



Ministry  
of Defence

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Ref: FOI 2022/15063

Mr David Gee  
[request-929629-1e756645@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-929629-1e756645@whatdotheyknow.com)

17 January 2022

Dear Mr Gee,

Thank you for your email on 16 December 2022 requesting the following information:

*“Can you please tell me what was the suicide rate per 100,000 personnel in the 16-19 age group in the a) army, and b) armed forces in the period 1984-2021.”*

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

- a. In the period 1 January 1984 to 31 December 2021, the suicide rate of UK regular Army personnel aged 16-19 was 14.8 per 100,000 personnel.
- b. In the period 1 January 1984 to 31 December 2021, the suicide rate of UK regular Armed Forces personnel aged 16-19 was 12.0 per 100,000 personnel.

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

MOD produce an annual [National Statistic on UK Armed Forces suicides](#). The ‘Figure 6 data’ tab within the supplementary data tables of this statistic contains three-year moving average rates for UK regular Armed Forces male suicides by age group.

## Background Notes

### Suicide Data

- Defence Statistics Health compiles the Department’s authoritative deaths database for all UK Armed Forces personnel who died whilst in Service going back to 1984. Information is compiled from several internal and external sources from which we release a number of internal analyses and external National Statistics Notices. The information presented has been compiled from data held by Defence Statistics on 03 January 2023.
- The information presented includes coroner-confirmed suicides and open verdict deaths in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the publication of National Statistics. The National Statistics definition of suicide includes deaths given an underlying cause of intentional self-harm or an injury/poisoning of undetermined intent. In England and Wales, it has been customary to assume that most injuries and poisonings of undetermined intent are cases where the harm was self-inflicted, but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves and thus given an open or narrative verdict by the coroner.

- The information presented includes coroner-confirmed suicides only.
- Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment. Figures include male and female personnel.
- Rates enable comparisons between groups and over time, taking account of the number of personnel in a group (personnel at risk) at a point in time. The number of events (i.e. deaths) is divided by the number of personnel at risk and multiplied by 100,000 to calculate the rate.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to statistics and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing [Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk).

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

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.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.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](#).

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics Health (Analysis Directorate)