

Eligibility Criteria for Funding Assistance for Hearing Aids

1. **Hearing Aid Funding Scheme - funding to cover the wholesale cost of hearing aid/s can be provided to:**

- Pre-schoolers, and children and young people up to the age of 21 years if they are in primary, secondary or tertiary education.
- Adults with complex needs aged 16 years and over who meet certain criteria described below.
- Adults who have a Community Services Card and also meet certain criteria described below.

Funding for the most cost-effective solution to meet the person's needs can be provided for eligible people following an assessment and recommendation undertaken by an audiologist who is a member of the New Zealand Audiological Society.

2. **Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme - all other people eligible for Ministry of Health funded services will be able to receive a hearing aid subsidy of up to \$511.11 (inc. GST) per hearing aid.**

Replacement hearing aids and repeat subsidies

Funding for hearing aids for adults is not available more than once in a six year period, except in exceptional circumstances which must be described in detail by the audiologist when the application is made. Approval for replacement hearing aids within this timeframe will be based on the person's individual circumstances, and the overall budget availability.

Funding for hearing aids for children under 16 years (or up to 21 years if in full time study) is available no more than three times in a six year period.

Repeat payments for the hearing aid subsidy can only be made once every six years.

Replacement hearing aids or hearing aid subsidies are only available when the person's current hearing aid/s can no longer be repaired or modified to meet their changed needs, and replacement hearing aid/s are the only viable option.

Repairs to Hearing aids

The cost of non-warranty repairs carried out by hearing aid manufacturers for those hearing aids which have been funded by the Ministry of Health (i.e. for adults within category 1 above) can be covered by the Ministry. Repairs for hearing aids for children attending compulsory education are covered through the Deaf Education Centres.

People who have received the hearing aid subsidy will be responsible for meeting the cost of repairs themselves.

1. Funding to cover the wholesale price of a hearing aid/s¹ can be provided to:

A. Adults with complex needs aged 16 years and over who meet one or more of the following:

Criterion	Evidence to be kept on the audiologist's file
<p>Hearing aid user since childhood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has a hearing loss which is severe or greater (i.e. with an average of 3 worst thresholds from 500 Hz, 1 kHz, 2 kHz and 4 kHz equal to or greater than 70 dB in the better ear) <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has been using hearing aids since childhood and would normally have received publicly funded devices through the Children's Hearing Aid Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Evidence of long-term hearing loss and details of hearing aid use from childhood (i.e. before 16 years of age).</i>
<p>Dual or multiple disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has a significant visual disability <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person has a significant physical or intellectual disability which impacts on their ability to communicate effectively and safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The corrected vision does not exceed 6/24 in the better eye OR</i> <i>There is a significant limitation in the binocular central field or vision not less than 10° in extent at the widest diameter, or the overall binocular visual field is no greater than 30° at its widest diameter</i> <i>Evidence of optometrist or ophthalmologist examination or report or RNZFB membership</i> <i>Evidence of the disability and its impact on the person's communication</i>
<p>Sudden and severe hearing loss²</p> <p>Within the previous 6 months, a permanent hearing loss must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developed suddenly (i.e. over 1-14 days) consist of a significant increase in the person's thresholds (i.e. at least 30 dB on average in one ear or both), AND result in a severe hearing loss (i.e. with an average of 3 worst thresholds from 500 Hz, 1 kHz, 2 kHz and 4 kHz equal to or greater than 70 dB in the better ear) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Evidence in the history of a sudden bilateral hearing loss, where possible including records of person's hearing prior to the sudden event</i>

¹ Note that the funding for hearing aid/s covers the price of the hearing aid/s only, and excludes any associated audiology service costs

² People who are eligible for cover or entitlement for services by ACC are not eligible for Ministry of Health funded services, except where joint funding arrangements apply

B. Other adults aged 16 years and over who have a current Community Services Card

AND, meet one of the following criteria³:

Criterion	Evidence to be kept on the audiologist's file
Working <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in paid employment for 30 hours per week or more• seeking paid employment• doing voluntary work (greater than 20 hours per week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>As per Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Services Manual</i>
Studying <ul style="list-style-type: none">• full time study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>As per Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Services Manual</i>
Caring for a dependent person <ul style="list-style-type: none">• full-time care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>As per Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Services Manual</i>

Community Services Card number & expiry date must be provided along with written evidence of the person's employment, education or carer situation

³ Refer to the Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Services Manual for definitions <accessible.co.nz/hearing> Eligibility for Ministry of Health funding assistance for hearing aids; July 2011