Background Quality Report
War Pension Scheme Annual Statistics:
1 April 2016 to 31 March 2026

The purpose of a background quality report is to inform users of the statistics about the quality of the data used to produce the publication, and any statistics derived from that data. It also discusses existing uses of the statistics and user requirements. This assessment relates to the annual 'War Pension Scheme' statistics published by Defence Statistics Health (DS-H) on 02 July 2026.

This BQR has been updated to reflect advice by the Office for Statistics Regulation. Additional information has been added to explain the impact of the introduction of a new administrative system on the usability of the statistics, including considerations for their interpretation and use.

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2. Introduction & Statistical Presentation

1. This annual Official Statistic provides summary statistics on claims and awards made under the War Pension Scheme (WPS). These statistics present trends over time between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2026. The results in this report are presented within seven sections:

    - **Section 1: Numbers of registered events under the WPS.** This section provides the overall numbers of WPS events registered, including disablement pension and war widows'/widowers' claims, claims for supplementary allowances, and appeals. Information is presented by financial year (Table 1). This is provided to show the volume of claims that are dealt with under the scheme, with the bulletin presenting trends over time by financial year.

    - **Section 2: WPS claim clearance times.** This section provides information on the average (median) clearance times for disablement pension claims, war widows'/widowers' claims, and appeals (Tables 2 to 5). The bulletin presents trends over time by financial year. This information is presented to provide the average time that claimants have waited for an outcome of their claim or appeal.

    - **Section 3: Outcomes of claims cleared under the WPS.** This section provides information on the outcomes of all claim types (Tables 6 to 8). A registered claim is cleared once an outcome has been reached. This information is provided to show the proportion of claims that are service-attributable.

    - **Section 4: Current recipients of a War Pension.** This section provides information on the number of recipients of a war pension, with trends over time by financial year. Further information is provided for those in receipt of a war pension as at 31 March 2026, including demographics and degree of disablement (Tables 9 to 14).

    - **Section 5: Causes of Disablement.** This section provides information on the numbers of disablement pensioners in receipt of a War Pension for mental disorders,

due to continued external public interest (Table 15). This section also presents the number of lump sum awards, and mesothelioma expenditure (Table 15a).

- **Section 6: Recipients of supplementary allowances under the WPS.** This section gives information on the number of people who are in receipt of ongoing supplementary allowances by type of allowance and type of pension (Tables 16 and 17). This information is provided to show the proportion of disablement pensioners and widows/widowers that require further financial support in addition to their war pension.

- **Section 7: WPS expenditure.** This section provides War Pension Scheme expenditure by financial year, and average weekly amounts paid to recipients of different ages and degrees of disablement (Tables 18 and 19).

2. The supplementary tables provide additional information including:
    - Numbers of disablement pensioners in receipt of a War Pension due to suffering from PTSD (Table 15)
    - Information on lump sum awards paid out for Service-attributable mesothelioma, following its introduction in 2015 (Table 15a)
    - Regional locations of war pension recipients (Table 13) and, following a consultation on the cessation of the Location of Armed Forces Pension and Compensation recipients Official Statistic, Local Authority locations (Table 13a)

3. Ad-hoc interrogation of the data used to compile these statistics is regularly undertaken by DS-H to answer Freedom of Information requests, Parliamentary questions and internal queries from within the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

4. The latest statistics are published as Official Statistics, adhering to the principles laid out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) protocols on pre-release access.

5. The implementation of a new administrative data system in September 2024 resulted in several changes to the data used to produce these statistics including changes to specific data fields captured, changes to categories within data fields, changes to how the data was stored and changes to formatting. The methodology used to produce these statistics was redesigned to minimise the impact of the data changes however, the transition to the new systems resulted in an increase in missing data and data errors during 2024/25. The key consideration for users is that direct comparison before and after system implementation may not be possible, especially in relation to supplementary allowance claims due to transition to the new system. In addition, updates to the system are on-going and may result in further methodology changes.

6. The latest review of this publication by the Office for Statistics Regulation was published on 1st July 2026 and coincided with the MOD taking the decision to de-accredit this publication. The MOD took the decision as during the last reporting cycle, data quality issues have persisted alongside ongoing system changes since the implementation of the new data system, meaning additional time is required to fully understand their causes and impact on reporting outputs. The publication is continuing as an Official Statistic as key headline measures remain unaffected, with issues mainly limited to detailed breakdowns and transparently reflected through ‘unknown’ categories. Information on system processes and methodology changes and their implications for how the outputs can be used, are detailed in the relevant section of this document.

7. These statistics were released on a quarterly basis between 2001 and 2010; following consultations with users in 2010 and 2011 this statistical bulletin was reduced to bi-annual

and annual releases respectively. Data is reported as at the end of the financial year, with the annual report published in early summer each year.

3. Statistical Processing

3.1 Source Data

8. Most of the information presented within this Statistical Bulletin is sourced from data held on the War Pensions administrative systems. The administrative system changed from the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS) to Compendia Touch (CT) in September 2024. Data presented for financial years 2016/17 to 2023/24 were taken from the WPCS, 2024/25 and 2025/26 were taken from CT.

9. Information on recipients of a lump sum award for service-attributable mesothelioma and WPS expenditure (Table 15a and Table 18 respectively) was supplied separately by the MOD Pension Finance team.

10. The financial information supplied by the MOD Pension Finance team is provided on an accrual basis. Expected expenditure is recorded when a claim is submitted and then later revised if this claim is withdrawn or rejected. Expenditure figures may therefore differ to the amount of actual monies paid out in a given time period, as they may include pending cases that are due to be paid but have not yet been paid or pending claims that go on to be rejected at a later date.

