



**DCEP Incorporated
Hardship Support Fund**

Guidelines 2024 - 2025

Introduction

The Plico Hardship Fund is a financial resource established to assist Plico members who facing financial hardship.

It provides temporary, one-off support to members who are experiencing hardship due to circumstances such as job loss, illness, or other unexpected events.

Assistance from the Hardship Fund may come in the form of:

1. Modifications to the frequency or amount of Plico instalments (DCEP to pay CEPCO direct)
2. Other forms of financial assistance which could include a one-off payment (DCEP to pay member direct, in extenuating circumstances only).

DCEP's ultimate goal is to help members overcome financial challenges and maintain their financial stability to provide much-needed support when it is required.

This financial support is provided in good faith to Plico members. Should a member be in a position to repay the funds in future, they are encouraged to do so to allow more members benefit from the Hardship Fund.

The Hardship Fund is managed by the DCEP Inc Committee. This Committee is made up of elected Plico Members. Plico works closely with DCEP to support members facing financial hardship.

Eligible support

Repayments – financial stress

If a member is facing financial stress due to loss or changes to employment, sickness, cost of living pressure or other issue that has impacted their financial stability, DCEP may provide support to cover Plico payments for a set period. This may be upon receiving an application from a Plico member or following notification from Plico/Starling Energy that a member's account is eight weeks or more in arrears. These payments will be sent directly to CEPCO to cover overdue and potentially future Plico instalments.

Support may be provided to reduce the frequency or the amount of each instalment.

Debt clearance – financial stress

The Hardship Fund may also be used to clear the outstanding debt of a Plico member by making a lump sum payment to CEPCO.

Donation - events

If an event has occurred that could severely impact a Plico member's financial stability, members may seek support for a lump sum payment. The allocated payments for these events are listed in Table 1. These payments are not ongoing and are provided at the discretion of the DCEP Committee. Evidence may be requested to support claims for these payments.

Note: All Plico members should have relevant Home and Contents insurance to cover these events.

Event Type	Reason for assistance given	Amount
A fire, earthquake, strong winds, flood or similar event that destroys the house.	Based on statistics, this is a rare event. It is traumatic and leaves individuals in a state of shock. Insurance payouts can be delayed.	\$5000
A fire, earthquake, strong winds, flood or similar event that does not destroy the house, but results in the house being uninhabitable for more than a month.	Based on statistics, this is a rare event. It is traumatic and leaves individuals in a state of shock. Insurance payouts can be delayed.	\$4000
A fire, earthquake, strong winds, flood or similar event that results in the house being uninhabitable for less than a month, longer than a week.	Based on statistics, this is a rare event. It is traumatic and leaves individuals in a state of shock. Insurance payouts can be delayed.	\$2000
Illness or disability: Serious health issues that prevent a borrower from working or incur substantial medical expenses which may impact their ability to repay loans. This includes physical and mental illness or disability.	The total support provided will be dependent on the seriousness of the illness and impact on financial stability.	Up to \$5000
Major car repairs or home repairs: Unexpected expenses related to vehicle breakdowns, home maintenance issues, or property damage may strain a borrower's finances and impact their ability to make loan payments.	The total support provided will be dependent on the member's circumstances and the quantum of the uninsured damage/insurance excess.	Up to \$2000
Legal issues (although not if accused or has committed a crime or similar): Unexpected legal expenses, such as fines, lawsuits, or legal fees, can impose financial strain on borrowers and disrupt their ability to meet loan obligations.	Legal expenses can lead to financial hardship.	\$1000
Business owner liquidation	The total support provided will be dependent on the member's circumstances and the quantum of the uninsured damage/insurance excess.	Up to \$3000
Family emergencies: Emergencies such as sudden medical expenses for a family member, childcare expenses, domestic violence or unexpected travel costs can strain a borrower's finances and make it challenging to manage loan payments.	The total support provided will be dependent on the severity and impact of the emergency.	Up to \$5000

Death of a family member: The loss of a breadwinner or a significant contributor to household income can create financial strain, especially if there is inadequate insurance coverage or savings.	The total support provided will be dependent on the impact.	Up to \$5000*
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Table 1: Hardship Support payment allocation for events

*All Hardship Support applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Allocation of funds are based on needs analysis and the availability of funds in the Hardship Support Fund.

After taking the member’s personal circumstances into account, the DCEP Hardship Fund will assign up to 20% of the support payment (defined in Table 1) towards covering the member’s Plico payments (outstanding and/or future payments).

How to apply

Plico members can apply using the online form on the [Member Support page](#) or by contacting DCEP at dcep.committee@plicoenergy.com.au. Starling Energy/Plico may also put DCEP in touch with members who are may be eligible for Hardship Support.

In most cases, members will be asked to provide supporting documents when they apply for support under the Hardship Fund. All applications for Hardship Support are treated confidentially.

Approvals process

Hardship Fund applications will be assessed by the DCEP Committee. For non-urgent cases, the Committee will make its decision at a DCEP meeting, held on the second Thursday of each month. For urgent cases, the Chair, Treasurer and one other DCEP member can make the decision out of session based on the criteria in these guidelines.

The DCEP Committee Treasurer will liaise with Plico/Starling Energy and CEPCO to arrange payments as approved by the Committee.

Questions?

Your DCEP Committee is always available to assist Plico members. Please reach out to us at dcep.committee@plicoenergy.com.au and we’d be happy to answer any questions you may have.