

Review of Mutual Obligation Payment Cancellations following a 3rd Financial Penalty



Between **April 2022** and **July 2024** some people may have had their Centrelink payment cancelled incorrectly. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (**DEWR**) is reviewing these decisions and may provide compensation if your payment shouldn't have been cancelled.

This fact sheet will help you understand this process, what you need to do, and what might happen next.

What you need to know

Am I affected?

You may have been affected if you were receiving JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment, or Special Benefit between April 2022 and July 2024, and had a 3rd financial penalty and your payment cancelled. If you have been affected DEWR will contact you either by text message, or through your myGov account.

What do I need to do?

You do not need to do anything until you are contacted. If you are contacted, you may be asked to provide information about your circumstances at the time your payment was cancelled. This could be information about your financial situation, or about other things happening in your life such as family violence, health issues, or other things that made your life more difficult. You do not need to provide any information, but anything you do provide may help the department determine whether you are eligible for a compensation payment.

You may seek independent legal advice or other support before you provide information to DEWR.

What happens next?

If you are contacted, you'll have an opportunity to give DEWR any information you think is relevant. DEWR will then undertake a review and determine whether your payment should have been cancelled. DEWR may decide you are owed some money as compensation.

At any time in this process, you can seek independent legal advice or support. This is important if you are unsure about anything.

What kind of information should I give DEWR?

You might tell DEWR about anything that made your life more difficult around the time your payment was cancelled. You should specifically tell DEWR about anything that made it harder to meet your mutual obligation requirements. Some things you might want to think about are:

- Financial hardship: If you have been unable to meet your living expenses or had other financial difficulties because of your payment being cancelled.
- Transport issues: If you had difficulty getting to and from appointments or activities, because you didn't have access to a car or public transport, the cost of transport was too much or the distance was too far.
- Medical conditions or illness: If you or someone in your family were experiencing health issues or had to go to hospital.
- Caring responsibilities: If you were caring for a child, or for someone who was unwell, were on sorry business, or supporting family following a death.
- Communication difficulties: If you had trouble contacting your provider or Services Australia, including not having enough data or access to a computer or other device.
- Family violence: If you were experiencing any form of family violence, threats, or abuse.
- Housing instability: If you were homeless or otherwise experiencing difficulty with your housing situation including couch-surfing or camping.
- Personal difficulties: Any other hardships that affected your ability to meet mutual obligation requirements.
- Any other information: If you have documents or other information that shows any of the above, or anything else you think might be relevant, these may be helpful for the review.

More information on the process and reasons a decision might be changed is available [here](#).

DEWR may follow up to ask you for additional information about any costs or expenses you had because your payment was cancelled. This could include late fees on bills, penalties, reconnection fees for utilities, interest on emergency loans, or fees associated with having to move house.

How do I contact the department?



If you have received a text message or myGov inbox message you can call: 1800 249 873.

For general questions: Call the National Customer Service Line at 1800 805 260

To make a complaint: Call 1800 805 260

For ongoing suspensions: Contact your employment services provider or the Digital Services Contact Centre at 1800 314 677

Who can I contact for help?

You can speak to a social security lawyer at one of EJA's [member centres](#).

What can I do if I'm not happy with this review?

If you are not happy with the outcome of your review you may consider seeking independent legal advice. You could also contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman: 1300 362 072.

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