

## **Reported incidents of bullying and harassment at food business premises 1 November 2018 to 17 March 2021**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has released, as a result of a Freedom of Information request (FOI), details of incidents of bullying and harassment reported by FSA staff and contractors.

FSA staff and contractors carry out official hygiene and other inspection controls in slaughterhouses, cutting plants and wild game facilities to ensure that the meat industry safeguards the health of the public and the welfare of animals at slaughter.

The FOI request was for **reported incidents only**, including the name, location of the food business and the outcome relating to incidents of bullying and harassment, acts of intimidation, and/or acts of violence perpetrated against employees of the FSA and contractors, including any acts of malicious damage to the property of any person working for or on behalf of the FSA.

The statistics were drawn from incident report forms submitted by FSA and contractor staff to the FSA's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team. The reported incidents cover different types of alleged conduct. The data details reported cases only. **It should not be assumed that any formal findings have been made as to the liability for reported incidents and no food business should be assumed to be at fault in respect of any reported incident.**

The definitions used follow the FSA's internal categorisation for reported incidents of bullying and harassment. These are as follows:

- **Aggression** – an incident where the individual was subject to an episode of aggression (verbal or non-verbal).
- **Physical assault** – unwelcome physical contact, including an actual physical attack or where a person genuinely believed they were going to be attacked.
- **Verbal abuse** – all other incidents including those that relate to the use of sexist or racist remarks.
- **Intimidation** – an incident where a behaviour or language resulted in an individual feeling threatened, including use of a potential weapon.
- **Malicious damage to property** – where the property of a member of a FSA team was deliberately or intentionally harmed.

Most incidents were resolved informally by food business managers addressing with their staff the issues raised by FSA managers.

The names of some food business premises have been withheld to comply with Data Protection Act rules (in accordance with the section 40(2) exemption under the FOI Act). As a result, the published information gives a slightly distorted picture of the type and size of food businesses where incidents have been reported, as the names that have been withheld are predominantly of smaller businesses, where it may be easier to identify individuals.

Annex A comprises of a table detailing reported cases of bullying and harassment. Included are the names and locations of the Food Business Operator (FBO), when the incident occurred, the type of incident and the action taken.

The data published here shows food businesses where bullying and harassment incidents were reported between 1 November 2018 to 17 March 2021 (with the exception of those names that have been excluded as explained above – the statistics for excluded plants have been aggregated and are shown in Annex B ‘Other food business operators’ section at the end of the table). A link has also been provided [here](#) to assist in establishing the type of food business identified in the data – i.e. whether it is a poultry or red meat slaughter house.

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