who were previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan compared to those who had not previously deployed there (see Figure 12 in supplementary web tables). Since 2015/16 there was no significant difference in the rates of mental health disorders between UK Armed Forces personnel who were previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan compared to those who had not previously deployed there. This comparison only includes deployment to Operation TELIC (Iraq), Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) and Operation VERITAS (Afghanistan) and does not include deployment to recent operations to Operation SHADER (Iraq) and Operation TORAL (Afghanistan).

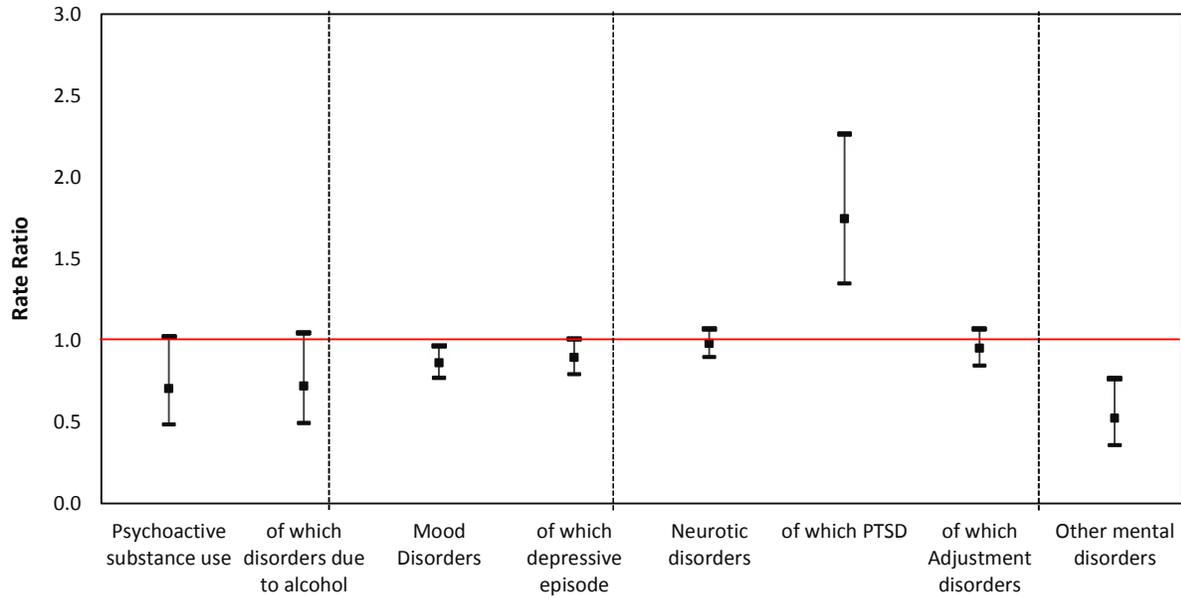
To investigate whether there were certain mental health disorders associated with deployment, rate ratios (RR) were calculated. The rate ratios provide a comparison of cases seen between personnel identified as having deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan and those who have not been identified as having deployed there. A rate ratio less than 1 indicates lower rates in those deployed than those not deployed, whereas a rate ratio greater than 1 indicates higher rates in those deployed than those not deployed. If the 95% confidence interval does not encompass the value 1.0, then this difference is statistically significant.

When looking at the specific mental disorders for those previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan, there were some statistically significant differences:

**Rates of PTSD were higher in those who had previously deployed** to Iraq and/or Afghanistan than those not deployed there (Figure 5). In 2021/22, there was an increased risk of 70% for PTSD for service personnel previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

**Figure 5: UK Armed Forces personnel seen at the MOD's DCMH's, for Iraq and/or Afghanistan by mental disorder. Rate Ratio, 95% Confidence Interval<sup>1,2</sup>.**

2021/22



**Source: DS Database and DMICP**

1. Deployment to the wider theatre of operation (refer to BQR)

2. Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (refer to BQR).

## Section 2: Trends in UK Armed Forces mental disorders at MOD DCMH 2007/08 to 2021/22

The most prevalent disorders diagnosed at MOD DCMH were:

**Adjustment Disorders**  
**Depressive Episodes**  
**Other Neurotic Disorders**

Rates of PTSD remain low at **1 in 1,000 (0.1%)** of UK Armed Forces serving personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH in 2021/22.

Clinicians at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services record the patient's initial mental health assessment based on the presenting signs and symptoms, categorizing to World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10) mental disorders (more details can be found in the Glossary). A patient admitted to a MOD in-patient provider will be discharged to the care of a DCMH and therefore the data in this section presents the number of personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH by mental disorder.

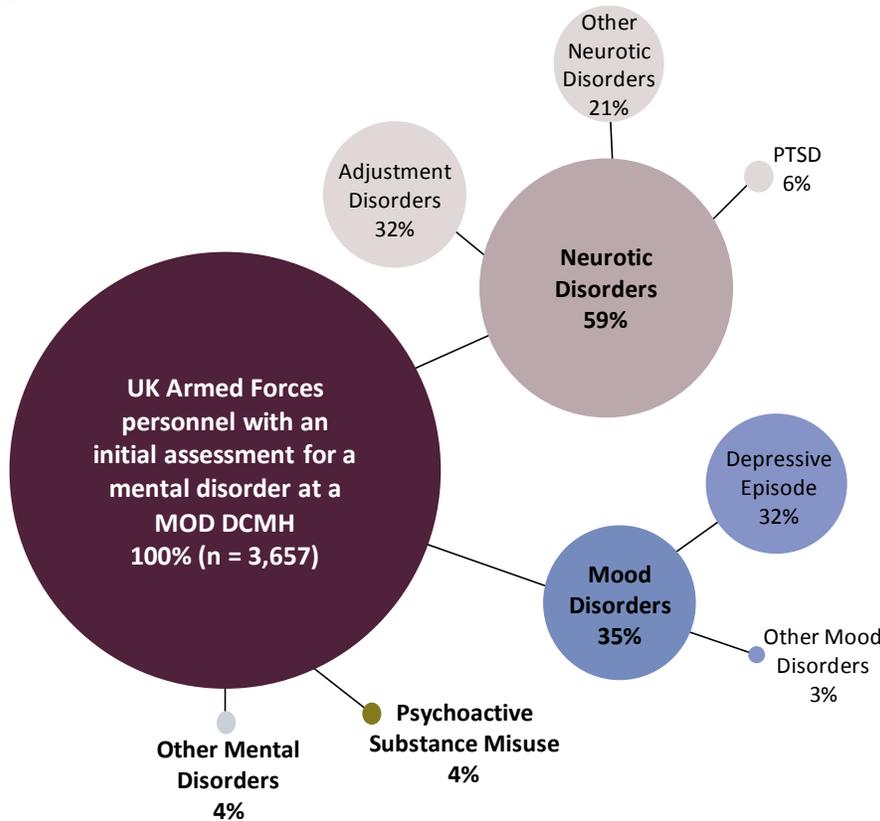
**Neurotic Disorders** (Adjustment, PTSD and Other Neurotic Disorders) were the most prevalent mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH among UK Armed Forces personnel in 2021/22 (accounting for **1.3%** of the population or approximately 1 in every 100 personnel), with Adjustment Disorders accounting for a third of all mental disorders in the UK Armed Forces (Figure 6a).

The finding that Neurotic Disorders were the most prevalent mental disorders among UK Armed Forces personnel is consistent with the UK general population. However, there were differences in the specific types of Neurotic Disorders most commonly seen within the UK Armed Forces and the UK general population. In the UK general population, Generalised Anxiety disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Phobias were the most common Neurotic disorders<sup>d</sup>, whereas Adjustment disorder was the most common in the UK Armed Forces. Adjustment disorder is a short-term condition occurring when a person is unable to cope with or adjust to a particular source of stress such as a major life change, loss or event. The higher rates of Adjustment disorders seen in the UK Armed Forces compared to the UK general population may reflect the impact of Service life with routine postings every few years and operational tours. Another possible explanation is a clinician's diagnostic habit to assess UK Armed Forces personnel with a condition which is less prognostically serious (personal correspondence with DCA Psychiatry, 2014).

