

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

ParentsNext: examination of Social Security (Parenting payment participation requirements - class of persons) instrument 2021

PUBLIC HEARING 25 JUNE 2021

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Social Services Portfolio
Services Australia

Topic: Assistance to customers experiencing hardship

Question reference number: IQ21-000070

Member: Dr Anne Webster MP

Type of question: Written.

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 July 2021

Question:

Where a participant advises that they are unable to afford food for their family, or pay their rent where their Parenting Payment has been suspended, reduced or cancelled, what immediate assistance (including specified emergency payments) may they access from Services Australia (and how long does it usually take to get such assistance)?

Answer:

Services Australia (the Agency) will attempt to restore a customer's suspended Parenting Payment as quickly as possible once the reason for the suspension has been addressed. Generally, the Agency will make payment within 48 hours of being contacted by the customer.

If a customer is in receipt of a reduced income support payment, and is experiencing hardship, they may be eligible for Crisis Payment, which is designed to provide immediate financial assistance, usually within two working days of application.

Customers can also be referred to an Agency Social Worker, who can connect them to agencies that provide assistance, such as food for example.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

**Social Services Portfolio
Services Australia**

Topic: Back paying customers

Question reference number: IQ21-000071

Member: Dr Anne Webster MP

Type of question: Written.

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 July 2021

Question:

Please outline the process by which back-payments are processed where a person has had a suspension lifted. For example, if a person is due to receive their social security payment on a Thursday, but has their payment suspended for a mutual obligation on the Tuesday and does not resolve the matter (causing the suspension to be lifted) until the Friday, will the payment they were due to receive be paid the following Monday, or will it be backpaid at the next regular payment time (e.g. the following Thursday fortnight)?

Answer:

If a Parenting Payment recipient has a suspension lifted after the day they were otherwise due payment, the payment is delivered into their bank account in two working days.

Using the example above:

- Tuesday 15 June 2021 – date suspension was applied
- Thursday 17 June 2021 – date Parenting Payment was due before suspension
- Friday 18 June 2021 – matter resolved, Parenting Payment restored and payment released
- Tuesday 22 June 2021 – payment delivered to person's bank account

Family Tax Benefit (FTB) is not part of this suspension process and is paid as usual on the normal FTB payday, even where the basic benefit is suspended due to a mutual obligation failure.