



Ministry
of Defence

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FOI2023/07886, FOI2023/09577
[REDACTED]

29 August 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 26 June 2023 requesting the following information:

"I am conducting research on the number of service personnel with stoma's. I would like to submit a FOI request to find out the total number of currently serving personnel who have either an ileostomy or colostomy?

Also can I get the number of personnel who have been medically discharged in the last 5 years due to having an ileostomy or colostomy."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

As at 1 June 2023 there were **39** currently serving UK armed forces personnel with a Read code for an ileostomy or a colostomy entered into their electronic medical record.

Please note, the figures provided are for personnel who have **ever** had a Read code for an ileostomy or a colostomy entered into their electronic medical record. It is not possible to identify personnel that currently have an ileostomy or a colostomy because this would require a clinical review of the medical records to determine whether the procedure has been reversed, which would exceed the FOI cost limit.

Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2023 **there were no** UK regular armed forces personnel medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of an ileostomy or a colostomy.

Please note, surgical procedures (e.g. ileostomy/colostomy) are not typically listed as principal or contributory causes of medical discharge, this is because causes are more likely to be recorded as the underlying medical conditions (e.g. disease or disorder) resulting in discharge.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it useful to note:

Ileostomy and colostomy Read codes

Currently serving personnel include all UK armed forces regular and reservist, trained and untrained personnel. This does not include entitled or non-entitled civilians, foreign service or non-UK military.

Reservist personnel have been included. However, the requestor should please note that the majority of reservist personnel receive their primary medical care from the NHS. Any personnel who were only seen by the NHS regarding these procedures and have not informed the MOD were not included in the figures presented for the number of personnel with a Read code entered into their military medical record.

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 for Read codes can be run.

Defence Statistics Health are only able to identify cases when a Read code has been entered into the electronic patient record. 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.

The following Read codes were used to identify personnel who have had an ileostomy or a colostomy:

Read code	Description
7645	Creation of ileostomy
77112	Total colectomy and ileostomy NEC
77173	Colectomy and ileostomy NEC
14U2	H/O: ileostomy
14U3	H/O: colostomy
7645y	Other specified creation of ileostomy
771B-1	Colostomy
771Bz	Other exteriorisation of colon NOS
ZV442	[V]Has ileostomy
ZV443	[V]Has colostomy

DMICP is a live data source and is subject to change. Date of extract 3 August 2023.

Medical Discharges

Medical discharge figures presented are for UK Regular personnel (including Gurkhas and MPGS). Reservist personnel have not been included.

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc.) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the armed forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the armed forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

Medical discharges due to colostomy or ileostomy were identified as personnel who were discharged with a principal or contributory cause coded as Z933 or Z433 (colostomy), or Z932 or Z432 (ileostomy) in the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10).

Principal condition is the first principal ICD 10 code on the medical discharge documents (FMed 23). Contributory cause contains all other principal conditions and any contributory conditions on the medical discharge paper (FMed 23).

Information on medical discharges was sourced from electronic medical records (DMICP) and manually entered paper documents (FMed 23s). The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting are secondary functions.

Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) is the most accurate source for demographic information for UK Armed Forces personnel and was used to gather information on when an individual was serving.

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK armed forces as an Official Statistic publication. The last statistical release was on 13 July 2023 which presented data up to 31

March 2023. The latest report can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk.

Please note, Defence Statistics Health conduct regular data validation and methodology reviews to improve accuracy of reported figures. Therefore, information presented in this response may differ from previously released figures.

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 Statistics Health (Analysis Directorate)