



## Hearing Aid Services Communication 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011

The team at **accessible** would like to extend a huge thank you to Audiologists, Audiology Providers and Manufacturers for your support whilst we have established the new Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Services. You have all done a fantastic job with getting to grips with the new Services and processes in a short timeframe. We look forward to our ongoing relationship with you.

It is also very exciting to be introducing the **Hearing Online Ordering Forms** to make claims (Phase 1) and applications including repairs (Phase 2) much easier to complete and faster. Testing is underway with a group of audiologists and once this is complete Audiologists and Providers will be contacted with log in details, user manuals and training plans.

### Question & Answers: Hearing Aid Funding Scheme (HAFS)

#### Review Price Point

You will be aware that the Ministry of Health average price target was separated from the **accessible** review price point on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011. In discussions with Audiologists and the Ministry of Health it has been decided that the review price point will now only include the Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List price of the hearing aid (and no longer include operational parts costs). This will streamline the processing of Hearing Aid Funding Scheme (HAFS) applications.

**Question: When do I need to include an audiology report and audiogram with a Hearing Aid Funding Scheme application?**

**Answer:** The Audiology report and audiogram are required:

- when the cost of a hearing aid is over the review price point of \$1,800.00 excl GST
- when requesting optional enhancing items eg a remote control/connectivity devices
- when requesting an FM system.

#### HAFS Application form – updated version Nov V1.2

The Professional Advisors – Hearing, have been reviewing your reports for 4 months and have suggested some changes to support timely and efficient reviews. Changes have also been made to support the On-Line Ordering version of the **HAFS Application form**.

**Question: Where do I find the updated HAFS Application form?**

**Answer:** The new word & PDF forms are available on the **accessible** website [www.accessable.co.nz](http://www.accessable.co.nz) 'Hearing'.

#### Manufacturer's Invoices for HAFS Applications or Repairs & Replacement Parts

**Question: Do I need to complete a HAFS Application or Repairs & Replacement Parts form when I have pre-ordered items directly from the Manufacturer for Children and Young People?**

**Answer:** Yes, you must complete the required form; otherwise the Manufacturer's invoice will be delayed until a form is received. **accessible** is receiving a large number of invoices from the Manufacturer which do

not have a **HAFS or Repairs & Replacement Parts form** from the Audiologist, so we ask you to please support Manufacturers by completing the appropriate forms.

Threshold for Repairs & Replacement Parts for Children and Young People:

**Question: Is there a maximum threshold for replacement earmoulds/domes & tubes for children and young people?**

**Answer:** No - there is no threshold limit for children and young people in full time education up to 21 years of age for replacement earmoulds/domes and tubes

**Question: What replacement items are funded under the HAFS (Repairs and Replacement Parts) for children and young people?**

**Answer:** Earmoulds, domes and tubes.

Items that are not funded as replacements are:

- waxstops, windprotectors – these can be requested via MoE DEC
- receivers, battery doors / covers, batteries, any repairs to hearing aids or FM systems – are requested via MoE DEC
- swim plugs – these would need to be paid for privately or via the DHB ENT
- items for hearing aids previously having an approved Subsidy claim. If the person is now eligible under the HAFS please complete a new **HAFS Application form** and an Audiology Report explaining the situation.

For replacement critter clips, dry aid kits and capsules, softbands and other equipment accessories – please check with the MoE DEC first. If the items are not funded via DEC, then please complete a **HAFS Application form**, under Additional Optional Items and an Audiology Report advising the essential need for this item. Include confirmation that the item will not be replaced by MoE DEC.

Auditory Processing Disorder and Hearing Aid Services

**Question: Is a person who has a diagnosis of Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) eligible for hearing aids funded under the HAFS or Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme (HASS)?**

**Answer:** To be eligible for the HAFS or HASS the person needs to have a permanent hearing loss. Where a person has a diagnosis of APD their eligibility for funding is less clear. Please complete an Audiology Report, including diagnosis and an audiogram with your **HASS or HAFS form** to enable your request to be reviewed by a Professional Advisor.

#### **Question & Answers: Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme (HASS)**

Subsidy Claim amount

**Question: Can the full Subsidy amount of \$444.44 ex GST be claimed for a hearing aid from the Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List (the List) which costs less than \$444.44?**

**Answer:** Only the actual List price of the hearing aid can be claimed. Refer to Hearing Aid Services Notice 2011 Page 1859 CD3. In cases where the List price of the hearing aid is under \$444.44 excl GST, and you wish to also claim for the wholesale cost of hearing aid accessories (such as earmoulds) please complete a **HASS Claim form** and include a covering email explaining the reasons for claiming the items other than a hearing aid from the List.

**Question: Can a Subsidy be claimed for hearing aid accessories, BAHA's and FM systems?**

**Answer:** The Subsidy can be claimed for the wholesale cost of these items up to the value of \$444.44 excl GST. Refer to the definition of hearing aid accessories in the Hearing Aid Services Manual, Part 1 Section 10.10. In such cases, please ensure you complete a **HASS Claim form** and include a covering email explaining the

reasons for claiming these items and advising the wholesale cost. Please note that the 6 year period applies to any items provided with the Subsidy.

## General Information

### FM systems and Hearing Aid Services

Please refer to the Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Services Manual Part 1, Section 2.4 which explains the eligibility criteria for the provision of FM systems for pre-schoolers and adults.

The Ministry of Health definition of an FM system is being updated in the draft Hearing Aid Services Manual Part 1 July 2011 and replaced with the following definition:

“FM Systems allow a person to talk into a microphone, which transmits the sound of their voice directly to a person wearing hearing aid(s). FM devices are usually considered as accessories to hearing aids unless the receiver component is included within the hearing aid case. They would only be considered hearing aids if there is amplification. FM receiver devices without an amplification component are excluded from the Ministry’s funding schemes”.

For school age students, please refer to the Ministries of Education and Health update about FM systems for students with Auditory Processing Disorder which can be found on the **accessible** website [www.accessable.co.nz](http://www.accessable.co.nz) ‘Hearing’.

### History Check for previously funded hearing aids

A reminder please, to minimise the risk of Subsidy Claims being declined, **accessible** encourages Audiologists to check the history of funded or subsidised hearing aids via our email service [hrgquery@accessable.co.nz](mailto:hrgquery@accessable.co.nz)

### Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List (the List)

The List has now been updated for the next quarter and has been made available for use from 1st November 2011. The next quarterly update will be 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012.

### Correct Information in Applications and Claims

To minimise delays with having to follow up to clarify information when completing HAFS Applications and HASS Claims please:

- use the **exact** Model Description and Manufacturer Name from the List
- complete all the statistic and additional information details on the first page including Ethnicity and NHI # details.

### Average Price Target

The average price target was established by the Ministry of Health on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011. **accessible** will have Audiology Provider figures for the average price of hearing aids (including accessories) available at the end of January 2011.

Of interest, the average price for a hearing aid (excluding accessories, FM systems and BAHAs) supplied by manufacturers for the HAFS is \$1,223.

If you have any questions please contact: Wynne Donovan, Professional Advisory Team Manager, DDI 09 620 1706 or email [wdonovan@accessable.co.nz](mailto:wdonovan@accessable.co.nz)