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Ref:ArmyPolSec/C/S/FOI2024/12210

Mr David Gee
[request-1144191-
dbf35e1f@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-1144191-dbf35e1f@whatdotheyknow.com)

2 August 2024

Dear Mr Gee,

Thank you for your email of 4 July 2024 in which you requested the following information:

Thank you for your response to my request for an internal review following my request on the above subject ref. FOI2023/09865.

For this fresh request, can you please answer the following:

- 1. How many sexual offence cases involving victims under age 18 have been handled by the Service Police in the last three full years for which records are available?*
- 2. How many of these cases were in the army?*
- 3. Of the army cases, how many concerned a) female and b) male victims, and how many led to successful prosecution.*

This is a simplified version of my earlier request, which was refused because I specified a source that had become obsolete. In this request, I am asking you to provide the information wherever the data may be stored.

If the request exceeds the resource limit, then please answer as much of the request as possible beginning with point 1.

If you believe that releasing the data may disclose the identities of individuals, please have regard to the queries I raised about this in my last request, which were set out in my request for internal review. I believe that the ICO has also asked you to do this, should this be an issue.

My last request took several months to answer, as did the request for internal review. Overall, it took nine months. Please let me know if you expect this request to take longer than 20 working days.

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

However, I have to advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate limit. This is because to extract information in scope of your request would involve a manual search of over 600 records which would take at least some 14 working days of effort.

Section 12(1) of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit. For example, if you were to ask for a shorter date range such as just 2023, and if requesting information about Army cases to confirm if you are interested in whether the victim or the suspect or both are in the Army and whether the investigations were undertaken by the Royal Military Police or by any Service Police Force. Please contact me if you would like to refine your request or require advice on doing so.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that on 5 December 2022 the Defence Service Crime Unit (DSCU) was formed which is an independent tri-service Service Police force with jurisdiction to investigate serious crime alleged to have been committed by persons subject to Service law, in the UK and overseas. This includes sexual offences. More information about the DSCU can be found here:

[Defence Serious Crime Unit \(DSCU\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-serious-crime-unit)

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 Leader A
Army Policy and Secretariat