

# Evidence verification: Guidance

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## Providing evidence for new claims

Evidence may be required to verify the information that claimants provide when making a new claim. This could be to establish:

- their identity
- relevant circumstances
- reasons for payment

Claimants must be given a calendar month to provide information or evidence in connection with their new claim. The calendar month begins when the claimant is informed what evidence is needed. This applies to any declaration made within the first Assessment Period.

The definition of a calendar month is a period starting at the beginning of a day in one of the 12 months of the year and ending just before the start of the same day in the following month. Where there is no corresponding day in the next month, the period ends at the end of that month. This means one calendar month from 31 May is 30 June.

Where the claimant is unable to provide evidence within the calendar month and the reason is considered reasonable, such as waiting for evidence from a third party, the calendar month can be extended.

If the claimant fails to provide the information or evidence the claim can be considered for closure **1 calendar month plus 1 day** after the date that the evidence was requested. This is so the claimant is not disadvantaged if they accessed their claim on the last day of the calendar month.

For further information, see Claim closure: Guidance.

An ineligible partner, landlord or relevant childcare providers can also be requested to provide information or evidence in connection with a claim.

## **Providing information**

At any time during the period of the request, the claimant may:

- explain that the information or evidence does not exist
- inform us that they need more time
- state that it is not possible for them to obtain it

Claimants may be required to provide information or evidence on their ineligible partner to:

- confirm information about their circumstances
- to supply information or evidence in connection with the claim (for example their capital, earnings and income)

If the ineligible partner has a National Insurance number, information about their earnings may be received through Real Time Information.

If the ineligible partner does not have a National Insurance number, the eligible claimant must report those earnings.

## **Change of circumstances**

A claimant must report all changes of circumstances as soon as possible after the change occurs.

This applies to any declarations made after the end of the first Assessment Period once there is an award in place.

When the claimant reports a change of circumstances, whether advantageous or disadvantageous, they have 14 days to supply the evidence from the date it was requested. However, individual circumstances must be taken into account, and a claimant can be given longer than 14 days if considered necessary.

For conditionality purposes, any change of circumstances is taken into account immediately and the Labour Market regime is changed (if appropriate) when the change is notified. The change must then be validated to ensure the correct regime is in place going forward. If the change is not validated because the necessary evidence has not been provided, the conditionality will be reassessed based on evidence already supplied.

This differs from the approach to payments which may not be changed until the change has been validated. The change may not take effect until the end of the

Assessment Period during which the change occurs or was notified (if later). When evidence or verification is received, the change in regime must then be confirmed.

The reported change may impact on the allocated Labour Market regime across the whole household, not just the individual claimant and/or member of the couple reporting the change.

Claimants must be informed that the allocation to a regime is treated on a whole household basis for conditionality purposes. Over time this will encourage couples to make decisions based on their joint circumstances - whilst recognising their responsibilities as individual claimants.