



MANATŪ HAUORA

Hearing Aid Services Manual

Final Draft

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual outlines the eligibility criteria, funding guidelines, roles and responsibilities and the processes to be used when considering claims and applications for Hearing Aid Services funded by the Ministry of Health.

This manual is for:

- Approved Assessors who complete hearing assessments for people with hearing loss and submit applications and make claims for Hearing Aid Services on the person's behalf
- manufacturers and distributors of hearing aids and accessories
- people with hearing loss, their families, whānau and/or support people who wish to understand more about this service.

For the purposes of this manual, Approved Assessor refers to:

- An Audiologist who is a full member of the New Zealand Audiological Society and holds a current Certificate of Clinical Competence.

This Manual is divided into two parts.

PART ONE:

- Hearing Aid Services funded by the Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of Health guidelines for the provision of Hearing Aid Services.
- Roles and responsibilities of different parties throughout the assessment, claims, application and approval process.

PART TWO:

An outline of the processes that are used by Accessable, the Ministry of Health's contracted Services Manager for the management of Hearing Aid Services.

This manual, forms and templates and any updates are available at the web addresses opposite.



Throughout this manual the term 'person' refers to the person with hearing loss.



www.accessable.co.nz/hearing
www.moh.govt.nz/

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The content of the manual is found on the left hand side of each page and is categorised by chapter names and numbered sequentially for easy reference.


PART 1


Chapter Name


Content...


This manual is for:

- Approved Assessors who complete assessments for people with hearing loss and submit claims or applications for hearing aid services on their behalf
- people with hearing loss, their family, whānau and/or support people who wish to understand more about this service.

 **Definition**

 **Example**

 **Note**

 **Reference**

July 2011 Hearing Aid Services Manual **2**

Hearing Aid Services Manual part number - indicating the main sections of the manual.

These icons indicate further explanations to the text contained on the page. The icons are used consistently throughout the manual.





Information contained in the text boxes provide explanation of the content.

Hearing Aid Services Manual sequentially numbered for faster and easier referencing.

Date page created or amended allowing for accurate version control of this publication.

Note: This manual has been formatted for double sided printing.

Key to symbols used throughout the manual:

Symbol	Meaning	Explanation
	Definition	Definitions of terminology used in the text are explained as well as having a full glossary of terms.
	Note	This icon highlights important notes in the text and provides further direction and instruction.
	Example	This is an opportunity to further illustrate the content of the text with useful examples for comparison.
	Reference	This is an opportunity to direct readers to alternate sources of information or relevant websites.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO HEARING AID SERVICES

1.1 WHAT ARE HEARING AID SERVICES?

Hearing aid services are one of the many services funded by the Ministry of Health through Disability Support Services.

To ensure that provision of hearing aids are affordable within defined budgets, service allocation is evaluated against the following principles:

- i. they make an effective contribution towards helping people with hearing loss to live, as far as possible, as others do in their own homes and communities
- ii. they represent value for money both now and in the future
- iii. they are allocated fairly through a consistent, principled and equitable approach
- iv. they reflect a lifetime perspective by recognising that the hearing aid services that are most appropriate for a person may change over time.

The Ministry of Health contracts with Accessable, the Services Manager, to administer and manage Hearing Aid Services nationally.



For other services and support available for people with hearing loss, go to:

- Deaf Aotearoa
www.deaf.org.nz
- Hearing Therapy Services
www.life.nzl.org/
- Hearing Association of New Zealand
www.hearing.org.nz
- Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind (deafblind services)
www.rnzfb.org.nz
- National Foundation for the Deaf
www.nfd.org.nz

2. FUNDING GUIDELINES FOR HEARING AIDS

This manual contains the funding guidelines for the Ministry of Health's two hearing aid schemes.

- **Hearing Aid Funding Scheme:** Funding to cover the full price of the hearing aids on behalf of eligible people (see section 3).
- **Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme:** A subsidy of \$511.11 (incl. GST) towards payment of the hearing aids for eligible people (see section 4).



