



Government of Western Australia
Department for Child Protection
and Family Support

BROKERAGE FUNDING

Guidelines for Leaving Care Service Providers

5 July 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines provide leaving care Service Providers with a guide for the use of brokerage funds to ensure services are responsive to client needs when they are transitioning from the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and those young people up to 25 years of age who request financial assistance subsequent to their leaving care.

Legislation

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) has a statutory responsibility, as per Sections 98, 99, and 100 of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*, to provide for any social and financial assistance to eligible young people who are leaving or have left care. The Department must ensure that a young person who leaves care is provided with any social services that are considered appropriate having regard to the person's needs and as identified in the care plan. The Department needs to ensure that appropriate mechanisms and strategies are in place to address and meet the care plan requirements.

A person who qualifies for leaving care assistance is under 25 years of age, has left the care of the CEO and at any time after the person reached 15 years of age was the subject of:

- a protection order (time limited);
- a protection order (until 18);
- a negotiated placement agreement (for a continuous period of at least 6 months) or;
- provided with a placement service under section 32(1)(a) (for a continuous period of at least 6 months) (Section 96).

The CEO must ensure that a person who qualifies for assistance is provided with services to assist with one or more of the following:

- obtain accommodation;
- undertake education and training;
- obtain employment;
- obtain legal advice;
- access health services;
- access counselling services.

This assistance can be provided directly by the Department or by referral to the Leaving Care Services.

What is the Leaving Care Fund?

The Department has developed a leaving care fund to meet the leaving care and aftercare needs of young people from 15 years of age. The aim of the fund is to:

- Support young people as part of their preparation for leaving care.
- Support young adults who have already left care and return seeking aftercare assistance.

Brokerage funding is provided to leaving care Service Providers as part of their contractual funding arrangement with the Department. Brokerage

funding must be utilised in line with departmental policies and the young person's care plan.

What is brokerage?

In this context, brokerage is the use of designated funds to purchase services or goods to address individual client needs and identified barriers to optimal case management outcomes. The use of funds is flexible and tailored to the individual.

The application of brokerage funding occurs within the context of case management practises and is linked to the achievement of identified goals in the young person's care plan.

Principles for the use of Brokerage Funds

- Services are tailored to achieve the best possible outcome for clients.
- The clients are supported to recognise their own strengths and issues and to identify possible solutions within a case management approach.
- Other options are considered prior to expenditure of brokerage funds.
- Services purchased are of the most appropriate and of the highest quality available within the resources.
- Funds are delivered in a consistent, transparent and fair manner ensuring equitable access to brokerage funds for all clients within the specified target group.
- Assistance is provided in a way that maintains client dignity and supports independence.

The table below sets out items that under normal circumstances will be funded through the leaving care fund. This should be used as a guide only. Other items may also be funded through the leaving care fund.

☑	Items	Notes
☑	Obtaining a Motor Driver's Licence (including the supervised driver hours).	Leaving care funds can cover all costs associated with obtaining a drivers licence.
☑	Funding for educational expenses, e.g. text books, computers, laptops and other educational equipment.	Young people who intend to study at TAFE should be assisted to access the TAFE fee waiver initiative.
☑	Health and Dental services including counselling, e.g. significant and ongoing health and dental treatment (not met through the public system within a reasonable timeframe), ambulance cover for the first three years out of care.	Young people should be encouraged to access the public health system where possible.
☑	Employment related expenses e.g. essential employment equipment, safety Equipment.	Young people should be encouraged to apply for other relevant concessions and alternative sources of funding, where available.
☑	Housing and accommodation establishment costs, e.g. bond, utility connection fees, furniture and essential household items.	Young people should be assisted to apply for the TILA grant.
☑	Legal advice.	Young people should be encouraged to access Legal Aid where possible.

