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Operational Procedures Manual (Version 6)
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Owner

SRSS Program Support Section, Community Programs and Reporting Branch. The Assistant Secretary Community Programs and Reporting Branch is the authorised delegate for approving amendments to the SRSS Operational Procedures Manual.

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Part 2 – Eligibility for SRSS

2.1 Eligibility for SRSS

The Department determines the Band under which an SRSS recipient receives services. Similarly, the Department decides if, and when, the level of service and Band should change for an SRSS recipient. Eligibility for the SRSS Program will be communicated to SRSS Providers at the time of Referral in the Service Provider Portal. This Referral will specify the relevant Band and Services that are required. SRSS recipients will include, but are not limited to:

- UAMs in Alternative Places of Detention (APOD)
- UAMs, adults and family groups who are legally detained under the *Migration Act 1958* (the Act) and who reside in the community under Residence Determination arrangements
- adults and family groups who reside in the community on Bridging visas or other temporary visas
- other vulnerable people in the community in the process of resolving their immigration status.

Where the Department receives an allegation or conflicting information in relation to any SRSS recipient's eligibility for SRSS, the SRSS Provider may be instructed to review the Recipient's circumstances.

For the purpose of the SRSS Program, a UAM is a minor under the age 18 who does not have a parent or legal guardian.

2.1.1 Band 1 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 1 Services generally requires the SRSS recipient to be an unaccompanied minor (UAM) residing in an APOD, who requires additional care arrangements, as determined by the Department. Other minors may be referred to Band 1 at the discretion of the Department where their parent/guardian is unavailable due to circumstances such as a medical emergency where no other appropriate care options exist.

Band 1 services should not be used to provide SRSS recipients respite or child care arrangements. Services under Band 1 are not available to children to assist parents to attend interviews, appointments or other non-emergency activities. It is expected that alternative care arrangements are sourced in such situations.

APODs may include:

- Immigration Residential Housing (IRH)
- Immigration Transit Accommodation (ITA)
- Any other location designated as an alternative place of detention by the Minister or a delegate in the Department, including hotels or hospitals.

Band 1 Recipients will cease to be eligible for Band 1 services if or when the recipient:

- turns, or is determined to be over 18 years of age
- is transferred to another SRSS Band or location where they do not require Band 1 Services
- is granted a visa

- is in the care of a suitable adult family member (for example, they are moved to a location with a family member, a family member arrives in Australia and is able to care for them or a family member they arrived with becomes able to provide care)
- departs Australia.

2.1.2 Band 2 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 2 Services generally requires the SRSS recipient to be an unlawful non-citizen UAM, detained under the Act, accommodated in the community under Residence Determination.

The Minister must make a Residence Determination under section 197AB of the Act, for the SRSS recipient to reside at a specified place.

2.1.3 Band 3 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 3 Services generally requires the SRSS recipient to be an unlawful non-citizen, detained under the Act, accommodated in the community under Residence Determination.

The Minister must make a Residence Determination, under section 197AB of the Act, for the SRSS recipient to reside at a specified place.

2.1.4 Band 4 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 4 Services is based on a person being released from immigration detention (held or Residence Determination) through the grant of a bridging visa (Final Departure or otherwise) or substantive visa, and requiring transitional support.

Persons granted a substantive visa and transitioning out of held detention or SRSS, should access mainstream services for which they are eligible, including support payments. Income support, including financial hardship and rent and bond loans, are not available from the date of visa grant.

Individuals who are granted a Final Departure BVE are eligible to access a maximum of three weeks of Band 4 support, without income support.

Nuclear families (with children under 18 years of age) who are granted a Final Departure BVE and individuals/families who are granted a standard BVE, are eligible to access a maximum of six weeks of Band 4 support, with income support.

In instances where an SRSS recipient no longer requires Band 4 support services prior to the end of these timeframes, SRSS Providers should refer to [2.3.6 Transferring Bands, Locations and SRSS Providers](#) for further guidance. Noting that from the time an SRSS recipient enters Band 4, SRSS Providers should be focused on helping the SRSS recipient to secure independent accommodation and register with essential services as soon as possible.

2.1.5 Band 5 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 5 Services is based on a non-citizen in the Australian community (who is not detained under the Act), being assessed by a departmental officer as having a prescribed vulnerability. They are unlawful or on a bridging visa and are experiencing barriers which impede their ability to resolve their immigration status. Recipients in Bands 4 and 6 can be referred for assessment to receive Band 5 services.

Eligible Band 5 Recipients must demonstrate they:

- have an unresolved immigration status and engage with the Department in resolving their immigration status such as:
 - a departmental primary decision
 - an independent merits review decision of a primary refusal
 - a final decision as per the fast track process
 - assistance with the next steps in resolving their immigration status after a negative merits review outcome
 - assistance to depart Australia.
- have inadequate support in the community to manage independently
- are disadvantaged by one or more of the prescribed vulnerabilities below and as a result are unable to support themselves or manage independently and face barriers to resolution of their immigration status:
 - a mental health condition which has been diagnosed by a qualified mental health practitioner or qualified medical practitioner
 - a physical health concern, disability or medical condition which has been diagnosed by a qualified medical practitioner
 - an elderly person who is unable to manage independently
 - a minor or unaccompanied minor at risk of harm
 - the parent or guardian of a minor at risk of harm
 - a person who is suffering from the effects of torture and trauma that has been diagnosed by a qualified practitioner. A qualified practitioner includes a doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist or qualified torture and trauma counsellor
 - a person who has suffered a significant event outside of their control.

If an individual has received a substantive visa refusal decision, and has prescribed vulnerabilities (as above), which precludes them from working, they may be eligible to receive limited support to facilitate departure from Australia.

Individuals applying for financial assistance, via the SRSS program, who are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$ (cumulative) in the 12 month period before their SRSS application, will be deemed ineligible for SRSS, and their application for support or payments will be refused. This includes transferring or receiving funds to or from bank accounts that are in a different name to their own, transfers between individuals who reside in Australia, transfers to or from overseas accounts and/or business transactions.

If current SRSS recipients are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$1000 from 3 November 2017 onwards, or where there is a pattern of regular transfers over a period of time or in other exceptional circumstances, a debt may be raised and they will be removed from program.

Please note that where an individual has the ability to transfer or has received funds in excess of \$ it is indicative that the individual is not in financial hardship and does not require financial support through SRSS.

Additionally, if an adult chooses to study, when they have the capacity to work and support themselves, they will not be eligible for SRSS income support. SRSS is not designed to be a social welfare program and is only intended to support individuals who are in financial hardship while resolving their immigration status.

2.1.6 Band 6 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 6 services is based on a non-citizen in the Australian community (who is not detained under the Act), who is assessed as experiencing financial hardship and is seeking to engage Australia's protection obligations through the grant of an appropriate protection or humanitarian visa. For IMAs, this means being invited or having an application for a TPV or SHEV with the Department or with merits review.

For non-IMAs, as well as demonstrating financial hardship, their original entry visa to Australia must be expired, they must hold a valid Bridging Visa and have a valid Protection Visa application awaiting assessment with the Department or with merits review. Individuals cannot request the cancellation of their substantive visa in order to be eligible for SRSS.

A person or family can be considered to be in financial hardship when:

- the income of the family unit is less than 89% of the Centrelink Special Benefit payment that would be paid to a family of a similar size and composition
- there are no disposable assets or funds in Australia or overseas that the family can draw upon to sustain themselves
- there is no continuing and adequate support from family, friends or other people or organisations in the Australian community or overseas.

Individuals whose country of origin has reciprocal health rights and services with Australia (New Zealand, United Kingdom etc.), may not be eligible to receive support through SRSS.

Individuals applying for financial assistance, via the SRSS program, who are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$5,000 (cumulative) in the 12 month period before their SRSS application, will be deemed ineligible for SRSS, and their application for support or payments will be refused. This includes transferring or receiving funds to or from bank accounts that are in a different name to their own, transfers between individuals who reside in Australia, transfers to or from overseas accounts and/or business transactions.

If current SRSS recipients are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$1000 from 3 November 2017 onwards, or where there is a pattern of regular transfers over a period of time or in other exceptional circumstances, a debt may be raised and they will be removed from program.

Please note that where an individual has the ability to transfer or has received funds in excess of \$1000, it is indicative that the individual is not in financial hardship and does not require financial support through SRSS.

Additionally, if an adult chooses to study, when they have the capacity to work and support themselves, they will not be eligible for SRSS income support. SRSS is not designed to be a social welfare program and is only intended to support individuals who are in financial hardship while resolving their immigration status.

An application may be made by an SRSS Provider on behalf a person in the community not currently receiving SRSS Services, for further information refer to [2.3.5 Applications and Referrals for Band 6 Services](#).

2.1.7 Cancellation of SRSS

If an individual does not engage with the Department to resolve their immigration status or engage in the return or removals process, the person's eligibility for SRSS may cease and all support services may be terminated. For example, if individuals are not meeting status resolution

milestones, breaching visa conditions, not reporting changes of circumstances or providing false or misleading information.

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2.2 SRSS Program Continued Eligibility

2.2.1 Engagement in Status Resolution

Eligibility for support from the SRSS Program is linked to the SRSS recipient's cooperation with the Department and SRSS Providers. A principle of the SRSS Program is to ensure that recipient's vulnerabilities are not and do not become a barrier to resolving their immigration status.

2.2.2 SRSS Band Eligibility Revision

Band 5

SRSS recipients in Band 5 must actively contribute to ongoing Continued Eligibility Reviews with their Status Resolution Officer. This review will focus on the SRSS recipient's on-going vulnerabilities, progress towards status resolution and continued engagement with the Department.

The template will require the following information to be updated:

- Housing
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Income benefits
- Family issues
- Community resources and social network
- Employment
- Language and education
- Meaningful engagement activities
- Legal/IOM
- Critical incidents
- Timeframes and goals in transitioning off services.

The *Continued Eligibility Review* template must provide information to Status Resolution Officers to assist them in assessing the SRSS recipient's continued eligibility for Band 5 (refer to [2.1 Eligibility of SRSS](#)) and outline how the SRSS recipient is progressing towards becoming self-sufficient. The first *Continued Eligibility Review* template is due one month after the Case Plan is approved and is required to be updated every month thereafter. The information in the *Continued Eligibility Review* should not be copied and pasted from the previous month. If a milestone is not met, it is expected that detailed information as to why be included in the *Continued Eligibility Review* and that the next steps to be undertaken by the SRSS Provider to address the milestone are clearly defined.

The completed *Continued Eligibility Review* form should be submitted to the Status Resolution Officer via the 'Confirmation – Case Plan Review' in the Service Provider Portal. When submitting a *Continued Eligibility Review* form for a family, the activity must be recorded against each family member; however, only one *Continued Eligibility Review* should be submitted per family and be attached against the principle SRSS recipient.

Additionally, SRSS Providers must review Case Plans each time a Case Worker contacts an SRSS recipient (at least monthly) to ensure appropriate levels of support are in place and to maintain oversight of the individual SRSS recipients' case, refer to [4.1.1 Case Worker Support](#) for

further information regarding regular contact. The Case Plan should be updated to reflect significant changes only and uploaded to the portal as required.

Bands 2, 3 and 6

In some circumstances, the Department may request that a *Continued Eligibility Review* template (refer to 2.2.2 SRSS Band Eligibility Revision) be completed and submitted for Recipients in Bands 2, 3 and 6 to assist in reviewing continued eligibility for services through SRSS.

Band 6

Band 6 eligibility is reviewed when the SRSS recipient is no longer in financial hardship, such as, if they have gained employment with an income greater than 89 per cent of the relevant Centrelink allowance.

Where the Department receives an allegation or conflicting information in relation to a Band 6 SRSS recipient's eligibility for SRSS, the Department may request the SRSS Provider to conduct an eligibility review.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Part 6 – Financial Assistance

6.1 SRSS Regular Payments

The regular SRSS Payments administered by Human Services may consist of three allowances. The three allowances are:

1. **Living Allowance** (Bands 2-6)
2. **Dependent Child Allowance** (Bands 3-6)
3. **Rental Assistance Allowance** (Bands 4-6)

The Department provides Human Services with the SRSS recipient's payment commencement date for all Bands. The commencement date is the date on which the SRSS recipient:

- started living in the community following release from held detention arrangements
- entered the SRSS Program while already living in the community.

The SRSS Provider must arrange the SRSS recipient's initial interview with Human Services and assist the Recipient to open a bank account (where required) and ensure the Recipients have the BSB and account numbers recorded for their Human Services interview. When the bank account is set up the SRSS Provider must record this in the Service Provider Portal as 'Essential Registration – Banking'.

SRSS recipients are to be registered with Human Services within five business days of their entry into the SRSS Program. When the SRSS recipient has an initial interview booked with Human Services, the SRSS Provider must record this has been completed using the 'Essential Registrations - Allowance' task in the Service Provider Portal. Payments made by Human Services are made fortnightly, in arrears.

Note: Band 1 SRSS recipients do not receive any SRSS Payments as their care and accommodation needs are provided by the Detention Service Provider.

In situations where a SRSS recipient is receiving long term, ongoing treatment or care in a care facility (such as hospital or an aged care facility), the SRSS payment may not be payable during this period. The Department will advise the Department of Human Services, on a case by case basis, if a SRSS recipient's payment may be cancelled or suspended in these circumstances.

6.1.1 Living Allowance

Band 2

Band 2 SRSS recipients receive a portion of their Living Allowance as a personal allowance from Human Services. The personal allowance should be used to purchase things such as phone cards, mobile credit, public transport, and additional clothing and entertainment activities. The remainder of the Living Allowance is retained to cover the cost of utilities and household groceries. The Department pays up to \$ per person, per fortnight for utilities and up to \$ per person, per fortnight for household groceries which is invoiced as a Direct Recipient Cost by the SRSS Provider.

Band 3

The SRSS recipient's Living Allowance rate depends on their arrival date:

- 70 per cent for all Unauthorised Air Arrivals and IMAs who arrived in Australia before 13 August 2012

- 60 per cent for IMAs who arrived in Australia on or after 13 August 2012, who are living in the community and:
 - are subject to regional processing
 - have been officially exempt from regional processing under Section 198AE of the Migration Act.

A portion of the Band 3 Living Allowance is retained by the Department for payment of utilities.

Bands 4-6

SRSS recipients' Living Allowance rates are based on 89% on the relevant Newstart or Youth Allowance, depending on the SRSS recipient's circumstances.

The SRSS Payments are based on the amount that would be payable to an eligible Australian citizen or permanent resident under the Social Security Law or Family Assistance Law rate. SRSS recipients are ineligible for other Human Services payments.

The existing Newstart and Youth Allowance income tests and rules apply to SRSS recipients who are earning an income. The income test applies to SRSS recipients where income is declared, regardless of whether the SRSS recipient has permission to work attached to their visa. SRSS recipients must inform Human Services of any income and/or assets which may affect their payments. SRSS recipients must immediately advise the Department and Human Services of any changes to their circumstances.

In limited circumstances, SRSS recipients may be eligible to receive a single living allowance, while still living in the same property as their former partner. The SRSS recipient's eligibility and relationship status will be reviewed every three months by CPON or Status Resolution Officer, and will be subject to the following evidence requirements:

- relationship status on substantive visa application
- nature of the commitment
- financial circumstances
- accommodation arrangements
- social aspects
- care of children

6.1.2 Dependent Child Allowance Bands 3-6

The Dependent Child Allowance is a percentage of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Parts A and B (where applicable), where a family has one or more dependent children.