In 2021/22, **Depressive Episodes** remained the second most prevalent disorder and accounted for **32%** of all mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH (Figure 6a).

The proportion of initial assessments for **PTSD** and **Psychoactive Substance Misuse** in 2021/22 remained low at **6%** and **4%** of all mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH respectively.

**Figure 6a: UK Armed Forces personnel mental disorders at initial assessment at MOD DCMH, number and percentage<sup>1,2,3</sup>**  
2021/22

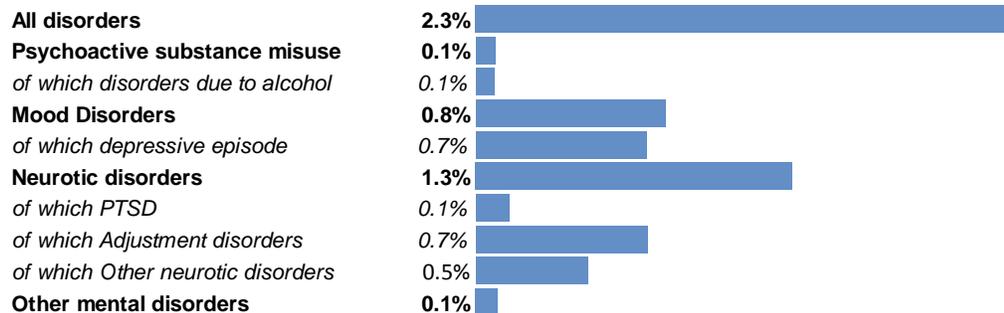


**Source: DS Database and DMICP**

1. Percentages in the graphic may not sum 100% due to some personnel presenting with more than one disorder and thus are counted within each disorder they have presented with.
2. Excludes personnel where initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR).
3. The number of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder differs from that presented in Table 2 as here only includes personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH in 2021/22, whereas Table 2 includes personnel assessed at both a MOD DCMH and/or an in-patient provider.

**Figure 6b: UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at a MOD DCMH in 2021/22, percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3</sup>**

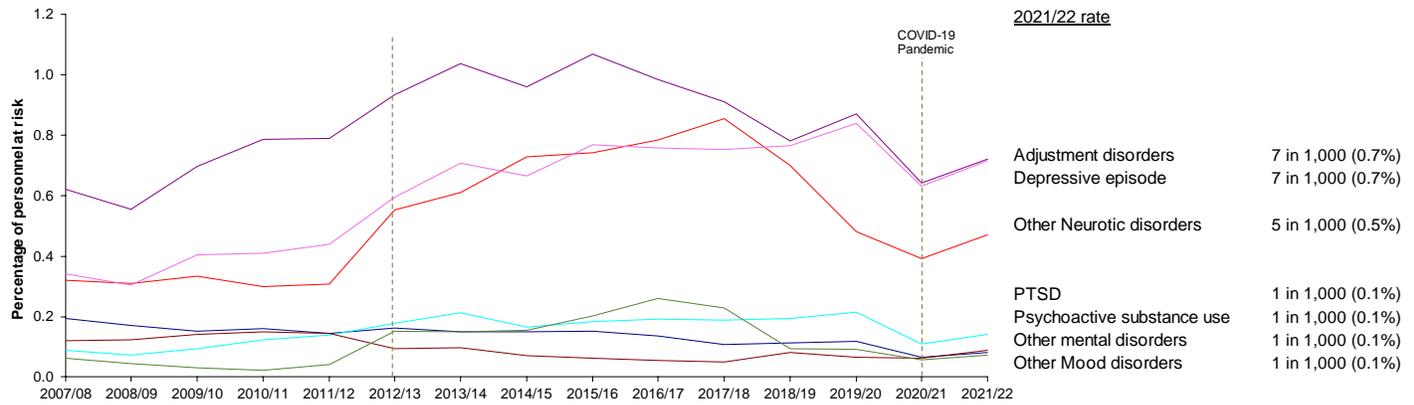
**% of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder at a MOD DCMH in 2021/22**



**Source: DS Database and DMICP**

1. Excludes personnel where initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. The percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel assessed with a mental disorder differs from that presented in Figure 4 as Figure 6b includes personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH only in 2021/22; Figure 4 includes personnel assessed at both a MOD DCMH and/or an in-patient provider.

**Figure 7: UK Armed Forces personnel mental disorders at initial assessment at MOD DCMH, percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3</sup>. 2007/08 to 2021/22**



**Source: DS Database and DMICP**

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

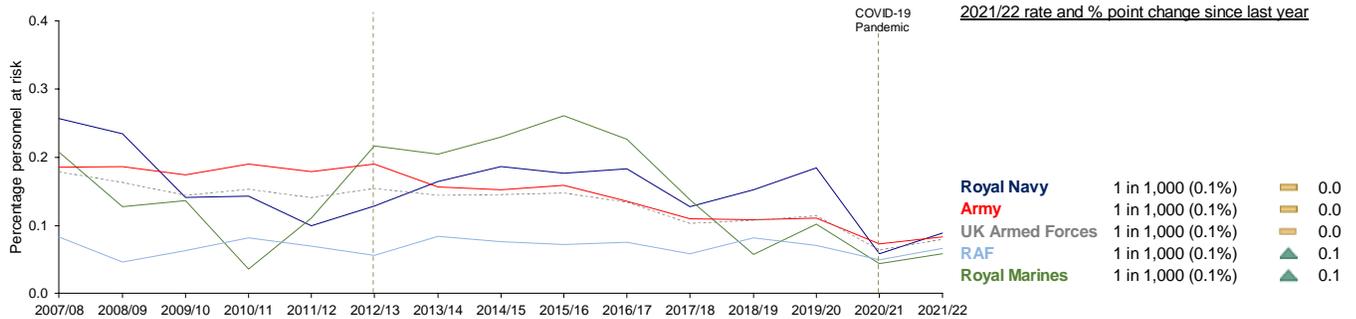
The rate of Other Neurotic disorders have fallen since 2017/18. This may be the result of the new care model introduced in 2018 which sees low risk patients with less complex presentations of common mental disorders being offered self-help and psychosocial interventions in primary care before assessment for referral to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services. This may have had an impact on referral rates for specialist intervention for stress-related disorders that fall under the Other Neurotic category, with crude exploratory analysis suggesting these disorders were more likely to be treated solely within the primary healthcare setting.

In 2021/22, rates among each disorder increased in line with the overall rise in mental disorders assessed at a MOD DCMH.

Despite media attention focusing on prevalence of **PTSD** and **Psychoactive substance misuse due to alcohol** in the UK Armed Forces, Figure 7 shows that these disorders remain **low** with around 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) serving UK Armed Forces personnel assessed at a MOD DCMH. Figures 8 and 9 present the differences in the percentage of UK Armed Forces personnel within each Service assessed with psychoactive substance misuse due to alcohol and PTSD respectively.

