

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Statistics on Defence Health

(produced by the Ministry of Defence)

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About the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

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1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports¹ prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*². The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*³. The report covers the set of statistics reported in the following National Statistics publications, produced by the Ministry of Defence (MOD):

- *Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces*⁴ (*Deaths in Forces*);
- *Suicide and Open Verdict Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces*⁵ (*SOV Deaths in Forces*);
- *1990/1991 Gulf Conflict – UK Gulf Veterans Mortality Data: Causes of Death*⁶ (*Gulf Conflict*); and
- *War Pensions Statistics*⁷ (*WPS*).

1.1.2 The Act also allows departments to request an assessment of other official statistics in order for them to gain National Statistics status. In response to such a request, the report covers the official statistics reported in *Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Statistics (AFCS)*⁸ produced by the MOD.

1.1.3 Section 3 of this report adopts an ‘exception reporting’ approach – it includes text only to support the Requirements made to strengthen compliance with the *Code* and Suggestions made to improve confidence in the production, management and dissemination of these statistics. This abbreviated style of report reflects the Head of Assessment’s consideration of aspects of risk and materiality⁹. The Assessment team nonetheless assessed compliance with all parts of the *Code of Practice* and has commented on all those in respect of which some remedial action is recommended.

1.1.4 This report was prepared by the Authority’s Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=MORTALITY>

⁵ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=SUICIDES>

⁶ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=GULFVETERANS>

⁷ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=WARPENSIONS>

⁸ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php?pub=AFCS>

⁹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/criteria-for-deciding-upon-the-format-of-an-assessment-report.pdf>

in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics detailed in paragraph 1.1.1 can be designated as National Statistics, and has determined that the statistics detailed in paragraph 1.1.2 can be designated as new National Statistics products, subject to the MOD implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by June 2012.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 1.3.1 The MOD encourages feedback from the users of the statistics, but has not published information about users' views of the statistics or the statistical service it provides. It also has not fully documented the use made of the statistics.
- 1.3.2 The MOD publishes some information about the methods used to produce the statistics in *Deaths in Forces*, *SOV Deaths in Forces* and *Gulf Conflict*, but very little about the methods used to produce the statistics in *WPS* and *AFCS*. The MOD does not currently publish information about the strengths and weaknesses of the statistics in relation to their uses.
- 1.3.3 *Deaths in Forces* and *AFCS* include helpful commentary, which provides explanations for the trends presented in the releases. The other releases also include comments on the statistics, but need to be improved so that the main messages are drawn out more clearly, and the statistics are explained in such a way that assists user interpretation.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the Ministry of Defence could strengthen its compliance with the *Code*. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

Requirement 1	Publish information about users' views of the statistics and document the use made of the statistics (para 3.1).
Requirement 2	i) Confirm that, in future, any changes to methods or classifications will be announced in advance of the release of the changed statistics; and ii) Make clear whether statistics within <i>WPS</i> are subject to revision (para 3.2).
Requirement 3	Improve the published information about the methods used to produce these statistics (para 3.3).

- Requirement 4** Publish more information about the quality of these statistics, taking into account the use of the statistics (para 3.4).
- Requirement 5** Improve the commentary in the releases so that it aids user interpretation of the statistics (para 3.5).
- Requirement 6** Review the content of *WPS* and *AFCS* in consultation with users (para 3.6).
- Requirement 7** Make all the statistics available in a format which encourages re-use, and make clear to users how they can access information relevant to their needs (para 3.7).