3.2 Data collection

11. Both the WPCS and CT are the administrative systems for the WPS. War Pension claims are processed and various information on claims and awards are recorded on the administrative system. A snapshot of all data entered onto the WPCS/CT is transferred to Analysis Digital on a quarterly basis, where Analysis Digital will then validate and compile the data ready to use for processing by DS-H. The area within the MOD which administer the WPS is responsible for ensuring the quality of the WPCS/CT data supplied to DS-H.

3.3 Data validation

12. As DS-H receives a data extract, there is limited visibility of the source system and the data entry and processing undertaken prior to receipt. Changes to these processes may affect the data and, consequently, the statistics produced. To mitigate this risk, a data working group has been established to improve understanding of the data source and provide advance notice of changes and their potential impact on statistical outputs.

13. The main sources of potential error in the WPS statistics are as follows:
    - Incorrect information entered onto the WPCS/CT
    - Incomplete data extracts
    - Data processing errors resulting in incorrect data outputs produced by DS-H
    - Manual error during production of report tables, graphs and commentary by DS-H
    - System changes

14. To ensure potential errors are identified and resolved, DS-H implement a series of data quality checks from the point of receiving the data through to the report production. These checks involve close liaison with the WP operations teams, to understand the accuracy of the figures published. Where there is concern over the accuracy of data, DS-H will publish the information as provisional (‘p’) or highlight concerns within the relevant section of this document.

- Basic consistency checks are carried out on raw data. For example, the numbers of records received is compared to the previous extract to ensure the total number is as expected.
- Any inconsistencies are raised with members of the data working group.
- The WP data are then processed through a series of automated programming in a MYSQL database.
- Further automated validation checks are carried out after the data have been processed to ensure all processes and queries have run correctly and the final numbers are an accurate reflection of data received.
- Manual checks are then carried out on the final report to ensure figures quoted in the commentary reflect those in the tables, and the numbers sum to the totals provided.

15. The key strengths of the WPS data are that it is obtained from a case management system, which has the benefits of consistency of information available and accuracy of key fields, and the efficient method used to capture WPS data extracts. Validation checks are undertaken by DS-H to ensure the information provided in the reports is accurate.

16. The key weakness is that DS-H rely on the level of detail that is manually entered for each claim. There are also no other data sources that can be used to validate the information provided. Furthermore, a great deal of the information is recorded in free text fields e.g. medical conditions, and therefore it is not always possible to identify information requested in ad-hoc requests. Information is not always complete, for example, Service Number is not complete and therefore cannot be used to link the WPS data to other datasets to acquire more comprehensive information.

3.4 Data compilation

General

17. The introduction of a new administrative system in September 2024 required changes to the methodology used to produce these statistics. Testing on historical data indicates that the revised methodology produces results within 5% of those generated under the previous methodology. While this suggests that the impact on the published figures is limited, users should be aware that figures from 2024/25 onwards are derived from a different system and production process. Due to the transition to the new system, it is not possible to know if any observed change between 2023/24 and 2024/25 reflects a real change in claims or awards or, the introduction of the new system, or the change in methodology, or a combination of all three.

18. Assessment has shown that key headline measures, including total claims registered, claims cleared and War Pensions in payment, remain unaffected. The impact is largely confined to the more detailed breakdowns.

19. It should be noted that updates to system workflows are on-going and may result in further methodology changes.

Reporting Registered Claims and Appeals

20. Summary counts of registered claims and appeals are presented, as recorded on the WP administrative systems.

21. **New System Impact on Statistics**: It was not possible to determine whether 30% of supplementary allowance claims in 2024/25 were initial claims or reviews, and these were therefore reported in Table 1 as ‘Supplementary Allowance unknowns’. This proportion reduced to 3% in 2025/26. The high proportion of unknown claim types in 2024/25 limits the ability to assess trends in initial supplementary allowances and reviews. Consequently, it is

not possible to determine the extent to which the observed reduction in 2024/25 and subsequent increase in 2025/26 reflect data recording issues rather than genuine changes in the number of claims.

Reporting Clearance Times

22. These statistics were first presented within the 2015/16 Statistical Bulletin following increased external user interest in the time taken to clear WPS claims.

23. Clearance times calculations are conducted separately to the automated process. Cleared WPS claims (claims with a 'cleared date' recorded on the WPCS/CT) were identified and working days (to exclude weekends and bank holidays) between each claim being registered and cleared were calculated. Due to variations in the time taken to process each type of WPS claim, average clearance times were calculated separately for each claim type: first disablement claims, second/subsequent disablement claims, widows'/widowers' claims and appeals. Calendar months for average clearance times were calculated by dividing the median clearance time for a claim type by 21.665 (on the basis of there being 5 working days in a week and 4.333 weeks in a month).

24. The average clearance times for appeals were produced by calculating the number of working days (to exclude weekends and bank holidays) between the date of appeal registration and the date the claimant was informed, and subsequent payment was amended or started. This provides an indication of the total length of time that a claimant may wait for a final decision to be reached following the submission of an appeal. The clearance time figures in this statistic include entitlement and assessment appeals.

25. Prior to the 2026 report, the supplementary tables presented the mean, maximum, minimum, median and quartiles for the clearance times. An internal review of the data concluded:

    - The dates used to calculate the clearance times are manually entered onto the WPCS/CT.
    - There are errors, such as claims reported to be cleared within 0 days however there is no robust mechanism to determine which records are inaccurate without taking a resource-intensive review of a substantial volume of claims.
    - There are no defined upper or lower threshold benchmarks that could be used to systematically identify the records for review.
    - It is believed that any attempt by analysts to arbitrarily select records, for example those with a clearance times of 0 and 1, would introduce bias into the process, as it would address lower-value errors while implicitly treating records with clearance times of 2 and above as valid without evidence.

