



# Work and Development Permit Scheme

*in Western Australia*



## What is the Work and Development Permit (WDP) Scheme?

The Work and Development Permit (WDP) Scheme helps people experiencing hardship to pay their court fines.

People eligible for the WDP Scheme, will be able to reduce or clear their outstanding court fines by completing approved voluntary activities instead of paying the fine.

## How can you clear a court fine?

If you are eligible for the WDP Scheme you will be able to clear your outstanding court fines by undertaking one or more of the following approved activities:

- Voluntary unpaid work;
- Medical or mental health treatment;
- Education, vocational or personal development courses (see *"Why work with a Ruah Legal Services Key Worker"*);
- Treatment for alcohol or drug use problems;
- Mentoring programs if under 25 years of age; or
- An activity as prescribed by the regulations.

The above listed activities have different conversion rates, which allows people to pay off a certain amount of their fine for every hour of the activity that they complete. For example, undertaking mental health treatment or personal development courses contributes \$70 per hour.

For more information about the approved activities and the respective fine conversion rates, please see the WA government website at [www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-justice/work-and-development-permit-scheme](http://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-justice/work-and-development-permit-scheme) > "Information for Clients".

The WDP Scheme is voluntary. It can be commenced early on to prevent the accumulation of fine enforcement fees.

*Under a WDP, personal development activities you work on with a RLS Key Worker will result in payments being made to reduce your court fines. Your RLS Key Worker will endeavour to give you updates about your outstanding fine progress as they work with you.*

## What happens when your Key Worker support ends?

At the conclusion of the RLS Key Worker's support, if fines are still owing, your Key Worker will advise you of this and provide further support options.

The Key Worker may continue to help by:

- Supporting you to contact the Fines Enforcement Registry and enter a time to pay agreement; or
- Referring you to another approved sponsor of the WDP if appropriate.

If you disengage with your RLS Key Worker and are not likely to re-engage whilst on a WDP, the RLS Key Worker will inform the Fines Enforcement Registry and the WDP will be cancelled.

## Contacts

If you require further information about the WDP Scheme and how it works, or if you would like to engage in a WDP program with Ruah Legal Services, please talk to your RLS Lawyer or Key Worker.

### **Ruah Legal Services**

(08) 9328 8012 or Freecall: 1800 620 285

### **For general advice regarding the WDP Scheme:**

#### **Fines Enforcement Registry**

(08) 9235 0235 or Freecall: 1300 650 235  
fines@justice.wa.gov.au

#### **Legal Aid WA**

(08) 9261 6353 or Freecall: 1300 650 579  
wdpservice@legalaid.wa.gov.au

#### **Aboriginal Legal Service**

(08) 6371 4600 or Freecall: 1800 019 900  
wdpservice@als.org.au

## Who is eligible for the WDP Scheme?

To be eligible for the WDP Scheme, you must meet the following criteria:

1. A court fine has been issued to you;
2. Thirty (30) days have elapsed since it was issued and the court fines have been referred to the Fines Enforcement Registry; and
3. You are experiencing hardship.

## What is an eligible court fine?

A court fine is a financial penalty which a Judge, Magistrate or Justice of the Peace has ordered a person to pay in a Western Australian Court. It is not a fine which is issued by local government or police.

Only court fines are eligible for the WDP Scheme. Other outstanding unpaid fines or infringements are not eligible to be included in a WDP Scheme application.

## What is the definition of 'experiencing hardship'?

The following circumstances are considered hardship:

- You are experiencing **financial hardship**;
- You have been, or might be, subjected to **family violence**;
- You have a **mental illness**;
- You have a **disability**;
- You are experiencing **homelessness**;
- You are experiencing **drug or alcohol use** problems; or
- You are experiencing another type of **hardship** that is not listed above.

If you are experiencing any of the above circumstances, and you have a court fine that has been referred to the Fines Enforcement Registry, you may be eligible for a WDP.

## How do you apply?

If you believe that you are eligible for the WDP Scheme, you need to contact a registered sponsor. A registered sponsor may be an individual or organisation that works to provide assistance to clients of the WDP Scheme.

Ruah Legal Services Key Workers are registered sponsors (see *"Why work with a Ruah Legal Services Key Worker"*).

To contact other registered sponsors, see the dropdown menu "Register of approved sponsors" on the following website [www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-justice/work-and-development-permit-scheme](http://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-justice/work-and-development-permit-scheme).

If the registered WDP sponsor considers that you are eligible, they may then apply to the Fines Enforcement Registry to issue you with a WDP. You do not need to submit an application to the Fines Enforcement Registry yourself. The Fines Enforcement Registry will only accept applications from registered sponsors.

## **Why work with a Ruah Legal Services Key Worker?**

Ruah Legal Services (RLS) Key Workers are registered sponsors of the WDP Scheme, and any personal development work you complete with them is an approved activity that will reduce your court fine(s).

RLS Key Workers can undertake personal development with you, under the approved activity of an:

'Educational, vocational or personal development course.' The Department of Justice outlines that this activity includes counselling aimed at improving:

- Financial management;
- Mental health;
- Emotional or behavioural issues.

Your RLS Key Worker can lodge an application for a WDP which means that some of the time spent with the Key Worker, such as counselling, financial advice and personal development tasks can go towards paying the amount owed. Each hour you work with a RLS Key Worker equals a \$70 reduction of your court fines. Reduction of your fines only occurs after the WDP has been approved. Any activities you have completed prior to approval will not contribute to a reduction of your fines.

You should know that whilst under a WDP, any time to pay arrangements you have set up for your outstanding court fines with the Fines Enforcement Registry will cease. Any time to pay arrangements for other infringements that are not court fines will continue.

# Need legal advice? Call our Telephone Advice line

Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

☎ 08 9328 8012 or Freecall 1800 620 285

## Connect with us:

### Ruah Legal Services

PO Box 8078, Subiaco East WA 6008

Facsimile: (08) 6323 3382

✉ [legalservices@ruah.org.au](mailto:legalservices@ruah.org.au)

🌐 [ruahlegal.org.au](http://ruahlegal.org.au)  

Ruah Legal Services acknowledges and respects the traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owners of the land on which we work, the first people of this country. We pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

**Everyone is welcome. Everyone belongs.**



## Disclaimer

The writer, publisher and Ruah Legal Services disclaim liability as to the reliability and completeness of the information in this publication and disclaim any liability for action taken or not taken as result of this content or for any errors and omissions. It is emphasised that the reader may need legal advice in relation to their particular circumstances.

© 2023 Ruah Legal Services Limited ABN 58 636 664 983  
trading as Mental Health Law Centre WA