The Hearing Aid Funding Scheme includes the previous:

- *Children's Hearing Aid Fund*
- *funding through Equipment and Modification Services.*

2.1 PROCESS

Before any application or claim for funding can be considered, the person needs to have an assessment of their hearing and hearing needs with an Approved Assessor.

The Approved Assessor should identify the person's need for a hearing aid in conjunction with them and recommend the most appropriate and cost effective solution that is likely to be of most benefit to them.

Where the Approved Assessor identifies that the person is eligible for services as outlined in this manual, they may either make an application for funding through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme or alternatively, the Approved Assessor may make a claim for a subsidy through the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme.

If the person is not eligible for hearing aid funding or subsidy, or a hearing aid is not considered as being the most suitable solution for the person, the Approved Assessor should discuss other options that will minimise the impact of hearing loss for the person.



Approved Assessors hold areas of accreditation which relate to their qualifications and experience within that specialty. Approved Assessors accredited to assess hearing needs and recommend hearing aid services are audiologists who are full members of the New Zealand Audiological Society and hold a current Certificate of Clinical Compliance For more information see the glossary or go to: www.disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz

For a list of members of the New Zealand Audiological Society go to: <http://www.audiology.org.nz/>

2.2 ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for consideration of hearing aid funding or subsidy the person will meet all of the following:

- have a permanent hearing loss as determined by a hearing assessment and hearing needs assessment
- not be eligible for cover or entitlement through ACC, the ACC and the Ministry of Health jointly, or from Veterans' Affairs New Zealand
- live in New Zealand
- be a New Zealand resident or be eligible for health and disability services under a reciprocal health agreement with another country.