The Department will determine if the SRSS Recipient has a dependent child and qualifies for the Dependent Child Allowance. The Department may determine the date payments commence where a dependent child has been in the care of a SRSS Recipient for more than three months.

The Dependent Child Allowance for a newborn child commences from the date provided by the Department, which may be the dependent child's date of birth or the date on which the child became a dependent of the SRSS recipient (*refer to 5.1.2 Newborn Children*). Where a dependent child is already in the care of an SRSS recipient, the Dependent Child Allowance commences from the start date of the SRSS recipient's Living Allowance.

An SRSS Recipient is not eligible for the Dependant Child Allowance for a child who is receiving SRSS or not, in the following circumstances:

- the child is receiving Special Benefit payments from DHS
- the SRSS Recipient has a non-SRSS recipient partner in receipt of FTB payments from DHS.

The Dependent Child Allowance will be paid to eligible SRSS recipients, who are the primary parent, at the same time as the Living Allowance or Rental Assistance Allowance. This payment will only be made to one parent when parents are partnered.

Primary parent SRSS Recipients who are single with dependents, will receive the Dependent Child Allowance from DHS.

Primary parent SRSS Recipients who are partnered, will receive the FTB Part A component from DHS, and where applicable, the FTB Part B component from SRSS Providers.

Service Providers are expected to undertake a review of the families Dependent Child Allowance when one parent has been exited from SRSS due to dormancy or has had their immigration status determined.

6.1.3 Rental Assistance Allowance

Bands 4-6

Rental Assistance Allowance is paid by Human Services at a rate that is 89 per cent of the Rent Assistance that would be payable to an eligible person under the Social Security Law or Family Assistance Law Rate. Rental Assistance Allowance may be available to eligible SRSS recipients who are paying for Private Accommodation. SRSS recipients residing in Provided or Emergency Accommodation (refer to Part 7 – Accommodation Assistance for further information) will not be eligible for the Rental Assistance Allowance.

An SRSS recipient will not be considered for Rental Assistance Allowance in the following circumstances:

- the SRSS recipient is in receipt of free board and/or lodging
- the SRSS recipient is residing in government housing or an Australian Government funded nursing home or hostel
- the Department advises Human Services the SRSS recipient is not eligible due to alternative accommodation arrangements.

Rental Assistance Allowance will be paid to eligible SRSS recipients at the same time as the Living Allowance. SRSS Providers must update the accommodation details in the Service Provider Portal when an SRSS recipient moves into privately leased accommodation. SRSS recipients must notify Human Services of their change in circumstances and provide supporting documentation in order to receive Rental Assistance Allowance. SRSS Providers should record any assistance to register for this allowance in the Service Provider Portal as 'Essential Registration – Rental Assistance'.

The Rental Assistance Allowance is based on Rent Assistance and its existing rules, as such, supporting documentation must be provided to Human Services. Supporting documentation may include:

- a formal tenancy agreement
- a statutory declaration or signed letter from the home owner or agent including the address details, weekly rental amount and name of the SRSS recipient

6.1.4 Service Provider Interim Payments

Service Provider interim payments are payment SRSS Providers are authorised to make to recipients in lieu of their regular SRSS payments while their payment issues are being investigated. They are usually approved for periods of two weeks at a time, in line with their regular SRSS payment periods. Service Provider Interim Payments should be recoverable by one of the following methods:

- SRSS Payment Support Team adjusts the recipients allowance eligibility start date to the day after the last date of the approval period
- The Service Provider may be required to enter a payment deduction for the Service Provider Interim Payment amount paid to the recipient (refer to 6.4 Payment Deductions).

6.1.5 Resolution of SRSS Regular Payment Issues

In the first instance, DHS should be contacted in relation to a payment issue (such as non-payment or incorrect payment of recipients Living Allowance, Dependant Child Allowance and/or Rental Assistance). Where DHS have advised that they are unable to resolve the payment issue, the Service Provider should contact the SRSS Payment Support Team immediately where the matter will be investigated and approval of a Service Provider Interim Payment or other payment may be considered.

Where Service Provider Interim Payments or other payments are to be considered, the Service Provider may be required to provide written confirmation or proof of the recipient's financial hardship if deemed necessary, such as (but not limited to):

- details regarding the recipients living arrangements (i.e. do they have rental obligations)
- a breakdown of their current financial position including current debts and outgoings
- details of how the recipient has been supporting themselves until now if the matter has been ongoing for some time
- copies of bank statements if necessary.

Please note that it is imperative that the SRSS Payment Support Team is contacted immediately once the Service Provider is made aware of a recipient's payment issue which DHS are unable to resolve. This will allow the SRSS Payment Support Team adequate time to investigate and resolve the payment issue, and potentially avoid the recipient from reaching a state of financial hardship.

6.1.6 Persons Permitted to Enquire

SRSS recipients may wish to voluntarily authorise a Person Permitted to Enquire (PPE) on their behalf with Human Services and Medicare. The SRSS recipient can request this in two ways:

- verbally (face-to-face or by telephone) if appointing their SRSS Provider (for Human Services payments)
- by lodging a completed SRSS Payment – authorising a person or organisations to enquire on your behalf form (DHS form SU698 for sharing Medicare information).

If for any reason the SRSS recipient chooses to voluntarily end this arrangement, Human Services will update their system with the end date and the arrangement effectively ceases from that point.

The PPE is intended to be flexible as not all clients may want their SRSS Provider to enquire about their payments.

Please find the *SRSS Payment – authorising a person or organisations to enquire on your behalf* form at www.humanservices.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/su698-1406en2.pdf

6.1.7 UAM Clothing Allowance

Band 2

SRSS Providers are required to purchase essential clothing for Band 2 Recipients up to \$200 per Recipient twice yearly (once for the winter season and once for the summer season). Remaining funds are not to be provided to the SRSS recipient or retained after seasonal purchase. By way of example, if an SRSS recipient enters the SRSS Program in March and accesses their first clothing allowance at that time, and the second clothing allowance in July, they are not permitted to access their next clothing allowance until March the following year. The SRSS Provider may spend the first seasonal allowance on the SRSS recipient's entry into the SRSS Program. Use of this allowance should be recorded by the SRSS Provider as a 'Payment Confirmation – Small Allowance' in the Service Provider Portal. Requests for purchases in excess of the pre-approved amount of \$200 should be recorded as a 'Payment Request – Extra Funds' to the CPON Officer with a completed *Payment or Movement Request* form attached in the Service Provider Portal. All related purchases should be recorded as a Direct Recipient Cost, and all supporting evidence should be provided to SRSS Contract Management with the monthly invoice

The clothing allowance is generally not available to SRSS recipients who are soon to turn 18 or have recently turned 18 years of age and remain living in a Band 2 Supported Accommodation.

Clothing purchased using this allowance should be for essential, every day clothing, including jackets and long pants in winter and t-shirts and shorts in summer. Beyond this, any additional clothing will need to be purchased by the SRSS recipient from their Living Allowance.

6.2 Financial Management Support

6.2.3 Budget support

Bands 2-6

The main aim of providing financial management guidance to SRSS recipients is to prevent situations where SRSS recipients are unable to meet their expenses or fall into debt. It is also important to prepare SRSS recipients for life outside the SRSS Program by ensuring they have the skills to manage their finances in the future.

SRSS Providers are required to guide new SRSS recipients to ensure they understand how their Living Allowance should be used. SRSS recipients should be provided with a budgeting guide clearly setting out fortnightly income and expenditure and estimated future bills. SRSS recipients should be aware of how much money is needed for food and household expenses, how much needs to be put aside for bills, how much can be spent on activities and personal purchases and how much can be saved.

As part of the SRSS Program orientation process, financial management guidance should be provided to SRSS recipients, with information such as seasonal price variations of fruit and vegetables, the differences between supermarkets and fluctuating seasonal costs of heating/cooling their residences.

To assist SRSS Providers in providing financial management orientation to SRSS recipients, the website <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/tools-and-resources/publications> has a Money Management Kit which may be useful. The kit includes factsheets, audio and video content in 16 different languages, including English. It has guidance on budgeting, saving, spending and banking.

6.2.4 Use of Living Allowance

Band 2

The SRSS Provider is responsible for managing the purchase of groceries and payment of utilities for UAM households. SRSS Providers should engage the UAMs as much as possible on decisions relating to the types of food purchased and cost effective ways to stretch resources. The Department expects that live-in Carers will either supply their own food or make a similar contribution towards the household grocery funds to cover their consumption while in the house.

A portion of the Living Allowance is given directly to UAMs to be used to purchase things such as phone cards, mobile credit, public transport, and additional clothing and entertainment activities.

Bands 3 - 6

It is expected that the Living Allowance is used to pay for all general household and living expenses. This includes rent and utilities (where required), food and other household products (toiletries, cleaning products).

6.2.5 Additional support for UAM SRSS recipients

Band 2

SRSS Providers should provide additional guidance to SRSS recipients in Band 2 about budgeting and managing their Living Allowance so they can save to make bigger purchases and to encourage self-sufficiency as they approach adulthood. This may include saving for additional clothes or to pay for activities not approved under the Meaningful Engagement Allowance.

6.3 SRSS Payment Cessation

6.3.3 Automatic stoppage

SRSS Living Allowance will cease when an SRSS recipient is no longer eligible for the SRSS Program as determined by the Department. Eligibility for SRSS Living Allowance will cease without confirmation by the Department when:

- the SRSS recipient dies (payments cease on the date of the death of the individual)
- the SRSS recipient departs Australia (payments cease the day before the departure date)
- 13 weeks have elapsed since the payment was suspended and payment has not been restored – applies to Band 5 and 6 only
- where the recipient, is not contactable, fails to report on a change in their financial circumstance, attend an immigration appointment, or participate in a financial assessment without adequate notification/reason or where alternative arrangements have not been made, their Income Support may cease immediately. SRSS Providers should advise the Department of these instances via an 'Escalation - Issue' activity in the Portal (refer to the DWD for correct referral details) or upon the grant of a visa (UAMs will be eligible for referral to the UHM Program, where they will continue to receive assistance after they have transitioned from SRSS).

Queries relating to cessation or stoppage of SRSS Payments should be directed as follows

- Bands 2-3 to the CPON Officer
- Bands 4-5 to the Status Resolution Officer
- Band 6 to s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Queries relating to transitioning from SRSS to another program, including the transition of payments, refer to [10.1 Transition Out](#).

6.3.4 Suspension

Human Services can only suspend Band 4 to Band 6 Recipients' SRSS Payments. Human Services cannot suspend Band 2 and Band 3 Recipients' SRSS Payments. This is because the Department has duty of care obligations for Band 2 and Band 3 SRSS recipients.

6.3.5 Restoration

If Human Services suspends the SRSS Payment, then Human Services can restore the SRSS Payment. If the Department suspends the SRSS Payment, then only the Department can advise Human Services whether to restore the SRSS Payment, or if another action is required, such as ceasing the SRSS Payment. If an SRSS recipient completes the activity or action related to the suspension and their SRSS Payment is restored, the appropriate arrears are paid as applicable.

The Department instructs Human Services of its decisions regarding restoration or suspension of SRSS Payments. The Department also provides Human Services with a restoration date and whether the Eligible Recipient is entitled to a back payment. This will be reflected in the service provider portal.

6.3.6 Cancellation

Cancellations may result for a number of reasons, and should generally be initiated by the Department with a Stop Payment Notice. The Department of Human Services may also cancel Recipient's in Bands 4-6 in certain circumstances. This will be reflected in the service provider portal with a Stop Payment Notice. Cessation of Living Allowance under Band 6

Band 6

The Department may cease an eligible SRSS recipient's Living Allowance where, following an investigation it is confirmed that the SRSS recipient:

- has provided false, misleading and/or conflicting information
- either deliberately or inadvertently withheld relevant information
- breached the Code of Behaviour (where relevant)
- is not actively engaging with the Department to resolve their immigration status.

Cessation will result in termination of the SRSS recipient's Living Allowance payments and may involve recovery of funds. The decision to cease such payments will only be made by SRSS Operations who will advise the SRSS Provider and Human Services via a 'Stop transaction' in the Service Provider Portal.

6.3.7 Reinstatement of Living Allowance under Band 6

The Department may consider a further Band 6 Application for financial support by a person when the person or party:

- provides any requested information
- makes arrangements to repay any overpayments, where applicable
- meets eligibility criteria (refer to 2.1 Eligibility for SRSS)
- completes the Band 6 Application Process.

The decision to reinstate Living Allowance payments will only be made by the Department. SRSS Operations Band 6 will record this in the Service Provider Portal once undertaken and advise the SRSS Provider via a Referral.

6.3.8 Payment Reviews

Human Services conducts reviews of an SRSS recipient's SRSS Payment to ensure an SRSS recipient's personal information is current and that their SRSS Payment Rate is correct. Human Services generally undertakes SRSS Payment Reviews on a six monthly basis, however, the timing of these Reviews can be before or after the six months in some situations. Where an SRSS recipient fails to respond to a reminder about an SRSS Payment Review, their SRSS Payment will be suspended until the SRSS recipient undertakes the Review.

6.4 Payment Deductions

The Department may require Human Services to reduce an SRSS recipient's Living Allowance, as a deduction, to recover a sum that has been provided to the SRSS recipient by their SRSS Provider.

Reasons for deductions include, but are not limited to:

- Transitional Accommodation Contribution
- Rental Bond Loans and Rent in Advance Loans Deductions
- Overpayments resulting from a Human Services overpayment
- Service Provider Interim Payments made to recipients in lieu of their Regular SRSS Payments as a result of a regular payment issue
- Other deduction reasons may be provided by the Department, for example, repayment for damage to property or other invoices.

Where payment deductions are required, SRSS Providers will submit an 'Allowance Modification' to the responsible officer. Please see the Decision Workflow Document for correct referral details. The request must include the proposed amount for consideration and where appropriate, approval of the related expenditure by the Department. Once the 'Allowance – Modification' is approved by the Department in the Service Provider Portal, Human Services will be notified and the SRSS recipient's SRSS Payments will be reduced until the amount is repaid in full.

The Payment Deduction will be **5 per cent** of the SRSS recipient's fortnightly SRSS Living Allowance. Although the SRSS recipient also has the option to pay off the amount in full. To utilise this option, Service Provider must make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team before an 'Allowance Modification – Deduction' is entered in the Portal.

Please refer to Service Provider Portal Functional Guide – Allowances – Payment Groups (page 9) for step by step information on payment deductions, or contact

s. 22(1)(a)(ii) with any queries.

6.5 Financial Hardship Assistance

SRSS Providers should engage regularly with SRSS recipients to minimise reliance on Financial Hardship Assistance by providing comprehensive guidance around budgeting and income management.

Prior to considering the provision of financial hardship assistance, SRSS Providers must be satisfied that the Recipients have demonstrated careful budgeting practices and all efforts to redistribute funds from their current Living Allowance have been exhausted. Financial Hardship Assistance should only be provided to assist in resolving a crisis/emergency situation.

Examples of crisis points' where Financial Hardship Assistance may be required, include events such as:

- house fire
- death
- domestic violence
- critically ill family members.

The following situations are not to be considered crisis points that require Financial Hardship Assistance:

- the birth of a baby; as the family has more than six months to plan and save for items that are associated with the birth of the child
- a child/children starting school as families have access to the Schooling Requirements Package (per child)
- utilities, infringement notices or overdue rent arrears. Arrangements can be made with the relevant utility provider to pay in instalments, payment plans or through weekly/fortnightly/monthly direct debit arrangements.

