

Response Document

Ministry of Defence Statistics Plan Consultation

Introduction

On 16th February 2015, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) opened a public consultation with users about proposals for collecting and publishing Official Statistics, including the priorities for current development and planned future developments. Primarily, the consultation sought users' views on whether the proposals within the Plan to amend or release new Official Statistics had an impact or consequences on users' needs.

The publication of a response to this consultation has been delayed largely due to (a) the restrictions in place during the election period earlier this year which prohibited the publication of consultation responses; and (b) the breadth of statistics covered by the Plan, and subsequently the consultation responses.

Consultation Outcome

Seven responses were received from both external and internal users during the consultation period which ended on 16th March 2015. Two responses from internal users have been dealt with separately through internal feedback.

As the responses received did not raise any objections to the prioritisation of work, to any planned future developments, nor refer to any adverse impact that the work set out in the Plan may have on users' circumstances, the Plan will remain as proposed. However, these responses will help to shape the development of the next Plan.

Annex A provides an update on statistical developments that were proposed in the Plan.

Some specific issues were highlighted in the consultation responses which go beyond the scope of the current Plan. The broad areas of interest raised in these responses are highlighted below, accompanied by an official response from the MOD. In a number of cases work is in development and further work is needed to see if the requests can be met. Once this has been completed, this will inform the development of the next Plan. In some cases the information requested is already available and is highlighted in the official response.

1. Reinstate statistics on employment in UK industry resulting from MOD expenditure

The request to reinstate these statistics has been carefully considered, however the MOD upholds its position that such numbers do not support MOD operations or policy formation. The Department considers that the purpose of the Defence Budget is to maintain the Armed Forces so that they can contribute to our nation's security. Every pound the MOD spends must contribute to the security of the United Kingdom. Decisions on where personnel are based; on which contracts are let to which firms and hence jobs that may be created or supported as a result; are based solely on what is best for the Armed Forces. Where possible, the MOD will continue to publicise numbers of jobs secured/created and values of contracts awarded on individual projects throughout the UK when it is preparing to make such announcements, but such estimates will come from industry/defence contractors and not the MOD.

2. Location/demographic information about medically discharged Service Personnel

The MOD publishes the annual [Medical Discharge](#) Official Statistic covering personnel who medically discharge, and will look to include medical discharge numbers by location in the report; however, as with any statistics released Data Protection Act/disclosure issues will need to be considered.

In relation to the demographics of medically discharged Personnel, the Medical Discharge Official Statistic has tables by age and gender. In addition to this, the Military Diversity Statistics publication, due for release in November 2015, presents outflow data for age and gender (previously published in the UK Armed Forces [Annual Personnel Report](#)).

3. Numbers of Service Personnel, their families, civilians and veterans at small geographical levels, including age breakdown; Numbers of occupants of Service Family Accommodation.

The MOD publishes an annual Official Statistic on the [Location of UK Armed Forces pension and compensation recipients](#), which provides the location of veterans who have a current War Pension and the location of veterans who have claimed under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS). The War Pension provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death caused or made worse by service from WW1 in 1914 to 5 April 2005. The AFCS provides compensation for all injuries, ill-health and death attributable to service where the cause occurred on or after 6 April 2005. The location information in this report is provided by Clinical Commissioning Group, county, Local Authority and region.

The MOD is planning to review the information published on location statistics in 2015/16 but does not currently hold the level of detail requested. The MOD will bear in mind user requirements expressed via the consultation in this review, and explore whether these additional requirements could be met. However, as with any statistics released at such a low geographical level, Data Protection Act/disclosure issues will need to be considered.

The [Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey](#) 2015 report, published on 30 July 2015, contains estimates of the size of Regular Armed Forces families where the member of the Armed Forces is married or in a civil partnership. The report shows the proportion of Armed Forces families of each size and in each broad age category, for example “Young family – under 5s only”. The supporting tables show estimates of family size by Service (Naval Service, Army, RAF) and location (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, non-UK). Quality information is provided to inform users of the precision of the estimates.

Information on the number of children is held on Joint Personnel Administration but the quality of the field is not known and therefore is not pro-actively released.

4. Service Personnel and Reserves statistics

4.1 Future Reserves – various requirements including the percentage that have former Regular Service.

The MOD has been working to improve the quality and range of statistics available on reserves and we plan to continue to do so in 2015/16. The data items requested in responses to the consultation are among those which have not yet been reviewed/assessed and therefore are not currently available for publication in Official Statistics. It is not currently possible to say if/when these data will be published.

4.2 Support expressed for new Official Statistic on Armed Forces longevity and progression statistics, including request for additional information on ‘chance of survival and promotion statistics’.

The MOD is conducting a review of these statistics. This review commenced last year and work continues this summer. It will consider the methodological basis for producing statistics along with their fitness for purpose. The review will take into account points raised in response to the consultation. A decision on whether to regularly publish statistics will be made depending on the outcome of the review.

4.3 Support expressed for Service Personnel Recruitment and Harmony Statistics

The MOD currently publishes intake figures (i.e. the number of recruits into the Armed Forces) in the Quarterly Personnel Report (pages 26 to 32). Following a review and public consultation, we have replaced the Monthly Personnel Report, Quarterly Personnel Report and Annual Personnel Report with a new [Monthly Service Personnel Statistics](#) publication from July 2015 statistics (published 13 August 2015). New data series will be added incrementally into the publication. Statistics relating to applications to join the Armed Forces were included in the 13 August 2015 publication and it is envisaged that harmony statistics will be included in the September 2015 publication.

5. Additional statistics on the transition from military to civilian life including figures split by employment/education/training and voluntary work; use of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for comparison of earnings.

