

Options and services for Disability Support Pension customers

This factsheet is available in other formats.
For more information, see page 8.

The Australian Government offers many options and services to help people on Disability Support Pension (DSP) who can do some work, study, training or volunteering. These programs are available to help you achieve your goals and may also help you and your employer if you find it hard to keep your job because of your disability. They are available to help you whether you can participate part-time or full-time.



Apart from financial benefits, working, volunteering or participating in community activities can help you meet new people, socialise, increase your skills and be involved in your community.

Even if you do not feel you can work now, you may be able to in the future. Centrelink can refer you to an appropriate employment service. Centrelink can also provide you with encouragement and support to do some training or study that can help prepare you for work. The Australian Government understands that not everyone who receives DSP is able to work.

What options and services are available to help me?

Disability Employment Services

Disability Employment Services aim to help you find a job that lasts. The service is voluntary and is available to eligible job seekers with disability, injury or health conditions. You can get help with education, training, building your confidence, rehabilitation and job search to suit your personal needs.

Your local Disability Employment Services Provider will know where jobs are available and how to help you get one. They will work with you every step of the way. Once you are placed in a job, they can continue to support you for at least 26 weeks to help you stay in the job. If you need further support after this, a provider will be able to help you for as long as you need it.

Your Disability Employment Services Provider works with:

- > local employers
- > Registered Training Organisations
- > state, territory and local governments
- > community and health services, **and**
- > other organisations.

To use Disability Employment Services you may need to undertake a Job Capacity Assessment, if you do not already have one, to determine the best service for you. If you do volunteer for employment assistance, this Job Capacity Assessment will not be used to review your eligibility for DSP.

You can contact Centrelink for a referral to Disability Employment Services.

Job in Jeopardy assistance

Disability Employment Services Providers can assist you if you are at risk of losing your job as a result of your illness, injury or disability through Job in Jeopardy assistance. The program is not designed to assist with finding new employment but can help you keep your job.

If you use Job in Jeopardy assistance, you may receive personalised support and advice on:

- > job redesign
- > workplace assessments
- > workplace modifications
- > specialised equipment to help you perform the requirements of the job.

You can access Job in Jeopardy assistance through Centrelink.



Employment service providers

Job Services Australia is a national network of employment services available to help you find paid work.

Job Services Australia providers can:

- > help you develop a resume
- > match your skills to job vacancies
- > tailor job searches to suit you, **and**
- > improve your chance of finding a job.

If you are eligible for the full range of services, your Job Services Australia provider may be able to provide additional assistance to help you secure work.

Job Services Australia is funded by the Australian Government.

For more information about Job Services Australia, visit www.deewr.gov.au

Supported Wage System

Most Australians who have disability and participate in the workforce receive full rates of pay. However, some people are unable to find or keep a job at full rates of pay because their disability affects their workplace productivity.

The Supported Wage System allows employers to match a person's productivity with a fair wage. The Supported Wage System will give you access to a reliable process of productivity based wage assessment to determine fair pay for fair work.

For more information about the Supported Wage System, visit www.deewr.gov.au

New Enterprise Incentive Scheme

The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) helps eligible unemployed people start and run their own small business. It provides training, support and helps participants to become self-supporting and independent. You may be eligible for help to become self-employed through the NEIS.

Eligible NEIS participants undertake an accredited three-month small business management course. Participants receive 12 months of business advice and mentor support to help the business become successful.

If you become self-employed you will need to contact Centrelink to provide information on your disability and the type of work you do to determine if you are still eligible for DSP. The number of hours you can work while still receiving DSP can vary. For more information about allowable working hours, see page 6 of this factsheet.

You can find out more about the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme by visiting www.deewr.gov.au

Australian Disability Enterprises

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE) are businesses that employ and support people with disability and enable them to work in a range of different industries. They are especially suited to you if you have higher support needs and require a higher level of ongoing support.

ADE offers you the same working conditions as those in the general workforce. If you are employed by ADE, they will provide you with the skills and support you need so, when you are ready, you can move to a job outside the ADE.

You can contact Australian Disability Enterprises at www.australiandisabilityenterprises.com.au

JobAccess

JobAccess is a free, confidential service that provides advice and workplace solutions for people with disability and their employers. It includes a comprehensive, easy to use website and a telephone information and advice service. You can find all the information about employment for people with disability in one place using JobAccess.

JobAccess provides advice on every stage of the employment process—preparing for work, how to look for jobs and, if you need it, support in the workplace once you have found a job.

