

# Freedom of Information request 3593/2010

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## Information request

Please disclose under the FOI Act:

- The number of “unacceptable customer behaviour” incidents reported in each of the last three calendar years; 2008, 2009, and 2010.
- Please provide a geographical breakdown of these incidents for each of these years. At the very least this should involve a breakdown into the 11 regions used by the DWP, but if permissible within the cost limit please break these incidents down by local authority or Jobcentre.
- Please also provide a breakdown by type/nature of unacceptable behaviour for each of these years. This could involve putting the incidents into broad categories such as verbal abuse/physical abuse/vandalism or Jobcentre property/aggressive behaviour etc.

## DWP response

A copy of the information is attached in the format you requested.

Data for Jobcentre Plus is provided up to and including the last month available which is October. Data for the rest of DWP is collected quarterly and the data is provided up to and including the last month available which is September 2010.

Data is not collected in local authority areas.

Every day, DWP staff undertake over 65,000 interviews face to face with customers in our offices, take around 250,000 phone calls and visit more than 2,000 customers. This equates to 16 million interviews, 60 million phone calls and 600,000 visits annually. DWP regards every incident directed against its staff as serious and is committed to ensuring that the risks of assault are eliminated or minimised through the use of control measures relevant to the assessed level of risk.

The categories of incidents are as follows:

1. Verbal:

- Verbal abuse face to face
- Verbal abuse over the telephone
- Abusive written correspondence
- Personal threats, intimidation or harassment

2. Attempted assault:

- Small items thrown but missed
- Large items thrown but missed
- Assailant lunged/ attempted assault which missed
- Spitting but missed
- Thumping security screen
- Hitting, kicking furniture without damage

3. Actual assault:

- Spitting
- Small items thrown and hit
- Large items thrown and hit
- Struck by assailant
- Struck with weapon owned by assailant
- Struck with weapon found on the premises

4. Other:

- Customers fighting
- Damage to property
- Incomplete information

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.