

Extended Post Care Support (EPCS)

Information for service providers

In June 2022, the Queensland Government announced a funding commitment for young adults leaving care to ensure they are better supported to transition from care.

Three EPCS initiatives came into effect on 1 July 2023:

1. New services being rolled out across Queensland to deliver culturally appropriate, proactive and practical support **to young adults leaving care** from their 18th birthday up to their 21st birthday.
2. Extension of the care allowance for young adults who continue living with their former carer or guardian (carer) from 19 years old up until their 21st birthday. The care allowance is paid to the young adult's carer to meet the everyday living costs of the young adult and is paid at the full base rate.
3. Financial support of up to \$16,000 per year being available to young adults leaving care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults. The financial support is available from their 18th birthday up until their 21st birthday and will assist in meeting their everyday living costs.

Who is eligible for EPCS?

Type of support	Who is eligible
Support from the new Extended Post Care Support Services	All young people turning 18 from 1 July 2023 who were subject to either a (interim or finalised): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the chief executive • child protection order granting long-term guardianship to a suitable person • permanent care order. Young people who are subject to a supervision order or a directive order are not eligible for EPCS.
Payment of the care allowance	Young adults whose foster or kinship carer, long-term guardian or permanent guardian was receiving the care allowance at the time they turned 18.
Financial support (\$16,000 per year)	Young people turning 18 from 1 July 2023 and leave care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults.

How about young adults who turned 18, 19 or 20 before 1 July 2023?

Young adults who turned 18, 19 or 20 before 1 July 2023 **will not be eligible** to access the new EPCS services or the financial support of up to \$16,000 per year. These young adults are still eligible to access support through Next Step Plus, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services, Transition and Post-Care Support program, and a Support Service case through Child Safety.



What will the new EPCS services provide?

The new EPCS services are funded to complement and not duplicate the supports already available in the service system. They will sit within the continuum of support available to young people and young adults from 15 up until their 25th birthday. Service delivery will be across following three domains:

Support to young adults

Culturally appropriate, proactive and practical support will be provided to eligible young adults and will include ongoing active assistance with:

- accessing and maintaining safe, secure and affordable housing as a priority
- connecting or maintaining connections to family, culture, Country and community
- accessing education and training opportunities and finding employment
- learning budgeting and other independent living skills
- accessing stable income or financial support that meets their cost of living
- improving health and wellbeing
- facilitating referrals and advocating for young adults to access other resources and services, including specialist services for young adults with complex support needs
- linking young adults to opportunities that promote independence.

EPCS service providers will work directly with young adults and provide practical support – for example, taking young adults to appointments and connecting them to formal or informal support networks (mentors or other safe members of the community) – to help them in their journey to living as independent adults.

Support to the carer household

Support to the 'carer household' will be provided for the young adults to continue to live with their carers recognising it as an enabling factor for their transition from care and into adulthood.

The service response will focus on assisting carers to support young adults through their transition to adulthood. This may include the provision of psycho-education, referrals that support the former carers' wellbeing and/or other practical assistance to support the young adults changing needs.

Administration of the financial support to young adults

Up to \$16,000 per annum is available to young adults **from their 18th to 21st birthdays** if they leave care to live in their own independent housing arrangements. The provision of financial support is a key component of the EPCS service model and will be provided to young adults as part of the broader support available through the new EPCS service providers.

The financial support will meet young adults' basic needs, such as living in safe, stable and secure housing, enrolling in education and training, finding employment and accessing culturally appropriate services to support their health and wellbeing.

The administration of the financial support will be tailored and led by young adults to empower them to make decisions on the financial supports they need and to strengthen their own financial decision making capacity.

How many new EPCS services are there?

The department has funded **16 new EPCS services from 1 July 2023**. By 1 January 2024, 19 new EPCS services will have rolled out across Queensland.

Region	Location	Supplier
Brisbane and Moreton Bay	Moreton Bay	Jabani Jinna Indigenous Corporation
South East	Logan and surrounds, Bayside and Gold Coast	YFS
		Beenleigh Housing Development Corporation - Jinndi Mibunn
South West	Ipswich, Toowoomba and Southern Downs	Life Without Barriers
	Roma and Far West	Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement
	South Burnett	South Burnett CTC
Sunshine Coast and Central	Caloundra and Maroochydore	REFOCUS
	Gympie	Anglicare Southern Queensland
	Bundaberg and Fraser Coast	Central Queensland Indigenous Development
	Gladstone	Gladstone Region Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Service
	Rockhampton and Emerald	Central Queensland Indigenous Development
Anglicare Central Queensland		
North Queensland	Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday	Life Without Barriers
	Townsville	Churches of Christ
	Mount Isa	Churches of Christ
Far North Queensland	Cairns and surrounds, Cape and Torres Strait Islands	Youth Empowered Towards Independence

How can I refer to an EPCS service provider?


Referrals to EPCS service providers can be made in the following ways:

- Child Safety Officers can refer directly to services as part of the transition from care planning.
- Young adults can self-refer at any point before or after they turn 18.
- Other services involved in supporting the young adult prior to or after they turn 18.

How are EPCS services different to other transition support services?

EPCS services will complement, not duplicate, the support services provided by Next Step Plus and Youth Housing and Reintegration Services. EPCS services will:

- provide more intensive, proactive support to young adults over three years, particularly with finding accommodation and developing or maintaining connection to family, culture, Country and community
- focus on young adults not engaged in formal supports when leaving care, through assertive outreach

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- administer \$16,000 per year for three years to young adults who are living independently
 - support carers, if required.

Questions that young adults may ask?

Can the \$16,000 be directly given to me?

No. Financial support cannot be provided directly to young adults as it would be considered income and may have tax implications. Access to other supports, such as Centrelink social security payments and benefits, may also be affected.

Can I access the \$16,000 financial support from EPCS if I remain living with my carer?

No. The financial support is only available to young adults who exit care to live in their own housing arrangements. Young adults who continue living with their carer are not eligible to receive the financial support and the cost of meeting their basic needs must be covered by the carer with the extended care allowance.

Can I access another EPCS service if I move?

Yes. If a young adult moves to another area, they can choose whether they want to remain with their existing EPCS service or have a facilitated referral made to an EPCS service in the area to which they moved. The financial support funding will sit with the service providing the active support.

What happens when I turn 21?

Prior to the young adult's 21st birthday, EPCS providers will work to ensure the young adult is linked with appropriate support services for any ongoing support needs. Referrals to Next Step Plus or other relevant services must be facilitated at least three months before they turn 21.

Who can I ask if I have more questions?

Please send an email to non-familybasedcareandtertiarysupportmailbox@cyjma.qld.gov.au if any further questions arise.