



Ministry  
of Defence

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Ref: FOI 2022/04775 04776 04780



04 May 2022

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your emails from 12 April 2022 requesting the following information. We will be considering three requests within this response, FOI 2022/04775, FOI 2022/04776 and FOI 2022/04780.

"I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please inform me of the following

Total Permanent downgrades in service  
Total Non deployable personnel"

"Royal Navy I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please inform me of the following

Total Permanent downgrades in service  
Total Non deployable personnel"

"Royal Air Force I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please inform me of the following

Total Permanent downgrades in service  
Total Non deployable personnel"

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

When Service personnel are medically downgraded they are awarded a Medical Deployability Standard (MDS) of either Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) or Medically Non Deployable (MND). A decision is also made as to whether the downgraded individual requires short term or longer term limitations in their military duties (categorised as temporary or permanent). A permanent marker does not imply that the MDS can never change - it is intended to distinguish the longer term limitations to carrying out military duties from the relative short term ones.

The total number of downgraded personnel (MLD & MND) with a permanent marker is presented in Table 1, and the total number of personnel downgraded with an MDS of MND

(Temporary & Permanent) is presented in Table 2. Please note, the personnel represented in this response may have since had their limitations lifted and may have returned to their previous levels of medical fitness.

**Table 1: UK armed forces personnel<sup>1</sup> permanently<sup>2</sup> medically downgraded by service, numbers**

1 March 2022

	<b>Permanent Downgrading</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>12,298</b>
Royal Navy <sup>3</sup>	2,141
Army	7,939
RAF	2,218

Source: DMICP & JPA.

<sup>1</sup> The figures provided are for full time trained (Royal Navy and RAF)/trade trained (army) and serving against requirement personnel in service.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that a permanent marker does not imply that the downgrading status can never change - it is intended to distinguish the longer term limitations to carrying out military duties from the relative short term ones. Permanently downgraded personnel may hold an MDS of either Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) or Medically Non Deployable (MND).

<sup>3</sup> Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

**Table 2: UK armed forces personnel<sup>1</sup> with a medical deployment standard of Medically Non Deployable (MND) by service, numbers**

1 March 2022

	<b>MND</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>14,698</b>
Royal Navy <sup>2</sup>	3,292
Army	7,577
RAF	3,829

Source: DMICP & JPA.

<sup>1</sup> The figures provided are for full time trained (Royal Navy and RAF)/trade trained (army) and serving against requirement personnel in service.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note the following:

The figures provided are for full time trained (Royal Navy and RAF)/trade trained (army) and serving against requirement personnel in service. This does not include reserves, entitled or non-entitled civilians, foreign service or non-UK military.

Service personnel with medical conditions or fitness issues which affect their ability to perform their duties are referred to a medical board for a medical examination and review of their medical grading. The patient may be downgraded, to allow for treatment and rehabilitation. Medically downgraded personnel are those personnel who have been assessed by a medical board and subsequently awarded a Medical Deployability Standard (MDS) of either Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) or Medically Non Deployable (MND):

- Medically Limited Deployable (MLD): Personnel medically fit for duty with minor employment limitations. MLD personnel may have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all Medically Fully Deployable (MFD) requirements.

- Medically Not Deployable (MND): Personnel medically fit for duty with major employment limitations. MND personnel are not fit to deploy on Operations but may be deployable on UK based exercises and should be able to work effectively for at least 32.5 hours per week.

When a Medical Board awards a MDS of MLD or MND, a decision is made as to whether the MDS is a temporary or permanent. The maximum period of validity of a temporary MDS is 12 months for the Royal Navy and Army, 18 months for the RAF. A permanent marker does not imply that the MDS can never change - it is intended to assist personnel staff involved with employment decisions by distinguishing the longer term health problems from the relative short term ones.

While a medical board will likely provide some degree of opinion concerning the future functional capacity of an individual, the decision of retention of medically downgraded personnel in service is an employment board function. The timing of decisions on retention must strike an appropriate balance between the needs of the service person and of the service and takes into account the treatment needs and occupational health advice. Therefore, every case of medical downgrading is considered on its individual merits.

The Defence Medical Information Capability programme (DMICP) was used to obtain information on Medical Deployment Standard (MDS) and Permanent status.

DMICP has a centralised data warehouse of coded information. It is the source of electronic, integrated medical records for primary healthcare and some MOD specialist care providers. It was rolled out in 2007 and is the source of electronic, integrated healthcare records for primary healthcare and some MOD specialist care providers.

Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) is the most accurate source for demographic information for UK armed forces personnel and was used to gather information on a person's service.

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

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to statistics and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing [Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk).

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,  
Defence Statistics Health