

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

SCOAF Contacts

- In the last twelve months (July 2019 - June 2020), SCOAF received 821 contacts (emails, written correspondence and telephone calls).
- In Q2 2020, SCOAF received 227 contacts, which represented an increase of 22% on the 186 contacts received in Q1 2020 and an increase of 43% on the 159 contacts received in Q2 2019.
- Of these 227 contacts, 194 were in-scope¹ and could be processed as applications.
- Of these in-scope¹ contacts, 38% were processed as referral requests, 18% were processed as investigation requests and 12% were not pursued further.

SCOAF Referrals

- Referral requests received in Q1 2020 (34 requests) have fallen by 28% compared to Q1 2019 (47 requests) and have fallen by 6% compared to Q2 2019 (36 requests).
- In Q2 2020, 100% of referral requests closed were within timeliness targets².

Chart 1: Number of SCOAF quarterly contacts received, Q1 2018–Q2 2020

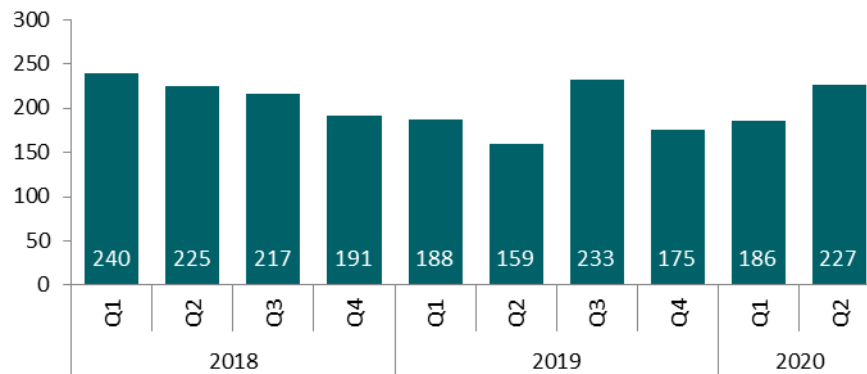
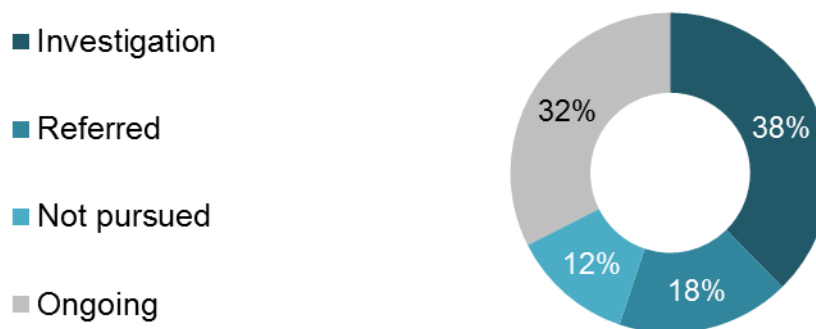


Chart 2: Breakdown of in-scope¹ contacts to SCOAF, Q2 2020



- In scope contacts are all contacts which have the potential to lead to either an investigation request or a referrals request.
- The SCOAF referrals timeliness target is to make a Service complaints referral within 10 calendar days.

Quarterly Statistical Report

This report presents key findings from the casework of the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces. It supplements data released in the [Annual Report](#)

Figures presented are **provisional** and are subject to later revision. They are produced in the spirit of the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#)

SCOAF Contacts and Referrals

New enquiries to SCOAF are logged on the casework system and are referred to as contacts. Contacts that fall within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction are referred to as 'in scope'.

The Ombudsman can refer an individual's intention to make a Service complaint to their chain of command.

SCOAF Investigations

- In Q2 2020, the Ombudsman has received 73 investigation requests. This represents a decrease of 4% when compared to Q1 2020 (76 requests) and an increase of 3% when compared to Q2 2019 (71 requests).
- The most requests were for investigations into admissibility decisions and undue delay.
- 94% of all investigation requests were considered eligible for investigating.
- In the last 12 months, Royal Navy⁴ had the highest complaint upheld rates⁵ for Admissibility Decisions with 42% of complaints upheld and the RAF had the lowest upheld rates (18%).
- The RAF had the highest complaint upheld rates³ for Undue Delay at 73%, and Army had the lowest upheld rates with 53%.
- In Q2 2020, 81% of eligible investigation requests closed were within SCOAF timeliness targets⁶. There was a 95% timeliness rate for Admissibility Decision Investigations, 91% for Undue Delay investigations, 64% timelessness rate for Maladministration and 64% timelessness rate for Substance investigations.
- As of 30th June 2020, we have 39 unallocated substance and mal-administration cases – this is unchanged from 31st March 2020.

