

Financial support guide for home-based carers

July 2019

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Victorian government care allowances

Assessed and approved foster, kinship, permanent and additional needs local adoptive parents are eligible to receive care allowances where the Victorian child protection service or a registered community service organisation places a child (aged 0 to 18 years) in their care.

The Victorian Government provides care allowances through the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to contribute to the day-to-day costs incurred while providing home-based care as a volunteer carer.

For general enquiries, please contact the Department of Health and Human Services Care Allowances Helpdesk on **1300 552 319** or email the [Care allowances helpdesk](mailto:caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au.> Further information, including current care allowance rates, is available on [Support for home based carers in Victoria](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>

Care allowance

The care allowance assists home-based carers with the day-to-day costs of providing care for children and young people, such as food, household provisions, utilities, clothing, recreational activities and entertainment. There are different allowances available depending on the needs and age of the child or young person in care.

Information about the care allowance structure and payment rates is available on [Support for home based carers in Victoria](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>.

Care allowance structure and payment rates 2019-2020

Level 1

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$10,499	\$402.42
8-10 years	\$10,864	\$416.42
11-12 years	\$12,033	\$461.64
13+ years	\$15,441	\$591.86

Level 2

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$11,083	\$424.80
8-10 years	\$12,044	\$461.64
11-12 years	\$14,240	\$545.80
13+ years	\$19,551	\$749.37

Level 3

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$14,458	\$554.16
8-10 years	\$15,627	\$598.98
11-12 years	\$18,633	\$714.20
13+ years	\$25,696	\$984.94

Level 4

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$27,782	\$1,064.88
8-10 years	\$27,782	\$1,064.88
11-12 years	\$27,782	\$1,064.88
13+ years	\$27,782	\$1,064.88

Level 5

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$42,764	\$1,639.14
8-10 years	\$42,764	\$1,639.14
11-12 years	\$42,764	\$1,639.14
13+ years	\$42,764	\$1,639.14

Therapeutic foster care allowance

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
0-7 years	\$17,834	\$683.59
8-10 years	\$19,004	\$728.42
11-12 years	\$22,010	\$843.64
13+ years	\$29,073	\$1,114.37

School attendance allowance

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
5-11 years	\$361.88	-
12-18 years	\$542.81	-

New placement allowance (6 months)

Age	Annual rate	Fortnight rate
Level 1	-	\$63.94

New placement allowance

An additional \$63.94 per fortnight paid over the first six months of a new level one placement to meet the immediate or 'start up' costs of caring for a child or young person.

Education and medical payment

A payment to contribute to the educational and health needs of a child or young person in home-based care. The education and medical payment are paid fortnightly with the care allowance

School attendance allowance

An allowance paid to foster and statutory kinship carers to contribute to education expenses for children and young people. The allowance is paid quarterly in arrears (see above care structure and payment rates).

Adjustment to the care allowance

Where a child is in kinship or permanent care and child protection are involved, during the pre-adoption order phase or through additional needs local adoption, carers are eligible to receive the level one care allowance, relative to the age of the child in their care.

In some circumstances, kinship, permanent care, pre-adoption order phase and additional needs local adoption carers may be eligible for a special negotiated adjustment to the care allowance. Consideration will be given to increasing the care allowance where a child has a particular need for access to services to promote their health and wellbeing and is unlikely to receive the services they require without additional financial support to the carer. In assessing increases to the care allowance, consideration will be given to the complexity associated with meeting the individual's child's care needs and other supports that may be able to be accessed such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

For further information about an adjustment to the care allowance, speak to the child or young person's child protection worker or agency case manager.

Foster carers should speak to their agency if they have any queries about the care allowance.

Client support funding

Client support funding is additional funding that carers may be eligible for to help cover costs for extraordinary expenses. This includes the purchase of specific items or services that exceed the day-to-day costs of what the care allowance contributes to or to assist with high costs that place an unreasonable financial burden on the carer.

