

Guideline:

# Eligibility, Referrals, Commencement and Caseload

This Guideline specifies a ParentsNext Provider responsibilities and required actions when assessing Participant eligibility and actioning Participant Referrals and Commencements. It also addresses Provider caseloads.

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## Related documents and references

Reference documents relevant to this Guideline include:

- [Social Security \(Parenting Payment participation requirement—classes of persons\) Specification 2016 \(No. 1\)](#)
- [Social Security Act 1991](#)
- [Guide to Social Security Law](#)
- [Direct Registration Guideline](#)
- [Transfers and Exits Guideline](#)
- [Exemptions and Suspensions Guideline](#)
- [Job Seeker Classification Instrument \(JSCI\) Assessment Guideline](#)
- [Appointments Guideline](#)

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## Eligibility for ParentsNext

ParentsNext Participants are parents receiving Parenting Payment with a young child or children under six years of age and no recent connection to the paid workforce. ParentsNext is delivered in two streams—the Intensive Stream and the Targeted Stream. For Compulsory Participants, the same base eligibility requirements apply in both streams. However, the additional eligibility requirements differ (the following section on Eligibility for Compulsory Participants has details).

Parents residing in the Intensive Stream Locations may Volunteer to participate in ParentsNext, if eligible (refer to the Eligibility for Intensive Stream Volunteers section below).

### Eligibility for Compulsory Participants

Parents are required to participate in ParentsNext as Compulsory Participants if they meet all of the following base eligibility criteria:

- have been receiving Parenting Payment for at least the past six months
- have a child under six years of age
- have no reported earnings from Employment in the past six-month period
- meet one of the additional eligibility criteria.

### Additional Eligibility for Compulsory Participants

Intensive Stream	Targeted Stream
<p>For those residing in an Intensive Stream Location, one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be an Early School Leaver with a youngest child at least six months of age</li> <li>• have been assessed as highly disadvantaged with a youngest child at least six months of age</li> <li>• have a youngest child at least five years of age.</li> </ul>	<p>For those residing in a Targeted Stream Location, one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be an Early School Leaver with a youngest child at least one year of age</li> <li>• have been assessed as highly disadvantaged with a youngest child at least three years of age</li> <li>• have a youngest child at least five years of age and be part of a jobless family (<i>no reported employment earnings in the previous six months, for partnered recipients this include partner's earnings</i>).</li> </ul>

### Additional Eligibility Criterion Definitions

#### Early School Leaver

An Early School Leaver is a parent under 22 years of age who has not completed the final year of secondary school, or an equivalent level of education (Certificate III or above), and is not in full-time study.

#### Youngest child aged five years

This eligibility criterion only takes into account parents with primary care of the youngest child or children who are five years of age. This is a high priority criterion because the Participant will be required to undertake job search once their youngest child turns six.

### Assessed as highly disadvantaged

The parent's level of disadvantage is assessed using the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) assessment tool. The Department of Human Services completes the JSCI as part of assessing the parent's eligibility for ParentsNext.

Refer to the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) Assessment Guideline.

### Eligibility for Intensive Stream Volunteers

Parents are only eligible to volunteer for ParentsNext if they:

- reside in an Intensive Stream Location
- are receiving Parenting Payment
- have a child aged under six years of age
- are not a Compulsory Participant.

### Who determines eligibility for ParentsNext?

#### Compulsory Participants

The Department of Human Services determines eligibility and makes referrals for Compulsory Participants in ParentsNext.

#### Intensive Stream Volunteers

The Department of Human Services and ParentsNext Providers can determine eligibility as a Volunteer in the ParentsNext Intensive Stream locations.

Refer to the Direct Registration Guideline.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 102.1)

### Not eligible as an Intensive Stream Volunteer

Parents are not eligible for Direct Registration in ParentsNext as an Intensive Stream Volunteer if they:

- are aged under 16 years of age, or the relevant school leaving age in the state or territory in which they live, whichever is the higher
- do not have the legal right to work in Australia (Note: Providers can use the [Visa Entitlement Verification Online \(VEVO\)](#) service to check a non-citizen's visa status after sighting their international passport)
- are incarcerated
- are participating in jobactive, Disability Employment Services, Transition to Work or NEIS Assistance and are required to, or wish to, continue participating in the employment service.

Before Directly Registering a parent as an Intensive Stream Volunteer, the Provider must use the Department of Jobs and Small Business IT Systems to confirm the parent meets the eligibility criteria.

Refer to the Direct Registration Guideline.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 102)

### Intensive Stream Participants no longer residing in an Intensive Stream Location

An Intensive Stream Participant will Exit ParentsNext if they move to a Targeted Stream Location and are ineligible for the Targeted Stream. In this circumstance, the Participant can choose to continue receiving support from the same Provider they Exited from, as an Intensive Stream Volunteer. Providers should contact Participants to ask if they wish to continue receiving Intensive Stream services.



**System step:** Providers should reinstate Intensive Stream Participants who wish to Volunteer after they are Exited from ParentsNext due to moving to a Targeted Stream Location. This can be completed via the Registration screen in the Department's IT Systems.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 105)

## ParentsNext Locations

A map of the Employment Regions where ParentsNext operates, including Intensive Stream Locations, is located here –

<https://ssc.carto.com/builder/cbe4cb20-db98-4c2b-9271-34695a5b9848>

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## Referrals to ParentsNext

### Referrals by the Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services refers all Compulsory Participants to ParentsNext Providers, and can also refer Intensive Stream Volunteers.

Providers must accept all Referrals made by the Department of Human Services and Commence the referred Participant in ParentsNext. Generally, the Department of Human Services books an Initial Appointment for the Participant in the Provider's Electronic Calendar via the Department's IT Systems, and Notifies the Participant of the Appointment details.