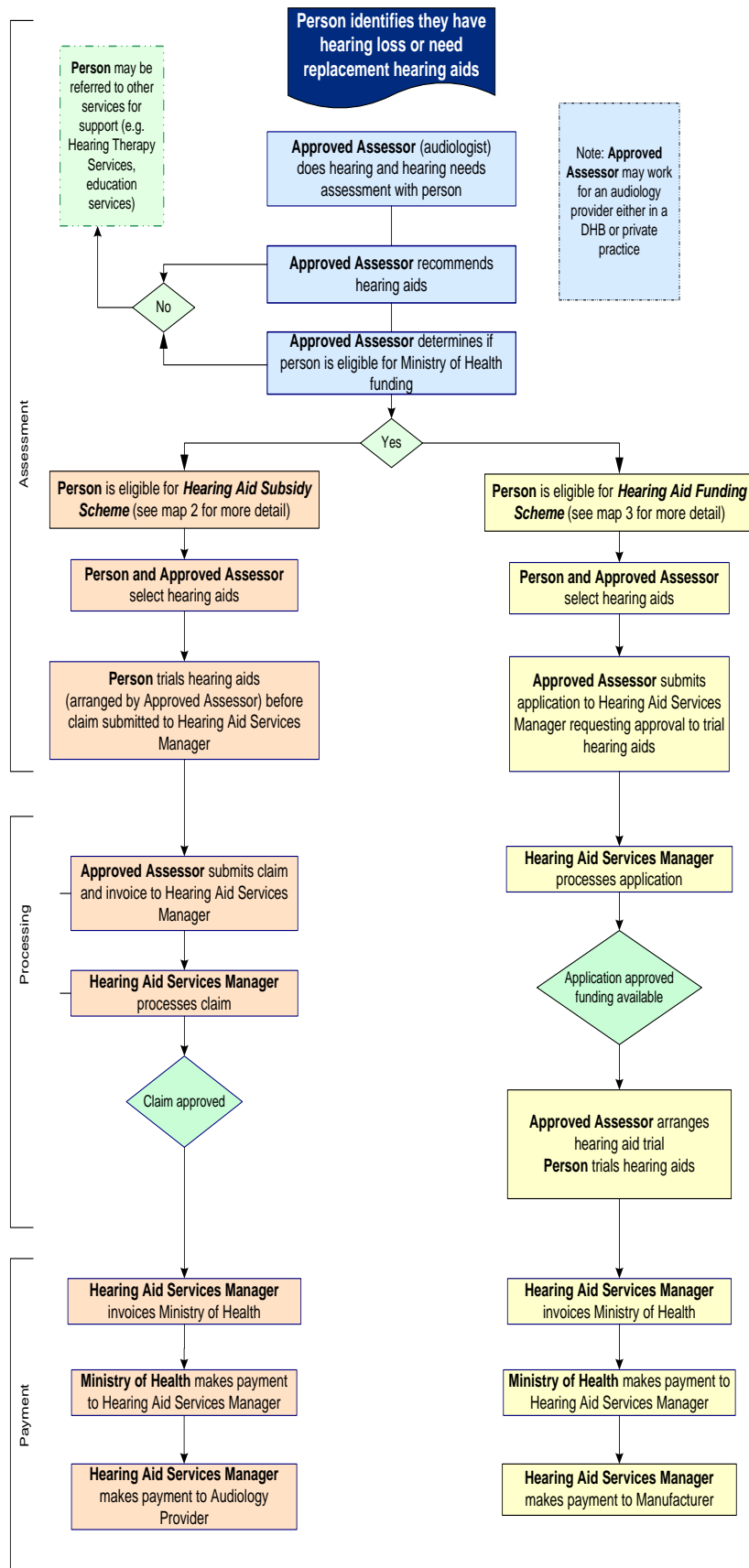


A hearing assessment includes taking, interpreting and recording an audiogram and other related testing. A hearing needs assessment is a comprehensive assessment of a person's hearing function, communication needs and rehabilitation options. It includes recommendations for achieving the person's hearing goals as agreed between the person and the Approved Assessor.



More information about eligibility and reciprocal health agreements is available at: www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility

Overview of Application and Claim processes for hearing aids (Map 1)



2.3 APPROVAL SYSTEM FOR HEARING AIDS ELIGIBLE FOR MINISTRY OF HEALTH FUNDING

2.3.1 Definition

Hearing aids are defined as personal electronic devices that are used wholly or principally by people with hearing loss to alleviate the impact of their hearing loss. Bone anchored devices are considered hearing aids, but cochlear implants do not fall within the definition (having their own separate funding stream). FM systems (otherwise known as remote microphone devices) are usually considered as accessories to hearing aids unless the receiver component is included within the hearing aid case.

2.3.2 Notification

As therapeutic devices, hearing aid ranges must be notified using the WAND system operated by Medsafe (a division of the Public Health section of the Ministry of Health). Medicines and medical devices are controlled via the Medicines Act (1981). WAND is a notification system in case of product warnings being used by various regulatory bodies that are monitored by Medsafe.



WAND means Web Assisted Notification Devices. For more information on this, go to: www.medsafe.govt.nz/

The implication from this is that all importers of products described as hearing aids (and other therapeutic devices) should register their products with WAND, and should have a product registration number for each device range.

2.3.3 Approval for funding (Ministry of Health subsidy or funding schemes)

This should be sought from the Audiology Section, School of Population Health, University of Auckland, following registration through WAND. Approval is normally based on satisfactory documentation of compliance with relevant international standards. Testing could be necessary for devices where documentation is inadequate in some respect.

2.3.4 Approved Hearing Aid List

The Ministry of Health will keep a list of approved hearing aids, which will be managed and regularly updated by Accessable.

All products available for funding, whether for the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme or the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme, must be named on this list.

Prices notified by the manufacturers for the list only apply to hearing aids supplied through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

2.4 FM SYSTEMS AND ACCESSORIES

An FM system is a communication system for improving speech comprehension in difficult listening situations. A microphone is worn by the speaker which transmits the signal wirelessly to a receiver which is worn by a person wearing hearing aids.



FM means frequency modulated and the transmission is via radio waves.

FM systems are typically considered accessories to hearing aids. They would only be considered hearing aids if there is amplification. FM receiver devices without an amplification component are excluded from the Ministry of Health's funding schemes.

FM systems will be considered for pre-schoolers and adults where there is clear rationale provided by the Approved Assessor as to the essential need for the equipment.

