



# Australian Government

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## Services Australia

### Reviews and appeals 109-03000000

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## Background

This document explains the internal and external review and appeal process for Centrelink decisions.

### Government intent

The right to have a decision reviewed exists for almost every decision made by Centrelink. It is also possible for a customer to seek an [administrative law remedy](#) where the actions of Services Australia have had an adverse impact on them.

It is important that customers are aware of their review and appeal options if they do not understand or do not agree with a decision.

### Internal review framework

The internal review framework aims to make sure that customers:

- understand decisions that affect their entitlements
- are given the chance to provide new information to have a decision reassessed
- can exercise their right to apply for a formal review of a decision they disagree with

### Documenting the decision discussion

Document a discussion about a decision on the customer's record. This will make sure that:

- there is a record showing what was discussed with the customer
- the contact can be acknowledged if the customer contacts again

### Steps in the internal review process

When a customer contacts the agency to discuss a decision that has been made:

- At the first point of contact, a Service Officer will discuss the decision, and give the customer information about their options to request an explanation or apply for a formal review of the decision. Staff can use the support resources available to them if the matter is complex, or if they need support to give a satisfactory response to the customer. See the [Process](#) page
- The customer can choose to request an explanation of the decision, which will be provided by a Subject Matter Expert (SME). The customer may choose this option if they do not understand or would like more information about the decision
- The customer can choose to apply for a formal review of the decision, which will be undertaken by an Authorised Review Officer (ARO). The customer may choose this option if they do not agree with the decision

**Note:** the referral for an explanation or a formal review should be based on what the customer wants. If there is any doubt, ask the customer. A formal review was known as an appeal

The internal review process should be straightforward for customers. Errors should be fixed and any new information assessed as quickly as possible. Customers do not have to provide new information. If a customer wants to provide new information, tell them

do this as soon as they can, preferably within 7 days.

The [Process](#) page has scripting to help Service Officers have a conversation with a customer about the internal review options.

For more information, see:

- [Request for an explanation or application for a formal review](#)
- [Priority explanation or a formal review of a decision](#)

## Role of the decision maker

- [Try to contact the customer before finalising an unfavourable decision](#)
- Discuss the decision with the customer
- Allow new information to be provided
- Correct errors and undertake reassessments
- Explain review and appeal rights
- If the customer does not understand or does not agree with the decision, [record a request for an explanation or application for a formal review](#)

## Role of the Service Officer

- Discuss the decision with the customer
- Document the discussion with the customer
- Allow new information to be provided
- Correct errors and undertake reassessments
- Arrange other appropriate referrals or assistance including:
  - [continuing payments pending review](#) of the decision (for a formal review only)
  - debt recovery arrangements
  - referral to a social worker
- Explain review and appeal rights
- If the customer does not understand or does not agree with the decision, [record a request for an explanation or application for a formal review](#)

## Role of the Subject Matter Expert (SME)

The SME is:

- a skilled officer, independent of the original decision
- responsible for explaining the decision when a customer has requested an explanation

See [SME explanations, ARO referrals and implementing ARO decisions](#).

## Role of the Authorised Review Officer (ARO)

The ARO is a senior officer, independent of the original decision.

The ARO is responsible for undertaking a formal review of the decision.

See [Reviews by an Authorised Review Officer \(ARO\)](#).

## External review process

After a formal review by an ARO, the customer may apply to the [Administrative Appeals Tribunal \(AAT\)](#) for an AAT first review of the decision. Certain decisions are exempted.

If a customer does not agree with an AAT first review decision, they may apply for an AAT second review.

All parties to an AAT second review have a further right of appeal to the Federal Court. Decisions of the Federal Court may be appealed, by leave, to the High Court.

These decisions **cannot** be appealed to the AAT:

- ABSTUDY entitlement and eligibility decisions. See [Review of ABSTUDY and AIC decisions](#)
- JET Child Care fee assistance (JETCCFA) decisions. See [Reviews of JETCCFA decisions](#)
- Grants, formerly known as ex-gratia payments. Appeal rights following an ARO review depend on the guidelines for each grant. See [Reviews of grants and ex-gratia payments](#).

