



Assessment, Linking, and Referral

Purpose of this document

The Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS) provides low intensity basic care and supports to assist eligible people to increase their connection to their local community and live independently. The goal of QCSS is to empower Service Users to engage with their local community, increase their capacity to live independently and, as appropriate, facilitate access to the broader service system for further support.

This document is designed to provide further guidance regarding the circumstances under which QCSS may or may not be appropriate for children, how information, linking, networking, and support planning are utilised to support service users, and how and why service users may be supported to exit from QCSS. This document is to be read in conjunction with the QCSS Practice Manual.

Children in QCSS

When determining the appropriateness of QCSS supports for children, consideration should be given to whether the day-to-day care needs of the child would ordinarily be met by the family or carer. This includes all personal care, domestic support, and general day to day care of the child.

When assessing the eligibility of a child for QCSS it should be determined whether the requested support is primarily designed to meet the needs of the child or whether the services constitute carer support. QCSS is not designed to provide direct support to carers. Carers should be referred to a carer specific service such as Carers Queensland or Carer Gateway.

If the carer requires support outside of their position as a carer, a separate eligibility assessment must be carried out for them. The service user would then be the parent/adult and not the child. If they require support in their position as a carer or parent, they should be referred to a carer or parenting specific service.

In cases where a child has reached an age where it is not common practice for a family member or carer to provide certain supports, such as shower assistance or personal care to a teenager or young adult, support can be offered in line with assessed need and application of access priority guidelines. As per program intent, support should build skills to self-manage and be about supporting the person to access their community.

Children who require specialist and developmental supports should be referred to the NDIS or other government departments such as Queensland Health, mental health services and the Department of Education or other providers of specialist services for families and children. Where any other child specific service is appropriate and available, children should be referred there for age-appropriate tailored support. QCSS is not designed specifically to support children but may do so in the absence of other appropriate services.

When a child is referred to a QCSS service, QCSS Access Point will consider whether that service is appropriate and able to provide services to children. Refer to 2.3.4 Support planning for special needs groups.

Information, Linking, and Networking

Where the needs of an individual are better met through alternate or more appropriate supports, it is vital to provide the person with timely information and links to access relevant external services. This may occur at any point in the service user's journey from enquiry to receiving QCSS supports.

The external services may be able to provide support with information, services and networks related to the person's individual circumstance and presenting needs. The person's capacity and complexity of situation will determine how information is provided or if the person requires linking assistance to engage with an external service.

Information

Throughout interaction with the QCSS Access Point (including initial contact and assessment process) information should be provided to a service user to assist them to access the broader social services system to meet their needs and goals. This may include:

- detail around the objectives and eligibility criteria of other services
- self-referral pathways for other services including phone numbers, email addresses and online portals
- websites that contain information about specific services or networks.

Linking

Gaining insight and understanding of the service user's needs, goals and objectives is key to determining avenues for linking and referrals. Linking a service user to an external service for supports through the broader social services system goes further than providing information. It provides the service user with more support to assist them in engaging with other services and may require some coordination with relevant services.

"Linking" an individual to an external service may include:

- developing and sharing knowledge of the broader social services system
- enquiring with external service outlets on behalf of a service user
- assisting a service user to access another service by facilitating a three-way phone call.

Understanding an individuals' needs and complexities will enable service providers, including QCSS Access Point, to determine the urgency of support needs to be met, thereby creating timely linking and referrals.

Networking

Service providers are expected to explore their local communities to gather and share information about support services and build relationships that will enable ease of access to services for people across the broader social services system.

Support Planning

The QCSS Assessment Form includes a Goals and Motivations Domain with a range of questions that allow Assessors to clarify and determine the priorities to be addressed through the service user Support Plan. Utilising conversational prompts, Assessors will identify the person's strengths, talents, capabilities, and resources that can be applied to work on particular goals and tasks in a service user's Support Plan.

Service providers are required to ensure that support needs and review periods are expressly communicated and agreed to by service users prior to service commencement.

The service outlet uses the Support Plan Recommendation Table from the Assessment Form to work with the service user to further define their goals and start planning their supports. Support Plan Recommendations by QCSS Access Point should:

- link logically to the service user's story and goals
- enable people to get the right support from the right place at the right time
- ensure QCSS resources do not duplicate other agencies' responsibilities such as health, mental health, housing, children and family services and disability/NDIS
- offer clarity on parties responsible for service provision (e.g. QCSS service provider or external support) and
- clearly state the commencement and review dates for services.

Information collected from the QCSS Access Point during the intake process may vary depending on the service user's responses and ability to offer relevant details.

The support plan should focus on the service user's strengths and abilities, and on building their capacity, rather than creating dependency on service supports.

Service User Exit Planning

Where a service user is dissatisfied with their service provider and chooses to change service outlet or move out of the geographic area of their current service provider, they are not guaranteed support, as service provision is based on service availability and suitability to the program.

The Change of Provider process is not intended for instances when a service user's review indicates a reduction of supports based on their needs/capacity or for service users that have ceased supports. QCSS service outlets are not to use Change of Provider as an exit strategy. People who have had their supports ceased should be exited from the program and not be referred to QCSS Access Point. Referral to access QCSS supports from another service outlet is not an alternative service option.

Where a service provider identifies that a service user may be out of scope of QCSS upon commencement of services, or where the service user becomes out of scope after service delivery has begun, the service provider should work with the service user to find appropriate alternative or supplementary supports. The service user should not be referred back to QCSS Access Point. The service provider may utilise Community Connection Support funded hours to link and refer the client to appropriate alternate services.

Where a review indicates that a service user's support can be reduced or ceased, it is expected that an exit strategy be put in place, and that supports would not be reduced or ceased without discussion and agreement with the service user, and their carer, where appropriate.