



Australian Government

Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

Improved Support for Carers

Changes to Carer Payment (care receiver under 16 years)

Are you caring for a child under 16 with severe disability or severe medical condition?

If you are a carer of a child with severe disability or severe medical condition you may be interested to know about changes to Carer Payment (an income support payment from Centrelink) from July 2009.

The changes recognise more situations in which a carer can qualify for payment. Importantly the way qualification is assessed has changed from a set of narrow medical criteria to an assessment of the care required and provided by the carer.

Changes to Carer Payment

The most significant change is to the way qualification for Carer Payment is assessed.

The basis of assessment has changed from a narrow medical model to one that recognises the impact of the significant care provided to children with disability or medical condition. The new assessment process recognises and assesses the total care load of the carer.

Other changes include:

- ▶ more circumstances in which carers may qualify for Carer Payment, encompassing
 - ▶ one child with severe disability or severe medical condition
 - ▶ two or more children with disability or medical condition
 - ▶ a disabled adult and one or more children with disability or medical condition
- ▶ access to Carer Payment for short term or episodic care for periods of at least three months but less than six months
- ▶ more sensitive and generous arrangements for carers of children who have been diagnosed with a terminal condition
- ▶ more generous arrangements for carers of children in hospital
- ▶ automatic qualification for Carer Allowance based on qualification for Carer Payment
- ▶ provision for a wider range of treating health professionals able to complete medical forms.

Improving the lives of Australians

What financial support is there for carers?

There are two payments specifically for carers; Carer Payment and Carer Allowance.

Additionally, carers who receive Carer Payment will also receive a Pensioner Concession Card or a Health Care Card, depending on their caring circumstances.

Carer Payment

Carer Payment provides income support to carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial paid employment. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.

Carer Allowance

Carer Allowance is an income supplement which is not taxable or income and assets tested. It is available to carers who provide daily care and attention in a private home to a person with disability or medical condition. Carer Allowance can be paid in addition to a social security income support payment.

Carer Supplement and Child Disability Assistance Payment

In the 2009-2010 Budget the Australian Government announced greater assistance to carers with the introduction of a Carer Supplement, which will be paid annually. Under this measure an annual \$600 Carer Supplement will be paid to recipients of Carer Payment.

An **additional annual \$600 Carer Supplement** will also be paid to recipients of Carer Allowance for each eligible person in their care.

The Carer Supplement will be paid in addition to a person's fortnightly Carer Allowance entitlement, and in addition to the fortnightly income support payment. The first payment will be made on or before 30 June 2009, with subsequent annual payments from 1 July 2010.

Carer Allowance recipients (care receiver aged under 16 years) are also paid the **Child Disability Assistance Payment of \$1,000 per year** for each eligible child being cared for.

If you care for a child under 16 with severe disability or severe medical condition, or a number of people with disability, you may wish to find out more about these payments.

How do I get further information?

For information about rates, other available assistance or your potential eligibility you can:

- visit the payment page on Centrelink's website www.centrelink.gov.au
- visit www.fahcsia.gov.au and follow the links to carers and general benefits and payments
- telephone Centrelink on **13 27 17** or for TTY service **1800 810 586**
- visit your nearest Centrelink office.