



This annual bulletin provides summary statistics on claims, awards and recipients of pensions, allowances or other payments under the War Pension Scheme (WPS) between 2013/14 and 2022/23. The WPS is a no-fault scheme, which financially compensates for injury/illness and death caused by service in the UK armed forces from the start of the First World War in 1914 until 5 April 2005.

Key Points

As at 31 March 2023, there were



82,374 disablement pensioners and **10,583** war widows/widowers in receipt of a war pension.



Of which, **51% and 87%** respectively were of retirement age (65+).

Subsequently, **35%** of supplementary allowances were paid out in the form of age addition allowances.

During financial year 2022/23 there were

1,908 first disablement and **542** war widows'/widowers' claims cleared.

Of which, **72% & 43%** respectively were awarded compensation.

In 2022/23, the total disablement pension expenditure was **£462.0M** and the total war widow/widower expenditure was **£144.6M**.



Of the £462.0M, **£9.2M** was lump sum expenditure to compensate for mesothelioma.

On average it took



Almost eight months to clear first disablement claims, **two months** to clear war widows'/widowers' claims and **13 months** to clear appeals.

MOD has no control over the length of time it takes for a decision for an appeal to be made as appeal tribunals are independent.

COVID-19 affected operational delivery of the WPS in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as casework paused for a short period because it could not be delivered remotely. During 2021/22, the delivery of the WPS started to return to normal levels, and operational delivery was not materially impacted during 2022/23, except in some areas of external input where general resource shortages in services that began during COVID-19 are yet to fully recover.

Source: War Pension Computer System

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Background Quality Report:

[Statistics background quality report for the war pensions scheme](#)

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Other bulletins in this series and the supplementary tables in Excel format and in Open Document Spreadsheet format containing all data presented in this publication can be found in the [War Pensions Recipients Index](#).

National Statistics Status

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act of 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in November 2013 following a [compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation](#). The statistics last underwent a [full assessment against the Code of Practice](#) in 2012.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. Further details about how this report has been developed since its confirmation as National Statistics can be found in the [Background Quality Report](#).

Introduction

This Statistical Bulletin presents summary information on the War Pension Scheme (WPS) as at 31 March 2023. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is currently reviewing this publication with the intention to remove and reformat some of the tables in the Supplementary Tables, effective from 2024. The effected information has been clearly labelled in this Bulletin, the Supplementary Tables and on the [Gov.uk website page on the War Pension Scheme statistics](#).

The WPS provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005. The WPS is managed by the MOD with all compensation claims administered by Defence Business Services (DBS) Veterans UK.

Further information on the eligibility to claim, and the processing of WPS claims, can be found on the [Gov.uk website page on the War Pension Scheme](#).

These statistics have been provided in response to a high volume of requests for information about claims and awards under the scheme, and the number of individuals currently in receipt of a War Pension. These statistics are used by external organisations such as NHS trusts, local Government, and armed forces charities. This report is also used internally to aid work planning and policy development.

All tables provided in previous releases of this report have been updated with 2022/23 data and are available as separate Excel and Open Document Spreadsheet (ODS) files in the [War Pensions Recipients Index](#).

In addition to this statistical bulletin, the MOD also publishes annual statistics summarising MOD compensation payments under the;

- a) Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS): This scheme considers claims for compensation for injury, illness or death caused by service on or after 6 April 2005. Details of which can be found in the [AFCS Index](#).
- b) Common Law Compensation Scheme: This scheme considers claims or compensation based on whether the MOD has a legal liability to pay compensation. Where there is a proven legal liability, compensation is paid. The details of which can be found in the [MOD Compensation Claims Statistics](#).

Other related MOD and Other Government Department Official Statistics:

- c) Annual Location Statistics on the location of pension and compensation recipients can be found in the [Locations Report](#).
- d) A four-part publication on the size and socio-demographic characteristics of the UK armed forces veteran population residing in Great Britain. The last in the series was published in 2019 as the [Annual Population Survey](#).
- e) A two part publication which provided estimates on the size and socio-demographic characteristics of the working age (between 16 and 64 years of age) UK armed forces veteran population residing in England and Wales, and; comparisons to the general population in England and Wales using responses provided in the [2011 Census](#).
- f) A collection of publications and data from the Office for National Statistics related to characteristics of the UK armed forces veterans population using responses provided in the [2021 Census](#).

Registered Claims and Appeals

This section provides summary information on claims and appeals registered under the WPS during 2022/23, and trends over time.

Disablement claim: Registered by ex-UK armed forces personnel for injury/illness caused by service prior to 6 April 2005. Includes first and second/subsequent claims.

First disablement claim: There are two types of first claim; **current invaliding claims** are raised automatically following medical discharge for a pre-April 2005 injury or illness. All other first claims are classed as a **first claim to pension**.

Second/Subsequent disablement claim: Claimants can submit further claims if existing conditions worsen or they suffer the onset of new associated conditions following their first claim.

War widows'/widowers' claim: Registered by, and on behalf of, eligible spouses and partners following the death of a service person or veteran where the cause of death was attributed to service in the UK armed forces prior to 6 April 2005.

Supplementary Allowance claim: Pension recipients may claim for 'top-up' payments to provide financial support for a range of care needs, including additional costs associated with the burden of ageing and having a disablement.

Appeals: All claimants may lodge an appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their claim.

During 2022/23 there were:

6,358 Disablement claims registered by ex-UK armed forces personnel for compensation for service-attributable injury or illness. Of these,

**2,754 were first disablement claims, and
3,604 were second/subsequent disablement claims.**

Additionally, there were:

575 war widows'/widowers' claims registered to apply for compensation for service-attributable death.

1,645 supplementary allowance claims registered by disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers for additional financial support.

894 Appeals registered by disablement pension and war widow/ widower pension claimants, who were dissatisfied with the outcome of their claim.

