

## Centrelink Payments and Domestic Violence

*Your rights and responsibilities*

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### Can I get a Crisis Payment?

You can apply for a crisis payment if you have experienced domestic violence, and you have left your home, or intend to, or your partner has left or been forced by police to. You can be eligible for a crisis payment if you are experiencing severe financial hardship.

A Crisis Payment is a one off payment.

If you are already receiving a Centrelink payment, with the exception of Family Tax Benefit or Child Care Benefit, you may be eligible to receive a Crisis Payment as an additional payment.

### How can Centrelink Support me?

If you are not already on Centrelink payments you should contact Centrelink as soon as possible, to see if you are eligible for payments. You may still be eligible for payments, even if you're working.

If you are on Centrelink payments, you need to tell Centrelink everytime your relationship changes. In cases of on again - off again relationships and relationships involving domestic or family violence, Centrelink will still need to be updated on your circumstances. If you have left, or are planning to leave a family/domestic violence situation, Centrelink can assist with payments, social work counselling and third party referrals.

### Payments and services Include:

- Income support payments
- Crisis payment
- Exemptions from seeking employment
- Collecting child support

### If you are caring for children, you need to:

- Check your eligibility for Family Tax Benefit
- Claim child support (if it is safe for you to do so)
- Enquire about child care subsidies

## Tips

*Talk with a social worker*

*All the social workers at Services Australia have a degree in Social Work, and are trained and qualified to help you with your needs. If you would like a social worker to assist you, you can access this service by calling Centrelink and asking to speak with a social worker.*

## What can I do if Centrelink won't help me?

**If Centrelink declines to help you, or tells you you're not eligible for payments, you have a right to appeal.**

- You can request a full explanation of the decision
- You can request an internal review of the decision if you believe it is incorrect
- You can apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to review the decision
- You can initiate an appeal with a court

Appeals can be made by calling Centrelink. If you want to review or appeal decisions about claims and entitlements, you must do so within 13 weeks of Centrelink notifying you of their decision.

If your payments are suspended, you should appeal the decision straight away, and ask for payment pending review, so you can still receive payments while the appeal is underway.

## My ex said they would dob me in to Centrelink

Centrelink fraud is a serious offence in Australia, and any allegations made to Centrelink will be taken seriously. You have a legal obligation to tell Centrelink the truth about your current financial situation. You must report your income correctly in order for Centrelink to calculate your payments correctly. If Centrelink contacts you about past payments, or suspends your current payment - contact them immediately.

## Where can I get more help or advice?

**If you are struggling financially, its worth contacting charities or emergency relief providers in your area. Uniting Communities Consumer Credit Law Centre can give you advice about Centrelink related problems and appeals, over the phone - contact them on (08) 8342 1800**

**The Legal Service Commission of SA provides legal advice on social security prosecutions on (08) 8463 3555 or 1300 366 424**