

# Child Safety PROCEDURE

**Title:** High Support Needs Allowance

**Procedure No.:** 296-10

## Purpose

These procedures guide decision-making regarding payment of the High Support Needs Allowance (HSNA) based on the child’s individual needs to eligible carers, and the actions required for the commencement, continuation and discontinuation of payment to eligible carers.

This procedure gives effect to High Support Needs Allowance policy (296).

## Assessment Process

The HSNA may be provided to eligible carers as outlined in the High Support Needs Allowance policy (296).

The HSNA may be provided when a child or young person has been assessed as having at least one of the identified needs highlighted in the table below that contribute to direct and indirect costs of caring for that child or young person that is in excess of the fortnightly caring allowance.

Domains	A	B	C	D
1. <i>Behaviour</i>	High level of functioning	Occasional age-appropriate problems	Significant and/or frequent problems	Major problems severely impact functioning
2. <i>Emotional Stability</i>	Demonstrates coping skills or high resilience	Generally stable, occasional issues	Significant instability	Extreme emotional responses which limit functioning
3. <i>Alcohol and Drug Use</i>	Conscious decision to avoid use	No use, or minor experimentation with no significant impact	Substance use with some impact	Substance use with serious dysfunction
4. <i>Family of Origins Relationships</i>	Nurturing relationships with some or all family members	Adequate relationships with some or all family members	Limited relationships with most family members	Significant problems/conflict
5. <i>Social Relationships (non-family)</i>	Well-developed social skills	Expected level of social skills	Poor social skills	Disconnected
6. <i>Cultural History</i>	Identity is a source of strength	Some identity	Conflicted	Disconnected



Domains	A	B	C	D
7. <i>Physical Health</i>	Healthy	No health issues	Some health issues impact functioning	Major health issues severely impact functioning
8. <i>Child Development and Intellectual Ability</i>	Above average intelligence/development	Age-appropriate intellectual functioning/development	Limited intellectual functioning/developmental delay	Severely limited intellectual functioning/development
9. <i>Education/Vocation/ Employment</i>	Exceptional performance	Satisfactory performance	Some school/vocation/employment problems	Severe school/vocation/employment problems
10. <i>Additional Identified Child Strength/Need</i>	Exceptional strength	Good/adequate functioning	Some need	Significant need
11. <i>Life Skills (for YP15+)</i>	Advanced life skills	Age-appropriate life skills	Lacks some age-appropriate life skills	Significantly limited life skills
12. <i>Relationship with Carer Family</i>	Nurturing relationships with some or all carer family members	Adequate relationships with some or all carer family members	Limited relationships with most carer family members	Significant problems/conflict

In circumstances where an SDM: strengths and needs assessment cannot be completed, the *Practice Resource: Support levels and behavior characteristics* can be used to determine a child’s strength and needs based on the information available. This applies to children and young people subject to a long-term guardianship order to a suitable person or subject to a permanent care order.

HSNA may also be considered for a child or young person if there are regular and ongoing child related costs associated with meeting the child’s identified strengths and/or needs, which may total the amount received through the HSNA.

### Scope of the allowance

#### Disability supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme

HSNA cannot be provided to meet costs that are being met by the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The NDIS funds the reasonable and necessary disability support needs of eligible children with disability. [The Applied Principles and Tables of Support](#) outlines the principles to determine the responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems outlines the disability supports the NDIS should be expected to pay for eligible children in care.

#### What the HSNA is to cover

The HSNA is a fortnightly supplement to the fortnightly caring allowance, provided to assist with the ongoing direct care and placement costs of children with high support needs.

It is expected the HSNA will cover the following types of ongoing expenditure:

- additional/specialised food requirements
- baby-sitting and cleaning costs

- additional wear and tear on whitegoods (for example, washing machine)
- additional utilities costs
- additional clothing and household items (for example, washing detergent, bedding)
- additional safety equipment (for example, child locks and barriers)
- nappies for children with urinary or faecal incontinence (i.e. enuresis or encopresis)
- additional costs/fees associated with an identified strength, such as a sporting activity or other area of excellence, including additional camp fees
- additional costs associated with activities to support cultural identity
- subscription or membership fees for organisations and services related to the identified child strength or need (for example, membership of Autism Queensland).

