

# Child Safety PROCEDURE

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**Title:** Dual payment of carer allowances

**Procedure No.:** 289-9

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## Purpose

To inform staff of the eligibility criteria and process for administering dual payments of carer allowances.

This procedure gives effect to policy 289 Dual Payment of Carer Allowances.

## Definitions

Carer allowances refer to the fortnightly caring allowance, high support needs allowance and complex support needs allowance.

The primary placement is the placement in which the child normally resides, with the primary carer.

A respite placement is the placement in which the child temporarily resides, with the respite carer, pending their return to a primary placement.

A planned respite placement is made as part of a placement agreement.

An emergent respite placement occurs to support the primary placement in responding to a crisis or emergency, or in circumstances that temporarily impact on the carers (or eligible long term guardian's) ability to provide care, and where it is intended that the child will return to the primary placement at a later date.

A respite payment refers to a payment (for a respite period) to the respite carer only.

A dual payment refers to a payment (for a respite period) to both the respite and primary carers.

## Process

This procedure applies where Child Safety provides the same carer allowances concurrently to the respite and primary carers.

## 1. Determine eligibility for dual payment of carer allowances

All children, regardless of their assessed support level (moderate needs, high needs, complex or extreme needs) can be considered under this procedure.

An approved foster or kinship carer, or a provisionally approved carer, can be considered for the dual payment of carer allowances when they are the primary or respite carer of a child who is placed in respite care under section 82 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Eligibility for dual payments is not affected by any payments that the child or carer may receive, such as Commonwealth and State benefits, or a wage.

### Long-term guardians

The long-term guardian of a child is eligible for the dual payment of carer allowances where all of the following apply:

- the guardian was an approved foster or kinship carer, and caring for the child, when granted guardianship of the child
- the guardian is experiencing a crisis or an emergency which temporarily impacts on their ability to provide direct care (for example, due to sudden illness or hospitalisation or a death in the family)
- the guardian is currently in receipt of the fortnightly caring allowance
- the child is placed with an approved foster carer for respite
- the respite placement is required because there are no other options available within the long-term guardian's existing support network.

### Permanent guardians

Permanent guardians are not eligible for dual payment of carer allowances as Child Safety does not have the legislative authority to provide case work or case management (including respite placements) to children subject to permanent care orders.

## 2. Obtain approval for dual payment of carer allowances

The Child Safety Service Centre Manager may approve the dual payment of carer allowances for:

- planned respite placements for up to a total of 52 days per child per financial year, for children with moderate or high support needs.
- planned respite placements for up to a total of 78 days per child per financial year, for children with complex or extreme support needs. This must not exceed the equivalent of three days per fortnight.
- emergent respite placements for a total of 20 days per child per financial year.

The Regional Director may approve the dual payment of carer allowances for emergent respite placements more than 20 days.

The discussion about dual payment for planned respite will be recorded in the placement agreement after a meeting with the primary carer. The documentation should show that the needs of both the young person and the carer have been explored and that making a dual payment provides the best level of support to both the young person and the carer.

Dual payment of planned respite for children with complex and extreme needs will also be documented in the child’s case plan, and must not exceed 78 days per calendar.

	CSSC Manager	Regional Director
Dual planned respite for children with moderate or high support needs	1-52 days*	
Dual planned respite for children with complex or extreme support needs	1-78 days*	
Dual emergent respite	1-20 days*	21+ days*
*Days per financial year		

**3. Complete actions in ICMS and Carepay to facilitate the dual payment of carer allowances**

Child safety officers will keep an accurate record of all respite placements (emergent and planned) and dual payments of carer allowances on the child’s client file. Where dual payment is being made to a long-term guardian, this will include the original, signed *Respite Agreement Form*.

To commence the dual payment of carer allowances, enter the respite placement dates in ICMS. An end date must be recorded in ICMS for all respite placements. If the respite placement has no end date, a red validation error will display in Carepay which can only be corrected by entering an end date in ICMS.

Leave the primary placement in ICMS open during the respite period.

In Carepay, identify the dual payment type (planned or emergent) on the Payment management tab of the Carer profile or Child profile screen. This will trigger a payment to be approved by the Approving Officer.

If the period of respite spans multiple payment fortnights, enter a start and end date in ICMS for each fortnight. This can reduce the instance of overpayments should respite arrangements change suddenly.

Long-term guardians

Where dual payments are being provided to a long-term guardian and an approved foster carer (emergent respite placement):

- the child safety officer with case responsibility for the child: - confirms that the eligibility criteria for long-term guardians are satisfied:
  - documents the long-term guardian's eligibility in a case note in ICMS
  - seeks approval for the dual payment of carer allowances
  - completes and signs the Respite Agreement Form
- the long-term guardian must sign the Respite Agreement Form.

#### **4. Pay the 'Carer allowance – start-up/outfitting allowance', where applicable**

The 'Carer allowance – start-up/outfitting allowance' may be paid to respite carers for respite placements of a duration greater than five consecutive days, in accordance with *Policy 600 Child related costs – outfitting*. This allowance cannot be paid as a dual payment (that is, it is only paid to the respite carer in this instance).

To pay the Start-up/outfitting allowance, complete the Start-up allowance grid in the Payment management screen of the respite carer's profile or child profile.

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**Date to be reviewed:** 6 May 2019 (Minor update 18 October 2018)

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**Office:** Investment and Commissioning  
**Help Contact:** Tertiary Care and Support

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### Links

#### Policy:

Dual payment of carer allowances (289)

#### Related Procedures:

Case planning (263)  
Child related costs – carer support (597)  
Child related costs – client support and family contact (598)  
Child related costs – education support (599)  
Child related costs – long-term guardian support (608)  
Child related costs – medical (596)  
Child related costs – outfitting (600)  
Child related costs – placement funding (628)  
Child related costs – placement support funding (629)  
Child related costs – travel (595)  
Complex support needs allowance (612)  
Expenses – fortnightly caring allowance and inter-state foster payments (365)  
High support needs allowance (296)

#### Related Legislation or Standard:

*Child Protection Act 1999*

*Child Protection Regulation 2023*

*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

**Related Government Guidelines or Policy:**

Child Safety Practice Manual

Statement of Commitment between the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the foster and kinship carers of Queensland

Child related costs – long-term guardian support (608)

**Forms. Standard Letters or Memorandum:**

Approved carer payment form – Care Agreement

Respite Agreement Form (Note: for use with eligible long-term guardians only)

**Rescinded Procedure:**

289-8 – Dual payment of carer allowances

289-6 – Respite Placements and Dual Fortnightly Caring Allowance

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