

# Background Quality Report

## War Pension Scheme Annual Statistics: 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2022

The purpose of a background quality report is to inform users of the statistics about the quality of the data used to produce the publication, and any statistics derived from that data. It also discusses existing uses of the statistics and user requirements.

This assessment relates to the annual 'War Pension Scheme' statistics published by Defence Statistics on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

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### 2. Introduction & Statistical Presentation

1. This annual National Statistic provides summary statistics on claims and awards made under the War Pension Scheme (WPS). These statistics present trends over time between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2022, with some further detail presented for the latest five quarters. The results in this report are presented within seven sections:

- **Section 1: Numbers of registered events under the WPS.** This section provides the overall numbers of WPS events registered, including disablement pension and war widows'/widowers' claims, claims for supplementary allowances, and appeals. Information is presented by financial year (Table 1) and quarter (Table 2). This is provided to show the volume of claims that are dealt with under the scheme, with the bulletin presenting trends over time by financial year.
- **Section 2: WPS claim clearance times.** This section provides information on the average (median) clearance times for disablement pension claims, war widows'/widowers' claims, and appeals (Tables 3 to 6). The bulletin presents trends over time by financial year. This information is presented to provide the average time that claimants have waited for a decision to be made on the outcome of their claim or appeal.
- **Section 3: Outcomes of claims cleared under the WPS.** This section provides information on the outcomes of all claim types (Tables 7 to 13). A registered claim is cleared once an outcome has been reached. This information is provided to show the proportion of claims that are service-attributable.
- **Section 4: Current recipients of a War Pension.** This section provides information on the number of recipients of a war pension, with trends over time by financial year. Further information is provided for those in receipt of a war pension as at 31 March 2022, including demographics and degree of disablement (Tables 14 to 20).
- **Section 5: Causes of Disablement.** This section provides information on the numbers of disablement pensioners in receipt of a War Pension for mental disorders, due to continued external public interest (Table 21). This section also presents the number of lump sum awards, and mesothelioma expenditure (Table 21a).
- **Section 6: Recipients of supplementary allowances under the WPS.** This section gives information on the number of people who are in receipt of ongoing supplementary

allowances by type of allowance and type of pension (Tables 22 and 23). This information is provided to show the proportion of disablement pensioners and widows/widowers that require further financial support in addition to their war pension.

- **Section 7: WPS expenditure.** This section provides War Pension Scheme expenditure by financial year, and average weekly amounts paid to recipients of different ages and degrees of disablement (Tables 24 and 25).
2. Ad-hoc interrogation of the data used to compile these statistics is regularly undertaken by Defence Statistics to answer Freedom of Information requests, Parliamentary questions and internal queries from within the Ministry of Defence.
  3. The latest statistics are published as National Statistics, adhering to the [UK Statistics Authority \(UKSA\)](#) protocols on [pre-release access](#). The UKSA has designated these statistics as [National Statistics](#), in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice](#) for Official Statistics. Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.
  4. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:
    - meet identified user needs;
    - are well explained and readily accessible;
    - are produced according to sound methods; and
    - are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.
  5. Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics and have made the following improvements:
    - Added insight by providing additional information to users of these statistics, including:
      - i) Total expenditure in the form of ongoing pensions to disablement pensioners and widows/widowers, by financial year.
      - ii) Clearance times for War Pension claims and appeals.
    - Responded to continued external interest in disablement pensioners suffering from mental health disorders, specifically post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), by incorporating this information into these annual statistics.
    - Updated these statistics to reflect any significant War Pension Scheme policy changes, for example the inclusion of information on lump sum awards paid out for Service-attributable mesothelioma, following its introduction in 2015.
  6. These statistics were released on a quarterly basis between 2001 and 2010; following consultations with users in 2010 and 2011 this statistical bulletin was reduced to bi-annual and annual releases respectively. Data are reported as at the end of the financial year, with the annual report published in June of each year.
  7. The regional locations of war pension recipients are shown in Table 19 of the WPS National Statistic. This includes a breakdown by region within the UK, as well as providing the number of war pensioners who live overseas.
  8. Defence Statistics also publishes annual statistics on the [Location of Armed Forces Pension and Compensation recipients](#), presenting the location of Disablement pensioners and widows/widowers in receipt of a pension under the WPS as at the end of the financial year. The latest statistics were published in August 2021 on the GOV.UK website.

### **Scheme information and definitions**

9. This section provides a summary of the WPS. Full scheme information, including advice on how to submit a claim for compensation under the WPS can be found on the [GOV.UK War Pension Scheme page](#).

10. The WPS is managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with all compensation claims administered by Defence Business Services (DBS) [Veterans UK](#). The WPS provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005.
11. The compensation arrangements provided by the WPS and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme were replaced on 6 April 2005 by the [Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme \(AFCS\)](#) to pay compensation for injury, illness or death caused by service that occurred on or after that date. Defence Statistics also publishes [annual AFCS statistics](#) on the GOV.UK website.

