



Ministry of Defence

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16 February 2023

[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted],

Thank you for your email of 20 January 2023 in which you requested the following information:

How many OPD positions exist in the Regular Army at each rank from Pte to WO1.
How many vacancies (unfilled positions) exist at each rank?

Can you please provide the most recent promotion and LOS statistics for RAMC personnel within the ODP trade for male and female soldiers up to WO1.

Is it possible for ODPs to direct entry commission as a PQO? Which roles are available to them?

Can you please provide any policy documents pertinent to direct entry PQO commission from ODP

How many ODPs have applied for direct entry PQO position each year for the last 5 years?

Of those that have applied how many have been selected for commission and from what rank?

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

Due to the nature of the request, Section 26(1b) (Defence) has been engaged for part 1 of the request. As Section 26 is a qualified exemption, a Public Interest Test has been conducted. Though the public may appreciate transparency within the government, releasing detailed information about the number of posts alongside the strength within a regiment or department, broken down by rank, can allow adversaries to infer the Army's capability. As a result, the Ministry of Defence has chosen not to release all the information in relation to request part 1. Strength of ODPs in the Army has been provided, by rank, however Workforce Requirement (and therefore vacancies) has been withheld under Section 26.

Some information in part 4 of the request has been rounded to prevent the potential release of personal information. Section 40 of the FOIA provides that information is exempt from disclosure if it is personal data.

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



Army Policy Secretariat

Annex A

1. How many Operating Department Practitioners (ODP) positions exist in the Regular Army at each rank from Pte to WO1. How many vacancies (unfilled positions) exist at each rank?

Table 1: Trade Trained Regular Army RAMC ODPs Strength by Paid Rank as at 1 October 2022 (single Service estimate)

Paid Rank	Strength
Major (LE)	~
Captain (LE)	~
Warrant Officer Class 1	~
Warrant Officer Class 2	~
Staff Sergeant	5
Sergeant	20
Corporal	25
Lance Corporal	10
Private	5

Source: Analysis (Army) and Workforce Plans

2. Can you please provide the most recent promotion and LoS statistics for RAMC personnel within the ODP trade for male and female soldiers up to WO1.

Table 2: Average Years Length of Service (LoS) on Outflow for RAMC Other Rank ODPs from 1st October 2015 to 1st October 2022

	Average Years
Total Average	13
Male	15
Female	10

Source: Analysis (Army)

Table 3: Average Years Length of Service to Paid Rank Promotion⁴ for RAMC Other Rank ODPs from 1 October 2015 to 1 October 2022

Paid Rank Promoted to	Total Average Years	Male Average Years	Female Average Years
Warrant Officer Class 1	~	~	~
Warrant Officer Class 2	~	19	~
Staff Sergeant	17	16	18
Sergeant	10	9	10
Corporal	8	8	7
Lance Corporal	3	4	2

Note:

- Please note that these figures are not comparable with Career Progression figures published elsewhere. The averages below are based on very small numbers (in most cases, fewer than 20 individuals) over a seven-year period and therefore caution should be used if making decisions based on these figures as these averages may not be robust.

3. Is it possible for ODPs to direct entry commission as a PQO? Which roles are available to them?

- You may join the British Army as an ODP or as a Student to train to become an ODP as a Non-Commissioned Officer. Those ODP Non-Commissioned Officers or Professionally Qualified Soldiers (PQS) in service may Late Entry Commission as a Professionally Qualified Officer (PQO) ODP. In exceptional circumstances, where the workforce requirement allows it, and on successful completion of the PQO or Main Board Army Officer Selection Board, Army Medical Service Arm Selection Board and the approval of Hd Personnel Policy in Army Headquarters, may an OPD Direct Entry Commission from a Non-Commissioned Rank. This would be commissioned to the role of a PQO ODP.

4. Can you please provide any policy documents pertinent to direct entry PQO commission from ODP

- The Army Commissioning Regulations (2019) state:

4.7.001. The Army Medical Services has several specialities that provide Healthcare Support to the British Army outside those other PQO Cadres detailed in the previous Sections. These specialities are collectively known as Allied Health Professionals (AHP) (each overseen by their own governing body). There are 2 AHP groups when referring to the route for Commission:

a. Direct Entry / Reserve to Regular Transfer:

- (1) Pharmacists.
- (2) Physiotherapists.
- (3) Clinical Psychologists (refer to Chapter 4 Section 8).
- (4) Clinical Scientists (refer to Chapter 4 Section 9).

b. Late Entry / Reserve to Regular Transfer:

- (1) Bio-Medical Scientists (BMS).
- (2) Environmental Health Officers (EHO).
- (3) Operating Department Practitioners (ODPs).
- (4) Radiographers.

c. For those cadres that are restricted to Late Entry, there may be an option to Commission via the Direct Entry route, but this will only be by exception, where the workforce requirement allows it, and on successful completion of the PQO or Main Board AOSB, AMS ASB, the approval of Hd Pers Pol.

5. How many ODPs have applied for direct entry PQO position each year for the last 5 years?

- The number of ODPs that have applied for direct entry in the last 5 years is 0

6. Of those that have applied how many have been selected for commission and from what rank?

- As the answer to part 5 is 0, the number of those who have applied through DE and have been selected for commission is 0

- There have been fewer than 10 personnel who have commissioned to become an LE (Late Entry) officer from ranks Sergeant to Warrant Officer class 1 over the past 7 years.

Notes/Caveats to all figures:

1. Figures are for the Trade Trained Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, Army Reserve and all other Reserves, but includes those personnel that have transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP.

2. LoS has been calculated using entry date. There are known problems with the entry date information extracted from JPA which is supposed to reflect their 'current entry date' but if personnel have transferred to the Army from another Service, served under an alternative assignment type (e.g. reserve forces), are re-entrants or have transferred from Other Ranks to Officers, their entry date may correspond to any of these events. The resulting LoS may reflect their current period of service, include previous service, or it may be the time that has elapsed since they first joined the Armed Forces, irrespective of any break in service.

3. Please note that in Table 3 it is not possible to calculate the time taken to promote between Paid Ranks. LoS is LoS since entry into the Regular Army, not LoS since achieving the previous Paid Rank. These figures are not comparable with Career Progressions figures published elsewhere.

4. Average LoS has been rounded down to the nearest whole year, e.g. 5 years 11 months has been rounded down to 5 years.

5. Average LoS figures based on fewer than 5 individuals have been withheld in order to limit disclosure and ensure confidentiality. Total average LoS figures have been withheld where one subcategory has been withheld. Please note that, while figures have been provided where these are based on more than 5 individuals, these cannot be considered a robust average as some figures are based on very small numbers of individuals promoting over a seven year period (in most cases, fewer than 20) and caution should be used if making decisions based on these numbers.

6. ODPs are identified using Main Trade for Pay and includes Student ODPs.

7. The data have been rounded to the nearest 5 to limit disclosure and ensure confidentiality.

8. "~" fewer than 5 or an average based on fewer than 5 individuals and "-" denotes zero