



Ministry of Defence

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Ministry of Defence
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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 17 February 2022 requesting the following information:

"I wish to make an information request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Questions:

1. What number of serving personnel are discharged with a traumatic brain injury?
 - a. Broken down into service related brain injury and non-service related.
2. What number of serving personnel are discharged with:
 - a. Spinal cord injury
 - i. Both broken down into service related and non-service related.
 - b. Paralysis from injury
 - i. Both broken down into service related and non-service related.
3. What number of serving personnel are discharged with the loss of a limb?
 - i. Both broken down into service related and non-service related.

In regards to the above questions please provide a time range from 2017 – 2022 considering across the spectrum of disciplines i.e. RAF, Army and Navy.

If any of the above questions require clarification or more specificity please let me know and I will be happy to revise the questions and return to you."

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 information in scope of your request is held. However, I must advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit. This is because to identify if a medical discharge with a cause of 'Paralysis' was due to an injury would require a search of the medical record and would be in excess of 3.5 working days of effort.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note MOD may consider providing the following information which is in scope:

- The number of UK armed forces personnel who have medically discharged due to the following conditions listed as a principal or contributory cause between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2021:
 - Traumatic Brain Injury
 - Spinal Cord Injury
 - Paralysis
 - Loss of Limb
- The number of individuals awarded under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS), who were medically discharged for the above conditions between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2021, where the awarded condition (based on the tariff of injury tables) is the same as the principal or contributory cause listed on the medical discharge, which would confirm whether the condition was service related.

Medical Discharges

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.

Information on medical discharges is sourced from electronic medical records (DMICP) and manually entered paper documents (FMed 23s). The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting are secondary functions.

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces as an Official Statistic publication. The last statistical release was on 15 July 2021 which presented data up to 31 March 2021. The latest report can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>. Please note some medical discharge numbers by cause are provisional, further details can be found in the report.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) provides compensation for any injury, illness or death which is caused by service on or after 6 April 2005. It replaces the War Pension Scheme (WPS), which had been in place since 1917. Where the injury is partly caused or made worse by service, compensation is payable if, on the balance of probabilities service is the predominant cause of the injury or of the worsening of the injury. The AFCS is managed by Defence Business Service (DBS) Veterans UK within the MOD.

Claimants' injuries/illnesses considered to be Service-attributable are awarded under the AFCS in line with one of nine tariff injury tables, which each cover the legislation surrounding the payment of compensation: Table 1 - Burns; Table 2 - Injury, Wounds and Scarring; Table 3 - Mental Disorders; Table 4 - Physical Disorders; Table 5 - Amputations; Table 6 - Neurological Disorders; Table 7 - Senses; Table 8 - Fractures and Dislocations; and Table 9 - Musculoskeletal Disorders. The full list of AFCS of AFCS tariffs can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/517/schedule/3/part/1>

AFCS data as at 31 March 2021 is available in the latest published National Statistics, as published on the GOV.UK website on 24 June 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>

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 our statistical publications covering medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces and the AFCS, 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