



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
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OIA-2025-5504

September 2025



Dear 

I refer to your email of 7 August 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information about workplace bullying, harassment, and sexual harm. Responses to the various items of your request are provided below.

The systems in place within the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) for responding to complaints, including allegations of discrimination, harassment, sexual harm, and bullying place an emphasis on providing support to those who raise an issue. Individuals have many avenues by which they can raise matters, including but not limited to command, management, chaplains, social workers, human resource advisors (HRA), anti-harassment advisors, and sexual assault prevention and response advisors (SAPRA). The majority of complaints are low level, and are able to be successfully handled by an immediate superior. Due to the range of avenues available to raise such an issue, data is not comprehensively captured in a centralised manner but collected and stored locally across multiple parts of the NZDF. Furthermore, in some cases complainants may not want associated information disclosed.

You may be aware of Operation Respect that was launched in March 2016 to tackle inappropriate and harmful sexual behaviours. At the request of the NZDF, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has reviewed the Operation's strategy and efforts since 2022. The first OAG Operation Respect Audit and Monitoring Survey was completed and presented to Parliament in March 2023. The second such Audit and Monitoring Survey is currently underway with an expected completion in March 2026.

1. *What data does your organisation collect about incidents or concerns related to workplace bullying, harassment or sexual harm?*
- For clarity, this includes requests for advice, assistance, informal notifications or formal complaints relating to these types of behaviour.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) data is gathered by the NZDF Health Directorate (DHD) as part of the integrated wellbeing, response, and prevention health services provided to NZDF personnel. It is recorded and held within the Defence Medical Information System (DMIS) and is protected in accordance with privacy policies. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination (BHD) data is gathered within the NZDF People Capability Portfolio (PCP). NZDF legal and Military Police systems will also hold details on the incidence and resolution of HSB, bullying and harassment.

2. *Please provide a list or schema of all data fields used to record or track information about workplace bullying, harassment or sexual harm, at any stage of the process your organisation follows (from initial contact to case closure).*
- *Please include an explanation of the classifications used in each data field and any specific terminology, so it can be easily understood by someone from outside your organisation.*

Enclosure 1 provides a copy of the relevant fields from: the NZDF Exit Survey; the NZDF Discrimination Harassment and Bullying report; the Defence Human Resources Employment Relations Register; and, the NZDF Recruit Intake survey.

Within the DMIS the following encounter codes are used by NZDF Health Providers. These include well established codes common to medical practitioners, and unique codes developed for use specifically within the NZDF:

WLBBULLY(R) - Bullying

Client's difficulties are related to experiencing bullying. May be behaviours at an individual or group level.

WLBHARASS(R) - Harassment

Client's difficulties are related to experiencing harassment. May include sexual. May be behaviours at an individual or group level.

WLBPSB(R) - Problematic Sexual Behaviours

Any sexual behaviours, such as masturbation, pornography, and cybersex that are having a significant impact on daily functioning and regulation.

WLBPSI(R) - Problematic Sexual Ideation

Any harmful sexual thoughts, urges, or fantasies that have not been acted on but which are impacting on daily functioning and regulation.

WLBSURVSH(R) - Survivor of Sexual Harm

Client is believed to have been subjected to harmful sexual behaviours.

WLBSURVSH(R) - Using Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Sexualised social behaviour, sexual harassment, and sexual offences, client is alleged perpetrator.

WLBWORKDYN - Workplace Dynamics

Workplace experienced as unsupportive and / or unhealthy.

SN571(R) - Sexual Abuse

UROSASC(R) - Sexual Assault / Unwanted Sexual Contact.