#### First disablement and second/subsequent claims and awards

12. A former serving member of the UK Armed Forces may submit a **first disablement claim** for compensation under the WPS for injury/illness caused by service. The claim will only be considered under the WPS if the claimant has left Service and the claimed injury/onset of illness occurred prior to 6 April 2005 (post 6 April 2005 claims are passed to the AFCS for consideration). There is no time limit to claim. The following cohorts are also eligible to claim for compensation under the WPS:
  - War-time service in the Naval Auxiliary Service, or the Mercantile Marine
  - Service in the Polish Forces under British command during World War Two
  - While serving in the Merchant Navy, the Coastguard Service, the Nursing Service and the Home Guard
  - While serving in the Polish forces under British command during the Second World War
  - While serving as a civil defence volunteer
  - As a prisoner of war
  - As a result of enemy action in the Second World War (as a civilian)
13. An initial decision is made by DBS Veterans UK on whether to award each claim. Awarded claims are those considered to be service-attributable, following advice from a medical advisor. Medical advisors assess the level of each individual's disablement in comparison to that of an able-bodied person of the same age and gender. Disablement percentages awarded are between 0% and 100%:
  - Those awarded at a disablement percentage of 20% - 100% are paid an ongoing war pension, the percentage awarded reflected in the amount paid.
  - Those awarded at a disablement percentage of 1% - 19% are paid a one-off gratuity (lump sum) payment.
  - Cases where the claimed injury/illness is determined to be service-attributable but not severe enough to impact on daily life are awarded a nil (0%) award.
14. Prior to 22 February 2020, gratuity awards at levels 15-19% were unable to be recorded in line with other percentage levels on the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS) and therefore were not able to be picked up in the standard data processing for the report. A correction was made to the WPCS on 22 February 2020 meaning that figures from 2020/21 onwards are available, as recorded on the WPCS, although figures prior to 2020/21 are not available.
15. Successful claimants are eligible to register for compensation for second/subsequent claims at a later date following their initial award. This includes the worsening of existing conditions that have already been assessed under the scheme, and/or the onset of new conditions since their previous award. New conditions will only be considered under the WPS if their onset was prior to 6 April 2005. New conditions deemed to have occurred on or after 6 April 2005 are passed to the AFCS for consideration. There is no time limit to claim for second/subsequent conditions.

16. Successful second/subsequent claims will result in the claimant either receiving an additional lump sum payment (if the disablement percentage is between 1% and 19%), or an increase in the amount received (if the disablement percentage is 20% or above).
17. Full details of the [2021 rates for disablement pensioner war pension and gratuity amounts](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.
18. If a claim for a further condition and a deterioration are received at the same time, due to the limitations of the WPCS, only the further condition is recorded. The number of deterioration claims reported in tables 2 and 10 are therefore a minimum. A manual search of all claims received in the financial year would be needed to identify all deterioration claims which would require disproportionate cost.

#### War widows'/widowers' claims and awards

19. Where death is caused by service prior to 6 April 2005, the WPS provides an income stream known as a war widows/widowers pension, payable to the spouse, civil partner or adult dependant. Payments are also paid to eligible children. There is no time limit to claim. Claims for a war widows'/widowers' pension will be considered if the applicant's husband, wife or civil partner:
  - Died as result of their service in HM Armed Forces before 6 April 2005
  - Was a civil Defence volunteer or a civilian and their death was a result of the 1939 to 1945 war
  - Was a merchant seaman, a member of the naval auxiliary services, or a coastguard and their death was a result of an injury or disease they got during a war or because they were a prisoner of war
  - Died as a result of their service as a member of the Polish Forces under British command during the 1939 to 1945 war, or in the Polish Resettlement Forces
  - Was in receipt of the Constant Attendance Allowance at the time of their death, or would have been had they not been in hospital
  - Was in receipt of a Disablement Pension at the 80% rate or higher and was getting Unemployability Supplement
  - War widows'/widowers' claims are also still automatically generated for consideration under the WPS following a death in service, regardless of cause, if the service person joined the UK Armed Forces prior to 6 April 2005. Compensation will be awarded under the WPS in the event that the cause of death was attributable to injury or ill health caused, or made worse by, service prior to this date. However, where cause of death is attributable to service post 6 April 2005, compensation will be awarded under the AFCS and the WPS claim will be rejected.
20. War widows'/widowers' claims are either awarded or rejected. The amount of compensation awarded to successful claims is determined by the rank of the spouse, age of the widow/widower and whether there were children in the family at time of death. Full details of the 2021 rates for the war widows/widowers pension can be found on the [GOV.UK war disablement pension rates webpage](#).

#### Supplementary Allowance claims and awards

21. Disablement pensioners and War widows/widowers in receipt of a war pension may also apply for additional financial support to help with the extra costs of a long-term condition or disability. There is a wide range of supplementary allowances. A list of allowances and their definitions can be found under 'Supplementary Allowances' in the glossary section at the end of this Background Quality Report.
22. Some supplementary allowances are automatically awarded and paid when an individual meets certain criteria (e.g. age allowances), so the individual does not need to submit a claim for them.

As a result there is an ongoing issue with identifying the number of people who were automatically awarded a supplementary allowance.

