

Extended Post Care Support (EPCS)

Information for Carers

In June 2022, the Queensland Government announced a funding commitment for young adults leaving care to ensure they are better supported to transition from care.

Three EPCS initiatives came into effect on 1 July 2023:

1. **New services** being rolled out across Queensland to deliver culturally appropriate, proactive and practical support **to young adults leaving care** from their 18th birthday up to their 21st birthday.
2. **Extension of the care allowance** for young adults who continue living with their former carer or guardian (carer) from 19 years old up until their 21st birthday. The care allowance is provided to the young adult's carer to meet the everyday living costs of the young adult and is provided at the full base rate.
3. **Financial support of up to \$16,000** per year being available to young adults leaving care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults. The financial support is available from their 18th birthday up until their 21st birthday and will assist in meeting their everyday living costs.

Who is eligible for EPCS?

Type of support	Who is eligible
Support from the new Extended Post Care Support Services	All young people turning 18 from 1 July 2023 who were subject to either a (interim or finalised): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the chief executive • child protection order granting long-term guardianship to a suitable person • permanent care order. Young people who are subject to a supervision order or a directive order are not eligible for EPCS.
Provision of care allowance	Young adults whose foster or kinship carer, long-term guardian or permanent guardian was receiving the care allowance at the time they turned 18.
Financial support (\$16,000 per year)	Young people turning 18 from 1 July 2023 and leave care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults.

How about young adults who turned 18, 19 or 20 before 1 July 2023?

Young adults who turned 18, 19 or 20 before 1 July 2023 **will not be eligible** to access the new EPCS services or the financial support of up to \$16,000 per year. These young adults are still eligible to access support through Next Step Plus, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services, Transition and Post-Care Support program, and a Support Service case through Child Safety.



What will the new EPCS services provide?

Support to young adults

Culturally appropriate, proactive and practical support will be provided to eligible young adults and will include ongoing active assistance with:

- accessing and maintaining safe, secure and affordable housing as a priority
- connecting or maintaining connections to family, culture, Country and community
- accessing education and training opportunities and finding employment
- learning budgeting and other independent living skills
- accessing stable income or financial support that meets their cost of living
- improving health and wellbeing
- facilitating referrals and advocating for young adults to access other resources and services, including specialist services for young adults with complex support needs
- linking young adults to opportunities that promote independence.

EPCS service providers will work directly with young adults and provide practical support – for example, taking young adults to appointments and connecting them to formal or informal support networks (mentors or other safe members of the community) – to help them in their journey to living as independent adults.

Support to the carer household

Support to the 'carer household' will be provided for the young adults to continue to live with their carers, recognising it as an enabling factor for their transition from care and into adulthood.

The service response will focus on assisting carers to support young adults through their transition to adulthood. This may include the provision of information and referrals that support the former carers' wellbeing and/or other practical assistance to support the young adult's changing needs. Support can also include helping the young adult and carer develop mutually agreed financial plans in relation to the provision of the care allowance to the household.

Administration of the financial support to young adults

Up to \$16,000 per annum is available to young adults from their 18th to 21st birthdays if they leave care to live in their own independent housing arrangements. The provision of financial support is a key component of the EPCS service model and will be provided to young adults as part of the broader support available through the new EPCS service providers.

The financial support will meet young adults' basic needs, such as living in safe, stable and secure housing, enrolling in education and training, finding employment and accessing culturally appropriate services to support their health and wellbeing.

Extension of the Care Allowance

Purpose

- 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.



Do I need to apply for the extended Care Allowance?

No. If it is agreed between you and the young person that they will remain living in the household after they turn 18, then you need to advise Child Safety. These discussions should occur as part of the transition to adulthood planning with the young person's Child Safety Officer. It is important that you are involved in some of these planning processes if the young person is continuing to live with you once they exit care.

Once you inform the Child Safety Officer, or the Child Safety Service Centre the young person is assigned to, the care allowance will be extended until the young person turns 21 or to the agreed time that the young person is going to live in the household.

Do I need to renew or maintain a valid carer certificate to receive the Allowance?

No. You are 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.

What should the extended Care Allowance be used for?

The care allowance must be used to meet the young adult's basic needs first and foremost. This will include, but is not limited to:

- board and rent and support to 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
- 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
- general day-to-day employment and secondary and tertiary education costs relating to travel and uniforms, if required.

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 while the carer is receiving the care allowance.

Do I need to provide any evidence of expenditure?