26. It was concluded that from the 2026 report information on WPS claim clearance times would only be presented as a median average with an inter-quartile range (removing the mean average and minimum/maximum), as these statistics are affected less by outliers and better reflect the average typical experience for the individual making a claim. An outlier is an observation within a dataset that appears to be inconsistent with the remainder of the dataset.

    - The median is the value in the center of the data set when they are arranged from smallest to largest.
    - A quartile is any of three values (first/lower quartile, second quartile (median), third/upper quartile) that divides the sorted (from smallest value to largest value) dataset into four equal parts. The lower quartile (LQ) is the value at which 25% of the values in the dataset will be below this point. The upper quartile (UQ) is the value at which 75% of the values in the dataset will be below this point.
    - The inter-quartile range (IQR) is the range in which the middle 50% of the data points fall (i.e. the distance between the lower and upper quartile). The longer the inter-quartile range the wider the spread of data.

Reporting on outcomes of registered Claims and Appeals

27. Summary counts of outcomes of registered claims and appeals are presented, as recorded on the WPCS/CT.

28. **New System Impact on Statistics:** During the 2024/25 production, approximately a quarter of appeals cleared in 2024/25 had no outcome information, in-part due to DS-H not receiving a final dataset on the date WPCS was closed down. In addition, a high number of claims had missing cleared dates so 'tribunal outcome received date' was used as a proxy to identify claims cleared during 2024/25. These figures were revised during the 2025/26 production as the relevant claim records had been updated enabling the statistics to be re-produced using cleared date and resulting in no unknown outcomes. The issue was not evident in the 2025/26 data.

Reporting War Pensions in payment

29. Summary counts of all disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers as at 31 March 2026, including demographics, are presented, as recorded on the WPCS/CT.

Reporting Causes of disablement

30. Claims are assessed by medical advisors to determine injuries and illnesses that are service-attributable, with medical diagnosis codes recorded on the WPCS/CT for a range of common conditions. However, diagnosis codes are not recorded for all conditions. In these cases, medical conditions are determined from information held in free-text format. Therefore, any searches conducted are reliant on specific search terms being spelled correctly.

31. Due to continued external interest in the numbers of disablement pensioners awarded for mental disorders, specifically post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), awards made under the WPS for these conditions are produced for purposes of this Official Statistic. Awards for Mental disorders have been identified from the following medical diagnosis codes, as recorded on the WPCS/CT: 4000,4001,4002,4003,4004,4005,4006,4007,4008, and a free-text search for the following terms: post traumatic stress, ptsd, post-traumatic stress, psych, phobia, phobic, depressed, mood, depression, depressive, adjustment, anxiety, panic, dysthymic, schizo, mania, paranoid, affective disorders, personality disorder, bi-polar, bi polar, stress disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, conversion disorder, cyclothymic disorder, delusional, dissociative, dream, identity disorder, mental disorder, nervous disorder, nightmare disorder, compulsive disorder, agoraphobia, substance abuse, substance use. To produce the figures for War Pensions in payment for PTSD, a medical diagnosis code of 4006 was used and the free-text field was searched for "post traumatic stress", "PTSD", or "post-traumatic stress".. This figure should be regarded as a minimum estimate, as records containing spelling errors, typing errors, or alternative terminology may not have been identified by the search criteria. The methodology used to identify favourable awards for mental health conditions was reviewed during 2023/24, resulting in revisions to some published figures. These revisions did not materially affect the overall trends presented. Further details are available in previous editions of the background quality report for this publication.

32. Since the introduction of the lump sum payment for service-attributable mesothelioma on 16 December 2015 (see Appendix paragraphs 18-20 for further information), there has been external interest in the numbers of claimants opting to receive the lump sum award.

33. Therefore, this information is now compiled using data supplied directly by the MOD Pension Finance team, and numbers of claimants who have opted to receive the lump sum award have been published within these statistics since the 2016/17 Statistical Bulletin, published in June 2017.

Reporting Weekly Amounts Paid Out

34. Summary information on weekly amounts paid out to disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers are presented, as recorded on the WPCS/CT.

Reporting Expenditure by Financial Year

35. These statistics were first presented within the 2015/16 Statistical Bulletin following increased external user interest in overall WPS expenditure each financial year. This information is compiled using data supplied directly by the MOD Pension Finance team.

36. There have been no changes in methodology to produce these figures since these statistics were first published in June 2016.

Statistical Methods

37. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to identify if there were significant differences between clearance times over time (noting that due to the move to the new system in September 2024, figures from 2024/25 onwards can't be compared with earlier years). The significance test provided confidence to state that an observed difference between the clearance times was a real difference and did not occur due to chance. A significance level of 0.05 has been used throughout this report.

38. The z test difference between two proportions was used to identify if there were significant differences between cleared claim success rates over time (again noting that figures from 2024/25 onwards can not be compared to previous years). The significance test provided confidence to state that an observed difference between the percentages was a real difference and did not occur due to chance. A significance level of 0.05 has been used throughout this report.

4. Quality Management

4.1 Quality Assurance

39. The MOD's quality management process for Official Statistics consists of three elements: (1) Regularly monitoring and assessing quality risk via an annual assessment; (2) Providing a mechanism for reporting and reviewing revisions/corrections to Official Statistics; (3) Ensuring BQRs are published alongside reports and are updated regularly.

4.2 Quality Assessment

40. The War Pension Scheme Official Statistic was last assessed in 2025 and was deemed to be of low quality risk.

5. Relevance

5.1 User needs

41. These statistics have been provided in response to an increasing number of requests for information about claims and awards under the scheme, and the number of individuals currently in receipt of War Pensions Benefits and Allowances. A range of information is requested including further details of claims and awards (e.g. by claim type or outcome) and

further information on those awarded compensation (e.g. age, gender or service). The report is used by external organisations such as NHS trusts, Local Government and Armed Forces charities. The report is also used to support other MOD departments in work planning and policy development.