23. Further details on [supplementary allowance rates of payment](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.

## Appeals

24. If a claimant is unhappy with the outcome of their claim they can appeal to an independent tribunal. Tribunals are held by the [HM Courts and Tribunals Service](#) (England, Scotland and Wales) and the [Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service](#) and are independent from DBS Veterans UK. Tribunal decisions are legally binding on both the appellant and DBS Veterans UK. The Tribunal is bound by the rules of the scheme. Further information on Tribunals can be found in the glossary.

## Awards for mesothelioma

25. The War Pensions Scheme is open to veterans diagnosed with diffuse mesothelioma as a result of exposure to asbestos during their military service prior to 6 April 2005. Prior to 16 December 2015, the WPS provided a war disablement pension and supplementary allowances and a war widows'/widowers' pension for an eligible partner paid for life.
26. Since 16 December 2015, veterans diagnosed with service-attributable mesothelioma have had the choice between a one-off, tax-free lump sum of £140,000 and regular, smaller payments in the form of an ongoing disablement pension. Disablement pensioners already in receipt of an ongoing pension on 16 December 2015 were entitled to receive a lump sum payment of £140,000 less any monies already received. Lump sum payments have been made since 1 April 2016.
27. Further details on the policy change can be found on [GOV.UK website](#).

## 3. Statistical Processing

### 3.1 Source Data

28. Most of the information presented within this Statistical Bulletin is sourced from data held on the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS) which is an administrative data system, managed by Veterans UK, responsible for administering the scheme.
29. Information on recipients of a lump sum award for service-attributable mesothelioma and WPS expenditure (Table 21a and Table 24 respectively) was supplied separately by DBS Veterans UK.
30. The financial information supplied by DBS Veterans UK is provided on an accrual basis. Expected expenditure is recorded when a claim is submitted and then later revised if this claim is withdrawn or rejected. Expenditure figures may therefore differ to the amount of actual monies paid out in a given time period, as they may include pending cases that are due to be paid but have not yet been paid or pending claims that go on to be rejected at a later date.

### 3.2 Data collection

31. The War Pension Computer System (WPCS) is the administration system for the WPS. DBS Veterans UK process War Pension claims and record various information on claims and awards on the WPCS. A snapshot of all data entered onto the WPCS is transferred from Veterans UK to Defence Statistics on a quarterly basis, where Defence Statistics will then

validate and compile the data ready to use for processing. DBS Veterans UK is responsible for ensuring the quality of the WPCS data supplied to Defence Statistics.

32. Information on recipients of a lump sum award for service-attributable mesothelioma and overall WPS expenditure (Table 21a and Table 24 respectively) is supplied separately by DBS Veterans UK. The financial information supplied by DBS Veterans UK is provided on an accrual basis. Expected expenditure is recorded when a claim is submitted and then later revised if this claim is withdrawn or rejected. Expenditure figures may therefore differ to the amount of actual monies paid out in a given time period.

### **3.3 Data validation**

33. As the War Pension Computer System (WPCS) is operated by DBS Veterans UK, there is limited visibility of the system and the data entry and processing done before the data is received by Defence Statistics.

34. The main sources of potential error in the WPS statistics are as follows:

- Incorrect information entered onto the WPCS by DBS Veterans UK staff
- Incomplete data extracts from DBS Veterans UK
- Data processing errors resulting in incorrect data outputs produced by Defence Statistics
- Manual error during production of report tables, graphs and commentary by Defence Statistics

35. To ensure potential errors are identified and resolved, Defence Statistics implement a series of data quality checks throughout the report production. These checks involve close liaison with DBS Veterans UK when required, to ensure the accuracy of the figures published. Where there is concern over the accuracy of data, Defence Statistics will publish the information as provisional ('p').

36. Defence Statistics receives raw data extracts from the WPCS from DBS Veterans UK. Basic consistency checks are carried out on raw data. For example, the numbers of records received is compared to the previous extract to ensure the total number is as expected. If any data quality issues are evident following receipt of data, Defence Statistics liaise with DBS Veterans UK to determine whether any changes are required.

37. The WPCS data are processed through a series of automated programming in a MYSQL database that produces a series of summary tables on WPS claims and awards that are then used to populate final tables within the report. Manual checks are conducted on the final tables to ensure that the automated process has worked successfully.

38. Further validation checks are carried out after the data have been processed to ensure all processes and queries have run correctly and the final numbers are an accurate reflection of data received from DBS Veterans UK. Manual checks are then carried out on the final report to ensure figures quoted in the commentary reflect those in the tables, and the numbers sum to the totals provided. If any data quality issues are evident following receipt of data, Defence Statistics liaise with DBS Veterans UK to determine whether any investigation is required.

### **3.4 Data compilation**

Reporting Registered Claims and Appeals

39. Summary counts of registered claims and appeals are presented, as recorded on the WPCS.

40. There have been no changes in methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were designated National Statistics in November 2013.

#### Reporting Clearance Times

41. These statistics were first presented within the 2015/16 Statistical Bulletin following increased external user interest in the time taken to clear WPS claims.

