

Media Release

The Hon Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Thursday, 23 April 2020

MORE SUPPORT TO KEEP FAMILIES AND CHILDREN SAFE

Foster and kinship carers will receive a one-off \$600 payment for every child they care for, as part of a package of support from the Victorian Government for some of our state's most in-need children and families.

Minister for Child Protection Luke Donnellan today announced an additional \$77.5 million over the next two years to support some of Victoria's most at-risk children by bolstering the staff, resources and services available to them.

The coronavirus pandemic is placing immense pressure on these families as well as the frontline workers who support them, including financial challenges, physical distancing restrictions and the potential for heightened family violence.

The package includes \$46 million to increase the capacity of family services to provide outreach support to the most vulnerable Victorian families.

In a new model of care, specialist family services teams with staff from service providers and child protection practitioners will deliver intensive and integrated support so families can immediately access the services they need, when they need them most.

The teams will also help families to access things like immunisation, childcare, kinder and school – so no child falls through the cracks. They will also help in supporting families on practical coping strategies and video conferencing technology to stay connected while 'stay at home' restrictions are in place.

Another \$11 million will provide extra financial support for carers most in need and a one-off payment of \$600 to all foster and kinship carers per child in their care to help cover the additional costs of full-time caring at home.

The investment will also go towards dedicated phone support with up-to-date advice, funding to increase much needed respite time, and increased efforts for identifying kinship options for children and young people.

Our landmark Home Stretch program will be expanded with nearly \$4 million to support all young people currently in care who are due to turn 18 before December this year. During these uncertain times, the program will allow them to keep their current foster or kinship care living arrangements or support as they transition to independence.

More than \$15 million will support residential care service providers to form mobile response teams that will bolster staff where needed and proactively respond to the needs of every young person. It will also help to ensure residential homes are properly cleaned to ensure the safety and hygiene standards needed during this crisis.

The Government will also provide workforce supports, ensuring agencies and the Department of Health and Human Services can replace frontline workers in the children and family sector if staff cannot perform their duties because of coronavirus.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Child Protection Luke Donnellan

"Every day, our foster families and kinship carers provide the most amazing support to our children and young people. Now, it's our turn to support them."

"We're making it easier for workers on the frontline to do what they do best – supporting our children, young people and families as we get through this together."

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