

Freedom of Information request 2541/2013

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Information request

I would like to submit the following questions in a freedom of information request.

1. Does a Jobseekers Allowance Claimant legally have to provide their home address to make a claim?

Yes. In relation to Jobseekers Allowance the law provides that a claimant must provide any information or evidence required by the Secretary of State in connection with their claim. As you'll see from the answers below it is not essential that we are given all information requested – some we request because it may help us administer the benefit – but knowing a person's address is a key piece of information. Why? Because it could affect someone's legal entitlement to Jobseekers Allowance. This is likely to arise where the claimant is seeking to claim benefit to which he may not be entitled eg he is a prisoner, where he is living with another benefit claimant, he is out of the country. Even if there is nothing untoward about the claim, in the absence of any other means of communication if we needed to write to the claimant we would, of course, need an address. Accordingly if we receive a claim with no address then in law it would be treated as defective and not decided until the information was provided. If it was not provided the decision would be to disallow the claim for Jobseekers Allowance.

Of course if someone is homeless then they cannot provide an address. In which case we would consider any of the following:

- an address of a friend or relative
- the address of their Jobcentre Plus office
- if the claimant has regular contact with a Homeless Persons Centre or similar, that address.

2. Does a Jobseekers Allowance Claimant legally have to provide their landline telephone number to make a claim?

No.

3. Does a Jobseekers Allowance Claimant legally have to provide their mobile telephone number to make a claim?

No.

4. Does a Jobseekers Allowance claimant legally have to provide their email address to make a claim?

No.

5. If a Jobseekers Allowance Claimant cannot provide a landline telephone number, mobile number or email address during the course of their JSA claim will this affect their entitlement to benefits?

As explained above, claimants may be asked to provide telephone numbers or e-mail addresses as a preferential means of corresponding with them but their entitlement to benefit is not affected if they choose not to.

However, claimants can be issued with a Jobseeker Direction, mandating them to create an e-mail address, to use it when looking for work and to apply for appropriate vacancies, if it is felt that this would increase their chances of finding work. If they fail to comply with the Direction, a sanction may be applied to their benefit.