## Complaints and FOI requests

A customer who requests an explanation or applies for a formal review of a decision may also:

- make a complaint about the service they received, or
- request release of documents under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

## Contents

[Advising verbally of an unfavourable decision](#)

[Request for an explanation or application for a formal review](#)

[Reviews by an Authorised Review Officer \(ARO\)](#)

[Administrative Appeals Tribunal \(AAT\)](#)

[Court Appeals after an unfavourable decision by Administrative Appeals Tribunal \(AAT\) \(AAT second review\)](#)

## Related links

[SME explanations, ARO referrals and implementing ARO decisions](#)

[Priority explanation or formal review of a decision](#)

[Secretary initiated review of decision](#)

[Appeals \(APL\) system](#)

[Continuing payments pending review \(PPR\)](#)

[Managing reviews and appeals paper files](#)

[Requests lodged under Freedom of Information Act 1982](#)

[Managing customer complaints and feedback](#)

[Customer compensation and act of grace payments](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

[Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)

## Process

This page contains information to help staff when customers make initial contact about a Centrelink decision. A separate procedure applies if the customer has already [requested an explanation, quality check or formal review](#) of the decision.

### On this page:

[Service Officer guide](#)

[Customer has further information](#)

## Service Officer guide

Table 1: guide/scripting for Service Officers to use to help customers with an enquiry about a decision.

Step	Action
1	<p><b>Check why the customer has contacted</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>After checking why the customer has contacted, ask them what they would like to do or know about the decision.</p>

	<p>Ask appropriate questions to understand the customer's enquiry so their concerns can be addressed or referred to the relevant business area.</p> <p>Staff can use the support resources available to them if the matter is complex, or if they need support to give a satisfactory response to the customer.</p> <p>If the customer asks about a decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• made by <b>Compliance Risk Branch</b> (CRB), warm transfer them to a CRB Service Officer who will continue with this process. See <a href="#">Procedures for non-compliance staff in CRB interventions</a>. CRB decisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Online Compliance Intervention (OCI)</li> <li>◦ Employment Income Confirmation (EIC)</li> <li>◦ Check and Update Past Income (CUPI)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• made under the <b>Targeted Compliance Framework</b> or <b>Job Seeker Compliance Model</b>, see <a href="#">Non-compliance with compulsory requirements - review and appeals</a></li> <li>• relating to changed, missing or cancelled child care attendance data, <a href="#">go to Step 2</a></li> </ul> <p>For all other decisions, <a href="#">go to Step 3</a>.</p>
2	<p><b>Decision relates to changed, missing or cancelled child care attendance data</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>This is data that a child care provider has given to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it relates to legacy Child Care Benefit (CCB) or Child Care Rebate (CCR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ If the customer has not been able to resolve the issue with the child care provider, refer to the Child Care Management System (CCMS) Support Team to check the data. See <a href="#">Customer queries CCMS information</a></li> <li>◦ If the CCMS Support Team has finalised a referred enquiry, and the customer would like to discuss the decision, <a href="#">go to Step 5</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• If it relates to Child Care Subsidy (CCS) or Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS), see <a href="#">CCS and ACCS - Viewing attendance reports</a></li> </ul> <p>If the customer is enquiring about a different child care decision, <a href="#">go to Step 3</a>.</p>
3	<p><b>Service Officer checks they can discuss the decision</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>Review the customer record to gather more information to discuss the decision with the customer.</p> <p>If the Service Officer is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>not</b> in a Smart Centre Operations or Service Delivery Partner team, <a href="#">go to Step 6</a></li> <li>• in a Smart Centre Operations or Service Delivery Partner team: <p>Are they suitably skilled to discuss the decision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Yes</b>, <a href="#">go to Step 6</a></li> <li>◦ <b>No</b>, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For decisions about debt (excluding Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Subsidy reconciliation), compliance review, intelligence investigation, compensation or random review , <a href="#">go to Step 7</a></li> <li>- For other decisions, <a href="#">go to Step 4</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Service Officer unable to discuss decision</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>If the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>has not</b> specifically asked for a review or appeal, <a href="#">go to Step 5</a></li> <li>• <b>has</b> specifically asked for a review or appeal, confirm they do want a formal review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Advise the customer <p>'A formal review application will be completed by an Authorised Review Officer. The Authorised Review Officer is an independent officer who will review the decision taking into account any additional information you have. The Authorised Review Officer will attempt to contact you to discuss your application for review. We aim to finalise a formal review within 49 days.'</p> </li> <li>◦ If the customer still wants to apply for a formal review, <a href="#">record the application for formal review</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>◦ If the customer does not want to apply for a formal review, refer the enquiry to a suitably skilled Service Officer. <a href="#">Go to Step 5</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Refer to a suitably skilled Service Officer</b> + Read more ...</p>

A suitably skilled Service Officer will discuss the decision with the customer and give the customer their internal review options if required.