2 Subject of the assessment

- 2.1 *Deaths in Forces* provides statistics annually on the number of deaths and the cause of death among the UK Regular Armed Forces. The report presents statistics on death amongst personnel serving in each of the three Services (Naval Service, Army and RAF) and also presents comparisons of the number of deaths and causes of death to the UK general population.
- 2.2 *SOV Deaths in Forces* presents statistics annually on suicides and open verdict deaths that have occurred among individuals serving in the UK regular Armed Forces since 1984. This report includes both coroner-confirmed suicides and open verdict deaths, in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹⁰.
- 2.3 *Gulf Conflict* presents statistics on the causes of death among UK veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict. It compares death rates among Armed Forces personnel who were deployed to the Gulf war ('Gulf cohort') with an 'Era cohort', which is made up of Armed Forces personnel of a similar profile in terms of gender, service, regular/reservists status and rank as those who were deployed to the Gulf war. In response to public interest, data on deaths among Gulf Conflict were first analysed by the University of Manchester, covering the period April 1991 to March 1999. This analysis was subsequently updated by the MOD. Between July 2000 and July 2003, the MOD regularly presented statistics to Parliament on deaths among Gulf Conflict and these were published in Hansard¹¹ twice a year. Since January 2004, the MOD has published statistics on the causes of death of Gulf Conflict as official statistics in a National Statistics release. *Gulf Conflict* was published twice a year from 2004 to 2008 and annually since then.
- 2.4 *WPS* presents statistics on the characteristics of the recipients of war pensions and the pensions themselves – for example, the type of pension (or payment) and how much has been paid out under each pension or payment category. It includes information about new claims, awards and appeals under the War Pension Scheme¹². Pensions, allowances and other payments are awarded under this scheme to claimants as a result of death or disablement after serving in the UK Armed Forces before 6 April 2005. The statistics are produced from data stored on the War Pensions Computer System of the Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency's¹³ (SPVA). *WPS* was published quarterly between 2001 and 2009, twice a year in 2010 and 2011 and annually from 2012.
- 2.5 *AFCS* presents statistics on the number of claims under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme registered by financial year, and the number of claims cleared by financial year, and by quarter. Claims include injury claims raised by a claimant as well as medical discharge and death-in-

¹⁰ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-health4/suicides-in-the-united-kingdom/2010/stb-statistical-bulletin.html#tab-Definition-of-suicide>

¹¹ http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1999/dec/16/gulf-veterans-number-and-causes-of-deaths

¹² http://www.veterans-uk.info/pensions/wdp_new_index.html

¹³ <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/SPVA/>

service cases which are automatically referred to the SPVA. SPVA decides on the outcome of the claims. The statistics are produced using data on the Compensation and Pension System (CAPS). The Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme came into force on 6 April 2005 to pay compensation for injury, illness or death caused by service that occurred on or after that date. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pension Scheme and the Armed Forces Pensions Scheme.

- 2.6 *Deaths in Forces* and *SOV Deaths in Forces* are used to compile the MOD's annual *Statement of Health of the Armed Forces*. Each of the three single services also produces an Annual Health Report which draws on these statistics. The statistics are also used by the Armed Forces Mental Wellbeing Steering Group to monitor trends in deaths by suicide. *Gulf Conflict* is used by veterans' organisations, such as The Royal British Legion, to keep up to date with the latest information available regarding any differences between mortality rates of gulf veterans and other Armed Forces personnel. Charities, the NHS and other organisations outside the MOD use the statistics within *WPS* and *AFCS* for estimating and planning veteran casework provision. The statistics are also used within the MOD for workload planning and developing policy for war pensions.
- 2.7 The MOD publishes other official statistics on defence health which are not included in this assessment. These include statistics on MOD operations, mental health, medical discharges and health and safety¹⁴.
- 2.8 The MOD told us that it takes the resource of approximately 3 full time equivalents to produce these statistics.

