



Coronavirus Supplement

Operational advice for NEIS providers

Background

The Government has announced the Coronavirus Supplement as part of its economic plan to support Australian households and businesses. The new, time-limited supplement will be paid at a rate of \$550 per fortnight. The supplement will be available to existing and new recipients of eligible income support payments, from 27 April 2020.

To ensure NEIS participants have the same access to the Coronavirus supplement as other recipients, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment has implemented a temporary policy change to allow:

- Existing NEIS Allowance recipients to choose to cease receiving their NEIS Allowance and apply for income support through Services Australia, while continuing to participate in NEIS.
- Prospective NEIS participants on an income support payment to choose to remain on their current payment or transfer to NEIS Allowance when they commence in NEIS.

Important information regarding NEIS Allowance and other income support payments

To ensure NEIS participants make an informed decision about whether to receive NEIS Allowance or another income support payment, NEIS providers work closely with participants to ensure they are aware of the following:

- NEIS Allowance is designed to ensure a NEIS participant's rate of payment is not affected by the earnings they make through their NEIS Business. The benefit of this is that NEIS participants can earn any amount through their NEIS Business without their NEIS Allowance payment being affected. To continue qualifying for NEIS Allowance, NEIS participants must remain compliant with their NEIS Participant Agreement, including operating their business on a full time basis and maintaining appropriate insurance.
- Different income support payments have different reporting requirements and may be income tested. This means the person's NEIS business income may impact upon the rate of income support the person receives. The Coronavirus Supplement is not income tested.
- NEIS participants on an income support payment with Mutual Obligation or Compulsory Participant Requirements will continue to fully meet these requirements by participating in NEIS Assistance and operating their NEIS business.

- Existing NEIS Allowance recipients who choose to cancel their NEIS Allowance will not automatically switch onto the JobSeeker Payment or any other payment. To access another income support payment, NEIS participants must contact Services Australia (Centrelink) to lodge a claim and determine their eligibility. This can be done by registering their intent to claim via MyGov in the first instance.

Prospective NEIS participants

Prospective NEIS participants receiving any income support payment can choose to remain on their current income support payment or move onto NEIS Allowance when they commence in NEIS Assistance. Consistent with current procedure, the NEIS provider must indicate whether or not the prospective NEIS participant will transfer to NEIS Allowance in the department's IT system.

At the 'Add Participant' stage on the NEIS > Participant > Details screen, ESS Web will recognise whether the prospective NEIS participant is in receipt of an income support payment and allow the NEIS provider to select the corresponding option for NEIS Allowance:

- If the prospective NEIS participant wishes to transfer to NEIS Allowance, select 'Yes'
- If the prospective NEIS participant wishes to remain on their current income support payment, select 'No'.

The system will default to 'No' if the prospective NEIS participant is not in receipt of income support. The usual workflow will apply from that point onward.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Allowance Details". Under the heading "NEIS Allowance" (marked with a red asterisk), there are two radio button options: "Yes" (unselected) and "No" (selected). To the right, under the heading "Rent Assistance", there are two radio button options: "Yes" (unselected) and "No" (unselected).

Operational advice: NEIS participants currently receiving NEIS Allowance

The department has established a process to allow current NEIS participants receiving NEIS Allowance to elect to cancel their NEIS Allowance payments.

To request cancellation of a NEIS participant's NEIS Allowance, NEIS providers must:

- Receive contact from the NEIS participant requesting to cancel NEIS Allowance.
- Make the NEIS participant aware of the items covered under '*Important information regarding NEIS Allowance and other income support payments*'
- Have the NEIS participant agree to the following statement via email:

I <first name, surname>, understand and confirm:

- I am requesting to cancel my NEIS Allowance and remain in the New Business Assistance with NEIS program. I will continue to receive mentoring*

and support from my NEIS provider and operate my NEIS Business for the duration of my NEIS Participant Agreement.

- *When my NEIS Allowance is cancelled, I will need to contact Services Australia (Centrelink) to lodge a claim for income support, such as the JobSeeker Payment. I am aware that different income support payments have different reporting requirements and the income from my NEIS business may affect my rate of payment.*
- *I will receive an email notification confirming the cancellation of my NEIS Allowance and I will need to provide this to Services Australia (Centrelink) as evidence for my income support claim. My current email address is <email address>.*

4. Email each request to cancel NEIS Allowance, one case per email, to the NEIS Payroll Hub (NEISPayrollHub@dese.gov.au).

When each request is processed by the NEIS Payroll Hub, the participant will receive an email notifying them of the cancellation of their NEIS Allowance. The participant must provide this to Services Australia (Centrelink) as evidence to support their income support claim.

Operational advice: Prospective NEIS participants wishing to transfer to NEIS Allowance

NEIS participants receiving any income support payment are permitted to transfer to NEIS Allowance within the first 39 weeks of receiving NEIS Assistance. Please refer to the *Taking up the option to transfer to NEIS Allowance* section of the *Support NEIS Participants to start and run their small business Guideline*.