

## Statement of administrative sources

The following tables explain the administrative data sources which the Service Complaints Ombudsman (SCO) currently use to produce official statistics, or which have the potential to be so used, differentiating clearly between:

- sources owned and managed by SCO;
- sources owned and managed by other organisations.

### 1.1 Statistical usage of the SCOs administrative sources:

#### 1.1.1 SCO Casework

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| <b>Name</b>                        | SCO Casework  |
| <b>Administrative purpose</b>      | SCO Service complaint monitoring  |
| <b>Coverage</b>                    | UK  |
| <b>Owner</b>                       | SCO   |
| <b>Statistical publication</b>     | The official statistics publications produced using casework data are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SCO Annual Report</li> <li>- SCO Quarterly updates</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Non-statistical publication</b> | Non-statistical information is released from SCO Casework sourced information.<br><br>SCO Casework holds further information related to individual complaints which are not covered in the statistical release and any ad hoc release (e.g. in non-statistical publications, Parliamentary Questions or Freedom of Information Act requests) would be a decision for the SCO.                       |
| <b>Statistical access</b>          | The data is currently extracted annually at the end of the calendar year. A 'snapshot' is taken as at 31 December and a copy of the required information is used to generate statistics tables and produce graphics for the report.<br><br>The annual CMS snapshot contains complaint volumes (received, closed and open), date of receipt, Service, gender, rank, ethnicity, category and outcome. |
| <b>Data collection</b>             | The data is entered at the initial point of contact made by a complainant to the SCO. There is no validation at present which stipulates mandatory or optional fields. Some fields are populated by using values from lists or binary coding (0/1).   |

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| <b>Quality audit arrangements</b>        | <p>Local users and administrators are responsible for the quality of data entered onto the system. Local processes exist in the SCO to audit data quality prior to extraction and statistics production.</p> <p>The SCO routinely assess the quality of the administrative data held – this is carried out via automated validation checks (e.g. to estimate proportion of missing/invalid values) following extraction and results are fed back to the data owners.</p> <p>The SCO also regularly self-assess the quality of the data held and received, in line with the UK Statistics Authority best practice and assessment criteria (e.g. using the UKSA Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit).</p> |
| <b>Change procedures</b>                 | CMS is a live system and as such, changes and updates to the data are ongoing.  |
| <b>Security of statistical processes</b> | SCO extracts are held on a restricted server and access is password-protected.  |

#### 1.1.2 Joint Personnel Administration (JPA)

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| <b>Name</b>                        | Joint Personnel Administration (JPA)   |
| <b>Administrative purpose</b>      | Armed Forces personnel management  |
| <b>Coverage</b>                    | UK   |
| <b>Owner</b>                       | Ministry of Defence  |
| <b>Statistical publication</b>     | <p>The official statistics publications produced using JPA data are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SCO Annual Report</li> <li>- SCO Quarterly update</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, JPA is widely used by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) statistics teams in the production of a variety of National Statistics bulletins. Information about this can be found at the link below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284851/defence-statistics-statement-of-administrative-data-sources.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284851/defence-statistics-statement-of-administrative-data-sources.pdf</a></li> </ul> |
| <b>Non-statistical publication</b> | No non-statistical information is released by SCO from JPA-sourced data.   |
| <b>Statistical access</b>          | <p>The SCO receives bimonthly and annual snapshot extracts of JPA data in Excel format (xls). These extracts contain data as at the last of each period (e.g. as at 31 December 2014).</p> <p>The bimonthly extracts contain details relating to open Service complaints. It is supplied as a raw flat file and includes date of receipt, complainant service number, Service, unique complaint</p>  |

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reference number, SCO referral number, complaint category, complaint type, reasons for delay and the current status of the complaint.

The annual aggregate snapshot return is supplied by the single Service complaints secretariat via a standardised pro forma and includes summary tables detailing complaint volumes (received, closed and open) by category, gender, rank, ethnicity and outcome.

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**Data collection**

JPA is a very large management information system used for many different purposes across the Armed Forces – the recording of Service complaints is just one of many functionalities.

Personnel information on JPA is first collected when people join the Armed Forces. Some fields are mandatory; some are left for individuals to populate their own information. Most fields are populated by selecting values from lists and information is updated throughout an individual's Service career.

Service complaints data are entered onto JPA at the point when an allegation is received/made. Initially, these are entered by a clerk at the informal level and the responsibility for accurately recording the information is at the local level. The information is updated throughout the individual complaint's 'life', e.g. some go on to become formal complaints following the receipt of an Annex F and then proceed through complaint levels 1-3.

The majority of fields used in statistics production are automated (e.g. dates or links to personnel information) or entered via dropdown menus – where possible, free text and manual amendments are limited.

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**Quality audit arrangements**

Local users and administrators of JPA are responsible for the quality of the data they enter onto the system. There is no validation incorporated into the JPA data entry front end, as local processes exist in each Service to audit data quality prior to data extraction and transfer.

The SCO routinely assess the quality of the administrative data held in extracts. This is carried out via validation checks (e.g. estimate proportion of missing/invalid values) and results are fed back to the data owners.

In addition, the SCO routinely assess the quality of the data in line with UK Statistics Authority best practice and assessment criteria (e.g. using the UKSA Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit). A self-assessment of the quality of the administrative data released by SCO is carried out quarterly.

There have been multiple Ministry of Defence internal audits of the Service complaints data held by the Armed Forces. In 2011, in response to recommendations from the SCO and following an audit by Defence Internal Audit (DIA), JPA was reprogrammed to improve the way Service complaints were recorded and

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monitored. Following subsequent recommendations, the DIA conducted a second audit in 2012 – however, they were unable to provide any further assurances on the quality of the data. A further follow up audit has been commissioned and is due to report in 2015.

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**Change procedures** As JPA is a live system, changes and updates to data are ongoing. SCO take snapshots of JPA data which are used for production of official statistics and can be replicated thereafter. SCO routinely identify minor discontinuities in the data and correct these prior to publication of official statistics.

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**Security of statistical processes** SCO extracts of JPA data are provided via restricted GSI networks. The SCO database of JPA data is held on a restricted server and access is password-protected.

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Email:  
StatisticsManager@servicecomplaintsombudsman.gsi.gov.uk

Website: [www.servicecomplaintsombudsman.org.uk](http://www.servicecomplaintsombudsman.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7877 3452

Service Complaints Ombudsman  
PO Box 72252  
London SW1P 9ZZ