Figure 1 shows an increase in the number of registered **disablement claims in the latest financial year compared to the previous financial year (23% increase from 5,150 in 21/22)**. This increase may represent continued return to normality following COVID-19, and is also likely to have been influenced by the new Digital Claim Form introduced for those wishing to submit a first claim under the WPS or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) from 7th November 2022, making it easier for individuals to submit claims. As at the end of March 2023 the digital submission rate was 68% of all first claim submissions to WPS and AFCS since the form's inception. The impact of the increase in cost of living over the financial year 2022/23 on personal finances may also have increased the likelihood of individuals submitting a claim, as well as increased coverage of veterans in the media, especially with recent major anniversaries of the Gulf (1991) and Falklands (1982) wars and Nuclear Test Veterans (1952). Registered war widows/widowers' claims, allowance claims and appeals all decreased, by 15%, 5% and 12% respectively, compared with the previous year, and this continues the general downward trend in claims over the 10-year period.

(Tables 1 and 2, Supplementary tables)

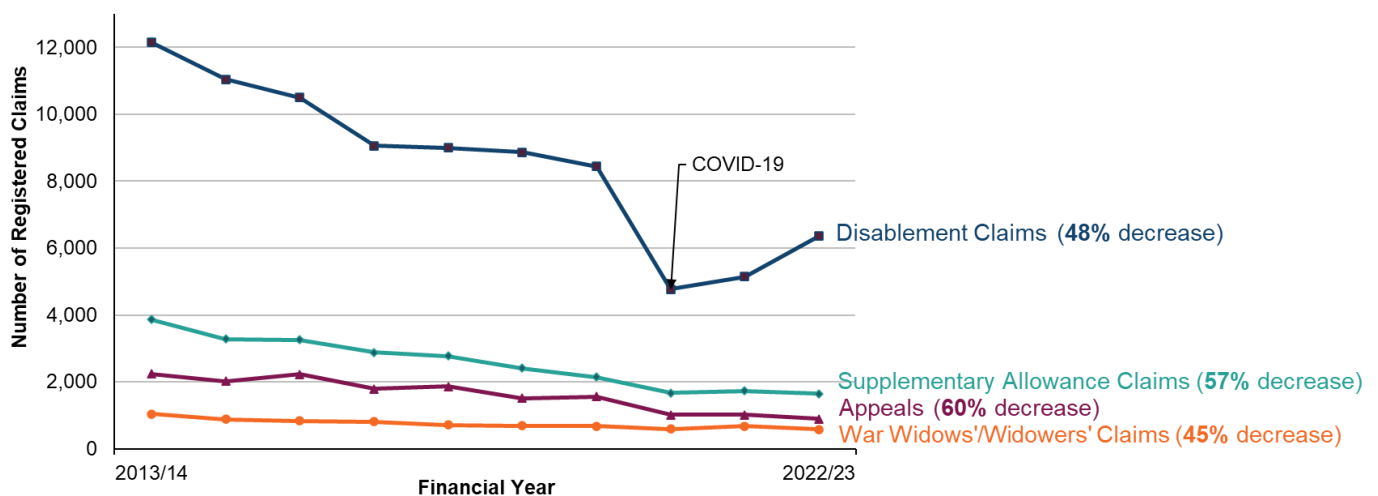
Source: War Pension Computer System

Registered Claims and Appeals (Cont.)

Between 2013/14 and 2019/20, the number of registered **disablement claims reduced by just under a third** (31% decrease from 12,149 claims in 2013/14) and the number of **war widows'/widowers' claims had reduced by over a third** (34% decrease from 1,038 claims in 2013/14). This is primarily the result of the ageing and declining second world war and national service populations, which means that the number of people available to claim is reducing year on year. Another factor that may be influencing this decline is the introduction of the AFCS on 6 April 2005, which took over the administration of compensation arrangements for service-attributable injury/illness and deaths on or after this date. Subsequently, the numbers of all other claim types have also reduced over this period.

Figure 1: War Pension Scheme claims registered, by claim type^{1,2} and financial year the claim was registered, numbers and percentage changes since 2013/14

1 April 2013 to 31 March 2023



Source: War Pension Computer System

1. Disablement claims include both first and second claims.
2. Includes appeals for all claim types.

Disablement and War widows'/widowers' claims have continued to be registered under the WPS since the introduction of the AFCS for the following reasons:

- Service personnel with a pre-April 2005 injury / illness are not able to claim for compensation under the WPS until they have left the UK armed forces, and there is no time limit for registration of first disablement claims.
- The WPS will consider compensating the widows/widowers of deceased ex-service personnel who were in receipt of specific War Pension arrangements at the time of their death (as detailed in the Background Quality Report).
- War widows'/widowers' claims are also still automatically generated for consideration under the WPS following a death in service, regardless of cause, if the service person joined the UK armed forces prior to 6 April 2005. Compensation will be awarded under the WPS if the cause of death was attributable to injury or ill health caused, or made worse by, service prior to this date. However, where cause of death is attributable to service post 6 April 2005, compensation will be awarded under the AFCS and the WPS claim will be rejected.

(Tables 1 and 2, Supplementary tables)

Source: War Pension Computer System

Clearance Times

This section provides summary information on the average (median) number of working days it took to clear claims and appeals registered under the WPS, as an indication of how long a claimant can expect to wait, on average, for a decision. Figures are presented for claims cleared in 2022/23, with trends over time. Note that clearance times for supplementary allowance claims have not been calculated as they include a wide range of care needs, from claiming for a refund on prescription glasses to more complex needs such as claiming for employability support.

During 2022/23;

First and second / subsequent disablement pension claims were cleared, on average, within **eight months** for both types of claim.

War widows'/widowers' claims were cleared, on average, in approximately **two months**.

Appeals took the longest average time to clear (approximately **13 months**), however it should be noted that the MOD have no control over the length of time it takes for a decision to be made as appeal tribunals are independent.

Clearance times are calculated as the number of working days between the date the claim/appeal was received by the MOD and the date a decision was made.

Figure 2: War Pension Scheme claim and appeal clearance times¹, by claim type and financial year cleared, median average, upper quartile and lower quartile²

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023



Source: War Pension Computer System

1. Appeals clearance times were calculated from date of appeal registration to date a decision was made by Tribunal, Ministry of Justice.