42. Consultations to review the WPS statistics were carried out in 2012 and 2013 to ensure they are coherent and continue to meet users' needs. Following the consultations, the publication was expanded to provide additional information frequently requested by users, including the number of people claiming and receiving awards, annual War Pension expenditure, and recipients of war pensions for mental health conditions.

43. Following an internal consultation on the content of the WPS statistics in 2024, some of the tables in the Supplementary Tables were removed or reformatted. The information this affected was clearly labelled in the 2022/23 Bulletin, 2022/23 Supplementary Tables and, at the time, on the GOV.UK website page for the War Pension Scheme statistics.

44. In reference to the UK Statistics Authority report, The Use Made of Official Statistics, the WPS statistics are used by:
    (i) Government – Policy Making
    (ii) Government – Policy Monitoring
    (iii) Local Government – Service Delivery
    (iv) Academia – Facilitating Research
    (v) Charities – Service Delivery

Description of Users and Usage of Statistics

45. The War Pension Scheme statistics have been published in response to user demand. Interest has come from internal MOD policy makers, Parliament, Government Departments, the third Sector, academics, the media, and the general public.

46. The WPS statistics are used by the following groups of customers:
    - WPS policy teams use these statistical publications as a basis for policy making.
    - The MOD use these figures for background information and for planning purposes e.g. estimating the volume/workload for different types of claims.
    - External organisations such as Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), local Government and Armed Forces charities use the reports and location figures as part of estimating and planning veteran casework provision e.g. to assess the numbers and needs of service personnel and veterans in their local area.
    - WPS statistics are also used by the media to give context to reports on Armed Forces Compensation.

47. Following the MOD's launch of the Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2011, DS-H received an increasing volume of requests from within the MOD, Local Government departments and NHS trusts for information on the number of veterans by location. This was required to assist with planning for the needs of service personnel and veterans in each specific area of the UK.

48. From 2011 this information was presented in the Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients official statistic. In January 2025, following a consultation, the decision was taken to cease the production of the official statistic due to the report no longer being the most appropriate data for providing an indication of the location of all veterans. The consultation highlighted the continued need to present information on War Pension recipients by local authority. A new table was added to the annual WPS statistics from 2024/25 showing WPS recipient location information at Local Authority and Regional Level.. Table 13a presents War pensioners in payment, by type of pension, country, region, county and local authority.

49. The publication of these statistics also plays an important part in ensuring the Department's accountability to the British public.

50. DS-H keep a record of all PQs, FOIs and internal adhoc requests relating to the WPS, and review these to ensure that the content of the WPS statistics is relevant to user needs.

51. Since 2017, the War Pension Scheme Official Statistics have had approximately 400 to 1700 unique hits per year via the GOV.UK website.

52. Users external to the MOD are encouraged to give feedback via email (Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk) and publications provide details of how to give feedback.

6. Accuracy and Reliability

6.1 Overall Accuracy

53. Those administrating the WPS within the MOD are responsible for ensuring the quality of WPCS/CT data supplied to DS-H. The data is from large administrative database (WPCS pre-September 2024 and CT post-September 2024) and is subject to the data quality issues of any large administrative system with data collated by a large number of staff for operational delivery purposes. There is a risk as DS-H has limited visibility of the system and the data entry and processing done before the data is received by DS-H however, a data working group has been set up to mitigate this risk.

54. The figures are based on the data extract taken from the War Pension administrative systems, as at the end of each quarter and will be correct as at the time each extract was taken. Therefore, any update to claim information made on the system after each quarterly snapshot will not be reflected in the report.

55. Historic data are revised if errors are found in the data processing or statistical methods used during their publication. If an error was found all historic data in the latest publication would be revised, and DS-H would highlight the error and the impact on the numbers presented.

    Provisional figures can be identified by a provisional marker 'p' and revised figures can be identified by a revision marker 'r'.

56. **New system impact on the statistics:** The implementation of the new system in September 2024 primarily affected the recording of supplementary allowance claim types calculations for 2024/25. As a result, 2024/25 represents a break in the time series for this measure, limiting comparisons between the periods before and after system implementation. For all other measures, the impact is believed to be minimal however due to the system change we can not be sure if an observed change between 2023/24 and 2024/25 reflects a real change in claims or awards or, the introduction of the new system, or the change in methodology, or a combination of all three.

57. It should be noted that the errors have not impacted claim processing, only on the reporting capability.

Data Coverage

58. The MOD holds electronic data on all WPS claimants that have registered claims under the WPS since 1 April 2003 and those in payment as at 1 April 2003. The WPCS went live in January 1996, and all ongoing claims or appeals, or cases in receipt of an ongoing war pension, were migrated across from preceding systems during 1995. However, the claim and award dates were replaced with the migration date, so date information is not available for

claims until 1996. The system also routinely archived claims after 18 months on inactivity. The MOD started receiving regular extracts from the WPCS from 1 April 2003 and therefore is only confident in the data coverage from that date.

59. The data presented within these statistics include compensation claims registered by all eligible claimants, as detailed in the Appendix paragraphs 4 and 12, between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2026.

60. Whilst figures presented include all claims registered during the reported time period, the figures do not represent all individuals who have sustained a service-related injury/illness during that time. This is because there can be a time lag between an individual's injury/illness and the date they make a claim. Service personnel cannot submit a claim under the WPS until they have left service.

61. In a given table, numbers of claims registered or cleared within a given time period may not sum to the total number of people. This is because one person can make more than one claim spanning different quarters or financial years but would only be counted once in the overall total number of people.

62. Information is not presented on pre-appeal awards as it is not possible to distinguish between a pre-appeal award and an appeal awarded at tribunal from the WP administrative systems. Pre-appeal awards are where the MOD issues an updated award following the submission of new evidence within the appeal application and the appellant accepts the offer prior to its submission to Tribunal. The appeal would still go to Tribunal if the pre-appeal award did not answer all aspects of the appeal or the appellant was not happy with the new award.

