

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 (October 2018-September 2019), SCOAF received 770 contacts (emails, written correspondence and telephone calls).
- In Q3 2019, SCOAF received 233 contacts which represents a 47% increase on Q2 2019 (158 contacts) and a 7% increase on Q3 2018 (217 contacts).
- Of these 233 contacts, 221 were in-scope¹ and could be processed as applications.
- Of these in-scope¹ contacts, 22% were processed as referral requests, 45% were processed as investigations requests and 12% were not pursued further.

SCOAF Referrals

- Referrals requests received in Q3 2019 (48 requests) have risen by 33% from Q2 2019 (36 requests) and risen by 23% from Q2 2018 (39 requests).
- In Q2 2019, 100% of referral requests closed were within timeliness targets².

Fig 1.1: Number of SCOAF quarterly contacts received, Q1 2018 - Q3 2019

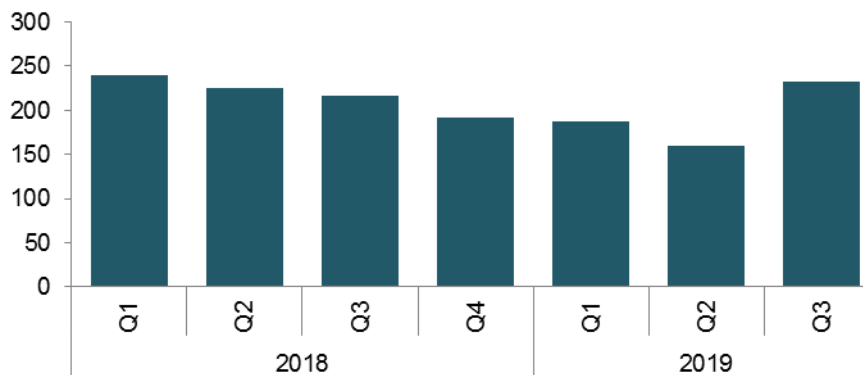
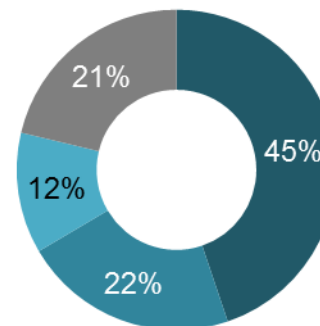


Fig 1.2: Breakdown of in-scope¹ contacts to SCOAF, Q3 2019

- Investigation
- Referred
- Not pursued
- Ongoing



- 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 Q3 2019, the Ombudsman received 99 investigation requests. This represents a rise of 41% on Q2 2019 (70 requests) and a rise of 18% on Q3 2018 (84 requests).
- The most frequent requests were investigations into admissibility decisions and undue delay.
- 82% of all investigation requests were considered eligible for investigating.
- In the last 12 months, RAF had the highest upheld rates³ for Admissibility Decisions at 58% and the Army had the lowest with 33%.
- In the last 12 months, the Army had the highest upheld rates³ for Undue Delay at 66% and Naval Service had the lowest with 46%.
- In Q3 2019, 94% of eligible investigation requests closed were within SCOAF timeliness targets. There was a 100% timeliness rate for Admissibility Decision Investigations and Undue Delay investigations, 87% timeless rate for Maladministration and 89% timeless rate for Substance investigations.
- As of 30th September 2019, we have 74 unallocated substance and mal-administration cases - a decrease of 22% since 30th June 2019 (95 cases).

Fig 1.3: Investigation requests to SCOAF by case type, Q3 2019

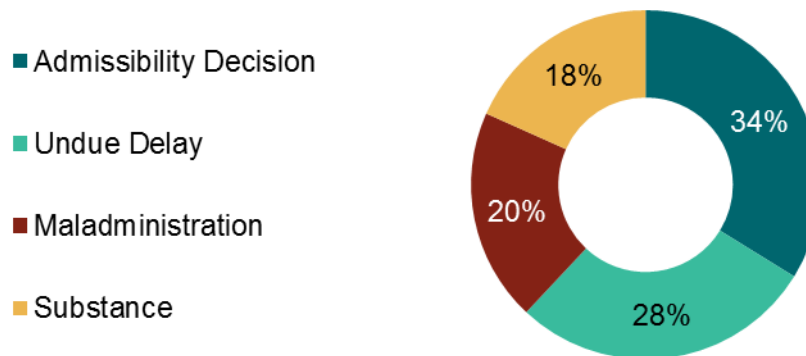
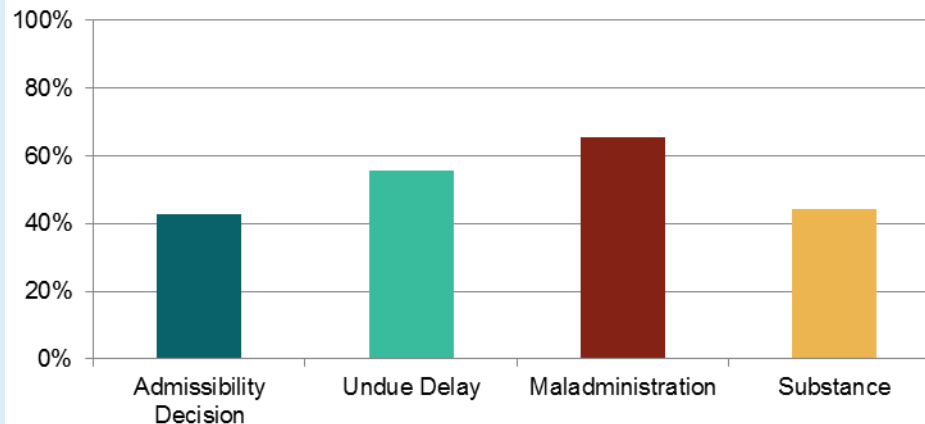


