



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

MC15-015648

Mr Bob Buckley
cnvnr@a4.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your email of 24 November 2015 to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter MP, regarding the Disability Support Pension (DSP). The Minister has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

DSP is designed to give people an adequate means of support if they have a permanent physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment which attracts at least 20 points under the Impairment Tables. The person must also be assessed as being unable to work for 15 or more hours per week, for at least the next two years, because of their impairment. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including Asperger's Syndrome, may be granted DSP or have their pension continued if they meet these criterion.

Tables for the assessment of work-related impairment for Disability Support Pension (Impairment Tables) are designed to assess a person's loss of functional capacity that affects their ability to work. The Impairment Tables do not contain a list of psychological, physiological or anatomical conditions.

The Impairment Tables are used to assign impairment ratings according to the severity of the impact of the impairment on a person's functional ability, as it relates to work. Each person's level of impairment must be assessed on an individual basis to account for the varying spectrum of severity and stability that can occur with medical conditions. Autism Spectrum Disorder, including Asperger Syndrome, is usually assessed under Impairment Table 7 – Brain Function.

If Centrelink makes a decision that a person disagrees with, they have the right under social security law to ask for a review of the decision by a review officer. The review system is designed to ensure correct decisions are made in accordance with legislation

If after this a person still has concerns about the correctness of the decision, they can lodge an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The Tribunal is a Government review body that can provide an independent examination of Centrelink decisions. Each of these steps in the appeal process is free of charge. To obtain more information about appeal rights you can contact Centrelink on 13 2717 for the cost of a local call. Please note that calls made from mobile phones may incur additional costs.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gary Knox'.

Gary Knox
Acting Branch Manager

24 December 2015

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