2. See 'Methodology' section for further information on the median and upper and lower quartiles.

(Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Clearance Times (Cont.)

During 2022/23;

First disablement pension claims and second/subsequent disablement claims were cleared, on average, within eight calendar months (165 and 168 working days respectively). During 2019/20, a procedure change required caseworkers to provide a greater depth of detail in their award notifications. This change in procedure, along with the impact of COVID-19 on administration of the WPS and ability to obtain medical evidence to inform decision making, may have contributed to the significant increase in the average claim clearance time in 2019/20 and 2020/21. Since then, the average claim clearance time has reduced to pre-pandemic levels for second/subsequent claims, and for 2022/23 reduced to below pre-pandemic levels for first claims. This may represent return to normality following COVID-19, including a clearing of the backlog of claims built up due to COVID-19, as well as being influenced by improvements in the way in which claims were processed at the initial stage. These improvements included reaching out for evidence sooner than was previously done, obtaining a factual report from the most appropriate member of the multidisciplinary primary care team rather than having to go through medical examination by the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments, and the introduction of an electronic logging system for claimant's files, which has streamlined the claims processing workflow. These factors may also have impacted in the reduction in spread in clearance times observed for second/subsequent claims in 2022/23 compared with the previous year, so that claims were generally more similar in the times taken to process them.

War widows'/widowers' claims were cleared, on average, in approximately two calendar months (38 working days). Widows'/widowers' claims took less time to clear, and the spread in clearance times was generally smaller, than for disablement claims. During 2022/23, the average clearance time significantly decreased from 63 to 38 working days, suggesting that processing times returned to normal levels following the increase due to COVID-19 observed during 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Appeals were cleared, on average, in approximately 13 calendar months (286 working days), which was a reduction in the average time taken to clear appeals compared with the previous year (Figure 2). The time taken for MOD to complete the first stage of appeal processing also decreased from within eight calendar months to within four calendar months (74 working days), which was due to a back-log of older appeals being reduced so that clearances were generally for more recent appeals. Following the first stage, appeals were heard at an independent Tribunal. The Tribunal stage of appeals processing took a similar time to the previous year at approximately 10 months on average. This suggests that this stage of the process may still be recovering from the effects of COVID-19 on evidence gathering and build up of appeals. The MOD has no control over the length of time it takes for evidence to be gathered and a decision to be made at the Tribunal. For further information on the Tribunal process, please see the Background Quality Report.

Note that during 2018/19, DBS Veterans UK experienced a lack of resourcing which partly led to increased clearance times for claims and appeals for 2018/19. Whilst resource stabilised, this continued to impact clearance times in 2019/20.

(Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Claim Outcomes

This section provides summary information on the outcomes of claims and appeals cleared under the WPS during 2022/23, and trends over time. The MOD is currently reviewing the publication with the intention of removing Supplementary allowance claim outcomes, effective from 2024.

Decisions are made following the advice of medical advisors on whether a claim is service-attributable.

First disablement claims, and second/subsequent claims determined to be service-attributable are awarded a disablement percentage between 0% and 100%:

- a) Those awarded at 20% - 100% are paid an ongoing war pension.
- b) Those awarded at 1% - 19% are paid a one-off gratuity (lump sum) payment.
- c) Service-attributable cases determined not to be severe enough to impact on daily life are awarded a nil (0%) award.

War widows'/widowers' claims are either awarded or rejected with successful widows/widowers paid an ongoing war pension. Claim outcomes for war widows'/widowers' do not reflect where a review has changed an initial decision.

Full details of rates payable under the scheme can be found on the [webpage for war disablement pension 2022 rates](#).

During 2022/23:

There were a total of **1,908** first disablement claims and **542** war widows'/widowers' claims cleared.

Just over 7 in 10 (72%) of all first disablement claims were awarded compensation (1,372) in the form of a gratuity payment or ongoing war pension

Just over 4 in 10 (42%) of Second/subsequent disablement claims were awarded compensation or resulted in an increased entitlement (1,186).

Just over 4 in 10 (43%) of war widows'/widowers' claims were successful (233).

Just under 6 in 10 (59%) of supplementary allowance claims were successful (895).

Just over one-third (35%) of all entitlement appeals were successful (125).

Annual numbers of cleared disablement pension claims have reduced, reflecting the general downward trend in annual numbers of registered claims over the past 10 years (Table 9, Supplementary tables). There was also an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on registered claims and staffing capacity during 2020/21 and 2021/22, while by 2022/23 the back-log of first disablement claims had largely cleared. Some resource has also been moved away from claim handling to other areas this year, such as the development of a new claim management system. These factors have resulted in a lower number of first disablement claims cleared in 2022/23.

The number of cleared war widows'/widowers' claims has decreased in 2022/23 compared with the previous year. During 2020/21, caseworkers working on these claims were involved with other tasks, which led to resource being moved away from widows/widowers' claims. In 2021/22, the team recovered its position which would have contributed to the increase in the number of claims cleared. During 2022/23 the number of claims cleared has lowered again in a return to normal following COVID-19 and the reduced number of registered war widows/widowers' claims during this year.

(Tables 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Claim Outcomes (Cont.)

The proportion of first disablement claims which were successful and the proportion awarded nil were consistent with the previous year (72% successful in 2022/23 compared with 71% in 2021/22; 17% awarded nil in 2022/23 compared with 18% in 2021/22). In 2021/22 there was a decrease in proportion of successful first disablement claims and increase in proportion awarded nil compared with 2020/21; these proportions have remained similar this year, and we will continue to monitor these. Success rates also vary across the different types of claims and appeals as they all have different eligibility criteria.