To refer to a suitably skilled Service Officer, use the **Decision Enquiry Fast Note** in Customer First:

- Access the [Fast Note workflow](#)
- Select **Auto Text** option and complete the fields as below
  - **Category 1:**Generic
  - **Category 2:** Decision enquiry
  - **Template:** Select the option that relates to the payment and type of decision the customer wants to discuss. This is important to make sure the enquiry can be assigned to an appropriate Service Officer.  
For example, 'Discussion of Decision Required - FTBNCL' if the enquiry is about a Family Tax Benefit claim decision
- Select **Confirm**
- The **Text** field will prefill with standard text. Update this field with extra details including:
  - Date of decision
  - Service type
  - The type of decision the customer is enquiring about
- Select **Continue** to create an open **ACTDOC**

Advise the customer they will be contacted within the next few days by a Service Officer who can talk to them about the decision and their options.

Procedure ends here.

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#### **Discuss decision** + Read more ...

Discuss the decision with the customer and answer any questions.

If any errors are identified:

- staff who do not have the skills to undertake a reassessment, see [Step 5 in Table 2](#)
- staff with the appropriate skills are to undertake a reassessment and correct any errors

After discussing the decision and taking any appropriate action:

- If the customer has given or wants to give more details about a recent decision, see [Table 2](#)
- If the customer does not understand or does not agree with the decision, provide the customer with their options, [go to Step 7](#)
- If the customer would like to make a complaint, [go to Step 8](#)
- If no further action is needed after discussing the decision, [go to Step 9](#)

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#### **Give the customer options** + Read more ...

The customer may not be aware of their options, or may not be sure which option to choose.

Give the customer more details about the explanation and formal review process.

Tell the customer:

- We want to help you understand what your different options are so you can choose the best option for you. I'll explain them to you now'
- 'You can choose to ask for an explanation of the decision which means I will arrange for a skilled officer to contact you. They will explain the decision further, answer any questions you have, and may be able to address your concerns without the need for a formal review of the decision. We aim to contact you within 14 days'
- [If priority indicated:](#) 'Based on your circumstances, you should be contacted sooner'
- 'You can apply for a formal review, which means your application will be sent to an Authorised Review Officer. The Authorised Review Officer is an independent officer who will review the decision taking into account any additional information you have. The Authorised Review Officer will attempt to contact you to discuss your application for review. We aim to finalise a formal review within 49 days
- [If priority indicated:](#) 'Based on your circumstances, your review should be completed sooner
- 'It is your choice to request either an explanation of decision or apply for a formal review of decision'
- 'If you choose to go with an explanation of the decision, you can change your choice and apply for a formal review at any time