You can contact JobAccess on **1800 464 800** or by visiting **www.jobaccess.gov.au**

Mobility Allowance

Mobility Allowance is an extra payment that helps with the cost of transport if you have disability. If your disability makes it difficult for you to use public transport and you are:

- > working, **or**
- > studying, **or**
- > undertaking vocational training, **or**
- > volunteering, **and**
- > doing one of the above activities for at least 32 hours in a four-week period, on a continuing basis

you may be able to get Mobility Allowance. You may also be able to get Mobility Allowance if you are looking for work.

You do not need to be receiving another Centrelink payment to be eligible for Mobility Allowance and there does not need to be public transport in your local area. It is not income or assets tested and it is a non-taxable payment.

Mobility Allowance recipients are also entitled to a Health Care Card.

To find out if you can get Mobility Allowance, talk to Centrelink.

Assistance when I start work

Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to:

- > keep more of your Centrelink payment when you start work
- > keep your Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card for a period of time after you start work
- > get your Centrelink payment back if your work lasts less than 12 weeks.

If your payment is suspended and you reapply for DSP within two years, you will not need to provide a medical report in order to start receiving DSP again.

More information about assistance when you start work is available through Centrelink.

Pensioner Education Supplement

Pensioner Education Supplement helps people improve their chances of finding a job through study. It is a fortnightly payment from Centrelink to help eligible students with ongoing study costs. To be eligible for the Pensioner Education Supplement, you must be enrolled in an approved course.

Contact Centrelink for more information about Pensioner Education Supplement.



Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance

If you start working 15 hours or more a week and your pension is suspended, you may be eligible for Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance. If you receive one of these allowances it will not prevent you from returning to DSP if you stop work within two years.

To get one of these allowances, Centrelink will need to know how much money you earn each fortnight, before tax (your gross income). If you work less than 30 hours a week because of your disability, you will still be able to have a Pensioner Concession Card while on Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance. Depending on your hours, your employment may meet your Activity Test requirements.

For more information about Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance, you can talk to Centrelink.

Centrelink Social Workers

Centrelink Social Workers are trained professionals who can:

- > provide you with counselling and support if you have difficult personal or family issues
- > provide you with information about, or refer you to, community support services
- > help you with your claims for payments from Centrelink.

Social Workers are available to help you in Centrelink Customer Service Centres and through the Centrelink Call Centres.

Financial Information Service

A Financial Information Service Officer can give you information to help you make informed decisions about your future.

Financial Information Service Officers provide information to people over the telephone, at personal interviews or through financial education seminars.

You can contact the Financial Information Service through Centrelink.



If I start working, do I need to tell Centrelink?

If you start working and earning money, you will need to tell Centrelink within 14 days of your circumstances changing. It is important to remember that if you do take up work, your pension payment may change but this does not mean it will be stopped.

If you start working more than 15 hours a week in open employment or you have a high income, your pension payment will be suspended. If you leave the job within two years, your payment can start again without the need to provide a medical report or have a Job Capacity Assessment.

Allowable working hours

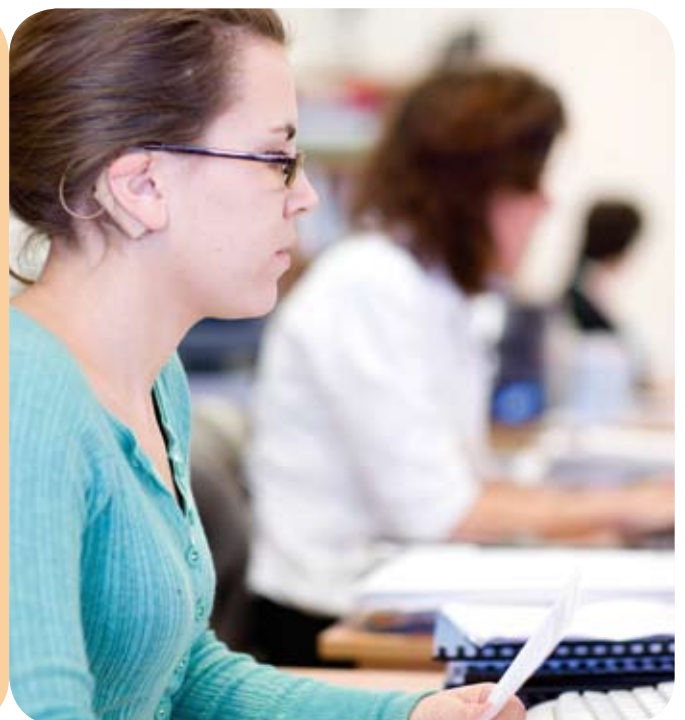
The number of hours you can work and still receive DSP varies according to when you were granted the pension. If you work more than your allowable hours per week your DSP will not immediately be cancelled, it will be suspended for two years. This means if you find your job too difficult because of your disability or you need to reduce your hours of work in those two years, you can access DSP again without the need to prove your eligibility. Access to your Pensioner Concession Card continues for 12 months from the date your DSP is suspended.

