Title: Child Related Costs – Carer Support

Procedure No: 645.5-1

Purpose

This procedure guides the use of Child Related Costs (CRC) to fund supports for carers looking after children and young people in a care arrangement, this includes children and young people subject to statutory intervention with Child Safety or support service cases.

This procedure is to be used in line with the Child Related Costs policy (CRC policy) (645).

Scope

CRC Carer Support provides financial support to a carer for safety equipment and/or for support services which assist the carer to look after children and young people in their care.

The term ‘carer’ within this document is inclusive of foster carers, kinship carers and provisionally approved carers.

The following categories are part of the CRC Carer Support procedure and show the associated General Ledger (G/L) Account Code:

- Property Modifications (G/L Account Code: 530439)
- Motor Vehicle Expenses (G/L Account Code: 530440)
- Support Costs (G/L Account Code: 530438)

Process

Upon a CRC request being received by the Child Safety Officer (CSO), the CSO is to refer to the CRC policy (645) and the corresponding procedure to determine if the request meets the guidelines for CRC.

Once the CSO has determined that the guidelines are met, the CSO can progress the request for approval. To progress approval the CSO will consult with their Business Officer and relevant financial delegate for the request.

Business Officers in each Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) are authorised to manage and pay requests of up to $250.

The carer, child, young person or parent will be required to provide receipts for all reimbursement requests.

For requests for payment/reimbursement of $100 or under, a CRC form is not required. Consultation between the Business Officer, CSO and Senior Team Leader is required to
determine the outcome of the request. If the request is supported, the Business Officer will approve the request and process the reimbursement.

For requests for payments/reimbursements over $100 up to $250, approval from the Business Officer and a completed CRC form is required. Consultation between the Business Officer, CSO and Senior Team Leader is required to determine the outcome of the request. If the request is supported, the Business Officer will approve the request and process the reimbursement.

For requests for payments/reimbursements of $250 and over, approval from the CSSC Manager and a completed CRC form are required. Once approved, the Business Office is able to process the request.

For requests for reimbursement over $25,000, please refer to the financial delegation schedule, complete the CRC form and provide to the relevant financial delegate for their consideration and approval.

Child Safety Officers will:
- Consider the use of CRC as part of the case planning processes.
- Make sure carers are aware of how to request CRC for unplanned expenses as they arise.
- Make sure CRC support is consistent with the case plan and/or supportive of the care arrangement.

Business Officers will:
- Ensure the correct CRC G/L Account Code is used
- Ensure all transactions are substantiated, and necessary substantiating documentation (for example, invoices and receipts) is filed to ensure an audit trail.

Should the request not be supported, the CSO will inform the person making the request of the outcome including an explanation for the decision.

**Categories for child related costs carer support**

**Property Modifications (G/L Account Code: 530439)**

This category is to provide financial support for the costs associated with approved modifications to the home or property of a carer to support a long term placement as outlined in the case plan.

Expenditure under this category can include
- Installation of ramps for wheelchair access for a child or young person with a physical disability
- Installation of hand rails
- Other safety and security modifications required to meet the specific needs of a child or young person
- Modifications to a motor vehicle.

**Motor Vehicle Expenses (G/L Account Code: 530440)**

This category is used for all costs associated with a carers vehicle expenses.

Expenditure under this category can include:
• an approved lease
• maintenance and running costs for a motor vehicle leased for a carer for a short-term arrangement between four to six weeks.

When a vehicle lease is required to support a placement long-term, please refer to the Individual Placement Support policy and procedure.

The lease of any vehicle for a carer must be part of an approved case plan and have demonstrated benefits for the child or young person. The lease must be for a specified period between four to six weeks and must be the most efficient, effective and economic use of the child related costs funding, as per the requirements of the Financial Accountability Act 2009.

In circumstances where a carer chooses to lease a vehicle for reasons not included as part of an approved case plan, the costs will be met by the carer.

**Support Costs (G/L Account Code: 530438)**

This category provides financial support to a carer to purchase support services and/or goods in circumstances where an acute illness, stress or crisis, is impacting on the carer’s ability to care for the children and young people in their care.

This category can also be used to purchase goods where an emergent situation has arisen.

Emergent situations may include circumstances where:
• children and young people are placed with carers and the carer payments have not yet commenced, or
• children and young people are placed with a carer in emergent accommodation.

The types of costs included in this category are:
• Safety equipment such as a car seat, safety locks and child barriers required in emergent situations
• Prepaid essential gift card to purchase food, toiletries and clothing for a child or young person, and
• In-home services such as a cleaner or short-term baby-sitting to assist the carer in the day-to-day care of a child or young person un
• der the circumstances mentioned above. This is a short term arrangement and regular review must occur.

Please also see policy Dual Payment of Carer Allowances if emergent respite is considered a more appropriate solution.

The gift cards G/L account code: 530426 is to be used for the bulk purchase of gift cards. For further details, refer to the finance procedure ‘Prepaid gift cards FME026.1’ for guidance on the purchase, control and issue of prepaid gift cards.

**Personal Assets: When a child or young person leaves a care arrangement**

As a general rule, all clothing, gifts and personal items purchased for the child or young person belong to the child or young person. All items belonging to the child or young person will go with them to their next care arrangement, when they transition to adulthood, or when they return home to their family.
In cases where a carer purchases shared items or gifts for the carer family, these items need to be detailed in the child or young person’s case plan and/or placement agreement that they are shared items and are to remain with the carer. These items should be agreed upon with the CSO.

Examples of these items include but are not limited to:

- bedding/towels
- bunk beds
- book shelves
- swing sets.

In order to facilitate this, carers are encouraged to maintain a personal assets list in order to assist with managing items purchased for the children and young people in their care.

**Authority:**

*Child Protection Act 1999*

*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

**Delegations:**

The use of CRC will be in accordance with departmental financial delegations and standards.
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**Office:** Child and Family Operations  
**Help Contact:** Operational Support  

**Links**  

**Related Policy**  
Child related Costs (645)  
Case Planning (263)  
Early Childhood Education and Care Participation Minimum Gap Payment (640)  

**Related Procedures**  
Child Related Costs – Health and Wellbeing Support (645.1)  
Child Related Costs – Education and Child Care Support (645.2)  
Child Related Costs – Travel Support (645.3)  
Child Related Costs – Child and Young Person Support (645.4)  
Child Safety Practice Manual  

**Related Legislation**  
*Adoptions Act 2009*  
*Child Protection Regulation 2000*  
*Human Rights Act 2019*  

**Related Guidelines**  

**Forms**  
CRC Approval Form  

**Rescinded Policies**  
Child Related Costs – Carer Support (597-5)
Michael Hogan

Director-General