

Exception supports and placements

This Fact Sheet provides guidance about the use of exception placements and exception supports prior to the full adoption of the new Permanency Support Program funding model on 1 July 2018.

What is happening to exception supports and exception placements in the new Permanency Support Program?

On 1 October 2017, Family and Community Services (FACS) entered into new contracting arrangements with non-government out-of-home care (OOHC) Service Providers reflecting the new funding model to deliver services in line with the Permanency Support Program.

The Permanency Support Program involves a shift from a placement-based service system to one that is centred on safety, permanency and wellbeing for children, young people and their families and kin. This shift has been embedded into the new Permanency Support funding model.

From 1 July 2018, there will be no exception placements and no exception support payments available as they are not part of the new Permanency Support Program funding model.

As part of working towards the cessation of all exception supports and placements there are some significant changes to how, what and when applications for exception supports and exception placements can be made.

The changes for foster care placements are different to the changes for residential care placements.

The change in funding model will not mean a reduction in service or provisions for children and young people and their families. The support previously sourced from exception placements and exception support funding has been accounted for in the new Permanency Support Program. As part of the commencement of the new Permanency Support Program funding model on 1 July 2018, Complex Needs Packages will be introduced to ensure that children and young people can continue to receive the exceptional supports they require on a case-by-case basis due to their complex needs.

FACS will put in place further support and guidance in the coming months in consultation with the sector to ensure a smooth transition to the new Permanency Support Program funding model. In addition, existing exceptions arrangements will be reviewed in consultation with Service Providers to allow the smooth transition from these arrangements to the new funding model.

More information about the Permanency Support Program can be found on the [FACS website](#).

What are exception supports?

Exception supports are where additional extraordinary supports are needed to maintain or support a child or young person in a particular placement and where a non-government (NGO) Service Provider does not have capacity to provide the additional support required. This is based on the total value of their contract, not the individual unit costs for the particular placement.

Exception supports are:

- Time limited
- Require evidence of need (including relevant assessments) to support an application.

What changes are being made to exception supports?

There are changes to the types of exception supports that can be accessed by Service Providers from now until the full adoption of the new Permanency Support Program funding model on 1 July 2018 as follows.

1. Additional rostered staff (only available for residential care placements)
2. Behaviour support
3. Respite (only available for foster care placements)
4. Medical and dental
5. Educational fees
6. Disability care
7. Supervised contact (only available for residential care placements or for large sibling groups 4+ in foster care placements)
8. Supervised transport (only available in limited circumstances and dependent on the case plan goal).

All applications for exception supports must be made prior to 30 March 2018 to allow for a reconciliation period before the introduction of the full Permanency Support Program Funding Model.

What are exception placements?

An exception placement is a time limited placement for a child or young person placed with a funded NGO. It is based on the needs of the child or young person and only used where either:

- The non-government OOHC sector has no placements for a child or young person in a funded program and FACS does not have a placement

- A child or young person requires a placement outside an NGO's contracted service types
- A child or young person can be successfully managed in a less intensive placement but there is no vacancy at this level.

What changes are being made to exception placements?

Foster care

Exception placements are no longer available for foster care.

Existing exception placement arrangements in foster care are being reviewed in consultation with Service Providers to allow the transition from these arrangements to the new funding model.

FACS is managing a process to ensure existing exception placements are being converted into contracted placements. Further detail about this process can be obtained by contacting Statewide Program Contracting in the FACS Partnerships Directorate State-WideContracts@facs.nsw.gov.au

Residential Care

As of 1 July 2018, there will be no exception placements in residential care services.

Until 1 July 2018, all referrals for residential services must be made via the Central Access Unit (CAU) and only if the child or young person:

- Is over the age of 12 years* and
- Has a Child Assessment Tool (CAT) score of 5/6*.

*Children under the age of 12 years and those with a CAT score 1-4 may be considered in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Executive Director, Community Services Statewide Services and Executive Director, Child and Family.

What supporting documentation will I need to provide?

Requests for all exception supports and exception placements (residential care only) require sufficient evidence and a clear justification and de-escalation plan for FACS to fund the support.

Decisions about exceptions must be made jointly by FACS and the NGO Service Provider as part of the case planning process. The case planning process should be guided by collaborative practice and focussed on the identified needs of the child or young person.

The relevant FACS Child and Family District Unit completes an application form for exception support or placements (residential care only).

For all exception supports, evidence must be provided that:

- All publically funded programs and services provided under interagency agreements with NSW Health, Education and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) have been fully explored and exhausted
- Your agency has no capacity to provide the additional support under your contract
- The exception support is in line with and supports the child or young person's case plan goal direction
- The additional support is short term, targeted and aimed at avoiding escalation of the child or young person's needs and documents the cost of the support.

For exception supports, additional evidence is required to demonstrate the need for the particular support. This evidence may include professional assessments, reports, legal documents and the case plan.

