# Vulnerable measure of income management

## What is the vulnerable measure of income management?

The vulnerable measure of income management aims to help vulnerable or at-risk individuals and their families to manage their income support and family assistance payments more effectively.

Income management works by directing a proportion of certain income support and family assistance payments to priority items such as food, housing, clothing and utilities.

## Who is eligible for this type of income management?

The vulnerable measure of income management applies to people who are receiving an eligible payment, living in a location where the vulnerable measure is in place, and who:

* are granted the Unreasonable To Live At Home rate of income support by a Centrelink social worker; or
* are under the age of 16 and are granted Special Benefit by a Centrelink social worker; or
* are under the age of 25 and receive a crisis payment due to prison release; or
* are assessed by a Centrelink social worker as being vulnerable or at risk, and likely to benefit from income management.

A person may be considered vulnerable or at risk if he or she:

* is in financial hardship
* is experiencing financial exploitation
* may not be undertaking reasonable self-care, or
* is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

## How does the vulnerable measure of income management work?

People on the vulnerable measure of income management have 50 per cent of their income support and family assistance payments directed towards meeting their basic needs such as food, clothing, housing and utilities. Lump sum payments are 100 per cent income managed.

Income management does not change how much a person receives. It just changes the way that they receive part of their welfare payments. People participating in income management receive the rest of their payments in the usual way.

Income managed funds cannot be spent on alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling.

People can spend their income managed funds by organising direct payments to people or organisations for things like rent, utilities, food or household items, and by using the BasicsCard.

Centrelink meets with people to help them determine how to allocate their income managed funds. Financial Wellbeing and Capability service providers can also help a person to develop budgeting skills and make informed financial choices.

## Who can refer people to a social worker?

Community agencies can contact Centrelink directly to discuss whether income management might be an option for a person. Relatives and friends who are worried about a person can also refer them to a social worker.

## More information

To find out more visit dss.gov.au, humanservices.gov.au or call 1800 132 594 (for customers).

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this fact sheet is intended only as a guide. The information is accurate as at May 2014.

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