## Psychoactive Substance Misuse due to Alcohol

**Figure 8: UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment at the MOD's DCMH, for psychoactive substance misuse due to alcohol, by Service, percentage personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3</sup>. 2007/08 to 2021/22**



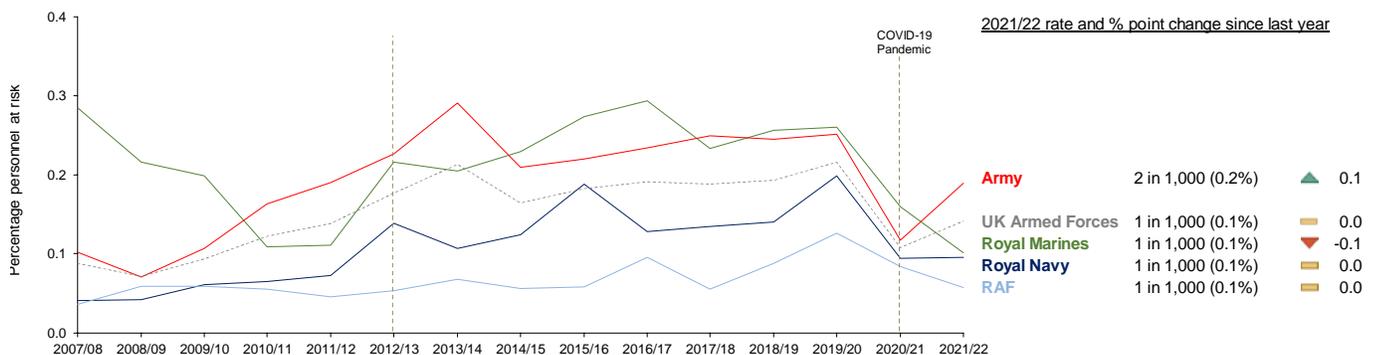
**Source: DS Database and DMICP**

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

Royal Marines had the highest rate of alcohol misuse among the services between 2012/13 and 2016/17 before falling to 0.1% in 2021/22. Please note, the number of Royal Marines assessed with this disorder remain small (less than five in 2021/22) and so caution should be taken in interpreting these findings. In 2021/22, the rates of Psychoactive Substance Misuse for Alcohol were similar for each Service at around 0.1% (1 in a 1,000 personnel).

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

**Figure 9: UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment at the MOD's DCMH, for PTSD by Service, percentage personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3</sup>. 2007/08 to 2021/22**



**Source: DS Database and DMICP**

1. Dotted lines represent 2012/13 revised methodology to include electronic patient record data source (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
2. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods).
3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

The Army and Royal Marines had the highest proportion of personnel assessed with PTSD at a MOD DCMH during the fifteen-year period presented. In 2021/22, rates of PTSD fell or stayed the same in each service except the Army which rose to 0.2% of Army personnel. Figure 5 in this report shows that deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan resulted in an increased risk of a subsequent assessment of PTSD in the UK Armed Forces.

The rate of serving personnel assessed with PTSD **remains low at 0.1%** of UK Armed Forces personnel in 2021/22, equivalent to 1 in 1,000 personnel.

## Section 2: Number of new episodes of care among UK Armed Forces personnel at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services, 2017/18 to 2021/22

Personnel may have more than one episode of care in a year. To understand clinical activity and prevalence of mental health disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services, it is important to present the total number of new episodes of care. This is of particular use to MOD's policy areas and other internal users of this bulletin.

**Table 3: UK Armed Forces new episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by Service provider, initial assessment, numbers and percentage personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3</sup>. 2017/18 to 2021/22**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Number of new episodes of care</b>					
<b>New episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services<sup>1</sup></b>					
At a DCMH	6,336	5,402	5,234	3,779	4,569
At a MOD in-patient provider	303	308	310	217	261
Episodes assessed with a mental disorder <sup>2</sup>	5,411	4,717	4,658	3,458	4,071
Episodes assessed without a mental disorder <sup>2</sup>	1,221	980	871	523	730
Missing mental disorder information <sup>3</sup>	7	13	15	15	29
<b>Percentage of personnel at risk</b>					
<b>New episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services<sup>1</sup></b>					
At a DCMH	4.0	3.5	3.4	2.4	2.8
At a MOD in-patient provider	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
Episodes assessed with a mental disorder <sup>2</sup>	3.4	3.0	3.0	2.2	2.5
Episodes assessed without a mental disorder <sup>2</sup>	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4
Missing mental disorder information <sup>3</sup>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT, BFG**

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)

2. Clinician's initial assessment based on presenting symptoms (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)

3. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)

There was a statistically significant increase in the rate of new episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services in 2021/22 to 3.0% of UK Armed Forces personnel.

In 2021/22, **4,410** UK Armed Forces personnel had **4,830** new episodes of care at MOD Specialist Mental Health services. There were 4,569 new episodes at a MOD DCMH and 261 new episodes at MOD In-patient providers.

Breaking this information into initial assessments for mental health disorders at a MOD DCMH during 2021/22, there were:

2,149 personnel with 2,222 new episodes of care for Neurotic Disorders. Of which:

- 1,170 personnel with 1,205 new episodes of Adjustment Disorder.
- 229 personnel with 234 new episodes of PTSD.

1,283 personnel with 1,339 new episodes of care for Mood Disorder. Of which:

- 1,160 personnel with 1,214 episodes of Depressive episodes.

145 personnel with 148 new episodes of Other Mental Disorders.

130 personnel with 135 new episodes of Psychoactive Substance Misuse. Of which:

- 128 personnel with 133 episodes of Psychoactive Substance Misuse due to alcohol.

Following a consultation in 2017 the production of more detailed tables presenting episodes of care data and rates have been ceased. Previous releases of the tables can still be found on [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

### Section 3: Comparison to the UK general population

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Overall rates of mental health in the UK Armed Forces were **broadly comparable** to those seen in the UK general population.

The rate of those seen in specialist mental health care was **lower** than the UK general population.

Analysis in this section compares UK Armed Forces personnel seen by clinicians in military primary care (GP's) and/or by specialist mental health clinicians at a MOD DCMH to the UK general population.

#### UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting

The rate of UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting for any mental health related reason in 2021/22 (12.5%) was broadly comparable to those seen in the UK general population. As a crude comparison, [the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014](#) (latest information available) carried out by NHS Digital shows that in England, 12.5% of adults reported discussing their mental health with a GP in the past year.

#### Gender

Within the UK Armed Forces, rates of personnel seen in military healthcare for any mental health related reason was significantly higher amongst females compared to males throughout the ten year period presented.

This finding was replicated [in the civilian population where females were more likely to report mental ill health than males](#). A study following up the mental health of adults suggested that this is because females were likely to have more interactions with health professionals<sup>c</sup>. MOD has not investigated whether females in the UK Armed Forces have more interactions with health professionals than their male colleagues.

#### Ethnicity

In 2021/22, UK Armed Forces white ethnic personnel (including white minorities) were statistically significantly more likely to be seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason than ethnic minority personnel (excluding white minorities). This was broadly comparable to the UK general population. As a crude comparison, [the NHS Digital Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014](#) showed that in England, the white ethnic group (including white minorities) were most likely to report receiving treatment, with 14% reporting receiving treatment compared to around 7% of ethnic minority groups (excluding white minorities).

#### UK Armed Forces personnel seen by MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

The rate of mental disorder among UK Armed Forces personnel seen by MOD Specialist Mental Health Services (2.3%) was **lower** than the rate of 4.8% of [the UK general population who accessed secondary mental health services in 2020/21](#) (latest data available).

Published annual data for those seeking help from their GP for mental health related reasons and those referred to specialist mental health services in the UK general population for 2021/22 is currently unavailable. Published provisional monthly information on referrals to mental health specialist services among [the UK general population](#) suggests the number of referrals may be higher in 2021/22 than those seen in 2020/21.

If the annual 2021/22 UK general population rate, once published, remains in line with the published monthly rates, the rate of mental disorder among UK Armed Forces personnel seen by Specialist Mental Health Services will be lower than the rate of the UK general population who accessed secondary mental health services.