No. You are not required to produce receipts or other evidence of expenditure of allowances to receive the extended Care Allowance.

Does the extended Care Allowance include any other allowances?

No. The extended care allowance is provided at the base rate as per the [Queensland Government Website](#). It does not include access to regional and remote loading, 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.

Do I need to tell Child Safety if the young adult moves out?

Yes. You are required to notify Child Safety if the young adult ceases to live at your home permanently. There may be times where the young adult goes away for a couple of weeks – you do not need to advise Child Safety about this if it is expected that they will be coming back home.

However, when they cease to live with you permanently it is your responsibility to inform the Child Safety Service Centre that the young adult was previously assigned to. If there is an EPCS service supporting the young adult, they will also inform child safety of the change in circumstance so that funding can be redirected to support the young adult to live independently.

If you do not inform Child Safety of the date the young adult moves out it may result in an overpayment of the care allowance. If an overpayment occurs, you will be advised as soon as possible to determine a suitable repayment strategy.

Can I still access support from the foster and kinship care services?

No. These services are funded to support you in your role as a carer for children and young people under a Child Protection Order. Once the young person turns 18, they are no longer in care.

Support to the carer household will be provided for the young adults to continue to live with their carers recognising it as an enabling factor for their transition from care and into adulthood.

How many new EPCS services are there?

The department has funded 18 new EPCS services across Queensland.

Region	Location	Supplier	Contact details
Brisbane and Moreton Bay	Moreton Bay	Jabani Jinna Indigenous Corporation	Phone: 3063 1368 Email: admin@jabanijinna.org.au
Brisbane and Moreton Bay	Brisbane	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service	Phone: 3240 8900 Email: brighterfutures@atsichsbrisbane.org.au
South East	Logan and Bayside	YFS Ltd	Phone: 3826 1500 Email: nextsteplus@yfs.org.au
South East	Gold Coast	YFS Ltd delivered through Gold Coast Youth Service	Phone: (07) 5572 0400 Email: intake@gcys.org.au
South East	Logan, Bayside and Gold Coast	Jinndi Mibunn - BHDC Ltd	Phone: (07) 3807 0901 Email: admin@bhdc.org.au
South West	Ipswich, Toowoomba and Southern Downs	Life Without Barriers	Phone: 1800 935 483 Ipswich - 3432 7800 Toowoomba - 4616 3100 Email: nextstepreferrals@lwb.org.au

South West	Roma and Far West	Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement	Phone: (07) 4637 9953 Email: Intake@goolburri.org.au
South West	South Burnett	South Burnett CTC Inc	Phone: (07) 4162 7788 Email: nextstep@sbctc.com.au
Sunshine Coast and Central	Caloundra and Maroochydore	REFOCUS	Phone: 1800 733 628 Email: EPCS@refocus.org.au
Sunshine Coast and Central	Gympie	Anglicare Southern Queensland	Phone: 5480 4700 or 0439 915 554 Email: NextStepPlus@anglicaresq.org.au
Sunshine Coast and Central	Bundaberg and Fraser Coast	Central Queensland Indigenous Development	Phone: Bundaberg - 4313 1194 Hervey Bay - 4313 1195 Email: nsp.referrals@cqid.com.au
Sunshine Coast and Central	Gladstone	Nhulundu Health Service	Phone: 4979 0992 Email: nextstepplus@nhulundu.com.au
Sunshine Coast and Central	Rockhampton and Emerald	Central Queensland Indigenous Development	<i>Rockhampton</i> Phone: 4920 0000 <i>Emerald</i> Phone: 4987 4792 Email: nsp.referrals@cqid.com.au
Sunshine Coast and Central	Rockhampton and Emerald	Anglicare Central Queensland	Phone: 1300 769 814 Email: enquiries@anglicarecq.org.au
North Queensland	Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday	Life Without Barriers	Phone: 4965 4800 or 1800 935 483 Email: nextstepreferrals@lwb.org.au
North Queensland	Townsville	Churches of Christ	Phone: (07) 4740 1333 Email transitiontoadulthoodreferrals@cofcqld.com.au
North Queensland	Mount Isa	Churches of Christ	Phone: (07) 4740 1333 Email transitiontoadulthoodreferrals@cofcqld.com.au
Far North Queensland	Cairns and surrounds, Cape and Torres Strait Islands	Youth Empowered Towards Independence	Phone: (07) 4051 4927 Email: referrals@yeti.net.au

Who can I ask if I have more questions?

Please send an email to YouthInvest@cyjma.qld.gov.au if any further questions arise.