42. Clearance times calculations are conducted separately to the automated process. Cleared WPS claims (claims with a 'cleared date' recorded on the WPCS) were identified and working days (to exclude weekends and bank holidays) between each claim being registered and cleared were calculated. Due to variations in the time taken to process each type of WPS claim, average clearance times were calculated separately for each claim type: first disablement claims, second/subsequent disablement claims, widows'/widowers' claims and appeals. Calendar months for average clearance times were calculated by dividing the median clearance time for a claim type by 21.665 (on the basis of there being 5 working days in a week and 4.333 weeks in a month).

43. The average clearance times for appeals were produced by calculating the number of working days (to exclude weekends and bank holidays) between the date of appeal registration and the final date that appeals were cleared by Tribunal. This provides an indication of the total length of time that a claimant may wait for a final decision to be reached following the submission of an appeal. However, the commentary in the main Statistical Bulletin also presents the average length of time DBS Veterans UK take to complete their processing of appeals prior to appeals going to the Tribunal. The clearance time figures in this statistic include entitlement and assessment appeals.

44. Information on WPS claim clearance times has been presented as a median average with an inter-quartile range rather than a mean average and standard deviation, as these statistics are affected less by outliers and better reflect the average typical experience for the individual making a claim. An outlier is an observation within a dataset that appears to be inconsistent with the remainder of the dataset.

- The median is the value in the center of the data set when they are arranged from smallest to largest.
- A quartile is any of three values (first/lower quartile, second quartile (median), third/upper quartile) that divides the sorted (from smallest value to largest value) dataset into four equal parts. The lower quartile (LQ) is the value at which 25% of the values in the dataset will be below this point. The upper quartile (UQ) is the value at which 75% of the values in the dataset will be below this point.
- The inter-quartile range (IQR) is the range in which the middle 50% of the data points fall (i.e. the distance between the lower and upper quartile). The longer the inter-quartile range the wider the spread of data.

45. Note that the mean average is also presented in the supplementary tables as this is used internally as a measure of performance on the management of cases by DBS Veterans UK.

46. There have been no changes in methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were first published in June 2016.

#### Reporting on outcomes of registered Claims and Appeals

47. Summary counts of outcomes of registered claims and appeals are presented, as recorded on the WPCS. Please note, a recent quality assessment has highlighted some concerns with the information on appeal outcomes that Defence Statistics receive from the War Pension Computer System (WPCS). Therefore, figures have been marked provisional while we investigate this further.

## Reporting War Pensions in payment

48. Summary counts of all disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers as at 31 March 2022, including demographics, are presented, as recorded on the WPCS.
49. There have been no changes in methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were designated National Statistics in November 2013.

## Reporting Causes of disablement

50. Claims are assessed by medical advisors to determine injuries and illnesses that are service-attributable, with medical diagnosis codes recorded on the WPCS for a range of common conditions. However, diagnosis codes are not recorded for all conditions. In these cases, medical conditions are determined from information held in free-text format. Therefore, any searches conducted are reliant on specific search terms being spelled correctly.
51. Due to continued external interest in the numbers of disablement pensioners awarded for mental disorders, specifically post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), awards made under the WPS for these conditions are produced for purposes of this National Statistic. Awards for Mental disorders have been identified from the following medical diagnosis codes, as recorded on the WPCS: 4000,4001,4002,4003,4004,4005,4006,4007,4008, and a free-text search for the following terms: post traumatic stress, ptsd, post-traumatic stress, psych, phobia, phobic, depressed, mood, depression, depressive, adjustment, anxiety, panic, dysthymic, schizo, mania, paranoid, affective disorders, personality disorder, bi-polar, bi polar, stress disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, conversion disorder, cyclothymic disorder, delusional, dissociative, dream, identity disorder, mental disorder, nervous disorder, nightmare disorder, compulsive disorder, agoraphobia, substance abuse, substance use. It is important to note that these figures should be treated with caution due to the unreliability of the underlying data.
52. There have been no changes in the methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were designated National Statistics in November 2013.
53. Since the introduction of the lump sum payment for service-attributable mesothelioma on 16 December 2015 (see paragraphs 25-27 for further information), there has been external interest in the numbers of claimants opting to receive the lump sum award.
54. Therefore, this information is now compiled using data supplied directly by DBS Veterans UK, and numbers of claimants who have opted to receive the lump sum award have been published within these statistics since the 2016/17 Statistical Bulletin, published in June 2017.

## Reporting Weekly Amounts Paid Out

55. Summary information on weekly amounts paid out to disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers are presented, as recorded on the WPCS.
56. An anomaly has been identified in the average weekly amounts received by War Pensioners. In a small number of cases, the values for the combined weekly amounts of War pensions and allowances received are not equal to the sum of the values of War Pensions only and allowances only received. This will be investigated further for future publications.
57. There have been no changes in the methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were designated National Statistics in November 2013.

## Reporting Expenditure by Financial Year



58. These statistics were first presented within the 2015/16 Statistical Bulletin following increased external user interest in overall WPS expenditure each financial year. This information is compiled using data supplied directly by the DBS Veterans UK finance team.

59. There have been no changes in methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were first published in June 2016.

#### Statistical Methods

60. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to identify if there were significant differences between clearance times over time. The significance test provided confidence to state that an observed difference between the clearance times was a real difference and did not occur due to chance. A significance level of 0.05 has been used throughout this report.