¹⁴ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=66&pubType=0>

3 Assessment findings

- 3.1 The MOD holds annual user consultation meetings about its statistics and publishes the minutes of meetings¹⁵. The MOD told us that the statistics on defence health are only discussed if a user present at the meetings comments on them. MOD statisticians regularly attend and contribute to an Armed Forces Veterans 'Customer Advisory Group' which meets twice a year and is hosted by the Service Personnel Veterans Agency (SPVA). This forum provides the opportunity for consultation with users of the *WPS*, *AFCS* and *Gulf Conflict* from outside the MOD. The MOD invites feedback on its statistics on the front page of each release. However, it has not published information about the feedback it has received on these publications and the statistical service that it provides in relation to this group of statistics. It also has little documentation about the use made of these statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should publish information about users' views of the statistics and document the use made of the statistics¹⁶ (Requirement 1). We suggest that the MOD refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, *The Use Made of Official Statistics*¹⁷ when documenting use.
- 3.2 The provider of AFCS data to the MOD changed from 'Paymaster' (an external agency) to SPVA in January 2009, but the data source remained the same. The MOD marked clearly which statistics were affected by this change within the release and stated in the release that there had been a change in the data provider. However, this change was not announced in advance. Also, the release did not include information about the extent of the revisions that had been made. This release has now been superseded by a June 2011 release which replaces all historic versions of the report, since the MOD identified a processing error which resulted in incorrect allocation of claims. The June 2011 release includes information about the nature and extent of the processing error revisions. *WPS* does not make clear whether the statistics are subject to revision. Since January 2005, *Gulf Conflict* includes age adjusted estimates for the 'Era cohort', because the MOD found there was an age difference between the cohorts. The change in methodology was described in the background notes of the publication, but was not announced in advance. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should: i) confirm that, in future, any changes to methods or classifications will be announced in advance of the release of the changed statistics; and ii) make clear whether statistics within *WPS* are subject to revision¹⁸ (Requirement 2).
- 3.3 *Gulf Conflict* contains an overview of the methods used, and some information about the data sources used, to produce the statistics, but the MOD does not publish information about the rationale for the methods it has chosen or an explanation of how the data are collated from the different sources. Also, the methods information in *Deaths in Forces* does not make clear how often the MOD checks deaths data, how this is done and how existing data is updated.

¹⁵ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=48&pubType=4&thiscontent=5210&PublishTime=09:30:00&date=2011-06-22&disText=22%20June%202011&from=listing&topDate=2011-06-22>

¹⁶ In relation to Principle 1, Practices 1, 2 and 3 of the *Code of Practice*

¹⁷ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/index.html>

¹⁸ In relation to Principle 2, Practices 4 and 6 of the *Code of Practice*

The release explains that after 2007, the statistics are based on registered deaths rather than reported deaths, but it does not explain why this change was made, how it impacts on the statistics and what this means for their use. Both *Deaths in Forces* and *SOV Deaths in Forces* state that the statistics are standardised by age and gender, but the MOD does not publish information about how this is done. *SOV Deaths in Forces* includes only an overview of methods used; the MOD does not publish an explanation of how data from different sources have been collated or how often the MOD receives cause of death information. The MOD publishes little information about the methods used to produce the statistics in *WPS* and *AFCS*. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should improve the published information about the methods used to produce these statistics¹⁹ (Requirement 3).

- 3.4 *Gulf Conflict, Deaths in Forces* and *SOV Deaths in Forces* all include confidence intervals, but these are not explained. *WPS* and *AFCS* do not include information about the accuracy of the statistics. None of the releases provides information about the strengths and weaknesses of the statistics in relation to their use. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should publish more information about the quality of these statistics, taking into account the use of the statistics²⁰ (Requirement 4).
- 3.5 *Deaths in Forces* and *AFCS* contain helpful commentary which explains the reasons for changes and trends in the time-series. *SOV Deaths in Forces* also includes a useful discussion of the reasons for the change over time in the methods people use to commit suicide, but not the overall downward trend in suicides. *Gulf Conflict* and *WPS* describe the statistics they present but provide little explanation for the findings and trends. *WPS* and *AFCS* contain many detailed data tables so it is difficult to draw out the main points of interest. None of the releases contain sufficient information about the policy and operational context in which the statistics have been collected and will be used. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should improve the commentary in the releases so that it aids user interpretation of the statistics²¹ (Requirement 5). We suggest that in meeting this requirement the MOD should consider the points detailed in annex 2.
- 3.6 The topics covered by *WPS* and *AFCS* are closely related, but they do not refer to one another or explain how the statistics relate, and how users should interpret the two sets of statistics. The releases are both quite detailed but it is not clear whether the analysis presented is meeting users' needs. As outlined in paragraph 3.1, the MOD has not documented users' needs for the statistics or published any information about users' experience of these statistics. The MOD told us that it receives a lot of user requests for different analyses of the statistics in *WPS* and *AFCS*. Users may benefit from a review of the two releases to establish: whether different content would better meet their needs; whether all the statistics included in the releases are necessary; and whether the statistics would be more helpfully presented alongside one another in one release. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should