Applications for FM systems for pre-schoolers should include the following:

- evidence of significant hearing loss
- description of the situations and settings for use
- description of the availability of support for the child to use the device in the home and/or pre-school setting
- an endorsement of the recommendation from the child's Advisor on Deaf Children.

Applications for FM systems for adults should include the following:

- evidence of significant hearing loss – moderate or worse
- if peripheral hearing loss is less than moderate evidence of signal to noise performance on appropriate speech test materials at least 1 SD below the mean
- description of the situations and settings for use
- commitment from communication partner/s.

Applications for other assistive or personal listening devices which take the voice or sound to the ear by ear buds or headphones (i.e. are not connected directly to a hearing aid) can be considered through Hearing Assistive Technology, under the Equipment and Modifications Services funding scheme.

2.4.1 FM systems for students in compulsory education

As FM systems (including both the FM receivers and the transmitter) are primarily required in classroom and school settings, they are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Health's responsibility is to fund hearing aids where these are primarily required to support a child in their daily living.

The Ministry of Education's Assistive Technology Service will consider funding FM systems for students who are identified as having special learning needs (and therefore receive additional support for learning from their school or Special Education). The allocation of a personal FM system must be considered as a part of a support package for a student with hearing loss (including auditory processing disorder) and not as the sole intervention strategy.

To be eligible for assistive technology support, students must already be receiving support through one of the special education initiatives.



For more information about special education initiatives and eligibility for assistive technology, see the [Eligibility Fact Sheet](#) at www.minedu.govt.nz – (search for assistive technology).

Some students who have auditory processing disorder are not identified as having special learning needs and are not eligible for special education support. Their needs should be met directly by their school.

2.5 BONE ANCHORED HEARING AIDS (BAHA)

- When a person is unable to use an air conduction hearing aid, a bone conduction device (BAHA) is considered. This is usually for medical reasons e.g. discharging ears or no ear canal.
- The device can be attached to a surgically implanted component called an abutment or can be worn under a head band called a 'soft band'.
- The Ministry of Health contributes towards the cost of the hearing aid portion of the device referred to as 'the sound processor'. The surgery, abutment and implant are either funded through the public health system (via the District Health Board) or privately.
- Loan sound processor devices are available from relevant suppliers or clinics which can be trialled with a 'soft band' to ascertain if the person is likely to get benefit prior to applying for funding. This trial is not usually lengthy.
- Where the trial is successful the application is made for funding for the sound processor from Accessable.
- The usual criteria for funding of hearing aids will apply. This means that some people needing a BAHA will be eligible for funding towards the price of the sound processor (for the hearing aid funding scheme) and others will be eligible to receive the hearing aid subsidy of \$511.11 (incl. GST) towards this cost.
- In addition, rationale is required from both the surgeon and the Approved Assessor that this device is appropriate and essential for the associated condition.
- At the time of application to Accessable confirmation should be given that funding has been secured for the surgery and implant component of the device.
- Care needs to be taken by the Approved Assessor and the surgeon to coordinate the timing of the approval of the hearing aid funding with the timing of the person's surgery.

3. HEARING AID FUNDING SCHEME

Hearing aid funding includes applications for:

- a hearing aid and hearing aid accessories
- a bone anchored hearing aid
- an FM system.

Hearing aid funding excludes:

- consumable items for hearing aids
- cochlear implants or speech processors for cochlear implants
- second hand hearing aids
- assistive listening devices
- devices that have microphones and amplification systems that are designed primarily for other uses, such as stereos and mobile phones
- any service costs associated with the assessment, trial or fitting of a hearing aid.

Funding will only be approved for hearing aids which are listed on the Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List.

3.1 ELIGIBILITY FOR HEARING AID FUNDING

Funding for hearing aids will be considered for:

- i. children and young people up to the age of 21 years who are in full time study; and pre-schoolers
- ii. adults 16 years of age and over who have complex needs
- iii. adults 16 years of age and over who have a community services card and are either working full time, in full time study, seeking employment, engaged in voluntary work or are the main carer for a dependent person.

