

Freedom of Information request 1017/2011

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Information request and DWP response:

Please provide me with Jobcentre Plus's customer service rules of processing job seeker's rapid reclaims, and reasons when Jobcentre Plus may ask from job seeker to provide again evidence to pass the habitual residency test. Is there any need to provide evidence about residency and eligibility for state benefits if the proofing process has been done once?

If someone makes a repeat claim for Jobseeker's Allowance within 26 weeks of a previous claim ending, and there have been no significant change to their circumstances since the last claim ended, Jobcentre Plus is able to reuse the majority of the information provided during the initial claim in order to assess their entitlement to benefit. As a result, the new claim gather will be shorter and evidence already provided will not generally need to be re-presented. There will also be a much shorter New Jobseeker Interview, during which the Jobseeker's Agreement will be reviewed.

The right to reside element of the habitual residence test is applied on every claim including rapid reclaims. Evidence of nationality and, where applicable, immigration status must be provided. Form HRT2R must also be completed on every new claim.

If there is any doubt that the jobseeker's circumstances are not the same as previously reported (for example, because there has been a change in their household or they have more money coming in), then they will need to complete a full new claim gather and will be required to present evidence in support of their claim.

What are time lime limits by the law to process and to decide job-seeker claims for benefits?

You also ask "what are the time limits by the law to process and to decide job-seeker claims for benefits". There is nothing in the legislation to specify time limits for processing Jobseeker's Allowance claims. The Department does, however, set its own internal Average Actual Clearance Time (AACT) target. For the last financial year, 2010/11 this was set at 11 days for Jobseeker's Allowance. AACT is calculated from the date the person first contacts Jobcentre Plus or their first day of unemployment, whichever is the later, to the date a letter is sent to them with information about their entitlement.

The link below is to the Jobcentre Plus Service Standards which you may find useful:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/dwp1018.pdf>

What are the time limits by the law to give reply to job seekers complaint by the Independent Case examiner, and by Jobcentre Plus who as the Respondent?

There are no legal time limits for the Independent Case Examiner (ICE) to respond to a customer complaint. However, the ICE's service standards for 2011/2012 state aim to give a final response to 55% of complaints within six months and 85% of complaints within 12 months.