



Ministry
of Defence

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Our Ref: FOI2014/01133/13/04/72991

E-mail: Army Sec-group@mod.uk

Your Ref:

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

23 June 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 1 May 2014 requesting the following information:

"I would like details of the number of soldiers who have failed their Personal Fitness Test in the last three years? If possible I would like this figure broken down by sex. and

I would also like details of the number of soldier who are regarded as overweight or have been overweight in the last three years. This could be answered in terms of BMI values?"

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

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.

Defence Statistics have confirmed that between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2014 a total of 32,419 UK Regular Army personnel failed a Personal Fitness Assessment (PFA). Of these 29,600 were male and 2,819 were female. Compared against the average number of personnel serving during this period this figure equates to 11% of the Army. Please note some of the personnel who failed the test may have since passed a subsequent fitness test.

You ask for your second question to be answered in terms of BMI values. I should tell you that the Ministry of Defence use Body Composition Measurements (BCM) in their health risk assessments which does not comprise of BMI in isolation; waist circumference (WC) is also included. BMI does not differentiate between weight that is associated with muscle mass and weight associated with body fat. Therefore, the relationship between BMI and body fat varies according to body build and composition.

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2014, 22,068 UK Regular Army personnel had a health risk assessment category of increased risk (overweight with disease risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease). This figure may not include personnel who are exempt from testing, for example personnel who have been medically downgraded.

Please note, for personnel categorised as at increased risk; dependant on the level of health risk a monthly or quarterly re-assessment will take place, therefore they may have had their BCM measured more than once during this period and have subsequently reduced their risk to health level.

All personnel are provided with the support and training necessary in order to meet the Army's physical standards, with additional help for those personnel who fail to meet this criteria. Personnel who remain unable to meet the standard having received all available support are managed in accordance with current Army policy.

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

The Military Annual Training Test (MATT2) Policy was introduced in August 2008 (last amended in April 2013) and details the basic level of physical fitness testing for all Officers and Soldiers, in order to ensure that individuals are prepared for the physical and psychological demands of combat.

There are two elements of the MATT2 Policy:

- a. Personal Fitness Assessment (PFA). The PFA is in the format of press-ups, sit-ups and aerobic test, taking the form of a run or a MSFT (Multi-Stage Fitness Test) and requires a pass at the gender fair level equivalent to a PFA 'green'. Inability to attain a pass in any of the three elements will be deemed a fail and require remedial action in accordance with the current Fitness Test Failure Policy.
- b. Annual Fitness Test (AFT). The AFT consists of an 8 mile loaded march, in 2 hours carrying a load determined by an individual's Career Employment Group (CEG). It is conducted in combat clothing and boots.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Army Secretariat