Chart 3: Investigation requests to SCOAF by case type, Q2 2020³

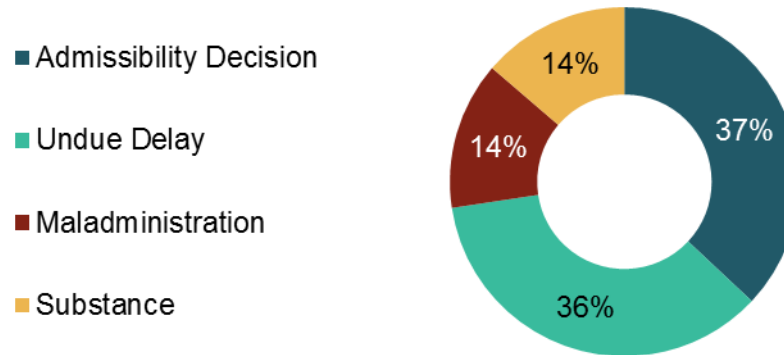
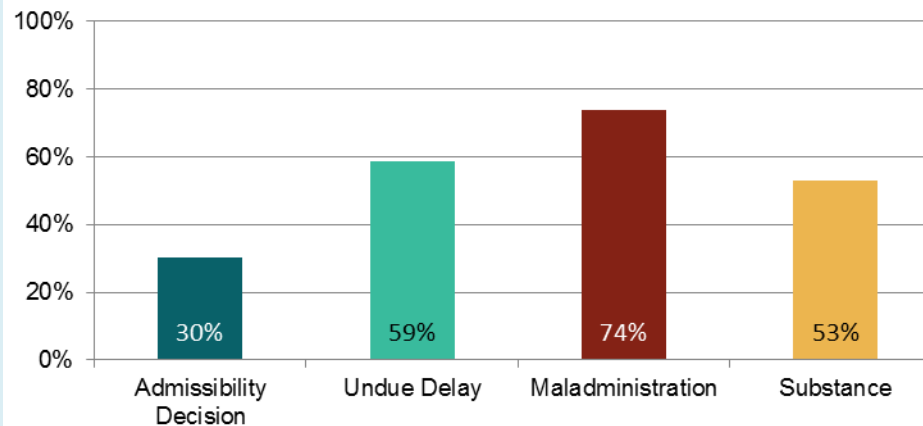


Chart 4: SCOAF investigation upheld rate⁵ by case type for the last 12 months, July 2019 – June 2020



3. The sum of the components of Chart 3 does not add up to 100% due to rounding. The actual percentages before rounding are: Admissibility Decision (37.0%); Undue Delay (35.6%); Maladministration (13.7%); Substance (13.7%).

4. Includes Royal Marines

5. Investigations upheld in favour of the complainant fully or partially.

6. The SCOAF investigations timeliness target is to complete the investigation and decision within 17 working days for investigations into Admissibility Decisions and Undue Delay and 100 working days for investigations into Maladministration and Substance.

SCOAF Investigations

The Ombudsman's powers of investigation are limited to:

- Review of **admissibility decisions**
- Undue delay** in the handling of a Service complaint or Service matter
- Substance** (merits) of a Service complaint that has been finally determined
- Maladministration** of a Service complaint that has been finally determined