WHAT BROKERAGE FUNDS CANNOT BE USED FOR

Brokerage funding is not intended for:

- Program funding or staffing costs;
- an income supplement for the young person;
- an alternative to other free or low cost goods or services available within the community;
- health care costs that can be met directly or at least partially reimbursed through Medicare and attending medical clinics willing to bulk bill; or
- other items which do not support the young person to attain or maintain independence.

2. ADMINISTRATION & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Administrative structures are to be developed by each funded Service Provider and supported by policy and procedures that are developed according to the funding guidelines.

From 1 January 2014 brokerage funds will be incorporated into the annual funding level and allocated on a six monthly basis in July and January. There will be no additional funds available once the brokerage funds have been expended within the financial year.

The Service Provider will report actual brokerage funds expenditure in a six month period to the Department via an adjustment advice form. Payments will reflect the adjustment for the actual expenditure for each six month period as reported in the adjustment advice form.

It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to determine the allocation of funds to each client, varying the amount up or down depending on the individual client needs. As an approximate guide a sum up to \$500 per young person could be expended each financial year.

Reporting:

From 1 January 2014, as brokerage funds are incorporated into the annual funding, reporting requirements will be incorporated into the annual financial statement and the six monthly progress reports.

Service Providers are required to include in the annual audit line items for the following:

- The amount spent on allowable brokerage items

The six-monthly progress reports will include a section that allows for qualitative reporting on brokerage, as well as provide a breakdown on the funds spent (see Attachment A).

3. OPERATION

Expenditure of brokerage money is linked to the goals identified in a young person's care plan/case plan. It must be clear how the expenditure will assist in reaching one or more goals in the care plan/case plan.

Prior to using brokerage funds to purchase a good or service, Service Providers should explore alternative sources provided as a core service of other agencies or that may be less expensive or free. This will involve effective networking by Service Providers in order to have a good knowledge of available services and referral mechanisms.

Value for money should be considered when planning the use of brokerage funding.

The Service Provider shall not make a loan from brokerage funds, nor allow any client to be placed under any obligation to repay the brokerage amount to the Service Provider.

If it is deemed appropriate to purchase food or supplies from brokerage funds for a client, all other avenues for the provision of free or low cost food or supplies must have been explored. No funds are to be used for the purchase of alcohol, cigarettes or illegal substances.

Over expenditure of funding must be met by agencies own resources.

4. AGREEMENTS

Inter-agency agreements

Cross agency linkages are to be developed with regard to equitable access to brokerage funds.

If a client having received brokerage funding, moves to another Service Provider, it is the responsibility of the original worker to pass on the information to the new Service Provider to limit multiple access to brokerage funds for individual clients.

Summary of Brokerage Income and Expenditure
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Summary of goods or services purchased from brokerage funds (Insert additional rows if required).

Income - \$ from DCP for Brokerage				
Unspent funds carried over from last reporting period (A)				\$
Brokerage received for this reporting period (B)				\$
Total Brokerage Available (C)				\$
Expenditure – \$ spent on Brokerage				
Date	Client	Category of brokerage	Details	Amount Spent \$
		Obtain accommodation		
10/7/2013		Example: Rent	Cheque to Department of Housing - For 2 weeks rent and \$100.00 bond.	229.85
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
		Undertake education or Training		
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
		Obtain employment		
				\$
				\$
				\$
		Obtain legal advice		
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
		Access health services		
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
		Access counselling services		
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
Total Spent in this reporting period (D)				\$
Balance (C) - (D) carry this figure over to the next reporting period				\$
Total \$ Committed BUT NOT SPENT				\$
Balance of Funds Remaining				\$

Summary of Brokerage Expenditure

CASE EXAMPLES

Numbers do not always tell the full story. Please use this space to provide additional information about the assistance you provided and the outcomes achieved.

Using two or three examples please describe how the use of the brokerage funds for goods or services supported a client's achievement of goals with regard to transitioning from care.

Give a brief summary of the client's presenting issues, the assistance provided through brokerage funding and the outcome. (Include the amount of brokerage funds provided and what they were spent on)

Please do not provide names that would identify a client.