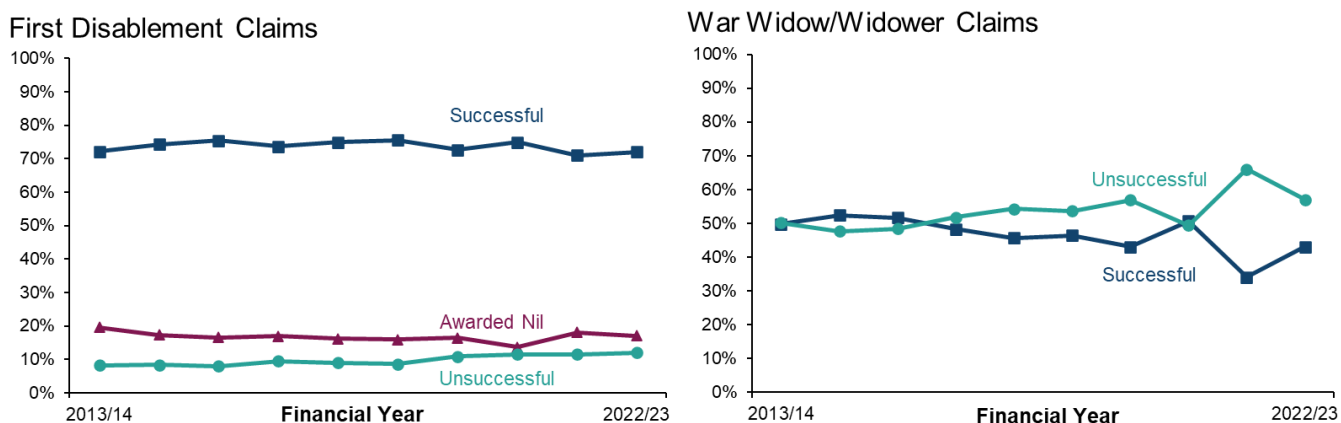
Just over 4 in 10 (43%) of war widows'/widowers' claims have been accepted during 2022/23 (Figure 3), an increase from 34% of claims being accepted during 2021/22. This is similar to the years prior to 2021/22.

Second disablement claims include claims for further conditions or deterioration of an existing condition. They also included reviews made by the MOD to assess whether the level of disablement has changed since the initial assessment was made. When individuals submit second/subsequent claims, a comparison is made between the condition of the claimant and the condition of a normal healthy person of the same age and gender. It is a current assessment and the decision is based on current medical evidence, therefore the pension awarded may be reduced in value. Note that only a small proportion (1%, n=27) of second/subsequent claims cleared during 2022/23 resulted in a reduced outcome.

Supplementary allowances each have their own eligibility criteria and decision-making process and therefore success rates varied considerably during 2022/23, for example 44% of claims for funeral expenses were successful compared with 76% of claims for unemployment supplement (Table 7, Supplementary tables).

Appeal success rates were generally lower than other claims (35%, n=125 of all entitlement appeals being allowed in 2022/23) since in most cases the original claim outcome resulted from a fair assessment (Table 13, Supplementary tables).

Figure 3: War Pension Scheme cleared claims by claim type^{1,2}, outcome^{3,4} and financial year the claim was cleared, percentages of cleared claims
1 April 2013 to 31 March 2023



Source: War Pension Computer System

1. Figures include first disablement claims only due to the complexity of second/subsequent claim outcomes.
2. Widows'/Widowers' claims figures exclude widows'/widowers' reviews.
3. Successful awards includes those awarded a gratuity payment (at 1-19%), a war pension (at 20-100%) or those with an unknown disablement percentage.
4. Nil awards are not applicable for war widows/widowers.

(Tables 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

War Pension Recipients

This section provides summary statistics on the numbers of disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers in receipt of an ongoing war pension as at 31 March each year, between 2014 and 2023. Demographic information is also presented for those in receipt of a pension as at 31 March 2023.

Disablement pensioners: Ex-UK armed forces personnel in receipt of an ongoing war pension for a service-attributable injury/illness at a disablement percentage of 20% or above.

War widows/widowers: Those in receipt of an ongoing war pension following the death of their partner or spouse caused, or substantially hastened, by service.

As at 31 March 2023, there were **82,374 disablement pensioners** in receipt of an ongoing war pension of which:

- 94% were male, and just over half (51%) were of retirement age (aged 65+).

As at 31 March 2023, there were **10,583 war widows/widowers** in receipt of an ongoing war pension, of which:

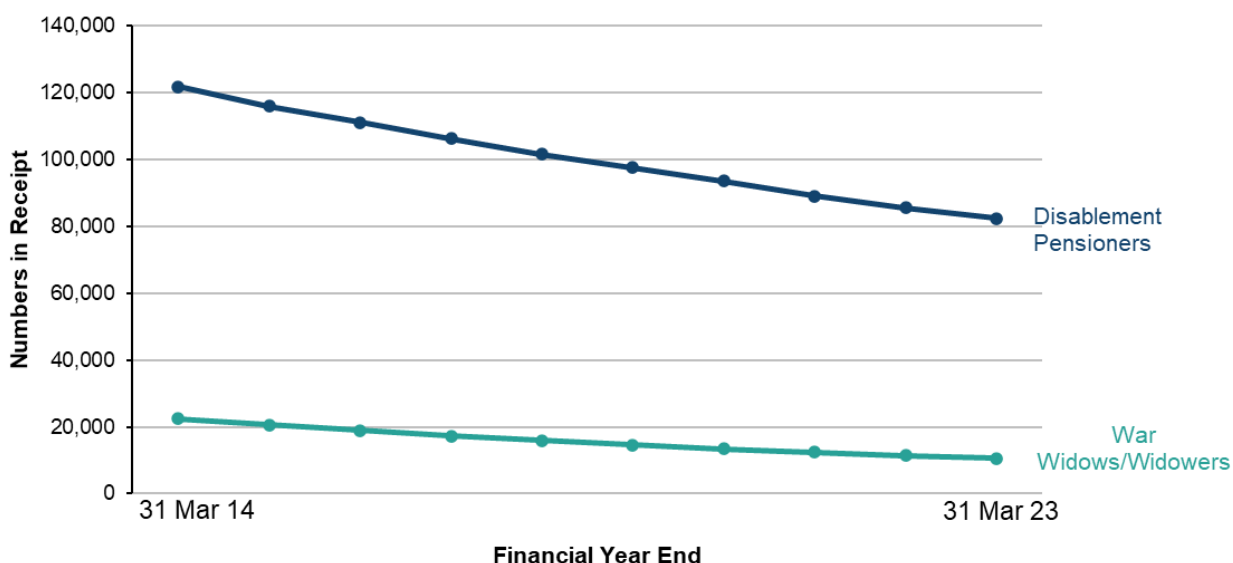
- Nearly all (>99%) were female, and 87% were of retirement age (aged 65+).

