



Family Based Care

Brokerage Guidelines

Terminology

These guidelines relate to brokerage funding provided to service types within the Family Based Care Investment Specification listed below: -

- Connecting Kin (T210)
- Equipping Kin (T211)
- Supporting Kin (T212)
- Foster Care Recruitment (T213)
- Supporting Foster Care (T214)

The Family Based Care Investment Specification references service users as:

- Children and young people aged under 18 years requiring kinship care and/or enhanced family connections (U2261)
- Prospective Kinship Carer Household (U6000)
- Approved Kinship Carer Household (U6001)
- Prospective Foster Carer Household (U6002)
- Approved Foster Carer Household (U6003)

For the purposes of this Brokerage Guideline document, the generic terms of:

- ❖ “carer” is used to refer to prospective and approved kinship or foster carers;
- ❖ “children and young people” identifies children and young people aged under 18 years subject to the custody or guardianship of Chief Executives under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.
- ❖ “service user/s” is used in relation to children and young people, carers, other household members or a combination of all.

Background

Brokerage funds are provided to organisations as a component of investment in Family Based Care (FBC) service delivery under the Family Based Care investment specification. The primary aim of brokerage is to improve access to or assist carer households to provide or maintain care arrangements for children or young people within their care.

Purpose of Funding

Brokerage can be defined as the purchase of assets, goods or service that will support the service to achieve outputs and intended outcomes. These may be further identified within the:

- Child or young person’s case plan
- Placement agreement
- FBC agency support plan

Brokerage can also be used to respond to emergent needs identified by the FBC service before they are able to be recorded by departments regular reviews of case plans and placement agreements.

Brokerage funds are allocated on the premise that their timely expenditure will target service user needs and address those needs that may otherwise de-stabilise an existing care arrangement or prevent a care arrangement from being provided in the first place.

Principles

The use of brokerage for FBC services is guided by the following principles:

- ❖ **Flexibility** - the use of brokerage funds is driven by choice and flexibility in services and may be applied at any point during the service user's engagement with the service
- ❖ **Focused** - brokerage support is responsive to and driven by the expressed need of the service user and is respectful of their rights, dignity and confidentiality; and
- ❖ **Case Management** - brokerage funds are used within a case management context to enable service users to access a range of goods, resources and services they may need to achieve the outcomes outlined in the child or young person's case plan, placement agreement, foster care agreement or FBC agency support plan. This is particularly important for carer households with multiple needs as it improves access to specialist support and services. Interventions purchased with brokerage funds are assessed and negotiated in collaboration with the service user. Responses are tailored to the specific needs of the service user. A level of assessment and planning should be put in place prior to, or concurrently with, the use of brokerage funds.

Value for money

Goods or services purchased with brokerage funds are to be as cost effective as possible. When deciding to commit brokerage funds, consideration is given to whether the intended expenditure is the best use of resources to meet the identified goals within the child or young person's case plan, placement agreement, foster care agreement or FBC agency support plan.

Prior to using brokerage funds to purchase support services or resources, available local, state, or federal secondary or universal services should be explored.

Brokerage funds should purchase timely supports, services and resources on a short term or episodic basis in response to an immediate need.

If the purchase of smoke alarms is being considered please refer to the department's site [Smoke alarm installation project](#). Brokerage may be used to install smoke alarms if the carer is not approved but adherence to the details in the Smoke alarm installation project, such as using a certified electrician, must be followed.

Longer term financial supports to a child or young person or carer may be provided by application of additional care allowances (High Support Needs or Complex Support Needs Allowances), an Individualised Placement and Support Package or supports through other schemes managed outside the department, for example the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The decision about the application of other supports is to be discussed at a carer's placement agreement meeting and outcomes recorded in any updated placement agreement.

Scope of Brokerage Funding Use

Brokerage funds are used to purchase goods, services or activities only when existing services, supports or resources cannot meet the identified needs of the service user or are not readily accessible.

When supporting approved carer households

When emergent needs are identified, either because service users are new and a full assessment of their needs is not yet completed or documented, such as in a carer's placement agreement, brokerage funds should be used to immediately meet the identified need.

When the need is ongoing, FBC services will support the identification of these needs through regular communication at planned placement agreement meetings and as required between planned meetings. Services will contribute information on how any support can or has been met through available brokerage funding.

Communication and participation at placement agreement meetings by FBC services will support approved foster carers or kinship carers to understand processes for considering and applying for:

- Reimbursement through [Child Related Costs \(CRC\)](#)
- Additional Carer Allowances such as:
 - Establishment Allowance
 - Start-up Allowance
 - High Support Needs Allowance (HSNA)
 - Complex Support Needs Allowance (CSNA)
- Additional Individualised Placement and Support (IPS) packages

The immediate application of brokerage funds to meet an emergent need between routine placement agreement meetings can serve as evidence for consideration of other financial supports required by the carer.

Brokerage can be used by FBC agencies to assist service users to:

- purchase assets goods or services for the service user.
- access specialist support, where it is not possible to arrange timely access to an existing free service
- meet a service user's immediate needs where no other options are directly available.

As a general rule, any items or assets purchased with brokerage funds for the direct use by a child/young person should remain the property of the child/young person and be 'portable'. The term 'portable' means that if the child/young person should change care arrangement or be reunified with their parent/s, then the item/asset will go with the child/young person. Such goods purchased for children or young people should also be documented within the Placement Agreement.

Examples of short-term support options funded through brokerage within a case management context:

- provision of financial assistance to obtain identification documents, e.g. Birth Certificate
- purchase of goods and services to ensure a residence is safe and meets relevant standards of care requirements (*If the property is owned by Qld Government the service must seek the permission of the Qld Government before commencing any repairs or upgrades to the premises*).
- provision of services to assist with in-home support, e.g. house cleaning and yard maintenance
- access to transportation assistance (including purchase of Australian/New Zealand standard [AS/NZS1754] approved car capsules and seats)
- purchase of material aid such as white goods or additional food (for establishment of a new care arrangement)
- purchase specialist services that are not offered by the agency or are unavailable from other free service providers due to lack of immediate vacancy or long waitlists. Specialist services may include but are not limited to:

- healing services
- counselling/ therapeutic services
- specific carer development opportunities
- respectful family relationship support
- mental health and wellbeing support

Market Testing – Supplement Care Support

During 2024-25 and 2025-26, licensed care services (supporting kin (T212) and supporting foster care (214)) were supported to consider the use of brokerage to supply supplemented care.

When brokerage is included in contracts, supplemented care may be provided at the request and support of the approved carer.

Supplemented care may involve, but is not limited to, transporting, or picking up a child, taking the child to appointments or being in the carers home when the carer cannot. This type of support may have previously been described as ‘youth worker’ support. Services can use brokerage funds for this purpose, including payment of wages for staff or contractors. Staff performing this role are undertaking a risk assessed role for the service and must have a Blue Card and an LCS2 or LCS7 clearance.

Service delivery models providing supplement care support to family based carers will ensure an appropriate and consistent match between worker, carer and child or young persons. Information about supplement care provided by a service will be shared with the department for inclusion in the carer’s placement agreement.


Agencies will record the use of supplement care support in the IS70 Brokerage reports and in the most appropriate care service domain measure relevant to why the supplement care was provide (IS151A-E). For example, brokerage used to provide a worker to help transport a child to medical appointments should be recorded under IS151D “Value of brokerage expenditure to assist children and young people to be healthy”. When used to provide a worker to help with family contact, record the use under IS151B “Value of brokerage expenditure to assist children and young people to be connected”. Estimated prorate distribution of costs for a worker’s engagement is encouraged.

Total value of brokerage used for supplemented care is recorded in notes against IS116.

Data will help inform if supplement care is included as part of base or brokerage elements of service delivery in future years.

