

Stability in Family-Based Care Program

Information for family-based carers

When a young person in care turns 18, the departmental authority will cease. This might mean they no longer want to live in their current family-based care placement - but a lot of the time, they do.

The Stability in Family-Based Care (SFBC) program helps support young people to achieve their potential with the opportunity to remain in their family-based care placement until they turn 21.

The program will provide primary family-based carers who continue to care for a young person after their Youth Court order or long term formal agreement expires on their 18th birthday with extended carer payments until the young person turns 21.

The program is based on the carer's and young person's commitment to each other.

How much is the carer payment?

As a primary carer, you will continue to receive your fortnightly carer payment, indexed annually.

You won't be able to access respite care, incidental expenses, special needs loading, activity grants, remote access or other loadings as part of this program.

Eligibility for the program

To be eligible for the SFBC program, you and the young person in your care must meet the following criteria:

- the young person was under one of the following arrangements to the age of 18 years:
 - Guardianship/Long Term Guardianship (including Specified Person) order
 - Family Care Meeting Agreement
 - other long term formal agreement where the Minister or Chief Executive assumed some form of legal responsibility
- the young person turned 18 on or after 1 July 2018 and wants to continue to live in your home on a full time basis beyond their 18th birthday
- you also agree for the young person to continue living in your home on a full time basis beyond their 18th birthday
- the young person is not earning an income that exceeds the carer payment
- you are not entitled to another payment for the care of the young person post-18 years (other than the Centrelink carer payment)
- an application for SFBC program is signed by both of you
- it continues to be in the young person's best interests to remain in the family home.

How much can the young person earn and what do you mean by “full time” living arrangements?

You and the young person will be ineligible for the SFBC payment when the young person’s income reaches or exceeds the amount equivalent to the carer subsidy.

For living arrangements, the young person must live with you at least 4 nights per week.

How does the program work?

SFBC arrangements will be introduced as a part of transition from care planning. This usually starts when the young person turns 15.

Young people who are 17 and a half can apply to the program – you and the young person will need to complete an application form (this is available to download from our website).

SFBC Agreements

To be eligible for the program, you and the young person will need to contribute to, participate in and sign an SFBC Agreement annually. This includes a statutory declaration regarding your continued eligibility for the program.

An SFBC Agreement aims to support the young person develop a range of life and social skills that will prepare them for future independence. This includes things like:

- finance and budgeting
- cooking
- managing a home
- applying for jobs
- continuing education

SFBC Program Liaison

Once the young person has turned 18, the department no longer provides a guardianship case management service to them.

As part of the SFBC program, there is still liaison with the department – but it’s less intensive than guardianship case management and is designed to support the young person in their family environment. Young people will be building their skills to manage their own independence and we want them to have the safety net of supportive family relationships to continue their care plan.

The SFBC liaison officer will contact the young person at least every quarter to review their eligibility and the SFBC Agreement, and will provide referral information and support to access other services if they’re relevant.

If the young person needs more intensive case management within this period, they will be referred to Post Care Services and the SFBC liaison officer will take a secondary support role.

When will the SFBC program end?

The SFBC arrangement will end when the young person stops meeting the eligibility criteria, or when they turn 21.

You can end the SFBC arrangement at any time by giving notice to the SFBC liaison officer.

When the SFBC arrangement ends, the SFBC Agreement will be reviewed and plans made to make sure the young person can move into suitable accommodation and access the right services.

Responsibilities

What are my responsibilities as a carer?

You are expected to contribute and participate in a SFBC Agreement, including continuing to work with the young person and liaison officer to support and maintain stability for the young person and prepare them for future independence.

You are also required to complete an annual statutory declaration regarding your continued eligibility for the program.

It is your responsibility to inform DCP immediately if the young person:

- is no longer residing with you on a full time basis ;
- returns to residing with you on a full time basis after any time away; and
- reaches the income threshold.

What are my responsibilities as a young person?

You are expected to contribute and participate in a SFBC Agreement and to maintain contact with your SFBC liaison officer.

You are also required to complete an annual statutory declaration regarding your continued eligibility for the program.

As you will have access to some form of income (Centrelink or paid employment), there is also an expectation you will contribute to your own:

- clothing
- social life
- toiletries
- costs related to transport education, training and employment.

It is your responsibility to inform DCP immediately if you:

- no longer live with your carer on a full time basis;
- return to living with your carer on a full time basis after any time away; and
- reach the income threshold.

What if we have a change of circumstances?

You and the young person must report any change in circumstances that affects your eligibility, to the department within 7-14 days. If the change is temporary, you still need to advise the department.

You can read more about overpayment and overpayment recovery in the Carer Handbook.

What if we don't want to continue with the program?

In instances where a SFBC arrangement is not suitable for you, alternative arrangements should be identified to make sure the young person is supported in accordance with their transition from care. Speak with your caseworker or the SFBC liaison officer.

