

Recommendations

The Ombudsman made the following recommendations in her Annual Report for 2019:

Recommendation 4.1

That the questions measuring knowledge of the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces (SCOAF) in the Armed Forces Continuous Attitudes Survey (AFCAS) and the Reserve Forces Continuous Attitudes Survey (ResCAS) are reviewed by December 2020. This review should consider whether the questions are the most effective in capturing the data that needs to be measured. The Ministry of Defence should consult SCOAF personnel as part of this review.

That any review of the AFCAS and the ResCAS also considers if the surveys could be an effective tool to collect any further information about the attitudes and experiences that Service personnel have of the Service Complaints process.

Recommendation 4.2

That a comprehensive review of data collection is conducted as part of any reorganisation of the Service Complaints system in order to ensure that the correct data is being collected and reported against. This review must consider the following key issues:

- What is the overarching objective of the Service Complaints system and what data is required to report against this?
- What do stakeholders want to know about the Service Complaints system and can this data be collected and reported on?
- How is qualitative analysis conducted in order to ensure comprehensive reporting and understanding of the issues?

Recommendation 4.3

That by December 2020, a leaflet is developed to provide individuals involved in the Service Complaints system a comprehensive overview of where they can get wellbeing support. This leaflet must be provided to all complainants and respondents.

Recommendation 4.4

That a review of process is undertaken to identify where the gaps in post-decision aftercare exist and that procedures to address these are drafted and put in place by December 2020. These procedures should include at a minimum:

- timeframes for the implementation of redress being included in decision letters
- notification of a point of contact post-decision for any queries relating to redress
- responsibility for updating complainants on the implementation of recommendations made as part of SCOAF investigations.

As the Ministry of Defence is already considering a raft of recommendations arising from three key reviews of the Service Complaints system in 2019, some of which concern structural changes, the Ombudsman has limited her recommendations pending the outcome of that work.



About the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces

The Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces provides independent and impartial oversight of the Service Complaints system. The primary way in which she does this is through her powers of referral and investigation. Using these powers the Ombudsman can:

	Help Service personnel access the Service Complaints system by making referrals for individuals who don't want to approach their chain of command directly to make their complaint.
	Review admissibility decisions made by the chain of command and determine whether a complaint or appeal was correctly excluded.
	Investigate undue delay in the handling of a Service Complaint or Service Matter.
	Investigate the substance (merits) and/or handling of a complaint (maladministration) once the internal Service Complaints process is over.

Contacts

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Contact details for individuals wishing to make an application to the Ombudsman or to find out more about SCOAF are:

Website <https://www.scoaf.org.uk>

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2019

Summary of the 2019 Annual Report of the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces

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Message from the Ombudsman

I am pleased to present a summary of my Annual Report for 2019.

This summary highlights the key information from the report, including the:

- Work undertaken by my office in 2019
- Work of the Service Complaints system in 2019; and
- Recommendations made in my report.

