

Office of Service Complaints Ombudsman

The Office of Service Complaints Ombudsman (OSCO) provides an alternate point of contact for serving personnel to raise complaints about Service life with the chain of command. The ombudsman provides oversight of the Service complaints process and reports to Parliament.

OSCO Contacts and Referrals

- Since 1st January 2016 when OSCO was launched, we have received 2,852 contacts (emails, written correspondence and telephone calls).
- In Q4 2018, OSCO received 191 contacts which represents a decrease of 27% on the 260 contacts received in Q4 2017.
- Of these contacts, 180 were 'in scope' and could be processed as applications.
- Of these 'in-scope' contacts, around 43% were requests for investigations, 18% were requests for referrals and 16% were not pursued.
- Referrals requests in Q4 2018 (29) have fallen by a quarter from the Q3 2018 (39).

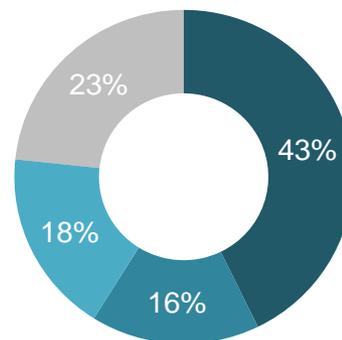
Fig 1.1: Number of OSCO quarterly contacts^{1,2} received



1) All contacts made to OSCO includes requests within and outside of scope.
2) Since January 2016, the OSCO have recorded all telephone contacts made.

Fig 1.2: Breakdown of applications (in scope) to OSCO, Q4 2018

- Investigation
- Not pursued
- Referred
- Ongoing



Factsheet

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

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

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OSCO Investigations

- In Q4 2018, the Ombudsman has received 77 investigation requests. This represents a decrease of 22% when compared to Q4 2017 (99 requests).
- The most frequent requests were for investigations into complaint admissibility and undue delay.
- 84% of all investigation requests were considered eligible for investigating.
- In 2018, 45% of all investigations carried out have been upheld in favour of the complainant to some extent (90 out of 198).
- In Q4 2018, 64% of eligible investigation requests closed were within OSCO timeliness targets.
- As of 31st December 2018, we have 143 unallocated substance and maladministration cases - an increase of 20 cases since 30th September 2018 (123 cases).

Fig 1.3: Investigation requests to OSCO by case type, Q4 2018

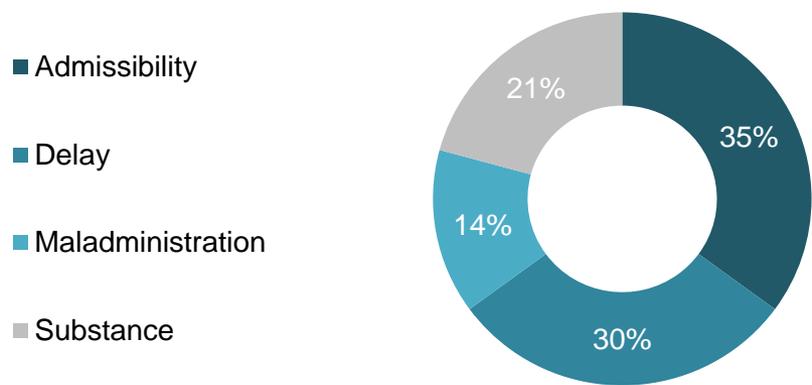
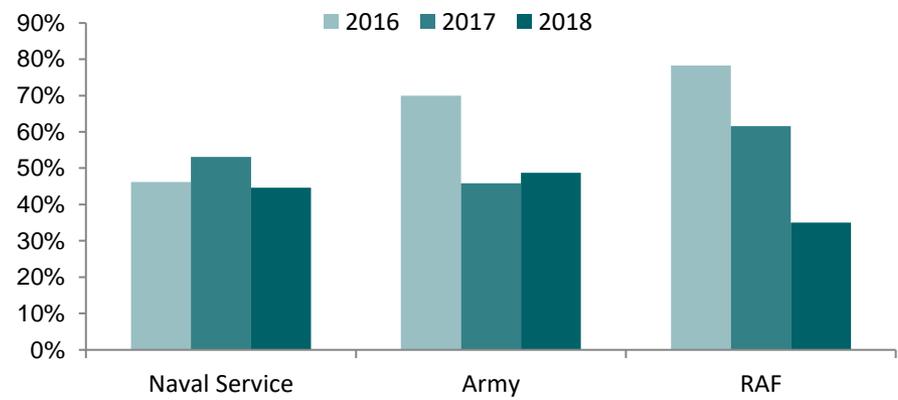


