



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Employment services

Information for current job seekers and participants

This information sheet outlines advice for job seekers and participants who are currently registered with an employment services provider (including, but not limited to, jobactive, ParentsNext and Transition to Work).

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment is monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely and has established a range of measures to support job seekers and participants who may be, or will be, impacted by COVID-19.

Temporary lift of mutual obligation requirements

Due to the high demand on government services, some job seekers have had difficulty reporting their attendance at appointments and activities online.

As a result, all mutual obligation requirements will be lifted from 23 March to 27 April 2020.

This means that no one will be penalised for not being able to report their attendance at appointments or activities – no one's payments will be suspended and no compliance action will be taken.

Do I still need to participate in my appointments with my jobactive provider and undertake activities?

Appointments and activities are voluntary until Monday 27 April 2020. However, the department encourages you to continue to participate in scheduled appointments and activities in line with your Job Plan unless you need to self-isolate, need to seek medical attention or have a Centrelink exemption.

Providers are taking a flexible approach to mutual obligation requirements to support job seeker health and safety during this challenging time. Flexible arrangements include:

- All appointments will take place online or over the phone.
- Job search effort requirements have been reduced to up to four job search per month.
- All Work for the Dole, and other group activities, are suspended and you will be referred to other suitable online activities where appropriate.

Your provider will work with you to adjust the number of jobs you need to look for in your Job Plan to better reflect the work opportunities in your local area. They may refer you to online training and non-classroom-based courses if you have the equipment to support online options.

You are also encouraged to accept suitable job offers if it is safe to do so and in line with advice from health authorities.

If you have any concerns, including if you are in a group identified as vulnerable or if you live with or have close contact with vulnerable people, please contact your employment services provider to discuss your requirements. Alternatively you can contact the department's National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260.

Are there different arrangements for ParentsNext participants?

For ParentsNext participants only, once you have connected with your provider, all future appointments and activities are voluntary while the COVID-19 pandemic is occurring. Your provider will touch base with you on a monthly basis to discuss ongoing support.

Advice for job seekers and participants

It is important to stay up to date with advice published by the [Australian Government Department of Health](#), as well as by your state or territory health authority. The Department of Health provides a range of information about COVID-19 including how to protect yourself, when and how to isolate if required as well as health updates and alerts.

If you need to self-isolate

If you are required to self-isolate in line with Department of Health advice, you should contact your employment services provider by phone, not in person, to let them know that you are unable to participate in your appointment and/or participate in an activity. Your provider will reschedule any appointments or activities until you have finished your self-isolation in line with advice from health authorities and/or your doctor.

You should also contact Centrelink by phone, not in person, to let them know that you need to isolate and request an exemption from your mutual obligation requirements. You can contact Centrelink to discuss an exemption by calling the numbers below:

- JobSeeker Payment and Special Benefit recipients can call 132 850.
- Youth Allowance recipients can call 132 490.
- Parenting Payment recipients with mutual obligation requirements can call 136 150.

If you have reason to think you may have COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19

You should seek medical advice as soon as possible and then contact your employment services provider by phone, not in person. Your provider will be able to assist with rescheduling any appointments and activities while you seek medical advice.

You should also contact Centrelink by phone, not in person, to let them know if you are required to self-isolate and request an exemption from your mutual obligation requirements.

If you have recently travelled internationally

If you have recently travelled internationally, you must follow the advice of health authorities, including any advice about the need to self-isolate. Please refer to information published on the [Department of Health](#) website.

Your employment services provider may contact you to ensure that you are following this advice. Your provider will work with you to reschedule any appointment or activities in the near future. Your provider may also recommend that you contact Centrelink by phone, not in person, to seek an exemption from your mutual obligation requirements.

Further information

Please visit the [Department of Health](#) for the latest health advice, as well as your state or territory health department for the latest local updates and guidance on COVID-19.

You can contact the 24/7 National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 which provides health and situation information on the outbreak. Call 131 450 for translating or interpreting services.

If you are a job seeker, you can also refer to the jobactive website <https://jobsearch.idc.hosts.testnetwork/covid-19-information> for more information.