There was a 4% decrease in the total number of recipients from the previous year, which has been decreasing at a consistent rate each year since 2013/14.

Annual numbers of disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers in receipt of an ongoing pension under the WPS have consistently decreased by approximately 4 to 5% and by approximately 7 to 9% respectively each year since 31 March 2014 (Figure 4). This is the result of the number of pension recipients leaving the scheme each year remaining higher than the number of successful claimants entering the scheme. The main reason for the cessation of a pension was death (due to the age profile of disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers as discussed on page 11). Pensions may also cease for other reasons such as: failure to draw the pension for one year; refusal to undergo a medical examination or provide medical evidence; or imprisonment.

Figure 4: Disablement Pensioners and War Widows/Widowers in receipt of an ongoing pension, as at financial year end, numbers

As at 31 March 2014 to as at 31 March 2023



Source: War Pension Computer System

(Tables 14 to 20, Supplementary tables)

Source: War Pension Computer System

War Pension Recipients (Cont.)

Disablement Pensioners

The demographic profile of disablement pensioners was as follows:

- More than **9 in 10 (94%)** were **male**.
- Just over **half (51%)** were of **retirement age (65+)**.
- Over **one-quarter (28%)** were located in the **South East** and **South West** of England.
- Almost **two-thirds (65%)** were in receipt of a war pension at a disablement percentage between 20% and 30% (see box at the bottom of the page for an explanation of disablement percentages).

The demographic profile of disablement pensioners is in line with veteran findings in the [ONS England and Wales Census 2021](#), reporting that 86% of veterans were male, 53% of veterans were of retirement age, and [data from the ONS England and Wales 2021 Census](#) that showed that 31% of veterans in England and Wales were located in the South East and South West of England.

War Widows/Widowers

The demographic profile of war widows/widowers is as follows:

- More than **9 in 10 (>99%)** were **female**
- Almost **9 in 10 (87%)** were of retirement age (**65+**)
- Almost **one-third (32%)** were located in the **South East** and **South West** of England.

The age profile of War widows/widowers is driven by two factors:

- The high volume of older widows/widowers as a result of deaths during the Second World War, and subsequent [National Service](#) which ended in 1960.
- The introduction of the AFCS which has compensated for deaths attributable to time spent in service after 6 April 2005, resulting in fewer younger widows/widowers joining the WPS.

Disablement Percentage

20 least severe
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100 most severe

Using evidence supplied from the claimant and advice from medical advisors, Veterans UK will award claimants with severe enough disabilities a 'disablement percentage' ranging from 20% (least severe) to 100% (most severe).

(Tables 14 to 20, Supplementary tables)

Source: War Pension Computer System

Causes of Disablement

Due to continued external interest, this section provides information on awards made under the WPS for service-attributable mental health conditions and mesothelioma.

Information on injuries/illnesses is recorded on the War Pension Computer System (WPCS) in the form of a medical diagnosis code and a free-text medical diagnosis description. The code and description are based on the medical evidence and diagnosis obtained once a claim has been registered with DBS Veterans UK. Due to the free text nature of this information, it was not possible to provide a full summary of all injuries/illnesses that have been awarded compensation under the War Pension Scheme. However, records can be interrogated for specific condition(s).

Awards for mental health conditions

As at 31 March 2023:

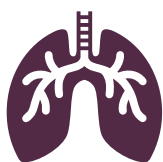


14,714 (18%) of disablement pensioners were in receipt of a War Pension for **mental disorders**.

Of which, **8,330** were specifically for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (**PTSD**). Awards made for mental health disorders are estimates, based primarily on a free-text search, and should be interpreted with caution. Information on the search terms used can be found on page 17 of this bulletin and in the Background Quality Report.

Awards for mesothelioma

Between 1 April 2016 (date of first payments) and 31 March 2023:



607 ex-service personnel diagnosed with mesothelioma had elected to receive the lump sum payment instead of receiving a regular disablement pension.

Since 16 December 2015, veterans who had been diagnosed with diffuse mesothelioma as a result of asbestos exposure through their service in the armed forces have been entitled to receive a lump sum payment of up to £140,000 instead of receiving an ongoing disablement pension. These payments started being paid from 1 April 2016. Further details on the introduction of these lump sum payments can be found in the Background Quality Report.

(Tables 21 and 21a, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Recipients of Supplementary Allowances

This section provides summary statistics on [disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers in receipt of supplementary allowances](#) as at 31 March 2023. Eligible disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers are able to claim for additional financial support for a range of care needs, including additional costs associated with the burden of ageing and having a disablement.