It should be noted that comparisons with the UK general population are difficult for a number of reasons. Due to the nature of the role UK Armed Forces personnel undertake, in particular access to weapons; a patient's medical officer may refer at an earlier stage to specialised mental health services compared to the UK general population. In addition, the source of the UK general population statistic for specialist mental ill-health also covers services such as Adult Learning Disability and Children/ Young People services which are not relevant to the UK Armed Forces population (these services accounted for just 5% of all secondary mental health service usage in 2020/21).

The lower rates seen among UK Armed Forces personnel accessing specialist mental health services compared to the UK general population may be due to the rigorous selection of individuals into the UK Armed Forces which may prevent those with more serious mental disorders joining the Services; as well as the role tight unit cohesion plays in maintaining good mental health. In addition, UK Armed Forces personnel who have a mental disorder which prevents continued Service in the military environment may be considered for medical discharge, thus more severe cases of mental health may not remain in the UK Armed Forces population.

## Annex A1: Royal Navy personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2021/22

<p><b>1 in 7 (13.9%)</b> Royal Navy personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2021/22.</p>	<p><b>1 in 50 (2.0%)</b> Royal Navy personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2021/22.</p>	<p>Higher presentations seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among: <b>Females</b> <b>Other Ranks</b></p>	<p>The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were: <b>Depressive Episode</b> <b>Other Neurotic Disorders</b></p>
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In 2021/22, 13.9% of Royal Navy personnel (around 1 in 7) were seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason, statistically significantly higher than the Army and Royal Marines, and the UK Armed Forces as a whole. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons in 2020/21 (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021). As COVID-19 restrictions eased, and the use of remote and electronic consultation methods became established the rate returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021/22.

In 2021/22, 2.0% (1 in 50) of Royal Navy personnel were assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services; a statistically significant increase from 1.7% in the previous year. Rates of mental disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among the UK Armed Forces as a whole also statistically significantly increased from the previous year, however rates remain below levels seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Royal Navy personnel seen in specialist mental health services:

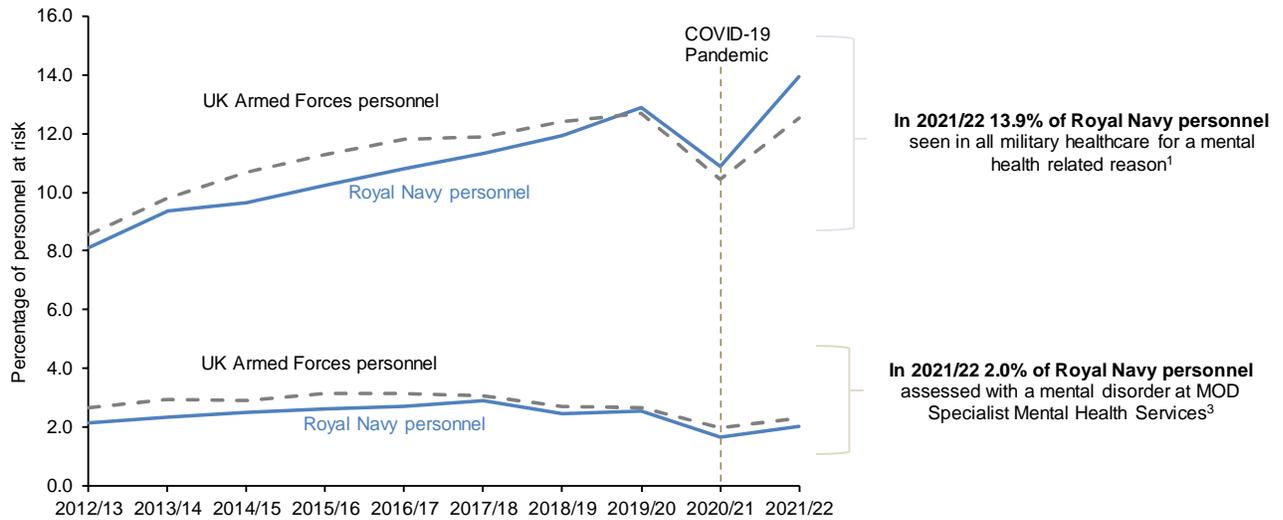
There were statistically significant higher presentations in certain demographic groups in line with the findings for the UK Armed Forces as a whole:

- Females
- Other ranks

Depressive Episodes and Other Neurotic Disorders were the most prevalent condition among Royal Navy personnel assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

**Figure A1.1: Royal Navy personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.**  
2012/13 to 2021/22



**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders.
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder.

**Table A1.2: Royal Navy personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>.**  
2021/22

	2021/22		percentage of Royal Navy personnel at risk
	n	%	
<b>Number of Royal Navy personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>2.0</b>	
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	430	1.7	
Female*	137	3.9	
<b>Rank</b>			
Officer	84	1.3	
Other Rank*	483	2.2	
<b>Age</b>			
Aged <20	30	1.8	
Aged 20-24	126	2.2	
Aged 25-29	131	2.5	
Aged 30-34	105	2.3	
Aged 35-39	78	2.0	
Aged 40-44	57	2.0	
Aged 45-49	25	1.3	
Aged 50 +	17	0.7	

**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '\*\*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).

## Annex A2: Royal Marine personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2021/22

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### **1 in 14 (7.3%)**

Royal Marines personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2021/22.

### **1 in 67 (1.5%)**

Royal Marines personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2021/22.

The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were:

**Depressive Episode  
Adjustment Disorders**

The rate of Royal Marine personnel seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason was significantly lower than the other three services and the UK Armed Forces as a whole across the entire period. In 2021/22, the rate was 7.3% of Royal Marine personnel (around 1 in 14).

The overall rate of Royal Marine personnel presenting to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services with a mental disorder in 2021/22 was 1.5%; statistically significantly lower than the other services.

Rates for Royal Marines personnel seen in any military healthcare and MOD Specialist Mental Health Services in 2021/22 have increased since 2020/21 but remain below levels seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Royal Marines seen in specialist mental health services:

Previous deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan was a predictor of mental disorders in the Royal Marines in 2009/10 and each of the last seven years (see supplementary tables for further information).

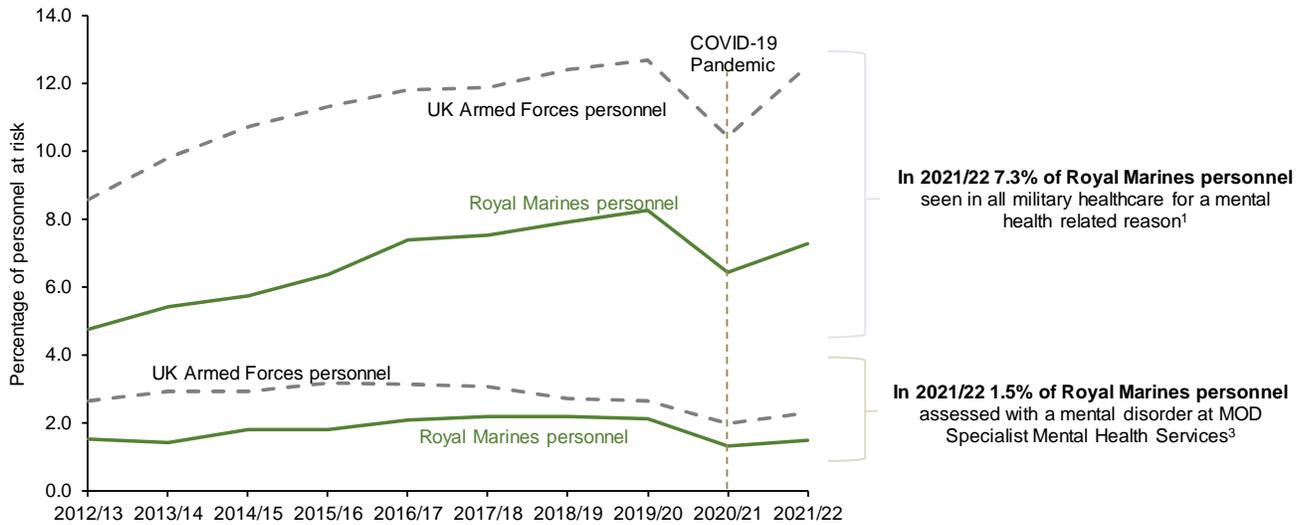
There were statistically significant higher presentations in Royal Marine females compared to males. Please note, the number of Royal Marine females assessed with a mental disorder remain small (eight in 2021/22) and so caution should be taken in interpreting these findings.

