

## Brokerage Procedure

### 1. Purpose

This procedure provides detailed guidance about the brokerage process for Inala Community House (ICH) Out of Home Care (OHC).

### 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, students and volunteers within ICH OHC. For the purpose of this procedure, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

### 3. Definitions

**Child:** A child is an individual under 18 years (*Child Protection Act 1999*).

**Carer:** A carer refers to both an approved foster carer and an approved kinship carer.

**Foster Carer:** A general carer approved by the Department to care for a child in out of home care.

**Kinship Carer:** A person related to the child or a member of a child's community and considered family or a close friend who is approved by the Department to care for child in out of home care.

**The Act:** The Act refers to the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*.

**The Department** refers to the Queensland Government Department responsible for Family Services programs and/or Child Protection or Child Safety.

**Brokerage or flexi funding** refers to ICH OHC purchasing goods or services to meet the needs of carers or children to help establish new placements or stabilise existing placements, in alignment with the Qld Out of Home Care Outcomes Framework.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Determining brokerage requirements

ICH OHC Caseworkers play a pivotal role in working with the Department and other stakeholders to assist and support foster and kinship carers to help achieve the goal and outcomes of the child's case plan. A key part of this is to provide support, which includes education/training, emotional support, coordination of respite, other practical assistance and facilitate financial support where required (refer to ICH OHC Caseworker Guide for further information about the role of a Caseworker).

Financial support can be made available through brokerage (flexi funding) that can be used to procure a range of supports for a child or carer to help establish or stabilise a placement. Note that where appropriate, other available supports should also be pursued, such as GIVIT, options for low cost and free food, charity stores and/or Child Safety payments.

A carer or child may approach the ICH Caseworker with a specific brokerage request, or the ICH Caseworker may identify a brokerage need. Informal assessment is a continual part of the ICH OHC caseworker's role and underpins ongoing casework with the carer. ICH OHC caseworkers must prioritise urgent brokerage requests/needs that are required to meet fundamental placement needs.

All brokerage requests/needs must be justified and align with domains from the Qld Out of Home Care Outcomes Framework, which forms part of the approval process (refer 4.3):

- Safe and Nurtured
- Connected
- Achieving
- Healthy
- Resilient.

### 4.2 Brokerage delegations

A small budget is available each year for expenditure on ICH OHC placement related expenses and on justifiable client needs (refer to the Department's Investment Specification).

Brokerage delegations include:

- **Single expenditure spend of \$25 or less** - no prior approval required. Splitting of a single expenditure to have the costs fall below the \$25 maximum is not permitted.
- **Single expenditure spend over \$25** – prior approval required. ICH workers will make a recommendation to the ICH OHC Manager who will approve the purchase if deemed appropriate.

#### 4.3 Requesting and approving brokerage

Ideally, all brokerage requests over \$25 should be submitted to the ICH OHC Manager through PowerApps. Through this process, ICH OHC workers must provide sufficient detail for the Manager to understand specifically what the brokerage will be used for and any relevant purchasing logistics. ICH OHC workers must also demonstrate how the brokerage request aligns with the QLD Out of Home Care Outcomes Framework. In some instances, the Manager may request further information or another quote for larger purchases.

In circumstances where approval is sought within short timeframes (e.g., the worker is in the field with the carer and/or child, and a brokerage need is immediately evident), the worker can text or phone the ICH OHC Manager and seek verbal approval, and then follow up with the formal request via PowerApps upon return to the office.

#### 4.4 Payment of goods or services

There are three options to pay for brokerage items:

1. **Using the ICH OHC team's debit card**
  - ICH OHC Workers can request access to ICH debit cards held by the ICH OHC Manager and Senior Case Worker. These positions are responsible for the cards, which are kept in locked safety boxes.
  - ICH OHC Workers can then use the card to make brokerage purchases e.g., through an online supplier, over the phone or in person at a retail shop.
  - The ICH OHC Debit Card Use Form that is kept with the debit card **MUST** be completed by the worker using the card. This helps to monitor when the card was taken, the purpose and when it was returned.
2. **Arranging payment via invoice**
  - Some suppliers may agree to invoice ICH directly for the brokerage item.
  - The ICH OHC caseworker should email the invoice to the OHC Manager, who will forward it to the Finance team for processing.

- Refer to the ICH Finance Policy for further information about the processing of invoices.
3. Paying with own funds and seeking reimbursement
- ICH OHC workers can choose to pay for brokerage items with their own funds (cash or card) and seek reimbursement through the ICH Finance Team.
  - Refer to the ICH Finance Policy and Receipt Submission Procedure for further guidance.

#### 4.5 Record keeping

**Tax receipts and invoices must be obtained for any expense for a service user or approved workplace related expenditure, whether under or over \$25.**

The ICH OHC worker must write on the receipt/invoice the following details:

- Case Worker Name
- Client surname as recorded on SRS
- OHC (to identify the service)
- A description of what was purchased

Where the purchase is over \$25 and ICH OHC Manager approval is required, the approval email must be submitted with the tax receipt/invoice.

These receipts/invoices must be provided directly to ICH Reception via email [reception@ich.org.au](mailto:reception@ich.org.au) by close of business each Friday.

All purchases must fully comply with ICH policies and procedures related to purchasing and debit card use. Refer to the ICH Finance Policy and Receipt Submission Procedure.

The ICH OHC Manager monitors brokerage transactions, regardless of the amount, to ensure they fall within the Investment Specification expenditure per year and/or per month allocation. The ICH OHC Manager also conducts checks to make sure that expenditure splitting is not occurring.

## 5. Review

This procedure shall be reviewed every two years.

## 6. Related Documents

### **Policies**

ICH OHC Supporting Placement Policy  
ICH Finance Policy

### **Procedure**

ICH Receipt Submission Procedure

### **Forms**

ICH OHC Debit Card Use

### **Other**

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)  
Qld Human Services Quality Framework  
Relevant Departmental Investment Specification