Fig 1.4: SCOAF investigation upheld rate³ by case type for the last 12 months⁴



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

4. From October 2018 to September 2019 inclusive.

5. 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 .

6. This improvement on previous years is due to the introduction of the triage process whereby all Maladministration and Substance cases are now assessed on receipt to determine whether an investigation will be conducted. The criteria for making this decision can be found on our website.

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 Q3 2019, the three Services had 464 'red flag' complaints open – a 1% decrease on the end of Q2 2019 (470 complaints), but an increase of 4% on the end of Q3 2018 (447 complaints).
- 60% of 'red flag' cases have been open for more than double the target period (48 weeks).
- On average (median⁷), cases have spent 32 weeks beyond the 24 week target.

Fig 1.5: Number of Service complaints (tri Service) beyond 24 week target (i.e. red flag cases)

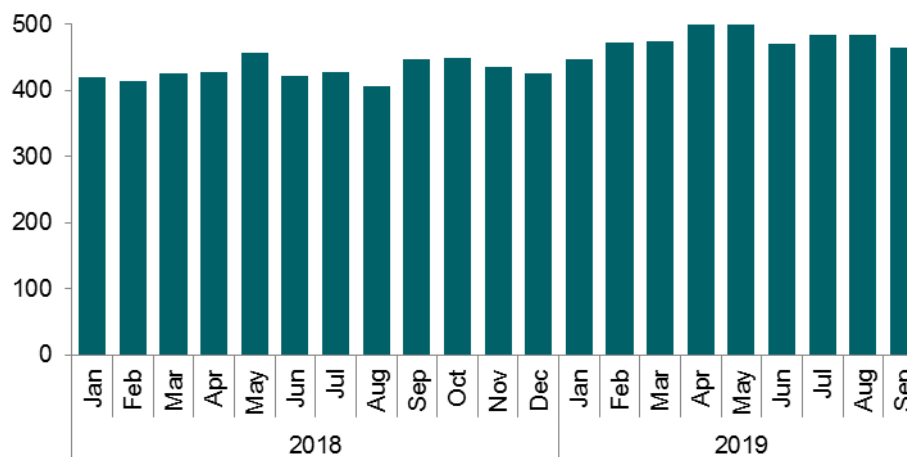
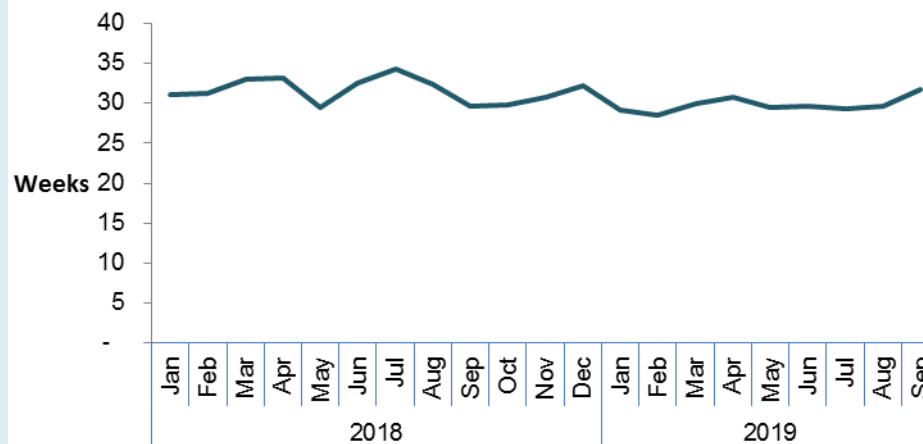


Fig 1.6: Median⁷ number of weeks spent over 24 week target for tri Service red flag cases



7. 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 September 2019.

Data on the tri Service 'red flag' cases was extracted from Joint Personnel Administration system (JPA) as at 30th September 2019.