Unlike for the overall UK Armed Forces, there was no significant difference in rates of mental disorder in the Royal Marines between rank.

Adjustment Disorders and Depressive Episodes were the most prevalent conditions among Royal Marines assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

**Figure A2.1: Royal Marine personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.**  
 2012/13 to 2021/22



**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders.
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder.

**Table A2.2: Royal Marine personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>.**  
2021/22

		2021/22		
		n	%	percentage of Royal Marine personnel at risk
<b>Number of Royal Marine personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services</b>		<b>103</b>	<b>1.5</b>	
<b>Gender</b>				
	Male	95	1.4	
	Female*	8	6.3	
<b>Rank</b>				
	Officer	11	1.3	
	Other Rank	92	1.5	
<b>Age</b>				
	Aged <20	~	1.1	
	Aged 20-24	10	0.7	
	Aged 25-29	15	0.9	
	Aged 30-34	22	1.6	
	Aged 35-39	27	2.9	
	Aged 40-44	18	3.3	
	Aged 45-49	6	1.7	
	Aged 50 +	~	0.6	

**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '\*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).
5. In line with the JSP 200 directive on statistical disclosure control, figures less than 5 have been suppressed "~" (refer to BQR for more information).

## Annex A3: Army personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2021/22

<b>1 in 8 (11.9%)</b> Army personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2021/22.	<b>1 in 41 (2.4%)</b> Army personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2020/21.	Higher presentations seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among: <b>Females</b> <b>Other Ranks</b> <b>Under 20's</b>	The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were: <b>Adjustment Disorders</b> <b>Depressive Episode</b>
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In 2021/22, 11.9% of Army personnel (around 1 in 8) were seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason, similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons in 2020/21 (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021). As COVID-19 restrictions eased, and the use of remote and electronic consultation methods became established the rate returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021/22.

The overall rate of Army personnel presenting with a mental disorder to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services was 2.4% in 2021/22; similar to the UK Armed Forces as a whole. This was a statistically significant increase from 2.1% in 2020/21. Rates of mental disorders assessed at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among the UK Armed Forces as a whole also had a statistically significant increase from the previous year.

For Army personnel seen in specialist mental health services:

There were statistically significant higher presentations in certain demographic groups in line with the findings for the UK Armed Forces as a whole:

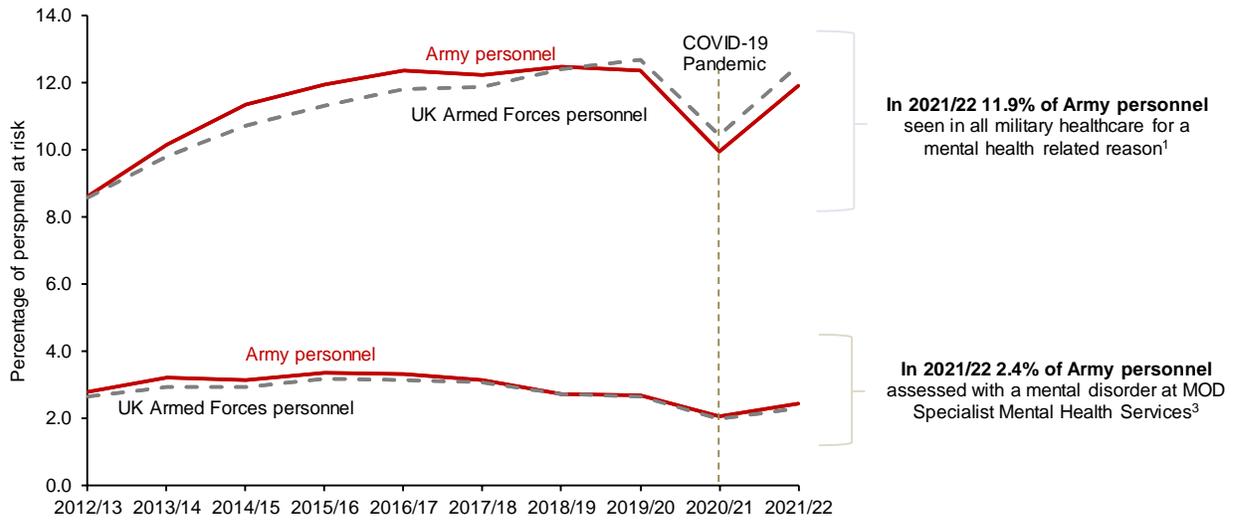
- Females
- Other ranks

In 2021/22, higher presentations to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were seen among Army personnel aged under 20 compared to other age groups.

Adjustment Disorders and Depressive Episodes were the most prevalent conditions among Army personnel assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the MOD mental health statistics page](#).

**Figure A3.1: Army personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.**  
 2012/13 to 2021/22



**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders.
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder.

**Table A3.2: Army personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>.**  
2021/22

		2021/22		
		n	%	percentage of Army personnel at risk
<b>Number of Army personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services</b>		<b>2,261</b>	<b>2.4</b>	
<b>Gender</b>				
	Male	1,839	2.2	
	Female*	422	5.0	
<b>Rank</b>				
	Officer	187	1.2	
	Other Rank*	2,074	2.7	
<b>Age</b>				
	Aged <20*	224	3.5	
	Aged 20-24	508	2.8	
	Aged 25-29	439	2.5	
	Aged 30-34	424	2.6	
	Aged 35-39	314	2.3	
	Aged 40-44	213	2.2	
	Aged 45-49	103	2.1	
	Aged 50 +	51	0.9	

**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '\*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).

## Annex A4 RAF personnel mental health 2007/08 to 2021/22

<p><b>1 in 7 (14.1%)</b> RAF personnel were seen in military healthcare for a mental health related reason in 2021/22.</p>	<p><b>1 in 43 (2.3%)</b> RAF personnel seen by a specialist mental health clinician for a mental disorder in 2021/22.</p>	<p>Higher presentations seen at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services among: <b>Females</b> <b>Other Ranks</b></p>	<p>The most prevalent disorders at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services were: <b>Adjustment Disorders</b> <b>Depressive Episode</b></p>
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In 2021/22, 14.1% of RAF personnel (around 1 in 7) were seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason. This rate was statistically significantly higher than the Army and the Royal Marines, and the UK Armed Forces as a whole. During periods of COVID-19 national lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in some routine and training activity that may potentially have removed some of the stressors of military life and may have contributed to the fall in personnel seeking help for mental health related reasons in 2020/21 (personal correspondence DCA Psychiatry, 2021). As COVID-19 restrictions eased, and the use of remote and electronic consultation methods became established the rate in 2021/22 returned to levels similar to that seen pre-pandemic.

The overall rate of RAF personnel presenting to MOD Specialist Mental Health Services with a mental disorder was 2.3% in 2021/22.

