FOI2023/04166

27 April 2023

Dear ███████

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 March 2023 in which you requested the following information:

> "Can I please request data on the demographic characteristics of applicants for the Royal Marines (Officers and Other Ranks combined) from 2015-present in terms of:
>
> % women
> % ethnic minorities
> Average age
> Average level of education (or, this not being possible, a breakdown of those up to GCSE, A Level, and University and higher)
>
> Could I also request the following data on those starting Royal Marines training:
>
> % women
> % ethnic minorities
> Average age on joining
> Average level of education (or, this not being possible, a breakdown of those up to GCSE, A Level, and University and higher)"

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

A search has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. Information detailing the number of applicants between the period 1 April 2015 – 30 March 2022 can be found at Annex A to this letter.

Please be advised that applications beyond this date have not yet been published and have therefore not been provided.

Figures for question one have been provided for 'Applicants'. The current definition of this stage at which we collect data is as follows:

> Applicant = An individual who has successfully submitted an application to join the Armed Forces, with that application having been entered into the Recruiting IT Management System. It includes those who will not meet eligibility criteria but have submitted an application.

For successful applicants who accept an offer to join the Services, there is a substantial processing time between their application being received and the applicant joining the Services. Therefore, the intake figures for a given year are not comparable with the number applicants in that financial year as the numbers apply to different cohorts of people.

With regards to the average level of education, please be further advised that this information is not currently held in a format that allows it to be reliably extracted or interpreted. Therefore, we are unable to provide this information to you.

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.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

Navy Command Secretariat - FOI Section

Table 1. Percentage of Female Royal Marine Applicants, Financial Year 2015-2022.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Female %	0.7%	1.6%	2.4%	3.1%	3.0%	2.9%	3.4%

Source: Analysis (Navy)

1. Application data is taken from the Defence Recruiting System (DRS). Between the introduction of DRS in November 2017 and 1 August 2019 some applications were not recorded on DRS; these applications are not included in the statistics as they cannot be verified and there is a risk of double counting.
2. Figures include Applications where personnel have indicated a career preference of Royal Marines Other Ranks or Royal Marines Officer. Applicant career preference are based on their declared career choice at the time of Application. Applicants may change their career choice throughout the process.
3. Number of applications counts each application once, however candidates can make more than one application; therefore some candidates could be counted twice.
4. Percentage of Female RM Applicants is percentage of total RM applications.

Table 2. Percentage of BAME Royal Marine Applicants, Financial Year 2015-2022.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
BAME %	0.7%	1.6%	2.4%	3.1%	3.0%	2.9%	3.4%

Source: Analysis (Navy)

1.   Application data is taken from the Defence Recruiting System (DRS). Between the introduction of DRS in November 2017 and 1 August 2019 some applications were not recorded on DRS; these applications are not included in the statistics as they cannot be verified and there is a risk of double counting.

2.   Figures include Applications where personnel have indicated a career preference of Royal Marines Other Ranks or Royal Marines Officer. Applicant career preference are based on their declared career choice at the time of Application. Applicants may change their career choice throughout the process.

3.   Number of applications counts each application once, however candidates can make more than one application; therefore some candidates could be counted twice.

4.   Percentage of BAME RM applicants is a percentage of total RM applications with known ethnicity.

5.   Ethnicity data is self-reported on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. Any percentages or figures quoted within this report relate to those with a known ethnicity as reported on JPA.

6.   Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is a collective descriptor for non-white citizens (including those of mixed ethnic origin).

Table 3. Average Age of Royal Marine Applicants, Financial Year 2015-2022.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Average Age	20	20	20	21	21	21	20

Source: Analysis (Navy)

1. Age is rounded down to the nearest whole year.
2. Average age is the calculated mean age of total applications to the Royal Marines.
3. Application data is taken from the Defence Recruiting System (DRS). Between the introduction of DRS in November 2017 and 1 August 2019 some applications were not recorded on DRS; these applications are not included in the statistics as they cannot be verified and there is a risk of double counting.
4. Figures include Applications where personnel have indicated a career preference of Royal Marines Other Ranks or Royal Marines Officer. Applicant career preference are based on their declared career choice at the time of Application. Applicants may change their career choice throughout the process.
5. Number of applications counts each application once, however candidates can make more than one application; therefore some candidates could be counted twice.

Table 4. Percentage of Female Royal Marine New Entrants, Financial Year 2015-2022.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Female %	1.1%	1.8%	1.0%	0.7%	1.1%	1.9%	1.3%

Source: Analysis (Navy)

1. Personnel who joined the Royal Marine Strength as Trained, and therefore did not go through initial training, are not included.
2. Percentage of Female RM New Entrants is percentage of total RM intake.

Table 5. Percentage of BAME Royal Marine New Entrants, Financial Year 2015-2022.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
BAME %	2.7%	3.6%	3.9%	3.8%	3.2%	4.3%	4.7%

Source: Analysis (Navy)

1. Ethnicity data is self-reported on the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. Any percentages or figures quoted within this report relate to those with a known ethnicity as reported on JPA.
2. Percentage of BAME RM New Entrants is a percentage of total RM intake with known ethnicity.
3. Personnel who joined the Royal Marine Strength as Trained, and therefore did not go through initial training, are not included.
4. Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is a collective descriptor for non-white citizens (including those of mixed ethnic origin).

Table 6. Average Age of Royal Marine New Entrants, Financial Year 2015-2022.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Average Age	21	21	21	20	21	21	21

Source: Analysis (Navy)

1. Age is rounded down to the nearest whole year.
2. Average age is the calculated mean age of total untrained RM intake.
3. Personnel who joined the Royal Marine Strength as Trained, and therefore did not go through initial training, are not included.