



Ministry
of Defence

[REDACTED]
Defence Business Services
Secretariat
Room 6303
Tomlinson House
Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire FY5 3WP

Ref: FOI2022/06587

DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
28 June 2022

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 30 May 2022 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), seeking the following information:

"I have an FOI question for you that previously you could not answer as it was too broad. I have narrowed it down so that you can answer it.

For the years 2004 and 2020 how many payouts did the MoD award for hearing loss and how much was the payouts?

Please redact any information that would prevent you from releasing such information."

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 MOD, and I can confirm that all of the information in scope of your request is held. However, I have to advise you that we would not be able to answer your questions without exceeding the appropriate limit.

Section 12 of the FOI 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.

Under the War Pension Scheme (WPS), it is possible to identify the number of Noise Induced Hearing Loss claims, processed by Veterans UK for the years 2004 and 2020, however, as the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) was not introduced until 2005, only figures for 2020 are available. In order to determine how many claims were awarded and the total amount paid out, for the WPS in 2020 alone, would require the interrogation of an estimated 500 individual claim files. Each file check would take in the region of 30 minutes, totalling 250 hours. At the rate of £25 per hour, this would equate to approximately £6,250 of effort, exceeding the appropriate cost limit.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

However, under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), it may be helpful if I explain that Defence Statistics publish an annual National Statistic on claims and awards made under the WPS and the AFCS; further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>

You may also wish to look at a previous FOI request relating to AFCS and common law claims for service-attributable hearing loss. For ease of reference, I have provided the link to the response below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1046445/FOI response FOI2021-04458 Redacted.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1046445/FOI_response_FOI2021-04458_Redacted.pdf)

In addition, the Department may be able to provide some information in the scope of your request if you were to refine your request to just AFCS figures for 2020, as this would reduce the number of cases to be examined. Although it is not guaranteed that your refined request may fall within the cost limit, we would be happy to look at it again.

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

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/>.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Defence Business Services Secretariat

[REDACTED]