Providers must ensure their Electronic Calendar always has capacity to receive an Appointment for a Participant within the next two Business Days.

If a Provider has a Participant Referred without an Initial Appointment, the Provider must contact the Participant and book them into an Initial Appointment within the following two business days.

Refer to the Appointments Guideline.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 66.1, 70.1)

### Direct Registration of Intensive Stream Volunteers

If a parent presents to a Provider without a Referral from the Department of Human Services wanting to Volunteer in ParentsNext, the Provider must confirm their eligibility for ParentsNext as an Intensive Stream Volunteer. The Provider must confirm the parent currently receives Parenting Payment, has a youngest child under six years of age, and resides in an Intensive Stream Location. Once they have checked eligibility, the Provider should Direct Register the parent.

Refer to the Direct Registration Guideline.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 102)

### Delay of Referrals

The Department of Human Services holds interviews with relevant parents who are receiving Parenting Payment to assess their eligibility as a Compulsory Participant in ParentsNext.

During the interview, if the parent is eligible as a Compulsory Participant and they report experiencing a major personal crisis or a significant disruption which would result in an Exemption, the Department of Human Services grants an Exemption. This Exemption delays the Referral to a ParentsNext Provider until a more appropriate time.

Examples of a major personal crisis or significant disruption include:

- family and domestic violence
- death of an immediate family member
- homelessness
- loss of home or significant damage to home due to a disaster
- hospitalisation
- current or impending incarceration.

This process applies in exceptional circumstances where it is unreasonable for the parent to attend an Initial Appointment with a Provider due to the parent's circumstances.

Providers should refer to the Exemptions and Suspensions Guideline for action if a Participant advises they have a major personal crisis or significant disruption *after* being Referred to ParentsNext by the Department of Human Services.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 78.1 and 78.2)

### Participants referred by the Department of Human Services with an Exemption

When a Participant with an Exemption is referred to a Provider, the Provider should phone the Participant and ask if they would like to voluntarily participate in ParentsNext.

If the Participant does not wish to voluntarily participate in ParentsNext during the Exemption period, the Provider should contact the Participant after the suspension end date.

Refer to the Exemptions and Suspensions Guideline.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 78.4)

### Identifying the reason for a Referral to ParentsNext



**System Step:** Providers can identify the reason a Participant was Referred to ParentsNext through the ParentsNext Eligibility History screen in ESS Web, both via the Department's IT Systems.

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## Commencement in ParentsNext

### Commencing a Participant Referred by the Department of Human Services

Providers must record a Pending Participant's attendance at an Initial Appointment in the Department's IT Systems. This results in the Participant Commencing in ParentsNext.

Providers should Commence a Participant within two Business Days of them being Referred to, or Directly Registered by, the Provider.

### Transition Participants

Providers should Commence ParentsNext Transition Participants within 12 weeks of the start of the program. Transition Participants will be Commenced once they attend an Initial Appointment with the Provider.

(Deed references: Annexure A1—Definitions; Clause 65.2)

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## Commencing Intensive Stream Volunteers through Direct Registration

Once the Department of Human Services confirms eligibility, and the Provider records the Participant has attended an Initial Appointment in the Department's IT Systems, the Participant Commences in ParentsNext (refer to the Appointments Guideline).

(Deed references: Clause 102)

### Initial Period

After Commencing in ParentsNext, the Participant enters the Initial Period for 20 Business Days. During the Initial Period, the Provider must:

- discuss with the Participant their short-term and long-term goals, taking their circumstances into account
- assist the Participant to identify appropriate Activities
- assist the Participant to identify local support services they may require and facilitate referrals where appropriate
- begin to prepare or update the Participant's Participation Plan
- conduct a JSCI assessment, if the Participant has not had one completed within the past six months (refer to the JSCI Guideline).

The Provider may undertake all these tasks at the Initial Appointment, or utilise the 20 Business Days to complete these. These tasks can be finalised by phone, online or by scheduling another Appointment.

(Deed references: Clause 73)

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## Provider Caseloads

### Business Share

Participants are referred to a Provider based on the Provider's Business Share for an Employment Region. Intensive Stream Volunteers are not included as part of a Provider's Business Share.

The Department allows a flow of Referrals to a Provider within a 30 per cent tolerance of the Provider's Business Share in an Employment Region. This means there may be times when a Provider is allocated more than 100 per cent of their Business Share.

(Deed references: Clause 66.2)

### Start-up Caseload

Providers must have timeslots available to accept Referrals and conduct Appointments from 2 July 2018. These timeslots must be set up in the Department's IT Systems by 9 June 2018, to allow the Department of Human Services to make referrals before the program commences.

From 2 July 2018, all existing Compulsory Participants in the current ParentsNext program will be transferred to an Intensive Stream Provider. The Provider must Commence all Pending Transition Participants within 12 weeks of the expanded ParentsNext program commencing on 2 July 2018. Providers must contact Participants who Transitioned as Suspended once their Suspension ends.

(Deed references: Clause 70; Clause 74 and 65)

### Participant Choice of Provider

New Participants can choose their preferred ParentsNext Provider from a list of available Providers at their interview with the Department of Human Services. The list includes Provider Sites sorted by closest distance to the Participants address that service the Employment Region (including where the actual Site is located outside the Employment Region) and service the appropriate Stream of the Participant. The list only includes Providers who have not exceeded their Business Share at the time of the Referral.

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### Summary of required Documentary Evidence

Nil.



All capitalised terms in this guideline have the same meaning as in the ParentsNext 2018–2021 (the Deed). This Guideline is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of ParentsNext Providers' obligations. It must be read in conjunction with the Deed and any relevant Guidelines or reference material issued by Department of Jobs and Small Business under or in connection with the Deed.