



Joint Medical Group Secretariat

## Headquarters Joint Medical Group

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Dr Minh Alexander

Reference: FOI2019/01300

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Date: 26 February 2019

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Dear Dr Alexander

Thank you for your enquiry of 30 January 2019 in which you requested the following:

- “1. Correspondence between the NHS National Guardian’s Office and the Defence Medical Services regarding the National Guardian’s visit on 25 January 2019 and her lecture as part of the Surgeon General’s leadership lectures*
- 2. Please advise when the Defence Medical Services first started appointing Freedom To Speak Up Guardians or equivalent and how many are currently in post*
- 3. Please share a copy of the role specification*
- 4. Please advise whether ring fenced time is identified for these roles, and if so, what is the range of WTE currently allocated to such roles*
- 5. Please advise of the reporting line for Freedom To Speak Up Guardians in the Defence Medical Services and whether there is a mechanism for them to escalate outside of their local unit if they are unable to resolve matters at that level. If there is such an escalation mechanism, please give details.”*

Your enquiry has been treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) can confirm that it holds information within the scope of your enquiry.

### **1. Correspondence between the NHS National Guardian’s Office and the Defence Medical Services regarding the National Guardian’s visit on 25 January 2019 and her lecture as part of the Surgeon General’s leadership lectures.**

Relevant correspondence is enclosed with some personal details redacted in accordance with the Section 40(2) (Personal Information) exemption of the FOIA. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption which provides that personal information is exempt from disclosure where release would contravene any of the Data Protection Principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

However, it is MOD policy not to withhold the names of officials where the persons involved are sufficiently senior personnel (i.e. 1\* and above, military and civilian) and/or occupy demonstrably public-facing roles. Names of officials meeting this criteria have been disclosed in the enclosed correspondence, while those who do not have been redacted in accordance with Section 40(2).

There are other e-mails arranging logistics for the visit that have not been included. These can be provided if required, albeit with personal details redacted in accordance with Section 40.

**2. Please advise when the Defence Medical Services first started appointing Freedom To Speak Up Guardians or equivalent and how many are currently in post.**

There are currently two Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardians in the Defence Medical Services (DMS), who were appointed to the roles in the last 6 months. There are also a number of trained FTSU Champions.

**3. Please share a copy of the role specification.**

The DMS FTSU role is described in Joint Service Publication 950 Leaflet 1-2-13: Raising Concerns, including Whistleblowing, by Defence Medical Services Personnel. This is enclosed.

A comprehensive update of this policy is being undertaken to take account of the introduction of FTSU in the DMS. Notwithstanding FTSU, the Surgeon General has long stated his commitment to speaking up about concerns and there are good mechanisms already in place for this. Introducing FTSU Guardians and Champions will augment current arrangements, providing an alternative way to confidentially raise concerns.

**4. Please advise whether ring fenced time is identified for these roles, and if so, what is the range of WTE currently allocated to such roles**

There is currently no time specifically ring fenced for the FTSU Guardian role. This remains under review however.

**5. Please advise of the reporting line for Freedom To Speak Up Guardians in the Defence Medical Services and whether there is a mechanism for them to escalate outside of their local unit if they are unable to resolve matters at that level. If there is such an escalation mechanism, please give details.”**

One of the DMS FTSU Guardians works in Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC) and reports to the DPHC Command Board. Both FTSU Guardians have direct access to the Medical Regulator within the Defence Safety Authority and can, within their remit, report concerns directly to Professional Bodies, the Care Quality Commission and the National Guardian's Office.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Joint Medical Group Secretariat