63. The publication presents a separate summary of recipients who have opted to receive a lump sum award to compensate for service-attributable mesothelioma. Further details on this can be found in the Appendix paragraphs 18-20. These claimants are not captured on the WPCS and therefore are excluded from the rest of the summary statistics, with the exception of the expenditure table (Table 19).

6.2 Data Revisions

64. Data revisions are handled in accordance with the MOD's Official Statistics Revisions and Corrections Policy.

7. Timeliness and Punctuality

7.1 Timeliness

65. Data are provided to DS-H on a quarterly basis. Between 2008 and 2010 figures were published on a quarterly basis. Following user consultation, the frequency of publication was reduced from quarterly to biannual in 2010, and then further reduced down to an annual frequency from 2011.

66. Figures as at 31 March are usually published within 12 weeks of the end of the reporting period. It takes four weeks to extract, validate and process data extracted from CT. It takes a further six weeks to compile and quality assure the report. Sometimes these timings are extended for example, if new staff are working on the report or, if there are data quality concerns which need resolving. The publication date is always confirmed at least 20 working days ahead of the release date.

7.2 Punctuality

67. These Official Statistics reports have all been published on time to meet pre-announced release dates. Future publication dates will also be announced on GOV.UK at least one month in advance. See the GOV.UK Official Statistics Release Calendar.

8. Coherence and Comparability

68. The WPCS and CT are the administrative system for the War Pension Scheme and are the only source for information on the WPS in the years they were operational. Location information is presented in line with ONS geographical breakdowns to enable comparisons with other statistical publications. Similarly, age bands are presented in line with other DS-H reports.

69. All definitions within this bulletin are consistent with the terms used by those who operate the WPS.

70. The COVID-19 pandemic affected operational delivery of the WPS in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as casework paused for a short period from March 2020 because it could not be delivered remotely. Operational capability continued to be limited throughout that year and routine administration was hampered by increased difficulties in obtaining medical evidence to inform decision making. This may have contributed to the observed increase in clearance times in 2020/21. During 2021/22, the delivery of the WPS started to return to normal levels, with the increase of staffing levels and non-remote working. Additionally, other forms of medical evidence gathering were introduced which aided the processing of claims. The phased return to the normal level of WPS processing and delivery can be seen by the reduced average clearance time for first and second claims in 2021/22. Operational delivery of the WPS was not materially impacted by COVID-19 during 2022/23, except in some areas of external input where general resource shortages in services that began during COVID-19 were yet to fully recover.

71. The implementation of a new administrative system in September 2024 required changes to the data processing and methodology used to produce these statistics. Testing suggests that the impact on most statistics reported on is limited. However, because changes to the system, data and methodology occurred simultaneously, it is not possible to determine the extent to which differences observed between 2023/24 and 2024/25 reflect genuine changes in claims and awards or changes arising from the system transition. The transition particularly affected supplementary allowance claim types, for which 2024/25 represents a break in the time series. It should be noted that updates to system workflows are on-going and may result in further methodology changes which may affect comparability over time.

9. Accessibility and Clarity

Accessibility

72. The War Pensions Scheme statistics report can be accessed through the GOV.UK website and is published as an accessible PDF document. Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source (ODS) versions of all WPS report tables are also available on the GOV.UK website alongside each published report.

73. The publication follows the standard structure for the MOD Official Statistics including: summary of key points, introduction, findings, a short summary of data, definitions and methods, a glossary, symbols, disclosure control, revisions and contact details.

74. 24-hour pre-release access to the report is available to a limited distribution list within the MOD. The full list can be found in the pre-release access list.

Clarity

75. Users with an interest in the key findings can read a short summary of main messages within the Key Points section of the front page of the report. The report is then split into several sections to help users navigate their way through the publication.

76. A glossary of all key terms is provided at the end of this Background Quality Report and in the Statistical Bulletin.

10. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

77. DS-H minimise the cost to Government of producing these statistics through using data already collated for operational delivery purposes within the MOD's administrative system. As a large administrative system, data quality across fields is of varying quality and completeness which limits the information available to customers in our statistics and requests for information.

11. Cost and Respondent Burden

78. The annual report takes approximately 35 days to produce each year. Further analysis and development work will require additional resource.

79. The WPS report uses an administrative data source which is already collected by the MOD.

12. Confidentiality and Security

12.1 Confidentiality – Policy

80. DS-H has data access agreements with the WP operations teams with respect to obtaining the WPS data extracts. All DS-H staff involved in the production have signed a declaration that they have completed the Government wide data protection training and they understand their responsibilities under the Data Protection Legislation and the Official Statistics Code of Practice. DS-H staff also complete annually the Defence Protecting Personal Data training.

12.2 Confidentiality – Data Treatment

81. In line with Code of Practice for statistics, disclosure control is conducted on all statistical information provided by the MOD to safeguard the confidentiality of individuals. Within these statistics a risk of disclosure has been considered to be high where numbers presented are fewer than three. In cases where a risk of disclosure exists, one of three appropriate disclosure control methods have been applied:
    - Figures have been suppressed: In most cases where there may be a risk of disclosure, numbers fewer than three have been suppressed and marked as '[c]'. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is fewer than three, secondary suppression has been applied where the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot be derived from totals.
    - Percentages have been suppressed: Percentages have not been presented if they enable the suppressed figure to be calculated.