Provision of the HSNA does not preclude the recipient from receiving reimbursement for specific child related costs. Decisions regarding the provision of child related costs will be based on the most effective means of supporting the child with the most efficient use of departmental resources, including consideration of how the HSNA may improve placement stability and thereby reduce the risk of placement disruption and escalated placement costs.

Where a child is in receipt of a wage, or Commonwealth or state benefit, he or she is not expected to contribute to the cost of their care.

## Apply for the HSNA

### Application for a children in care

When a child safety officer has undertaken an assessment of the child's strengths and needs and has identified that the child meets the criteria for HSNA the child safety officer can apply for the HSNA by completing the [Application for High Support Needs Allowance](#).

In addition, the carer can also request the HSNA by asking the child safety officer verbally or via email.

If a carer requests the HSNA the child safety officer will arrange a placement meeting to discuss the request and make an assessment of the child's current support needs and the support options available for the child. The assessment includes a review of the child's strength and needs using the *SDM: child's strengths and needs assessment* in ICMS, if required. The assessment will be informed by advice provided by the carer and supporting evidence including specialist disability assessment report, medical reports and/or other professional reports, if available.

Following the meeting the child safety officer will submit the application for HSNA form for approval by the child safety service centre manager.

### Application for children subject to a long-term guardianship order to a suitable person

Long-term guardians can request provision of the HSNA verbally or via email.

If a long-term guardian requests the HSNA, the child safety officer, senior team leader or senior practitioner will arrange a meeting to discuss the guardian's request and to make an assessment of the child's current support needs and the support options available for the child. The outcomes of discussions with the long-term guardian will be recorded as a case note in the child's file.



Long-term guardians may provide evidence such as a specialist disability assessment report, school reports or assessments, medical reports and/or other professionals reports to support the application for high support needs allowance.

The child safety officer will complete the application for High Support Needs Allowance and submit for approval by the child safety service centre manager.

### **Application for children subject to a permanent care order**

Permanent guardians can request the HSNA by contacting a child safety officer, senior team leader or senior practitioner. The child safety officer, senior team leader or senior practitioner will arrange a meeting to discuss the guardian's request and to make an assessment of the child's current support needs.

The permanent guardian may provide evidence to support the application such as a specialised disability assessment report, school reports or assessments, medical reports and/or reports from other professionals.

The child safety officer will submit the application for High Support Needs Allowance for approval by the child safety service centre manager.

### **Assessment**

The provision of the HSNA can be determined by the outcome of the Child Strengths and Needs Assessment (as per the table highlighted above), supporting evidence, if available, and information provided by the carer/guardian.

Where supporting evidence has been provided such as specialist disability assessment report, school reports or assessments, medical reports and/or other professional reports, the supporting evidence must be considered to inform the assessment of the child strengths and needs.

The HSNA should also be considered in circumstances where the child related costs associated with meeting the child's identified strengths and/or needs regularly total the amount received through the HSNA. For example, where a carer is regularly submitting reimbursements for regular appointments, transport or lessons etc. consider meeting the costs through HSNA rather than CRC reimbursements.

### **Duration**

The duration for which provision of the HSNA is required for a child in care will be determined by the type of strengths and needs for which the allowance is provided, and their expected longevity. For example, where a child has suffered an accident and requires additional medical and physical care for a limited time period, the end date will reflect medical advice regarding the course of treatment and expected period of recovery.

Where the HSNA is provided for an identified strength (as shaded in the above table), the duration of the HSNA will be the period of time in which the child is participating in a sporting or academic program. For example, where an outstanding academic or sporting ability involving state representation requires additional financial assistance to enable the child to participate.

The HSNA may be approved for an indefinite period of time where a child has been assessed as having an ongoing disability, medical or psychological condition.



The outcome of the Child Strengths and Needs Assessment and other supporting information, will be provided with the application for Application for HSNA for approval by the child safety service centre manager. The form must outline the timeframe for the provision of the HSNA.

## Approval

Approval of the HSNA will be in accordance with the relevant financial delegations and standards.

Payment of the HSNA can only commence upon approval by the child safety service centre manager. Approval will be sought from the manager by completing the Application for High Support Needs Allowance form and attaching the approved Child Strengths and Needs Assessment.

Once the manager has approved the HSNA, the carer or guardian should be advised of the provision of the HSNA and the commencement date and end date, where applicable.

