Child Safety
POLICY

Title: Complex Support Needs Allowance
Policy No.: 612-3

Policy Statement:
The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women will provide the complex support needs allowance to assist foster and kinship carers meet the direct and additional indirect costs of caring for children assessed as having complex and extreme support needs, to ensure that a child's individual needs are met in a timely and effective manner.

Long-term guardians and permanent guardians are eligible to receive the complex support needs allowance if they were an approved foster or kinship carer and caring for the child when the order was made and exceptional circumstances apply. In exceptional circumstances, the complex support needs allowance may be paid to long-term guardians and permanent guardians for a maximum period of six months.

Principles:
- The wellbeing and best interests of the child or young person are paramount (Child Protection Act 1999, section 5(1)).
- Children and young people in care will receive a quality of care that is consistent with the Charter of Rights for a Child in Care (Child Protection Act 1999, Schedule 1) and the Statement of Standards (Child Protection Act 1999, section 122).
- Approved carers and guardians have the right to receive support that will contribute to a safe and therapeutic care environment being provided to meet the needs of children and young people (Child Protection Act 1999, section 7(h)).
- Approved carers are volunteers who care for children subject to statutory child protection intervention in the carer's own home without expectation of remuneration.
- Approved carers and guardians are entitled to financial assistance, paid in the form of allowances, as reimbursement towards the direct and additional indirect financial costs of responding to the care needs of children placed in their care.
- The level of financial assistance provided is based on the child's needs and the associated costs to carers and guardians.
- For a child currently subject to an order granting long-term guardianship to a suitable person or a permanent care order, Child Safety acknowledges that the full needs of the child may not be evident or anticipated prior to the making of the order.
Objectives:
The purpose of the complex support needs allowance is to respond to and meet the needs of children assessed as having complex and extreme support needs, and thereby promote improved outcomes for children both throughout and following the placement.

The complex support needs allowance will provide financial assistance to carers and guardians so that children’s needs are met in a timely and effective manner.

Scope:
The complex support needs allowance may be provided to approved foster and kinship carers, provisionally approved carers. It may also be paid to eligible guardians in exceptional circumstances and for a period not exceeding six months.

The complex support needs allowance may be provided for a child in care in addition to the payment of the Fortnightly caring allowance and high support needs allowance.

The complex support needs allowance is financial assistance for the costs of caring for child, and contains no remuneration and is provided in expectation of the expenditure necessary to meet both the direct and additional indirect costs of the placement, rather than an acquittal of expenditure.

The complex support needs allowance may be provided to assist with medical, transport, and clothing costs; costs associated with recreation and leisure, skill development, and family contact; as well as other additional indirect costs. The complex support needs allowance cannot be provided to meet costs that are covered by other payments and schemes, for example, costs paid by Medicare or the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Receipt of allowances does not preclude carers from receiving additional financial assistance through child related costs for specific approved purposes, where the costs exceed the level of the allowances.

For long-term guardians and permanent guardians, the complex support needs allowance is provided only in exceptional circumstances for a time limited period (not exceeding six months) if the child has emerging special needs or the guardian requires assistance to establish a care environment for the child to meet the child’s ongoing needs.

The complex support needs allowance is not subject to tax and should not be cited as income for any purpose, including tax returns, applications for Commonwealth benefits, or when applying for loans from financial institutions.

Roles and Responsibilities:
The procedures which give effect to this policy are contained in the Child Safety Practice Manual.

Authority:
Child Protection Act 1999
Adoption Act 2009
Child Protection Regulation 2011
Financial Accountability Act 2009
Delegations:
Refer to instruments of delegation for information on delegations for decision-making under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

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**Date to be reviewed:** 13 August 2022

**Office:** Department of Child Safety Youth and Women  
**Help Contact:** Operational Support

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**Links:**

**Procedures**  
Complex support needs allowance (612)

**Related Policies**  
Case planning (263)  
Child Related Costs – Carer support (597)  
Child Related Costs – Client support and family contact (598)  
Child Related Costs – Education support (599)  
Child Related Costs – Long-term guardian support (608)  
Child Related Costs – Medical (596)  
Child Related Costs – Outfitting (600)  
Child Related costs – Placement funding (628)  
Child Related costs – Placement support funding (629)  
Child Related Costs – Travel (595)  
Dual payment of carer allowances (289)  
Expenses – Fortnightly caring allowance and inter-state foster payments (365)  
High support needs allowance (296)  
High support needs allowance (296)  
Supporting children in the care of long-term guardians (607)
Related Legislation or Standard
Child Protection Act 1999
Child Protection Regulation 2011
Financial Accountability Act 2009
Adoption Act 2009
Statement of Commitment between the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the foster and kinship carers of Queensland.

Rescinded Policies
400-1 Complex support needs allowance – Funded Specialist Foster Care Services

Michael Hogan
Director-General