

Child Safety POLICY

Title: Regional and remote loading for carers

Policy No: 379-6

Policy Statement:

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women will provide an additional reimbursement to carers in circumstances where their geographical location significantly impacts on the costs of providing out-of-home care.

This additional reimbursement is the Regional and remote loading and is calculated at 10% of the Fortnightly caring allowance received by the carer.

Eligibility for the loading is based the results of the *Index of retail prices in Queensland and regional centres, 2013* and the Aboriginal councils and Indigenous Communities identified as part of the *True costs of care project (2007)* which recognised the high costs within the former Deed of Grant in Trust Communities (DOGIT), later identified as Aboriginal Councils.

Carers are not required to produce receipts or other evidence of expenditure of allowances.

Where a young person is in receipt of a wage, or Commonwealth or State government benefit, they will not be expected to contribute to the cost of their care.

Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) boundaries changes will trigger a review of the *Regional and remote loading for carers* procedure so carers and CSSCs are not adversely affected.

Note: The Regional and remote loading is not subject to tax and is not to be cited as income for any purpose, including yearly tax returns, applications for Commonwealth benefits, or when applying for loans from financial institutions.

Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child or young person are paramount.
- Carers have the right to receive support that will ensure a safe and caring environment in which the needs of the child or young person are met.
- The Regional and remote loading is paid in conjunction with the Fortnightly caring allowance and as such, payments cannot commence until the carer is assessed and approved in accordance with the requirements of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 135 and related policies and procedures.
- Long-term guardians and permanent guardians of a child or young person under the *Child Protection Act 1999* who were previously approved foster or kinship carers for the child have the right to receive support that will contribute towards the ongoing stability of the guardianship care arrangement.

Objectives:

The objective of this policy is to inform Child Safety officers of the eligibility requirements for the Regional and remote loading and ensure that carers and guardians who are significantly impacted by their geographical location are reimbursed for the cost of providing out-of-home care.

Scope:

This policy and associated procedure guide the decisions and actions of Child Safety staff in relation to the provision of the Regional and remote loading to carers. The term *carer* includes:

- approved foster carers
- approved kinship carers
- provisionally approved carers
- long-term guardians of a child or young person under the *Child Protection Act 1999* who were previously approved foster or kinship carers for the child
- permanent guardians of a child or young person under the *Child Protection Act 1999* who were previously approved foster or kinship carers for the child.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Roles and responsibilities related to the use of Regional and remote loading for carers are outlined in the associated procedure.

Roles and responsibilities related to out-of-home care placements, and children and young people subject to long-term guardianship orders to suitable persons or permanent care orders are contained in the Child Safety Practice Manual.

Authority:

Child Protection Act 1999

Adoption Act 2009

Financial Accountability Act 2009

Delegations:

Refer to the instruments of delegation for decisions made under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Records File No.: NA

Date of approval: 28 August 2015

Date of operation: 14 November 2016

Date to be reviewed: 28 August 2018 (Minor update 18 October 2018)

Office: Department of Child Safety Youth and Women

Help Contact: Operational Support

Links:

Procedures

Regional and remote loading for carers (379-6)

Related Policies

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)

Complex Support Needs Allowance (612) Dual payment of carer allowances (289)

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

Expenses General (FSE001)

High support needs allowance (296)

Special Payments (including Ex-gratia) (FSE009)

Supporting children in the care of long-term guardians (607)

Related Legislation or Standard

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Regulation 2011

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

379-5 Regional/remote loading for carers

379-1 Expenses – Regional/Remote Loading for Carers

Michael Hogan

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