For RAF personnel seen in specialist mental health services:

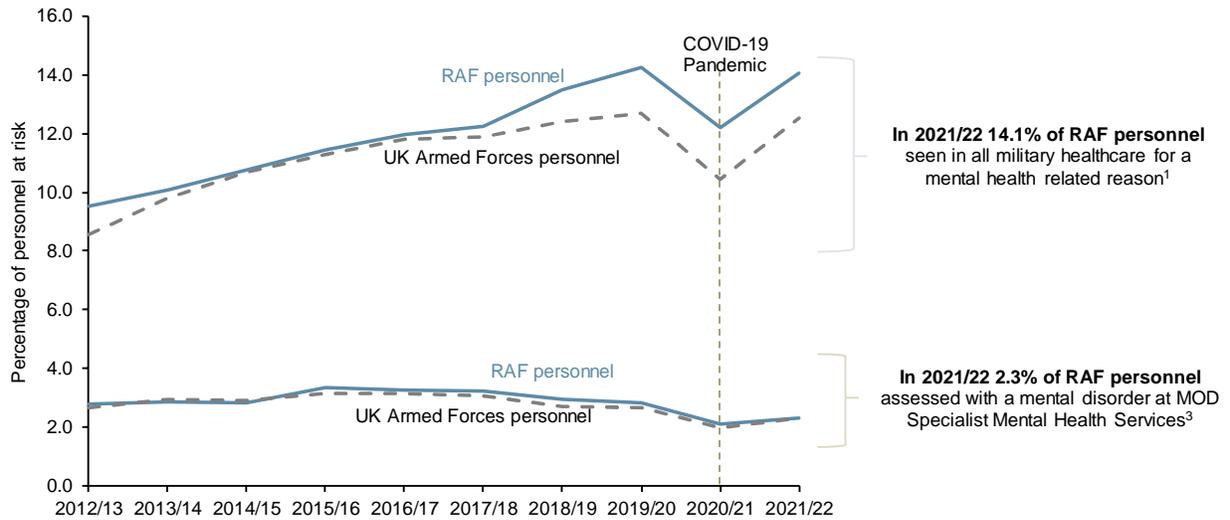
There were statistically significant higher presentations in certain demographic groups in line with the findings for the UK Armed Forces as a whole:

- Females
- Other ranks

Depressive Episodes and Adjustment Disorders were the most prevalent condition among RAF personnel assessed with a mental disorder.

More information regarding presentations in certain demographics along with rates per 1,000 personnel at risk and 95% Confidence Intervals are available in Excel tables at [the defence mental health statistics page](#).

**Figure A4.1: RAF personnel seen for a mental health related reason, percentage of personnel at risk.**  
2012/13 to 2021/22



**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Personnel recorded in primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.
2. Mental health related reasons do include signs and symptoms of mental health as well as ICD-10 mental health disorders
3. Initial assessment at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services for a mental disorder

**Table A4.2: RAF personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services by demographics, number and percentage of personnel at risk<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>.**  
2021/22

		2021/22		
		n	%	percentage of RAF personnel at risk
<b>Number of RAF personnel assessed with a mental disorder at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services</b>		<b>810</b>	<b>2.3</b>	
<b>Gender</b>				
	Male	586	2.0	
	Female*	224	4.2	
<b>Rank</b>				
	Officer	147	1.7	
	Other Rank*	663	2.5	
<b>Age</b>				
	Aged <20	27	2.2	
	Aged 20-24	142	2.6	
	Aged 25-29	139	2.3	
	Aged 30-34	141	2.4	
	Aged 35-39	147	2.6	
	Aged 40-44	113	2.6	
	Aged 45-49	61	2.3	
	Aged 50 +	42	1.2	

**Source: DS Database, DMICP, SSSFT and BFG**

1. Percentages are based on the calculation of the absolute number and are presented to 1dp (refer to Data, Definitions and Methods)
2. Excludes personnel where Initial diagnosis was not supplied (refer to BQR)
3. Numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one episode of care in a year and change age group, rank or deployment status will be counted once in each sub-category.
4. '\*' denotes significantly higher rates to comparison group(s).

## Glossary

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**Admissions** In-patient admissions to the MOD mental health in-patient care providers.

**All mental health** is defined as those seen for a mental health related issue in either primary care or specialist mental health care at a MOD DCMH.

**Army** the British Army consists of the General Staff and the deployable Field Army and the Regional Forces that support them, as well as Joint elements that work with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Its primary task is to help defend the interests of the UK.

**Assessed without a mental disorder** A few patients present to DCMH with symptoms that require the treatment skills of DCMH staff, whilst not necessarily having a specific and identifiable mental disorder as defined under ICD-10.

**Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP)** is the MOD electronic medical record.

**Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH)** DCMH are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care service at sites in the UK and abroad.

**Electronic medical record** is where all UK Armed Forces healthcare data is stored. The system is known as DMICP.

**FTRS (Full-Time Reserve Service)** are personnel who fill Service posts for a set period on a full-time basis while being a member of one of the Reserve Services, either as an ex-regular or as a volunteer. An FTRS reservist on:

**Full Commitment (FC)** fulfils the same range of duties and deployment liability as a regular Service person;

**Limited Commitment (LC)** serves at one location but can be detached for up to 35 days a year;

**Home Commitment (HC)** is employed at one location and cannot be detached elsewhere.

Each Service uses FTRS personnel differently:

- The Naval Service predominantly uses FTRS to backfill gapped regular posts. However, they do have a small number of FTRS personnel that are not deployable for operations overseas. There is no distinction made in terms of fulfilling baseline liability posts between FTRS Full Commitment (FC), Limited Commitment (LC) and Home Commitment (HC).
- The Army employ FTRS(FC) and FTRS(LC) to fill Regular Army Liability (RAL) posts as a substitute for regular personnel for set periods of time. FTRS(HC) personnel cannot be deployed to operations and are not counted against RAL.
- The RAF consider that FTRS(FC) can fill Regular RAF Liability posts but have identified separate liabilities for FTRS(LC) and FTRS(HC).

**Gurkhas** are recruited and employed in the British and Indian Armies under the terms of the 1947 Tri-Partite Agreement (TPA) on a broadly comparable basis. They remain Nepalese citizens but in all other respects are full members of HM Forces. Since 2008, Gurkhas are entitled to join the UK Regular Forces after 5 years of service and apply for British citizenship.

**International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10<sup>th</sup> edition (ICD-10)** is the standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes. The following ICD 10 Chapters have been included in this report:

- **F10 to F19 Mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance misuse, including alcohol.** A wide variety of disorders that differ in severity (from uncomplicated intoxication and harmful use to obvious psychotic disorders and dementia), but that are all

attributable to the use of one or more psychoactive substances (which may or may not have been medically prescribed).

- **F30 to F39 Mood affective disorders, including depressive episodes.** Disorders in which the fundamental disturbance is a change in affect or mood to depression (with or without associated anxiety) or to elation. The mood change is usually accompanied by a change in the overall level of activity; most of the other symptoms are either secondary to, or easily understood in the context of, the change in mood and activity. Most of these disorders tend to be recurrent and the onset of individual episodes can often be related to stressful events or situations. Includes Manic and Bipolar affective disorders, Depressive and recurrent Depressive episodes and other mood affective disorders.
- **F40 to F49 Neurotic Stress related and somatoform disorders, including PTSD and Adjustment disorders.** This includes mental disorders characterized by anxiety and avoidance behaviour, with symptoms distressing to the patient, intact reality testing, no violations of gross social norms, and no apparent organic aetiology. 'Other neurotic disorders' are mostly made up of reactions to stress and anxiety disorders that do not include adjustment disorders or PTSD.
- **F00 to F09, F20 to F29 and F50 to F99 are presented as 'Other mental health disorders'.** This includes, disorders grouped together on the basis of their having in common a demonstrable etiology in cerebral disease, brain injury, or other insult leading to cerebral dysfunction; schizophrenia, personality disorders and eating disorders.