3. *Please provide a list of all reports produced by your organisation that relate to workplace bullying, harassment or sexual harm?*

- *Please include a brief explanation for each report of:*

- *who is responsible for its creation (i.e. the job title/role, not individual names)*
- *how often they are produced*
- *the purpose of the report, and*
- *the information and any data fields contained in each report.*
- *to whom they are distributed (job titles/roles)*

- *whether the reports are shared externally (e.g. with ministerial offices, other agencies, Public Service Commission, unions and associations, the general public)*

In line with the information provided in response to item 2, the following reporting takes place within the NZDF:

- data from the Recruit Intake Survey is managed by the Operation Respect Data Analyst and distributed to recruit training providers at senior command level for their internal use only after each intake (13 intakes per year across the three Services);
- data from the Defence Human Resources Employment Relations Register informs an employment relations case file report that is provided monthly by the Manager Human Resources Advisory Services to the Assistant Chief Defence human Resources and the Chief People Officer;
- data from the NZDF Exit Survey is collated by NZDF Organisational Research into a six-monthly report. This is provided to the Chief People Officer and select commanders and managers.

Other reporting may be generated on a case-by-case basis as required.

Please provide responses to Q4-7 for the period 2020-2025 (inclusive), broken down by calendar year and listed under the headings of

- (a) workplace bullying*
- (b) harassment*
- (c) sexual harm*

4. *The total number of incidents recorded.*

Please also break these down according to any sub-categorisations you use internally to differentiate types of bullying, harassment or sexual harm incidents.

As noted initially, there is no comprehensive data captured in a centralised manner for all instances of bullying, harassment, or sexual harm incidents. Table A below provides the number of complaints recorded by Defence Human Resources to April 2025.

Table A

Type of complaint	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Workplace bullying	13	9	4	5	5	1
Harassment	12	13	3	1	4	1
Sexual harassment	2	2	2	0	0	0

Table B below provides the number of disclosures to the Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Advisor (SAPRA) service from 2020 to 20204. A breakdown of disclosures in 2025 is not yet available. There are two types of disclosure. A restricted disclosure enables personnel to disclose their experience directly to a SAPRA without the involvement of the chain of command, or Military Police, which under the Armed Forces Discipline Act would otherwise necessitate an investigation. This provides personnel who may not otherwise report the incident a way to come forward and receive appropriate support and information. Restricted disclosures can be amended to unrestricted later if the victim/survivor so wishes.

An unrestricted disclosure is made when a victim/survivor of sexual violence wishes the incident to be investigated by the relevant authority (this may be their Command, the NZDF

Military Police or the New Zealand Police). An unrestricted disclosure is also investigated if other personnel are aware that such an incident has occurred.

Table B

Type of disclosure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Sexualised social behaviour	3	6	9	4	1
Sexual harassment	23	14	19	36	18
Indecent act	0	0	1	2	1
Harmful digital communication	3	2	1	3	2
Indecent assault	21	18	13	19	10
Sexual violation	15	17	14	10	4

5. *The number of incidents that involved a formal investigation, broken down to show:*
- internal investigations (i.e. those conducted by people employed by your organisation)*
 - independent external investigations (i.e. external lawyers, investigators or other 3rd parties engaged for the purpose of conducting the investigation)*

Of the complaints provided in Table A, 76 have been investigated internally. One complaint is currently being investigated externally.

Given the explanation provided above concerning disclosures, data on investigations is not available.

6. *The outcomes of the investigations completed in Q5 (using whatever categorisations your organisation records internally against cases).*

This information is not centrally recorded. It would require a substantial research and collation effort to manually review the 76 complaint files; therefore this item of your request is declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

7. *The number of people who have left your organisation who were:*
- complainants (i.e. people who raised any inquiry or complaint)*
 - respondents (i.e. people who were the subject of any inquiry or complaint allegations)*

This information is not captured within the data collected by the NZDF. This item of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA.