¹⁹ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 1 and Principle 8, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁰ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 and Principle 8, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

²¹ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

review the content of *WPS* and *AFCS* in consultation with users²² (Requirement 6).

- 3.7 The MOD has recently improved its 'Build your own' table tool²³ (BYOT) so that users can download tables in CSV format. Statistics from *WPS* are available on BYOT only up to 2009. Statistics from *AFCS* are scheduled to be added to BYOT during 2012. Statistics from *Gulf Conflict, Deaths in Forces* and *SOV Deaths in Forces* are not available in BYOT. The MOD does not make clear to users of defence health statistics how they can access the statistics in forms that enable re-use and what statistics are available from the tool. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the MOD should make all the statistics available in a format which encourages re-use, and make clear to users how they can access information relevant to their needs²⁴ (Requirement 7).

²² In relation to Principle 1, Practices 1 & 3, Principle 7, Practices 2 & 5, Principle 8, Practices 2 & 4 and Principle 1, Practices 3 & 6 of the *Code of Practice*

²³ <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=30>

²⁴ In relation to Principle 8, Practices 4 & 6 and Protocol 1, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the Ministry of Defence's Health statistics in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

Suggestion 1 Refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, *The Use Made of Official Statistics* when documenting use (para 3.1).

Suggestion 2 Consider the points detailed in annex 2, in seeking to improve the statistical releases (para 3.6).

Annex 2: Compliance with Standards for Statistical Releases

- A2.1 In October 2010, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Releases*²⁵. Whilst this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and compliance with the *Code*. In relation to the statistical releases associated with Defence Health Statistics, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.
- A2.2 In implementing any Requirements of this report (at paragraph 1.5) which relate to the content of statistical releases, we encourage the producer body to apply the standards as fully as possible.

Appropriate identification of the statistics being released

- A2.3 *Deaths in Forces*, *SOV Deaths in Forces*, and *Gulf Conflict* have titles which describe the coverage of the release but the titles of all releases, apart from *Deaths in Forces*, do not make clear the period to which the latest statistics relate. However, in *SOV Deaths in Forces*, this is explained in the first sentence of the release.
- A2.4 The releases do not state how regularly they are updated, but *Gulf Conflict* includes information about when the data are updated.
- A2.5 The releases include standard headings and logos, apart from *AFCS*. *AFCS* contains contact information and an invitation for feedback on the front page as the other releases do, but does not have the standard logos on the front page.
- A2.6 All releases include a brief account of what is included in the release, but some do not state the tables and charts which are in the release at the beginning.
- A2.7 *Gulf Conflict* states when the release has been updated until, but not the period which the update covered or which statistics have changed from the previous release. *SOV Deaths in Forces* states the new period which the updated release also covers, but it does not state which tables have been affected by the update. *WPS* does not explain whether the statistics are subject to revision.