Where a child has extraordinary needs or needs that are above the day-to-day costs of caring, carers should contact the service from where they receive support to discuss access to client support funding. For foster carers this will be their agency, and for kinship carers will be the child or young person's child protection worker or agency case manager.

For more information on client support funding and support for home-based carers in Victoria is available on [Support for home based carers in Victoria](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>.

Kinship Placement Support Brokerage

The kinship care placement support brokerage, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, is to provide time-limited or one-off supports required to stabilise existing statutory kinship care placements with current child protection intervention.

The brokerage is not a substitute for alternative financial supports that may be available for kinship carers and must be directly related to supporting or stabilising statutory kinship care placements subject to current child protection involvement.

Further information is available from the child's case manager (child protection, authorised Aboriginal agency or CSO or ACCO), or through the kinship engagement team in the division where child protection is involved.

Flexible funding for permanent carers

Flexible funding is available to meet the extraordinary needs of children and young people subject to a permanent care order to help meet costs not met by the care allowance or other funding sources.

New permanent carers should speak to the child or young person's child protection worker or agency case manager. Existing permanent carers can call Permanent Care and Adoptive Families on (03) 9020 1833 or email [Permanent Care and Adoptive Families](mailto:info@pcafamilies.org.au) <info@pcafamilies.org.au>.

For further information see the [Support for home-based carers](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria) website <[http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria)>.

Other Victorian and Commonwealth Government financial supports

In addition to the Victorian Government care allowances and supplementary funding, home-based carers may be entitled to a range of other financial supports and benefits from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

Contact details for the relevant government department or organisation are listed in the contacts section of this guide.

Child care

Please note that some child care benefits and rebates ended on 1 July 2018.

For further information about changes visit [Child care assistance](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/assistance-child-care-fees) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/assistance-child-care-fees>>.

Child Care Subsidy

The child care benefit and the child care rebate stopped on 1 July 2018.

From 2 July 2018, the Child Care Subsidy assists with the cost of approved child care including centre-based day care, long day care, family day care, occasional care, outside school hours care, vacation care, and in-home care.

The Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the child care provider.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Child care subsidy](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>>.

Additional Child Care Subsidy

If eligible for the Child Care Subsidy, the Additional Child Care Subsidy provides extra assistance with the cost of approved child care.

There are three types of Additional Child Care Subsidy:

- Grandparent subsidy
- Transition to work subsidy
- Temporary financial hardship subsidy

For further information about eligibility, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Additional child care subsidy](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/additional-child-care-subsidy/eligibility) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/additional-child-care-subsidy/eligibility>>.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (Child Wellbeing)

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (Child Wellbeing) provides additional child care fee assistance to an individual or provider in respect of a child who is considered to be 'at risk' of abuse or neglect.

Any child identified as being 'at risk' under state or territory child protection laws will be eligible to receive the Additional Child Care Subsidy (Child Wellbeing) payment. The approved child care service requires a letter from the state/territory child protection agency stating that the protection order is still current. of the protection order. The subsidy is paid directly to the approved child care service.

Foster and kinship carers can speak to the child's case manager about accessing child care.

For further information see [Additional child care subsidy \(child wellbeing\)](https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/additional-child-care-subsidy-child-wellbeing-0) on the Department of Education and Training website <<https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook/additional-child-care-subsidy-child-wellbeing-0>>.

Concessions

Concessions

The Victorian Government offers a number of concessions designed to assist and improve the affordability of essential services for low-income households who hold an eligible Commonwealth Government concession card. This may include concessions for council rates, water, electricity and gas bills, as well as public transport.

For further information, contact the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services Concessions Information Line on 1300 650 172 or see [Concessions and benefits](#) on the Services website <<http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits>>.

Victorian government carer card

Carers in receipt of a care allowance through the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services are eligible for a Victorian Carer Card. The card provides access to a wide range of discounts and benefits. Cardholders are also entitled to free travel on public transport on Sunday plus two return off-peak travel vouchers each year.

For further information, contact the Carer Card Information Line on 1800 901 958 or visit the [Carer Card](#) website <<http://carercard.vic.gov.au/>>.

Disability

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

All eligible Victorians now have access to the The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary supports that help people with disabilities aged 0-64 to reach their goals, objectives and aspirations in a range of areas, such as education, employment, social participation, independence, living arrangements and health and wellbeing.

People with a disability who meet the NDIS access requirements receive funded supports and an individual plan.

For further information about the NDIS call 1800 800 110 visit the [NDIS](#) website <<https://ndis.gov.au/index.html>>.

Speak to the child or young person's child protection worker or case manager to discuss disability supports and accessing the NDIS.

Child disability assistance payment

An annual payment to assist parents and carers with the costs of caring for a child or young person with a disability or serious illness. Eligible recipients can receive a payment of up to \$1,000 for each child in their care.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Child Disability Assistance Payment](#) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-disability-assistance-payment#a1>>.

Continence aids payment scheme

Provides a payment to assist eligible people who have permanent and severe incontinence to meet some of the costs of their incontinence products. Eligible recipients can receive up to \$609.70 which will be indexed annually.

For further information, contact Medicare on 13 20 11 or visit [Continence aids payment scheme](#) on the Bladder Bowel website <<http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au/caps>>.

Disability initiative in the permanent care program

Permanent carers may access discretionary grants to assist with the costs of caring for a child or young person with a disability or developmental delay. The maximum amount payable for any one child per year is \$5,000.

For further information, contact Permanent Care Services closest to you. Contact details can be found on [Permanent Care Contacts](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/permanent-care-services-contacts) on the Services Providers website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/permanent-care-services-contacts>>

Young people may be eligible for the Disability Support Pension if they are aged 16 years or over, and have an illness, injury or disability that prevents them from working.

Payment rates are updated on 20 March and 20 September in each year for those 21 and over with or without children, or under 21 with children.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Centrelink Disability Support Pension](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-support-pension) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-support-pension>>.

Electronic communication devices scheme

A state-wide service which supports people with a disability who have no speech, or speech that is difficult to understand, to buy speech generating devices and software.

For further information, contact Yooralla on (03) 9362 6111 or visit [Electronic communication devices scheme](http://www.yooralla.com.au/services/Communication-and-Assistive-Technology/electronic-communication-devices-scheme) on their website <<http://www.yooralla.com.au/services/Communication-and-Assistive-Technology/electronic-communication-devices-scheme>>.

Mobility allowance

Assists people aged 16 years of older with disabilities who are working, looking for work, or training and cannot use public transport without substantial assistance. The standard rate for the Mobility Allowance is \$97.90 per fortnight. A higher rate of \$136.90. per fortnight is available to people receiving the Disability Support Pension, Parenting Payment, Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance as a job seeker.

For further information, contact Commonwealth Department of Human Services on 13 61 50 or visit [Mobility allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/mobility-allowance) on their website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/mobility-allowance>>.

Home owner and renter support

A range of support services relating to housing, assisting people who need help with their mortgage or rent and helps find emergency accommodation for those who need it.

For further information, contact the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services on 1800 134 872 or visit [Home owner and renter support](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/home-owner-and-renter-support) on their website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/home-owner-and-renter-support>>.

State wide equipment program

Provides people who have a permanent or long-term disability or who are frail or aged with subsidised aids, equipment, and vehicle and home modifications. To determine eligibility and requirements, a Statewide Equipment Program (SWEP) registered prescriber conducts an assessment. Subsidies to cover the costs of equipment differ depending on the device required.

For further information, contact the SWEP on 1300 747 937 or visit [State wide equipment program](http://swep.bhs.org.au) website <<http://swep.bhs.org.au>>.

Youth disability supplement

Provides extra assistance to young people from 16 years of age with a disability and on an income support payment. The current maximum rate of Youth Disability Supplement is \$129.80 per fortnight.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Youth disability supplement](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-disability-supplement) on the Commonwealth Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-disability-supplement>>.

Education

ABSTUDY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are studying or undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship may be eligible to receive ABSTUDY to assist with living expenses, school expenses, equipment and travel fares. The amount of ABSTUDY received depends on a person's circumstances such as study load, the course studied and the individual's age.

For further information, contact the Centrelink ABSTUDY line on 1800 132 317 and ask for an Indigenous Contact Officer or visit [ABSTUDY](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/abstudy>>.

Assistance for isolated children

Assists families with the extra costs associated with educating their children where the child cannot attend an appropriate state school because of geographical isolation, disability or special needs. The current rates are:

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme Allowance	Maximum payment rate
Boarding Allowance (Basic and Additional)	\$10,838 per year, made up of two components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8,422 – basic • \$2,416 – additional (subject to parental income and actual boarding costs).
Second Home Allowance	\$245.36 per fortnight, per child
Distance Education Allowance	\$4,211 per year.
Assistance for Isolated Children Pensioner Education Supplement	\$62.40 per fortnight – for students aged under 21 years receiving Disability Support Pension or Parenting Payment (single) and studying at primary level.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Assistance for isolated children](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children?utm_id=7) on the Human Services website <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children?utm_id=7>.

Camps, sports and excursions fund

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or students residing in out-of-home care are eligible to apply. The community service organisation (agency) or the Department of Health and Human Services are eligible to make an application on behalf of the student which will be processed as 'Special Consideration' category applications.

\$125 per year will be paid for eligible primary school students, with \$225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit [Camps sports and excursions](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx?Redirect=1) on their website <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx?Redirect=1>>.

Early start kindergarten (ESK)

Free kindergarten programs for children who turn three years old by 30 April in the year they will be attending kindergarten and who are children known to child protection (including those referred directly from child protection to Child FIRST) or are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit [Early start kindergarten](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx) on their website
<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/Pages/earlystart.aspx>>.

Kindergarten fee subsidy

Supports eligible children to attend kindergarten for 15 hours per week at no cost.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit [Kindergarten funding](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx) on their website
<<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx>>.

Program for students with disabilities

A targeted supplementary funding program to provide a range of supports and initiatives to assist state school students with disabilities.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Service Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit [Program for students with disabilities](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/studentwithdisability.aspx) on their website
<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/studentwithdisability.aspx>>.

Skills First Youth Access Initiative

Young people who are or have been subject to a child protection order or youth justice order can have their tuition paid. Young people must be under 22 years old on 1 January of the year they start studying and must study an accredited course at an approved provider.

For further information speak to the young person's case manager, telephone the TAFE and Training Line on 13 1 8 23 or visit [Skills First Youth Access Initiative](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx) on the Department of Education and Training website
<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Skills-First-Youth-Access-Initiative.aspx>>.

State schools relief

A charity that can provide students attending government schools with non-branded school clothing and footwear free of charge or subsidise branded uniform items. Books, calculators and stationery are also available.

For further information, contact the school in the first instance or visit [State schools relief](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/stateschoolsrelief.aspx) on the Department of Education and Training website
<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/stateschoolsrelief.aspx>>.

Student scholarships

A range of different scholarships are available for primary, secondary and tertiary students.

For further information, contact the Department of Education and Training Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit [student scholarships](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/default.aspx) on the Student Scholarships website
<<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/default.aspx>>.

Family assistance

Carer payment (child)

Provides income support to parents and carers who are unable to support themselves through paid employment because of the demands of their caring role for a child or young person under 16 years of age with a severe disability or medical condition.

For further information and current payment rates contact the Centrelink Carer's Line on 13 27 17 or visit [Carer payment](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/carer-payment) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/carer-payment>>.

Commonwealth carer allowance (child)

A supplementary payment to parents and carers who provide daily care and attention at home for a child aged under 16 years with a physical or intellectual disability or medical condition. The Commonwealth Carer Allowance when caring for a child under 16 years is either a fortnightly payment of \$129.80 and a Health Care Card for the child, or a Health Care Card for the child depending on the particular needs of the child. The current Commonwealth Carer Allowance when caring for a person 16 years or over is \$127.10 per fortnight.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Carer's Line on 13 27 17.

Carer adjustment payment

A one-off payment when a child under seven years of age is diagnosed with a severe illness, severe medical condition has a major disability because of a catastrophic event. The maximum amount of Carer Adjustment Payment any family can receive is \$10,000 for each child for a single catastrophic event.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Carer's Line on 13 27 17 or visit [Care adjustment payment](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/carer-adjustment-payment) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/carer-adjustment-payment>>.

Dad and partner pay

Supports fathers or partners caring for a newborn or recently adopted child with up to two weeks government-funded pay based on the rate of the National Minimum Wage. Dad and Partner Pay is currently \$740.60 per week before tax.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Dad and partner pay](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/dad-and-partner-pay) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/dad-and-partner-pay>>.

Double Orphan Pension

Helps with the costs of caring for orphaned children or children who are unable to be cared for by their parents or have died. The current payment rate is \$65.10 per fortnight and is not taxed.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Double orphan pension](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/double-orphan-pension) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/double-orphan-pension>>.

Family tax benefit A and B

Income tested payments to help families (including carers) with the cost of raising children. The amount of Family Tax Benefit Part A and B received by families depends on family income, the number of children in a family, and how old they are.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Family tax benefit](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/family-tax-benefit) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/family-tax-benefit>>.

Newborn upfront payment and newborn supplement

A lump sum and an increase to a Family Tax Benefit Part A payment when you start caring for a baby or child that has recently come into your care. The amount of Newborn Upfront Payment and Newborn Supplement depends on your family’s income and how many children you have.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Newborn upfront payment and newborn supplement](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newborn-upfront-payment-and-newborn-supplement) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newborn-upfront-payment-and-newborn-supplement>>.

Newstart allowance

Financial assistance for people looking for work while they undertake activities that may increase their chances of finding employment.

Current Newstart allowance rates are:

If you are	Maximum fortnightly payment
Single, no children	\$559.0
Single, with a dependent child or children	\$604.70
Single, aged 60 or over, after nine continuous months on payment	\$604.70
Partnered (each)	\$504.70
Single principal carer granted an exemption from mutual obligation requirements for either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster caring • non-parent relative caring under a court order • home schooling • distance education • large family. 	\$780.7

For further information, contact the Centrelink Jobseekers Line on 13 28 50 or visit [New Start Allowance](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newstart-allowance) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/newstart-allowance>>.

Parenting payment

A payment to eligible principal carers of a child to help with the cost of caring for them. Current rates are:

Family situation	Maximum fortnightly payment
Single	\$780.70 (includes the pension supplement)
Couple	\$504.7
Couple, separated due to illness, respite care, or prison	\$604.7

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50

Rent assistance

Provides financial help to eligible people who pay rent and receive a Centrelink payment. Payment rates for rent assistance depend on an individual’s circumstances.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Rent assistance](#) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/rent-assistance>>.

Single income family supplement

An annual payment of up to \$300 to help eligible households.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Single income family supplement](#) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/single-income-family-supplement>>.

Telephone allowance

Assists with the costs of a telephone and home internet service for those in receipt of certain Commonwealth Government benefits. The current basic rate for this payment is \$30.20 per quarter, and the higher rate is \$44.60.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50.

Utilities allowance

Assists to help meet the costs of regular bills such as gas, electricity and water for those in receipt of certain Commonwealth Government benefits. The current allowance rates are:

- Single – \$161.10 per quarter.
- Couple – \$80.55 per quarter for each eligible member of a couple.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Utilities allowance](#) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/utilities-allowance>>.

Victorian managed insurance authority insurance

The Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) is the insurer for the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, which has established a Volunteer Care Givers insurance cover. It applies to home-based care arrangements where there is active child protection involvement, and provides cover where, during a period of care, a child or young person causes damage to your property, either through accident, theft or malice.

If you need to make a claim, speak to your agency or child protection where there is no agency involved about this process or contact the VMIA. Call (03) 9270 6900 or email contact@vmia.vic.gov.au.

For further information, visit the [VMIA](#) website <<http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au/>>.

Youth allowance

Assists young people aged 16 to 24 years who are studying full time, undertaking a full time Australian Apprenticeship, training, looking for work or sick. The amount of Youth Allowance received depends on a person's circumstances.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Students and Trainees Line on 13 24 90.

Health

Ambulance

All holders of Health Care Cards and Pensioner Concession Cards, and children and young people subject to a Family Reunification, Interim Accommodation, Care by Secretary or Long Term Care Order are entitled to free, clinically necessary ambulance travel anywhere in Australia. This covers all emergency transport treatment and non-emergency transport on the recommendation of a doctor to the nearest and most appropriate hospital.

For further information, contact Ambulance Victoria on (03) 9840 3500 or visit the [Ambulance Victoria](http://www.ambulance.vic.gov.au) website <www.ambulance.vic.gov.au>.

Better access to psychiatrists, psychologists and general practitioners

Provides improved access to mental health practitioners through Medicare. Under this initiative, Medicare Benefits Schedule rebates are available to patients for selected mental health services.

For further information, contact Medicare on 132 011 or visit [Better Access](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/enablers/education-guide-better-access-mental-health-care-general-practitioners-and-allied-health) on the Human Services website <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/enablers/education-guide-better-access-mental-health-care-general-practitioners-and-allied-health>.

Child dental benefits schedule

Under the schedule, eligible children aged 2 to 17 years can access a range of basic dental services range up to \$1,000 per child over a consecutive two year period.

For further information, contact Medicare on 132 011 or visit [Child dental benefits schedule](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule) on the Human Services website <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule>.

Dental health services Victoria

General dental

In Victoria, all children and young people up to the age of 18 years in out-of-home care have priority access to public dental services, which means they are offered the next available appointment for general care and are not placed on a wait list. All children and young people in out-of-home care, including kinship and permanent care, are exempt from fees and are not required to present a Health Care Card to receive free treatment.

Additionally, all children and young people may be eligible for free general dental care at one of the many public dental teaching clinics across Victoria.

For further information on the cost for public dental services, contact 1300 360 054 or 1800 833 039 (country areas only) or visit the [Dental Health Services Victoria](http://www.dhsv.org.au) website <www.dhsv.org.au>.

Orthodontic treatment

Public orthodontic treatment is also available at The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne for children and young people in out-of-home care when specific requirements are met.

For further information please call the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne on (03) 9341 1000 or 1800 833 039 (country callers) or visit the [Dental Health Services Victoria](https://www.dhsv.org.au/dental-health/teeth-tips-and-facts/orthodontics) website <https://www.dhsv.org.au/dental-health/teeth-tips-and-facts/orthodontics>

Health care card

Entitles individuals to cheaper medicine and some other concessions. All children in foster or kinship care are eligible for a Health Care Card in their own name. Permanent carers and special needs local adoptive parents may be eligible for another type of concession or health care card.

For further information, contact the Centrelink Families Line on 13 61 50 or visit [Concession and health care cards](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/concession-and-health-care-cards) on the Human Services website <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/subjects/concession-and-health-care-cards>.

Medicare

A child placed in out-of-home care remains eligible for services funded through Medicare on presentation of a valid Medicare card or number.

For further information, contact Medicare Australia on 13 20 11 or visit [Medicare](#) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/medicare>>.

Medicare safety net

Provides families and children, including children in care, with financial assistance for high out-of-pocket costs for out of hospital Medicare Benefits Schedule services.

