



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of
Information Team
Caxton House
6-12 Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

Amanda Hart
request-777755-6bdfbb5f@whatdotheyknow.com

[freedom-of-information-
request@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk)

[DWP Website](https://www.dwp.gov.uk)

Our Ref: FOI2021/60792

25 August 2021

Dear Amanda Hart,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 27 July. You wrote:

“From electronic material, letters and memos, etc, please kindly inform us how many people, excluding staff and contractors, have died in a jobcentre during the years 2019 and 2020.

Please kindly supply this information for Scotland and split the figures by year.”

DWP Response

Under Section 14(1) of the Fol Act, public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request which is deemed vexatious.

A request may be treated as vexatious, if it seeks information of a frivolous nature; if it is likely to cause distress or irritation without justification; or if it is aimed at disrupting the work of an authority or is harassing individuals in it.

By way of clarification it is the request which is treated as vexatious not the person making the request. An individual can make multiple requests and each will be considered on its own merits.

A vexatious request is assessed with reference to all the circumstances of an individual case. In this case, the Department is treating your request as vexatious for the following reasons:

We believe that the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption or irritation to the authority. Although Freedom of Information requests are purpose and applicant blind, the authority, can take into account the wider circumstances surrounding the request before making a decision when deciding if a request is vexatious.

We have dealt with a series of requests from yourself and others about deaths in jobcentres in 2017 and 2018. Your initial request was raised on 19 November 2019 and responded to under our reference FOI2019/41765.

We subsequently confirmed on 8 June 2020, under reference FOI2020/18837, that our response to this request was incorrect and we should not have asked you to submit requests

by region. We confirmed that figures are held nationally and we confirmed that one death occurred in 2017.

We also stated that we do not have a specific process or written policy to routinely record all non-staff related deaths on our premises, and any such situations will be managed at a local level depending on the circumstances. In accordance with Health and Safety Law we would report a citizen's death where it meets the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

In our revised response of 20 July 2021 to your Internal Review request (IR2021/50402) we confirmed the region in which that death occurred.

We also stated that no deaths in Jobcentres have been recorded since this incident.

We are therefore of the opinion that you are already in possession of the information that you have requested and therefore that requesting this information is both unreasonably persistent and that this request has no obvious intent to obtain information.

As we have also advised that any information held would be available nationally, we believe that this request, when viewed in context is likely, given the experience of previous requests, to lead to a series of requests by region, intended to harass and annoy the department.

On this basis, the Department has decided that Section 14(1) of the FoI Act applies on this occasion.

You should be aware that if we receive further requests on the same or a similar subject matter, we do not intend, by application of Section 17(6) of the Act to issue further refusal notices.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team
Department for Work and Pensions

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk or by writing to: DWP Central FoI Team, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Website: [ICO Contact Information](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.