Centrelink can tell you about your allowable hours a week and if your pension will be affected by your employment. People who get DSP and who are employed by an Australian Disability Enterprise, are under the Supported Wage System or who receive ongoing support from a Disability Employment Services Provider generally will not have an allowable working hours limit.

Pension Income Test

If you work less than your allowable working hours, or are not subject to the allowable working hours limit, your DSP will be calculated under the Pension Income Test. The Pension Income Test means you can earn a certain amount of income each fortnight before your pension is affected. For each dollar of income over that amount, the pension is reduced by 50 cents a fortnight for a single pensioner and 25 cents a fortnight for each member of a pensioner couple.

For more information about the Pension Income Test, contact Centrelink.



Examples



Grace

Grace has been getting DSP for two years. Because of her disability, Grace has been unable to work, however she now feels that she wants to get back into the workforce.

Grace contacts Centrelink for assistance. Centrelink arranges a Job Capacity Assessment to determine the appropriate employment service to assist her. With the help of Disability Employment Services, Grace starts a part-time job, working 10 hours a week. Because her situation has changed, Grace needs to let Centrelink know she is now working.

Grace has some difficulties in adjusting to her new workplace but knows there is support available through her Disability Employment Services Provider and other Centrelink programs and services.

Because Grace travels to work but is unable to use public transport because of her disability, she is eligible for Mobility Allowance. At her new job, Grace earns money but is still eligible to receive a part pension. She also makes new friends and starts doing more social activities outside of work.



Jason

Jason has a disability and is getting DSP. He has recently started working again and is enjoying participating in more social activities. Jason is working more than 15 hours a week so when he tells Centrelink that he is working, his DSP is suspended.

After six months of working, Jason does not feel well enough to continue at this stage. He tells Centrelink he has stopped work and because he left the job within two years, he starts receiving DSP again without having to provide a medical report or have a Job Capacity Assessment.

Jason would like to start working again when he feels well enough and knows there is help and support available to him when he feels ready.

How can I find out more?

There are a range of products and publications available about specific Centrelink support and services. You can access these publications by visiting our website at **www.centrelink.gov.au** or at your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

For more information about Centrelink payments, options and services including, Disability Support Pension, Disability Employment Services, Job in Jeopardy, Mobility Allowance, assistance for when you start work, Pensioner Education Supplement, Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, allowable working hours, Pension Income Test or Centrelink Social Workers:

- > go to **www.centrelink.gov.au**
- > call **13 2717**
- > visit your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

For more information on income and assets tests, contact Centrelink's Financial Information Service on **13 2300**.

For TTY enquiries **Freecall™ 1800 810 586**. This service is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

You can also contact us using the National Relay Service telephone (speech to speech users) on **1300 555 727** or **Freecall™ 1800 555 727**.

To speak to Centrelink in a language other than English, call **13 1202**.

For the Centrelink Indigenous Call Centre call **13 6380**.

To contact JobAccess, visit the website **www.jobaccess.gov.au** or call **1800 464 800**.

For more information about Job Services Australia, the Supported Wage System or New Enterprise Incentive Scheme visit the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website **www.deewr.gov.au**

To contact Australian Disability Enterprises, visit **www.australiandisabilityenterprises.com.au**

Note: calls from your home phone to Centrelink "13" numbers from anywhere in Australia are charged at a fixed rate. That rate may vary from the price of a local call and may also vary between telephone service providers. Calls to "1800" numbers from your home phone are free. Calls from public and mobiles phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.

Centrelink information in other formats

Some Centrelink information is available in alternative formats. These formats include audio CD/DVD, large print, Braille and E-text. You can also select the 'listen to this page' icon to hear the contents of the selected web pages from our website. We can also arrange to provide information products in other alternative formats upon request.

If you are interested in this service call **13 2717** or ask at a Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

Disclaimer: the information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments and services. It is your responsibility to decide if you wish to apply for a payment and to make an application, taking into consideration your particular circumstances.

This information is accurate as at June 2010. If you use this publication after that date, please check with us that the details are correct.