

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 9

Question No: 72

Topic: Transfers to Newstart

Hansard Page: 21/11/2013 CA88

Senator Moore asked: “ I am ... interested in the special assistance offered to people transferring from the parenting payment to Newstart. The last annual report said that there were a range of special assistance processes put into the system around those people transitioning, which was described in the annual report as 'a successful transition'.”

Answer:

The Department of Human Services offers reviews to Parenting Payment recipients who are due to transition to other payments, such as Newstart, to ensure they will be claiming their correct entitlements.

Single principal carer parents transferred from Parenting Payment to Newstart Allowance are paid at the higher ‘with child’ rate of Newstart Allowance. They also continue to have access to the existing range of supplementary benefits, including Rent Assistance, childcare fee assistance, family assistance payments, and the Pensioner Concession Card.

Parenting Payment recipients who transition to Newstart or Youth Allowance (other) and who were receiving the Pensioner Education Supplement can retain eligibility to the supplement if they are continuing in their studies.

To better support part-time work for single principal carer parents on Newstart Allowance, from 1 January 2013, the previous income test taper rate of 50 or 60 cents in the dollar was replaced with a more generous taper rate of 40 cents in the dollar. This means that single principal carer parents on Newstart Allowance are able to keep more of their payment each fortnight, providing families with greater financial security.

From 1 January 2014, the Government will extend eligibility for the Pensioner Education Supplement (PES) to all single principal carer parents on Newstart Allowance who undertake an approved course of study or training in an accredited institution. This extension will help recipients with the costs of study while they gain an initial qualification to assist them to re-enter the labour market.

Extending PES to single principal carer parents receiving Newstart Allowance will help more parents to get the training and qualifications they need to be competitive in the labour market and find and keep a job.

From 1 January 2014, the Government is extending access to the Pensioner Concession Card by 12 weeks for single parents who stop receiving income support when their youngest child turns eight.

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

This measure will help single principal carer parents who no longer qualify to receive Parenting Payment Single because their youngest child has turned eight, and who don't qualify for other types of income support because their earnings are too high.

Job Services Australia provides parents transitioning from Parenting Payment with tailored services to equip them with the skills and attributes to meet employers' needs and emerging skills or labour shortages.

Eligible unemployed parents are offered professional career counselling services to build their motivation and confidence. They are also eligible to apply for Wage Connect, a wage subsidy program.