



Ministry  
of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4U

Ref: FOI 2023/10955

5 October 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence on 6 August 2023 requesting the following information:

- 1) *Over the last five years, how many intelligence officer university bursaries have been given out for each FY or recruiting year?*
- 2) *Over the last five years, how many intelligence officer places have been given to direct entrants or current serving personnel or each FY or recruiting year?*
- 3) *Over the last five years, how many people have applied for intelligence officer, please split down into entry route (bursary, DE, etc...) for each FY or recruiting year?*
- 4) *Over the last five years, how many people have gone to OASC for intelligence officer? Please split into the number successful/unsuccessful and for each FY or recruiting year.*
- 5) *How many people are currently waiting to start MIOT for intelligence officer for any route (bursary, DE, etc...)? Please split down per route.*

In your further e-mail on 7 September 2023 in response to being advised that the above exceeded the Section 12 (Cost Compliance) limit you provided the following:

*Please take this message as a request to change question three to the following:*

*Over the last five years, how many people have applied for intelligence officer, please split down into for each FY or recruiting year?*

*Please can you also answer Q1, Q2, Q4 & Q5.*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for this information has now been completed and information in scope of your request is held.

Questions 1 and 5

I can advise that information in scope of your request for questions 1 and 5 falls entirely within the scope of the exemption Section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld. Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40(2) requires the Department to conduct a balancing exercise; this exercise involves balancing the rights

and interests of individuals against the legitimate interests in disclosure. This is not the same as carrying out the public interest test associated with certain exemptions in FOIA. The balancing exercise is carried out in order to decide whether the exemption in section 40(2) is engaged. In particular, there is no assumption of disclosure in the legitimate interest test, as there is with qualified exemptions. The outcome of the balancing exercise lay in withholding all data for questions 1 and 5 as the numbers were equal or less than 5 and could identify individuals.

## Question 2

Some information relating to question 2 has been withheld under Section 21 of the FOI Act, as it is available to you by other means.

For information for Financial Year (FY) 2018/2019 please see Table 1 in the Annual Compendium of Royal Air Force (RAF) Manpower Statistics as at 1 April 2019, available at the below link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/889313/FOI2020.01850.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/889313/FOI2020.01850.pdf)

For information for FY2019/2020 please see Table 1 in the Annual Compendium of RAF Manpower Statistics as at 1 April 2020, available at the below link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964979/FOI2021.00677.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964979/FOI2021.00677.pdf)

Information relating to question 2 for FY2020/2021, FY2021/2022 and FY2022/2023 falls entirely within scope of the qualified exemption Section 26 (1)(b) (Defence) of the FOIA.

A Public Interest Test has been conducted against this exemption to determine whether in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweigh the public interest in disclosure. I have found that, under Section 26 (1)(b), the balance lies in favour of withholding the information relating to the intake of RAF Intelligence Officers. Release of any information relating to the intake of any sensitive Profession of the RAF could be used to derive tactical level information regarding the UK Armed Forces assessment of current and future threats and ii) current and planned responses to these threats and the level of personnel required to do so. As such, this may provide tactical advantage to hostile forces causing operational and personnel security risks. Consequently, this information has been withheld.

Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) – while information has previously been released it may be helpful if I explain that each FOI request is assessed at the time it is submitted considering a variety of factors, including the current threat and risk factors, when making those assessments.

## Question 3

Information on the number of Regular RAF Intelligence Officer applicants, is provided in the table below:

	<b>FY 2018/2019</b>	<b>FY 2019/2020</b>	<b>FY 2020/2021</b>	<b>FY 2021/2022</b>	<b>FY 2022/2023</b>
<b>Applicants</b>	1444	1412	1257	552	682

Question 4

Information relating to the number of Regular RAF Intelligence Officer Applicants who attended the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC), is provided in the table below.

	<b>FY 2018/2019</b>	<b>FY 2019/2020</b>	<b>FY 2020/2021</b>	<b>FY 2021/2022</b>	<b>FY 2022/2023</b>
<b>Attended OASC</b>	73	90	38	54	80

Success has been interpreted as being offered a place on Modularised Initial Officer Training and is linked to the intake of new RAF Intelligence Officers. Therefore, the Public Interest Test conducted on Question 2 also applies to information on those candidates who have been successful at the OASC and has been withheld under Section 26 (1)(b).

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

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail: cio-foi@mod.uk). Please note that any reason for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint 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 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 Commissioners website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed electronically]

Air Command Secretariat