For further information, contact Medicare Australia on 132 011 or visit [Medicare safety net](#) on the Human Services website <<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-safety-net>>.

Pharmaceutical allowance

Provides families and children, including children in care, with financial assistance for high out-of-pocket costs for prescription medicines.

For further information, contact the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme on 132 290 or visit [Pharmaceutical allowance](#) on the Human Services website <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pharmaceutical-allowance>>.

Leaving care

Home Stretch Flexible Funding

Home Stretch is an offer under the Better Futures model to help young people in care transition to independent living by extending their existing supports up to the age of 21.

Home Stretch flexible funding is available to the young person to assist with expenses for education, employment, health (not covered by Medicare), and activities which assist their transition to independence. Carers and the young person can talk to their Better Futures worker about brokerage and how it can assist the young person's goals for independence.

For further information, call the Leaving Care Hotline on 1300 532 846 or visit the [Leaving care support programs page](#) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/leaving-care>>.

Transition to independent living allowance

One-off Commonwealth Government payment of up to \$1,500 to assist eligible young people who are leaving care to meet some of the costs involved in moving from out-of-home care to independent living. The payment is available as a lump sum or up to six instalments.

For further information, email [Transition to independent living allowance](#) <tila@dss.gov.au> program office, or visit [Families and children](#) on the Department of Social Services website <<http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila>>.

In Victoria, the application process is managed by Melbourne City Mission. For further information, and to apply, email [Melbourne City Mission](#) <tila@mcm.org.au>, or contact by phone on the Leaving Care Hotline 1300 532 846, or visit the [Melbourne City Mission](#) website <[http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-\(tila\)](http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/services/program-detail/transition-into-independent-living-allowance-(tila))>.

Transport

Conveyance allowance program

A form of financial assistance for parents and carers to transport children and young people to and from school in rural and regional Victoria. The allowance is also available for students to attend their nearest recognised special school or specialist setting.

For further information in relation to eligibility for a conveyance allowance, the school should be contacted in the first instance. If enquiries cannot be resolved at school level, email the [Department of Education and Training Family Payments Unit](mailto:conveyance@edumail.vic.gov.au) <conveyance@edumail.vic.gov.au> or visit [Conveyance allowance program](#) on the Department of Education and Training website <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/transport/Pages/conveyance.aspx>>.

School bus program

An extensive school bus network that provides travel at no cost to eligible government and non-government students living in rural and regional Victoria.

The school bus network is administered by Public Transport Victoria. For further information, contact Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007 or visit [Student transport](#) on the Department of Education and Training website <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/transport/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>>.

Students with disabilities and transport program

Students attending government specialist schools may be eligible for transport support. This is usually in the form of access to a free bus or a conveyance allowance (see above).

For further information and to discuss eligibility for the program, the school should be contacted in the first instance or visit [Students with disabilities and transport program](#) on the Department of Education and Training website <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/transport/Pages/sdtransport.aspx>>.

Victorian public transport concessions/student pass

All children 16 years and under can travel on public transport at a concession rate without the need for a concession card. Students aged 17 and over must carry a Victorian Public Transport Concession Card to travel on concession fares. Further discounted travel is available for students with the purchase of a Victorian Student Pass or Regional Transit Student Pass.

Holders of a current Pensioner Concession Card can buy concession fares. Primary holders of a Health Care Card with a Victorian address can also receive concession fares.

Pensioner Concession Card holders from Victoria who receive a Disability Support Pension or a Commonwealth Carer Payment can apply for free weekend travel. Applicants complete a form, and if eligible, they receive a free Myki which contains a free weekend travel entitlement.

For further information, contact Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007 or visit [Concession](#) on the Public Transport Victoria website <<http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/>>.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone the Allowances Helpdesk on 1300 552 319 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Caregivers](mailto:caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <caregivers.mgt@dhhs.vic.gov.au>

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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

Available at [Support for home based carers in Victoria page](#) on the Services website <<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/support-home-based-carers-victoria>>