SRSS Providers are required to apply 'value for money' principles (refer to [13.3 Financial Management](#)) prior to purchasing pre-approved items and services and must retain documentation which demonstrates how value for money has been achieved. There are three types of Financial Hardship Assistance available to SRSS recipients which is dependent on their Band placement and status as summarised in the following table and is detailed further in this section.

Recipient Band	IMA / Non-IMA	SRSS recipient Family Status	Financial Hardship Support Type
2 - 3	IMA	All Bands 2-3 Recipients	Assistance Type 1 - Financial Hardship (In Kind Support)
4 - 6	IMA	Family with children aged 16 and under	Assistance Type 2 - Vouchers or material aid
4 - 6	IMA	Single	Assistance Type 3 - Crisis Payment
4 - 6	Non-IMA	Family or single	Assistance Type 3 - Crisis Payment

6.5.3 Assistance Type 1

Bands 2-3

There may be occasions where SRSS recipients in Bands 2-3 face financial hardship, such as an inability to afford food or essentials, despite budgeting carefully.

Where the SRSS Provider can demonstrate they have provided budget support to assist the SRSS recipient meet their financial needs and the SRSS recipient is still unable to afford essential items, the SRSS Provider can submit a completed *Payment or Movement Request* using the template provided. It must be attached to the Service Provider Portal as a 'Financial Hardship Assistance – In Kind Support' activity to the CPON Officer.

Support provided will generally be in-kind (for example vouchers) rather than an additional monetary amount.

The 'Financial Hardship Assistance – In Kind Support' request should include details of budgeting advice given to the SRSS recipient, a basic budget showing how the current Living Allowance is being used and options for in-kind support. The Department will consider the request and work with the SRSS Provider to support the SRSS recipient through the period of financial hardship.

Requests for assistance are expected to be exceptional and for a short period of time.

SRSS Providers should not refer Band 2-3 SRSS recipients to charity organisations for food vouchers or support as these services must be left available for the Australian community.

6.5.4 Assistance Type 2

Financial hardship assistance for IMA families 16 years and under

Bands 4-6

SRSS Providers are able to provide Financial Hardship Assistance (Crisis/Emergency Relief) to IMA families with children 16 years and under, in Bands 4-6, in the form of vouchers or material aid when a family unit experiences a crisis situation as outlined above. SRSS Providers need to be satisfied that the Recipients have demonstrated careful budgeting practices and all efforts to redistribute funds from their current Living Allowance have been exhausted.

For recipients who have been granted a substantive visa and are transitioning out of SRSS, FHA Type 2 can only be used with pre-approval from the Department.

All requests for FHA Type 2 must be submitted in the portal as a 'Financial Hardship Assistance – In Kind Support' to CPON. A Payment Movement Request should then be uploaded and include details as to why the item is required and why it meets the above criteria for a crisis point.

Financial Hardship Assistance should be assessed by the SRSS Provider on a case-by-case basis. Departmental approval is not required where the provision of assistance is within the prescribed thresholds and type of in-kind support identified which assists the SRSS recipient to resolve a crisis situation, and to create a safe and suitable living environment (detailed below). A record of this provision should be recorded in the Service Provider Portal as a 'Payment Confirmation – Small Allowance'. All relevant supporting documentation (i.e. receipts, budget plans and invoices) should be attached to the activity. All receipts must be retained by the SRSS Provider for financial audit and/or quality assurance purposes. If these documents are not available when requested by the Department for quality assurance activities or general enquiries, the SRSS Provider may be required to credit the Department for all items purchased.

Where a request for Financial Hardship Assistance extends beyond the scope of what is outlined in the SRSS OPM, SRSS Providers must seek approval from SRSS Operations via the Service Provider Portal, as a 'Financial Hardship Assistance – In Kind Support' activity with completed *Payment or Movement Request* attached.

Financial Hardship Assistance (Bands 4-6)	
Vouchers of a fixed value	
Food	Emergency/staple food parcels, similar to those provided by community groups.
Emergency clothing	To provide 1-2 sets of essential daily clothing items, where a Recipient has no items of clothing due to a crisis point as defined above. In all instances, the cheapest items should be sourced.
Educational Items	This would only be available following a crisis situation as outlined above. In all instances second hand items should be sourced in consultation with the school.
Infant necessities	Following the loss of all infant necessities due to a crisis point, vouchers may be provided for essential items such as; formula, nappies, cot blankets.
Material Aid	
Essential living items required in order to resolve a crisis situation, and to create a safe environment	<p>The following essential living items may be required to be purchased following an emergency or crisis situation to create a safe environment. All items should initially be sourced from community organisations.</p> <p>Anything outside of this list requires approval from SRSS Operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing – restricted to 1-2 outfits per person • Blanket/linen • Refrigerator, microwave, frypan, pots, knives, dinnerware • Heater or Fan
Mattress Only	Replacing a mattress (including cot mattress) due to an emergency or crisis situation as outlined above. This does not include bed frames.

Financial Hardship Assistance Type 2 has an annual cap which commences from the date a family is released from immigration detention or date of entering the SRSS Program. As such, not all families will have the same date of commencement for the Financial Hardship Assistance 12 month cap period. At no time are vouchers for Financial Hardship Assistance to exceed the capped amounts. Financial Hardship Assistance type 2 is not cumulative in nature and any remaining funds cannot be carried over to the next 12 months.

Amounts listed below in the Material Aid (capped) column are not renewable and apply for the period the family remains in the SRSS Program.

Financial Hardship Assistance Limits (Bands 4-6)		
SRSS Family Composition	Vouchers for a fixed value (annual cap)	Material Aid (capped)
Single with one child	s. 47E(d)	
Single with two children		
Single with three + children		
Couple with one child		
Couple with two children		
Couple with three + children		

6.5.5 Assistance Type 3

IMA and non IMA crisis payment

Bands 4–6

A Financial Hardship Assistance Type 3 payment may be available to eligible Recipients in Bands 4-6 (IMA and non-IMA with or without families) experiencing an acute financial crisis or financial hardship as a result of a crisis/emergency situation or unforeseen circumstances outside of their control. Please note that this payment must not be used for school items (including ESL classes for both children and adults), basic household goods (including infant necessities), emergency accommodation, utilities, infringement notices, rent arrears payments or rent and bond loans.

Eligible Recipients may be able to access a small *one off* crisis payment. This payment must contribute to the resolution of the Recipient's immediate emergency situation (i.e. destitution), where there are no other options immediately available. The amount of this payment varies depending on the circumstances of the Recipient; however, payments will not exceed s.

Where the SRSS Provider assesses the Recipient is in need of a crisis payment, a request is required to be submitted for approval via the Service Provider Portal as a 'Financial Hardship Assistance – Cash in Advance' activity to the Status Resolution Officer for Bands 4-5 and SRSS Operations Bands 6. Details of the amount, date of provision, a current bank statement and any other relevant documentation (i.e. receipts, payment plans, or a value for money statement) must be attached to the activity.

*Note – This form of assistance is separate to the Financial Hardship Assistance Type 2 (Crisis/Emergency Relief) detailed above. Whilst IMA families may be able to access this crisis payment they would first be directed to in-kind support (Emergency Relief).

6.5.6 Rent in Advance and Rental Bond Loans

Bands 4-5

Where an SRSS Recipient is eligible for a Rental Bond and/or Rent in Advance loans, SRSS Providers must submit a Payment Request – Extra Funds' activity in the portal to the Status Resolution Officer and attach the required supporting documentation that is outlined below. Please note that only IMAs are eligible to receive Rent in Advance and Rental Bond Loans.

Band 6

Where an SRSS Recipient is eligible for a Rental Bond and/or Rent in Advance loans, SRSS Providers must submit a Payment Request – Extra Funds' activity in the portal to CPON, and attach the required supporting documentation that is outlined below.

The following supporting documentation must be attached to the request:

- Lease agreement/Tenancy agreement
- a statutory declaration or signed letter from the home owner or agent outlining the following:
 - o the address of the rental premises
 - o weekly rental amount
 - o name of the SRSS recipient proposing to reside at the property
 - o bond requirement (if bond loan is being requested), such as, the amount to be held
 - o conditions of the bond returns upon vacating the premises

If approved, the SRSS Provider should then enter an 'Allowance Modification-Deduction' within the Allowance tab in the Service Provider Portal. Where both a Rent in Advance and a Rental Bond Loan is required, SRSS Providers should enter two separate deduction activities.

The SRSS recipient also has the option to pay the amount off in full. To utilise this option, Service Provider must make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team before an 'Allowance Modification – Deduction' is entered in the Portal. It would be expected that the SRSS recipient would not require subsequent Rent in Advance or Rental Bond Loans. However, consideration may be given to situations where it is clearly demonstrated that circumstances beyond the SRSS recipient's control have resulted in a need for an additional loan. In such situations written supporting documentation must accompany the request to confirm regular repayments by the SRSS recipient.

Rental bond loans

Where a Rental Bond Loan is required to enter the rental market, the SRSS Provider must ensure formal lodgement of a rental bond with the appropriate state or territory rental bond authority.

Please note: Rental Bond Loans should be lodged in the SRSS recipients' name. They are capped at a maximum of \$, _____ per single recipient and \$1600 per family unit as per the Direct Recipient Costs Table (refer to Attachment 14.5). The payment of a bond for an SRSS recipient to secure accommodation will be granted for the duration of the lease on the property detailed in the request. If the SRSS recipient chooses to leave that property prior to the end of the lease, they will not be eligible for the payment of a bond at another property.

Rent in advance loan

Rent in Advance Loans will only be considered where supporting documentation is provided, such as rental receipts or a copy of the lease, clearly indicating the weekly rent and rent in advance payment for the nominated SRSS recipient. Loans are capped at s. 47E(d) for families.

Repayment of loans

Rent in Advance and Rental Bond Loans will be recovered as a Payment Deduction from the SRSS recipient's fortnightly Living Allowance. Refer to 6.4 Payment Deductions.

The SRSS recipient also has the option to pay the amount off in full. To utilise this option, Service Provider must make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team before an 'Allowance Modification – Deduction' is entered in the Portal.

Cancellation of loans

In the event that Rent in Advance or Rental Bond Loan has been issued and a Payment Deduction has already been entered into the portal, but the loan is no longer required; the SRSS Provider must ensure they advise the SRSS Payment Recovery team as soon as possible. This will ensure that the Recipient's Living Allowance is not deducted by the Department of Human Services. The SRSS Provider should also advise the relevant operational area (Departmental Status Resolution Officer or SRSS Operations for Band 6). For further information on Payment Deductions, please refer to Section 6.4 Payment Deductions.



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

SRSS Operational Procedures Manual

Version 8, 4 March 2019

Approval

Approved by	Title	Date
s. 22(1)(a)	Assistant Secretary, Status Resolution Branch	14 February 2019

Review of this document

This document will be reviewed and updated by the Department of Home Affairs as required.

Further assistance

If you require further assistance regarding the information contained in this document, please contact the SRSS Program Management Section.

E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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6. Pre-entry

The pre-entry phase occurs before an individual is receiving SRSS. This stage involves applications for the SRSS Program (Bands 5–6).



The following forms can be found on the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website:

- Form 1448: Status Resolution Support Services Program Debt Agreement
- Form 1450: Status Resolution Support Services Program Privacy Notice

6.1. Applications for the SRSS Program (Bands 5–6)

The SRSS Application Process may be commenced by an SRSS Provider, on behalf of non-citizens in the community who intend to engage Australia's protection obligations (and who are not currently receiving SRSS).

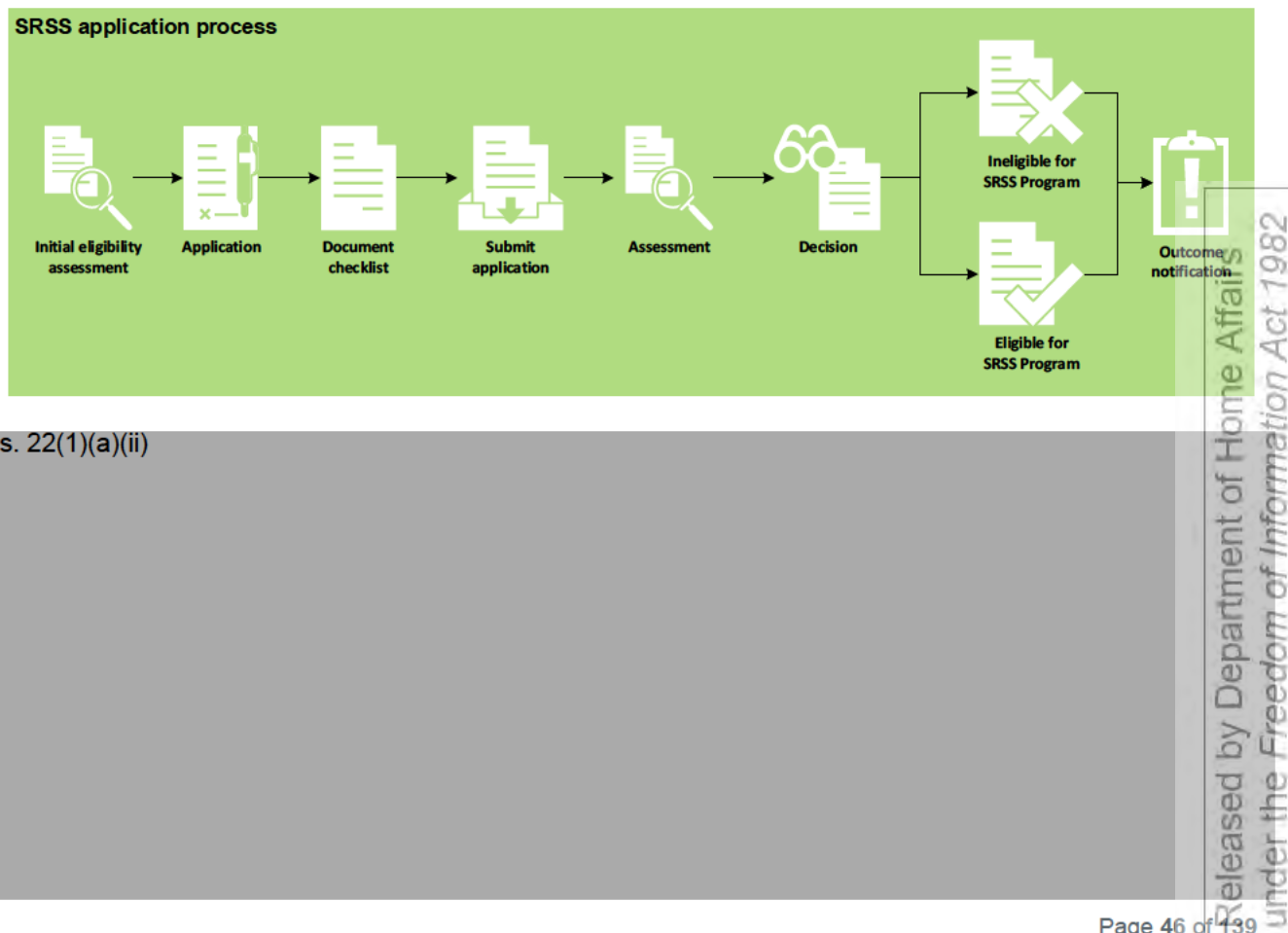
The SRSS Application Process for Band 5–6 support is outlined in the figure below. The SRSS Provider must ensure applications have all relevant information in order for the Department to make a decision (including attachments) and that applicants meet the eligibility requirements.

