



FACT SHEET – for Carers

Transition of Family Based Care

What changes are being introduced and how will they impact Carers?

We are excited to announce a series of enhancements to the family-based care system in Queensland, designed with the well-being and support of children and carers at the forefront of the changes.

We are introducing new services that aim to increase the number of foster carers, kin more kinship carers, support carers during assessment process and increase support to foster and kinship carers households. working on new ways to support carers in different ways.

The introduction of the new Family Based Care Services Investment Specification supports the establishment of individual programs for foster care and kinship care and will include a base-and-brokerage funding model. This will mean that carers will benefit by being able to receive flexible financial and practical supports to reflect the needs of their individual carer households.

Why are these changes necessary?

Carers and their support services have told us that we need to improve access to support for carers. We also know that we need to do more to recruit foster carers and find kinship carers and that support through these processes also needs to be enhanced.

A three-year research project between the Queensland Government and the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) identified the need for a program that allowed increased and individualised supports to carer households (including new carers and those undergoing assessment) through a base and brokerage model of funding. With these things in mind, six new service types have been designed to support all family-based care arrangements, including new carers.

What are the service types?

The six new service types are:

1. Connecting Kin (finding kin for children in care) (T210)
2. Equipping Kin (assessing and support prospective carers through kinship care assessment processes(T211)
3. Supporting Kin (supporting kinship carers once they are approved) (T212).
4. Foster Care Recruitment (active efforts to find new foster carers and complete their assessments and training) (T213)
5. Supporting Foster Care (supporting foster carers once they are approved (T214)
6. Specialist Family Based Care (service to be designed) (T215).

The sixth service type is included to help explore professional models of family-based care (not subject to this process and will commence as part of the Queensland Government's \$27 million commitment to pilot professional foster care).

How will this become a better care system for children and Carers?

The benefits of transitioning current Family Based Care services over to new service models is that it will better:

- support the activities of finding and assessing foster and kinship carers
- respond to the changing needs of carer households; and
- support the costs of delivering care.

What are the reasons for the new service types within the new investment specification?

For **carers and the sector**, the main reasons for creating the new service types are to:

- improve carer recruitment by targeting and coordinating investment
- support carer retention rates by providing improved access to support options through the inclusion of a brokerage amount
- create greater flexibility in how services are delivered, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations and Indigenous Businesses that may wish to provide some, but not all, functions to meet the needs of their communities (for example, by providing services that link and support kin only); and
- address issues with existing service models that are contributing to the increasing number of children and young people in residential care.

What is the process of transitioning to the new service types?

From 1 July 2025 and over the next three financial years, regions will work to fully transition all family-based care services to the new service models by 30 June 2028. The three phases will support a staged approach and allow for sector readiness, and learnings to revise and enhance transition planning.

- **Phase 1 (Market Sounding EOI):** Market sounding work, aimed at gathering market interest and coverage prior to finalising transition plans will occur early in 2025 with a statewide EOI process. Market interest across the 5 service types will be mapped, identifying where there are healthy markets and where additional work may be required for limited markets.
- **Phase 2 (Program Level):** Realignment of new and existing service providers to deliver the new Family Based Care service types, focusing on increasing carer numbers. This phase will focus on implementing region-wide Foster Care Recruitment service/s (T213) and establishing kinship services as a different function under a new kinship care program (T210, T211 and T212) with initial focus on increasing investment and coverage to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations and Indigenous Businesses.
- **Phase 3 (System Level):** Transition across multiple providers in a region or district to establish separate foster and kinship programs including Supporting Kin services (T212) to match supply mix targets and new Supporting Foster Care services (T214).

The current and new service models will operate concurrently with regions working to fully transition all family-based care services to the new service types by 30 June 2028. This will be followed by a further 2 years of evaluation.

How will these changes affect foster and kinship carers?

Nothing will change in the day-to-day role of a Carer but they can expect to have greater access to the supports they need.

What do Carers need to do prior to these changes, or as a result of these changes?

The department will keep Carers informed through the release of regular updates on the department's website, within the QFKC newsletter and their website, and via the Carer Connect App notice board.

How will Carers know when the changes have started?

Foster and kinship carers will notice a change in the level of support and help they receive from their care agencies.

What are the principles supporting the transition?

The principles guiding the transition to the new service models are:

- **Children and young people are at the centre of decision making:** all actions will ensure a better care system for children and young people.
- **Support to carers:** no carer will be worse off in the support they can access. More supports will be available to more carers. Services will keep foster and kinship carers engaged to ensure stable and appropriate care options for children through services tailored to the needs of carer households.
- **Service continuity:** minimal disruption to services for current carers and children during transition.
- **Pace and timeliness:** the transition must consider markets, demand, growth and culture.
- **Increased visibility and accountability:** the transition supports a new family-based care system where deliverables are achieved.
- **Effective communication:** enhance collaboration with current and potential providers and service users through clear communication, promoting co-design and market readiness.

Other important reforms improving outcomes for children and carers

In addition to the Family Based Care Services Investment Specification, the Queensland Government is also:

- investing an additional \$190.8 million over 4 years to ensure that care allowance payments reflect the needs of family based care arrangements
- providing a \$1500 contribution to children in all care arrangements for extracurricular activities; and
- investing \$27million to pilot new professional foster care models.

Where can I go for more information or if I have any questions?

- Support agency
- Peak Bodies – QFKC, PeakCare, QATSICPP and CREATE
- QFKC newsletter and website
- Carer Connect App