- Figures have been grouped: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being ‘hidden’ as a result of secondary suppression, columns and/or rows have been grouped together in order to present larger numbers.
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest five: In some cases where the suppression of information would result in larger numbers being ‘hidden’ as a result of secondary suppression and it has not been possible to group columns and/or rows, figures have been rounded to the nearest five. Figures have been rounded individually, meaning totals may not be equal to the sum of their components.
- From the 2024/25 financial year onwards we combined the Polish and Mercantile Marine principal schemes to reduce the amount of secondary suppression required.

12.3 Security

82. Only individuals who produce these statistics have access to the underlying data. DS-H ensures that the WPS data are kept confidential by holding this data on a secure server.

83. The files are all stored on a secure MOD network, with access to files limited to individuals in DS-H. All the MOD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to.

13. Links

Note: The MOD is not responsible for the contents or reliability of the listed non-MOD web sites and does not necessarily endorse the views expressed therein. Listings should not be taken as endorsement of any kind. The MOD has no control over the availability of these sites. Users access them at their own risk. The information given was correct at the time of publication.

Glossary

Adult Dependant: Adult relatives, i.e. sister, brother, aunt or uncle etc., for whom the service person was financially responsible.

Age 80 addition (NI) (Disablement & Widow/Widower): This may be paid to a war disablement pensioner and a war widow/widower aged 80 or over.

Age addition allowance: This may be paid to a war disablement pensioner who is aged 65 or over and whose disablement is assessed at 40% or more. A war widow/widower may receive an additional allowance at age 65 which is increased at age 70, and again at age 80.

Allowance for Lowered Standard of Occupation (ALSO): This may be paid if a disablement pensioner's earning capacity is reduced because their pensioned disablement permanently prevents them following their regular occupation. To gain entitlement new claimants must be under age 65, with a disablement percentage of at least 40%. This allowance plus their basic War Disablement Pension cannot exceed the 100% disablement pension rate.

Appeal: If a claimant is not satisfied with the outcome of any of their claims they may lodge an appeal to an appropriate Tribunal.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS): Compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve forces. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death attributable to service where the cause occurred on or after 6 April 2005.

Awarded 0%: The doctor may decide from the medical evidence that although the condition was caused by service or wartime experience, if it is not causing the person a problem at the moment then they will be awarded an assessment of nil.

Child allowance: An eligible child under 16 years old may receive a child allowance. The child allowance may continue whilst the child continues in full time education or if the child is incapable of self-support due to an infirmity which arose before the age of 16 years.

Cleared Claim: A claim is classed as cleared when the MOD issue a letter to the claimant informing them of the outcome of their claim or appeal.

Clothing Allowance (CLOT): This may be paid to a disablement pensioner with a disablement percentage of 20% or above where disablement causes exceptional wear and tear on clothing e.g. incontinence, wear to shoes due to poor gait, or to clothes due to wheelchair use.

Comforts Allowance (COMF): This may be paid to a severely disabled pensioner who is receiving **Constant Attendance Allowance** or **Unemployability Supplement** or both. It is intended to help with the extra expenses associated with severe disablement.

Conditional list review: These cases arise because the MOD have previously made an interim assessment for a limited period because the level of disablement was likely to change. A review date is calculated so that disablement can be reassessed before the given period expires.

Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA): This may be paid to a disablement pensioner who needs regular personal attention because of their pensioned disablement and that disablement is assessed at 80% or more. It is payable at one of four rates. The rate varies according to the level of attendance they need.

Current invaliding claims: Current invaliding claims and first claims to pension cover the initial claim that an individual makes for an injury/illness caused by service prior to 6 April 2005.

Departmental review: A review can be carried out to reassess a case when a condition has been rejected and an award for a war pension has not been made.

Deterioration claims: An application can be made to increase a war pension if an accepted condition has worsened, or, if another condition has made the accepted war pension disablement worse.

Disablement pensioner: Ex-UK Armed Forces service personnel with an injury/illness as a result of service with a disablement percentage of 20% or above.

Disablement Percentage: First and second/subsequent claims are assessed by a doctor, and then he/she gives a percentage of up to 100%, dependent on how disabled the person is.

Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance (ESDA): This may be paid to a disablement pensioner who is receiving **Constant Attendance Allowance** at one of the two highest rates, or would be receiving it if they were not in hospital.

Funeral Expenses (FE): Funeral expenses may be paid if the pensioner died as a result of his service disablement, or died while having treatment for that disablement in hospital, or was entitled to Constant Attendance Allowance, or was at the time of his death 80% or more disabled and receiving Unemployability Supplement.

Further condition claims: Disablement pensioners who already have entitlement to a war disablement pension can claim for an additional medical condition.

Gratuity Payment: If a disablement is assessed at less than 20%, personnel are paid a lump sum called a gratuity. The amount depends on the extent of the disablement and how long the person is likely to be disabled.

Inter-quartile range: The inter-quartile range is the largest minus the smallest number in the middle 50% of the data.

Inter War: Disabled due to service between 1 October 1921 and 2 September 1939.

Invalidity Allowance (IVA): This may be paid to a disablement pensioner under the age of 60 in receipt of the **Unemployability Supplement**. The rate varies according to the age at which unemployability began.

Median average: The median of a finite list of numbers can be found by arranging all the values from lowest to highest and picking the middle value.

Modified Over Age Infirm Allowance (MOIA): Compensation/Allowances (including that paid to children living in the Irish Republic or Overseas) due to infirmity are taken into account when calculating an award of **Over Age Infirm Allowance**.

Modified Unemployability Supplement (MSUP): The basic conditions of eligibility to UNSUPP are met and if the person becomes eligible for Retirement Pension or other benefit payable (such as Universal Credit) out of the public funds, then UNSUPP may be adjusted with that benefit, or paid at a nominal rate to allow continued payment of comforts allowance.