## 4. Quality Management

### 4.1 Quality Assurance

61. The MOD's quality management process for Official Statistics consists of three elements: (1) Regularly monitoring and assessing quality risk via an annual assessment; (2) Providing a mechanism for reporting and reviewing revisions/corrections to Official Statistics; (3) Ensuring BQRs are published alongside reports and are updated regularly.

### 4.2 Quality Assessment

62. The War Pension Scheme National Statistic was last assessed in 2021 and was deemed to be of low quality risk.

## 5. Relevance

### 5.1 User needs

63. These statistics have been provided in response to an increasing number of requests for information about claims and awards under the scheme, and the number of individuals currently in receipt of War Pensions Benefits and Allowances. A range of information is requested including further details of claims and awards (e.g. by claim type or outcome) and further information on those awarded compensation (e.g. age, gender or service). The report is used by external organisations such as NHS trusts, Local Government and Armed Forces charities. The report is also used to support other MOD departments in work planning and policy development.

64. In 2012 and 2013, Defence Statistics carried out an internal and an external consultation to review the War Pension Scheme (WPS) National Statistic and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Official Statistic to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. The consultations were prompted by the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health, which required a review of the content of the publications in consultation with users.

65. Following this consultation the proposed changes to the War Pension Scheme were to:

- Include the number of people as well as the number of claims/awards in each report table. This has been proposed due to the high volume of requests Defence Statistics receive for the number of people who have made claims/been awarded under the scheme. **These additional figures were added to the latest WPS statistics, published on 6 June 2013.**

- Include total WPS expenditure to provide an idea of the overall expenditure each financial year under the scheme. **This was included in the 6 June 2013 publication.**
- Include numbers in receipt of war pensions for mental health conditions. Defence Statistics frequently receive requests for this information. **This was included in the 6 June 2013 publication.**

66. In reference to the UK Statistics Authority report, [The Use Made of Official Statistics](#), the WPS statistics are used by:

- (i) Government – Policy Making
- (ii) Government – Policy Monitoring
- (iii) Local Government – Service Delivery
- (iv) Academia – Facilitating Research
- (v) Charities – Service Delivery

### **Description of Users and Usage of Statistics**

67. The War Pension Scheme statistics have been published in response to user demand. Interest has come from internal MOD policy makers, Parliament, Government Departments, the third Sector, academics, the media, and the general public.

68. The WPS statistics are used by the following groups of customers:

- WPS policy teams use these statistical publications as a basis for policy making.
- DBS Veterans UK use these figures for background information and for planning purposes e.g. estimating the volume/workload for different types of claims.
- External organisations such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local Government and Armed Forces charities use the reports and location figures as part of estimating and planning veteran casework provision e.g. to assess the numbers and needs of service personnel and veterans in their local area.
- WPS statistics are also used by the media to give context to reports on Armed Forces Compensation.

69. Following the MOD's launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2011, Defence Statistics received an increasing volume of requests from within the MOD, Local Government departments and NHS trusts for information on the number of veterans by location. This was required to assist with planning for the needs of service personnel and veterans in each specific area of the UK.

70. To meet these requirements Defence Statistics compiled information on the numbers of Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), War Pension Scheme (WPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) recipients with [summaries by location](#). This was initially published in November 2011, with the latest update published in August 2021.

71. The publication of these statistics also plays an important part in ensuring the Department's accountability to the British public.

### **Strengths and Weakness in Relation to User Needs**

72. Consultations to review the WPS statistics have been held to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. The consultations were prompted by the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health, which required a review of the content of the publications in consultation with users.

73. During 2021/22, the War Pension Scheme National Statistics had 693 unique hits via the GOV.UK website.

74. The key strength of the WPS data is the efficient method used to capture WPS data extracts. Validation checks are undertaken to ensure the information provided in the reports is accurate.

75. The key weakness is that Defence Statistics rely on the level of detail that DBS Veterans UK manually enter for each claim. There are also no other data sources that can be used to validate the information provided to Defence Statistics. Furthermore, a great deal of the information is recorded in free text fields e.g. medical conditions, and therefore it is not always possible to identify information requested in ad-hoc requests. Information is not always complete, for example, Service Number is not complete and therefore cannot be used to link the WPS data to other datasets to acquire more comprehensive information.
76. Users external to the MOD are encouraged to give feedback via email ([Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk)) and publications provide details of how to give feedback.

## 6. Accuracy and Reliability

### 6.1 Overall Accuracy

77. DBS Veterans UK is responsible for ensuring the quality of WPCS data supplied to Defence Statistics. The WPCS is a large administrative database and is subject to the data quality issues of any large administrative system with data collated by a large number of staff for operational delivery purposes. The WPCS is operated by DBS Veterans UK, therefore Defence Statistics have limited visibility of the system and the data entry and processing done before the data is received by Defence Statistics.
78. The figures are based on the WPCS data extract as at the end of each quarter and will be correct as at the time each extract was taken. Therefore, any update to claim information made on the WPCS after each quarterly snapshot will not be reflected in the report.
79. Historic data are only revised if errors are found in the data processing or statistical methods used during their publication. If an error was found all historic data would be revised, based on the quarterly snapshots of data, and Defence Statistics would highlight the error and the impact on the numbers presented. Revised figures can be identified by a revision marker 'r'.

