

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Additional Estimates 2005-2006, 14 February 2006

Question: HS 8

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink – Carer Allowance

Hansard Page: F&PA 121

SENATOR MCLUCAS asked on 14/2/2006:

1. I have some questions about the process of applying for Carer Allowance. Firstly, what is the frequency of having to reapply for a carer allowance?
2. Can you give me an indication of the severity of the condition? Is there a trigger that says: if this is your condition you do not have to reapply?
3. What is the trigger for reapplication?
4. I am also interested to know how Centrelink advises a Carer Allowance recipient that they have to reapply?

Answer:

We have taken the term ‘reapply’ to mean an application to continue payment (review) rather than a re-application for payment following a rejection or cancellation of Carer Allowance.

1. The frequency of reviews of Carer Allowance depends on whether the carer is caring for an adult or a child (under the age of 16 years).
 - Carer Allowance is reviewed every two years for carers of adults.
 - Carer Allowance reviews for carers of children are conducted at the following developmental milestones:
 - o 3 years, 4 months (only if Carer Allowance was granted before the child was 2 years old);
 - o 4 years, 8 months;
 - o 7 years;
 - o 10 years;
 - o 13 years; and
 - o 15 years, nine months.
 - Carers who care for people diagnosed with a terminal illness are contacted by telephone every 6 months to check their circumstances.

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2. If the carer is being paid for caring for a child who has been assessed as having a medical condition or disability that is on the Lists of Recognised Disabilities, the circumstances of the caring arrangements will be reviewed at development milestones (as listed at Q1). A medical review will not usually be undertaken.

If the carer is being paid for caring for a child assessed under the Child Disability Assessment Tool then a medical review will be undertaken at milestones.

Regardless of the severity of the condition or level of care required, a carer will need to lodge a new claim with a Health Professional Assessment when the child turns 16 years old if they want to claim Carer Allowance for caring for an adult.

In cases where the carer is caring for an adult, medical reviews are not undertaken for care receivers who have been assessed under the Adult Disability Assessment Tool with a score over 40 where the condition is permanent and non improving. These customers will have a review of their circumstances every two years. All other customers have a medical review every two years.

3. For Carer Allowance customers caring for an adult, the trigger is every second birthday of the care receiver.

For Carer Allowance customers caring for a child, the trigger is the care receiver reaching a developmental milestone more than 12 months after Carer Allowance is granted.

4. Medical reviews are sent to carers automatically with a notification letter. A reminder is automatically sent after 28 days if the carer has not returned the review.

Circumstance reviews are usually initiated as a telephone call to the carer. In cases where Centrelink has been unable to make contact with the carer they will post them a form to complete.

Carers are advised of the result of the review by letter and are provided with information about their review and appeal rights and how to contact Centrelink to discuss the decision further.

This answer required 1 hour, 45 minutes at a cost of \$75.00 to prepare.