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'An application for formal review should be made within (<a href="#">time frame based on the payment/decision</a>, for example, 13 weeks) of us telling you about the decision. If you apply for a review after this time, a review might not be able to be done or you may only get your entitlement from the date you apply for the review if the decision is changed'</li> <li><b>Family assistance customers only:</b> 'If you are also a Child Support customer, you need to apply for a formal review within 28 days of being notified of the decision. Otherwise any changes that may affect your Child Support assessment may only take effect from the date you applied for the formal review'</li> </ul> <p>If the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not understand the decision and wants to request an explanation, <a href="#">record the request for explanation</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>does not agree with the decision and wants to apply for a formal review, <a href="#">record the application for formal review</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>is satisfied after discussing the decision and no further action is required, <a href="#">go to Step 9</a></li> </ul>
8	<p><b>The customer would like to make a complaint</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>Refer to <a href="#">Managing customer complaints and feedback</a>.</p> <p>Advise the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'I can help you by recording your complaint. If you don't want to lodge a complaint now, you can also send us your feedback/complaint through your online account.'</li> <li>'Separate to your complaint, if you would like more information about the decision, I can arrange for a skilled officer to contact you to further explain the decision and answer any questions you have. They might be able to address your concerns without the need for a formal review of the decision. We aim to contact you within 14 days.'</li> <li>'You also have the right to apply for a formal review of the decision. An application for formal review should be made within (<a href="#">time frame based on the payment/decision</a>, for example, 13 weeks) of us telling you about the decision. If you apply for a review after this time, a review might not be able to be done or you may only get your entitlement from the date you apply for the review if the decision is changed. A formal review is completed by an Authorised Review Officer. We aim to finalise a formal review within 49 days.'</li> <li><b>Family assistance customers only:</b> 'If you are also a Child Support customer, you need to apply for a formal review within 28 days of being notified of the decision. Otherwise any changes that may affect your Child Support assessment may only take effect from the date you applied for the formal review.'</li> <li>Is there anything else I can help you with in regards to this decision?'</li> </ul> <p>If the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not understand the decision and wants to request an explanation, <a href="#">record the request for explanation</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>does not agree with the decision and wants to apply for a formal review, <a href="#">record the application for formal review</a>. Procedure ends here.</li> <li>is satisfied after discussing the decision and no further action is required, <a href="#">go to Step 9</a></li> </ul>
9	<p><b>No further action is needed</b> + Read more ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Customer Service Delivery Group (CSDG) staff</b> (For example: Service Centres/ Face to Face, Smart Centres Operations) Document the discussion with the customer, <a href="#">run the Internal Review/Explanation script</a> and select <b>Document decision discussion</b></li> <li><b>Non-CSDG staff</b> (For example: Intelligence and Investigations, Compliance and Debt Operations, Debt Programme and Compensation, or Appeals and Reviews teams) Document the discussion with the customer. <b>Do not select</b> Document decision discussion in the <b>Internal Review/Explanation</b> script</li> </ul> <p>Procedure ends here.</p>

## Customer has further information

Step	Action
1	<p><b>Customer has further information</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>The customer has given or wants to give further information relating to a recent decision and has not applied for a formal review.</p> <p>If the customer has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided documents or information not yet actioned, <a href="#">go to Step 2</a></li> <li>• documents or information to provide, <a href="#">go to Step 6</a></li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Customer has provided further documents or information not yet actioned</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>Check the customer's record to confirm receipt of any documents.</p> <p>Make sure any documents have been added/scanned to the customer's record and can be read.</p> <p>If the documents or details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relate to a claim rejected for reason FRC, FSD, POI, IME/OTH (DSP insufficient medical evidence), see <a href="#">Requested documentation not provided resulting in rejection of new claim</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>• relate to any other decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ If the Service Officer is skilled and scheduled duties allow them to action the documents or information, <a href="#">go to Step 3</a></li> <li>◦ If the Service Officer is not skilled or scheduled duties do not allow them to action the documents or information, <a href="#">go to Step 5</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Service Officer can action the documents or information</b> + Read more ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassess the decision using the new information</li> <li>• Document the reassessment on a <b>DOC</b> or <b>Note</b> on the customer's record</li> <li>• Discuss the new decision with the customer</li> </ul> <p>Is the customer satisfied with the new decision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes</b>, procedure ends here</li> <li>• <b>No</b>, <a href="#">go to Step 4</a></li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Explain review and appeal options</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>Advise the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'If you would like more information about the decision, I can arrange for a skilled officer to contact you to explain the decision further and answer any questions you have. They might be able to address your concerns without the need for a formal review of the decision. We aim to contact you within 14 days</li> <li>• 'You also have the right to apply for a formal review of the decision. A formal review is completed by an Authorised Review Officer. We aim to finalise a formal review within 49 days. An application for formal review should be made within (<a href="#">time frame based on the payment/decision</a>, for example, 13 weeks) of us telling you about the decision. If you apply for a review after this time, a review might not be able to be done or you may only get your entitlement from the date you apply for the review if the decision is changed'</li> <li>• <b>Family assistance customers only:</b> 'If you are also a Child Support customer, you need to apply for a formal review within 28 days of being notified of the decision. Otherwise any changes that may affect your Child Support assessment may only take effect from the date you applied for the formal review'</li> </ul> <p>If the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not understand the decision and wants to request an explanation, <a href="#">record the request for explanation</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>• does not agree with the decision and wants to apply for a formal review, <a href="#">record the application for formal review</a>. Procedure ends here.</li> <li>• is satisfied after discussing the decision and no further action is required, See <a href="#">Step 9 in Table 1</a></li> </ul>

