

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1.10 Working Age Payments

Question No: SQ17-000499

Topic: Medical support and treatment options

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

Has the Department given consideration to the relative cost effectiveness of expanding treatment options - and enabling participation in treatment to fulfil mutual obligation requirements - as a means to improve employment outcomes for clients who have an illicit drug problem?

Answer:

Supporting jobseekers to overcome any drug or alcohol use issues that prevent them from looking for work or undertaking other activities to prepare for work is designed to improve their chances of finding and maintaining a job and reduce the risk of ongoing welfare dependency.

As part of the Better Targeting Assistance to Jobseekers measure in the 2017-18 Budget, from 1 January 2018 jobseekers in Streams A and B of jobactive will be able to count drug or alcohol treatment towards meeting their Annual Activity Requirements. Currently these arrangements only apply to those in Stream C of jobactive.

Where it is determined to be in the interests of the jobseeker, jobactive providers will be able to refer Streams A and B jobseekers to drug or alcohol addiction treatments as part of an existing Job Plan. Drug and alcohol addiction treatments for jobseekers can be funded from resources in the Employment Fund. The Employment Fund is a flexible pool of funds which can be accessed by jobactive providers to pay for training or other assistance, to help participants gain and keep employment.