



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2019/05139

E-mail: People-Sec-
ParliMailbox@mod.gov.uk

Ms Jessica Browne-Swinburne
[request-572043-9ddf62ef@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

10 June 2019

Dear Ms Browne-Swinburne,

Thank you for your email of 30 April requesting the following information:

"How many men and how many women have, as serving members of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force, sought to be conscientious objectors in each of the following years: 2011- 2018? Can you break down the yearly figures by gender? Can you indicate which were successful and which went to ACCO? Please supply me with separate figures for each service and each year."

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

In regard to information held by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) relating to how many Service men and women sought to be conscientious objectors, in accordance with Section 12 of the FOIA, the MOD is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the cost of doing so would exceed the appropriate limit. The cost limit is currently set at £600 for central government. The Fees Regulations require that the costs are estimated at the rate of £25 per person per hour. The £600 appropriate limit relates to an official devoting around three and a half days (24 hours) of chargeable staff effort to a request. It has been estimated that your request will exceed this limit.

This is because there are multiple levels that an application can be raised to, and unsuccessful requests are not centrally recorded. Although those leaving as 'conscientious objectors' have this information recorded in their own personnel files, records on the central administration system capture this under the broader heading 'compassionate reasons' and as such this information is also not recorded centrally. To extract the information in scope of your request would involve the search for and scrutiny of all terminations based on compassionate grounds to then identify those categorised as being conscientious objectors.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) it may be helpful if I explain that the ACCO only sits when cases are referred to them; no cases have been referred to the ACCO since 2011.

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 us in the first instance at the address above. 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, Ground 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 normally 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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat.