

Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety

Professional Foster Care Pilot

Information for people interested in becoming Professional Foster Carers

Every child and young person should grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing home with people who care for and support them.

Some children and young people who are placed into care have disabilities and complex-to-extreme needs that require specialised care, which often means they will live in Residential Care settings with other children and young people and support workers.

The Professional Foster Care Pilot is a new initiative to enable these children and young people to receive the specialised care and support they need in Family-Based Care arrangements, instead of Residential Care.

We are seeking Professional Foster Carers who can provide around-the-clock care and support for these children and young people with high specialised needs.

Where is the Pilot being run?

The Professional Foster Care Pilot has been established in 2 Queensland locations — South East Queensland (covering Brisbane, Moreton Bay and South East Queensland) and Townsville.

The Pilot will run until 31 January 2028 to enable the Queensland Government to evaluate the effectiveness of Professional Foster Care as an innovative new model of care for Queensland children and young people.

What is a Professional Foster Carer?

A Professional Foster Carer is an individual or a couple who provide full-time specialised care for children and young people with disabilities or complex-to-extreme needs.

They are carefully selected for their professional background or experience in supporting children with:

- unique challenges, such as neurodiversity [Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)], intellectual, sensory and psychosocial disabilities; and
- complex needs including trauma-related behaviours, self-harm, difficulties regulating emotions or physical disabilities.

Being a Professional Foster Carer is a full-time voluntary role, and the intent of the Pilot is that the primary Carer does not have employment outside of their caring responsibilities. Professional Foster Carers are financially and practically supported to ensure they can focus on providing high-quality, stable care.

How is Professional Foster Care different to General Foster Care?

A Professional Foster Carer is different from a General Foster Carer as they need to care for children with more complex needs. Professional Foster Carers:

- require specialised skills or experience;
- complete additional training and assessment;
- receive ongoing supervision and support; and
- receive enhanced funding.

How are Professional Foster Carers supported?

Professional Foster Carers receive the following support to enable them to provide high-quality, stable care:

- Up to \$100,000 (excluding GST) in financial support per household per year (pro-rated based on nights of care) to meet the special needs of the child.
- Brokerage funding of approximately \$16,700 (excluding GST) per household for services, supports, and activities that improves the child's outcomes, such as:
 - appropriate medical, therapeutic, and behavioural supports;
 - access to education and extracurricular activities; and
 - tailored home environments to meet individual needs.
- Support from Specialist Professional Foster Care service providers who will:
 - provide specialised training and 24/7 support including supervision and reflective practice; and
 - assist with care planning.
- Support from the department to navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

What is the role of the Specialist Professional Foster Care service providers?

Specialist Professional Foster Care service providers are responsible for recruiting and assessing Carers with the right skills, experience, and cultural capability.

Working in partnership with Child Safety, the Specialist service providers will:

- match children and Carers and support placement stability;
- apply cultural considerations relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and help implement Cultural Support Plans;
- coordinate therapeutic and multi-disciplinary supports; and
- manage and distribute Carer financial allowances.

The Specialist Professional Foster Care service providers are:

Southeast Queensland:

1. *UnitingCare Queensland*

Email: Fostercare.Recruitment@uccommunity.org.au

Website: www.unitingcareqld.com.au/services-and-support/foster-and-kinship-care

2. *Key Assets Australia*

Phone: 1800 932 273

Website: www.keyassets.org.au/become-a-professional-foster-carer-in-queensland

Townsville:

1. *Life Without Barriers in partnership with the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service (TAIHS)*

Email: carer@lwb.org.au

Phone: 1300 592 227

Website: www.lwb.org.au/foster-care

More information

If you're interested in becoming a Professional Foster Carer and are located in the 2 Pilot locations, you can contact the Specialist service providers for more information.

For other queries about the Pilot, please email professionalfostercarepilot@families.qld.gov.au

To find out more about the role of a Professional Foster Carer, go to www.qld.gov.au/professionalfostercare