



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Statistics (Health)
Ministry of Defence
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Reference: **FOI2014/05942**

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date: **14 November 2014**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 15 October 2014 requesting the following information:

"...I would like the numbers of all serving armed forces personnel who have been medically classified as obese since 2010.

I would like the numbers broken down by sex and service if possible."

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

Following clarification received on 30 October 2014, you agreed that we would provide the number of Regular UK Armed Forces personnel that have been recorded as obese from 1 January 2010 to 30 September 2014 (latest data available).

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.

Between 1 January 2010 and 30 September 2014 (latest data available):

- a. **2,979** UK Regular Naval Service¹ personnel had a body mass index of obese or above (greater or equal to 30 kg/m²). Of these, **2,736** were male and **243** were female.
- b. **16,467** UK Regular Army personnel had a body mass index of obese or above (greater or equal to 30 kg/m²). Of these, **15,607** were male and **860** were female.
- c. **5,570** UK Regular RAF personnel had a body mass index of obese or above (greater or equal to 30 kg/m²). Of these, **5,113** were male and **457** were female.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note the following:

The MOD use body composition in their health risk assessments which comprises of BMI and waist circumference (WC), rather than BMI in isolation. BMI is a simple index of height-weight and 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.

¹ Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

The BMI has been taken from the individual Services Fitness Information Software System (FISS). Personnel can opt not to be tested for their BMI if they pass their fitness test and therefore this figure may be an undercount of the true number of personnel who have had a body mass index of obese or above.

Personnel may have had their BMI measured more than once during this time period and may have subsequently lost or gained weight. All UK regular personnel with a BMI of obese or above at any time between 1 January 2010 and 30 September 2014 have been included.

These figures may not include personnel who are exempt from testing.

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 Deputy Chief Information Officer, 2nd 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>.

I hope you find this information useful

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)