



DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION (“DSP”)

WHAT DO I NEED TO PROVE TO GET DSP?

In order to be successful in a claim for DSP, your medical evidence will need to show that:

- your condition is fully diagnosed and has been fully treated and stabilised (i.e. it is permanent);
- your condition will not improve in the next 2 years; and
- you are unable to work 15 hours per week (in any job, not just the area that you are experienced in).

There is also non-medical eligibility requirements such as citizenship, residence and any other income and assets.

HOW DO I PROVE THAT I AM UNABLE TO WORK 15 HOURS PER WEEK?

Even though your condition is fully treated, it may still cause impairments that affect your ability to work. To prove an inability to work, you must have at least 20 points of impairment.

You are allocated either 0, 5, 10 or 20 points of impairment for each impairment that you have. The amount of points depends on how severely the impairment impacts your day-to-day life.

There is a [table](#) for each impairment, setting out the severity required for each of the points.

The different types of “impairments” are:

- Functions requiring Physical Exertion and Stamina
- Upper Limb Function
- Lower Limb Function
- Spinal Function
- Mental Health Function
- Functioning related to Alcohol, Drug and Other Substance Use
- Brain Function
- Communication Function
- Intellectual Function
- Digestive and Reproductive Function
- Hearing and other Functions of the Ear
- Visual Function
- Contenance Function
- Functions of the Skin
- Functions of Consciousness (e.g. epilepsy)

If you use aids for your impairment, the impact of your impairment is assessed when you are using the aids, not without them.

Disclaimer: This factsheet provides general information and is not to be taken as legal advice. Published 2020.

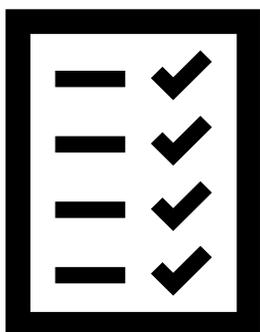


WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE MAKING AN APPLICATION?

Program of support

If you have multiple, mild/moderate impairments of 10 impairment points or less, you will need to prove that you have participated in a [program of support](#) for at least 18 months in the 3 years prior to applying. If you have been meeting your obligation requirements to get Jobseeker payments (previously known as New Start), this will be recognised as a program of support. Any exemption period will not be included in the 18 months.

If one of your impairments is 20 points, you will not need to do a program of support.



Medical evidence

You should also make sure that you:

1. have undertaken any tests recommended by your doctor;
2. have undertaken reasonable treatment for your condition; and
3. have enough medical evidence (using the medical evidence checklist).

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY APPLICATION?

You should include as much medical evidence as you can from the checklist.

Instead of providing evidence of the symptoms/impairments of your condition, the evidence must explain the individual symptoms/impairments that you are suffering. If your impairment is physical, such as upper limb function, you should get a report from a physiotherapist or occupational therapist on how the impairment affects your day-to-day life.

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CLAIM IS REFUSED?

If your claim was refused, you can request an internal appeal of Centrelink's decision. If your claim is refused again, you can make another appeal, which will be heard in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal ("AAT"). You can represent yourself in the AAT, or nominate someone to speak on your behalf. If you want our Disability Advocate to represent you in the AAT, contact us on 08 9185 5899 or disability@pcls.net.au.

If you have received a new diagnosis, additional treatment or your conditions have worsened since Centrelink made its decision, you may wish to contact Centrelink and make a new claim for DSP.

MEDICAL EVIDENCE CHECKLIST

- ✓ Diagnosis (if you can, get a diagnosis from a specialist, rather than a GP)
- ✓ Evidence that the condition has been fully treated
- ✓ Evidence of any tests you undertook
- ✓ Whether your condition will improve in the next 2 years
- ✓ The symptoms and/or functional impacts of your condition (the impact on day-to-day tasks)
 - Note: you should show your medical professional the impairment tables so that they can comment on the specific activities.
- ✓ Symptoms of your condition and how often they occur
- ✓ The qualifications of the medical professional (e.g. GP, physician, specialist)
- ✓ The medical professional's opinion on which impairment table your impairments would fall under and how many points should be attributed
- ✓ The medical professional's opinion on your ability to work 15 hours per week

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