Tri Service 'red flag' cases

- At end of Q2 2020, the three Services had 441 'red flag' complaints open – a 9% decrease on the end of Q1 2020 (485 complaints), and a decrease of 6% on the end of Q2 2019 (470 complaints).
- The Royal Navy⁷ reported a 16% decrease from 12 months ago, in the number of red flag cases (from 116 cases to 98 cases) while the Army reported a 3% decrease (from 295 cases to 287 cases) and the RAF reported a 5% decrease (from 59 to 56 cases).
- 56% of 'red flag' cases have been open for more than double the target period (48 weeks).
- On average (median⁸), cases have spent 29 weeks beyond the 24 week target.
- The average (median⁸) time a red flag case has spent beyond the 24 week target is 47 weeks for the Royal Navy, 27 weeks for the Army and 33 weeks for the RAF.
- The average (median⁸) time beyond target time for red flag cases has doubled over 12 months for the Royal Navy⁷ (from 23 weeks to 47 weeks), while the Army reported an 18% decrease (from 33 weeks to 27 weeks) and the RAF reported a 46% increase (from 23 weeks to 33 weeks).

Chart 5: Number of Service complaints (tri Service) beyond 24 week target (i.e. red flag cases)

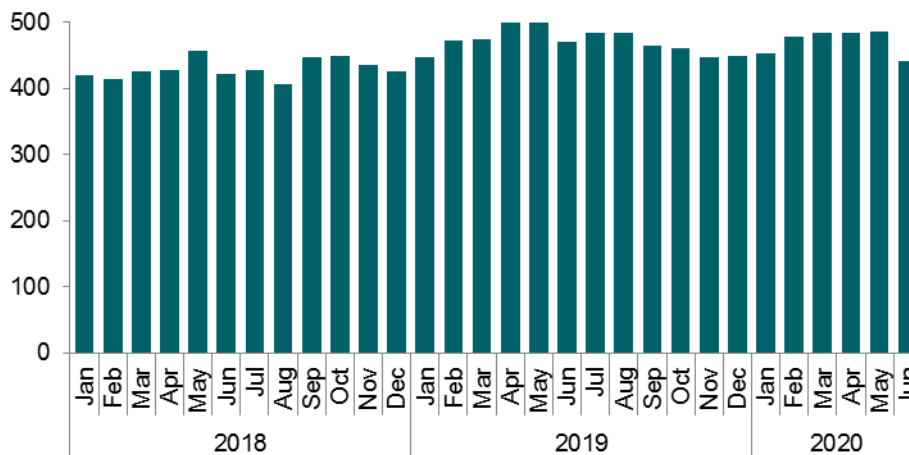
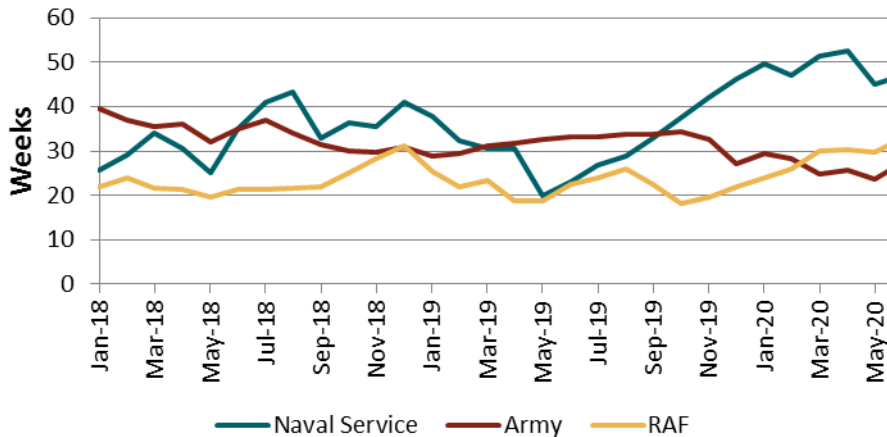


Chart 6: Median⁸ number of weeks spent over 24 week target for red flag cases by Service



⁷ Includes Royal Marines

⁸ The median is a type of average. The median case is the mid-ranked case of all cases ranked by number of weeks spent over target. The median number of weeks spent over target is the median case's number of weeks spent over target.

Tri Service 'red flag' cases

From January 2013, the Services were tasked by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to resolve 90% of Service complaints within a 24-week timeline. 'Red flag' cases are those which have exceeded this target. It is a Key Performance Indicator as set out by MOD.

Quarterly Statistical Report issued by

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About the data

SCOAF caseload data was extracted from the SCOAF casework system as at 30th June 2020. Data on the tri Service 'red flag' cases was extracted from Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA) as at 30th June 2020.