



Government Legal Department

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[REDACTED]

Ref No: FOI 25_207

14 October 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 12 September 2025 which contained your request for information. The Government Legal Department ("GLD") have processed your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act").

Request

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I request the following information:

1. *The total legal costs incurred by the Government Legal Department (or on behalf of the Ministry of Defence) in relation to claims brought by service personnel or veterans concerning Lariam (mefloquine), from 1 January 2005 to the present.*
2. *The number of such claims recorded as:*
 - *Settled (with or without payment)*
 - *Ongoing*
 - *Dismissed/withdrawn*

For clarity, I am not requesting details of individual cases, only aggregate costs and figures.

Response

Pursuant to section 1(1)(a) of the Act, GLD informs you that it holds the information you have requested, but we have estimated that cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, set at £600 for Central Government. This means compliance with your request would require more than 24 hours work, at the flat rate of £25 per hour, per person. This rateable value is applied to determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Section 12 of the Act makes clear that a public authority (such as the GLD) is not obliged to comply if it estimates the cost of complying with the request would exceed the 'appropriate limit.'

GLD's case management system does not store information in the way you have requested **by case subject matter**. Consequently, this would require GLD to undertake comprehensive and extensive manual searches to ascertain if the information is held, determine its location, and establish the methods for its retrieval and extraction.

We have identified 318 cases which we can extract the information you have requested from, however we estimate that there are approximately 500 cases in total held within the system. To obtain

the information from all of them, would require a manual search of the system, and this will take in excess of 40 hours. Consequently, this would invoke the Act's Section 12 exemption.

If you are able to refine your request, so that it is more likely to fall within the appropriate cost limit, we will consider it again as a new request for information. For example we can provide:

- Number of current settled cases;
- Number of withdrawn/discontinued cases;
- The number of ongoing cases;
- Hours spent on 318 cases;
- Total costs of 318 cases.

Please note total costs of all cases is not possible to obtain within the section 12 cost limit.

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original correspondence. Please use the contact details provided at the top of this letter in order to request an internal review relating to your original request.

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

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.ICO.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team

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