On receipt of an SRSS application, the Department will assess the application in accordance with:

- the relevant eligibility criteria
- all relevant and available information contained in departmental systems
- supporting documentation (see SRSS Document Checklist at end of Form 1455, and *SRSS Medical Evidence Fact Sheet* for details relating to medical evidence).

The SRSS Provider will be notified of a decision via an SP Portal referral.

6.1.1. SRSS Application Process figure



s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

8.4.3. Continued Eligibility Review (CER) (Bands 5–6)

All Band 5–6 recipients will be reviewed to assess their continued eligibility for the SRSS Program. This is done through a CER. The CER should focus on outlining how the barriers that were identified when the recipient transitioned in, or in a subsequent CER, are preventing an individual from resolving their immigration status or working. Some barriers include physical health, mental health, and family issues.

Continued Eligibility Reviews are due at the following times:

- in line with the initial SRSS approval period
- in line with timeframes specified in each subsequent CER
- where a support recommendation is being made (outside of the CER review period)
- where the Department requests a CER.

The information in CERs must be completed to a standard that will enable the Department to assess whether the recipient is still eligible for SRSS and the Program Services continue to be relevant.

1. Fill in all fields of the CER template, ensuring that the review focuses on:

- the recipient's ongoing barriers
- progress towards resolving barriers that are impacting on immigration status resolution
- continued engagement with the Department
- outlining the outcome of any actions the SRSS Provider has undertaken to assist the recipient
- listing all steps that have been taken to achieve milestones and/or goals (if a milestone and/or goal has not been met, detailed information as to why must be provided).

This may occur at the end of the initial approval period, at any subsequent approval periods, where a support recommendation is being made, or when the department requests a review.

2. Clearly detail all required information under each section in the Continued Eligibility Review, provide clear timeframes for each listed milestone and ensure evidence is included.
3. Submit an **SP Portal 'Confirmation – Case Plan Review'** activity, in 'Description' field type 'CER', and attach the completed form and any relevant supporting documentation, to:
 - the recipient's SRO (Band 5)
 - the SRSS Assessments Officer (Band 6)

Where a family has undergone a CER, the completed CER template and evidence should be uploaded against the principal recipient, but the activity should be recorded against each family member.

8.15. Income Support overview

DHS make Income Support payments on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs. The regular SRSS payments made by DHS may consist of three allowances. These three allowances are:

- Living Allowance
- Dependent Child Allowance
- Rental Assistance Allowance.

Recipients are ineligible for other DHS payments.

The Department provides payment commencement dates for any recipient who is approved to receive Income Support. All payments made by DHS are made fortnightly, in arrears.

Where recipients are approved to receive Income Support, service providers will assist recipients with DHS when they enter into the SRSS Program. The commencement date for payments is the date on which the recipient:

- started living in the community following release from held detention arrangements, or
- entered the SRSS Program while already living in the community.

In situations where a recipient is receiving long term, ongoing treatment or care in a care facility (such as hospital or an aged care facility), Income Support may not be payable during this period. The Department will advise DHS, on a case-by-case basis, if a recipient's payment should be cancelled or suspended.

8.15.1. Living allowance

SRSS payments are based on the amount that would be payable to an eligible Australian citizen or permanent resident under the Social Security Law or Family Assistance Law rate. The existing Newstart and Youth Allowance income tests and rules apply to recipients who are earning an income.

Recipients must inform:

- DHS of any income and/or assets which may affect their payments, and
- the Department and DHS of any change of circumstances.

8.15.1.1. Living Allowance calculations

Band 2 – The Living Allowance rate is calculated at 89 per cent of the Youth allowance, and depends on the age of the recipient. A portion of the Living Allowance is retained by the Department/SRSS Provider for payment of utilities and household groceries.

Band 3 – A portion of the Band 3 Living Allowance is retained by the Department for payment of utilities. The Living Allowance rate depends on their arrival date:

- 70 per cent for all Unauthorised Air Arrivals and IMAs who arrived in Australia before 13 August 2012
- 60 per cent for IMAs who arrived in Australia on or after 13 August 2012, who are living in the community, and:
 - o are subject to regional processing
 - o have been officially exempt from regional processing under Section 198AE of the Migration Act.

Band 4–6 – Living Allowance rates for approved recipients are based on 89 per cent on the relevant Newstart or Youth Allowance, depending on the Recipient's circumstances. The existing Newstart and Youth Allowance income tests and rules apply to recipients who are earning an income. Recipients must inform DHS of any income and/or assets that may affect their payments.

8.15.2. Dependent Child Allowance

The Department will determine if the recipient has a dependent child and qualifies for the Dependent Child Allowance. The Dependent Child Allowance is a percentage of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Parts A and B (where applicable), where a family has one or more dependent children. Primary parent recipients who are partnered, will receive the FTB Part A component from DHS, and where applicable, the FTB Part B component from Providers. DHS will pay both FTB Part A and B components for a single parent.

The Department may determine the date payments commence where a dependent child has been in the care of a recipient for more than three months. The Dependent Child Allowance for a newborn child commences from the date provided by the Department, which may be the dependent child's date of birth, the date the Department was notified of the birth or the date on which the child became a dependent of the recipient.

Where a dependent child is already in the care of a recipient, the Dependent Child Allowance commences from the start date of the recipient's Living Allowance.

A recipient is not eligible for the Dependent Child Allowance for a child in the following circumstances, if:

- the child is receiving Special Benefit payments from DHS
- the recipient has a non-Recipient partner in receipt of FTB payments from DHS.

The Dependent Child Allowance will be paid to an approved recipient, who is the primary parent, at the same time as the Living Allowance or Rental Assistance Allowance. This payment will only be made to one parent when parents are partnered.

8.15.3. Rental Assistance Allowance

Rental Assistance Allowance is paid by DHS at a rate that is 89 per cent of the Rent Assistance that would be payable to an eligible person under the Social Security Law or Family Assistance Law Rate. Rental Assistance Allowance may be available to eligible recipients who are paying for Private Accommodation.

A recipient will not be considered for Rental Assistance Allowance in the following circumstances:

- the recipient is accommodated in Ongoing Supported/Provided Accommodation or Emergency Accommodation
- the recipient is in receipt of free board and/or lodging
- the recipient is residing in government housing or an Australian Government funded nursing home or hostel
- the Department advises DHS the recipient is not eligible due to alternative accommodation arrangements.

The Rental Assistance Allowance is based on Rent Assistance and its existing rules and, as such, supporting documentation must be provided to DHS. Supporting documentation may include:

- a formal tenancy agreement
- a statutory declaration or signed letter from the home owner or agent including the address details, weekly rental amount and name of the recipient

Rental Assistance Allowance will be paid to approved recipients at the same time as the Living Allowance.

8.15.4. Income Support (DHS allowances) – approvals

SRSS Providers must ensure that recipients are approved by the Department for any DHS allowances.

Table 14: Approvals for Income Support

Recipient	Income Support (as determined by the Department)	Approval
Band 2	Living allowance	Referral from Department in SP Portal
Band 3	Living Allowance Dependent Child Allowance	Referral from Department in SP Portal
Band 4	Living Allowance Dependent Child Allowance Rental Assistance Allowance	Referral from Department in SP Portal Approvals will specify whether any allowances are approved.
Bands 5–6	Individuals must have a demonstrated barrier preventing them from working to support themselves or resolving their immigration status and provide evidence.	Referral from Department in SP Portal Decisions on accessing DHS allowances for Bands 5–6 recipients will be based on their application for SRSS, their most recent CER, request for Additional Service or a support recommendation. Approvals will specify whether any allowances are approved.

8.15.5. Arranging Income Support for recipients

Where a recipient is approved to receive DHS allowances, the SRSS Provider must assist recipients with DHS within five business days of their entry into the SRSS Program to:

- arrange the recipient's initial interview with DHS
- assist the recipient to open a bank account (where required)
- ensure the recipient has the BSB and account numbers recorded for their DHS interview
- record when the bank account is set up.

An individual lodging an initial claim with DHS should provide a COI and a secondary document.

1. Record when the bank account is set up as an **SP Portal 'Essential Registration – Banking'** task.
2. Record when the recipient has an initial interview booked with DHS as an **SP Portal 'Essential Registrations - Allowance'** activity.

8.15.5.1. Commencement of Identity documents

An ImmiCard is the preferred Commencement of Identity document for IMAs and SRSS Band 2 and 3 recipients, and must be used where one exists.

Non-IMA, Band 5 or 6 recipients may present their (current or expired) foreign passport when it is associated with their current Australian visa. This means that a foreign passport without an Australian visa associated with it, is not valid evidence of identity.

An individual that provides a passport or other identity documentation that does not match the details on the ImmiCard must be referred to the Department to have their identity resolved. This is to ensure the individual uses only one Commencement of Identity credential while residing in the Australian community.

In cases where the individual is unable to meet the document threshold, they must be referred back to the Department for further investigation and/or processing. For urgent circumstances, the Department can issue an ImmiCard Report, a paper-based document that contains the individual's photo and biographical details. The ImmiCard Report can be used temporarily while the ImmiCard is being issued and can be validated in VEVO.

8.15.5.2. Secondary documents

Secondary documents are issued by government or non-government sources and are evidence of an individual's identity in the community. Secondary documents should support the COI document and include, but are not limited to:

- BVE grant, visa grant notification or residence determination letters
- bank statement
- bankcard
- Medicare card
- utilities bill.

8.15.6. DHS change of circumstances

It is important that recipients tell DHS if there are changes to:

- personal and contact details
- bank details
- relationship status, for example if they become partnered or separated
- arrangements for anyone in their care, including their own children
- work status
- accommodation details (use the DHS Accommodation Details Form to do this)
- living arrangements if they're single and start sharing their accommodation with anyone outside the family who's 16 or older (use the DHS Relationship Details Form to do this)
- gender identity – gender updates are optional.

8.15.6.1. Rental assistance allowance payments following change of address (Bands 4–6)

Rental Assistance Allowance may continue for up to 28 business days following a recipient's advice on change of address or change in rental amount. This is to allow the recipient time to obtain and provide the required verification of change of address to DHS. If such verification has not been provided within the 28 business days, the Rental Assistance Allowance will cease.

8.15.6.2. Provided Accommodation & Income Support (Bands 4–6)

Where Band 4–6 recipients are receiving Income Support and are accommodated in Provided Accommodation, they will be expected to contribute 39 per cent of their Living Allowance (if they are receiving the Living Allowance) towards the cost of their Urgent/Emergency Accommodation, where the duration exceeds two weeks (on the 15th calendar day).

1. Ensure the **SP Portal 'Contact Details' tab**, 'Address Type' field, is listed as 'Service Provider Leased' at the end of the initial two-week period. This will ensure the Rental Contribution is deducted from the recipient's Income Support.

8.15.7. Income Support for Bands 4–6

Individuals applying for the SRSS Program, who are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$1000 (cumulative) in the 12-month period before their SRSS application, may be deemed ineligible for SRSS. As a result, their application for support or payments may be refused. This includes:

- transferring or receiving funds to or from bank accounts that are in a different name to their own
- transfers between individuals who reside in Australia
- transfers to or from overseas accounts and/or
- business transactions.

If current recipients are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$1000 from 3 November 2017 onwards, or where there is a pattern of regular transfers over a period of time or in other exceptional circumstances, a debt may be raised and they may be removed from program.

Where an individual has the ability to transfer or has received funds in excess of \$1000, it is indicative that the individual is not in financial hardship and does not require Income Support through the SRSS Program.

8.15.8. Income Support – Cessation

Income Support will cease when a recipient is no longer eligible for the SRSS Program as determined by the Department.

Eligibility for Income Support will cease without confirmation by the Department when:

- 13 weeks have elapsed since payments were dormant have not been restored (applies to Band 5 and 6 only).
- the recipient dies (payments cease on the date of the death of the individual)
- the recipient departs Australia (payments cease the day before the departure date)

8.15.8.1. Income Support – Cessation (Bands 5–6)

The Department may cease an eligible Recipient's Living Allowance where, following an investigation, it is confirmed that the recipient:

- has provided false, misleading and/or conflicting information
- either deliberately or inadvertently withheld relevant information
- breached the Code of Behaviour (where relevant)
- is not actively engaging with the Department to resolve their immigration status.

Cessation will result in termination of the recipient's Income Support payments and may involve recovery of funds. The decision to cease such payments will only be made by the SRSS Operations and Support Manager, who will advise the SRSS Provider and DHS via a 'Stop Transaction' in the SP Portal.

8.15.9. Income Support – Suspension

Income Support may be suspended immediately where the recipient:

- is not contactable
- fails to report on a change in their financial circumstances
- fails to attend an immigration appointment
- fails to participate in a financial assessment without adequate notification/reason, where alternative arrangements have not been made.

DHS can only suspend Band 4–6 recipients' SRSS Payments.

8.15.10. Income Support – Restoration

If a recipient completes the activity or action related to the suspension and their Income Support is restored, the appropriate arrears are paid as applicable.

The Department informs DHS of its decisions regarding restoration or suspension of SRSS Payments. The Department also provides DHS with a restoration date and whether the recipient is entitled to a back payment. This will be reflected in the SP Portal.

8.15.11. Income Support – Cancellation

Cancellations may result for a number of reasons. This will be reflected in the SP Portal with a Stop Payment Notice - Cessation of Living Allowance under Band 6.

8.15.12. Income Support – Reinstatement

The Department may consider an SRSS Application when the individual:

- provides any requested information
- makes arrangements to repay any overpayments, where applicable
- meets eligibility criteria
- completes the SRSS Application Process.

The decision to reinstate Income Support payments will only be made by the Department. SRSS Operations Band 6 will record this in the SP Portal once undertaken and advise the SRSS Provider via a SP Portal referral.

8.15.13. DHS SRSS Payment Review

DHS conducts reviews of a recipient's SRSS Payment to ensure a recipient's personal information is current and that their SRSS Payment Rate is correct. DHS generally undertakes SRSS Payment Reviews on a six-month basis, however, the timing of these reviews can be before or after the six months in some situations.

A recipient may be asked to respond to DHS about an SRSS Payment Review. If the recipient fails to respond to DHS, their SRSS Payment will be suspended until the recipient undertakes the SRSS Payment Review.

8.15.14. No payment received

Income Support is not an entitlement and is made due to eligibility, including financial hardship. If recipients do not receive payments or are concerned that payments do not reflect their circumstances, they should raise this with DHS or the SRSS Provider as soon as possible.

8.15.15. Income Support – Queries

1. Queries relating to cessation or stoppage of SRSS Payments should be directed as follows:
 - Bands 2–3 and 6 to the SRSS Operations and Support team
 - Bands 4–5 to the recipient's SRO.

8.15.16. Payment deductions

The Department may require DHS to reduce a recipient's Living Allowance, as a deduction, to recover a sum that has been provided to the recipient.

Reasons for deductions include, but are not limited to:

- Transitional Accommodation Contribution
- Financial Hardship Assistance Loan Deductions
- Overpayments resulting from a Human Services overpayment
- Service Provider interim payments made to recipients in lieu of their regular SRSS Payments as a result of a regular payment issue
- Repayment of damage to property or other invoices.

Other deduction reasons may be provided by the Department, for example, repayment for damage to property or other invoices.

The Payment Deduction will be five per cent of the recipient's fortnightly Living Allowance unless the recipient chooses to pay off the amount in full.

