Emergency Response Funding

Guidelines for Coordinating Service Providers

From 1 July 2013

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1. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING STRATEGY TO ASSIST PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY DURING EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SITUATIONS

1.1 Background

The Disability Services funding strategy to address emergency and crisis situations was developed out of an identified need within communities across Queensland for service responses to provide immediate intervention for individuals with a disability and their families and carers in the event of unplanned emergency and critical situations.

The Emergency Response initiative was one component of this strategy. Since 1998 Disability Services (DS) has allocated block funding to a selected number of non-government service providers to coordinate and/or provide short term one-off emergency disability support in order to respond to emergencies and/or unplanned support needs of individuals with a disability and families.

1.2 The purpose of Emergency Response funding

Emergency Response funding provides flexible and short term supports to individuals with a disability, their families and carers who are in **urgent and critical need** and unable to access other forms of support in a timely manner.

The funded coordinating agencies may either provide services or coordinate funds to other agencies to ensure people with a disability have access to appropriate services in emergency and crisis situations.

1.3 Target criteria for assistance through Emergency Response funding

To receive disability specialist services funded by DS, an individual is deemed eligible where they have a disability as defined by the Queensland Disability Services Act 2006.

Due to the emergent nature of supports provided through this initiative, individuals do not need to undertake the Disability Services intake, assessment and referral process nor be registered with Disability Services. The coordinating agency will make a determination of eligibility based on their disability specific knowledge and expertise. Individuals and families can approach the Emergency Response provider directly when they experience a crisis situation.

To access this funding initiative, individuals should:

- be experiencing an emergency and crisis situation;
- require minimal one-off funded support to continue to maintain the family and caring situation;
- not be able to receive support through any other scheme/s; for example in instances where support is required outside DS or other service providers' operating hours, or when the need for support does not allow sufficient time to apply for supports such as Time Limited Response through DS; and
- not require ongoing recurrent and/or planned support. Any ongoing support should not be related to the presenting problem/situation.

Individuals with a disability, their families or carers may approach the coordinating agency for support when faced with an emergency and crisis situation. Similarly, service providers may act on behalf of the individuals with a disability, their families or carers and request assistance from the coordinating agency.

Funding is not to be used for supports that are of a recurrent nature. Consideration may be given to the use of this funding for complex cases as a one-off short term response whilst other options are explored and assessed. Funding should only be provided for disability specific needs and services. If the individual with a disability requires ongoing or more specific support they must be redirected to DS for intake, assessment and prioritisation for services.

1.4 Types of emergency and crisis situations

There are many and varied reasons for individuals with a disability, families and carers presenting to DS and non-government service providers requiring short term paid support. Some examples are:

- critical carer stress

- critical carer fatigue

- increased temporary supports required by individuals with a disability

- increased or continued challenging behaviours requiring temporary interim management strategies

- sudden and unexpected changes in the caring situation (illness/hospitalisation, etc)

- an immediate need for critical equipment e.g. upon discharged from hospital or urgent advice from a specialist .

In most instances a carer or individual will only require assistance for a short period of time.

In some instances carers may access short-term funded supports and, with the assistance from the coordinating agency or a referring agency, will develop sustainable links within their communities that reduce the risk of their requiring urgent and critical supports in the future.

Short term supports are defined as supports that are required once off or for no longer than 72 hours* and which focus only on meeting the person's immediate needs. An allocation of supports to meet longer term or ongoing needs is dependent upon assessment by and further supports from Disability Services. Allocations of short term supports have a maximum funding limit of $3,500* per request.

except in exceptional circumstances

2. GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDING

2.1 General principles of application and assessment processes

The assessment and decision-making framework for the allocation of funding and supports should be consistent with the policies and procedures of the participating funded non-government service providers and the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

The application and assessment process for this funding support should be as straightforward as possible and not add to the distress of the individual with a disability, their family or carer. Overall transparency of decision-making in all aspects of the provision of support is important. In addition, processes or procedures must be in place to manage "conflict of interest" situations.

When an individual with a disability, family member, carer or referring service provider has had initial contact with the coordinating agency administering the block funding, the operational processes should include the following:

- an intake process;

- determination of an individual's eligibility and suitability of the requested supports under the *Disability Services Act 2006* and the initiative's criteria;

- consideration of whether the person should be referred on to another agency for support, and/or provided with information to assist them with their need;

- consideration of all other options for support or funding (e.g. Commonwealth Carer Respite, Individual Support Services through the Department of Communities – Social Inclusion);

- consideration of whether the support requests are of an **urgent and critical** nature;

- a planned approach to developing the appropriate supports and to document the agreed plan;

- provision to work with the family and relevant others to develop the next phase of sustainable contingency plans in the event of future crisis;

- referral to DS intake and assessment processes, if not already in contact with Disability Services, when longer-term support needs are identified and require ongoing supports; and

- appropriate information collection to enable decision making and reporting.

All information must be collected in accordance with the privacy principles of the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988* and permission should be gained from the individual with a disability, their family or carer to share information with relevant parties. All Service Providers should comply with Right to Information legislation when considering the release of information to the individual, their family, carers or others.

Details collected about the individual must ensure the reporting requirements for Disability Services National Minimum Data Set (DS NMDS), the initiative and Service Agreement are met.

2.2 Equipment

Equipment can be purchased through this initiative if the purchase is deemed as a **critical issue**. For example, the critical piece of equipment has broken, or the person cannot access their support arrangements without this aid/equipment.

Purchases of equipment should be inline with departmental considerations of suitable equipment items. It is suggested that the organisation utilise the aids and equipment information in Attachment 1 to ensure that the provision of supports is in line with departmental expectations and the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

This initiative is not to fund the service or maintenance of equipment nor excess payments on insurance claims; this should be planned for in advance, and is not seen as a critical nature.

Funding through this initiative should be by way of a contribution to the purchase of the equipment, with the individual/family co-contributing towards the purchase.

If equipment is required and is deemed as critical, the following should be carefully considered:

- the person's ability to contribute to the cost of the item;
- the availability of the item through other schemes such as, but not limited to Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, Local Area Coordinator, Commonwealth Carers Respite Service;
- whether other schemes fully fund the item; and
- waiting times for other schemes.

Where funding for equipment is considered, three quotes should be obtained (where possible) from suppliers for the required item and the most cost effective option should be chosen. Cost-effectiveness is not restricted to price; it also takes into account functionality, fit for purpose, accessibility and usability. The coordinating agency is responsible for entering into an agreement with the individual regarding the terms and conditions of the purchase, including an outline of the family's/individual's responsibility for maintenance and replacement of the equipment.

2.3 Subcontracting

Where subcontracting of supports is to be undertaken, the coordinating service provider will ensure that all appropriate safeguards are in place (e.g. Criminal History Checks).

To ensure complete DS NMDS service delivery data is captured, the service provider funded by DS should report the direct service delivery.

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3. ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

The allocation of funding to an individual/family by non-government service providers must be undertaken within a transparent and equitable decision-making framework and be provided in the most flexible manner.

The service provider in receipt of funding will be required to:

- agree to and sign the Service Agreement/variation to the Service Agreement;
- maintain appropriate individual, service and financial records including data for DS NMDS reporting;
- ensure operating costs associated with operating the initiative and providing supports are kept to a minimum within benchmarks;
- ensure six monthly DS reporting requirements for this initiative are met;
- ensure other service providers are aware of the process to access the funds and the guidelines for the provision of supports;
- ensure provision is made to respond to emergency and crisis situations during extended periods of service closure.

The funding made available to any one individual with a disability, their family or carer should be contingent upon the situation. The funds approved should be limited to the minimum support required to address the situation and should not unduly impact on the level of available funding required to address further emergency and crisis situations which may arise within the region.

3.1 Review and Evaluation

Review and evaluation criteria should be incorporated into the overall process, in order to gain feedback from individuals with a disability, their families and carers regarding the effectiveness of the program.

Disability Services will evaluate and review this initiative no less than once during the period of funding.

3.2 DS NMDS Reporting

The DS NMDS requires all States, Territories and the Commonwealth to collect and report on data conforming to the NMDS. The DS NMDS collection comprises a set of nationally significant data items.

The output to be reported under DS NMDS is 2.062 Case Management. For further information regarding DS NMDS please go to:

www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/key-projects/national-disability- agreement/disability-services-national-minimum-data-set-ds-nmds

ATTACHMENT 1

Aids and Equipment Categories for Supports

Organisations are reminded that all purchases / contributions towards aids and equipment under this initiative are subject to the target criteria for Emergency Response.

All aids and equipment requests should be an urgent or critical need. Category 1.

Communication support

Communication Support will assist people with disability to connect and exchange information with their communities of choice e.g.: speech generating device, PODD communication books.

Preferred prescribers:
• Speech Language Pathologists
• Occupational Therapists in consultation with a Speech Language Pathologist

Inclusions:
• Communication devices that are disability specific and improve community* participation

• Disability specific additions to computers which improve a person's ability to utilise the computer

• Disability specific computer applications and software (NOT personal computers, computer hardware or internet access)

* for the purpose of this category, community includes 'communities of choice'— for example, cyber and internet communities

Category 2. Community mobility

Community Mobility will improve physical access by subsidising equipment that supports people with disability to move outside their home environment e.g.: power assist wheels.

Preferred prescribers
• Occupational Therapist
• Physiotherapist

Inclusions
• Aids, equipment and assistive technology that support mobility, travel and posture within community environments

• Enhancements to mobility devices that improve their durability outside the home environment

• Powered mobility devices including scooters (4 wheel scooters are preferred)

Exclusions for all categories

- Medical and surgical treatment items

- Personal computers or internet access

- Standard household or personal items

- Items funded by other government funding bodies, including items provided through MASS, as this would not meet the urgent and critical access criteria.

- Home and vehicle modifications

- Personal training

- Insurance and/or maintenance to funded Aids, Equipment and Assistive Technologies

- Cost of repairs

- Non-disability specific items that are commercially available