Fig 1.4: OSCO investigation uphold rate³



3. Closed investigations upheld in favour of the complainant fully or partially.

OSCO contacts, referrals, investigations

All new enquiries to OSCO are logged as contacts on the casework system. 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.

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

About the data

Caseload statistics are extracted from the OSCO casework system as at end December 2018.

Tri-service 'red flag' cases

- At end of Q4 2018, the tri-Services had 426 'red flag' complaints open – down 5% on the end of Q3 2018 (447).
- All three Services reported a three month decrease in red flag cases over the same period.
- 58% of 'red flag' cases have been open for more than double the target period (48 weeks).
- On average (median), cases have spent 31 weeks beyond the 24 week target.

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

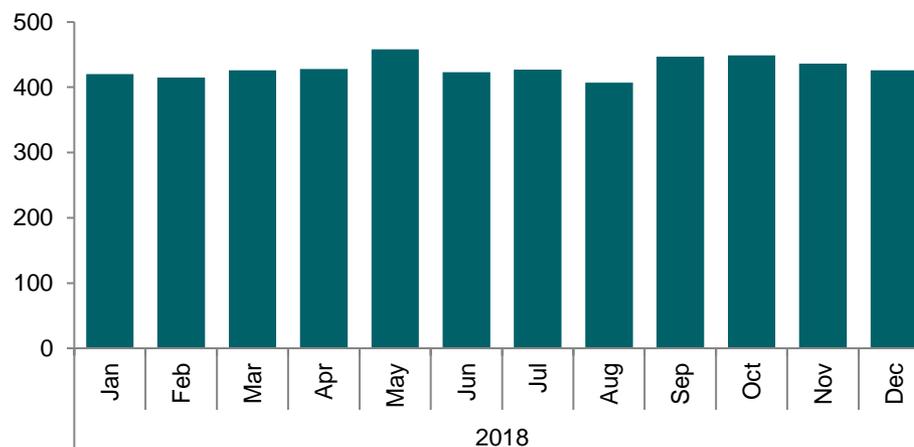
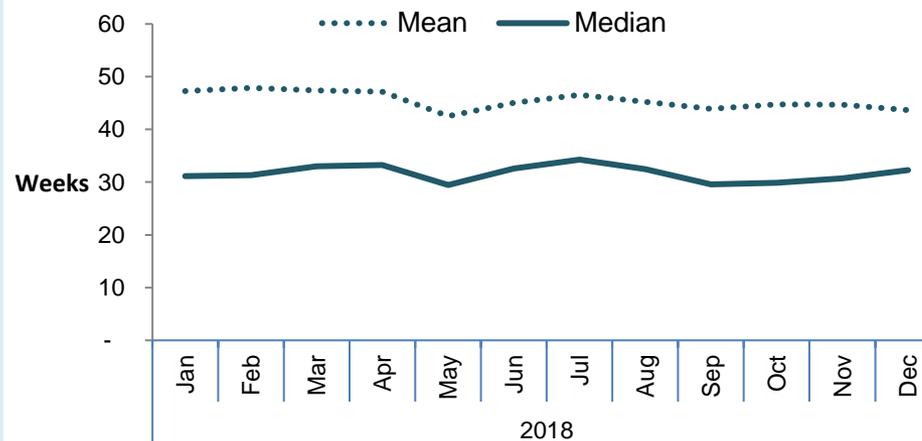


Fig 1.6: Median and mean number of weeks spent over 24 week target for tri-service red flag cases



Red flag

From January 2013, Services were tasked by 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 the Ministry of Defence.

Data on the 24-week target are provided by Services from MOD systems. The data is true as at end **December 2018**.