

Financial Assistance for HSQF Quality Audits

September 2020

The Queensland Government requires organisations delivering services in-scope of certification under the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) to be independently audited for compliance with the Human Services Quality Standards.

Audits are conducted by independent certification bodies which set their fees and charges according to commercial rates. Organisations pay their contracted certification bodies directly for the cost of completing their HSQF certification, including the audits.

Increase in annual funding

From 2020-21, a new approach is being implemented to assist organisations that receive up to \$3 million in total funding from the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS) and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) for services in-scope of certification. The increase in annual funding will assist organisations to meet the upfront costs of certification and eliminate the wait for a one-off grant after the audit has occurred.

The annual increase, effective from 1 July 2020:

- will be provided for all service outlets that are in-scope of certification, except those listed below as ineligible
- includes loadings for services delivered in regional and remote areas to assist with the higher costs of auditing in those areas
- includes, for organisations delivering child protection placement services in-scope of child safety licensing, a loading to assist with the additional costs of certification and report writing
- will be provided to organisations that are required to achieve certification under another approved quality system to demonstrate compliance with HSQF (such as peak organisations certified under ISO 9001), where this certification is not already held for another purpose.

To assist organisations transitioning to this new approach, one-off financial contributions will be available for HSQF audits completed up to 30 September 2020, subject to the existing eligibility criteria outlined below.

Organisations that receive an increase in annual funding will be responsible for meeting all certification and audit costs from 1 October 2020.

One-off financial contributions

One-off financial contributions will continue for:

- Organisations that receive more than \$3 million in total funding from DCDSS and DCSYW for services that are in-scope of HSQF certification
- Organisations required to hold a child safety licence whose child protection placement services are funded solely through Child Related Costs Placement and Support (CRC-PaS).

One-off financial contributions methodology

One-off financial contributions are calculated using an approved benchmarked costing methodology that includes: type and duration of audit; audit days and travel costs; report writing costs; registration and other certification fees; and number and location of services/sites audited.



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The following additional loadings may also be added, where applicable:

- *Initial certification audit Stage 1 contribution* – up to \$3,000 for organisations undergoing initial HSQF certification.
- *Regional loading for travel costs* – to assist with auditor flights/transport, accommodation, meals and incidentals for the audit of services/sites outside of south-east Queensland.
- *Remoteness loading* – for services located in remote or very remote areas.
- *Specific requirements loading* – for additional report writing requirements of child protection placement services in-scope of child safety licensing and for the cost of interpreter services used to enable client participation in the audit process.

The HSQF team assesses eligibility for one-off financial contributions, based on the criteria outlined below, following the receipt of the finalised audit reports from HSQF certification bodies. As such, organisations do not need to apply for a one-off financial contribution.

Where organisations are funded by both DCDSS and DCSYW, financial contributions are shared and may be paid separately by each department. As financial contributions are progressed for approval in batches, there is a period of time between when audit costs are incurred by organisations and when financial contributions are paid by the Queensland Government.

Eligibility Criteria

Services procured by Request for Quote

Services procured by the DCDSS and/or the DCSYW under a Request for Quote (RFQ) or tender specification since 1 September 2014 where the RFQ stated the organisation is responsible for meeting all costs associated with achieving and maintaining HSQF certification for in-scope service types, are ineligible for an annual funding increase or one-off financial contribution.

Organisations are responsible for meeting all HSQF certification and audit costs for these services.

Organisations that deliver services not procured in this way, including those funded prior to September 2014, are eligible for an annual funding increase or one-off financial contribution for the certification costs of those services.

Organisations delivering a mix of eligible and ineligible services will receive a proportional annual funding increase or one-off financial contribution for the eligible services, subject to final assessment by the Queensland Government.

Unspent funds

Organisations that declare unspent funds in their Directors Certification or have had declared unspent funds recovered, will be generally ineligible for a one-off financial contribution, subject to final assessment by the Queensland Government. Organisations should note that the costs associated with HSQF compliance, including audit costs, are an eligible cost item under service agreements and should be met or budgeted for before unspent funds are declared.

Queensland Health services

The information in this factsheet is only relevant to services funded by the DCDSS and the DCSYW. It does not apply to services funded by Queensland Health.

Further information

For further information please contact your DCDSS or DCSYW contract officer or the HSQF team on 1800 034 022 or hsqf@communities.qld.gov.au.