1. Discuss whether the recipient wants to make payments out of their Living Allowance or pay the amount in full.

Payments: Submit an **SP Portal 'Additional Services - Other'** task to the SRSS Operations and Support Manager, attaching all relevant supporting documentation, such as specifying the reason for damage and the value of the goods for consideration. Once approved, submit an **SP Portal 'Allowance Modification – Deduction'** to SRSS Payment Recovery for repayments of repair/replacement cost. The Department will notify DHS and the repayments will be made by way of a Payment Deduction.

Pay in full: Make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team, before submitting an **SP Portal 'Allowance Modification – Deduction'**.

The Payment Deduction will be **5 per cent** of the recipient's fortnightly SRSS Living Allowance.

8.15.17. Person Permitted to Enquire (PPE)

Individuals can appoint someone else to talk to DHS about their payment. DHS need their approval before this occurs.



The form authorising a PPE to talk to DHS the behalf of an individual is on the [DHS](#) website.

8.15.18. Income Support – Resolution of issues

In the first instance, DHS should be contacted in relation to a payment issue (such as non-payment or incorrect payment of recipient's Living Allowance, Dependant Child Allowance and/or Rental Assistance). Where DHS has advised that they are unable to resolve the payment issue, the SRSS Provider should contact the SRSS Payment Support team immediately where the matter will be investigated and approval of an SRSS Provider Interim Payment or other payment may be considered. Where Service Provider Interim Payments or other payments are to be considered, the SRSS Provider may be required to provide written confirmation or proof of the recipient's financial hardship if deemed necessary, such as (but not limited to):

- details regarding the recipient's living arrangements (i.e. do they have rental obligations)
- a breakdown of their current financial position including current debts and outgoings
- details of how the recipient has been supporting themselves until now if the matter has been ongoing for some time
- copies of bank statements if necessary.

Please note that it is imperative that the SRSS Payment Support team is contacted immediately once the SRSS Provider is made aware of a recipient's payment issue that DHS is unable to resolve. This will allow the SRSS Payment Support team adequate time to investigate and resolve the payment issue, and potentially avoid the recipient from reaching a state of financial hardship.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Appendix B – Direct Recipient Cost table

Direct Recipient Cost name	DRC Type	Band	Description	Cap	Prior departmental approval required (if under cap and within OPM guidelines)
Supported Living Services					
Schooling Requirements Package	2	- 2 3 - - -	Provided by the SRSS Provider for each child prior to the child commencing school.	s. 47E(d)	No
School Excursions Funding	2	- 2 - - - -	Funding of school camps, excursions and other school organised activities.		Prior approval for each excursion
School Excursions Assistance	2	- - 3 - - -	Funding of school camps, excursions and other school organised activities.		Prior approval for each excursion
Public transport assistance to travel to school	2	- 2 - - - -	Public transport cards (in-kind) for assistances with travel to school.		No
Meaningful Engagement Allowance	2	- 2 - - - -	An allowance to participate in meaningful engagement activities outside of school/education.		Prior approval for activity
Clothing Allowance	2	- 2 - - - -	Purchase of essential seasonal clothing.		No
Department-initiated travel by the recipient	2	- 2 3 - - -	Where the Department requires a recipient to travel in the same state or interstate to attend an appointment as part of their Status Resolution process.		Yes, in each instance
Baby Items Package	2	- - 3 - - -	Install package where recipient is moving into Band 3 from held detention (with a child or children under two years old) or 6 weeks before birth of baby.		No
Registering birth of baby & birth certificate	2	- - 3 - - -	Cost incurred for registering newborn.		Yes
Transit Assistance Allowance	2	- 2 3 - - -	To allow for the purchase of a meal or incidental costs for recipient during travel.		No
Visa-related health checks	2	- 2 3 - - -	Costs incurred for pre-approved recipients to undertake the health checks required by the Department for visa applications.		No prior approval required. Yes

Direct Recipient Cost name	DRC Type	Band	Description	Cap	Prior departmental approval required (if under cap and within OPM guidelines)
Provided Accommodation					
Utilities fees	2	- 2 3 - - -	Costs of gas, electricity.	s. 47E(d)	No
Landline (with local calls)	2	- 2 - - - -	Cost of landline (including connection and disconnection charges, and provision of landline ongoing monthly line rental if this is not included in connection fee) and local calls only.		No
Landline fees	2	- - 3 - - -	Cost of landline (including connection and disconnection charges, and provision of landline ongoing monthly line rental if this is not included in connection fee) only.		No
Long-term rent	2	- 2 3 - - -	Rental/accommodation costs for Provided Accommodation and household contributions to Community Links.		Yes
Linen package (replacement)	2	- 2 3 - - -	Replacement linen items required due to wear and tear.		No
Linen Package (new recipient)	2	- 2 3 - - -	Linen items (listed in the BHG Package) that must be provided to a new recipient.		No
BHG (Basic Household Goods)	2	- 2 3 - - -	Furnishings for Ongoing Supported/Provided Accommodation properties.		No
BHG (replacement items)	2	- 2 3 - - -	For items that are worn, damaged, or faulty. (If goods are deliberately damaged by a recipient, the recipient must meet the cost of replacement.)		No
Basic Starter Package	2	- - 3 4 - -	Small amount of staple foods and basic cleaning products provided upon property reception, and for Band 4 recipients arriving after 5pm.		No
Computer Package	2	- 2 - - - -	Desktop computer and peripherals at a ratio of one desktop computer to four Band 2 recipients in Provided Accommodation.		No
Internet access	2	- 2 - - - -	Ongoing Supported Accommodation.		No
Household Activity Items	2	- 2 - - - -	Recreational equipment, such as sporting goods and games for Band 2 recipients in Provided Accommodation.		No
Mobile phone handset	2	- 2 - - - -	Mobile phone handset only (retained by the SRSS Provider when it ceases to provide support to the recipient).		No

Direct Recipient Cost name	DRC Type	Band	Description	Cap	Prior departmental approval required (if under cap and within OPM guidelines)
Transitional Services					
Transitional Travel Arrangements	2	- - 3 4 - -	Funding of travel arrangements, including interstate transfers, for substantive visa holders who have been released from held detention or have been subject to a residence determination.	Actual cost for approved amount when notified within required timeframe.	Yes
Additional Services					
Financial Hardship Assistance (FHA)	1	- - - - -	Material aid or in-kind assistance in exceptional circumstances.	Actual cost for approved amount.	Yes
Financial Hardship Assistance Loan	1	- - - - -	Loan for recipient in exceptional circumstances, or to secure Independent Accommodation for Band 4.	Actual cost for approved amount.	Yes
Urgent and Emergency Accommodation	2	- - - - -	Accommodation for recipients in exceptional circumstances.	Actual cost for approved amount.	Yes
Emergency support	2	- - - - -	Support for an immediate resolution to presenting issues and where there are no other options.	Actual cost for approved amount.	Yes
Carer support	2	- - - - -	Where a vulnerable recipient requires the support of a full or part time Carer not provided by the SRSS Provider.	Actual cost for approved amount.	Yes
Transport for compelling circumstances	2	- - - - -	To cover the cost of transport, or make a contribution, such as long distance trips in exceptional circumstances.	Actual cost or contribution for approved amount.	Yes
Health and Medical costs	2	- - - - -	Reimbursement of health care costs in accordance with relevant approvals from the Department.	Actual costs for approved amount	Yes
Torture and Trauma	2	- - - - -	Reimbursement of Torture and Trauma counselling costs in accordance with relevant approvals from the Department.	Actual costs for approved amount	Yes
Childcare	2	- - - - -	Childcare for children who are below school age, where there are no other suitable options.	Actual cost for approved amount.	Yes
SRSS Provider-associated costs					
Car for each Band 2 household	2	- 2 - - - -	Carer at Band 2 household is to have access to a mid-range family car. SRSS Providers may enter lease arrangements to meet this requirement.	Actual cost	N/A

Direct Recipient Cost name	DRC Type	Band	Description	Cap	Prior departmental approval required (if under cap and within OPM guidelines)
Travel required by the SRSS Provider when performing the Services	2	1 2 3 4 5 6	Travel and accommodation costs for SRSS Provider Personnel can be claimed by the SRSS Provider if such travel is requested by the Department (for example, to accompany recipients on movements). Travel and accommodation to deliver services at a location in business-as-usual capacity will not be paid.	Actual cost, in accordance with the <i>Schedule of Services</i> .	Yes, in each instance
Costs associated with early termination of leases	2	- 2 3 - - -	The Department will meet the costs associated with the early termination of leases that the Department initiates.	Actual cost.	Yes, in each instance
Translating and Interpreting Costs	2	- 2 3 4 5 6	The Department will reimburse the Translating and Interpreting Costs that are incurred during Torture and Trauma Counselling sessions, and where recipients are independently accessing medical and legal services.	Actual costs.	No, but recipient must be approved for the activity.
Related to DHS SRSS Payments					
Initial Payments	3	- 2 3 4 - -	Cash payment equivalent to a fortnight's payment provided to recipients in Band 2, 3 and 4 at reception prior to receipt of their first full Income Support payment from DHS.	As outlined in OPM or advised by Department.	No, but recipient must be approved for Income Support as outlined in OPM or advised by Department.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Status Resolution Support Services Payment

Policy Document

This document prescribes policy for officers of the Department of Human Services (DHS) responsible for administering payments under the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) framework. SRSS is managed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

Released by Department of Home Affairs
under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) Payment Policy

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Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)

Payment Policy

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)



2.2 Determination of eligibility for SRSS Payment

DIBP is responsible for notifying DHS when a person is eligible for an SRSS Payment. For the purpose of this policy, a person who is eligible to receive the SRSS Payment is referred to as an SRSS Recipient. This notification is managed through an *Allowance Request*.

DHS is responsible for establishing if the SRSS Recipient meets payability conditions through established DHS procedures.

DIBP is responsible for notifying DHS when an SRSS Recipient is no longer eligible for SRSS and the SRSS Payment should cease. This notification is managed through an *Allowance Modification – Stop Request*.

SRSS Policy makes it clear that SRSS Recipients **are not eligible** for other DHS payments. However, as noted in [section 2.1: Authority for SRSS Payment](#), the rate of SRSS payment is assessed as a percentage of various payments administered by DHS.

Therefore DHS officers responsible for administering SRSS payments should assess SRSS payments with regard to established methods of assessment for DHS payments.

The responsibilities of DHS and DIBP officers are summarised at [Annex A: List of Responsibilities Table](#).

4.4 Verification of financial information

DHS should determine at the New Claim Interview if an SRSS Recipient in SRSS Bands 4-6 has liquid assets beyond the allowable threshold to qualify for the SRSS Payment. Liquid assets beyond the allowable threshold are defined as:

- a single SRSS Recipient having ready access to liquid funds in excess of \$4,450;
- a member of a couple, where either one or both members of the couple are an SRSS Recipient, having ready access to combined liquid funds in excess of s. [REDACTED]

Liquid assets over the threshold will be assessed to consider if any funds are to be disregarded for the purpose of unavoidable or reasonable expenditure. If at the new claim interview, the SRSS Recipient presents evidence to DHS which indicates the SRSS Recipient has ready access to liquid assets beyond the allowable threshold; DHS is to reject the new claim and notify DIBP through Management Information (MI) reporting. The reporting in MI may be accessed by DIBP at any time. If after the SRSS Recipient has been granted SRSS payments and then presents evidence to DHS, whether through a regular review or through a change in circumstance notice, which indicates the SRSS recipient has ready access to liquid assets beyond the allowable threshold, then DHS is to suspend the SRSS Payments.

DHS will review liquid assets during regular reviews for recipients in Bands 5 and 6.

For more information on reasons to reject, suspend or cancel an SRSS Payment, refer to [Annex D: Reasons and reason codes for modification of SRSS Payment](#).

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

6.8 Impact of assets

SRSS Recipients must inform DHS if they own any assets that may affect their eligibility for SRSS Payments. An asset can be regarded as any resources available to an SRSS Recipient that can be used to secure an economic benefit or service. The Newstart Allowance assets threshold should be applied by DHS to measure the worth of assets owned by SRSS Recipients.

If DHS assesses that assets owned by an SRSS Recipient are equal to or above the Newstart Allowance assets threshold then the following will apply:-

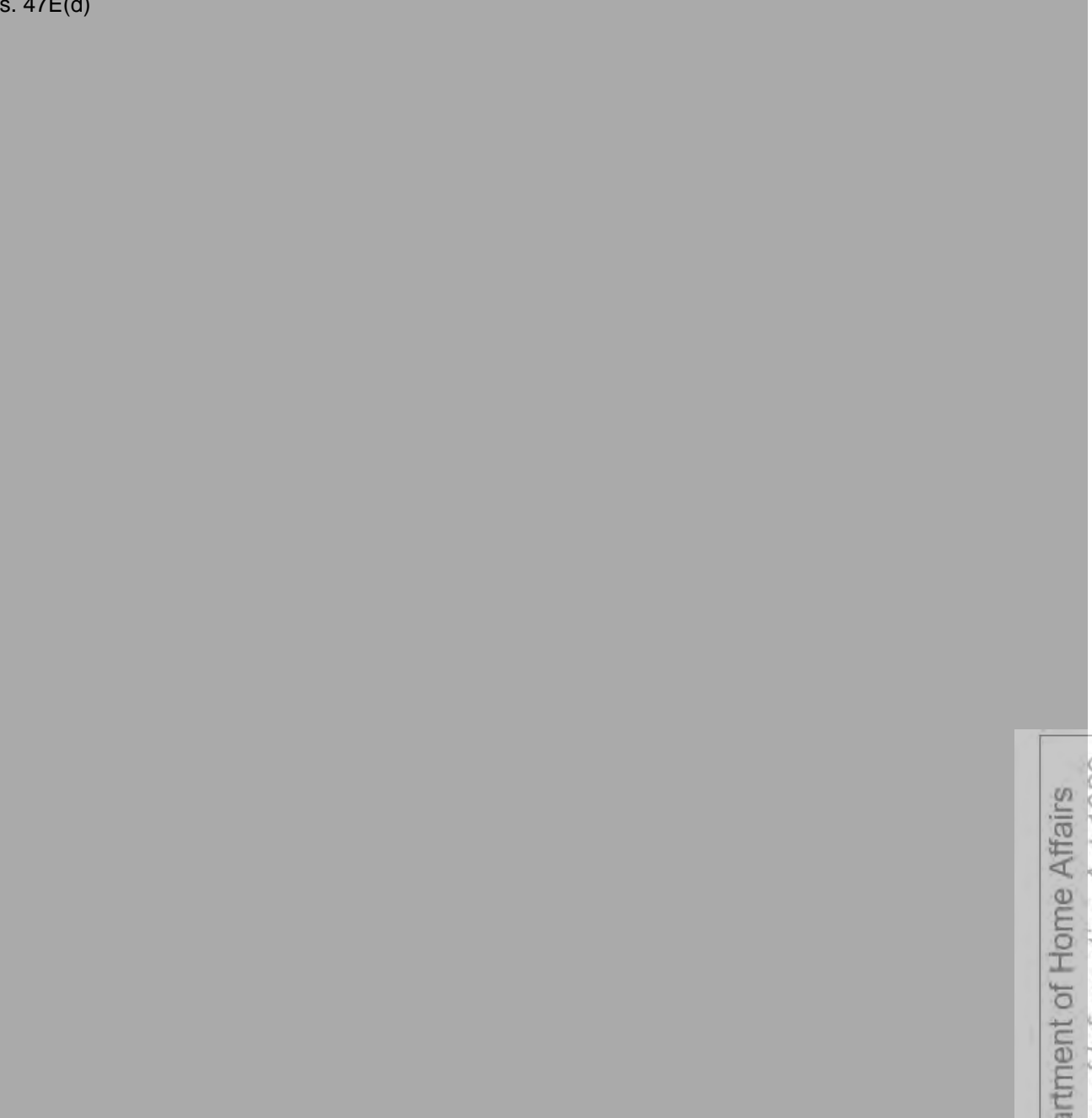
- the SRSS Recipient will not be eligible for the SRSS payment; or
- if SRSS payments have commenced, DHS will initiate dormancy provisions.

