

This chapter provides information about Centrelink payments and services that may be available to help people who have recently become widowed, separated or divorced.

Working age participation

As the gateway to the Job Network, to providers of Australian Government employment services and a wide range of other government and community services, Centrelink can refer customers to services designed to help improve their chances of getting a job; accessing study, training, or work experience placements; building up skills and confidence for work; undertaking community work; and ultimately, to help them become financially independent.

Some people will need extra help to update skills before they can find and keep work. Others might want to consider their longer-term prospects and return to full-time vocational or tertiary study to achieve their career goals.

Payments

- payments to help raise children
- Widow Allowance
- Crisis Payment
- Pension Education Supplement.

Payments to help raise children

The following payments may be available to a person who has recently separated or divorced, to help with the cost of raising their child(ren).

- Family Tax Benefit Part A
- Family Tax Benefit Part B
- Parenting Payment
- Child Care Benefit
- Child Care Tax Rebate
- Baby Bonus
- Maternity Immunisation Allowance
- Double Orphan Pension.

For more information about these payments, see Chapter 3.

Widow Allowance

If an older woman has become widowed, divorced or separated later in life and has no recent workforce experience, she may be able to get Widow Allowance.

For more information about Widow Allowance, see Chapter 11.

Crisis Payment

Crisis Payment assists customers who are in severe financial hardship and are either forced to leave home and find a new home because of an extreme event like domestic violence or a natural disaster, or who remain in the family home after experiencing domestic violence where the family member responsible has left or been removed from the home. Crisis Payment may also assist people who have been released from prison or psychiatric confinement after being charged with an offence.

For more information about Crisis Payment, see Chapter 7.

Pensioner Education Supplement

Assists eligible customers with the cost of undertaking full-time or part-time study.

For more information about Pensioner Education Supplement, see Chapter 5.

Services

- Centrelink Psychologists
- Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors
- social work services
- support through the Family Relationships Services Program
- Family Relationships Centres

- Financial Information Service
- child support.

Centrelink Psychologists

Centrelink Psychologists are registered health professionals who provide professional assessments, including Job Capacity Assessments. Centrelink Psychologists see people of different ages, from all types of backgrounds and with a wide range of concerns. Their work focuses on assessing work capacity and determining which services and programmes will be suitable for people who may need help or support. Centrelink Psychologists provide advice and recommendations for assistance and initiate referrals to the most appropriate services (for example, to the Job Network, Disability Employment Network, or community organisations).

Centrelink Psychologists also provide specialist assessments and offer short-term psychological interventions such as cognitive behaviour therapy, counselling, behaviour management and modification and motivational interviewing to facilitate a customer's engagement with the Job Network.

For more information about Centrelink Psychologists, see Chapter 13.

Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors

Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors are allied health professionals. They come from a range of disciplines including psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Job Capacity Assessors help identify a person's ability to work and any barriers they face in getting and maintaining employment.

Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors may provide assessments for:

- job seekers claiming or receiving Centrelink payments who have been identified as having barriers preventing them from working
- people claiming Disability Support Pension or those having their Disability Support Pension reviewed
- voluntary job seekers such as mature aged people or Disability Support Pension recipients wanting to get a job.

Following the assessment, Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors can directly refer clients to an employment or support service that meets their individual needs. Services include the Job Network, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Employment Network, Personal Support Programme, Job Placement, Employment and Training or Job Capacity Account short-term interventions. Many Job

Capacity Assessors also provide Job Capacity Account short-term intervention services to help prepare people to receive employment assistance from the Job Network.

For more information about Job Capacity Assessments, see Chapter 9.

Social work services

Centrelink Social Workers provide professional assessments including Job Capacity Assessments, counselling and referral to community support services for customers who may be facing difficult personal and family situations.

For more information about social work services, see Chapter 13.

Support through the Family Relationships Services Program

This programme provides support through early intervention and prevention to help families maintain and strengthen their relationships or manage the experience of separation.

The Family Relationships Services Program supports more than 100 community organisations across Australia. These organisations provide a variety of forms of assistance to families such as relationship education, counselling, mediation, skills training, conciliation and children's contact services.

For more information about these programmes, contact the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at www.facsia.gov.au or call **1300 653 227**.

Family Relationship Centres

Family Relationship Centres provide information, advice and dispute resolution (such as mediation) to help parents/carers focus on the needs of children and develop workable arrangements (including parenting plans) for children without going to court.

For more information call **Freecall™ 1800 050 321** or visit www.familyrelationships.gov.au

Financial Information Service

Centrelink's Financial Information Service (FIS) is an education and information service available to everyone in the community. The Financial Information Service helps people to make informed decisions about investment and financial issues for their current and future financial needs. The Financial Information Service is independent, free and confidential and provides services through seminars, and by phone and appointment.

For more information about the Financial Information Service, see Chapter 13.

Child support

The Child Support Agency (CSA) is responsible for the administration, assessment and collection of child support payments, including Family Assistance Office customers receiving Family Tax Benefit.

The CSA can collect child support payable under court orders or court registered agreements. When child support is paid through the CSA, the amount may be deducted from the paying parent's wage or salary (together with tax) or paid directly to the CSA. Child support payments may be collected from customers' pension and benefit payments.

The CSA also works out the amount of child support payable under a legislative formula. The person who has care of the child can apply to the CSA for an assessment of child support. This person does not have to be the parent of the child.

For more information about the Child Support Scheme, see Chapter 3.