As at 31 March 2023:

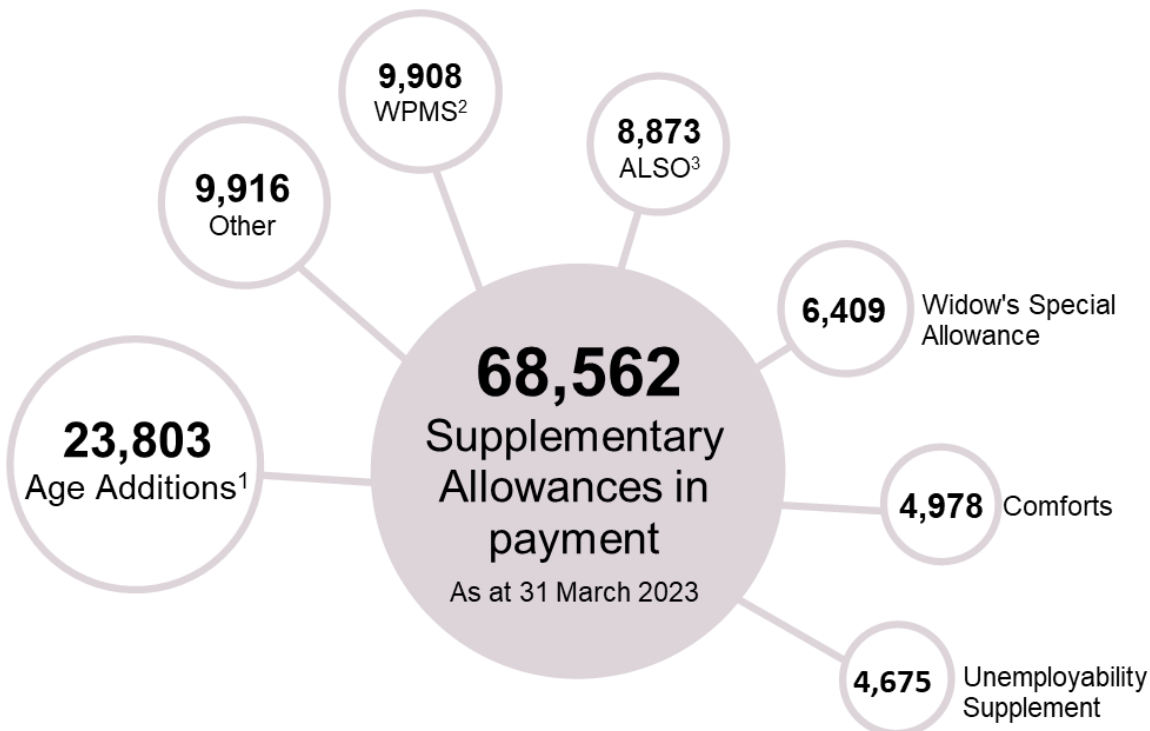
Age addition allowances made up over **one-third (35%)** of all supplementary allowances in payment, with over **8 in 10 (85%)** war widows/widowers and just under **2 in 10 (18%)** disablement pensioners in receipt of this allowance.

Pensioners are able to claim for multiple supplementary allowances and therefore may be in receipt of more than one allowance.

Age Addition Allowance: This is paid out from age 65 to disablement pensioners whose disablement is assessed at 40% or more. An Age 80 addition allowance is paid to all disablement pensioners aged 80 or over. The age allowances are made to help a pensioner cope with the increased costs associated with the burden of ageing and having a disablement, rather than any acceptance that the disablement worsens with age.

Figure 5: Supplementary Allowances in payment to Disablement Pensioners and War Widows/Widowers as at financial year end, numbers

As at 31 March 2023



Source: War Pension Computer System

1. Age Additions includes Age Addition Allowance and Age 80 Additions
2. WPMS stands for War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
3. ALSO stands for Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation

(Tables 22 and 23, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Expenditure

This section provides information on the financial expenditure under the War Pension Scheme during the past five financial years between 2018/19 and 2022/23.

In 2022/23, the total pension and supplementary allowances expenditure was **£606.5 million**.



Of which, **£462.0 million** was disablement pensioner expenditure and **£144.6 million** was war widows/widowers expenditure.

As at 31 March 2023, the total mesothelioma lump sum payment expenditure had been **£86.3 million** since its introduction on 16 December 2015. £9.2 million of this expenditure was accumulated during 2022/23 (this figure is included in the £462.0 million disablement pensioner expenditure).



As at 31 March 2023, the average weekly amount received by disablement pensioners was **£99.41** per week. This was compared to **£253.80** per week for war widows/widowers.

The average weekly amount received for disablement pensioners was lower compared to war widows/widowers. The majority of pensions in payment to disablement pensioners were at the lower disablement percentages, which equate to lower financial amounts compared to the standard war widows'/widowers' pension rate which compensates for service-attributable death.



The total **WPS expenditure decreased by 13%** over the last five financial years from £697.3 million in 2018/19 to £606.5 million in 2022/23. This reflects the decreasing numbers in receipt of a war pension and supplementary allowances.

In 2022/23, there was a **3%** decrease in the WPS expenditure from the previous financial year.

The financial information supplied by DBS Veterans UK is provided on an accrual basis. Expected expenditure is recorded when a claim is submitted and then later revised if this claim is withdrawn or rejected. Expenditure figures may therefore differ to the amount of actual monies paid out in a given time period, as they may include pending cases that are due to be paid but have not yet been paid or pending claims that go on to be rejected at a later date.

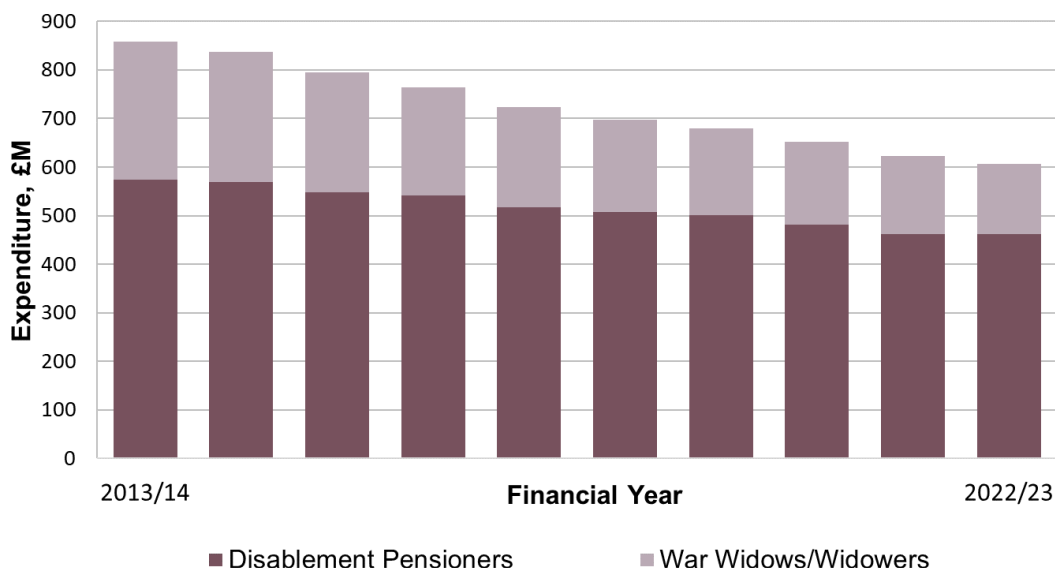
(Tables 23, 24 and 25, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Expenditure (Cont.)