### Data Coverage

80. The MOD holds electronic data on all WPS claimants that have registered claims under the WPS since 1 April 2003. Data for WPS claimants that claimed and were awarded between January 1996 and March 2003 are held although, prior to the MOD taking over responsibility for the data (in 2003) from the Department for Work and Pensions, data were periodically archived. There is a chance that some data covering the period 1996 to 2003 may have been archived, however it is not possible to quantify this.
81. The data presented within these statistics include compensation claims registered by all eligible claimants, as detailed in paragraphs 12 and 19 above, between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2022.
82. Whilst figures presented include all claims registered during the reported time period, the figures do not represent all individuals who have sustained a service related injury/illness during that time. This is because there can be a time lag between an individual's injury/illness and the date they make a claim. Service personnel cannot submit a claim under the WPS until they have left service.

83. In a given table, numbers of claims registered or cleared within a given time period may not sum to the total number of people. This is because one person can make more than one claim spanning different quarters or financial years but would only be counted once in the overall total.
84. The publication presents a separate summary of recipients who have opted to receive a lump sum award to compensate for service-attributable mesothelioma. Further details on this can be found on paragraphs 25-27. These claimants are not captured on the WPCS and therefore are excluded from the rest of the summary statistics.

## 6.2 Data Revisions

85. Data revisions are handled in accordance with the [MOD's Official Statistics Revisions and Corrections Policy](#). There have been no revisions made since the publication of the previous Background Quality Report on 24 June 2021.

## 7. Timeliness and Punctuality

### 7.1 Timeliness

86. Data are provided to Defence Statistics on a quarterly basis. Between 2008 and 2010 figures were published on a quarterly basis. Following user consultation, the frequency of publication was reduced from quarterly to biannual in 2010, and then further reduced down to an annual frequency from 2011.
87. Figures as at 31 March are published in June, up to 12 weeks after the end of the reporting period. It takes four weeks to extract, validate and process data extracted from the WPCS. It takes a further six weeks to compile and quality assure the report.

### 7.2 Punctuality

88. These National Statistics reports have all been published on time to meet pre-announced release dates. Future publication dates will also be announced on GOV.UK at least one month in advance. See the [GOV.UK Official Statistics Release Calendar](#).

## 8. Coherence and Comparability

89. The WPCS is the administration system for the War Pension Scheme and is the only source for information on the WPS. Location information is presented in line with ONS geographical regions to enable comparisons with other statistical publications. Similarly, age bands are presented in line with other Defence Statistics Health reports.
90. All definitions within this bulletin are consistent with the terms used by DBS Veterans UK.
91. The COVID-19 pandemic affected operational delivery of the WPS in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as casework paused for a short period from March 2020 because it could not be delivered remotely. Operational capability continued to be limited throughout that year and routine administration was hampered by increased difficulties in obtaining medical evidence to inform

decision making. This may have contributed to the observed increase in clearance times in 2020/21. During 2021/22, the delivery of the WPS started to return to normal levels, with the increase of staffing levels and non-remote working. Additionally, other forms of medical evidence gathering were introduced which aided the processing of claims. The phased return to the normal level of WPS processing and delivery can be seen by the reduced average clearance time for first and second claims. Despite this, WPS delivery is still being impacted by COVID-19 meaning that comparisons with previous years should be made with caution.

## 9. Accessibility and Clarity

### Accessibility

92. The [War Pensions Scheme statistics](#) can be accessed through the GOV.UK website and is published as an accessible PDF document. Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source (ODS) versions of all WPS report tables are also available on the GOV.UK website alongside each published report. Defence Statistics are currently ensuring all published information is equally accessible by everyone.
93. The publication follows the standard structure for MOD Official Statistics including: summary of key points, introduction, findings, a short summary of data, definitions and methods, a glossary, symbols, disclosure control, revisions and contact details.
94. 24-hour pre-release access to the report is available to a limited distribution list within MOD. The full list can be found in the [pre-release access list](#).

### Clarity

95. Users with an interest in the key findings can read a short summary of main messages within the Key Points section of the front page of the report. The report is then split into several sections to help users navigate their way through the publication.
96. A glossary of all key terms is provided at the end of this Background Quality Report and in the Statistical Bulletin.

## 10. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

97. Defence Statistics minimise the cost to Government of producing these statistics through using data already collated for operational delivery purposes within the MOD's administrative system. As a large administrative system, data quality across fields is of varying quality and completeness which limits the information available to customers in our statistics and requests for information.

## 11. Cost and Respondent Burden

98. The annual report takes approximately 35 days to produce each year. Further analysis and development work will require additional resource.
99. The WPS report uses an administrative data source which is already collected by the MOD. Therefore, the main operational cost to production of the statistics is liaison with DBS Veterans UK, for quality assurance and data interpretation.