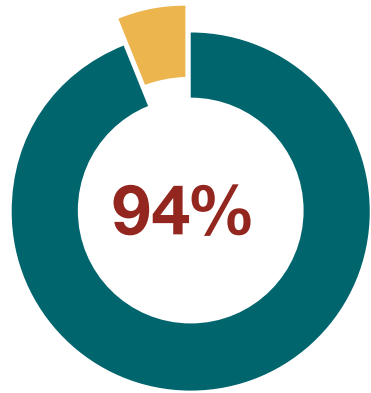
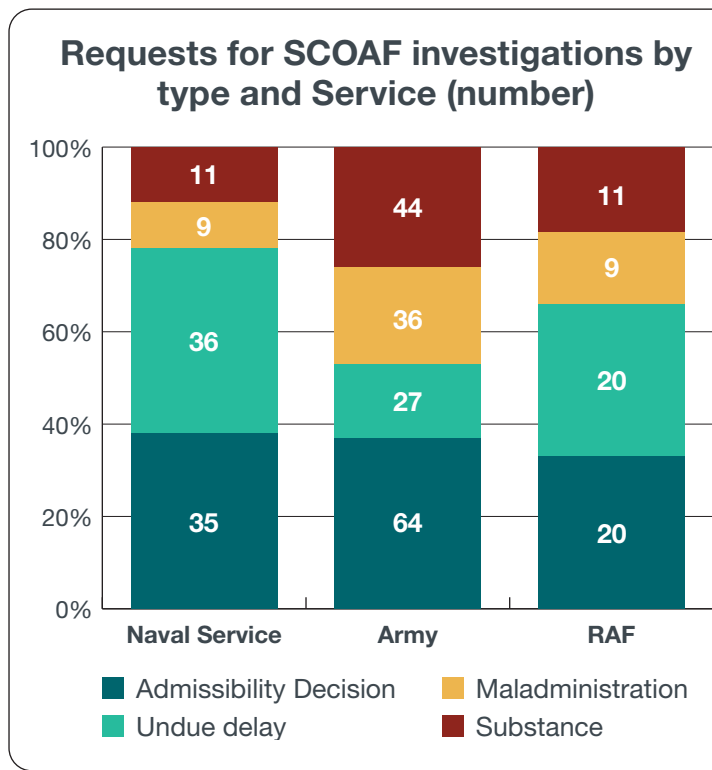
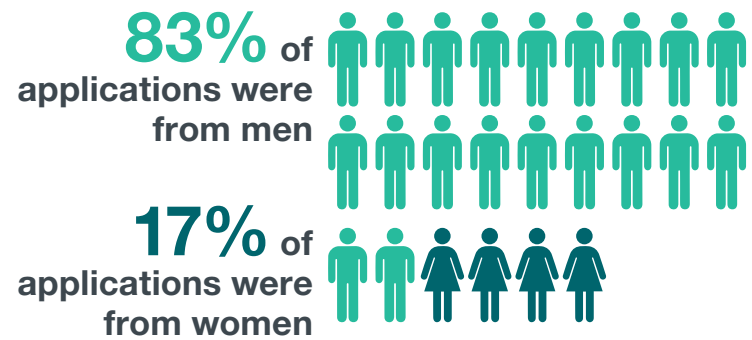
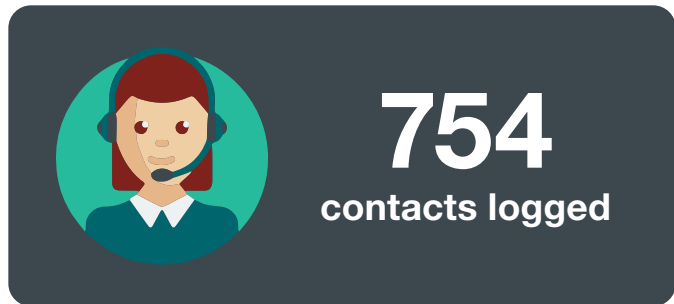
I hope you find this an interesting and useful document; whether as a companion to the full report or a summary document.

Nicola Williams
Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces



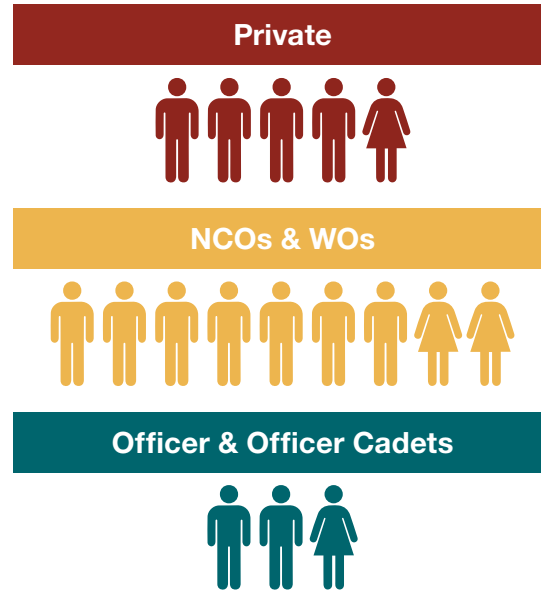
The work of SCOAF in 2019

The Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces (SCOAF) provides independent and impartial oversight of the Service Complaints system.



of contacts made concerned issues that fell within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction

Around half of the applications received were from NCOs

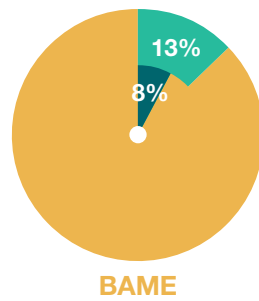
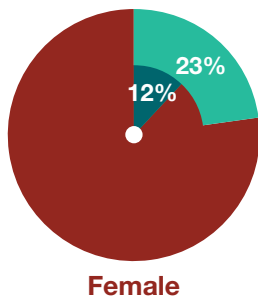


Service Complaints in 2019

The Service Complaints system is an internal workplace grievance system for members of the Armed Forces in the United Kingdom. The information below reflects the work of this internal process.

