



Ministry  
of Defence

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Ref: FOI 2024/01059

7 February 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email from 17 January 2024 requesting the following information:

“Please may I request the statistics on then following questions regarding specific medication use in the military:

1. The number of serving personnel who have had prednisolone prescribed during service?
2. How many times these serving personnel had been prescribed this in service?
3. The number of serving personnel who have had budesonide prescribed during service?
4. How many times these serving personnel had been prescribed this in service?
5. The number of serving personnel who have had dexamethasone prescribed during service?
6. How many times these serving personnel had been prescribed this in service?
7. The number of serving personnel who have had oral steroids (corticosteroid tablets) prescribed during service more than, 5 or more times, and remain Medically Fully Deployable?
8. The number of Royal Marines who have had dexamethasone, budesonide, or prednisolone prescribed during service and remain Medically Fully Deployable?
9. The number of Royal Marines who have had oral steroids (corticosteroids) prescribed more than, 5 or more times, during *service and remain Medically Fully Deployable?*”

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

The Ministry of Defence requires further information in order to determine whether it holds any information within the scope of your request.

Due to the complexity of the FOI questions there are a number of points we require clarification on in order to determine whether the questions can be answered:

1. The medications that you have specified in your request are available in a range of preparations, each of which are used to treat different medical conditions. All preparations other than oral are for specific localised inflammatory conditions e.g. inhaled forms are for inflammatory lung disease (asthma or COPD), rectal forms are for inflammatory conditions of the bowel (such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's). Please see the full list of preparations

for each of the medications requested. Please could you specify which of these you require to be included in the FOI response? Also, regarding your questions on corticosteroids (parts 7 and 9 of the FOI) do you only require information on corticosteroid tablets or all corticosteroids?

Prednisolone	Oral: tablets: 500microgram, 1mg, 2mg, 2.5mg, 3mg, 4mg, 5mg, 10mg, 25mg, 30mg. soluble tablets: 5mg. Gastro-resistant tablets: 1mg 2.5mg 5mg, dilacort. Oral solution: 5mg/5ml solution Eye/ear drops: 0.5%, 0.5% minims/unit dose vials, predforte 1% eye drops Rectal: 5mg suppositories, 20mg/100ml rectal solution, 20mg/application foam enema.
Budesonide	Oral: Jorvesa 0.5mg & 1mg orodispersibel tablets, cortiment 9mg modified release tablets, 3mg gastro-resistant modified release capsules, Entocort 3mg capsules, budenofalk 3mg gastro-resistant capsules, budenofalk 9mg gastro-resistant granules sachets Inhaled / respiratory: budesonide inhalers: easyhaler, Pulmicort, budelin novolizer, budesonide nebuliser liquid, Pulmicort respules Rectal: entocort 2mg/100ml enema, budenofalk 2mg/application foam enema. Nasal: 64 microgram/dose nasal spray, Aircort 100 microg, Budeflam aquanase.
Dexamethasone	Oral: tablets: 500microgram, 2mg, 4mg. Soluble tablets: 2mg, 4mg, glensoludex 2mg, 4mg, 8mg, 10mg, 20mg. Oral solution: 2mg/5ml, 10mg/5ml, 20mg/5ml. Parenteral (injection): 3.3mg/1ml, 6.6mg/2ml, 3.8mg/ml Eye drops: Dexafree, 0.1% eye drops, Dropodex 0.1%, Eythalm 1mg/ml, Maxidex 0.1%, 0.1% unit dose vials (minims), puradex 1mg/ml, Etacortilen 1.5mg/ml Implant: ozurdex 700microgram intravitreal implant
Oral corticosteroids	Betamethasone: 500microg soluble tablet Dexamethasone: as above Fludrocortisone: 100microg tablet. Hydrocortisone: 2.5mg, 5mg, 10mg, 15mg, 20mg. Hydventia 20mg. 10mg soluble tablets. 2.5mg muco-adhesive buccal tablets. Plenadren 5mg & 20mg modified release tablets. Efmody 5mg & 10mg modified release capsules. Prednisolone: as above

2. You refer to 'serving' personnel' in your FOI request. Do you mean:

- a. currently serving personnel, or
- b. personnel who have ever served?

Please note that centrally held personnel data is only held from 2007 onwards, and centrally held medical data is only held from 2010 onwards.

3. Regarding parts 7 and 9 of the FOI where you request information on personnel prescribed oral steroids five or more times, please could you give us more detail on what you require. For example are you interested in:

- a. Personnel who have been prescribed oral steroids five or more times consecutively/within a certain period of time, or
- b. Personnel who have been prescribed oral steroids five or more times ever?

Please note that it is not possible from centrally held medical data to identify the reason for a prescription, and therefore it is also not possible to identify individual episodes of care or continuous treatment pathways.

4. Regarding parts 7, 8 and 9 of the FOI, where you request information on personnel prescribed oral steroids/dexamethasone/budesonide/prednisolone who 'remain Medically Fully Deployable', do you mean:

- a. Personnel who are currently graded as MFD (or for those who have left service their latest grading was MFD), or

- b. Personnel who were graded MFD in the month immediately following the date of their latest prescription, or
- c. Personnel who remained MFD every month between their first and last prescription?

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

Defence Statistics Health compile data from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) data warehouse. DMICP has a centralised data warehouse of coded information. It is the source of electronic, integrated healthcare records for primary healthcare and some MOD specialist care providers. DMICP was rolled out in 2007 and legacy medical data for currently serving personnel was migrated across during rollout.

Please note that Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. A request for information not available in the centrally held data would require a manual search and review of records, which may exceed cost under the FOIA.

Once you have clarified your request, I will be pleased to consider it again.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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](mailto: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