

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CENTRELINK

Last updated February 2020

This factsheet provides information on one-off payments you can receive if you are experiencing or at risk of family or domestic violence.

It also explains how domestic violence may impact your existing Centrelink payments.

This factsheet covers:

- Crisis Payment
- Urgent Payment
- How domestic violence can impact your Centrelink payment

Crisis Payment

What is Crisis Payment?



You may be eligible for Crisis Payment if you are in severe financial hardship and if you or your partner had to leave your home because of domestic or family violence.

Crisis payment is a one-off payment equal to one week of whatever payment you are currently receiving from Centrelink.

To be eligible for Crisis Payment you must:

- Be receiving a social security payment, and
- Be in severe financial hardship, and
- Contact Centrelink within 7 days from the day you decide to leave home or the day the family member responsible for domestic violence was removed from your home

If you are not receiving a social security payment, such as Newstart Allowance or Parenting Payment, you will need to apply for one before claiming Crisis Payment. You can generally only be paid from the day you make contact with Centrelink, so it is a good idea to claim as soon as possible.

How can I claim Crisis Payment?



You can apply for Crisis Payment by submitting the claim form, found [here](#). You have 14 days from the date you contact Centrelink to submit the completed claim form.

You can submit the form online through MyGov, by post or in person at Centrelink. You can also:

- Speak to Centrelink on 132 850
- Make an appointment with a Centrelink social worker on 132 850
- If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, you can phone the Centrelink Indigenous Call Centre on 136 380
- If you are from a non-English speaking background, you can speak to a Centrelink employee in your preferred language by calling 131 202, or speak to Centrelink through an interpreter by calling 131 450

If you attend court for a domestic violence protection order, there may be a Centrelink social worker available there to help you with your claim.

For immediate assistance, go to your local Centrelink office.

What do I need to tell Centrelink when I apply for Crisis Payment?

It is important that you provide Centrelink with as much information as possible.



Some documents that may assist Centrelink in assessing your claim are:

- Documents from the police or court about the domestic violence, such as protection orders and police reports
- Letters or reports from doctors / councillors / caseworkers / social workers / domestic violence services / community agencies
- Personal statements or statements from family or friends or statutory declarations.
- If you have not been receiving a Centrelink payment you will need original identity documents for yourself and children such as birth certificates, passports, marriage certificates, immigration documents
- Information about your new details such as new address, phone contacts and bank accounts in your own name
- Any information about your situation such as income and assets

A Centrelink social worker will usually be involved in assessing the circumstances of domestic violence.

If you are concerned about Centrelink contacting certain people to assess your claim, make sure you tell Centrelink when you apply.

Urgent Payment

What is an Urgent Payment?



You may be eligible for an Urgent Payment if you are experiencing severe financial hardship because of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances such as domestic violence.

An Urgent Payment is **not** an additional payment. It is an instalment of your usual Centrelink payment paid to you earlier than you would normally receive it. If you receive an Urgent Payment, to pay it back you will receive less money on the day you normally receive your Centrelink payment.

How can I claim an Urgent Payment?



You can apply for Urgent Payment online through MyGov or the Express Plus app, by phone, by post or in person by submitting the [Application for Advance Payment](#) form.

How can domestic violence impact my Centrelink payment?

Exemptions from mutual obligations

If you are receiving a Centrelink payment that requires you to complete mutual obligations, you may be able to get an exemption if you have experienced a major personal crisis such as domestic violence. Mutual obligations include attending appointments with your job service provider, accepting offers of paid work, attending job interviews, attending training and looking for work.



The length of the exemption will depend on the type of payment you receive:

- For Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and Disability Support Pension, the exemption is granted for up to 13 weeks, with the possibility of an extension.
- For Special Benefit, the exemption is granted for up to 2 weeks, with the possibility of a further 2 weeks in extremely traumatic circumstances.

Separation due to domestic violence



If you were receiving a Centrelink payment and your relationship has ended due to domestic violence, you need to let Centrelink know as soon as possible. The single rate of payment is higher than the partnered rate, so you should receive more money.

If you are caring for children, you need to tell the Family Assistance Office in order to receive Family Tax Benefit. You can also claim child support with the Child Support Agency.

If you reconcile with your partner, it is important to tell Centrelink about any changes in your relationship status within 14 days of the change. Not keeping Centrelink informed could cause a debt.

The law and policy on relationships is complex, especially where there has been domestic violence. For more information, click here for our factsheet 'Relationship Status and Centrelink'.

Where can I get help?



You can get free legal advice from your closest member centre which can be found at <http://ejaustralia.org.au/legal-help-centrelink/>

For counselling and advice, call 1800 737 732 (RESPECT) or visit www.1800respect.org.au

This factsheet was informed by previously published factsheets from Basic Rights Queensland and Welfare Rights Centre Sydney.

This factsheet does not constitute legal advice.

Please contact any of our member centres if you wish to obtain free legal advice.
Find your closest member centre at www.ejaustralia.org.au