



Ministry  
of Defence

Ministry of Defence  
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Ref: FOI2024/01157

E-mail: Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk

13 February 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 18 January 2024 requesting the following information:

“By year (2010-present) and by service branch please provide data on:

- The total number of armed forces personnel deemed unfit for active service as a result of enemy action.
- The total number of armed forces personnel deemed unfit for active service as a result of oral diesel (dental caries or dental abscesses). “

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 information in scope of your request is held. However, I must advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit. Prior to 1 May 2014 cause of downgrading was not captured centrally in the electronic patient record and therefore it would require a clinician to review individual medical records to identify the medical cause required to answer question two. This would take over seven years of effort.

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.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note the following:

Service personnel with medical conditions or fitness issues which affect their ability to perform their duties are referred to a medical board for a medical examination and review of their medical grading. Information on the medical cause relating to their medical grading is centrally compiled since May 2014. The circumstances in which an injury occurred is not captured in relation to the medical grading review.

The MOD may consider providing the following information which is in scope:

The number of UK full time trained (trained Royal Navy/RAF and trade trained Army) armed forces personnel as at 1 October 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 with a medical deployment status of Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) or Medically Not Deployable (MND) where the principal cause of downgrading was oral disease and of which dental caries or dental abscess’.

You may also find it useful to note the following:

## Casualties

The following official statistics and links include information regarding the numbers of armed forces and civilian personnel injured on operations as a result of enemy action.

### **Afghanistan (Op HERRICK)**

The number of UK military and civilian casualties and fatalities that occurred on operations in Afghanistan between 7 October 2001 and 28 February 2015 is available via the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/op-herrick-casualty-and-fatality-tables-index>

The types of injuries sustained by UK service personnel on operations in Afghanistan between 1 April 2006 and 30 November 2014 is available via the gov.uk website: [Types of injuries sustained by UK service personnel on operations in Afghanistan \(Op Herrick\) 1 April 2006 to 30 November 2014 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/types-of-injuries-sustained-by-uk-service-personnel-on-operations-in-afghanistan-op-herrick-1-april-2006-to-30-november-2014)

Statistical information on UK military patients that were very seriously injured (VSI) or seriously injured (SI) on Op HERRICK, Afghanistan between 8 October 2007 and 30 September 2015 is available via the gov.uk website: [Op Herrick \(Afghanistan\) very seriously injured and seriously injured tracking: index - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/op-herrick-afghanistan-very-seriously-injured-and-seriously-injured-tracking-index)

### **Current Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ)-led operations**

The number of UK military and civilian casualties and fatalities that have occurred on current PJHQ-led operations can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-and-uk-civilian-operational-casualty-and-fatality-statistics>

## Medical Downgrading

Service personnel with medical conditions or fitness issues which affect their ability to perform their duties are referred to a medical board for a medical examination and review of their medical grading. The patient may be downgraded, to allow for treatment and rehabilitation. Medically downgraded personnel are those personnel who have been assessed by a medical board and subsequently awarded a Medical Deployability Standard (MDS) of either Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) or Medically Non Deployable (MND).

- a. Medically Limited Deployable (MLD) personnel are 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. MLD personnel can undertake full employment with possible limitations on their deployability. Their condition must not be vulnerable to exacerbation due to deployment or impose a constant demand on medical service on exercise or deployment.
- b. Medically Non Deployable (MND) personnel are medically fit for duty with major employment limitations or are medically unfit for Service. MND personnel have a medical condition or functional limitation that prevents the meeting of all MLD requirements. 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. They may require continued medical care, long term medication and access to secondary care facilities

Medical board templates were introduced in May 2014 and are used to enter medical deployability information including Medical Deployability Status (MDS) and the medical reasons for downgrading. All data entered through a template is stored as a Read code in the DMICP data warehouse. The circumstances in which the injury occurred is not captured at the medical grading review.

Cause of medical downgrading figures are compiled using the principal condition cited on a medical board/grading template. Each principal condition has a Read code and description which was converted into the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems Tenth Revision (ICD-10) coding scheme. Medical downgradings due to oral disease are identified with the following ICD-10 codes, K00-K14 (Oral Disease) including K02 (Dental Caries) and K046-7 (Dental Abscess).

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

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering primary care in the UK Armed Forces and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: [Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk)

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/>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics Health (Analysis Directorate)