

# Freedom of Information request 1771/2011

Received 28 June 2011  
Published 23 September 2011

## Information request

Geographic direct-dial (local phone exchange code) phone numbers of ALL Jobcentre Plus Offices in the UK previously listed and NOT beginning with 08-. One number for each office is sufficient.

## DWP response

The information you requested is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 36(2)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption protects information which, if released, would prejudice, or would be likely to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.

This is because disclosure of the geographic numbers that you seek would result in deterioration in the customer service we provide, as a consequence of unmanaged access to our telephone network. Jobcentre Plus is a very large organisation with 750 Jobcentre Plus offices open to the public, which is backed up by a network of benefit processing and contact centres that deal with nearly 60 million calls each year. We cannot risk the serious compromise to our telephony strategy that disclosure of these geographic numbers would cause.

This exemption requires the balancing of the public interest for and against disclosure. In coming to this decision we have considered the arguments in favour of, and against, disclosure.

There is a public interest in making the telephone numbers of our offices available to all our customers particularly where this increases customer choice and service. The full range of contact numbers available to DWP customers can be found on the Department's website here  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/contact-us/>

However, it is in the public interest that the Department is able to take full advantage of the efficiencies and service improvements provided by new telephony technology. This includes the use of specific customer help lines with appropriate automatic call routing to the correct teams able to deal with specific enquiries in our benefit processing and contact centres. Any

unmanaged access to the geographic telephone number you seek would cause disruption and a deterioration of customer service for the public in general. This would result in additional costs in dealing with unmanaged calls and Jobcentre Plus would also lose key call management information essential to the planning and allocation of staff resources.

In all the circumstances the Department is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption at Section 36(2)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act outweighs the public interest in disclosure.