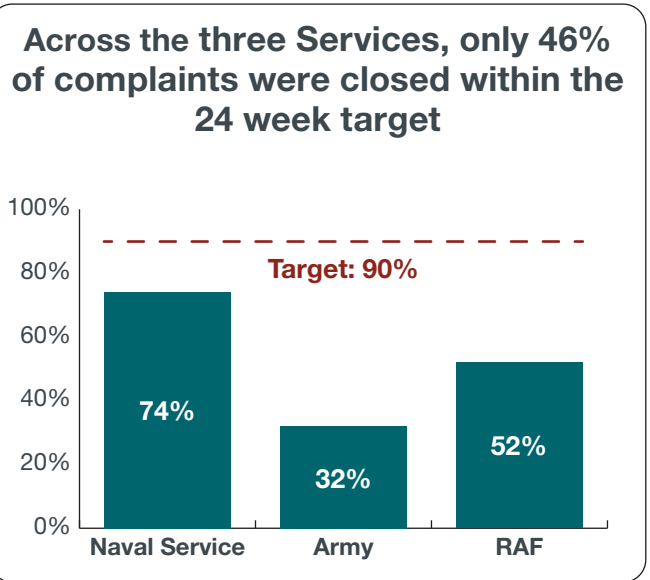
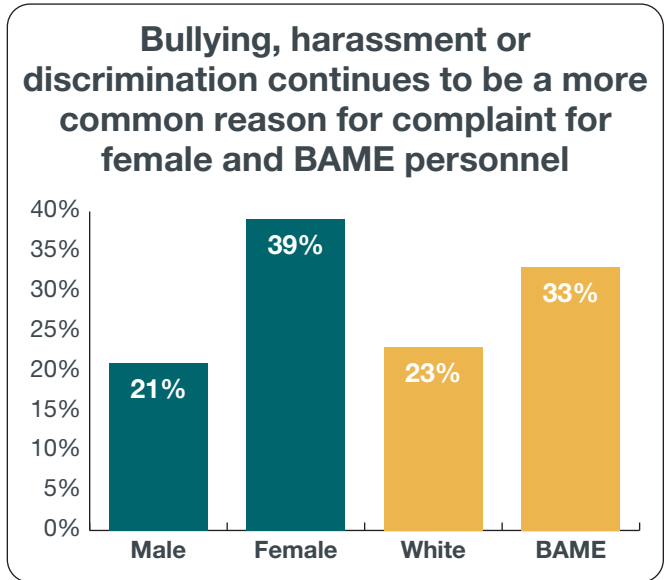
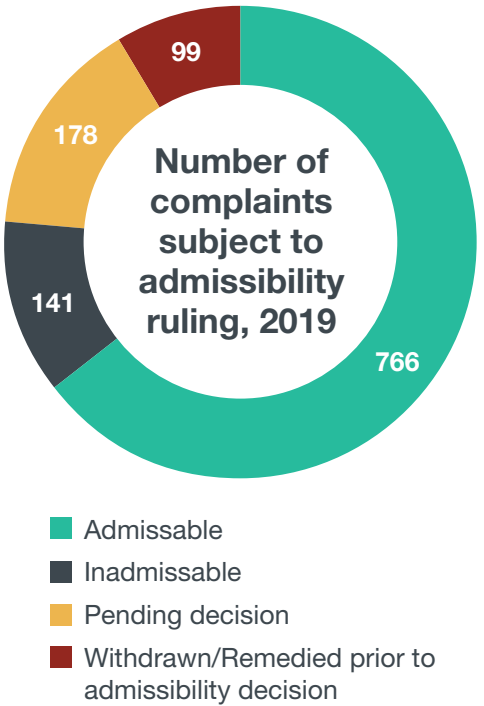


The top 3 areas Service Complaints were made about in 2019 were:



Female Service personnel were overrepresented in the Service Complaints system in 2019: **12%** of personnel, **23%** of admissible complaints.

BAME Service personnel were overrepresented in the Service Complaints system in 2019: **8%** of personnel, **13%** of admissible complaints.



4 pre-2016 complaints remain open.