



South East Queensland and New South Wales Flood Support Payment

Frequently asked questions

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Overview

What are Flood Support Payments?

Flood Support Payments are a one-off grant of \$10,000 per service for services impacted by flooding in South East Queensland and New South Wales between February and April 2022.

The aim of the financial support is to help services with the additional costs of the disaster, including cleaning, repairs and wages, while revenue is being impacted by children not attending. In conjunction with other emergency support for the ECEC sector, such as gap fee waivers and additional absences, this support gives providers more flexibility to help impacted families and the initial clean-up of services in the short term.

Eligibility

Who is eligible?

Services are eligible if the service:

- was located in an area subject to a Local Area Emergency (LAE) (offers are only being sent to providers who have services in LAE areas)
- was closed, or partially closed, for eight or more days during a declared LAE as a result of the flood events in NSW and South East Queensland
- waived gap fees for all absent children during the closure or partial closure during the LAE period
- is a CCS-eligible service
- agrees to prioritise places for flood-affected children and families when they return to care, with consideration to Priority of Access Guidelines.

Can I waive gap fees retrospectively in order to receive this support?

Yes – services can retrospectively waive gap fees for families where the service has been closed, in order to be eligible for this support. It is a requirement gap fees are waived for all absent children for at least eight or more days while the centre was closed or partially closed during the LAE.

Are all service types eligible?

Yes – all four service types (Centre Based Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care) will be eligible, where they are deemed to be located in an LAE-declared area.

Centre Based Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services located in a LAE will receive an application.

For Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC), the physical location of the head office of the service will be considered as part of the eligibility criteria. One Flood Support Payment will be paid per service, with the expectation this financial support will be shared with affected educators employed/contracted by the service.

Where a large number of educators provide a service through a FDC or IHC arrangement, the service will be able to apply for additional support through the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances program.

What constitutes a partial closure?

Partial closures may include the following:

- One or more rooms in a service have been closed/are not operating due to damage or safety concerns, including where the service cannot meet the required staff to child ratios.
- An FDC educator had to close/not provide care for eight or more days due to flooding and where closure (i.e. reduction in service) was appropriately reported to and by the service.
- An IHC educator cannot provide care for eight or more days due to flooding (e.g. in a family's home) and an application for care at an alternate location has been rejected by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

Providers approved under the National Law are required to report partial closures, i.e. an incident causing the service to reduce the number of children attending. Under Regulation 175 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, approved providers must make notifications about these incidents to their Regulatory Authority via the NQA ITS or by contacting the Regulator Authority directly.

Does my service need to be flooded / damaged to be eligible?

No – your service does not need to be damaged to be eligible for the Flood Support Payment, though it is anticipated that many services closed for eight or more days will have been damaged or unable to meet NQF staff to child ratios due to local community impacts.

How will the closure days be counted?

Your service needs to be closed for eight or more days during the LAE period to be eligible for the Flood Support Payment. Closures will be deemed to meet the eligibility condition if it is:

- Eight or more consecutive days during declared LAE. The days may include days the service does not ordinarily operate, such as weekends and public holidays, but the closure must commence on a day the service normally operates.
- A total of eight or more days (whether consecutive or not) on which the service would ordinarily operate during the declared LAE.

Please note, some services may be located in a flood-affected area that has been subject to more than one LAE since 23 February 2022. In such locations, services closures across the two (or more) LAEs are cumulative i.e. If a service is closed for four days of ordinary operation in the first LAE and four days of ordinary operation across the subsequent LAE, it will be deemed eligible.

For more guidance about closure periods, please refer to the [scenarios below](#).

My service is new, will it be eligible for support?

Yes – new CCS-eligible services will receive support if they meet the [eligibility criteria](#) so long as their CCS approval commenced before or during the declared LAE period.

Your new service will also be eligible if it was due to open for CCS-approved care during the period of LAE but had to postpone opening by eight or more days due to flood-related impacts.

Please be aware, there may be a delay in new services receiving their offer. If you have not received an invitation by 30 March 2022, please email ECECEmergencyManagement@dese.gov.au.

My service ownership has just been transferred, will it be eligible for support?

Yes – each eligible service will receive an offer for the Flood Support Payment.

There may be a lag between changes in a provider's approval status for a service, when a service is transferred from one provider (the former provider) to another provider (the receiving provider). If the Flood Support Payment has already been made to the former provider prior to the transfer being finalised, there will be no adjustment to account for these circumstances. This will be a matter for providers to resolve.