Over Age Infirm Allowance (OAIA): Over Age Infirm Allowance for children of deceased pensioners unable to support themselves dates back to the 1914 War. The allowance can be awarded or continued beyond the normal age limits on the grounds of infirmity if the ailment is of a nature which is likely to prevent the person from earning a living either permanently or for a prolonged period and infirmity commenced before age 16. The person is still referred to as a child even though they may be quite elderly.

Registered Claim: A claim is classed as registered when a workflow is created on the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS) / Compendia Touch (CT) for a claim.

Restored Widows/Widowers: A war widow/widower may have their pension restored under certain circumstances such as; they become widowed again; their marriage/civil partnership ends or they stop living with their partner.

Severe Disablement Occupational Allowance (SDOA): This may be paid to a disablement pensioner who is entitled to Constant Attendance Allowance at one of the two highest rates, but who still normally has a gainful occupation.

Supplementary Allowance: Everyone in receipt of a War Pension can claim for extra allowances to help with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability:

Temporary Allowance for Widows/Widowers (TAW): This may be paid to a widow/widower, irrespective of the cause of their spouse's death, if he/she were awarded Unemployability Supplement or Constant Attendance Allowance or both. The allowance is approximately equal to the disablement pension and allowances paid to their late spouse. It is paid for the first 26 weeks of widowhood.

Treatment Allowance (TA): This is equivalent to a disablement pension paid at the 100% rate. It may be paid instead of a disablement pension to a pensioner who incurs a loss of earnings as a result of receiving treatment for their pensioned disablement.

Tribunal: Tribunals hear appeals from all claimants who have disagreed with the decision made by the MOD on the outcome of their claim. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Pensions Appeal Tribunal operates, and in England and Wales, appeals are heard at the First-tier Tribunal (War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber). The Upper-tier Tribunal (Administrative Appeals Chamber) hears appeals against decisions made by the First-tier and Pensions Appeal Tribunals.

Unemployability Supplement (UNSUPP): This may be paid to a pensioner who is unemployable or virtually unemployable as a result of the war pensioned disablement. To gain entitlement, new claimants must be under age 65, with a pensioned disablement assessed at 60% or more when they make their claim. Additional allowances may be paid for a spouse and a child or children.

Unmarried Dependant: Partner who lived with the ex-service person for at least 6 months before his enlistment, was maintained by him and who has borne his child.

War Orphan: Child of deceased service person who has no surviving mother or father. Child whose mother was divorced from a service person at the time of death. Child who is not in the care of the surviving parent.

War Parent: Parent of the deceased service person.

War Pension Scheme (WPS): No fault compensation scheme for all members of the regular and reserve force. It provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death caused or made worse by service from WW1 in 1914 to 5 April 2005. Ex-service personnel are only eligible to claim once they've left the services.

War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS): Recipients of a War Pension can claim for extra, supplementary allowances to help with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability, one supplementary allowance being the WPMS. The WPMS is intended to help with the mobility costs of a pensioner who is unable to walk, or virtually unable to walk. To be eligible for WPMS:

- a War Pension must be in payment for the amputation of one or both legs (through or above the ankle), **or**
- your War Pension must be 40% or higher, **and**
- the conditions that your War Pension is for are the main reason you are unable to walk, or why you find walking difficult, **or**
- the conditions that your War Pension is for are the main reason why trying to walk could put you in danger or seriously damage your health, **or**
- you cannot walk outside without someone's help and your War Pension is for loss of vision assessed at 90% or more **and** hearing loss at 80% or more.

War widow/widower: Spouse of ex-service person whose death was whilst in service or related to a disablement due to service prior to 6 April 2005.

War widows'/widowers' Rent Allowance (RENT): A war widow/widower with a child or children may be eligible for a rent allowance.

War widows'/widowers' review: A review can be carried out where there is further evidence which could change the outcome of a claim.

War widow's/widower's Special Allowance: This is a Supplementary Pension payable to "pre-1973 war widows/widowers" (the widows/widowers of service personnel who died or left the services before 31 March 1973, and who did not benefit from the improvements made from that date to the MOD's Armed Forces Pension Scheme).

Working day: Any day in which legal business can be conducted. In this report, a working day is any day apart from a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday.

Appendix

Scheme information and definitions

1. This section provides a summary of the WPS. Full scheme information, including advice on how to submit a claim for compensation under the WPS can be found on the GOV.UK War Pension Scheme page.

2. The WPS provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005. All compensation claims are administered by the MOD.

3. The compensation arrangements provided by the WPS and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme were replaced on 6 April 2005 by the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) to pay compensation for injury, illness or death caused by service that occurred on or after that date. DS-H also publishes annual AFCS statistics on the GOV.UK website.

First disablement and second/subsequent claims and awards

4. A former serving member of the UK Armed Forces may submit a **first disablement claim** for compensation under the WPS for injury/illness caused by service. The claim will only be considered under the WPS if the claimant has left Service and the claimed injury/onset of illness occurred prior to 6 April 2005 (post 6 April 2005 claims are passed to the AFCS for consideration). There is no time limit to claim. The following cohorts are also eligible to claim for compensation under the WPS:
    - War-time service in the Naval Auxiliary Service, or the Mercantile Marine
    - Service in the Polish Forces under British command during World War Two
    - While serving in the Merchant Navy, the Coastguard Service, the Nursing Service and the Home Guard
    - While serving as a civil defence volunteer
    - As a prisoner of war
    - As a result of enemy action in the Second World War (as a civilian)

5. An initial decision is made by the MOD on whether to award each claim. Awarded claims are those considered to be service-attributable, following advice from a medical advisor. Medical advisors assess the level of each individual's disablement in comparison to that of an able-bodied person of the same age and gender. Disablement percentages awarded are between 0% and 100%:
    - Those awarded at a disablement percentage of 20% - 100% are paid an ongoing war pension, the percentage awarded reflected in the amount paid.
    - Those awarded at a disablement percentage of 1% - 19% are paid a one-off gratuity (lump sum) payment.
    - Cases where the claimed injury/illness is determined to be service-attributable but not severe enough to impact on daily life are awarded a nil (0%) award.