5	<p><b>Service Officer cannot action any further documents or information, or cannot correct any identified errors</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>Create an <b>ACTDOC</b> to refer details to the relevant business area. Use the appropriate <b>Fast Note</b> workflow or <b>Callback/ACTDOC</b> guided procedure.</p> <p>Advise the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'A skilled officer will consider the documents and advise you of the outcome. There are further options available if you do not agree with the decision, such as requesting an explanation or applying for a formal review</li> <li>• 'If you would like more information about the decision, I can arrange for a skilled officer to contact you to explain the decision further and answer any questions you have. They might be able to address your concerns without the need for a formal review of the decision. We aim to contact you within 14 days</li> <li>• 'You also have the right to apply for a formal review of the decision. A formal review is completed by an Authorised Review Officer. We aim to finalise a formal review within 49 days</li> <li>• 'The lodgement of documents is not considered to be an application for a formal review of the decision. If you would like to apply for a formal review, or to discuss the decision further, you can let me know now</li> <li>• <b>Family assistance customers only:</b> 'If you are also a Child Support customer, you need to apply for a formal review within 28 days of being notified of the decision. Otherwise any changes that may affect your Child Support assessment may only take effect from the date you applied for the formal review'</li> </ul> <p>If the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not understand the decision and wants to request an explanation, <a href="#">record the request for explanation</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>• does not agree with the decision and wants to apply for a formal review, <a href="#">record the application for formal review</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>• is satisfied after discussing the decision and no further action is required, See <a href="#">Step 9 in Table 1</a></li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Customer has further documents or information to provide</b> + Read more ...</p> <p>Advise the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'You should lodge &lt;additional documents/further information&gt; as soon as you can, preferably within 7 days. You can upload documents using our online services. We will then consider all documents and information that you provide and advise you of the outcome.</li> <li>• 'If you would like more information about the decision, I can arrange for a skilled officer to contact you to further explain the decision and answer any questions you have. They might be able to address your concerns without the need for a formal review of the decision. We aim to contact you within 14 days.</li> <li>• 'You also have the right to apply for a formal review of the decision. A formal review is completed by an Authorised Review Officer. We aim to finalise a formal review within 49 days.</li> <li>• 'The lodgement of documents is not considered to be an application for a formal review of the decision. If you would like to apply for a formal review, or to discuss the decision further, you can let me know now. An application for formal review should be made within (<a href="#">time frame based on the payment/decision</a>, for example, 13 weeks) of us telling you about the decision. If you apply for a review after this time, a review might not be able to be done or you may only get your entitlement from the date you apply for the review if the decision is changed'</li> <li>• <b>Family assistance customers only:</b> 'If you are also a Child Support customer, you need to apply for a formal review within 28 days of being notified of the decision. Otherwise any changes that may affect your Child Support assessment may only take effect from the date you applied for the formal review.'</li> </ul> <p>If the customer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is satisfied after discussing the decision and no further action is required, see <a href="#">Step 9 in Table 1</a></li> <li>• does not understand the decision and wants to request an explanation, <a href="#">record the request for explanation</a>. Procedure ends here</li> <li>• does not agree with the decision and wants to apply for a formal review, <a href="#">record the application for formal review</a>. Procedure ends here</li> </ul>

Add the course number to the **Search** field in the [Learning Portal](#) (LMS) in ESSentials:

Customer Service Delivery Group (CSDG) staff complete:

- **CLK01303** - Changes in Internal Review (CSDG only)
- **CLK01252** - Changes in the SME Role in Internal Review

Non-CSDG staff complete:

- **CLK01251** - Changes in the Internal Review Process
- **CLK01252** - Changes in the SME Role in Internal Review

To undertake the SME role, Service Officers must complete the eLearning courses above and be recognised as SMEs by team leaders or line managers. Line manager approval **must** be obtained before participating in the eLearning courses.