Am I eligible for support if my service was closed because of non-attendance (i.e. empty)?

Yes – if all children enrolled in your service are unable to attend for eight or more days, for example, due to road closures, flood-affected homes, temporary relocation or transport limitations, your service will be eligible for support.

However, where it is safe to do so, your service should remain open and should not refuse access to already-enrolled children requiring care.

Is my OSHC service eligible if it was closed due to the school/s being flooded?

Yes – if your OSHC service provides care for children from a flood-affected school/s and children enrolled in your service are unable to attend for eight or more days, your service will be eligible for support.

However, where it is safe to do so, your service should remain open and should not refuse access to already-enrolled children requiring care.

If my service has been closed for a reason other than the floods, will it be eligible?

No – this support is specifically in place to provide timely financial assistance to flood-affected services in declared LAE areas for reasons related to the flooding, including repairing damage to property, replacing resources, cleaning or inability to meet staff to child ratios due to the flooding.

Accessing the support

How will services be invited to apply?

Applications for services in eligible areas will be sent to providers. Applications will be emailed to the provider-level email address registered in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

The email will contain a weblink to a DocuSign form, which sets out instructions for opting in to receive the payment. Providers must opt-in for each service they operate.

Please check your provider-level email address and/or your junk mail.

If your service is in an area that has recently been subject to a further LAE in relation to the SEQ-NSW flood events and is now eligible for the payment, you need to find the email sent to you earlier in March to apply.

If you can't find the email, please email ECECEmergencyManagement@dese.gov.au with your provider name and CRN and service name and CRN details.

Providers have until 11.59pm on 30 April 2022 to accept the offer by completing and submitting the DocuSign form.

How and when will payments be made?

Payment can be made once eligible services have completed and submitted the DocuSign form and the Department has completed the mandatory compliance review.

Payments will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the CCSS, which has been used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details in the CCSS are up to date.

Payments will be made within two weeks of receiving the completed DocuSign form.

My service is in an LAE-declared area but has not received an offer – what do I do?

If your service meets the above eligibility criteria, please first check your provider-level email address in the CCSS and check your junk mail for the offer. Your email offer was sent shortly after your area was declared an LAE in response to the February – March 2022 flood event.

Please note, there may be a delay in extending offers to new services.

Once you have confirmed you have not received an offer, please email ECECEmergencyManagement@dese.gov.au requesting an application form.

Does the payment affect my service accessing other government support?

No – receiving the Flood Support Payment does not limit your eligibility to apply for and receive a CCCF Special Circumstances grant. However, the Flood Support Payment will be taken into consideration during the CCCF assessment process.

Applying for or receiving other state and territory or Australian Government support for businesses or individuals does not affect your eligibility for Flood Support Payments. However, providers/services should review and consider whether receiving the Flood Support Payments affects your eligibility for other government grants and supports, e.g. State and Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Small Business Grants.

Other questions

How do Flood Support Payments affect my revenue for GST purposes?

For a provider, Flood Support Payments are similar to Child Care Subsidy, in that they are not considered as revenue for GST purposes. Where some of this revenue is then passed on to FDC and IHC educators (based on contractual arrangements between the service and the educator) these monies are considered as revenue for GST purposes.

What does it mean to ‘prioritise places for flood-affected children and families when they return to care’?

Services are asked to prioritise places for children already enrolled in their service when they return to care after the flood event. Services are to take into consideration families who might not be able to access the service or who have to temporarily relocate due to the floods and ensure they are able to return to care when they are ready.

When prioritising places for flood-affected children and families, providers are asked to (but are not legally obliged to) continue to prioritise children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

Do I have to spend the Flood Support Payment on specific activities and will expenditure need to be reconciled?

No – while the Flood Support Payment is designed to support costs resulting from flood-related closures, such as cleaning, repairs and wages, there is no requirement to spend the support on any of these activities or provide evidence about how the Flood Support Payment was expended.

My service was closed for less than eight days but has incurred financial costs due to the flood event – what do I do?

If your service viability is impacted as a result of the flood event, your service may be eligible for a CCCF Special Circumstances grant. More information is available on our website at [Community Child Care Fund – Special Circumstances](#).

What if this grant is not sufficient to cover flood-related costs and/or make my business financially viable?