Please provide responses to Q8-9 for the period 2020-2025 (inclusive), broken down by calendar year:

8. *The number of settlement agreements (or other legal agreements containing any form of non-disclosure requirement) signed by people leaving your organisation who were:*
- complainants who raised any inquiry or complaint about workplace bullying, harassment or sexual harm.*
 - respondents who were the subject of any inquiry or complaint about workplace bullying, harassment or sexual harm.*

This information is not centrally recorded. It would require a substantial research and collation effort to manually review settlement agreements in order to provide the

requested information. This item of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

9. *The amount spent by your organisation on external legal advice for:*
- a. *legal services or advice provided in conducting independent investigations in Q5 (ii)*
 - b. *other advice provided about any other matters involving workplace bullying, harassment or sexual harm*

The single complaint remains under investigation. Cost information is not yet available.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley
Brigadier
Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Data fields

Reporting Data Fields / Classifications

Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Sexually Harmful Behaviour section of the NZDF Exit Survey - Six Monthly Report

Type (Bullying, Harrassment, Discrimination)

By Service: (Regular Force - Army / Navy / Air Force), Civilian

By Gender

Yes/No Questions:

Bullied by my colleagues

Bullied by my Supervisor/Leader

I have seen and/or heard colleagues harass and/or bully others

Complaint I made about harassment/ bullying not handled to my satisfaction

Complaint I made about harassment/ bullying damaged my career

Was harassment, bullying or discrimination part of your decision to leave the NZDF?

Sexually harassed by NZDF personnel

Disciminated because of my gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic group, physical or mental health

MD1037 - NZDF Discrimination Harrassment and Bullying Report

FORM COMPLETED BY:

Appointment

Rank/title

Completed as

Date of contact

Unit/Base/Ship/Headquarters

Originating Service

GENERAL INFO ABOUT DHB ISSUE:

Unit/Base/Ship/HQ where issue originated

Date/period incident(s) occurred

COMPLAINANT:

Gender

Age Group

Rank or Civilian class and grade

Service trade/branch/occupation

RESPONDENT:

Gender

Age Group

Rank or Civilian class and grade

Service trade/branch/occupation

FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, BULLYING:

Sexual Harassment

Sex (Gender)

Marital status

Religious belief

Ethical belief

Colour

Race

Bullying

Ethnic/national origin

Disability

Age

Political opinion

Employment status

Family status

Sexual Orientation

Other

Request for information

Alleged Behaviour

Is this a new issue?

Has it previously been reported?

Previously Reported - Comment

If previously reported, is this a repeat issue following resolution?

Part One complete?

Date Part One signed

ACTION TAKEN FOLLOWING FINAL RESOLUTION:

Not DHB as defined in DFO 3

Self Help

Informal assistance from supervisor

Formal Mediation
Formal Investigation
Outside Agency
Complaint made IAW DFO Chap 12
Unknown
Other
Other Action Comment
FINAL OUTCOME:
Self Help
Assistance from supervisor or other person
Allegation withdrawn
Mediated and resolved
Investigated and Proven
Investigated and proven to be malicious and vexatious
Investigated and unproven
Unresolved
Other
Disciplinary/summary action under ADFA or Civil Staff Code of Conduct
Self help - Comment
Investigated and Proven - Comment
Disciplinary/summary action - Comment
Other outcome - Comment
Comment
Follow up action taken

Defence Human Resources ER Register

Date Opened / Closed
Assigned to (HR Advisor)
Type (Bullying, Harrassment, Discrimination)
Status (Open / Closed)
Complainant Details
Complainant 1Up Manager
Respondent Details

Respondent 1Up Manager

Portfolio

Directorate

Unit

Location

Region

Category (Performance Issues, Discrimination/Harrassment/Bullying/Sexual Harrassment, Behaviour, Medical, Inappropriate Behaviour

DHBS - Is this investigation or the misconduct related to allegations/investigation in respect of: Bullying (B) - Harassment (H) - Discrimination D) - Sexual Harassment

Subject - Brief point of reference (this is NOT to be used instead of a Category)

Investigation (Date, Updates)

Investigator engaged (Internal / External)

Legal Advisor (NZDF / External)

Litigation Details

PG (Date, Details, Ex Gratia, Mediation, S123, Settlement Offer)

PIP (Date, Stage, Review Date, End Date)

Record of Settlement

Legal Advisor (Name)

Outcome (Upheld, Not Upheld)

Recruit DHB Survey

Section B: Training Environment

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

If I were to report an incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, I believe appropriate action would be taken.

