Child Safety
POLICY

Title: Complex Support Needs Allowance
Policy No: 612-2

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 for complex support needs allowance if they were an approved foster or kinship carer and caring for the child when the order was made, with provision of the allowance in exceptional circumstances, for a time limited period. Eligibility for payment of this allowance is outlined in the associated procedure.

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 placed 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 have the right to receive support that will contribute to the provision of a safe and therapeutic care environment in which the needs of children and young people are met (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 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 Services 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 stability to carers 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, and eligible guardians. Eligibility criteria for the allowance are detailed in procedure complex support needs allowance. The complex support needs allowance is provided for a child in addition to 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. Examples of such costs are detailed in procedure complex support needs allowance. The complex support needs allowance cannot be provided for 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 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 procedure 612 Complex support needs allowance and 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*. 
Records File No.: CHS/04139
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Date to be reviewed: 6 May 2019 (minor update 18 October 2018)

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

Links:

Procedures
Complex support needs allowance (612)

Related Policies
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Child Related Costs – Client support and family contact (598)
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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