



# Defence families with special needs

## Defence Community Organisation

### Support for dependants with special needs

**Defence Community Organisation provides practical assistance to Defence families who have dependants with special needs, to reduce the impact of relocation and minimise any interruption to specialist services the dependant requires.**

To access any of these support services, or to find out more information, contact the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608**.

The forms needed to apply for these services are available from the DCO website.

#### **FORMAL RECOGNITION OF DEPENDANTS**

In order to receive any of the assistance and support services available, you will first need to have your dependant with special needs formally recognised by Defence.

The definition of special needs includes children and adults, and covers a wide spectrum of cases including physical, intellectual, sensory, learning or behavioural difficulties, or psychiatric illnesses or disorders. It also includes academically gifted or talented children.

All special needs must be assessed or recognised by a specialised medical practitioner or psychologist.

You can have your dependant with special needs formally recognised by Defence at any time.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANCE ON POSTING**

Once your dependant is recognised by Defence, you may be eligible to receive assistance in the event of a posting.

There are a number of support services available on posting to a new location, from a pre-posting visit to the new location, through to setting up new services and equipment after arrival.

#### **Pre-posting visit**

Where it's necessary for the dependant to visit the new location before posting, we can cover accommodation and travel costs for the dependant and one family member. This is only granted in instances where it's not possible to make arrangements for support from the old location or there's a definite requirement for face-to-face contact with a Government department or institution in the new location.

#### **Assistance for removals**

During the move to your new posting location, you may apply for special accommodation and travel arrangements, or a valet unpacking service on your arrival if required.

Once you have been approved for this assistance, you can make arrangements through your Toll Transitions case manager before the move.

#### **Accessing services and equipment in your new location**

When families are posted they may have difficulties accessing the services they need immediately in the new location, as waiting periods may apply.



We provide assistance toward costs for interim services or equipment until the state or territory government agencies can deliver the service. We can assist with respite care, personal care, therapy services, special equipment hire, and early intervention programs.

### Special housing needs

If your dependant has special housing needs, you will need to provide medical documentation to us so that we can assess your need. Defence will then provide a recommendation to Defence Housing Australia.

Defence Housing Australia can provide assistance with allocation or modification of housing in the new location, and accommodation while in transit. Visit [www.dha.gov.au](http://www.dha.gov.au) for more information.

### EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

Special needs students may receive assistance with access to programs or services they require which are not available from the new school or other government agencies.

#### Assistance may include:

- funding for a therapy service or tuition not provided at the school but critical to educational progress,
- assessment of needs, toward development of an educational program, or
- reimbursement of private schooling costs, where a necessary special program is only available at a private school.

Specialised staff including Regional Education Liaison Officers and Defence School Mentors can also assist you with education advice and support.

### Defence Special Needs Support Group

We work closely with the Defence Special Needs Support Group, which provides a national network of peer support to Defence families with a special needs dependant. The Group delivers information, assistance and advocacy for these families.

Visit [www.dsnsq.org.au](http://www.dsnsq.org.au) to find out more about the Defence Special Needs Support Group.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit

[www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco) or contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** or email [defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au](mailto:defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au)

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