



Disability Employment Services

Participant Information Pack

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The participant information pack contains frequently asked questions (FAQ) fact sheets. The fact sheets are written for people taking part in the Disability Employment Services (DES) program. The word 'you' refers to the DES participant.

The purpose of the fact sheets is to provide information to support you to make informed choices around your employment journey.

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What is DES?

Disability Employment Services (DES)

The DES program helps people with disability, an injury or a health condition **prepare for, find** and **keep a job**.

DES providers deliver the DES program. They are organisations experienced in supporting people with disability.

There are two types of services in the DES program:

- Disability Management Service (DMS) – helps participants with disability, an injury or a health condition to find a job. DMS can also provide occasional support in the workplace.
- Employment Support Service (ESS) – helps participants with permanent disability find a job. ESS can also provide regular ongoing support in the workplace.

DES participant choice

You have choice and flexibility over the support services you receive, and how you receive them. You can choose your preferred DES provider, even if the provider is not in your area or employment region.

You should work with your DES provider to find out what they offer and discuss what works best for you.

How to choose a DES provider

You can search for a DES provider on the [JobAccess](#) website. You can search for DES providers by location, name and service type. You can choose a DES provider you prefer, even if they are not in your local area.

If you do not choose a provider, one will be randomly selected for you.

What if I need to change my DES provider?

You can change your DES provider by calling the **National Customer Service Line** on **1800 805 260**.

If you are experiencing issues with the service from your DES provider, please refer to the [Making a complaint FAQ](#).

Where can I find more information about DES?

[JobAccess](#) is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.

Visit the JobAccess website to find [information about DES](#), including:

- DES services – how DES providers can help
- starting a DES program – learn about how DES providers work with you
- participating in DES – learn about your requirements and the consequences of not participating
- other supports available – other programs and supports that may be available to you while participating in DES.

For confidential and expert advice on employment, contact **JobAccess Advisers** by calling **1800 464 800** free of charge.

What to expect from your DES provider

What service can I expect from my DES provider?

Your DES provider will work with you to help you **prepare for, find and keep a job**.

A DES provider will:

- talk to you about what services they can offer.
- speak with you about how they will help you find and keep a job.
- talk to employers with you or on your behalf.
- discuss your circumstances and personal preferences.
- be respectful, sensitive to your individual needs and culturally appropriate.

Once you have a job, your DES provider will keep supporting you and will develop a plan with you to help keep your job.

A detailed view of the services a DES provider will provide can be found under the [DES Service Guarantee](#).

What happens when I first connect with my DES provider?

Your DES provider will start by negotiating a **job plan** with you. Your job plan will list everything:

- your DES provider agrees to do to help you find and keep a job.
- you agree to do as part of the DES program.

For further information on what you are required to do as part of DES, refer to the [What do I have to do as a DES participant FAQ](#).

When your DES provider develops your job plan with you, they will talk to you about things like:

- what work you would like to do?
- what skills and education you have.
- whether you might need further training.
- any issues that might be making it hard for you to look for and keep a job.
- how to write a resume and get ready for a job.
- other support services that might help you.

Talk to your DES provider about the service or supports they will deliver for you.

What if I'm not happy with the services/supports I receive from my DES provider?

You are encouraged to talk with your DES provider about the supports and services you feel would help you in your employment journey. If you're not happy with the service you receive from them, you are encouraged to talk to them about your concerns and try to work through the issue.

If you're not happy with your DES provider's response or if you feel uncomfortable talking to them directly, you can make a complaint through the **Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS)** on **1800 880 052**.

If you are experiencing issues with the service from your DES provider, please refer to [Making a complaint FAQ](#) .

What services are there for people from diverse backgrounds?

DES is for all people with disability, injury or health condition.

DES providers must carry out services efficiently, effectively, and ethically. They should ensure their service is sensitive to a person's background. This includes people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Further information on the principles and standards that support the delivery of DES can be found in the [DES Code of Practice](#). DES providers have agreed to follow the DES Code of Practice.

What happens to the personal information I give to my DES provider?

Your personal information is stored securely and safely. For information about privacy, refer to the [Sharing your personal information FAQ](#).

Sharing your personal information

Why do I need to share my personal information?

DES providers will use the personal information you share to **help you find** and **keep** the **right job for you**. This includes information you share about your:

- health
- work adjustment needs
- interests and goals
- education
- work history.

They will keep all information about you in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). DES providers must immediately notify the Department of Social Services (DSS) if they are aware that your privacy has been breached.