6. Prior to 22 February 2020, gratuity awards at levels 15-19% were unable to be recorded in line with other percentage levels on the War Pensions Computer System (WPCS) and therefore were not able to be picked up in the standard data processing for the report. A correction was made to the WPCS on 22 February 2020 meaning that figures from 2020/21 onwards are available.

7. Claimants are eligible to register for compensation for second/subsequent claims at a later date following the initial decision. This includes the worsening of existing conditions that have already been assessed under the scheme, and/or the onset of new conditions since the previous decision. There is no time limit to claim for second/subsequent conditions.

8. Successful second/subsequent claims will result in the claimant either receiving an additional lump sum payment (if the disablement percentage is between 1% and 19%), or an increase in the amount received (if the disablement percentage is 20% or above).

9. Full details of the 2025 and 2026 rates for disablement pensioner war pension and gratuity amounts can be found on the GOV.UK website.

10. If a claim for a further condition and a deterioration are received at the same time, due to the limitations of the WPCS/CT, only the further condition is recorded. A manual search of all claims received in the financial year would be needed to identify all deterioration claims which would require disproportionate cost.

War widows'/widowers' claims and awards

11. Where death is caused by service prior to 6 April 2005, the WPS provides an income stream known as a war widows/widowers pension, payable to the spouse, civil partner or adult dependant. Payments are also paid to eligible children. There is no time limit to claim. Claims for a war widows'/widowers' pension will be considered if the applicant's husband, wife or civil partner:
    - Died as result of their service in HM Armed Forces before 6 April 2005
    - Was a civil Defence volunteer or a civilian and their death was a result of the 1939 to 1945 war
    - Was a merchant seaman, a member of the naval auxiliary services, or a coastguard and their death was a result of an injury or disease they got during a war or because they were a prisoner of war
    - Died as a result of their service as a member of the Polish Forces under British command during the 1939 to 1945 war, or in the Polish Resettlement Forces
    - Was in receipt of the Constant Attendance Allowance at the time of their death, or would have been had they not been in hospital
    - Was in receipt of a Disablement Pension at the 80% rate or higher and was getting Unemployability Supplement
    - War widows'/widowers' claims are automatically considered, under the WPS, after a death in service, regardless of cause, if the service person joined the UK Armed Forces prior to 6 April 2005. Compensation will be awarded under the WPS if the cause of death was attributable to injury or ill health caused, or made worse by, service prior to this date. However, where cause of death is attributable to service post 6 April 2005, compensation will be awarded under the AFCS and the WPS claim will be rejected.

12. War widows'/widowers' claims are either awarded or rejected. The amount of compensation awarded to successful claims is determined by the rank of the spouse, age of the widow/widower and whether there were children in the family at time of death. Full details of the 2025 and 2026 rates for the war widows/widowers pension can be found on the GOV.UK war disablement pension rates webpage.

Supplementary Allowance claims and awards

13. Disablement pensioners and war widows/widowers in receipt of a war pension may apply for additional financial support to help with the extra costs of a long-term condition or disability. There is a wide range of supplementary allowances. A list of allowances and their definitions can be found under 'Supplementary Allowances' in the glossary section at the end of this Background Quality Report.

14. Some supplementary allowances are awarded and paid automatically when an individual meets certain criteria (e.g. age allowances), meaning no claim is required. As a result, it is difficult to identify how many people receive these allowances.

15. Further details on supplementary allowance rates of payment can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Appeals

16. If a claimant is unhappy with the outcome of their claim they can appeal to an independent tribunal. Tribunals are held at a First-Tier Tribunal in England and Wales. Tribunals are held at a Pension Appeal Tribunal for Scotland and Northern Ireland. Tribunal decisions are legally binding on both the appellant and the MOD. The Tribunal is bound by the rules of the scheme. Further information on Tribunals can be found in the glossary. For decisions made on or after 6 April 2023, claimants in England, Wales or overseas can submit their request directly to the War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Chamber. Claimants in Scotland can submit their requests directly to Pensions Appeal Tribunal Scotland and claimants in Northern Ireland still submit their requests to the MOD.

17. During the appeal process, if no new evidence is provided, the bundle is compiled by the caseworker. If new evidence is submitted, then the qualified medical advisor will consider whether the additional evidence changes the decision under appeal. If the decision is changed, the claimant is notified to ask if they wish to continue with the appeal. If the claimant chooses to continue with their appeal, a caseworker may contact third parties to obtain evidence to provide content for the bundle of evidence which is despatched to all parties of the appeal. The MOD has limited control over the amount of time the process of compiling evidence takes due to the need for contacting third parties. Further evidence can be considered after the initial bundle has been compiled, which can affect the amount of time it takes for the appeal to be resolved at the tribunal. The MOD has no control over the time taken for the tribunal to arrange a hearing date once the completed evidence bundle has been sent.

Awards for mesothelioma

18. The War Pensions Scheme is open to veterans diagnosed with diffuse mesothelioma as a result of exposure to asbestos during their military service prior to 6 April 2005. Prior to 16 December 2015, the WPS provided a war disablement pension and supplementary allowances and a war widows'/widowers' pension for an eligible partner paid for life.

19. Since 16 December 2015, veterans diagnosed with service-attributable mesothelioma have had the choice between a one-off, tax-free lump sum of £140,000 and regular, smaller payments in the form of an ongoing disablement pension. Disablement pensioners already in receipt of an ongoing pension on 16 December 2015 were entitled to receive a lump sum payment of £140,000 less any monies already received. Lump sum payments have been made since 1 April 2016.

20. Further details on the policy change can be found on GOV.UK website.