## 12. Confidentiality and Security

### 12.1 Confidentiality – Policy

100. Defence Statistics have data access agreements with DBS Veterans UK with respect to obtaining the WPS data extracts. All Defence Statistics staff involved in the production have signed a declaration that they have completed the Government wide data protection training and they understand their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

### 12.2 Confidentiality – Data Treatment

101. In line with the directives of the JSP 200, disclosure control is conducted on all statistical information provided by the MOD to safeguard the confidentiality of individuals. Within these statistics a risk of disclosure is considered to be high where numbers presented are fewer than three. In cases where a risk of disclosure exists, one of three appropriate disclosure control methods have been applied:
- Figures have been suppressed: In most cases where there may be a risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than three have been suppressed and marked as '[c]'. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is fewer than three, secondary suppression has been applied where the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot be derived from totals.
  - Figures have been grouped: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression, columns and/or rows have been grouped together in order to present larger numbers.
  - Figures have been rounded to the nearest five: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression and it has not been possible to group columns and/or rows, figures have been rounded to the nearest five. Figures have been rounded individually, meaning totals may not be equal to the sum of their components.

### 12.3 Security

102. Only individuals who produce these statistics have access to the underlying data. Defence Statistics ensures that the WPS data are kept confidential by holding this data on a secure server.

## 13. Links

**Note:** The MOD is not responsible for the contents or reliability of the listed non-MOD web sites and does not necessarily endorse the views expressed therein. Listings should not be taken as endorsement of any kind. The MOD has no control over the availability of these sites. Users access them at their own risk. The information given was correct at the time of publication.



## Glossary

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**Adult Dependant:** Adult relatives, i.e. sister, brother, aunt or uncle etc., for whom the service person was financially responsible.

**Age 80 addition (NI) (Disablement & Widow/Widower):** This may be paid to a war disablement pensioner and a war widow/widower aged 80 or over.

**Age addition allowance:** This may be paid to a war disablement pensioner who is aged 65 or over and whose disablement is assessed at 40% or more. A war widow/widower may receive an additional allowance at age 65 which is increased at age 70, and again at age 80.

**Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation (ALSO):** This may be paid if a disablement pensioner's earning capacity is reduced because their pensioned disablement permanently prevents them following their regular occupation. To gain entitlement new claimants must be under age 65, with a disablement percentage of at least 40%. This allowance plus their basic War Disablement Pension cannot exceed the 100% disablement pension rate.

**Appeal:** If a claimant is not satisfied with the outcome of any of their claims they may lodge an appeal to an appropriate Tribunal.

**Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS):** Compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve forces. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death attributable to service where the cause occurred on or after 6 April 2005.

**Awarded 0%:** The doctor may decide from the medical evidence that although the condition was caused by service or wartime experience, if it is not causing the person a problem at the moment then they will be awarded an assessment of nil.

**Child allowance:** An eligible child under 16 years old may receive a child allowance. The child allowance may continue whilst the child continues in full time education or if the child is incapable of self-support due to an infirmity which arose before the age of 16 years.

**Cleared Claim:** A claim is classed as cleared when Veterans UK issue a letter to the claimant informing them of the outcome of their claim or appeal.

**Clothing Allowance (CLOT):** This may be paid to a disablement pensioner with a disablement percentage of 20% or above where disablement causes exceptional wear and tear on clothing e.g. incontinence, wear to shoes due to poor gait, or to clothes due to wheelchair use.

**Comforts Allowance (COMF):** This may be paid to a severely disabled pensioner who is receiving **Constant Attendance Allowance** or **Unemployability Supplement** or both. It is intended to help with the extra expenses associated with severe disablement.

**Conditional list review:** These cases arise because DBS Medical Services have previously made an interim assessment for a limited period because the level of disablement was likely to change. A review date is calculated so that disablement can be reassessed before the given period expires.

**Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA):** This may be paid to a disablement pensioner who needs regular personal attention because of their pensioned disablement and that disablement is assessed at 80% or more. It is payable at one of four rates. The rate varies according to the level of attendance they need.



**Current invaliding claims:** Current invaliding claims and first claims to pension cover the initial claim that an individual makes for an injury/illness caused by service prior to 6 April 2005.

**DBS Veterans UK:** Responsible for administering the armed forces pension schemes and compensation payments for those injured or bereaved through service.

**Departmental review:** A review can be carried out to reassess a case when a condition has been rejected and an award for a war pension has not been made.

**Deterioration claims:** An application can be made to increase a war pension if an accepted condition has worsened, or, if another condition has made the accepted war pension disablement worse.

**Disablement pensioner:** Ex-UK Armed Forces service personnel with an injury/illness as a result of service with a disablement percentage of 20% or above.

**Disablement Percentage:** First and second/subsequent claims are assessed by a doctor, and then he/she gives a percentage of up to 100%, dependent on how disabled the person is.

**Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance (ESDA):** This may be paid to a disablement pensioner who is receiving **Constant Attendance Allowance** at one of the two highest rates, or would be receiving it if they were not in hospital.

**Funeral Expenses (FE):** Funeral expenses may be paid if the pensioner died as a result of his service disablement, or died while having treatment for that disablement in hospital, or was entitled to Constant Attendance Allowance, or was at the time of his death 80% or more disabled and receiving Unemployability Supplement.

**Further condition claims:** Disablement pensioners who already have entitlement to a war disablement pension can claim for an additional medical condition.

