

# **Tertiary Family Support Brokerage Funds - Guidelines**

October 2020

## **Guidelines**

### **1. Purpose**

Brokerage funds held by service providers may only be used to purchase specialist services or goods that contribute to the overall needs and wellbeing of the child and family, consistent with the outcomes and intentions of the family's support program and the department's case plan goals.

In facilitating access to specialist services, brokerage funds may be used where existing fee-free funded services are unavailable, an immediate vacancy does not exist within the service or the service has a long wait list.

Brokerage funds may be used to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors for children, enhance a family's functioning and/or help maintain family relationships in keeping with case plan goals.

Brokerage funds should be used when it has been identified that the use of these funds is a critical component in the family achieving the outcomes outlined in the case plan.

### **2. Principles**

The use of brokerage funds by Tertiary Family Support services is guided by five principles:

#### **2.1 Flexibility**

The use of brokerage funds is driven by choice and flexibility in services and may be applied at any point during the client's engagement with the service.

#### **2.2 Client focus**

The use of Brokerage funds is responsive to and driven by the expressed needs of the client and is respectful of the rights, dignity and confidentiality of the family.

#### **2.3 Case Management**

Brokerage funds are used within a case management context to enable families to access a range of goods, resources and services they may need to achieve the outcomes outlined in the case plan. This is particularly important for families 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 family

Responses are tailored to the specific needs of the child/family. A level of assessment and planning should be put in place prior to, or concurrently with, the use of brokerage funds

The use of brokerage funds is not the first or only service provided to the child/family.

#### **2.4 Avoid duplication of Service Provision**

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

Where a child or young person is subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement or Supervision Order and additional support is required for the child or young person to remain safely at home, the relevant services, supports and/or resources for the child and family may also be provided through the use of Child Related Costs (CRC)

(<https://csywintranet.root.internal/policies-procedures/service-delivery/child-safety/child-related-costs>). This option should be pursued before considering the use of brokerage funds.

## 2.5 Value for Money

Interventions 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 child/family's case plan goals.

There is no cap on the amount of brokerage funds any one family may receive. Services are expected to prioritise families and their needs in an equitable and sustainable manner.

## 3. Types of Expenditure

Prior to using brokerage funds to purchase support services or resources, alternative options should be explored that may be less expensive or free.

Brokerage funds should purchase supports, services and resources on a short term or episodic basis. The spending of brokerage funds must be clearly linked to a family's case plan.

Brokerage funds may be pooled to provide services for several families, where the same need is identified e.g. purchasing specific training such as Circle of Security or Parenting under Pressure. Alternatively, brokerage funds could be used to fund the training of a staff member, to then provide in-house training for families on a regular basis and avoid the need for an external provider.

### Examples of support options funded through brokerage:

- **Purchase of goods or services** to ensure the home is safe. If the property is owned by Department of Housing and Public Works (DPHW) the service must seek the permission of the Department of Housing and Public Works before commencing any upgrades to the premises.
- **Purchase of whitegoods** such as a washing machine or refrigerator.
- **Purchase of household items** such as bedding/linen.
- **Timely access to** initial dental, audio, speech and health assessments.
- **School/educational expenses and supplies** such as the student resource scheme for state schools, uniforms, books and excursions.
- **Accommodation:** one off payment to help secure accommodation due to financial crisis or domestic and family violence.
- **Child Care:** where the parent(s) is attending counselling or a parenting course for a finite period i.e. 6 weeks; brokerage funds may be used to meet the cost of ordinary childcare.
- **House cleaning:** one off payment to clean the house and remove excess rubbish.

#### **4. Limits on Expenditure**

- The amount of funds allocated to brokerage from the service budget must not exceed **5%** of the total funding. The service will also be responsible for ensuring that funds have been expended for their intended purpose and develop processes to identify, manage and account separately for expenditure.
- Brokerage funds are not to be used to reimburse a worker already employed within the service.
- Brokerage funds should be paid directly by the service on behalf of the family for goods and services. Direct cash payments or any other form of reimbursement to families is not permitted.
- Brokerage funds are only to be provided in the context of clients' identified needs and case plan goals. Case plans must demonstrate the use of brokerage funds as part of a range of strategies to support the client to address identified needs and achieve goals which lead to case closure.
- The use of brokerage funds is not to be used as a form of Emergency Relief.