



Disability Support Pension reform

The Australian Government is improving support for Australians with disability to help them into work where possible, while continuing to provide an essential safety net for people who are unable to work to fully support themselves.

Since July 2010, the Australian Government has put in place a series of reforms to Disability Support Pension (DSP).

Reforms that have already been implemented include more thorough assessments of DSP claims by Senior Job Capacity Assessors, requiring DSP claimants to show they are unable to work independently even with employment assistance, and introducing revised Impairment Tables that focus on a person's abilities, rather than what they cannot do.

Further reforms will be introduced from 1 July 2012, including:

- introducing participation requirements for some DSP recipients;
- allowing DSP recipients to work up to 30 hours a week; and
- indefinite portability of DSP for recipients with a severe and permanent impairment and no future work capacity.

New participation requirements

From 1 July 2012, DSP recipients under age 35 with some capacity to work will be required to attend regular participation interviews with Centrelink and to develop participation plans aimed at building their capacity.

These plans may help people improve job readiness, search for employment, get training, volunteer or undertake rehabilitation. Attendance at participation interviews will be compulsory but the activities identified in the participation plans will be voluntary.

Centrelink will contact the DSP recipients who are affected by these requirements to provide information about what they need to do, and the support available.

Exemptions from these requirements will apply to DSP recipients who:

- are age 35 or over
- are assessed as having a work capacity of less than 8 hours a week
- are manifestly eligible for DSP
- are employed under the Supported Wage System or in an Australian Disability Enterprise, or
- have a dependent child under age six.



New rules to allow work up to 30 hours a week

Also from 1 July 2012, all DSP recipients will be able to work up to 30 hours a week without their payment being suspended or cancelled, and continue to receive a pension (subject to the usual means testing arrangements).

This important change will give people with disability the security they need to give it a go taking on more hours of work, without worrying about losing their qualification for the DSP if they are not able to sustain work at that level.

Centrelink will contact people whose DSP is suspended at 1 July 2012 for working 15 hours a week or more under the old rules, to let them know about the new rules.

Indefinite portability changes

From 1 July 2012 DSP recipients who have a severe and permanent impairment and no future work capacity will be able to travel overseas indefinitely while retaining access to their pension.

Applications for assessment under the new rules, for recipients wishing to take their DSP outside Australia indefinitely, can be made with Centrelink from 1 July 2012.

Other supports to help people with disability participate in work

The DSP reforms have been accompanied by other Government initiatives to ensure people with disability get the support they need to find and keep a job.

More than \$3 billion is being invested to uncap access to Disability Employment Services. Previously, the number of places in these services was capped and people had to wait up to a year to access assistance.

The Government is breaking down the barriers to employment through the Enhanced Wage Subsidy, which can provide up to \$3000 for employers who hire someone with a disability for 15 hours or more each week.

In addition, from 1 July 2012 a wage subsidy will be available to employers who offer employment to job seekers with minimal work experience, including those with a disability, worth around \$220 a week for 26 weeks.

How are the reforms being evaluated?

The DSP Advisory Group, consisting of representatives from peak disability organisations, will continue to work with the Australian Government to monitor the implementation of recent DSP reforms.

The impact of the 1 July 2012 changes on DSP recipients will be evaluated in 2013-14 when the measures have been in place for 12 months.

More information

For more information about DSP reforms visit:

www.fahcsia.gov.au

www.humanservices.gov.au

a local Centrelink Customer Service Centre

or call 13 27 17.