How will I agree to share my personal information?

When you join DES, you will be asked to sign a DES Privacy Consent Form when you meet with your DES provider.

The DES Privacy Consent Form asks you if your DES provider can collect and share relevant information with others to help you find and keep a job.

By signing the DES privacy consent form, you agree to allow DES providers to contact and share your information with potential employers and community support organisations.

If you don't agree to share your information, DES providers will be limited in providing services to help you find and keep the right job.

Your information is collected by your DES provider on behalf of DSS.

Who will my personal information be shared with?

Your personal information may be shared with:

- health care professionals, such as your doctor
- your advocate or nominee
- other support providers
- potential employers
- Government organisations who may provide you with support.

What information is collected?

Personal information may include:

- contact details, such as your name, where you live and your phone number
- your date of birth
- your advocate's contact details
- what help or supports you need.

Sensitive information may include:

- your culture
- the language you speak
- your health and medical information
- if you have a criminal record.

This information will assist the DES provider to understand your individual needs to help you find and keep the right job for you.

Your DES provider will usually be able to show you the information they hold about you. If you have concerns about how your personal information is being managed, please talk to your DES provider.

Can I change my mind about providing my personal information?

Yes. You can change your mind and withdraw your consent (say 'no') at any time. Talk to your DES provider about how to do this.

How is my information protected?

Your information is protected by law under the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

Where can I find more information?

You can find more information about the [Privacy Policy](#) on the Department of Social Services website.

Making a complaint

What if I'm not happy with the service I receive from my DES provider?

Talk with your DES provider about the supports and services you feel would help you in your employment journey. If you're not happy with the service you receive from them, you are encouraged to talk to them about your concerns and try to work through the issue.

DES providers will explain their feedback process to you, and they will give you a copy of it.

A senior staff member must investigate all complaints a DES provider receives.

What if I can't talk to or fix my concern with my DES provider?

If you are not happy with your DES provider's response, or if you feel uncomfortable talking to them directly, you can discuss your concerns and make a complaint through the **Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS)** on **1800 880 052**.

The CRRS is open Monday to Friday (except Australian national public holidays) from 9am to 7pm (AEST/ADST). This is a free service for DES participants.

What will the CRRS do?

The CRRS will help you understand your rights and improve your experience with your DES provider.

The CRRS will:

- listen to you and document your complaint
- get your permission to talk to the DES provider, and any other people or organisations that are involved
- remain impartial – the CRRS will not take sides and does not advocate on anyone's behalf.

All complaints made to the CRRS are confidential. You can make a complaint anonymously. However, it may be difficult for the CRRS to address your concerns if you do not provide your consent for the CRRS to talk to your DES provider.

Other ways to make a complaint

There are alternative options available through:

Employment Services National Customer Service Line

- Phone: **1800 805 260** (free call from land lines)
- Email: nationalcustomerserviceline@dewr.gov.au

Department of Social Services Feedback and Complaints

- Online: [DSS Feedback and Complaints | Department of Social Services, Australian Government](#)
- Email: enquiries@dss.gov.au
- Telephone: **1800 634 035** (AEST)
- Post: DSS Feedback, GPO Box 9820, Canberra, ACT, 2601

DSS aims to provide consistent and quality services to the Australian community through our staff and service providers. DSS encourages all clients to provide feedback on their experiences with DSS or a DSS funded service provider.

Additional services are available to assist you to make a complaint, enquiry or provide feedback.

Hearing and/or speech impairments: If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you can use the National Relay Service to contact any of DSS' listed phone numbers.

Languages other than English: If you need an interpreter, you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450. TIS National will put you through to any of DSS's listed phone numbers.

Speak and listen: Speak and Listen users should phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 362 072.

What can I do if I need support to make a complaint?

JobAccess provides [complaints and support contacts](#) for people with hearing and/or speech impairment. JobAccess also provides support for people who need an interpreter.

Where can I get more information on complaints?

JobAccess supports a number of ways for you to make a complaint or report abuse or neglect of people with disability.

For more information, visit the [Complaints Resolution and Referral Service](#) on the JobAccess website.

What do I have to do as a DES participant?

What do I need to do to get help to find a job?

In return for receiving certain income support payments, there are certain things you need to do to help you find a job. These are known as mutual obligation requirements.