Figure 6 shows the general decrease in both disablement pensioner expenditure and war widows/widowers expenditure over the previous 10 financial years, with an overall 20% decrease in disablement pensioner expenditure (from £574.2 million in 2013/14) and 49% decrease in war widows/widowers expenditure (from 284.7 million in 2013/14) between 2013/14 and 2022/23. This reflects the decrease in the number of disablement pensioner and war widows/widowers in payment (see page 10).

Figure 6: War Pension Scheme expenditure¹ by financial year, £M

1 April 2013 to 31 March 2023



Source: Veterans UK Finance Team

1. Disablement pensioners include gratuity payments and those who opted to take the mesothelioma lump sum payment.

(Tables 23, 24 and 25, Supplementary tables) **Source: War Pension Computer System**

Methodology

This section provides a brief summary of the methodology and data sources; more detailed information is available in the background quality report for this bulletin.

Data Sources

Figures presented in this bulletin were compiled from data stored on the War Pension Computer System (WPCS). Quarterly data extracts were received from the WPCS which were used to compile the figures provided. DBS Veterans UK were responsible for ensuring the quality of WPCS data supplied.

Annual data are received from DBS Veterans UK Finance Team which are used to report on financial expenditure under the WPS.

Annual figures are received from DBS Veterans UK for individuals who have opted to receive the mesothelioma lump sum payment, including the total expenditure under the scheme.

Data Coverage

The data presented include all regular and reserve ex-service personnel, war widows/widowers and other dependants (including adult dependants, children, unmarried dependants, war orphans, and war parents) who have claimed for compensation under the War Pension Scheme between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2023.

Note that recipients of the mesothelioma lump sum payment are additional to all other claimants of a disablement pension. These individuals are not recorded on the WPCS and are therefore not included within disablement pension figures presented.

A claimant was eligible for consideration under the WPS where disablement or death has occurred as a result of service in HM Forces, prior to 6 April 2005. In addition, awards may also be made where disablement or death has occurred as a result of:

- **War-time service in the Naval Auxiliary Service, or the Mercantile Marine.**
- **Service in the Polish Forces under British command during World War Two.**
- **A civilian or a member of a civil defence organisation was the direct result of an injury sustained as a result of enemy action in World War Two.**

Claims for injuries/illnesses as a result of service cannot be made until an individual has left the services.

Methodology (cont.)

Illnesses and injuries awarded under the WPS are recorded in both a free-text field and as a medical diagnosis code. To produce the figures for War Pensions in payment for mental health conditions, records with a medical diagnosis code 4000 to 4008, indicating a mental disorder, were identified. The free-text field was also searched for terms such as 'PTSD', 'psych', 'phobia', 'depression', 'adjustment', 'anxiety', 'panic', 'dysthymic', 'schizophrenia', 'mood disorder', 'substance abuse' and 'mania', as well as any probable misspellings or alternate spellings. To produce the figures for War Pensions in payment for PTSD, a medical diagnosis code of 4006 was used and the free-text field was searched for 'post traumatic stress', 'PTSD', or 'post-traumatic stress'. As conditions are sometimes spelt incorrectly it was possible that some records with reference to mental health have not been identified. Therefore, the figures supplied should be treated as a minimum.

Calculation of claim clearance times

Information on WPS claim clearance times has been presented as a median average with an inter-quartile range, rather than a mean average and standard deviation as these statistics were affected less by outliers. An outlier is an observation within a dataset that appears to be inconsistent with the remainder of the dataset.

- The median is the value in the center of the data set when they are arranged from smallest to largest.
- A quartile is any of three values (first/lower quartile, second quartile (median), third/upper quartile) that divides the sorted (from smallest value to largest value) dataset into four equal parts. The lower quartile (LQ) is the value that 25% of the values in the dataset will be below. The upper quartile (UQ) is the value that 75% of the values in the dataset will be below.
- The inter-quartile range (IQR) is the range in which the middle 50% of the data points fall (i.e. the distance between the lower and upper quartile). The longer the inter-quartile range the wider the spread of data.

Significance test

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to identify if there were significant differences between clearance times over time. The significance test provided confidence to state that an observed difference between the clearance times was a real difference and did not occur due to chance. A significance level of 0.05 has been used throughout this report.

Glossary

Adult Dependant: Adult relatives, i.e. sister, brother, aunt or uncle etc., for whom the service person was financially responsible.

Age 80 addition (NI) (Disablement & Widow/Widower): This may be paid to a war disablement pensioner and a war widow/widower aged 80 or over.

Age addition allowance: This may be paid to a war disablement pensioner who is aged 65 or over and whose disablement is assessed at 40% or more. A war widow/widower may receive an additional allowance at age 65 which is increased at age 70, and again at age 80.

Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation (ALSO): This may be paid if a disablement pensioner's earning capacity is reduced because their pensioned disablement permanently prevents them following their regular occupation. To gain entitlement new claimants must be under age 65, with a disablement percentage of at least 40%. This allowance plus their basic War Disablement Pension cannot exceed the 100% disablement pension rate.

Appeal: If a claimant is not satisfied with the outcome of any of their claims they may lodge an appeal to an appropriate Tribunal.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS): Compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve forces. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death attributable to service where the cause occurred on or after 6 April 2005.

Awarded 0%: The doctor may decide from the medical evidence that although the condition was caused by service or wartime experience, if it is not causing the person a problem at the moment then they will be awarded an assessment of nil.