In exceptional circumstances, the HSNA may be back-paid as determined by the child safety service centre manager to a maximum of six months prior to approval. Back-payments of the HSNA exceeding six months must be approved by the regional director. Decisions to back-pay the HSNA should be made with consideration of:

- the period of time that the identified strength/need (for which the HSNA has been approved) has been evident
- other payments (such as child related costs) which have been provided to assist with the expenses associated with the identified strength/need over the same period of time
- the time at which the carer or long-term guardian requested consideration of payment of the HSNA.

Approval of the HSNA will be reviewed twelve monthly; unless its provision ceases prior to the scheduled review or if the child or young person is subject to a long- term guardianship order or permanent care order.

## Review

The HSNA will be reviewed every twelve months except for a child or young person subject to a long- term guardianship order or permanent care order.

Where the HSNA has been approved for a child or young person subject to a long- term guardianship order or permanent care order the allowance will continue until the end date in the approved application, including up to a young person's 18th birthday.

The review may include a child's strength and needs assessment being undertaken. Where an assessment of the child's strength and needs has determined that the HSNA is no longer required as the child's needs have changed, the payment should cease by amending the end date of the allowance in the high and complex support needs allowance grid in the Details screen of the Child profile in Carepay. The decision to end the allowance has to be communicated to the foster carer as soon as practical.

## Administer the HSNA

To commence payments of the HSNA:

- ensure placement dates are entered into ICMS
- complete the Application for High Support Needs Allowance form and attach the approved form to the placement event

- enter the start and end dates of payment into the high and complex Support Needs Allowance grid in the Details screen of the Child profile in Carepay
- submit the task for approval.

The commencement date for payment of the HSNA will be the date of approval, unless back-dated payments have been approved. The end date will be the end of the period for which provision of the HSNA has been approved. If the HSNA has been approved for an indefinite period of time for a child in care, the end date will be the expiry date of the child's current order (including where the child is subject to an order granting long-term guardianship to a suitable person or permanent care order).

To discontinue payment of the HSNA, in Carepay edit the end date of the current high and complex support needs allowance grid entry to reflect the date the HSNA is to cease.

The HSNA is paid fortnightly in arrears and cannot be paid in advance.

When a child transitions from one placement to another, the HSNA will be paid to the child's new carer until the scheduled end date or next scheduled review.

Carers are not required to provide receipts demonstrating the expenditure of the allowance.

Long-term and permanent guardians in receipt of the HSNA are required to advise the department if the child leaves their direct care.

### **Dual payments**

When dual payments are made for respite placements, in accordance with policy 289 Dual Payment of Carer Allowances, both the primary carer and respite carer will receive the HSNA, on a pro rata basis, for the period of time that the child is in the respite placement. The Carepay system will automatically apply the HSNA to both the primary carer and respite carer where dual payments are approved.

### **Complex Support Needs Allowance**

Where the complex support needs allowance has been approved for a child, in accordance with the Complex Support Needs policy (612), application and approval of the HSNA is not required. Where a carer or guardian is in receipt of the complex support needs allowance, the HSNA will automatically be paid.

---

**Records File No.:** ADM/05301  
**Date of approval:** 6 December 2023  
**Date of operation:** 6 December 2023  
**Date to be reviewed:** 6 December 2026

---

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

---

### Links

High Support Needs Allowance Policy (296-9)

### Related Procedures

Case planning (263)  
Case planning (263)  
Complex Support Needs Allowance (612)  
Child Related Costs – Carer support (645-5)  
Child Related Costs – Child and Young person Support (645-4)  
Child Related Costs – Education and Child Care Support (645-2)  
Child Related Costs – Health and Wellbeing (645-1)  
Child Related Costs – Travel (645-3)  
Dual payment of carer allowances (289)  
Expenses – Fortnightly caring allowance and interstate foster payments (365)  
Regional/Remote loading for carers (379)  
Supporting children in the care of long-term guardians (607)  
Special payments (including Ex-gratia) (FSE009)

### Related Legislation or Standard

*Adoption Act 2009*  
*Child Protection Act 1999*

*Child Protection Regulation 2023*

*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

*Human Rights Act 2019*

**Related Government Guidelines or Policy**

Child Safety Practice Manual

Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women and the foster and kinship carers of Queensland.

**Forms, Standard Letters or Memorandum**

Application for High support needs allowance

**Rescinded Procedures**

High Support Needs Allowance (296-9)

---

Deidre Mulkerin

Director-General