Your mutual obligation requirements include:

- entering into a Job Plan and fully complying with the requirements in your Job Plan
- attending all appointments with Services Australia and/or a DES provider
- actively looking for work, including acting on job referrals and attending job interviews with employers
- participating in activities that will help improve your employment prospects.

What information is used to work out my mutual obligation requirements?

Your DES provider will work with you in negotiating a Job Plan.

Your Job Plan will list everything your DES provider agrees to do to help you find and keep a job. It will also list everything you agree to do as part of the DES program. You must be capable of doing the activity and meeting all requirements included in your Job Plan.

When negotiating your Job Plan with your DES provider, it is recommended you consider:

- your individual circumstances, such as your assessed work capacity and personal needs
- your education, experience, skills, and age
- the impact of any disability, illness, physical or mental condition that might affect your ability to look for work or participate in activities
- the job market and your options to access that market
- transport options available to you, how long it would take you to travel to comply with your requirements
- your family and caring responsibilities
- financial costs, that is, how much it will cost you to comply with your requirements and whether you can afford to pay for those costs
- areas of risk or vulnerability, such as social, physical, or environmental situations
- any specific cultural requirements you have, such as your beliefs, traditions and languages
- whether in the past you have not complied with your mutual obligation requirements.

Your DES provider is asked to identify both your strengths and barriers in finding employment.

Some activities in your Job Plan are compulsory. These can include:

- meeting with your DES provider at regular and scheduled times
- looking for a particular number of jobs each week
- attending appointments with other groups
- attending interviews
- attending training courses.

You can keep track of the activity requirements in your Job Plan through an online dashboard on the [myGov website](#).

What happens if I cannot meet my mutual obligation requirements?

Under social security law, you can receive demerits and financial penalties, if you do not complete your mutual obligation requirements. For example, loss of points or money. To learn more go to [Demerits and penalties for not meeting mutual obligations](#).

DES participants must be willing and able to meet their mutual obligation requirements to receive income support payments.

If you do not, or purposely intend to not, meet your requirements, your payments may be suspended or cancelled.

Codes of Conduct

For this fact sheet, codes of conduct can be defined as: a set of rules, responsibilities, or standards of an individual or organisation.

What are the codes of conduct for DES providers?

DES providers who are funded by the Australian Government must comply with the following codes when providing disability services:

- Disability Services and Inclusion (Code of Conduct) Rules 2023
- National Standards for Disability Services (National Standards).

Services provided through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) meet a different set of standards.

What do I need to know about the Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct protects people with disability who receive disability services and supports by maintaining a quality standard of service.

The Code of Conduct states that when a person provides you with supports or services, they must:

- respect your rights and privacy
- support you in a safe manner
- communicate openly with you
- raise issues affecting you
- take steps to prevent any form of abuse and/or sexual misconduct.

The full Code of Conduct can be found at the [Federal Register of Legislation](#) website.

What services does the Code of Conduct apply to?

Since January 2024, the Code of Conduct applies to providers who are funded by the Australian Government to deliver disability services and supports (except NDIS services) through current and future programs. This includes, but is not limited to:

- disability employment services – they help eligible participants find and maintain employment.
- disability supports – help people with disability find and maintain employment.
- counselling services – providing emotional support to people with disability.
- advocacy services – they promote and protect the rights of people with disability.

The Code of Conduct applies to the DES program, and DES providers and their staff.

What do I need to know about the National Standards for Disability Services?

Providers of disability services are required to meet the National Standards for Disability Services (National Standards). The National Standards help to promote and drive a nationally consistent approach to improving the quality of services. They focus on rights and outcomes for people with disability.

There are 6 National Standards that apply to disability service providers:

1. Rights: The service promotes individual rights and prevents abuse, harm, neglect and violence.
2. Participation: The service works with individuals, families, friends and carers for active inclusion.
3. Individual outcomes: Services and supports are assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed to enable individuals to reach goals.
4. Feedback and complaints: Regular feedback is sought and used to inform service reviews and improvement.
5. Service access: The service manages access, commencement, and leaving a service in a transparent, fair, equal and responsive way.
6. Service management: The service has effective and accountable service management and leadership to maximise outcomes for individuals.

What if I'm not happy with the service I receive from my DES provider?

If you think the support or service you receive from your DES provider is not in line with the codes of conduct or you are not happy with the service you receive from them, you are encouraged to talk to them about your concerns and try to work through the issue.

If you are not happy with their response, or if you feel uncomfortable talking to your service provider directly, you can make a complaint. Refer to the [Making a complaint FAQ](#).