**Gratuity Payment:** If a disablement is assessed at less than 20%, personnel are paid a lump sum called a gratuity. The amount depends on the extent of the disablement and how long the person is likely to be disabled.

**Inter-quartile range:** The inter-quartile range is the largest minus the smallest number in the middle 50% of the data.

**Inter War:** Disabled due to service between 1 October 1921 and 2 September 1939.

**Invalidity Allowance (IVA):** This may be paid to a disablement pensioner under the age of 60 in receipt of the **Unemployability Supplement**. The rate varies according to the age at which unemployability began.

**Median average:** The median of a finite list of numbers can be found by arranging all the values from lowest to highest and picking the middle value.

**Modified Over Age Infirm Allowance (MOIA):** Compensation/Allowances (including that paid to children living in the Irish Republic or Overseas) due to infirmity are taken into account when calculating an award of **Over Age Infirm Allowance**.

**Modified Unemployability Supplement (MSUP):** The basic conditions of eligibility to UNSUPP for a pensioner living abroad (including the Irish Republic and the Channel Islands) are the same as for the UK, however, if they become eligible for Retirement Pension or other benefit payable

out of the public funds of that country then UNSUPP may be adjusted with that benefit, or paid at a nominal rate to allow continued payment of comforts allowance.

**Over Age Infirm Allowance (OAIA):** Over Age Infirm Allowance for children of deceased pensioners unable to support themselves dates back to the 1914 War. The allowance can be awarded or continued beyond the normal age limits on the grounds of infirmity if the ailment is of a nature which is likely to prevent the person from earning a living either permanently or for a prolonged period and infirmity commenced before age 16. The person is still referred to as a child even though they may be quite elderly.

**Registered Claim:** A claim is classed as registered when Veterans UK begin a workflow on the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS) for a claim.

**Restored Widows/Widowers:** A war widow/widower may have their pension restored under certain circumstances such as; they become widowed again; their marriage/civil partnership ends or they stop living with their partner.

**Severe Disablement Occupational Allowance (SDOA):** This may be paid to a disablement pensioner who is entitled to Constant Attendance Allowance at one of the two highest rates, but who still normally has a gainful occupation.

**Survival Analysis:** Survival Analysis analyses the time duration until the event we are interested in occurs. In this reports case that is when the claim has been cleared.

**Supplementary Allowance:** Everyone in receipt of a War Pension can claim for extra allowances to help with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability:

**Temporary Allowance for Widows/Widowers (TAW):** This may be paid to a widow/widower, irrespective of the cause of their spouse's death, if he/she were awarded Unemployability Supplement or Constant Attendance Allowance or both. The allowance is approximately equal to the disablement pension and allowances paid to their late spouse. It is paid for the first 26 weeks of widowhood.

**Treatment Allowance (TA):** This is equivalent to a disablement pension paid at the 100% rate. It may be paid instead of a disablement pension to a pensioner who incurs a loss of earnings as a result of receiving treatment for their pensioned disablement.

**Tribunal:** Tribunals hear appeals from all claimants who have disagreed with the decision made by Veterans UK on the outcome of their claim. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Pensions Appeal Tribunal operates, and in England and Wales, appeals are heard at the First-tier Tribunal (War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber). The Upper-tier Tribunal (Administrative Appeals Chamber) hears appeals against decisions made by the First-tier and Pensions Appeal Tribunals.

**Unemployability Supplement (UNSUPP):** This may be paid to a pensioner who is unemployable or virtually unemployable as a result of the war pensioned disablement. To gain entitlement, new claimants must be under age 65, with a pensioned disablement assessed at 60% or more when they make their claim. Additional allowances may be paid for a spouse and a child or children.

**Unmarried Dependant:** Partner who lived with the ex-service person for at least 6 months before his enlistment, was maintained by him and who has borne his child.

**War Orphan:** Child of deceased service person who has no surviving mother or father. Child whose mother was divorced from a service person at the time of death. Child who is not in the care of the surviving parent.

**War Parent:** Parent of the deceased service person.

**War Pension Scheme (WPS):** No fault compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve force. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death caused or made worse by service from WW1 in 1914 to 5 April 2005. Ex-service personnel are only eligible to claim once they've left the services.

**War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS):** This is intended to help with the mobility costs of a pensioner who is unable to walk, or virtually unable to walk. New claimants must have a service disablement of at least 40%. It is paid to double amputees and to those pensioners who need help getting about because they are both deaf and blind as a result of their pensioned disablement.

**War widow/widower:** Spouse of ex-service person whose death was whilst in service or related to a disablement due to service prior to 6 April 2005.

**War widows'/widowers' Rent Allowance (RENT):** A war widow/widower with a child or children may be eligible for a rent allowance.

**War widows'/widowers' review:** A review can be carried out where there is further evidence which could change the outcome of a claim.

**War widow's/widower's Special Allowance:** This is a Supplementary Pension payable to "pre-1973 war widows/widowers" (the widows/widowers of service personnel who died or left the services before 31 March 1973, and who did not benefit from the improvements made from that date to the MOD's Armed Forces Pension Scheme).

**Working day:** Any day in which legal business can be conducted. In this report a working day is any day apart from a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday.