

Ready Response Care Pilot

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the pilot?

Ready Response Care is a carer led pilot that allows eligible foster carers who have a Carer Connect account and a Foster Care Agreement (FCA) that supports emergency, same day and/or after-hours care arrangements to nominate their availability, in the Carer Connect App, to provide care up to one month in advance. All availability recorded by the carer is automatically shared with the carer's affiliated Care Agency and the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Service (the Department), providing real-time transparent information. Participation by carers is voluntary. The pilot will operate in every region, except Far North Queensland.

Why is the pilot being implemented?

Ready Response Care is being piloted with the aim to avoid children and young people entering short-term residential care arrangements when family-based care options may be available but remain unidentified due to the time limitations in which care arrangement requests and responses are often sought. Real-time transparent information about carer availability in Carer Connect will streamline current processes and support emergent and after-hours care arrangement requests.

Ready Response carers supporting short-term care can provide more appropriate family-based care arrangements and provide valuable time for placement services and Care Agencies to identify primary care options, including kin.

How will agencies know what carers are participating in the pilot?

Lists of eligible carers able to participate in the pilot (those with a Carer Connect account and a FCA within scope) have been shared with Care Agencies. These lists will be reviewed and updated as new carers within scope of the pilot obtain a Carer Connect account. Only these carers will be able to access the 'availability feature' in their Carer Connect account. Other carers with a Carer Connect account, but without a qualifying FCA, will not see or be able to access the availability feature in the app.

What if a carer has no capacity to take on additional care arrangements?

Participation is voluntary and carer led. Eligible carers will only be invited to nominate availability when they believe they can commit to a new care request and know the time and dates they believe they could provide care. Carers will only be contacted as part of the Ready Response Pilot if they nominate availability and only contacted about that nominated availability.

How will carers be invited to record care availability?

As a carer led pilot, carers will be able to block out times and dates they believe they will be able to respond to emergent and same day care requests. This includes the time-period, including a start and end date, they can provide care. For each period of availability, carers will be asked to confirm if they can support transport and how they would like to be contacted. Carers can provide additional directions if they wish.

Carers will be able to update, add and delete nominated availability at any time in response to their changing capacity. Carers will have autonomy and control over the information shared.

Carers will be limited to sharing availability to one month in advance, and invited to routinely check and amend information supplied to ensure it accurately reflects their capacity and availability to respond.

Opportunity for carers to access the availability feature will be promoted in the Carer Connect App noticeboard and via regular Department communication to carers promoting the Carer Connect App.

How will Care Agencies receive advice about carer availability?

Every update provided by a carer in their Carer Connect App will trigger an automatic email advice to their Care Agency. Care Agencies have supplied email accounts for this purpose.

This real-time information will support Care Agencies' regular engagement activities and assist in the identification of short-term emergent family-based care options in response to time sensitive carer arrangement requests.

Care Agencies are to provide one email per care service and can update the email account used for availability information by emailing:

familybasedcareandsupportmailbox@dcssds.qld.gov.au

How can Care Agencies support the pilot?

Agencies should support eligible carers to share and update information about their availability when they have capacity via their app noting this information is shared with both their Carer Agency and the Department.

When an agency identifies a care arrangement with information supplied by a carer through Carer Connect, this should be identified in the subsequent care arrangement response provided by the agency. This includes placement requests made during business hours and via on call arrangements outside business hours.

Where an agency has used the information but confirmed the carer is unavailable this should also be confirmed in any care arrangement response to inform the department of the avenues explored.

How will the Department use availability information provided by carers?

The Department will continue to follow all existing care arrangement request, matching and approval processes, including review of a carers' other care preferences and capacity contained in their FCA. However, upon exhausting all family based care options and prior to seeking residential care options, placement service units, including Child Safety After Hours, will consult carer availability recorded in Carer Connect Admin to identify if an emergent foster care arrangement may be explored. This will follow existing care arrangement matching policies and include advice previously received from agencies about carer availability and if such avenues have already been explored to avoid unnecessary repeat approaches.

When considered appropriate in emergent circumstances, and to avoid nonfamily-based care arrangements, placement service units may approach carers direct. The Department will only do so in response to the times and availability

nominated by the carer and still following all existing care arrangement matching and approval processes.

Care Agencies will receive confirmation of any carer arrangements made via Ready Response.

When a Ready Response care arrangement is made, the Department is to ensure it is consistent with availability nominated by the carers. A child or young person will not be left in a care arrangement beyond the time periods the carer nominates or agrees to.

How will carers be supported when their availability is used to support a carer arrangement as part of the pilot.

Care arrangements identified by Care Agencies or placement support units as being within scope of the pilot (i.e., avoiding the use of short stay residential care), will be supported with the High Support Needs Allowance and Complex Support Needs Allowance (level 3) for up to seven days. Application of additional allowance is to be approved without the need for additional assessment.

When care arrangement options are identified as within scope, advice about the application of this additional allowance will accompany normal documents prepared by placement service units prior to a care arrangement being approved.

What if a Care Agency believes a carer is over-extending themselves and promoting too much caring availability?

If Care Agencies become concerned a carer may be over-extending themselves, then agencies are encouraged to discuss this directly with the carer.

Engagement should be strength based and allow carers to reflect on their current commitments and capacity, including the positive contributions they are making to children in care. Care Agencies should also approach such engagement with the opportunity to surface if carers do in fact have additional care capacity that can be supported.

A carer's current capacity should be reflected in their FCA and amendments to their FCA can be considered as result of this engagement.

What if the carer has an open Harm report?

Carers will not be able to access their Carer Connect account or promote any availability if they are subject to an open Harm Report. When a carer is subject to an open Harm Report their Carer Connect account access is automatically withdrawn until the matter is resolved (updated in ICMS). This is an existing feature of Carer Connect.

What if a Care Agency is concerned a carer should not be approached about a new arrangement, even though the carer is nominating availability?

Where carers are limited in their capacity to accept new care arrangements, carers should be aware of these conditions, reasons, and pathway to resolution. If Care Agencies hold concerns, these should be discussed with carer, where appropriate, and notified to the regional placement services unit so a carer's participation in the pilot can be appropriately managed.

Updates to the monitoring, including communication messaging, will be made as required through these networks.

When will the pilot commence?

The update to the Carer Connect App occurred on 20 November 2023. This allowed eligible carers to begin to view the availability feature. Communication to carers is targeted at inviting carers to consider nominating availability from 4 December 2023

How long will the pilot operate?

The pilot will operate over the next 12 months and be subject to monitoring and evaluation around:

- Carer engagement, experience, and use of Carer Connect availability
- Agency utilisation of carer availability information
- Department utilisation of carer availability information
- Increased family based care first arrangements

Quarterly reports will be provided through the established Family Based Care Strategic Implementation Group and regional placement service networks supplied by Investment and Commissioning. How can a Care Agency find out more information about the pilot?

Should Care Agencies have further questions or feedback about the pilot please email:

familybasedcareandsupportmailbox@dcssds.qld.gov.au

How can a Care Agency support their carers access Carer Connect?

Cares can download Carer Connect from the [Apple store](#) or [Google Play](#) and tap the Register button and follow the on screen prompts to complete the process.

Registration can also be completed via the [Carer Connect website](#).

Carer needing support to register their Carer Connect account can email: carerconnect@csw.qld.gov.au