

# Child Safety POLICY

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**Title:** Care Allowance – Extended Post Care Support

**Policy No:** 651-1

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## Policy Statement:

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (Child Safety) will provide the Fortnightly caring allowance (care allowance) when young adults aged 18 to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday remain with their carer or guardian to support their changing needs as they transition to adulthood.

The Care Allowance is paid to the young adult's former carer or guardian (carer).

## Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child or young adult, both throughout childhood and for the rest of their lives, are paramount.
- A young adult has the right to live in an environment that best meets their needs.
- A young adult will be supported to maintain ongoing positive relationships with persons of significance to them including family members, carers as well as long-term and permanent guardians as they transition to adulthood.
- A young adult will be supported to remain in a stable living arrangement with their carers as they transition to adulthood.
- A young adult will be empowered to make decisions on the support they need to build their capacity to financially support themselves.
- Financial support will be accessible and equitable and provided to support a young adult transition to adulthood.
- Financial support will be complementary to the other support programs operating in the extended post-care support system.
- Maintaining and strengthening the cultural identity of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young adults is integral to their successful transition to adulthood.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young adults have a right to be supported to develop and maintain connections with family, community, culture, traditions and language.
- Child Safety staff will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

## Objectives:

- To support young adults to remain living with their carer after they have turned 18 years, if this is their preferred arrangement.
- To provide the Care Allowance to carers to enable young people to experience consistent, stable living arrangements and be supported as they transition to adulthood.
- To provide the Care Allowance to those carers in an accessible and equitable way that is complementary to the other supports available via the Extended Post Care Support program.

## Scope:

The Care Allowance is provided to eligible carers, post a young adult's 18th birthday.

It is expected that the Care Allowance will meet the young adult's basic needs first and foremost. Basic needs are what young people require to live comfortable lives and include food, shelter, clothing and support to access education, employment, transportation and connection to family, community, culture and country.

The Care Allowance covers, but is not limited to:

- board and rent and support to assist with and contribute to direct care costs for the young adult, general wear and tear on household items;
- pro rata costs for utilities and appliances, including access to mobile phone and internet services;
- basic medical needs, including medication costs and support to access any private health insurance products as an ongoing dependent of the carer;
- food for the young adult;
- household goods for the young adult including furniture (e.g. bed, wardrobe), linen / towels and bedding;
- reasonable personal care and hygiene consumables, toiletries and haircuts;
- reasonable clothing expenses;
- general travel, including carer provided travel or support to access public transport (e.g. bus and train fares);
- travel and other accommodation support for ongoing connection and/or re-connection with family;
- support to obtain a driver's license, including supervised driving hours with the carer's vehicle and purchasing driving lessons; and
- general day-to-day employment and secondary and tertiary education costs relating to travel and uniforms, if required.

After the young adult's basic needs are prioritised, other expenses to build a young adult's self, identity, confidence and support social connection may be considered. These may include costs such as ongoing fees relating to:

- hobbies and recreational activities;
- social club and gym memberships; and
- day trips.

Where a young adult is in receipt of a wage, Commonwealth or State Government benefit, they will not be expected to contribute to household costs.

The Care Allowance does not include access to Start-up or Establishment Allowances, Additional Care Allowance, or Dual payment for care allowances.

The Care Allowance is indexed annually on 1 January each year, based on the movements in the Brisbane Consumer Price Index.

### *Eligibility*

Carers will be eligible for this Care Allowance if:

- They have received the Care Allowance for a young adult when the young adult was 17 years and the young adult remains living in their home after their 18th birthday. This includes permanent carers and long-term guardians who were receiving the Care Allowance when the young adult was 17 years.
- A carer of a young adult who turned 19 years, from 1 July 2023, is eligible for the Care Allowance up to the young adult's 21st birthday.

The Care Allowance ceases on the **day** the young adult turns 21 years.

A carer of a young adult who turned 19 prior to 1 July 2023, is **not** eligible for the Care Allowance.

However the young adult will continue to be eligible to receive support via a support service case and referral to access support as appropriate through other post care support services including Next Step Plus, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services (YHARS) and the Transition and Post-Care Support program.

### *Interstate care allowance*

If a Queensland carer was living interstate and receiving the interstate care allowance at a higher rate at the time the young person turned 18, these arrangements will continue.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Payment of the Care Allowance will be in accordance with the appropriate financial delegations.

Carers do not need to apply for the continuation of the Care Allowance. The Care Allowance will continue to be paid if a carer is receiving the allowance for a young adult who is 18 years and turns 19 years after 1 July 2023.

Carers are not required to produce receipts or other evidence of expenditure of allowances to receive the Care Allowance. Carers are also not required to renew or maintain a valid carer certificate to receive the Care Allowance when only supporting a young adult aged 18 years and over.

Carers are not required to provide part of the allowance to a third party, for example, to a parent or another carer.

Carers are required to notify Child Safety if the young adult ceases to live at their home.

**Authority:**

*Child Protection Act 1999*

*Child Protection Regulation 2023*

*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

*Human Rights Act 2019*

**Delegations:**

The officers delegated to make decisions regarding the payment of the Care Allowance payments are outlined in the associated procedure.

**Records File No.:** Not Applicable

**Date of approval:** 21 June 2023

**Date of operation:** 1 July 2023

**Date to be reviewed:** 1 July 2024

**Office:** Investment and Commissioning

**Help Contact:** Tertiary Care and Support

**Links:**

**Procedures**

Care Allowance – Extended Post Care Support

**Related Policies**

Expenses - fortnightly caring allowance and interstate foster payments (365)

Child Related Costs (645)

Transition to adulthood (349)

Support for children in the care of long-term and permanent guardians (607)

**Related Legislation or Standard**

*Child Protection Act 1999*

*Child Protection Regulation 2023*

*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

*Human Rights Act 2019*

### **Related Government Guidelines or Policy**

Child Safety Practice Manual

Taxation Determination, *Income tax: are certain payments to a volunteer foster carer to provide foster care assessable income?* TD 2006/62 Commonwealth Government, Australian Taxation Office

Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services and the Foster and Kinship carers of Queensland

### **Forms, Standard Letters**

Carer overpayment Letter 1

Carer overpayment Letter 2

### **Rescinded policies**

365-15 Expenses – Fortnightly caring allowance and inter-state foster payments

379-6 Regional and remote loading for carers

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Director-General