Include commentary that is helpful to the non-expert and presents the main messages in plain English

- A2.8 Each release includes a summary of key points. The releases contain language which is straightforward, with technical terms explained where necessary. The commentary in *SOV Deaths in Forces* refers to characteristics of the single services which may be a reason for the observed differences across the services in the statistics. It also explains the trends in the methods used to commit suicide, but it does not provide an explanation for the trend in total suicide rates which the release also presents. The commentary within *Gulf Conflict* describes the statistics presented in the charts and tables within the release, but does not explain the reasons for changes and trends. It does not

²⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html>

make clear why the release focuses on the comparison of the 'Gulf cohort' with the 'Era cohort' as opposed to with the UK general population; it would be useful if *Gulf Conflict*, *Deaths in Forces* and *SOV Deaths in Forces* used a common comparison population. The MOD has told us that it intends to include Standard Mortality Ratios (SMRs), comparing the Gulf cohort to the UK population, in the next *Gulf Conflict* release. *Gulf Conflict* also does not provide a reason for the interesting finding that you are more likely to die as a member of the UK population than as a member of the Armed Forces who was deployed to the 1990/1991 Gulf Conflict. The 'Other findings' section in *Gulf Conflict* presents differences between the two cohorts which are not statistically significant, and therefore is of little relevance. *WPS* contains many tables presented separately to the related charts with commentary at the beginning of the release. The commentary provides little explanation of the statistics and the trends presented in the charts, and the reason for including all the statistics presented in the detailed tables is not clear. *Deaths in Forces* and *AFCS* contain helpful commentary which explains the reasons for changes and trends in the time-series. However, similarly to *WPS*, *AFCS* contains many detailed tables and the reason for including all the statistics in the tables is not clear.

Use language that is impartial, objective and professionally sound

A2.9 Text used within the releases is impartial, descriptive statements are demonstrably consistent with the statistics, and descriptions of changes, trends and patterns are professionally sound.

A2.10 *SOV Deaths in Forces* presents confidence intervals in the charts and tables but, for certain age groups, the confidence intervals are large and the accompanying text does not highlight this and the affect it has on interpreting trends in the time series. The confidence intervals presented in *Gulf Conflict* are not explained in the text.

Include information about the context and likely uses

A2.11 None of the releases includes much information about the policy and operational context in which the statistics have been collected and will be used.

A2.12 The MOD does not comment on the quality and reliability of the statistics in relation to the range of potential uses. For example, *Deaths in Forces* and *SOV Deaths in Forces* do not highlight that the statistics only cover individuals who are serving in the Armed Forces at the time of death.

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

A2.13 The MOD publishes some information about the sources and methods used to produce the statistics, but this should be explained more fully.

A2.14 The MOD updates historical data presented in *Deaths in Forces*, *SOV Deaths in Forces* and *Gulf Conflict* in each new release, based on updated information it receives about deaths. The MOD could state more clearly in the releases that this is because it experiences a delay in receiving some death information and explain the extent of revisions.

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

- A3.1 This assessment was conducted from December 2011 to February 2012.
- A3.2 The Assessment team – Emma Bowditch and Jacob Wilcock – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Ministry of Defence in December. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 14 December 2011. The Assessment team subsequently liaised with the Ministry of Defence during January and February to review compliance with the *Code of Practice*, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

- A3.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare assessment reports.
- A3.4 The Assessment team received 7 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Users – MOD	2
Suppliers - MOD	1
Suppliers – Government departments	3
Suppliers – Devolved administrations	1

- A3.5 All users and suppliers who responded to the user consultation said they were content with the communication with the producers of defence health statistics within the MOD. User comments for the *Deaths in Forces*, *SOV Deaths in Forces* and *Gulf Conflict* included that the statistics are comprehensive but that it would be useful to have a greater level of coverage and granularity for Deliberate Self Harm. User comments for *WPS* and *AFCS* included that it would be useful to be able to obtain average figures over a long period e.g. 10 years, that the 'Build Your Own' tool was not very user friendly, and that statistics in *AFCS* could be presented in a more user friendly way. One user said they had been consulted on the narrative within *AFCS*. Uses reported for the statistics included: by policy staff within the MOD to develop and monitor policies; by MOD staff to respond to media or political claims; by MOD staff to respond to requests for information from ministers, other areas of the MOD and other government departments; and for MOD's annual accounts (*AFCS*).

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

