

Special Benefit

When you get a SHEV (Safe Haven Enterprise Visa) or TPV (Temporary Protection Visa) any asylum seeker Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) payment you are getting will stop.

If you are in 'financial hardship' you should then urgently claim Centrelink Special Benefit. 'Financial hardship' means that you (and your partner) have less than \$5000 readily available funds, and don't have enough money to support yourself and your family.

First contact Centrelink (phone 132 850 or 131 202 or ask your settlement worker) to register a claim and then take it to Centrelink along with your identity documents and details of finances.

Special Benefit payment may be less than the SRSS payment asylum seekers get.

If you receive free board or lodging, or any kind of support, this will reduce your payment.

Centrelink does a review every 13 weeks and you must show them the last three months bank statements. You must tell Centrelink things such as if you change address, you get a job, or have a change in family relationships.

People on Special Benefit also get a Health Care Card for cheaper medicine and may get some public transport costs reduced.

Special Benefit and work/study

With Special Benefits, Centrelink will give you a 'Job Active Provider' to try to find you work if you are of working age, are not the main carer of children, and have no major disabilities. If you don't do the activities set out by your 'Job Active' provider, the Special Benefit payments may be reduced.

If you get work you must tell Centrelink how much money you earn, and your benefit is then reduced by that amount. For example, if you earn \$100 in a fortnight, your payment will reduce by \$100.

You can study and get Special Benefit as long as you still do the job search activities. You need approval of your 'Job Active Provider' for any full-time study. If the study is less than 20 hours per week then it is normally classed as 'part-time study'.

SHEV holders who are studying cannot get other social security benefits for students such as Austudy or Youth Allowance.

Special Benefit and the SHEV Pathway

Usually TPV and SHEV holders can only apply for another TPV or SHEV when their visa is ending. However if you are a SHEV holder you can apply for a range of other visas if you or a family member:

- work without getting Special Benefit
- OR study

in a regional area for 3 ½ years (42 months).

Any **work you do while receiving Centrelink Special Benefits** will **NOT be counted as part of the 3 ½ years SHEV pathway** requirement. However other Centrelink payments you may get (see below) do not affect the 3 ½ years SHEV pathway.

If you **study** and receive Special Benefit then **that study can count toward the 3 ½ year SHEV Pathway** period BUT Special Benefit will not be given if the course you are studying is more than 12 months.

Other Centrelink payments and the SHEV pathway

SHEV and TPV holders may also be able to get some of these Centrelink benefits listed below. If you do get these benefits it **does NOT affect the 3½ year SHEV pathway**.

- Family Tax Benefit
- Single Income Family Supplement
- Double Orphan Pension
- Parental Leave Pay
- Dad and Partner Pay
- Health Care Card
- Child Care Benefit/ Rebate
- School Kids Bonus
- Child Dental Benefits Schedule
- Jobs, Education and Training Child
- Care Fee Assistance
- Stillborn Baby Payment
- Low Income Health Care Card

Other support SHEV and TPV holders get

SHEV and TPV holders can work, get Medicare, job seeker assistance and short-term counselling for torture and trauma.

Children under 18 can attend school.

People 18 or over can access the Adult Migrant English Program, but can't get Commonwealth-funded subsidies for other study.

More information

Fact Sheets on Special benefits for TPV/SHEV holders are available on the Department of Human Services website in several languages (www.humanservices.gov.au and search 'Special Benefits TPV SHEV'). To talk with Centrelink phone 131 202 (for an interpreter) or 132 850 in English.

*This Fact Sheet is legal information, not legal advice.
See a registered migration agent/lawyer for specific advice.*