



Ministry
of Defence

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

Ref: FOI2018/16079

25 March 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 19 December requesting the following information:

"With regards to my FOI request and your response, I wish to refine and amend my request, as per your advice. Details of my revised questions are below.

1 - How many investigations has the Service Police conducted since 2017 under AFA 06 into claims/allegations and/or information received, that someone had links to a far-right organisation. These should include all proscribed organisations plus English Defence League, Britain First, Scottish Defence League, System Resistance Network, British National Party, National Front, Combat 18, British People's Party, British Democratic Party and North West Infidels."

2 - Can you provide details of the above investigations please including the outcomes and names of the relevant organisations (eg National Action) - which service was involved.

3 - How many people were dismissed/sacked as a result of the above investigations and which service were they in? eg If army, can you say which battalion

4 - Can you advise please how many of the above allegations involved local police forces and how many people ended up in a civilian court on charges?

5 - What measures are in place to "ensure those exhibiting extremist views are neither tolerated nor permitted to serve"?"

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

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

I am writing to confirm that MOD may hold the information on the subject you have requested. However, I must advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the limit for FOI responses. Section 12 of the FOI 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.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note, there is no method on REDCAPS (the Service Police database) to record whether a crime has links to far-right organisations, other than in free text description of the offence. REDCAPS does not have a search facility for the free text sections, so the only way to search for the information would be to manually open and read every offence recorded.

In the period 1 Jan 2017 to 1 Jan 2019, there have been 6613 new records added to the Service Police database called REDCAPS and it would take a minimum of 5 mins to manually check free text field to see if there was any reference to extremism etc. That would take around 551 hrs. Even if we were to check one month, and you average the 6613 as 275 records per month, that would be 23 hrs work. However, by looking at just one month it would not give a meaningful answer as there might not be anything recorded, either because there were no investigations which had a link to extremism or nothing was recorded in the free text section.

There is no specific policy document "to ensure those exhibiting extremist views are neither tolerated nor permitted to serve". Extremist ideologies are completely at odds with the core values and standards of the Armed Forces. Values and standards are imperative in the training and development of our personnel. Individuals are regularly briefed and trained on these standards and must abide by them whether on or off duty.

All service personnel are subject to vetting as part of the recruitment process which will establish any prior criminal convictions or links to extremist or proscribed organisations. Vetting reviews are also conducted both periodically throughout a service persons career and as and when a service person requires a different level of vetting or clearance for a specific role. All personnel are bound by UK legislation concerning participation in extremist groups and membership of such organisations is a criminal offence.

You may wish to know that the Armed Forces are working alongside PREVENT teams within the Home Office and Police to provide units with regional points of contact who are there to take the lead and provide advice. PREVENT training is being developed for the units and key course are now being made aware of the action to take if they believe an individual is showing signs of radicalization of any kind. The information / suspicions are reported to the Civilian Police in the first instance who will advise the unit of the follow-on actions. Each circumstance is likely to be different.

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