



Ministry of Defence

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31 January 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 06 January 2023 in which you requested the following information:

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to ask that you provide me with the following information:

1. *The current Royal Engineers (RE) Geographic (Geo) Trade Group Establishment for Other Ranks (ORs).*
2. *The current Trade Trained Strength for Regular RE (Geo) ORs by rank.*
3. *The total number of Regular RE (Geo) ORs currently holding a permanent medical grading of MLD or MND. If possible, could this be shown by rank and medical grading.*
4. *During the last three promotion years, how many:*
 - *Regular RE (Geo) WO2s were promoted to WO1 rank. If possible, could this be shown by medical grading (MFD/MLD/MND).*
 - *Regular RE (Geo) SSgts were promoted to WO2 rank. If possible, could this be shown by medical grading.*
 - *Regular RE (Geo) Sgts were promoted to SSgt rank. If possible, could this be shown by medical grading.*
5. *How many RE (Geo) soldiers were awarded VEng (Long) engagements from 2018 to 2021. If possible, could this be shown by 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 some of this information is held below in Annex A.

Due to the nature of the request, Section 26(1b) (Defence) has been engaged for request parts 1 and 2. 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, 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 the information in relation to request part 1 and not to breakdown the information in part 2 of your request by rank.

In regard to request parts 3, 4 and 5, please be advised that Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In line with JSP200 Statistics Disclosure Guidance, numbers fewer than five are suppressed to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is, therefore, no requirement to consider the public interest in deciding to withhold the information.

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

2. The trade trained strength of the Corps of Royal Engineers (RE) Geographic Technician (Geo) is 414. Any further breakdown by rank is withheld under section 26 (Defence).

3. The number of UK Regular trade trained RE Geo Other Ranks (soldiers) Army personnel as at 1 October 2022 broken down who were permanently downgraded by MDS and rank.

- As of 1 October 2022, 31 UK regular trade trained RE Geo army soldiers had a permanent medical deployment standard (MDS) of medically limited deployable (MLD) or medically not deployable (MND). Under Section 40 of the FOIA, the breakdown by permanent MDS has not been provided as the number of personnel with an MDS of MND was less than 5.

Table 1: UK Regular RE Geo Army¹ soldiers with a permanent MDS of either MLD or MND by rank, numbers

Rank	n
Total	31
Warrant Officer Class 1	~
Warrant Officer Class 2	7
Staff Sergeant	~
Sergeant	8
Corporal	~
Lance Corporal	~
Private	~

Source: DMICP & JPA.

¹ UK regular trade trained army RE Geo soldiers, excludes officers.

~ In line with JSP 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed.

4. Trade Trained Regular Paid Rank RE GEO Promotions from Sergeant, Staff Sergeant and Warrant Officer Class 2, by MDS in Financial Years 2019/20 to 2021/22

Paid Rank Promoted from	Total	Medical Deployment Standard		
		MFD	MLD	MND
Total	60	45	10	5
Warrant Officer Class 2	10	5	~	~
Staff Sergeant	25	15	5	~
Sergeant	30	20	~	~

5. The number of Trade Trained Regular Engagement conversions to VEng (Long) for RE GEO Other Ranks in Financial Years 2018/19 to 2021/22 was 7.

Background Notes/Caveats

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. Figures exclude personnel serving in Senior Soldier Continuity Posts.
3. Question 4 figures represent all those RE GEO Sgts, SSgts and WO2s who promoted to SSgt, WO2 and WO1 respectively.
4. Question 4 figures represent personnel who have promoted from the RE GEO Main Trade for Pay. MDS is the standard that was assigned to personnel as at the 1st of the month in the month that they received their Paid Rank promotion.
5. If personnel promoted multiple times during Financial Years 2019/20 to 2021/22, each promotion will be counted.
6. Service personnel with medical conditions or fitness issues which affect their ability to perform their duties will generally be referred to a medical board for a medical examination and review of their medical grading. The patient may be downgraded, to allow for treatment, recovery and rehabilitation. The Medical Deployment Standard awarded can be on a temporary or permanent basis. The definitions of Medical Deployment Standard (MDS) categories are as follows:
 - Medically Fully Deployable (MFD): Personnel medically fit for duty with no employment limitations.
 - Medically Limited Deployable (MLD): Personnel medically fit for duty with minor employment limitations. MLD personnel may have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all Medically Fully Deployable (MFD) requirements.
 - Medically Not Deployable (MND): Personnel medically fit for duty with major employment limitations. MND personnel are not fit to deploy on Operations but may be deployable on UK based exercises and should be able to work effectively for at least 32.5 hours per week.

When a Medical Board awards a MDS of MLD or MND, a decision is made as to whether the MDS is a temporary or permanent. The maximum period of validity of a temporary MDS is 12 months for the Army. A permanent marker does not imply that the MDS can never change; it is intended to assist personnel staff involved with employment decisions by distinguishing the longer term health problems from the relative short term ones.

Information was derived from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP). DMICP has a centralised data warehouse of Read coded information. It is the source of electronic, integrated healthcare records for primary healthcare and some MOD specialist care providers from which searches can be run.

Please note that if information was entered as free text in the patient record then it was not available in the DMICP data warehouse and was not retrieved using the search for Read codes. DMICP is a live data source and is subject to change.

Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) is the most accurate source for demographic information for UK armed forces personnel and was used to gather information on a person's service and rank.

7. Question 5 figures represent RE GEO personnel who have successfully changed their engagement to VEng (Long).

8. Question 4 figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 to limit disclosure and ensure confidentiality.

9. Question 4 totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

10. "~" denotes fewer than 5 and "-" denotes zero.