

DSO 7: Make DWP an Exemplar of Effective Service Delivery

Indicator 5: Effective Contact: The proportion of customer contact that is necessary to enable customer needs to be met

- The 2009 Customer Contact survey has shown that around 64% of contacts from customers were deemed to be effective and necessary to enable the customer need to be met
- The level of effective contact has remained stable and in line with the 2008 findings. This indicates that customer service levels are being maintained despite the increase in business volumes within Jobcentre Plus, operating with a large number of new and inexperienced staff and the commitment to deliver additional help and interventions to assist jobseekers to return to work.

Detailed Findings

DWP received an estimated 144 million contacts from customers by post and telephone during the 2008/09 financial year. This is contact that generates direct or indirect staff involvement and so excludes other contacts such as people searching for jobs on the Jobcentre Plus website. Face to face contact is also excluded as this mainly occurs within Jobcentre Plus and this data is being gathered in a separate survey due for completion in Autumn 09.

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- The proportion of contact for the survey was split between 96.4 million (67%) contacts for telephone and 47.6 million (33%) for post
- "Providing information in response to a DWP request" is the most popular reason for customers contacting DWP with 12.7 million occurrences every year
- Around 20 million contacts are to chase progress, mainly about money
- The survey identified contacts across different customer groups and assessed whether the contacts were of value to the customer and DWP. For example, 65% of contacts from Lone Parents and 79% from Carers were value contacts.
- 11% of the total contacts were from an organisation or individual acting on a customer's behalf.

Methodology: How the Indicator is Measured

A Customer Contact Survey was conducted in 2009 to gain a detailed understanding of the reasons why customers contact the Department, the methods customers use to make contact and the volume of contacts. Management information was used to gather the data but, where this was not available, staff recorded the reasons for contact over five consecutive working days in February/March 2009. The status of the customer was also recorded where possible and whether the caller was a third party calling on a customer's behalf. Annual volumes were extrapolated based on the most reliable data source available in each case.

Next Update to Measurement

At present, the next measurement of this Indicator is due to be undertaken in Spring 2010.