**In-patient services** are provided through eight NHS trusts in the UK which are part of a consortium headed by the Midlands partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) and at Gilhead IV Hospital, Bielefield, Germany under a contract with Guys and St Thomas Hospital in the UK up until April 2013 and from this date the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) through the Limited Liability Partnership.

**Mental health related diagnosis codes** are the way mental health data is stored in the electronic medical record. The list of codes include all disorders under Chapter V (F00 to F99) of ICD-10 as well as other signs and symptoms of mental health.

**Mental disorder** Patients assessed by clinicians at a MOD DCMH or in-patient provider with a mental and behavioural disorder categorised under Chapter V (F00 to F99) in ICD-10.

**Military healthcare setting** represent primary care and MOD Specialist Mental Health Services.

**Military Provost Guard Service (M P G S)** provides trained professional soldiers to meet defence armed security requirements in units of all three Services based in Great Britain. M P G S provide armed guard protection of units, responsible for control of entry, foot and mobile patrols and armed response to attacks on their unit.

**Mobilised Reservists** are Volunteer or Regular Reserves who have been called into permanent service with the Regular Forces on military operations under the powers outlined in the Reserve Forces Act 1996. Call-out orders will be for a specific amount of time and subject to limits (e.g. under a call-out for warlike operations (Section 54), call-out periods should not exceed 12 months, unless extended.)

**MOD Specialist Mental Health Services** encompass the delivery of care through MOD's DCMH for outpatient care, and all admissions to the MOD's in-patient care contractor. It does not cover mental health care for patients treated wholly in the primary care setting by GP's.

**New episodes of care** New patients; or patients who have been seen at a DCMH but were discharged from care and have been referred again. This represents the level of clinical activity/prevalence and does not represent the number of personnel assessed as an individual may have more than one episode of care.

**Non-Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS)** are members of the Army Volunteer Reserve Force employed on a full-time basis. The NRPS comprises Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, Non - Commissioned Officers and soldiers posted to units to assist with the training, administrative and special duties within the Army Reserve. Typical jobs are Permanent Staff Administration Officer and Regimental Administration Officer. Since 2010, these contracts are being discontinued in favour of FTRS (Home Commitment) contracts. NRPS are not included in the Future Reserves 2020 Volunteer Reserve population as they have no liability for call out.

**Number of Personnel** represents the number of individuals with an initial assessment at MOD Specialist Services. An individual may have more than one episode of care, but the individual will only be counted once in the number of personnel.

**Officer** An officer is a member of the Armed Forces holding the Queen's Commission to lead and command elements of the forces. Officers form the middle and senior management of the Armed Forces. This includes ranks from Sub-Lt/2nd Lt/Pilot Officer up to Admiral of the Fleet/Field Marshal/Marshal of the Royal Air Force but excludes Non-Commissioned Officers.

**Operation HERRICK** is the name for UK operations in Afghanistan which started in April 2006. UK Forces are deployed to Afghanistan in support of the UN authorised, NATO led International Security Assistance Force (IASF) mission and as part of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

**Operation SHADER** is providing military support to the US led Coalition to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

**Operation TELIC** is the name for UK operations in Iraq which started in March 2003 and finished on 21 May 2011. UK Forces were deployed to support the Government's objective to remove the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to his neighbours and his people and, based on evidence available at the time, disarm him of his weapons of mass destruction. The Government also undertook to support the Iraqi people in their desire for peace, prosperity and freedom.

**Operation TORAL** started 1 December 2014, is the UK's post 2014 contribution to operations in Afghanistan under the NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION.

**Other Ranks** Other ranks are members of the Royal Marines, Army and Royal Air Force who are not officers but Other Ranks include Non-Commissioned Officers.

**Personnel at Risk** is defined as the number of serving UK Armed Forces personnel eligible for mental healthcare. This includes regular UK Armed Forces personnel, Ghurkhas, Military Provost Guard Staff, mobilised reservists, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Non-regular Permanent Staff.

**Primary care** is the level of healthcare provided by a General Practitioner (GP) or medical officer. This does not include specialist mental health care.

**Rate Ratio (RR)** provides a comparison of cases seen between personnel identified as having deployed to a theatre and those who have not been identified as having deployed to either theatre. A rate ratio less than 1 indicates lower rates in those deployed than those not deployed, whereas a rate ratio greater than 1 indicates higher rates in those deployed than those not deployed. If the 95% confidence interval does not encompass the value 1.0, then this difference is statistically significant.

**Royal Air Force (RAF).** The Royal Air Force (RAF) is the aerial defence force of the UK.

**Royal Marines (RM)** Royal Marines are sea-going soldiers who are part of the Naval Service. RM officer ranks were aligned with those of the Army on 1 July 1999.

**Royal Navy (RN)** The sea-going defence forces of the UK but excludes the Royal Marines and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service (RFA).

**Specialist mental health care clinicians** are those that provide care at MOD Specialist Mental Health Services. These include; psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, mental health social workers and occupational therapists.

**SSSFT**, now MPFT, is the Midlands partnership Foundation Trust which heads up the consortium providing in-patient care through eight NHS trusts in the UK.

**Strength** is defined as the number of serving UK Armed Forces personnel.

**Treated solely in primary care** refers to those patients who have not been seen at a MOD DCMH in the 6 months before or the 9 months after being seen in primary care with a mental health related diagnosis.

**UK Regulars** are full time Service personnel, including Nursing Services, but excluding FTRS personnel, Gurkhas, Naval activated Reservists, mobilised Reservists, Military Provost Guarding Service (M P G S) and Non-Regular Permanent Service (NRPS). Unless otherwise stated, includes trained and untrained personnel.

## Data, Definitions and Methods

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### Data Sources

#### Section 1 – All mental health seen in a military medical healthcare setting

All data has been sourced from MOD's patient electronic medical record (DMICP).

#### Section 2 – MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

Defence Statistics receive data from Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) and in-patient providers for all UK regular Armed Forces personnel from the following sources:

*For DCMH data:*

- Between 01 January 2007 and 30 June 2014, the report captures data provided by DCMHs to Defence Statistics in monthly returns.
- For the period 01 April 2012 to 30 June 2014, new episodes of care data was also sourced from the electronic patient record held in Defence Medical Information Capability Program (DMICP) in addition to those provided by DCMH in monthly returns.
- Since 01 July 2014, DMICP was the single source of DCMH new episodes of care data.

*For in-patient data:*

- Since January 2007, SSSFT and Gilead IV hospital, Bielefeld have submitted relevant in-patient records.

### Data Coverage

#### Section 1 – All mental health

This section includes all UK Armed Forces personnel, Regular and Reserves, who have a mental health related diagnosis code entered into their electronic medical record in any military healthcare setting, including primary care and specialist mental health care.

Mental health related diagnosis data entered into their electronic medical record is only available from April 2012. The data covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2022.

Mental health related diagnosis codes have been included if they sit within chapter V (Mental, Behavioural and Neurodevelopment disorders) of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10). ICD-10 is the standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes. Some codes that fall outside of this chapter have been included in the analysis, these are signs and symptoms that can relate to mental health. These have been included on the recommendation of clinicians working within the MOD. The full list of codes included are presented in the Background Quality Report (BQR).

#### Section 2 – MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

The data in this report include regular UK Armed Forces personnel, Ghurkhas, Military Provost Guard Staff, mobilised reservists, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Non-regular Permanent Staff as all of these individuals are eligible for assessment at a DCMH.

DCMH staff record the initial mental health assessment during a patient's first appointment, based on presenting complaints. The information is provisional and final diagnoses may differ as some patients do not present the full range of symptoms, signs or clinical history during their first appointment.