Cleared Claim: A claim is classed as cleared when Veterans UK issue a letter to the claimant informing them of the outcome of their claim or appeal.

Comforts Allowance (COMF): This may be paid to a severely disabled pensioner who is receiving Constant Attendance Allowance or Unemployability Supplement or both. It is intended to help with the extra expenses associated with severe disablement.

DBS Veterans UK: Responsible for administering the armed forces pension and compensation schemes for those injured or bereaved through service.

Disablement pensioner: Ex-UK armed forces service personnel with an injury/illness as a result of service with a disablement percentage of 20% or above.

Disablement Percentage: First and second/subsequent claims are assessed by a doctor, who then gives a percentage of up to 100% dependent on how disabled the person is.

Gratuity Payment: If a disablement is assessed at less than 20%, personnel are paid a lump sum called a gratuity. The amount depends on the extent of the disablement and how long the person is likely to be disabled.

Glossary (Cont.)

Registered Claim: A claim is classed as registered when Veterans UK begin a workflow on the War Pension Computer System (WPCS) for a claim.

Second/Subsequent Claim: Collective title for claims submitted at a later date following their initial claim. These include:

Conditional list review: These cases arise because DBS Medical Services have previously made an interim assessment for a limited period because the level of disablement was likely to change. A review date is calculated so that disablement can be reassessed before the given period expires.

Departmental review: A review can be carried out to reassess a case when a condition has been rejected and an award for a war pension has not been made.

Deterioration claims: An application can be made to increase a war pension if an accepted condition has worsened, or, if another condition has made the accepted war pension disablement worse.

Further condition claims: Disablement pensioners who already have entitlement to a war disablement pension can claim for an additional medical condition.

Supplementary Allowance: Everyone in receipt of a War Pension can claim for extra allowances to help with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability.

Tribunal: Tribunals hear appeals from all claimants who have disagreed with the decision made by Veterans UK on the outcome of their claim. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Pensions Appeal Tribunal operates, and in England and Wales, appeals are heard at the First-tier Tribunal (War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber). The Upper-tier Tribunal (Administrative Appeals Chamber) hears appeals against decisions made by the First-tier and Pensions Appeal Tribunals.

Unmarried Dependant: Partner who lived with the ex-service person for at least 6 months before his enlistment, was maintained by him and who has borne his child.

War Orphan: Child of deceased service person who has no surviving mother or father. Child whose mother was divorced from a service person at the time of death. Child who is not in the care of the surviving parent.

War Parent: Parent of the deceased service person.

War Pension Scheme (WPS): No fault compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve force. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death caused or made worse by service from WW1 in 1914 to 5 April 2005. Ex-service personnel are only eligible to claim once they've left the services.

War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS): This is intended to help with the mobility costs of a pensioner who is unable to walk, or virtually unable to walk. New claimants must have a service disablement of at least 40%. It is paid to double amputees and to those pensioners who need help getting about because they are both deaf and blind as a result of their pensioned disablement.

War widow/widower: Spouse of ex-service person whose death was whilst in service or related to a disablement due to service prior to 6 April 2005.

Glossary (Cont.)

War widows'/widowers' review: A review can be carried out where there is further evidence which could change the outcome of a claim.

War widow's/widower's Special Allowance: This is a Supplementary Pension payable to "pre-1973 war widows/widowers" (the widows/widowers of service personnel who died or left the services before 31 March 1973, and who did not benefit from the improvements made from that date to the MOD's Armed Forces Pension Scheme).

Working day: Any day in which legal business can be conducted. In this report a working day is any day apart from a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday

For further definitions please see [Background Quality Report](#).

Further Information

Symbols

[c]	Suppressed (greater than zero but fewer than 3, or secondary suppression – see disclosure control note for details)
[r]	Revised
[p]	Provisional
	Break in series
Q1	1 April to 30 June
Q2	1 July to 30 September
Q3	1 October to 31 December
Q4	1 January to 31 March

Disclosure Control

In line with the directives of the JSP 200, disclosure control is conducted on all statistical information provided by the MOD to safeguard the confidentiality of individuals. Within these statistics, a risk of disclosure has been considered to be high where numbers presented are fewer than three. In cases where a risk of disclosure exists, one of two appropriate disclosure control methods have been applied:

Figures have been suppressed: In most cases where there may be a risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than three have been suppressed and marked as '[c]'. Where there was only one cell in a row or column that was fewer than three, secondary suppression has been applied so that numbers cannot be derived from totals or subtotals. In most cases the secondary suppression has been applied to the next smallest figures.

Figures have been grouped: Where there is a risk of disclosure, relevant categories across columns or rows have been grouped in order to present larger numbers. This method of suppression has been applied to Tables 14, 18, 19 and 20 of the Supplementary tables.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five: In cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being 'hidden' as a result of secondary suppression and it has not been possible to group columns and/or rows, figures have been rounded to the nearest five. This method of suppression has been applied to Tables 7, 10, 12 and 18 in the Supplementary tables. Figures have been rounded individually, meaning totals may not be equal to the sum of their components. Where figures have been rounded to the nearest five in Supplementary tables, rounded figures are also presented in the bulletin.

Revisions

The figures reported for each quarter are based on the WPCS data extract as at the end of each quarter and will be correct as at the time each extract was taken. Previous years/quarters are not recalculated and therefore any update to claim information made on the WPCS after each quarterly snapshot will not be reflected in the report.

Historical data will only be revised if errors are found in the data processing or statistical methods used during their publication. If an error was found all historical data would be revised, based on the quarterly snapshots of data, and Defence Statistics will highlight the error and the impact on the numbers presented.

Scheme information

Further information on the WPS and other MOD compensation schemes can be found on the Gov.UK website at [WPS and AFCS](#) as well as in the [Common law compensation](#).

Further Information (Cont.)

Contact Us

Defence Statistics welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Ministry of Defence. For more information, see: [Link to government page with information on Freedom of Information requests](#).

Other contact points within Defence Statistics are:

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