Overall, I feel safe here.

Section C: Harassment, bullying and discrimination from fellow trainees

How often have fellow trainees...

Used foul or offensive language directed at you

Verbally abused you in a way that was unreasonable for the situation

Intimidated you

Ignored you or excluded you from activities

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your race or ethnic group

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your sexual orientation

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your religious beliefs

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Made offensive remarks or jokes about your age

Made sexist comments or offensive remarks or jokes about your gender

Made offensive remarks or suggestions that you do not act like a man or woman is supposed to act

Insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded you because of your gender

Made offensive remarks that you are either not good at a particular job or should be prevented from having a particular job because of your gender

Insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded you because of your sexual orientation or assumed sexual orientation or gender identity

Made unwelcome attempts to establish a sexual relationship despite your discouragement

Taking and/or posting inappropriate or sexually suggestive photos or videos of you without your consent

Sent you unwelcome sexually explicit material (e.g. pornographic photos or other objects of a sexual nature)

Whistled, called, hooted or yelled at you in a sexual way

Made unwelcome attempts to talk to you about sexual matters (e.g. used sexually explicit language, asked you about your own sex life, told sexual jokes and stories to you despite discouragement)

Made unwelcome gestures or used body language of a sexual nature that was directed at you

Touched, leaned over, pinched or brushed up against you, in a deliberately sexual manner that made you feel uncomfortable

Sexual activity where you were unable to consent (e.g. you were intoxicated)

Pressured you into sex that you didn't want to have

Sexually assaulted you

Please provide details of your experience(s) or the context that these things happened in:

Threatened you with violence in a way that caused you distress

Kicked, punched, or otherwise physically assaulted you in a way that caused you injury

If you have experienced any other behaviour(s), directed at you by a fellow trainee, that caused you distress, please provide details.

Section D: Harassment, bullying, and discrimination from instructors

How often have instructors...

Used foul or offensive language directed at you

Verbally abused you in a way that was unreasonable for the situation

Intimidated you

Ignored you or excluded you from activities

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your race or ethnic group

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your sexual orientation

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your religious beliefs

Made offensive remarks or jokes about your age

Made sexist comments or offensive remarks or jokes about your gender

Made offensive remarks or suggestions that you do not act like a man or woman is supposed to act

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Insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded you because of your gender

Made offensive remarks that you are either not good at a particular job or should be prevented from having a particular job because of your gender

Insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded you because of your sexual orientation or assumed sexual orientation or gender identity

Attempted to establish a sexual relationship with you

Said or made you feel you would be treated better in return for having a sexual relationship with them

Said or made you feel you would be treated worse if you did not have a sexual relationship with them

Taking and/or posting inappropriate or sexually suggestive photos or videos of you

Sent you sexually explicit material (e.g. pornographic photos or other objects of a sexual nature)

Whistled, called, hooted or yelled at you in a sexual way

Talked to you inappropriately about sexual matters (e.g. used sexually explicit language, asked you about your own sex life, told sexual jokes and stories to you)

Made gestures or used body language of a sexual nature that was directed at you

Touched, leaned over, pinched or brushed up against you, in a deliberately sexual manner that made you feel uncomfortable

Sexually assaulted you

Please provide details of your experience(s) or the context that these things happened in:

Threatened you with violence in a way that caused you distress

Kicked, punched, or otherwise physically assaulted you in a way that caused you injury

If you have experienced any other behaviour(s), directed at you by an instructor, that caused you distress, please provide details.

Section E: Reporting

Have you experienced any harassment, bullying, or discrimination during your course so far?

If you experienced harassment, bullying, or discrimination, in what ways did you deal with the incident(s)?

I ignored the behaviour

I avoided the person if I could

I asked the person to stop

A fellow trainee took action or said something on my behalf

I reported it through my chain of command

I sought advice (for example from an Anti-Harassment Advisor or Chaplain)

How satisfied were you with the outcome?

How worried are you that this might happen again?