Summary of exception support types and additional evidence

Summary of support types	Additional evidence required
<p>Additional rostered staff (only available for residential care placements)</p> <p>Where a child or young person placed in Residential Care or Intensive Residential Care has exceptional needs unable to be met without additional short-term rostered staff to settle and stabilise the placement, the exception support of 'additional rostered staff' may be considered.</p> <p>'Additional rostered staff' is not available for children and young people in foster care.</p> <p>FACS does not support long term placements of children and young people in individual residential placements (residential placements of one child only and multiple staff) and the overutilisation or reliance on 'additional rostered staff'.</p> <p>All new applications and renewals for additional rostered staff in residential care are required to have input from the Central Access Unit (CAU).</p> <p>As the use of additional rostered staff is time limited, the application of this support will be reviewed every four weeks by</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>A case plan which details a path for de-escalation.</p> <p>Clinical evidence of the particular needs of the child or young person and the circumstances, including how the additional short term support will assist and reduce the need for the support to continue.</p>

Summary of support types	Additional evidence required
<p>the FACS District Complex Care Review Panel.</p>	
<p>Behaviour support Where a child or young person is placed in OOHC and time-limited and intensive behaviour support is required to stabilise the child or young person in their current placement, an exception support may be considered.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for specialist behaviour support to address an unanticipated change or extreme escalation of behaviours should be identified through professional assessments. Assessments must recommend how behaviour support needs of the child or young person will be met by the provision of particular supports or provide advice on the development and implementation of a behaviour support plan.</p> <p>The exception support may be considered when the needs of the child or young person require support that is in excess of what the Service Provider is expected to provide and require skills that exceed the Service Provider's capabilities or are only available through a specialised Service Provider.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Assessments must recommend how behaviour support needs of the child or young person will be met by the provision of particular supports.</p>
<p>Disability care Where a child or young person with a disability is placed in OOHC and relevant services to meet the support needs of the child or young person in their current placement are required, an exception support may be considered.</p> <p>One-off and exceptional support needs for a child or young person with a disability must be identified through professional assessments where a recommendation is required about meeting the intellectual and/or physical disability needs of the child or young person through, for example, the purchase of costly physical aids. This exception support must not be used to fund additional rostered staff.</p> <p>The Service Provider is required to provide evidence that the expenditure cannot be met within Service Provider unit costs and all efforts have been made to access the services through mainstream services and NDIS.</p> <p>FACS has developed resources and guidelines for NGO and FACS Casework staff outlining the NDIS access, planning and review process; roles and responsibilities and where to go for further information. See www.facs.nsw.gov.au/ndis.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The Service Provider is required to provide evidence that the expenditure cannot be met within Service provider unit costs and all efforts have been made to access the services through mainstream services and the NDIS.</p>
<p>Educational fees In general, children and young people in OOHC will attend their local government school and access mainstream education services.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Assessments and detailed evidence to</p>

Summary of support types	Additional evidence required
<p>Where FACS or a funded OOHC Service Provider has placed a child in a non-government school, FACS will review the merits of payment in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Reviews will consider the best interests of the individual child or young person including educational needs, stability, continuity, special needs or disability and sense of belonging for the child or young person and participation within a family or local community.</p>	<p>support the request</p>
<p>Medical and dental</p> <p>All children and young people entering statutory OOHC should receive an initial health assessment and have a Health Management Plan which is integrated into the child or young person's case plan.</p> <p>The FACS Community Services and Health Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) prioritises the provision of health services to children and young people in OOHC. Subject to clinical needs, the provision of services under the MoU should be explored in the first instance. All children and young people should also have their own Medicare Card and Health Care Card.</p> <p>An exception support may be considered where the urgency and/or access to treatment results in a need to access private health care providers and there is written evidence from the Local Health District that services are not available under the FACS Community Services and Health MoU.</p> <p>Service Providers are expected to cover medical, allied health and dental costs, including GP visits and pharmaceutical costs for prescription and non-prescription medications.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Assessments and detailed evidence to support the request including why services are not available under the FACS Community Services and Health MoU.</p>
<p>Respite (foster care placements only)</p> <p>An exception support for respite (above the 24 night provision within the current Service Provider contract) may only be considered in very limited circumstances such as where there is a threat to placement stability or where a child or young person is placed at a lower level of care than corresponds to their assessed needs.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>This support is only available in truly exceptional circumstances and must be accompanied by a clear rationale.</p>
<p>Supervised contact (only available for residential care placements or for large sibling groups (4+) in foster care placements).</p> <p>Where a Service Provider holds case management responsibility, all costs for supervised contact must generally be covered by the Service Provider within their existing contract.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>This support is only available for children and young people in residential care and for 4+ sibling groups in truly exceptional circumstances and</p>

Summary of support types	Additional evidence required
	must be accompanied by a clear rationale and evidence as to why the support cannot be provided for within the contract.
<p>Supervised transport A Service Provider is responsible for costs related to supervised transport, as they are covered within their existing contract.</p> <p>During the funding model transition period, exception support for 'supervised transport' will only be available in very limited circumstances and will be dependent on the case plan goal.</p> <p>For example, a child or a young person transitioning to a sibling co-placement, who requires transport to school in a different geographic area or a child or young person who is living away from their local community and regular and frequent transport is required to maintain continuity of relationships and activities.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Only considered in truly exceptional circumstances based on the case plan goal and a clear rationale supported by evidence.</p>

What is the process for payment?

Once an exception support has been approved by FACS, you will be asked to provide itemised invoices for payment for the services approved for delivery.

Invoices and quotations must reflect the terms, services and timeframes outlined in the signed agreement between FACS and the OOHC Service Provider for provision of the agreed service.

Invoices should address key identification information including:

- The child or young person's name and KIDS/ChildStory number.
- A break down of placement or specific support services outlined and approved.
- Timeframes reflecting those specified on the approval and/or as per the service provided.

Timely approval processes will ensure the payment of invoices is in accordance with a 30 day turnaround.

Who can I contact to ask about an exception support?

Please contact the Child and Family District Unit (CFDU) in your district to enquire about an exception support for a child or young person case managed by your agency. Information about FACS districts is located on our website https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about_us/contact_us.