Assets that are assessed by DHS to be under the threshold have no impact on the SRSS Payment Rate.

6.9 Private assets

Only assets that are accessible and can be used by an SRSS Recipient to secure an economic benefit or service should be assessed in the assets threshold test. DHS should consider whether offshore bank accounts can be accessed by an SRSS Recipient to produce an economic benefit.

s. 47E(d)



10.29 Cancellation of SRSS Payment

Cancellation of an SRSS Payment may result for a range of reasons, and should generally be initiated by DIBP with a Stop Allowance Modification. Cancellation of an SRSS Payment differs from Stop SRSS Payment because a cancellation should not occur without a prior suspension unless the SRSS Recipient has died, they request to voluntarily withdraw from payment or they have earned sufficiently to preclude them from payment for six consecutive fortnights.

Note: In all circumstances involving the death or incarceration of a SRSS recipient, DHS will notify DIBP immediately.

DHS may cancel an SRSS Payment for the reasons listed below. In every case DHS must report the Cancel SRSS Payment to DIBP through MI reporting. DIBP can access MI Reporting at any time.

- failure to report to DHS for any purpose
- failure to attend an SRSS Payment Review
- failure to return an SRSS Payment Review form
- failure to attend a compulsory appointment with DHS
- failure to respond to correspondence from DHS
- during an investigation by DHS or DIBP
- the alternative income of an SRSS Recipient exceeds the SRSS income test for six consecutive fortnights
- the SRSS Recipient does not submit details of their Payment Destination
- due to a returned direct credit payment
- where mail to an SRSS Recipient is returned marked whereabouts unknown
- proof that an SRSS Recipient has provided false or misleading information that affects payability for SRSS
- the SRSS Recipient has been suspended for 13 weeks
- at the request of a SRSS Recipient
- when an SRSS Recipient dies.

Note: if DHS is advised of a death before DIBP, DHS may code the death action immediately to ensure any remaining family does not go into hardship. DHS will then immediately refer the case to DIBP.

Where DHS considers there are other reasons to cancel an SRSS Payment it should confirm the cancellation requirement with DIBP before proceeding with the cancellation.

DIBP should generally instruct DHS to cancel an Eligible Recipient's SRSS Payment with an *Allowance Modification - Stop*.

A list of SRSS Payment cancellation reasons and reason codes is at [Annex D: Reasons and reason codes for modification of SRSS Payments](#).

10.30 SRSS Payment reviews

DHS conducts reviews of an SRSS Payment in Bands 5 and 6 to ensure an SRSS Recipient's personal information is current and that their SRSS Payment Rate is correct.

A SRSS Payment Review seeks to capture information about an SRSS Recipient including, but not limited to, any undeclared:

- change of address, or change in amount of rent paid or Sharer status;
- change of family composition;
- earnings;
- income from sources other than earnings;
- liquid assets that might exceed the SRSS Payment financial hardship test; or
- other change in circumstance/s that may affect an SRSS Recipient's continuing qualification to, or rate of, SRSS Payment.

Conducting an SRSS Payment Review

DHS should conduct a SRSS Payment Review verbally (face to face or by telephone) with an SRSS Recipient and document their responses. Alternatively, DHS can request an SRSS Recipient to complete a review form. If an SRSS Recipient chooses to complete a review form, the form must be returned to DHS within 14 days of issue.

Frequency of Ongoing SRSS Payment Review

DHS generally undertakes SRSS Payment Reviews on a six monthly basis, however, the timing of these Reviews can be before or after the six months where circumstances make this necessary.

Failure to Complete a SRSS Payment Review

Where an SRSS Recipient fails to respond to a reminder about a SRSS Payment Review, their SRSS Payment may be suspended until the SRSS Recipient undertakes the Review.

10.31 SRSS Recipient disputes SRSS Payment

Where an SRSS Recipient seeks a review of any decision made by DHS in regard to an SRSS Payment, an initial review is completed by a DHS officer and may be escalated for reconsideration by a DHS Level 2 Helpdesk specialist. If an SRSS Recipient does not agree with the outcome of the review process, the matter should be referred by DHS to DIBP for determination.

10.32 Suspension of SRSS Payment pending review

If an SRSS Payment is suspended by DHS and the SRSS Recipient requests a review of the decision, the SRSS Payment will remain suspended until the DHS review is finalised. This review must be completed within 14 business days from the request. The DHS review may result in:

- restoration of the SRSS Payment
- a debt to the Commonwealth if an overpayment has occurred
- payment for the period the SRSS Payment was suspended.

10.33 DIBP Review of SRSS Payment decision

If DIBP is conducting a review of eligibility for SRSS, or determining an outcome of a DHS review, DIBP will advise DHS whether to suspend or continue the SRSS Payment during the period of the DIBP review. The DIBP review should be completed within 14 business days, the duration of the current EPED.

When DIBP determines from a review that an SRSS Recipient is no longer eligible for the SRSS Payment, DIBP must issue a Stop Payment Notice that will be implemented from the date of the determination by DIBP.

When a review by DIBP establishes that an SRSS Recipient remains eligible for SRSS Payments, DIBP must instruct DHS to pay for the period of suspension during the DHS review process.

10.34 Requirement to report earnings

An SRSS Recipient is required under SRSS policy to report any changes in circumstances to DIBP, their SRSS Provider, and to DHS. Changes in circumstances which include income earned from employment must also be reported to DHS. Under this requirement the SRSS Recipient must report the first income payment and any subsequent payments on a fortnightly basis. DHS may cancel the SRSS Payment if the SRSS Recipient has earned income sufficient to preclude them from the SRSS Payment for six consecutive fortnights.

Where an SRSS Recipient fails to report income from employment to DHS on a fortnightly basis, their SRSS Payment will be suspended.

10.35 Assessment of income from employment

The assessment of income an SRSS Recipient earns from employment will be based on the Newstart income test. If an SRSS Recipient is partnered to a DHS Customer receiving a Pension Allowance, then the SRSS income test is based on the DSS pension test.

The income an SRSS Recipient gains from employment may be earned, derived or received. Income earned during an instalment period is applicable to all days in that instalment period, regardless of which days are worked or the number of days worked.

10.36 Reporting zero income from employment

Where an SRSS Recipient reports zero income from employment for three consecutive fortnightly reporting periods, the SRSS Recipient reverts to a standard notification reporting period for the SRSS Payment. An SRSS Recipient must immediately advise DHS of any change to their employment circumstances.

11. Deductions

11.1 DIBP deductions

SRSS policy prescribes that deductions from the SRSS Payment may be made to facilitate payment of a debt by an SRSS Recipient. DIBP must notify DHS of a requirement to implement deductions. For instance, DIBP may require DHS to make deductions from an SRSS Payment to recover payments to the SRSS Recipient by the SRSS Provider. In these cases DIBP must notify DHS of the:

- amount to be deducted (in dollars only)
- the reason for the deduction
- the start date for the deduction.

DHS must notify DIBP when deductions from an SRSS Payment have resulted in full recovery of a debt owed by the SRSS Recipient. DHS must notify DIBP if they are unable to recover any debt owing and have exhausted all options for recovering further monies through deductions.

Where an SRSS Recipient has multiple debts that are subject to repayment through deductions, only one debt will be recovered during a debt repayment period.

11.2 Amount of deduction

DIBP instructs DHS of the rate of debt recovery in each case of deduction. The deduction amounts are calculated on a percentage basis. For the purpose of this policy, a maximum of 5 per cent of the SRSS Payment can be deducted. Where an SRSS Recipient is in financial hardship and unable to repay the 5 per cent deduction, DHS will inform DIBP. DIBP will determine whether the deductions can be suspended for a specific period or if the debt is not recoverable and notify DHS of the decision.

Refer to [Annex C: Payment Reference Table](#) for further information and the list of deduction reasons.

s. 47E(d)



12. Management of debts

12.1 Reasons for debts

A debt may also occur if an SRSS Recipient has received an amount of SRSS Payment for which they were not eligible. A debt can occur for several reasons:

- income from employment, investments or other sources which has not been considered when calculating the SRSS Payment made to them.
- changes in care of dependent children.
- changes in relationship status.
- loss of entitlement to the SRSS Payment, e.g. non-engagement, in prison, departed Australia, assets over the limit.
- fraudulent activity.
- administrative or system error.
- changes in the amount of rent paid or incorrect amount of Rental Assistance Allowance paid.



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Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)

Operational Procedures Manual (Version 7)
May 2018

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Part 3 – Eligibility for SRSS

3.1 Eligibility for SRSS

Eligibility for support through SRSS, is linked to the individual's cooperation with the Department and SRSS Providers and includes engaging with status resolution milestones and goals. Individuals will only be eligible to receive support to address a particular concern(s), where it is preventing an individual from resolving their immigration status, or to meet legal obligations.

3.1.1 Band 1 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 1 Services generally requires the SRSS recipient to be an unaccompanied minor (UAM) residing in an APOD, who requires additional care arrangements, as determined by the Department. Other minors may be referred to Band 1 at the discretion of the Department where their parent/guardian is unavailable due to circumstances such as a medical emergency where no other appropriate care options exist.

Band 1 services should not be used to provide SRSS recipients respite or child care arrangements. Services under Band 1 are not available to children to assist parents to attend interviews, appointments or other non-emergency activities. It is expected that alternative carer arrangements are sourced in such situations.

APODs may include:

- Immigration Residential Housing (IRH)
- Immigration Transit Accommodation (ITA)
- Any other location designated as an alternative place of detention by the Minister or a delegate in the Department, including hotels or hospitals.

Band 1 recipients will cease to be eligible for Band 1 services if or when the recipient:

- turns, or is determined to be over 18 years of age
- is transferred to another SRSS Band or location where they do not require Band 1 Services
- is granted a visa
- is in the care of a suitable adult family member (for example, they are moved to a location with a family member, a family member arrives in Australia and is able to care for them or a family member they arrived with becomes able to provide care)
- departs Australia.

3.1.2 Band 2 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 2 Services generally requires the SRSS recipient to be an unlawful non-citizen UAM, detained under the Act, accommodated in the community under Residence Determination.

The Minister must make a Residence Determination under section 197AB of the Act, for the SRSS recipient to reside at a specified place.

3.1.3 Band 3 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 3 Services generally requires the SRSS recipient to be an unlawful non-citizen, detained under the Act, accommodated in the community under Residence Determination.

The Minister must make a Residence Determination, under section 197AB of the Act, for the SRSS recipient to reside at a specified place.

3.1.4 Band 4 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 4 Services is based on a person being released from immigration detention (held or Residence Determination) through the grant of a bridging visa (Final Departure or otherwise) or substantive visa, and requiring transitional support. Transitional support services are designed to assist individuals and family groups to integrate into the Australian community. Services include assisting recipients to secure independent accommodation and register with essential services such as Medicare.

Departing Held Detention

Transitional services are primarily designed for those individuals or family groups who are exiting held detention and have never previously lived in the Australian community. In these instances, the following transition timeframes apply:

- Individuals who are granted a Final Departure BVE from held detention are eligible to access a maximum of three weeks of Band 4 support, without income support.
- Nuclear families (with children under 18 years of age) who are granted a Final Departure BVE from held detention and individuals/families who are granted a standard BVE, are eligible to access a maximum of six weeks of Band 4 support, with income support.

Upon release from held detention, only nuclear families with children under 18 years of age may be eligible to receive a one-off initial payment. Please refer to [Section 4.2.1 Initial Payments](#) for further information. Persons granted a substantive visa and transitioning out of held detention or SRSS, must access mainstream services for which they are eligible, including support payments. Income support, including financial hardship and rent and bond loans, are not available from the date of substantive visa grant.

Departing Residence Determination

Individuals who are granted a Final Departure BVE or standard BVE from Bands 2 or 3, may be eligible to receive limited transitional services if a serious vulnerability is identified. Transition support will be tailored to address the particular vulnerability.

Individuals who do not have a serious vulnerability are generally not eligible to receive transition services. If services are required after transitioning out of Band 2 or 3, individuals are required to complete an application for SRSS.

3.1.5 Band 5 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 5 services is based on a non-citizen in the Australian community (who is not detained under the Act). Services will be determined following an assessment by a departmental officer. Services may be provided where an individual has exceptional needs that require short term support or support to depart Australia. Please note that if an individual has work rights, income support will not generally be provided.

Individuals will be eligible for Band 5 where they meet the following eligibility criteria and require three or more additional services:

- they have a serious mental issue which is not currently managed/stable
- they have a serious physical health issue, for example a terminal or chronic illness
- they have a serious disability
- they have a cognitive impairment, for example an acquired brain injury
- they are a single parent with children under school age (dependent on each state or territory age restrictions)
- they are a primary carer for an individual with a vulnerability identified above
- where an individual is a victim of domestic violence, assault or other forms of violence
- an individual is greater than 70 years old.

Individuals must also be seeking to engage Australia's protection obligations through the grant of an appropriate protection or humanitarian visa. For IMAs, this means being invited to apply, or having an

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application for a TPV or SHEV with the Department or with merits review. For non-IMAs, their original entry visa to Australia must have expired and they must have a valid Protection Visa application awaiting assessment with the Department or with merits review. Individuals cannot request the cancellation of their substantive visa in order to be eligible for SRSS.

Individuals must also be actively engaged with the Department to resolve their immigration status by meeting status resolution milestones. Individuals will have their circumstances reviewed in line with their case plan, to ensure they are engaging with the Department and to determine whether support is still required.

Please note that if an individual has received a substantive visa refusal decision, and has prescribed vulnerabilities (as above), which precludes them from working, they may be eligible to receive limited support to facilitate departure from Australia.

An application for SRSS may be made by an SRSS Provider on behalf a person in the community not currently receiving SRSS Services. For further information refer to [3.3.4 Applications for Band 5 and 6 Services](#)

3.1.6 Band 6 Eligibility

Eligibility for Band 6 services is based on a non-citizen in the Australian community (who is not detained under the Act). Services may be provided where an individual has low level needs and requires two or fewer additional specific support services, in addition to case management, to reduce barriers towards visa grant or to enable departure from Australia. Please note that if an individual has work rights, income support will not generally be provided. Any support that is provided, will be tailored to address the specific resolution barrier and will be short term in nature.

Individuals must also be seeking to engage Australia's protection obligations through the grant of an appropriate protection or humanitarian visa. For IMAs, this means being invited to apply, or having an application for a TPV or SHEV with the Department or with merits review. For non-IMAs, their original entry visa to Australia must have expired and they must have a valid Protection Visa application awaiting assessment with the Department or with merits review. Individuals cannot request the cancellation of their substantive visa in order to be eligible for SRSS.

Individuals must be actively engaged with the Department to resolve their immigration status by meeting status resolution milestones. Individuals will have their circumstances reviewed in line with their case plan to ensure they are engaging with the Department and to determine whether support is still required.

An application may be made by an SRSS Provider on behalf a person in the community not currently receiving SRSS Services, for further information refer to [3.3.4 Applications and Referrals for Band 5 and 6 Services](#)

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3.2 SRSS Eligibility Review

3.2.1 SRSS Eligibility Revision

Bands 2 - 3

In some circumstances, the Department may request that a *Continued Eligibility Review* template be completed and submitted for recipients in Bands 2 and 3 to assist in reviewing continued eligibility for services through SRSS.

Band 5-6

All recipients within the SRSS program will be reviewed in line with their case plan to assess their continued eligibility for support. The Department will also undertake internal quality assurance activities, such as a random sampling of eligibility decisions, to ensure consistency in decision making.

The SRSS Provider must ensure that the review focuses on the SRSS recipient's on-going vulnerabilities, progress towards resolving barriers that are impacting on immigration status resolution and continued engagement with the Department.

The *Continued Eligibility Review* template will require the following information to be updated, with a focus on outlining how the barriers are preventing an individual from resolving their immigration status:

- Housing
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Income benefits
- Family issues
- Community resources and social network
- Employment
- Language and education
- Meaningful engagement activities
- Legal/IOM
- Critical incidents
- Timeframes and goals in transitioning off services.

Under each section in the *Continued Eligibility Review*, the SRSS Provider must clearly detail all required information and provide clear timeframes for each listed milestone. SRSS Providers must also clearly outline the outcome of any actions they have undertaken to assist the individual and list all steps that have been taken to achieve milestones and/or goals. If a milestone and/or goal has not been met, detailed information as to why, must be provided.

The information contained in the *Continued Eligibility Review* will assist the SRSS Processing Officer in assessing the SRSS recipient's continued eligibility for the program (refer to [3.1 Eligibility for SRSS](#)).

The first *Continued Eligibility Review* template is due in line with the initial SRSS approval period and is required to be updated in line with timeframes specified in each subsequent review.

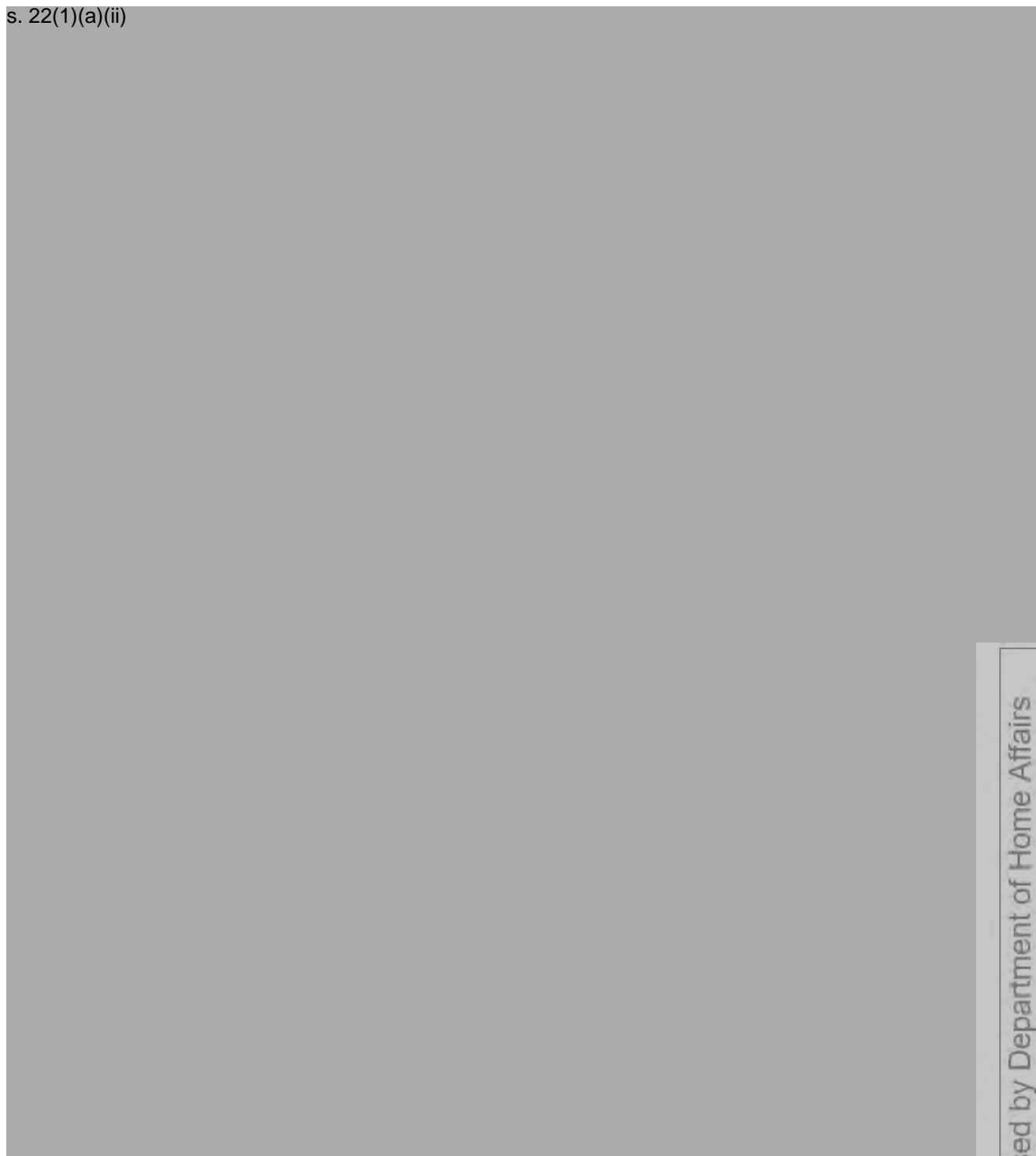
The completed *Continued Eligibility Review* form should be submitted to the SRSS Processing Officer via the 'Confirmation – Case Plan Review' in the Service Provider Portal. When submitting a *Continued Eligibility Review* form for a family, the activity must be recorded against each family member; however, only one

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Continued Eligibility Review should be submitted per family and be attached against the principle SRSS recipient.

Additionally, SRSS Providers must review Case Plans each time a Case Worker contacts an SRSS recipient (at least monthly) to ensure appropriate levels of support are in place and to maintain oversight of the individual SRSS recipients' case, refer to *Part 5 Case Worker Support* for further information regarding regular contact. The Case Plan should be updated to reflect significant changes only and uploaded to the portal as required.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)



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Part 8 – Financial Assistance

8.1 SRSS Regular Payments

The regular SRSS Payments administered by Human Services may consist of three allowances. The three allowances are:

1. **Living Allowance** (Bands 2-6)
2. **Dependent Child Allowance** (Bands 3-6)
3. **Rental Assistance Allowance** (Bands 4-6)

To be eligible to receive financial assistance, individuals must have a demonstrated barrier preventing them from working to support themselves and provide evidence that they are in financial hardship.

Individuals applying for financial assistance, via the SRSS program, who are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$475 (cumulative) in the 12 month period before their SRSS application, may be deemed ineligible for SRSS and their application for support or payments may be refused. This includes transferring or receiving funds to or from bank accounts that are in a different name to their own, transfers between individuals who reside in Australia, transfers to or from overseas accounts and/or business transactions.

If current SRSS recipients are found to be transferring or receiving funds in excess of \$475 from 3 November 2017 onwards, or where there is a pattern of regular transfers over a period of one or in other exceptional circumstances, a debt may be raised and they may be removed from program.

Please note that where an individual has the ability to transfer or has received funds in excess of \$475, it is indicative that the individual is not in financial hardship and does not require financial support through SRSS.

Adults who choose to study when they have the capacity to work and support themselves, will not be eligible for SRSS income support. SRSS is not a social welfare Program and financial assistance is only intended to support individuals who are unable to work while resolving their immigration status.

The Department provides Human Services with the SRSS recipient's payment commencement date for all Bands. The commencement date is the date on which the SRSS recipient:

- started living in the community following release from held detention arrangements
- entered the SRSS Program while already living in the community.

The SRSS Provider must arrange the SRSS recipient's initial interview with Human Services and assist the recipient to open a bank account (where required) and ensure the recipients have the BSB and account numbers recorded for their Human Services interview. When the bank account is set up the SRSS Provider must record this in the Service Provider Portal as 'Essential Registration – Banking'.

SRSS recipients are to be registered with Human Services within five business days of their entry into the SRSS Program. When the SRSS recipient has an initial interview booked with Human Services, the SRSS Provider must record this has been completed using the 'Essential Registrations - Allowance' task in the Service Provider Portal. Payments made by Human Services are made fortnightly, in arrears.

Note: Band 1 SRSS recipients do not receive any SRSS Payments as their care and accommodation needs are provided by the Detention Service Provider.

In situations where an SRSS recipient is receiving long term, ongoing treatment or care in a care facility (such as hospital or an aged care facility), the SRSS payment may not be payable during this period. The Department will advise the Department of Human Services, on a case by case basis, if an SRSS recipient's payment may be cancelled or suspended in these circumstances.

8.1.1 Living Allowance

Band 2

Band 2 SRSS recipients receive a portion of their Living Allowance as a personal allowance from Human Services. The personal allowance should be used to purchase things such as phone cards, mobile credit, public transport, and additional clothing and entertainment activities. The remainder of the Living Allowance is retained to cover the cost of utilities and household groceries. The Department pays up to \$[redacted] per person, per fortnight for utilities and up to \$[redacted] per person, per fortnight for household groceries which is invoiced as a Direct Recipient Cost by the SRSS Provider.

Band 3

The SRSS recipient's Living Allowance rate depends on their arrival date:

- 70 per cent for all Unauthorised Air Arrivals and IMAs who arrived in Australia before 13 August 2012
- 60 per cent for IMAs who arrived in Australia on or after 13 August 2012, who are living in the community and:
 - are subject to regional processing
 - have been officially exempt from regional processing under Section 198AE of the Migration Act.

A portion of the Band 3 Living Allowance is retained by the Department for payment of utilities.

Bands 4-6

SRSS recipients' Living Allowance rates are based on 89% on the relevant Newstart or Youth Allowance, depending on the SRSS recipient's circumstances.

The SRSS Payments are based on the amount that would be payable to an eligible Australian citizen or permanent resident under the Social Security Law or Family Assistance Law rate. SRSS recipients are ineligible for other Human Services payments.

The existing Newstart and Youth Allowance income tests and rules apply to SRSS recipients who are earning an income. The income test applies to SRSS recipients where income is declared, regardless of whether the SRSS recipient has permission to work attached to their visa. SRSS recipients must inform Human Services of any income and/or assets which may affect their payments. SRSS recipients must immediately advise the Department and Human Services of any changes to their circumstances.

In limited circumstances, SRSS recipients may be eligible to receive a single living allowance, while still living in the same property as their former partner. The SRSS recipient's eligibility and relationship status will be reviewed every three months by CPON or Status Resolution Officer, and will be subject to the following evidence requirements:

- relationship status on substantive visa application
- nature of the commitment
- financial circumstances
- accommodation arrangements
- social aspects
- care of children

8.1.2 Dependent Child Allowance Bands 3-6

The Dependent Child Allowance is a percentage of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Parts A and B (where applicable), where a family has one or more dependent children.

The Department will determine if the SRSS recipient has a dependent child and qualifies for the Dependent Child Allowance. The Department may determine the date payments commence where a dependent child has been in the care of an SRSS recipient for more than three months.

The Dependent Child Allowance for a newborn child commences from the date provided by the Department, which may be the dependent child's date of birth or the date on which the child became a dependent of the SRSS recipient (*refer to 6.1.2 Newborn Children*). Where a dependent child is already in the care of an SRSS recipient, the Dependent Child Allowance commences from the start date of the SRSS recipient's Living Allowance.

An SRSS recipient is not eligible for the Dependant Child Allowance for a child who is receiving SRSS or not, in the following circumstances:

- the child is receiving Special Benefit payments from DHS
- the SRSS recipient has a non-SRSS recipient partner in receipt of FTB payments from DHS.

The Dependent Child Allowance will be paid to eligible SRSS recipients, who are the primary parent, at the same time as the Living Allowance or Rental Assistance Allowance. This payment will only be made to one parent when parents are partnered.

Primary parent SRSS recipients who are single with dependents, will receive the Dependent Child Allowance from DHS.

Primary parent SRSS recipients who are partnered, will receive the FTB Part A component from DHS, and where applicable, the FTB Part B component from SRSS Providers.

Service Providers are expected to undertake a review of the families Dependent Child Allowance when one parent has been exited from SRSS due to dormancy or has had their immigration status determined.

8.1.3 Rental Assistance Allowance

Bands 4-6

Rental Assistance Allowance is paid by Human Services at a rate that is 89 per cent of the Rent Assistance that would be payable to an eligible person under the Social Security Law or Family Assistance Law Rate. Rental Assistance Allowance may be available to eligible SRSS recipients who are paying for Private Accommodation. SRSS recipients residing in Provided or Emergency Accommodation (*refer to Part 9 – Accommodation Assistance for further information*) will not be eligible for the Rental Assistance Allowance.

An SRSS recipient will not be considered for Rental Assistance Allowance in the following circumstances:

- the SRSS recipient is in receipt of free board and/or lodging
- the SRSS recipient is residing in government housing or an Australian Government funded nursing home or hostel
- the Department advises Human Services the SRSS recipient is not eligible due to alternative accommodation arrangements.

Rental Assistance Allowance will be paid to eligible SRSS recipients at the same time as the Living Allowance. SRSS Providers must update the accommodation details in the Service Provider Portal when an SRSS recipient moves into privately leased accommodation. SRSS recipients must notify Human Services of their change in circumstances and provide supporting documentation in order to receive Rental Assistance.

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Allowance. SRSS Providers should record any assistance to register for this allowance in the Service Provider Portal as 'Essential Registration – Rental Assistance'.

The Rental Assistance Allowance is based on Rent Assistance and its existing rules, as such, supporting documentation must be provided to Human Services. Supporting documentation may include:

- a formal tenancy agreement
- a statutory declaration or signed letter from the home owner or agent including the address details, weekly rental amount and name of the SRSS recipient

8.1.4 Service Provider Interim Payments

Service Provider interim payments are payment SRSS Providers are authorised to make to recipients in lieu of their regular SRSS payments while their payment issues are being investigated. They are usually approved for periods of two weeks at a time, in line with their regular SRSS payment periods. Service Provider Interim Payments should be recoverable by one of the following methods:

- SRSS Payment Support Team adjusts the recipients allowance eligibility start date to the day after the last date of the approval period
- The Service Provider may be required to enter a payment deduction for the Service Provider Interim Payment amount paid to the recipient (refer to 8.4 Payment Deductions).

8.1.5 Resolution of SRSS Regular Payment Issues

In the first instance, DHS should be contacted in relation to a payment issue (such as non-payment or incorrect payment of recipients Living Allowance, Dependant Child Allowance and/or Rental Assistance). Where DHS have advised that they are unable to resolve the payment issue, the Service Provider should contact the SRSS Payment Support Team immediately where the matter will be investigated and approval of a Service Provider Interim Payment or other payment may be considered.

Where Service Provider Interim Payments or other payments are to be considered, the Service Provider may be required to provide written confirmation or proof of the recipient's financial hardship if deemed necessary, such as (but not limited to):

- details regarding the recipients living arrangements (i.e. do they have rental obligations)
- a breakdown of their current financial position including current debts and outgoings
- details of how the recipient has been supporting themselves until now if the matter has been ongoing for some time
- copies of bank statements if necessary.

