

Disability Support Pension (DSP) talking points - Information for people claiming DSP

DSP is an income support payment.

It provides financial help if a person has a physical, intellectual or psychiatric condition that's likely to persist for more than 2 years and stops them from working at least 15 hours per week.

Services Australia provide DSP to eligible people.

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Who can get DSP

To get DSP, a person needs to meet both:

- non-medical rules
- medical rules.

For more information in English and other languages, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/dsp

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Manifest medical rules

A person meets the manifest medical rules if they:

- are permanently blind
- need nursing home level care
- have a terminal illness with average life expectancy of less than 2 years
- have an intellectual disability with an IQ of less than 70
- have category 4 HIV/AIDS.

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They also meet the manifest medical rules, if they get a Department of Veterans' Affairs Disability Compensation Payment at the Special Rate (totally and permanently incapacitated) paid under the *Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986*.

If they meet one of these manifest medical rules, they need to provide supporting medical evidence. They don't have to attend a medical assessment for Services Australia to assess their claim for DSP.

For more information, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/manifest-medical-rules-for-disability-support-pension

General medical rules

If a person doesn't meet the manifest medical rules, they'll need to meet all the general medical rules.

The general medical rules are:

- the person's condition is likely to persist for more than 2 years
- their condition is **diagnosed**, **reasonably treated** and **stabilised**
 - **Diagnosed** means the treating doctor or health professional has examined and diagnosed a person's condition and detailed this in medical evidence.
 - To assess if their condition is **reasonably treated**, Services Australia look at the treatment a person has had from their treating doctor or health professional. They also consider any further treatment that's planned.
 - Services Australia will look at their medical evidence and assess whether their condition is **stabilised**. This means whether their ability to work will get better or stay the same with more treatment or rehabilitation. Conditions that are deteriorating or fluctuate can be assessed as stabilised.
- they have an impairment rating of 20 points or more
 - A Job Capacity Assessor in Services Australia will assess a person's disability using the Impairment Tables that are in Social Security law.
 - The impairment rating is based on how the person's disability or medical condition affects their day-to-day life and ability to work.
- their condition will stop them working at least 15 hours a week in the next 2 years.

Under the general medical rules, they may also need to meet Program of Support rules, if these apply to them.

For more information, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/general-medical-rules-for-disability-support-pension

Non-medical rules for DSP

Even if a person meets medical rules, they also need to meet non-medical rules to get DSP.

The non-medical rules they need to meet include, they:

- must be at least 15 years and 9 months and under Age Pension age when they claim
- meet the residence rules
- meet the income and assets tests.

Residence rules

To get DSP they generally need to have been an Australian resident for at least 10 years in total. For at least 5 of these years, there must be no break in their residence.

Some people can get DSP if they've been an Australian resident for less than 10 years. This includes refugees or former refugees.

The 10 year rule also doesn't apply if they were an Australian resident when they became unable to work or permanently blind.

Some people who don't meet the residence rules may qualify under an International Agreement.

Income and assets

To get DSP, their income and assets need to be below the income and assets cut-off points. If they have a partner, their partner's income and assets are also considered.

For more information, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/non-medical-rules-for-disability-support-pension

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Getting help from a nominee

A person can authorise another person or an organisation to be their correspondence or payment nominee.

When a person adds a nominee, they give them permission to do things for them.

There are 2 types of nominees:

- a **correspondence nominee** can speak with Services Australia and do most of their Centrelink and aged care business for them
- a **payment nominee** can get their Centrelink payments for them.

They can only nominate 1 person or organisation for each type.

They can't have a nominee and be a nominee for someone else at the same time.

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To set up a nominee, a person can:

- go online - if they and their proposed nominee both have a Centrelink online account linked to myGov, they can manage their nominee arrangements online
- fill in a form – they can fill in the [Authorising a person or organisation to enquire or act on your behalf form](#)

For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/ someone-to-deal-with-us-your-behalf](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/someone-to-deal-with-us-your-behalf)

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How to claim DSP

Online

For many people, the easiest way to claim is online. If a person has a correspondence nominee, the nominee can also claim online for them.

Sign in to their myGov account and select Centrelink > **Make a claim or view claim status**, then **Make a claim**. Under **Disabled, ill or injured**, select **Get started**.

A step by step guide to claiming a payment online can be accessed at servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-claim-disability-support-pension

Phone

Call Services Australia on the Disability, sickness and carers line on **132 717**.

