Dear Mr Gee,

Thank you for your email of 22 February 2023 in which you asked for the following information:

In 2020 the following parliamentary question was asked: 'To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the data recorded in the Joint Personnel Administration system, how many complaints have been made by Junior Soldiers or their parents or guardians about (a) violent behaviour by staff and (b) inappropriate relationships between Junior Soldiers and staff since 1 January 2014.' Link

The minister answered with data for the period between 1 January 2014 and 31 October 2020. Can you please tell me the answer to the same question for the period from 1 November 2020 to the present?

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held and can be found below. Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA. For this reason the answer to your request has been rounded.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Section 40(2) requires the Department to conduct a balancing exercise, this exercise involves balancing the rights and interests of individuals against the legitimate interests in disclosure, this is not the same as carrying out the public interest test associated with certain exemptions in FOIA. The balancing exercise is carried out in order to decide whether the absolute exemption in section 40(2) is engaged. In particular, there is no assumption of disclosure in the legitimate interests test, as there is with qualified exemptions. The outcome of the balancing exercise lay in withholding the third-party personal data identified in the attached information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Incident(s) Reported</th>
<th>Number of cases: a) violent behaviour by staff (includes allegations of assault/battery/ill-treatment of subordinate)</th>
<th>Number of cases: b) inappropriate relationships between Junior Soldiers and staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 November 2020 – 21 February 2023</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes/Caveats

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest ten and “–” represents zero or rounded to zero. Rounding is used as a means of disclosure control and the preservation of anonymity.
2. Each case relates to one suspect but may include more than one alleged incident and/or victim. One suspect may have more than one case recorded.
3. JPA is a live system which is updated for retrospective complaints/allegations and therefore data can be subject to change.
4. In each case a judgement was made as to whether an allegation constituted violent behaviour.
5. Please note that the figures provided are single Service estimates based on data which is not gathered for statistical purposes or subject to the same level of scrutiny as official statistics produced by Defence Statistics. The figures provided may therefore be subject to data quality issues affecting their accuracy.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner’s website at https://ico.org.uk/.

Yours sincerely,

Personnel 2
Army Secretariat