Please note that it is imperative that the SRSS Payment Support Team is contacted immediately once the Service Provider is made aware of a recipient's payment issue which DHS are unable to resolve. This will allow the SRSS Payment Support Team adequate time to investigate and resolve the payment issue, and potentially avoid the recipient from reaching a state of financial hardship.

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8.1.6 Persons Permitted to Enquire

SRSS recipients may wish to voluntarily authorise a Person Permitted to Enquire (PPE) on their behalf with Human Services and Medicare. The SRSS recipient can request this in two ways:

- verbally (face-to-face or by telephone) if appointing their SRSS Provider (for Human Services payments)
- by lodging a completed SRSS Payment – authorising a person or organisations to enquire on your behalf form (DHS form SU698 for sharing Medicare information).

If for any reason the SRSS recipient chooses to voluntarily end this arrangement, Human Services will update their system with the end date and the arrangement effectively ceases from that point. The PPE is intended to be flexible as not all clients may want their SRSS Provider to enquire about their payments.

Please find the *SRSS Payment – authorising a person or organisations to enquire on your behalf* form at www.humanservices.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/su698-1406en2.pdf

8.1.7 UAM Clothing Allowance

Band 2

SRSS Providers are required to purchase essential clothing for Band 2 recipients up to \$475 per recipient twice yearly (once for the winter season and once for the summer season). Remaining funds are not to be provided to the SRSS recipient or retained after seasonal purchase. By way of example, if an SRSS recipient enters the SRSS Program in March and accesses their first clothing allowance at that time, and the second clothing allowance in July, they are not permitted to access their next clothing allowance until March the following year. The SRSS Provider may spend the first seasonal allowance on the SRSS recipient's entry into the SRSS Program. Use of this allowance should be recorded by the SRSS Provider as a 'Payment Confirmation – Small Allowance' in the Service Provider Portal. Requests for purchases in excess of the pre-approved amount of \$475 should be recorded as a 'Payment Request – Extra Funds' to the CPON Officer with a completed *Payment or Movement Request* form attached in the Service Provider Portal. All related purchases should be recorded as a Direct Recipient Cost, and all supporting evidence should be provided to SRSS Contract Management with the monthly invoice

The clothing allowance is generally not available to SRSS recipients who are soon to turn 18 or have recently turned 18 years of age and remain living in a Band 2 Supported Accommodation.

Clothing purchased using this allowance should be for essential, every day clothing, including jackets and long pants in winter and t-shirts and shorts in summer. Beyond this, any additional clothing will need to be purchased by the SRSS recipient from their Living Allowance.

8.2 Financial Management Support

8.2.1 Budget support

Bands 2-6

The main aim of providing financial management guidance to SRSS recipients is to prevent situations where SRSS recipients are unable to meet their expenses or fall into debt. It is also important to prepare SRSS recipients for life outside the SRSS Program by ensuring they have the skills to manage their finances in the future.

SRSS Providers are required to guide new SRSS recipients to ensure they understand how their Living Allowance should be used. SRSS recipients should be provided with a budgeting guide clearly setting out fortnightly income and expenditure and estimated future bills. SRSS recipients should be aware of how much money is needed for food and household expenses, how much needs to be put aside for bills, how much can be spent on activities and personal purchases and how much can be saved.

As part of the SRSS Program orientation process, financial management guidance should be provided to SRSS recipients, with information such as seasonal price variations of fruit and vegetables, the differences between supermarkets and fluctuating seasonal costs of heating/cooling their residences.

To assist SRSS Providers in providing financial management orientation to SRSS recipients, the website <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/tools-and-resources/publications> has a Money Management Kit which may be useful. The kit includes factsheets, audio and video content in 16 different languages, including English. It has guidance on budgeting, saving, spending and banking.

8.2.2 Use of Living Allowance

Band 2

The SRSS Provider is responsible for managing the purchase of groceries and payment of utilities for UAM households. SRSS Providers should engage the UAMs as much as possible on decisions relating to the types of food purchased and cost effective ways to stretch resources. The Department expects that live-in Carers will either supply their own food or make a similar contribution towards the household grocery funds to cover their consumption while in the house.

A portion of the Living Allowance is given directly to UAMs to be used to purchase things such as phone cards, mobile credit, public transport, and additional clothing and entertainment activities.

Bands 3 - 6

It is expected that the Living Allowance is used to pay for all general household and living expenses. This includes rent and utilities (where required), food and other household products (toiletries, cleaning products).

8.2.3 Additional support for UAM SRSS recipients

Band 2

SRSS Providers should provide additional guidance to SRSS recipients in Band 2 about budgeting and managing their Living Allowance so they can save to make bigger purchases and to encourage self-sufficiency as they approach adulthood. This may include saving for additional clothes or to pay for activities not approved under the Meaningful Engagement Allowance.

8.3 SRSS Payment Cessation

8.3.1 Automatic stoppage

SRSS Living Allowance will cease when an SRSS recipient is no longer eligible for the SRSS Program as determined by the Department. Eligibility for SRSS Living Allowance will cease without confirmation by the Department when:

- the SRSS recipient dies (payments cease on the date of the death of the individual)
- the SRSS recipient departs Australia (payments cease the day before the departure date)
- 13 weeks have elapsed since the payment was suspended and payment has not been restored – applies to Band 5 and 6 only
- where the recipient, is not contactable, fails to report on a change in their financial circumstance, attend an immigration appointment, or participate in a financial assessment without adequate notification/reason or where alternative arrangements have not been made, their Income Support may cease immediately. SRSS Providers should advise the Department of these instances via an 'Escalation - Issue' activity in the Portal (refer to the DWD for correct referral details) or upon the grant of a visa (UAMs will be eligible for referral to the UHM Program, where they will continue to receive assistance after they have transitioned from SRSS).

Queries relating to cessation or stoppage of SRSS Payments should be directed as follows

- Bands 2-3 to the CPON Officer
- Bands 4-5 to the Status Resolution Officer
- Band 6 to s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Queries relating to transitioning from SRSS to another program, including the transition of payments, refer to *10.1 Transition Out*.

8.3.2 Suspension

Human Services can only suspend Band 4 to Band 6 recipients' SRSS Payments. Human Services cannot suspend Band 2 and Band 3 recipients' SRSS Payments.

8.3.3 Restoration

If Human Services suspends the SRSS Payment, then Human Services can restore the SRSS Payment. If the Department suspends the SRSS Payment, then only the Department can advise Human Services whether to restore the SRSS Payment, or if another action is required, such as ceasing the SRSS Payment. If an SRSS recipient completes the activity or action related to the suspension and their SRSS Payment is restored, the appropriate arrears are paid as applicable.

The Department instructs Human Services of its decisions regarding restoration or suspension of SRSS Payments. The Department also provides Human Services with a restoration date and whether the eligible recipient is entitled to a back payment. This will be reflected in the service provider portal.

8.3.4 Cancellation

Cancellations may result for a number of reasons, and should generally be initiated by the Department with a Stop Payment Notice. The Department of Human Services may also cancel recipient's in Bands 4-6 in

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certain circumstances. This will be reflected in the service provider portal with a Stop Payment Notice. Cessation of Living Allowance under Band 6

Band 5 and 6

The Department may cease an eligible SRSS recipient's Living Allowance where, following an investigation it is confirmed that the SRSS recipient:

- has provided false, misleading and/or conflicting information
- either deliberately or inadvertently withheld relevant information
- breached the Code of Behaviour (where relevant)
- is not actively engaging with the Department to resolve their immigration status.

Cessation will result in termination of the SRSS recipient's Living Allowance payments and may involve recovery of funds. The decision to cease such payments will only be made by SRSS Operations who will advise the SRSS Provider and Human Services via a 'Stop transaction' in the Service Provider Portal.

8.3.5 Reinstatement of Living Allowance

The Department may consider a further SRSS Application for financial support by a person when the person or party:

- provides any requested information
- makes arrangements to repay any overpayments, where applicable
- meets eligibility criteria (refer to [3.1 Eligibility for SRSS](#))
- completes the SRSS Application Process.

The decision to reinstate Living Allowance payments will only be made by the Department. SRSS Operations Band 6 will record this in the Service Provider Portal once undertaken and advise the SRSS Provider via a Referral.

Please note that Living Allowance payments will generally not be provided to individuals who have work rights on their BVE.

8.3.6 Payment Reviews

Human Services conducts reviews of an SRSS recipient's SRSS Payment to ensure an SRSS recipient's personal information is current and that their SRSS Payment Rate is correct. Human Services generally undertakes SRSS Payment Reviews on a six monthly basis, however, the timing of these Reviews can be before or after the six months in some situations. Where an SRSS recipient fails to respond to a reminder about an SRSS Payment Review, their SRSS Payment will be suspended until the SRSS recipient undertakes the Review.

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8.4 Payment Deductions

The Department may require Human Services to reduce an SRSS recipient's Living Allowance, as a deduction, to recover a sum that has been provided to the SRSS recipient by their SRSS Provider. Reasons for deductions include, but are not limited to:

- Transitional Accommodation Contribution
- Financial Hardship Assistance Loans Deductions
- Overpayments resulting from a Human Services overpayment
- Service Provider Interim Payments made to recipients in lieu of their Regular SRSS Payments as a result of a regular payment issue
- Other deduction reasons may be provided by the Department, for example, repayment for damage to property or other invoices.

Where payment deductions are required, SRSS Providers will submit an 'Allowance Modification' to the responsible officer. Please see the Decision Workflow Document for correct referral details. The request must include the proposed amount for consideration and where appropriate, approval of the related expenditure by the Department. Once the 'Allowance – Modification' is approved by the Department in the Service Provider Portal, Human Services will be notified and the SRSS recipient's SRSS Payments will be reduced until the amount is repaid in full.

The Payment Deduction will be **5 per cent** of the SRSS recipient's fortnightly SRSS Living Allowance. Although the SRSS recipient also has the option to pay off the amount in full. To utilise this option, Service Provider must make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team before an 'Allowance Modification – Deduction' is entered in the Portal.

Please refer to Service Provider Portal Functional Guide – Allowances – Payment Groups (page 9) for step by step information on payment deductions, or contact s. 22(1)(a)(ii) for any queries.

8.5 Financial Hardship Assistance

Bands 2-6

Financial hardship assistance is available to both IMA and non-IMA recipients. There may be occasions where SRSS recipients face financial hardship, such as an inability to afford food or essentials, despite budgeting carefully.

Where the SRSS Provider can demonstrate they have provided budget support to assist the SRSS recipient meet their financial needs and the SRSS recipient is still unable to afford essential items, the SRSS Provider can submit a request for financial hardship assistance.

The Department must approval all requests for financial hardship assistance. No form of financial hardship assistance is pre-approved. Requests for assistance are expected to be exceptional circumstances and for a short period of time.

SRSS Providers should not refer SRSS recipients to charity organisations for food vouchers or support as these services must be left available for the Australian community.

SRSS Providers should engage regularly with SRSS recipients to minimise reliance on financial hardship assistance by providing comprehensive guidance around budgeting and income management.

Prior to requesting the provision of financial hardship assistance, SRSS Providers must be satisfied the recipients have demonstrated careful budgeting practices and all efforts to redistribute funds from their current Living Allowance have been exhausted. Financial hardship assistance should only be provided to assist in resolving a crisis (emergency) situation.

Examples of crisis points' where financial hardship assistance may be required, include events such as:

- house fire
- domestic violence
- critically ill family members

The following situations are not to be considered crisis points that require financial hardship assistance:

- the birth of a baby; as the family has more than six months to plan and save for items that are associated with the birth of the child
- a child/children starting school as families have access to the schooling requirements package (per child)
- utilities, infringement notices or overdue rent arrears. Arrangements can be made with the relevant utility provider to pay in instalments, payment plans or through weekly/fortnightly/monthly direct debit arrangements
- costs associated with funerals

8.5.1 Vouchers or Material Aid

All requests for Financial Hardship Assistance must be submitted in the portal as a 'Financial Hardship Assistance – In Kind Support' to CPON. Where approved by the Department, SRSS Providers are able to provide vouchers or material aid when a family unit experiences a crisis situation as outlined above, on a case by case basis. The amount of vouchers and/or material aid provided by the Department, will depend on the crisis circumstance and supporting documentation. Vouchers or material aid **must** be used to resolve a crisis situation in the first instance, before requesting access to a financial hardship assistance loan.

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In all cases, a request for in-kind support should include a completed Payment Request form and any relevant supporting information/documentation which outlines:

- details of budgeting advice given to the SRSS recipient
- a basic budget showing how the current Living Allowance is being used
- options for in-kind support and how the proposed in-kind support will resolve the crisis point

All relevant supporting documentation (i.e. receipts and invoices) should be retained by the SRSS Provider for auditing and quality assurance processes. Evidence of budget plans should be uploaded to the portal.

8.5.2 Financial hardship assistance loans

Where SRSS recipients require further assistance in resolving a crisis situation, they may apply for a financial hardship assistance loan, capped at \$475. The amount provided by the Department will depend on the circumstances of the recipient and the supporting documentation that supports the need for the loan. Loans will only be approved where the recipient can demonstrate that they have budgeted appropriately and utilised vouchers or material aid to resolve a crisis situation in the first instance.

Loans may be used for the following purpose:

- rent and/or bond loans when applying for private properties within a six month period after release from detention
- resolving a crisis situation **after** material aid and/or vouchers have already been utilised in the first instance and have not resolved the crisis situation.

SRSS Providers must submit a 'Payment Request – Financial Hardship Assistance' activity in the portal to the Status Resolution Officer and attach the required supporting documentation such as:

- Lease agreement/Tenancy agreement
- rental receipts or a copy of the lease, clearly indicating the weekly rent and rent in advance payment for the nominated SRSS recipient
- evidence of financial hardship (i.e. if material aid has been utilised, what it has been spent on)
- evidence of a budget or money management plan on how the money will be spent to resolve a crisis situation.

If approved, the SRSS Provider should then enter an 'Allowance Modification-Deduction' within the Allowance tab in the Service Provider Portal.

The SRSS recipient also has the option to pay the amount off in full. To utilise this option, the Service Provider must make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team before an 'Allowance Modification – Deduction' is entered in the Portal.

It would be expected that the SRSS recipient would not require a subsequent financial hardship assistance loan to be used for rent or bond purposes. However, consideration may be given to situations where it is clearly demonstrated that circumstances beyond the SRSS recipient's control have resulted in a need for an additional loan.

Where a financial hardship assistance loan is required to enter the rental market, the SRSS Provider must ensure formal lodgement of a rental bond with the appropriate state or territory rental bond authority.

8.5.3 Repayment of loans

Financial hardship assistance loans will be recovered as a Payment Deduction from the SRSS recipient's fortnightly Living Allowance. Refer to [8.4 Payment Deductions](#).

The SRSS recipient also has the option to pay the amount off in full. To utilise this option, the Service Provider must make arrangements with the SRSS Payment Recovery team before an 'Allowance Modification – Deduction' is entered in the Portal.

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8.5.4 Cancellation of loans

In the event that a financial hardship assistance loan has been issued and a Payment Deduction has already been entered into the portal, but the loan is no longer required; the SRSS Provider must ensure they advise the SRSS Payment Recovery team as soon as possible. This will ensure that the recipient's Living Allowance is not deducted by the Department of Human Services. The SRSS Provider should also advise the relevant operational area (Departmental Status Resolution Officer or SRSS Operations for Band 6). For further information on Payment Deductions, please refer to Section 8.4 Payment Deductions.

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