



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services
Secretariat
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Ref: FOI2023/04805

15 May 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 21 June 2022 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

- "1. What is the number of personnel medically discharged from HM Armed Forces in Scotland, between the financial years 2011/12 and 2021/22, with a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis?"*
- 2. How many service personnel discharged in Scotland with MS did so with access to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and how many were discharged without access to this between the financial years 2011/12 and 2021/22.*
- 3. How many MS-related claims have been rejected by the Armed Forces Pension Scheme in Scotland between 2011/12 and 21/22.*
- 4. What provision (advice, guidance, and signposting) is currently made for people with Multiple Sclerosis who are discharged from HM Armed Forces in Scotland...."*

And your clarification of 13 April 2023 requesting the following information:

*"Regarding the questions in your letter.
The question one, the answer would be both. Regarding question two, the answer is information relating to all personnel discharged."*

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 some information in scope of your request is held. However, I must advise you that we would not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit.

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

Some of the information you have requested is not held centrally as the medical condition is not recorded on the Armed Forces Pension Scheme register. We are therefore unable to identify

the number of rejected claims for Early Payment of Preserved Pension (EPPP) due to Multiple Sclerosis (MS) without exceeding the appropriate cost limit. In order to obtain this data, we would need to manually examine every claim made during this period to identify claims relating to MS and whether or not it was disallowed by the MOD Medical Adviser. During the period of 18 August 2020 and 28 December 2022 alone we recorded approx. 800 applications for EPPP. At 10 minutes per file this would involve in excess of 133 hours of effort, at £25 per hour, totalling approx. £3,325.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) it may be helpful if I explain that while we are unable to answer question three, we may hold information regarding the other parts of your request. Should you wish to submit a refined request we would be happy to consider 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,



Defence Business Services (Secretariat)