

Freedom of Information request 92/2013

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Information request

What I want to know is how many homeless claimants who were legally entitled to their benefits in law had their benefits affected or stopped for being unable to provide a permanent address. For example where they only had a c/o address whilst sofa surfing during the period from 1st/June/2008 until 30th/July/2008.

DWP response

We do not hold the information requested. However, a claimant does not need to have an address to claim benefit: they have the same right of access to the benefits system as any other claimant.

There are two categories relating to a homeless person for Income Support / Employment and Support Allowance purposes:

- a person with no fixed abode who changes address frequently, for example, sleeping at friends' houses; and
- a person without accommodation, for example, rough sleepers.

A person of no fixed abode receives the normal, full rate of Income Support. A person without accommodation receives only the personal allowance and is not entitled to premiums or housing costs.

For Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), claimants must satisfy the conditions for entitlement to JSA by being available for and actively seeking employment, as well as taking the steps detailed in their Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg).

When drafting the JSAg or action plan, the adviser will consider the implications of the claimant having no accommodation and the steps that the claimant needs to take to find accommodation.

The JSAg or action plan must take into account any support/encouragement the claimant might need to challenge themselves to overcome perceived barriers as well as tackling the actual barriers affecting their move towards or search for employment.

All homeless people need a safe correspondence address which, if there is no suitable alternative, may use the local Jobcentre Plus office.