When supporting prospective carer households (Foster Care Recruitment and Equipping Kin services) or family finding (Connecting Kin Service)

Brokerage funds are used to purchase goods, services or activities in support of the outcome statements included for each service type in the Family Based Care investment specification. Funds will be provided flexibly to support outcomes in the most efficient way possible.



For example, a Foster Care Recruitment service may use brokerage to undertake targeted foster care recruitment activities in response to emergent demand. A Connecting Kin and Equipping Kin service may use brokerage to support travel costs so children and young people can connect with family.

Meeting immediate need

It is expected that FBC services will utilise brokerage funds to directly pay for goods and services on behalf of service users.

To maximise use of brokerage funds, they should not duplicate the provision of financial or universal assistance when it is available. For example, fair play sports vouchers.

However, brokerage funds should be prioritised for use when the need is current and other available financial support is yet to be released or made available. For example, brokerage funds should be used to meet the needs of a new bed or furniture to make a child feel at home, rather than suggest a carer wait to receive establishment care allowance payments that may not be received until a fortnight after the care arrangement commences.

Purchasing assets

Brokerage funds can be used to purchase assets and goods that belong to service users and carers. This can include, but not limited to vehicles, vehicle modifications, home modifications, white goods and home outfitting. Contracts for services that include brokerage funding require special conditions to resolve any potential conflict between these guidelines and standard terms and conditions. The following clause is to be used in contract creation and may form the basis of contract advice should contracts require updating:

Services will use the Family Based Care Brokerage Guidelines to direct brokerage purchases made for clients, carers and children and young people. When a service uses brokerage to purchase an asset that the service retains ownership of, the standard terms and conditions apply to that asset.

When brokerage funds are not to be used:

- to reimburse a worker already employed within the FBC service (with the exception of supplement care support, see above)
- for direct cash payments or any other form of reimbursement to service users
- where the good or service has already been included in the assessment of an additional care allowance (HSNA/ CSNA).

Accountability

Brokerage funding for service users is calculated by the department according to service type and services can expend funds with flexibility based on carer or children and young people's needs.

The annual brokerage amount for a service outlet is delineated by table rows within section 5 FUNDING DETAILS of the Funding Schedule. Unspent funds will apply annually to the brokerage component (not quarterly).

The department will not seek to recover amounts under the annual brokerage allocation, ensuring the service has a sufficient pool with which to respond to the needs of service users.

Any unspent brokerage funding may be recovered by the department for application to priorities consistent with existing investment or strategic goals.

The service is responsible for:

- quarantining brokerage funds from administration and organisational expenses
- covering the outlay of managing brokerage funds within the general administrative costs of the service
- developing policy and procedure for managing demand for brokerage funding, including eligibility requirements and assessment processes
- reporting brokerage expenditure and outcomes via the identified performance measures within section 7.1 *Performance measures* of the Funding Schedule and in alignment with the [Queensland Care Services Outcomes Framework](#). Noting that reporting measures for brokerage spending will vary across the different service types and domains of the Queensland Care Services Framework as reflected below:

Service Type	Measure/s
Connecting Kin	Value of brokerage expenditure to assist Service Users within the Connected domain
Equipping Kin	Value of brokerage expenditure to assist Service Users within the Safe and Nurtured domain
Supporting Kin	Value of brokerage expenditure to assist children and young people across all five domains (Safe and Nurtured, Connected, Achieving, Healthy and Resilient)
Foster Care Recruitment	Value of brokerage expenditure to assist Service Users within the Safe and Nurtured domain
Supporting Foster Care	Value of brokerage expenditure to assist children and young people across all five domains (Safe and Nurtured, Connected, Achieving, Healthy and Resilient)

- confirming that funds have been expended for their intended purpose and developing processes to identify, manage and account separately for expenditure via the financial reporting format specified within section 7.2. *Data, statement and reports You are to submit*, of the Funding Schedule and
- ensuring that brokerage funds provided by the department are used in accordance with these guidelines.