

## Referral to a DHS Social Worker under the Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient Measure

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### *The Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient Measure*

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Comment [d1]: Can we add a brief para about the VWPR measure, then go into processes? Not just about housing – other orgs can refer.

~~Under the vulnerable measure, organisations state public housing authorities or NGOs may identify a person as being potentially vulnerable because they are at risk of homelessness or financial risk. The decision to place a person on the vulnerable measure is made by a DHS Centrelink Social Worker, who will make an assessment of the person according to the decision-making principles set out in legislation. If the circumstances warrant, and it is determined that income management will be beneficial, the social worker may place them on the vulnerable measure of income management. Risk of homelessness is just one of the reasons that an individual may be placed on this measure of income management to the vulnerable measure.~~

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Under this measure and unlike the child protection measure, the state authorities do not make the decision to apply income management. The decision to apply income management will be made by Centrelink. This decision will be subject to regular review and appeal rights, including Authorised Review Officers, the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Certain information can be exchanged given the individual provides consent to do so.

The Commonwealth is currently working with the NSW Government to set up formal referral arrangements from state housing authorities to refer tenants in arrears or with debt issues to a DHS Social Worker for consideration under the Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient measure of income management. There is no intention to expand this formal process to any other state government authorities, or non-government organisations.

Referrals to a DHS social worker can be received from anyone, including child protection officers. Organisations, including state public housing authorities or Non-Government Organisations may identify a person as being potentially vulnerable because they are at risk of a number of factors, including homelessness, financial crisis and exploitation. As the decision on whether a person is placed on the vulnerable measure of income management is made by a Centrelink Social Worker, anyone could be seen as making a referral to a social worker for consideration of the vulnerable measure. Upon receipt of a referral, the Social Worker will consider the best response for the person, which may include income management.

### *Role of the DHS Social Worker*

#### *Referrals from Child Protection to the a DHS Social Worker for income management*

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It would only be appropriate for child protection workers to provide referrals to a DHS Social Worker for consideration under the vulnerable measure in the event that there is no case worker allocated to the client, and the client is not going to have any formal case plan or intervention from ~~c~~Child ~~p~~Protection ~~authorities~~. In the event of longer term involvement with child protection, a case plan being anticipated or in place, where a child protection worker assesses that compulsory income management is an appropriate intervention for the person, any referrals of these clients to income management - a referral should be made under to the Child Protection measure. State child protection staff should not be encouraged to refer clients who they have ongoing contact with to a DHS Social Worker.

As identified above, a referral to a DHS Social Worker will not necessarily result in income management being applied, and The DHS Social Worker will consider a range of supports that might be appropriate for that client.