Paper claim form

Download and complete [Claim for Disability Support Pension form \(SA466\)](#) or visit a Service Centre to get the form.

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Medical evidence

Services Australia needs medical evidence from a person's treating doctors or other health professionals. This evidence helps Services Australia know how the person's disability or medical condition affects them. The medical evidence should include information about:

- their diagnosed disability or medical conditions
- past, current and planned treatment
- how their condition impacts them daily and their ability to work
- the name and contact details of their treating doctors or other health professionals.

Specific medical evidence is required for some medical conditions. For example, the diagnosis of an ear condition affecting hearing or balance must be supported by an ear, nose and throat specialist or an audiologist.

If they have problems getting this evidence, contact Services Australia to talk about options.

For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/ medical-evidence-for-disability-support-pension](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/medical-evidence-for-disability-support-pension)

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People who need extra support to claim DSP

Services Australia understands some customers may require additional help when gathering medical evidence and claiming DSP. This may include people who:

- are living in remote areas with little or no access to health services
- are homeless
- are experiencing family and domestic violence
- have intellectual impairment that impacts their decision-making capacity
- require specialised language or cultural support
- demonstrate behaviours consistent with a chronic mental health condition.

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Services Australia staff may be able to support someone to make a claim when they can't claim by themselves.

A person experiencing a crisis or living in a remote area may be able to lodge a claim without all supporting documents or medical evidence.

Services Australia can help people who have difficulty providing sufficient medical evidence. For example, they can:

- make direct contact with a person's treating health professional
- explore alternative options for medical evidence when someone is unable to access a specialist or GP

They can also assist customers who have difficulty confirming their identity.

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Assessing a DSP claim

When a DSP claim is submitted, health professionals in Services Australia will first review all the medical evidence.

They will determine if:

- the person meets or doesn't meet manifest medical rules
- there is insufficient medical evidence to assess if the person meets medical rules
- the person requires a Job Capacity Assessment referral.

If it's determined there's insufficient medical evidence to assess their medical eligibility for DSP, they'll attempt to call the person, and/or their nominee. Services Australia may give additional time to provide the required medical evidence to support the claim.

Services Australia may also attempt to contact the person's treating health professional. The DSP claim includes a consent form to help facilitate any contact with the treating health professional.

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Job Capacity Assessment

A Job Capacity Assessment is completed by a qualified health professional who works for Services Australia.

It helps Services Australia to understand:

- how the person's condition affects their ability to work
- any help they may need to get a job
- if they meet medical rules for DSP.

At the Job Capacity Assessment, Services Australia will assess if the person's medical condition:

- likely to persist for more than 2 years

- diagnosed, reasonably treated and stabilised
- has an impairment rating of 20 points or more, and
- stops them from working, or being retrained to work, for 15 hours or more per week.

The assessment may be held over the phone or completed as a file assessment, depending on the amount of medical evidence provided.

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Program of Support

A Program of Support helps people with disability to prepare for, find and keep a job.

A person may need to participate in a Program of Support before they claim DSP if they:

- have a total impairment rating of 20 points or more
- don't have at least 20 points on a single Impairment Table.

If a person has a Program of Support requirement, this is assessed as part of the Job Capacity Assessment.

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If Services Australia rejected a person's DSP claim because they didn't meet Program of Support requirements, the agency can reassess participation in a Program of Support. This applies if the person has either:

- now completed a Program of Support for the required period
- started a Program of Support but their medical condition or disability stops them from improving their ability to work by staying in a Program of Support.

To do this, a person may need to reclaim DSP and provide evidence from their employment services provider.

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Disability Medical Assessment

After the Job Capacity Assessment, the person may also need to attend a Disability Medical Assessment with a Government Contracted Doctor. The doctor will talk to them about:

- their condition and medical evidence
- the impact of their condition on their day-to-day life and ability to work.

If an assessment is needed, Sonic HealthPlus will make contact by phone to arrange an appointment.

Assessments may be done in person at a Sonic HealthPlus clinic. They may also be held via video conference or by phone. These assessments are not a medical examination and there is no cost.

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What if a claim is rejected?

If Services Australia rejects a person's claim, they'll try to call them to explain why. They'll also write to them.

People can contact Services Australia to ask for more information about their assessment, including:

- a copy of their medical assessment
- why they don't meet DSP medical rules.

People can ask for a review of the decision if they think a mistake has been made.

More information

Go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/dsp or call the Disability, sickness and carers line on 132 717, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

This information is accurate as at September 2023