

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EM0595_15

Senator Lines provided in writing.

Question

Provider appointments

What happens if someone says they can't come to their appointments with their JSA provider because they're sick?

Answer

Job seekers who are unable to attend an appointment due to a temporary incapacity or illness will generally be able to reschedule their appointment if they let their provider know in advance. If they are not able to give prior notice or, in the circumstances, it was unreasonable to expect them to do so and they are still reported for non-attendance they will be considered as having a reasonable excuse for their failure to attend if they were genuinely sick. It is preferable that job seekers provide a medical certificate as evidence of their illness but as this is not always possible providers have discretion as to whether to accept an excuse without evidence, based on the individual's circumstances and attendance history.

It is noted that the majority of Australian workers who pay the taxes, that are then used for welfare support, must provide a medical certificate for their time off work.

Job seekers who are incapacitated due to an illness for longer periods (as evidenced by a medical certificate) can be granted a temporary incapacity exemption for up to 13 weeks. Job seekers who have a reasonable excuse for their failure or who have an exemption are not subject to penalties for failing to meet their requirements.