



Ministry of Defence

**Defence Statistics Health
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Date: **14 July 2022**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 16 June 2022 requesting the following information:

“the number of armed forces personnel who have a read code on their medical records for an eating disorder. I would like the figures from January 2020 onwards and for these to be broken down by service and sex, if possible.

Additionally, could you also provide details of the number of armed forces personnel who have been medically discharged after being diagnosed with an eating disorder since January 2020. I would also like these figures broken down by service and sex if possible.”

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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. Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemption provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In line with JSP200 Statistics Disclosure Guidance, numbers fewer than five are suppressed to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is, therefore, no requirement to consider the public interest in deciding to withhold the information.

Between 1 January 2020 and 14 June 2022 (latest data available), **208** UK armed forces regular personnel had at least one eating disorder Read code entered into their electronic patient record (**Table 1**).

Table 1: UK armed forces regular personnel with an eating disorder read code recorded in their electronic patient record, by service and gender¹, numbers

1 January 2020 to 14 June 2022

	n
All	208
Royal Navy²	38
Army	105
RAF	66
Male	75
Female	133

Source: DMICP, JPA

1. Please note numbers within demographic groups may not sum the total as personnel who have more than one eating disorder read code recorded in the period and change service will be counted once in each service but only once overall.

2. Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel

Of those who had their first Read code for an eating disorder entered into their electronic patient record after 1 January 2020, **18** UK armed forces regular personnel were medically discharged between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2022 (latest data available). Please note that eating disorder may not have been listed as a principal or contributory cause of the subsequent medical discharge and may have been for an unrelated condition (**Table 2**).

Table 2: UK armed forces regular personnel¹ medically discharged² after an eating disorder Read code³ since January 2020, by service and gender, numbers

1 January 2020 to 31 March 2022

	n
All	18
Royal Navy⁴	~
Army	13
RAF	~
Male	5
Female	13

Source: FMed 23s, DMICP and JPA

1. Includes trained and untrained personnel.

2. Eating disorder may not have been listed as a principal or contributory cause of the subsequent medical discharge and may have been for an unrelated condition.

3. First eating disorder read code entered in medical record after January 2020

4. Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel

~ In line with JSP 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed.

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

Background Notes

Eating disorder data

Information was derived from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP). 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.

DMICP is a live data source and is subject to change. Date of extract 17 June 2022.

The following Read codes were used to identify an eating disorder:

Code	Description
Eu50	[X]Eating disorders
E271	Anorexia nervosa
Eu502	[X]Bulimia nervosa
Eu50z	[X]Eating disorder, unspecified
Eu503	[X]Atypical bulimia nervosa
Eu501	[X]Atypical anorexia nervosa
E2750	Unspecified non-organic eating disorder
E2751	Bulimia (non-organic overeating)
Eu500	[X]Anorexia nervosa
Eu502-1	[X]Bulimia NOS
Eu50y	[X]Other eating disorders
E275z	Non-organic eating disorder NOS
E275y	Other specified non-organic eating disorder
E275	Other and unspecified non-organic eating disorders
E2752	Pica
Eu50y-1	[X]Pica in adults
Eu504	[X]Overeating associated with other psychological disturbances
Eu504-1	[X]Psychogenic overeating
Eu505-1	[X]Psychogenic vomiting
Eu505	[X]Vomiting associated with other psychological disturbances
E2642	Cyclical vomiting - psychogenic
E2751-1	Compulsive eating disorder
E2754	Psychogenic vomiting NOS
E2757	Psychogenic polydipsia
1467	H/O: anorexia nervosa
1612	Appetite loss - anorexia
1612-1	Anorexia symptom
1JZ	Suspected binge eating disorder
EMISCAN3	Anorexia
EMISNQE3	Eating disorders
Fy05	Nocturnal sleep-related eating disorder
R030	[D]Anorexia
R0300	[D]Appetite loss
R030z	[D]Anorexia NOS

Medical discharge data

Please note that eating disorder may not have been listed as a principal or contributory cause of the subsequent medical discharge and may have been for an unrelated condition.

Medical discharge figures presented are for UK Regular personnel (including Gurkhas and MPGS).

The earliest eating disorder Read code entered since 1 January 2020 was used to determine if there was a subsequent medical discharge. Personnel who had an eating disorder Read code entered prior to January 2020 and medically discharged between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2022 have not been included.

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc.) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the armed forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the armed forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK armed forces as an Official Statistic publication. The last statistical release was on 14 July 2022 which presented data up to 31 March 2022. The latest report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>

Demographic data

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

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.

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

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

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics Health