If your service viability is impacted as a result of the flood event, your service may be eligible for a CCCF Special Circumstances grant. More information is available on our website at [Community Child Care Fund – Special Circumstances](#).

How do I know if my service is in an LAE-declared area?

Areas declared by the department to be in a LAE are listed [on our website](#).

If LAEs are declared on or after 11 March 2022, offers will be sent out within two weeks of the LAE being declared.

Where do I have to report my service closure as evidence of eligibility to receive the Flood Support Payment?

You are required to report any incidents resulting in service closures and reductions to your Regulatory Authority (RA) through the NQA ITS or by contacting the RA directly. You are also required to report a full service closure in the Provider Entry Portal (PEP) or your third-party software.

Scenarios

Partial closures

Scenario 1: Partial closures – room closures

A child care service in Ipswich was completely closed from Monday 28 February up to and including Thursday 3 March 2022 due to the flood event. When the service reopened on Friday, the kindergarten and pre-kindergarten rooms remained closed due to water damage. These two rooms remained closed until Thursday 10 March 2022. The service reported the closure of these two rooms (reduction in service) on NQA ITS.

As the service was closed or partially closed for 11 days (including one weekend), it is eligible for the Flood Support Payment, so long as it meets the other payment conditions.

Scenario 2: Partial closures – family day care

The head office for a Family Day Care service in Lismore closed from Tuesday 1 March up to and including Thursday 3 March 2022 due to the flood event. The service reopened on Friday 4 March 2022. However, two of the Family Day Care educators employed by the service were closed from Monday 28 March to Wednesday 9 March 2022 due to their homes being flooded.

The educators being unable to care for children constitutes a partial closure. As the service was partially closed for 10 consecutive days, it is eligible for the Flood Support Payment, so long as the partial closure has been properly reported and it meets the other payment conditions.

Consecutive and non-consecutive days of closure

Scenario 3: Centre closures – consecutive days

A child care service in Lismore closed on Monday 28 February 2022 due to the flood event. The service was completely closed up to and including Monday 7 March 2022. It did not reopen until Tuesday 8 March 2022.

As the service was closed for eight consecutive days (including one weekend) and the closure commenced on a normal day of operation, it is eligible for the Flood Support Payment, so long as it meets the other payment conditions.

Scenario 4: Centre closures – non-consecutive days

A child care service in Brisbane was closed from Monday 28 February 2022 up to and including Friday 4 March 2022 due to the flood event. It reopened on Monday 7 March 2022.

As the service was only closed for seven consecutive days (including one weekend), it is **not** eligible for the Flood Support Payment. The service cannot claim to have commenced the closure on Saturday 26 February as it does not usually operate on weekends.

Scenario 5: Closures and partial closures – consecutive days

A child care service in Gympie was completely closed from Tuesday 1 March 2022 up to and including Friday 4 March 2022 due to the flood event. When it reopened on Monday 7 March 2022, two of its rooms remained closed due to water damage to the ceiling. The two rooms were not repaired and reopened until Thursday 10 March 2022.

As the service was closed or partially closed for 11 days (including one weekend), it is eligible for the Flood Support Payment, so long as it meets the other payment conditions.

Scenario 6: Closures and partial closures – non-consecutive days

A child care service in Ipswich was completely closed from Monday 28 February to Wednesday 2 March 2022 due to the flood event. It reopened on Thursday 3 March 2022. After more rainfall over the weekend, the service closed again on Tuesday 8 March until Thursday 10 March, reopening on Friday 11 March. Unfortunately, further damage was identified in the nursery on Sunday 13 March and the room was closed until Thursday 17 March.

As the service was closed or partially closed for nine days (non-consecutive, and Sunday 13 March not being counted as that closure started on a day the service didn't normally operate), it is eligible for the Food Support Payment, so long as it meets the other payment conditions.

Scenario 7: Closures and partial closures – non-consecutive days across LAEs

A child care service in Byron Bay was completely closed from Monday 28 February to Wednesday 2 March 2022 due to the flood event. It reopened on Thursday 3 March 2022. Following a subsequent flood event and LAE declaration, the service was closed from Tuesday 29 March until Monday 4 April before reopening on Tuesday 5 April 2022.

As the service was closed or partially closed for eight days (non-consecutive) during an LAE period, it is eligible for the Food Support Payment, so long as it meets the other payment conditions.