A number of patients present to DCMH with symptoms that require the treatment skills of DCMH staff, whilst not necessarily having a specific and identifiable mental disorder. These cases are referred to as “assessed without a mental disorder”.

## Methodology

### Section 1 – All mental health

It is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record and therefore a rate of those managed solely by their GP cannot be provided. A crude methodology has been used to enable exploratory analysis to identify patients treated solely in primary care for their mental health issue. This is those who have not been seen at a MOD DCMH in the 6 months before or the 9 months after being seen in primary care with a mental health related diagnosis.

Mental health related DMICP codes are used to identify UK Armed Forces personnel seen in any military healthcare setting for a mental health related reason. These codes are recorded in personnel's medical records by a primary care clinician and/or a specialist mental health clinician at a MOD DCMH and could be a continuation of mental health care as well as new episodes.

### Section 2 – MOD Specialist Mental Health Services

DCMH are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care services at sites in the UK and abroad. All UK based and aero-medically evacuated Service personnel based overseas requiring in-patient admission are treated by one of eight NHS trusts in the UK which are part of a consortium headed by the Midlands partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT), was SSSFT; UK based Service personnel from British Forces Germany are treated at Gilead IV hospital, Bielefeld under a contract with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) through the Limited Liability Partnership. When presenting in-patient data in this report, the data include returns from both contract providers.

Due to the methodology changes implemented in July 2009 and in July 2013, when looking at trends over time for new episodes of care across the series of published reports, it is advisable to note:

- Prior to 2009/10, only an individual's first attendance at a DCMH or an in-patient provider were included in the data submitted by DCMHs to Defence Statistics.
- Since 2009/10, the report captures all new episodes of care provided by DCMH to Defence Statistics in monthly returns.
- Since 2012/13, the report captures all new episodes of care recorded in the MOD patient electronic record in addition to monthly submissions provided by DCMH to Defence Statistics.

Changes made to the methodology in July 2009 and July 2013 can be read in more detail in the [Background Quality Report \(BQR\)](#).

## Rates

Rates enable comparisons between groups and over time, taking account of the number of personnel in a group (personnel at risk) at a particular point in time. **The number of events (i.e. mental disorders) is then divided by the number of personnel at risk per annum and multiplied by 1,000 to calculate the rate per 1,000 personnel at risk.**

## Percentage

Previous publications of this report have provided rates alongside numbers to provide context and comparison between groups. This information is still available in the Excel file accompanying the release of this report, however, due to user feedback, this publication now provides a focus on the

percentage of the population at risk. This is calculated in the same way as the rate per 1,000 but multiplying by 100 instead of 1000, i.e. **the number of events (for example mental disorders) is then divided by the number of personnel at risk per annum and multiplied by 100 to calculate the percentage of personnel affected.** The percentages presented have been rounded to one decimal place.

### **Confidence Intervals**

Confidence Intervals use the standard error to derive a range in which we think the true value is likely to lie. It gives an indication of the degree of uncertainty of an estimate and helps to decide how precise a sample estimate is by giving a range of values likely to contain the given statistic. The wider the interval, the less precise the estimate is.

In order to calculate confidence intervals around an estimate we use the standard error for that estimate. The estimate and its 95% confidence interval are presented as: the estimate plus or minus the margin of error. The lower and upper 95% confidence limits are given by the sample estimate plus or minus 1.96 standard errors. The margin of error is calculated as:

Margin of error = 1.96 × standard error

In order to understand if a difference in rates is statistically significant, 95% confidence intervals are used. Statistical significance indicates that a finding is not due to chance. If a 95% confidence interval around a rate excludes the comparison value, then a statistical test for the difference between the two values would be significant at the 0.05 level. If two confidence intervals do not overlap, a comparable statistical test would indicate a statistically significant difference.

The information presented in this publication has been structured to release information into the public domain in a way that contributes to the MOD accountability to the British public, but which doesn't risk breaching individual's rights to medical confidentiality. In line with JSP 200 Statistics (April 2016), and in keeping with the Office for National Statistics Guidelines, all numbers less than five have been suppressed and presented as '~' to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is less than five, the next smallest number (or numbers where there are tied values) has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

### **Strengths and weaknesses of the data presented in this report**

A key strength of this report is the presentation of the number of Service personnel who have been seen for a mental health related reason, as reported by clinicians. The inclusion in this report of data direct from the legal electronic patient record improves the robustness and integrity of the underlying data. As the data is held in a pseudo-anonymised format in the DMICP data warehouse, patient consent is not an issue. A further strength is the use of the pseudo-anonymised patient identifier to enable validation of data therefore improving accuracy and enabling linkage to deployment records to identify any effect of deployment on mental health in the UK Armed Forces. In addition, the tables in this report have been scrutinised to ensure individual identities have not been revealed inadvertently.

Mental disorder types reported here are the clinician's initial assessment during a patient's first appointment within military healthcare, based on presenting complaints, therefore final diagnosis may differ as some patients do not show full range of symptoms, signs or clinical history during their first appointment. It should also be noted that the clinician's primary diagnosis is reported here, however patients can present with more than one disorder. It is also not unusual for a patient to be given more than one diagnosis. For those seen in primary care, it was not possible to identify which disorders were the primary diagnosis and which were the comorbid conditions. Therefore, all diagnosis, regardless of whether it was the primary or comorbid condition, have been included in the all mental health analysis.

A further weakness with this data is that it is not currently possible to report those treated solely within primary care from those requiring specialist mental health services as it is not possible to identify and follow distinct episodes of care from first presentation to the GP through the care pathway due to the way data is collated in the electronic medical record.

Changes in methodology in 2009/10 and 2012/13 also make it difficult to compare data over time. In addition, DMICP is a live system and extracts for this report are taken six weeks after the end of the reporting period. Therefore, any amendments to records or late data entries may be excluded from this report.

More detailed information on the data, definitions and methods used to create this report can be found in the [Background Quality Report \(BQR\)](#).

## References

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- a. McManus S, Bebbington P, Jenkins R, Brugha T. (eds.) (2016) Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014. Leeds: NHS Digital.
- b. Sundin J., Jones N., Greenberg N., Rona R., Hotopf M., Wessely S., and Fear N. (2010) Mental Health among commando, airborne and other UK Infantry personnel *Occupational Medicine*, 60, 552-559.
- c. Singleton N, Lewis G (2003). Better or Worse: A longitudinal study of the mental health of adults living in private households in Great Britain, *Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO): London*.
- d. Meltzer H, Singleton N, Lee A et al (2002). The social and economic circumstances of adults with mental disorders, *Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO): London*.
- e. [Mental Health Bulletin: 2020-21 Annual Report: NHS Digital](#).
- f. [NHS Digital Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics](#)

## Further Information

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### Symbols

~ In line with JSP 200 (April 2016) to ensure individuals are not inadvertently identified suppression methodology has been applied to reduce the risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than five have been suppressed and presented as '~'. Where there was only one cell in a row or column that was fewer than five, the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

### Revisions

There are no regular planned revisions of this bulletin. Amendments to figures for earlier years may be identified during the annual compilation of this bulletin. This will be addressed in one of two ways:

- Where the number of figures updated in a table is small, figures will be updated and those which have been revised will be identified with the symbol "r". An explanation for the revision will be given in the footnotes to the table.
- Where the number of figures updated in a table is substantial, the revisions to the table, together with the reason for the revisions, will be identified in the commentary at the beginning of the relevant chapter / section, and in the commentary above affected tables. Revisions will not be identified by the symbol "r" since where there are a large number of revisions in a table this could make them more difficult to read.

Occasionally updated figures will be provided to the editor during the course of the year. Since this bulletin is published electronically, it is possible to revise figures during the course of the year. However, to ensure continuity and consistency, figures will only be adjusted during the year where it is likely to substantially affect interpretation and use of the figures.

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