The [Career Transition Partnership](#) (CTP) Official Statistic presents the employment outcome for Personnel six months after leaving the UK Armed Forces. In addition it presents, for those who have left, the numbers who used the CTP services. The report does not present length of time taken for Personnel to use the CTP services as entitled Personnel are able to use the CTP services from two years before they are due to leave.

Currently information relating to education, training, voluntary work and whether employment is full-time or part-time for Service leavers who use the CTP services is not routinely collected. However, MOD is currently investigating the feasibility of routinely collecting this information to enable it to be presented in the CTP Official Statistic. The Official Statistic already presents employment by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) however due to the low numbers this is not currently presented by two digit groupings, MOD will revisit this decision. Please note the Plan proposed to present both Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and SOC in the Official Statistic, not replace SOC with SIC. MOD will investigate the feasibility of presenting employment type by age dependent on there being no risk of individual identities being revealed.

6. Support expressed for Build Your Own Table (BYOT)

BYOT is not currently available externally due to ongoing testing – we will inform users when it is available. Work to develop BYOT for health/medical data has been discussed, but is not in scope for 2015/16 due to available resource. It was considered a low priority in 2014/15 due to the challenges of patient confidentiality and the potential for disclosure issues.

7. Health Statistics

7.1 Additional information on co-morbidities in proposed new Wounded, Injured and Sick Official Statistic

The proposed new official statistic on Wounded, Injured and Sick will report on all Service personnel in the recovery pipeline, including mental health problems, musculo-skeletal problems, amputees etc. The early publications will focus on the wounded/injured/sick split, length of time in recovery and latest status (returned to duty, discharge from Service etc).

7.2 Additional information in proposed new Types of Injury Official Statistic

The proposed new official statistic on types of injury resulting from operations in Afghanistan will include a section on latest status (returned to duty, downgraded and discharge from Service), please note that their latest status may not be attributable to the injury sustained on operations.

7.3 Quarterly statistics on extended temporary registration

MOD policy on temporary patient registrations is still in development and once this has been finalised, and rolled out, MOD will look to include this information as part of the current quarterly official statistic on NHS Commissioning populations.

Annex A: Current status of proposed statistical developments and priorities

| | Status |
|---|---|
| Finance & Economics Statistics | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Improvements and refinements to Defence Inflation Statistics and (b) publishing a Statistical Methodology Note explaining these. | <p>(a) Complete. A methodology review was completed for the 13/14 report. Only very minor changes to the methods were made, though the commentary and methodology sections of the report were updated.</p> <p>(b) No longer applicable. As only minor changes were made, it was decided that a separate methodology note was not needed. These changes are explained in the Defence Inflation report itself and in the Background Quality report.</p> |
| Personnel - Military | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and restructuring of Service personnel statistics bulletins, and QPR/APR/MPR/Diversity Dashboard/Reserves & Cadets publications. | Complete. A review was conducted and an external consultation held. The consultation outcome was published in July 2015: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of Table 5bi from Quarterly Personnel Report. | Considered as a part of the review of Service personnel statistics bulletins. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of additional Service Personnel recruitment statistics. | In progress. Discussed above in paragraph 4.3. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of regular harmony statistics. | In progress. Discussed above in paragraph 4.3. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of quarterly location statistics. | Some changes implemented as a part of the review of Service personnel statistics bulletins (publication format and addition of some time series on previously published data). A wider review is planned for later in 2015/16. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Royal Navy & Royal Marines Monthly Situation Report and Quarterly Pocket Brief. | In progress, expected to be implemented from November 2015. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the feasibility of publishing Armed Forces 'Career Longevity and Progression' Statistics on a regular basis. | In progress. Discussed above in paragraph 4.2. |
| Personnel - Civilian | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Quarterly Civilian Personnel Report, split Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) personnel into sponsored reserve status, non-sponsored reserve status and cadets. | In progress, expected to be implemented from November 2015. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of quarterly Official Statistics on civilian sickness absence by TLB and Trading Fund. | In progress, aiming to implement by the end of 2015. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstating Build Your Own Table. | Not complete. Discussed above in paragraph 6. |

| Health | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to publish a bi-annual Wounded, Injured and Sick Official Statistic. | Not complete. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to publish a one-off Op HERRICK IED Official Statistic. | Not complete. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to publish a one-off Official Statistic on types of injury sustained in Afghanistan (2001 onwards). | Not complete. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional table to Annual Deaths in UK Regular Armed Forces publication showing number of reservist deaths from 1984 to date. | To be published March 2016 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand statistics presented in Amputations Official Statistic and proposed reduction in frequency of publication. | Reduction in frequency is complete following external consultation. Outcome published in May 2015. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the Medical Discharges Official Statistic including the presentation of new information on the impact of co-morbidity on trends. | In progress. Discussed above in paragraph 7. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in frequency of Career Transition Partnership Official Statistic and the presentation of additional breakdowns in the report. | Reduction in frequency is complete. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional statistics in annual War Pension Scheme publication. | Aim to be in 2016 publication |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional statistics in the bi-annual Armed Forces Compensation Scheme publication. | Waiting times published in June 2015 publication, AFIP to be published Dec 2015, all other additional stats to be published in 2016. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amalgamation of datasets for Annual Veterans Location Official Statistic. | Completed and published in May 2015. |
| Equipment | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed regular Official Statistic on fleet sizes of unmanned aircraft. | Not complete. |
| Activities of the UK Armed Forces | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of one-off Official Statistic on use of unmanned aircraft on Op HERRICK (Afghanistan). | Not complete. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transference of Search and Rescue statistics to DfT. Proposal to hold user consultation on changes to MOD Search and Rescue statistics. | Consultation is complete – outcome published in June 2015. |
| Other Official Statistics | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to consult users on cessation of UK Defence Statistics Factsheet. | Not complete. |