3.1.1 Children and young people

This includes:

- pre-schoolers
- children and young people up to the age of 21 years if they are in full time study

Full time study includes pre-school education, compulsory education (primary, secondary, correspondence school and home schooling), tertiary level education and vocational training.

▪ Tertiary level education or vocational training

The course(s) must be full time. The course length must be at least a calendar or academic year and the content of the course must support the person working towards future employment.

Written confirmation of the course, including acceptance onto the course, start and finish dates and the purpose of the course is required.

If the person is unable to undertake a full time course due to the limitations of their disability, funding approval may be considered if the person is studying at their maximum capacity.



For definitions of hearing aids, hearing aid accessories, bone anchored hearing aids and FM systems, see the glossary.



Assistive or personal listening devices are funded through Equipment and Modifications Services. For more information refer to the Equipment Manual at: www.disabilityfunding.co.nz www.accessable.co.nz



Accessable administers hearing aid funding on behalf of the Ministry of Health. Accessable is required to approve funding for the most appropriate and cost effective option to meet a person's needs. Cost effective refers to the most economic and suitable solution to meet the person's hearing needs. This may not necessarily mean the cheapest option.

Written confirmation from either a registered medical practitioner, allied health professional or disability advisor/co-ordinator who is based in a tertiary institution is required.

3.1.2 Adults 16 years of age and over who have complex needs

This may include one or more of the following:

i. severe long-term hearing loss since childhood

- The average of a person's 3 worst hearing threshold levels, which have been measured at audiometric frequencies of 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz, is equal to or greater than 70dB HL in the better ear.
- In addition, the person has had a continuous need for hearing aids since childhood.

ii. sudden and severe hearing loss during adulthood

- Within the last 6 months the person, over a period of 1 to 14 days, developed a significant increase in the person's hearing threshold level of at least 30 dB HL on average in one or both ears.
- This has resulted in the average of the person's three worst hearing threshold levels, which have been measured at audiometric frequencies of 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz, being equal or greater than 70 dB HL in the better ear.



The person is eligible to receive hearing aid funding only once following the onset of sudden and severe hearing loss during adulthood.

iii. hearing loss and a significant visual disability

The person will have vision loss which impacts on their ability to communicate effectively. Vision loss includes one of the following:

- the person's corrected vision, with lenses, does not exceed 6/24 in the person's better eye
- the person has significant limitation in their binocular central field vision not less than 10° in extent at the widest diameter
- the person's overall binocular visual field is no greater than 30° at its widest diameter

iv. hearing loss and a significant intellectual disability

A significant intellectual disability means a significantly sub-average general intelligence that:

- may be indicated by an IQ of 70 or below on an individually administered test
- reduces the person's ability to communicate effectively.

v. hearing loss and a significant physical disability

A significant physical disability means a long-term physical disability that affects the person's ability to communicate effectively.



A person with a significant physical disability may have difficulty with expressive communication due to a neurological condition.

3.1.3 Adults aged 16 years and over

Adults aged 16 years and over who have a community services card **and** are either working full time, in full time study, seeking employment, engaged in voluntary work or are the main carer of a dependent person.

▪ Full time work

Full time work is employment that is at least 30 hours per week or which achieves a degree of financial independence that is at least the same as the person could earn on the sickness benefit.

If the person is unable to work 30 hours per week due to the limitations of their disability, funding approval may be considered if the person is working at their maximum capacity. This will require supporting documentation from either a medical practitioner or an allied health professional.

▪ Seeking employment

The person is registered for employment with Work and Income, Workbridge or employment support services associated with specific disability organisations such as Deaf Aoteroa or the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind.

▪ Engaged in voluntary work

The person is engaged in voluntary work for a minimum of 20 hours per week with a recognised community-based voluntary, not-for-profit agency and is able to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the work.

This means that they must have been involved for a minimum of 8 weeks and will be intending to work in that role for at least 12 months.

Written confirmation of the voluntary work must be provided with the application.

▪ Main carer

A main carer is an unpaid carer who lives with the person and provides the majority of their care.



For more information on the community services card see section 3.1.2 or go to: www.workandincome.govt.nz

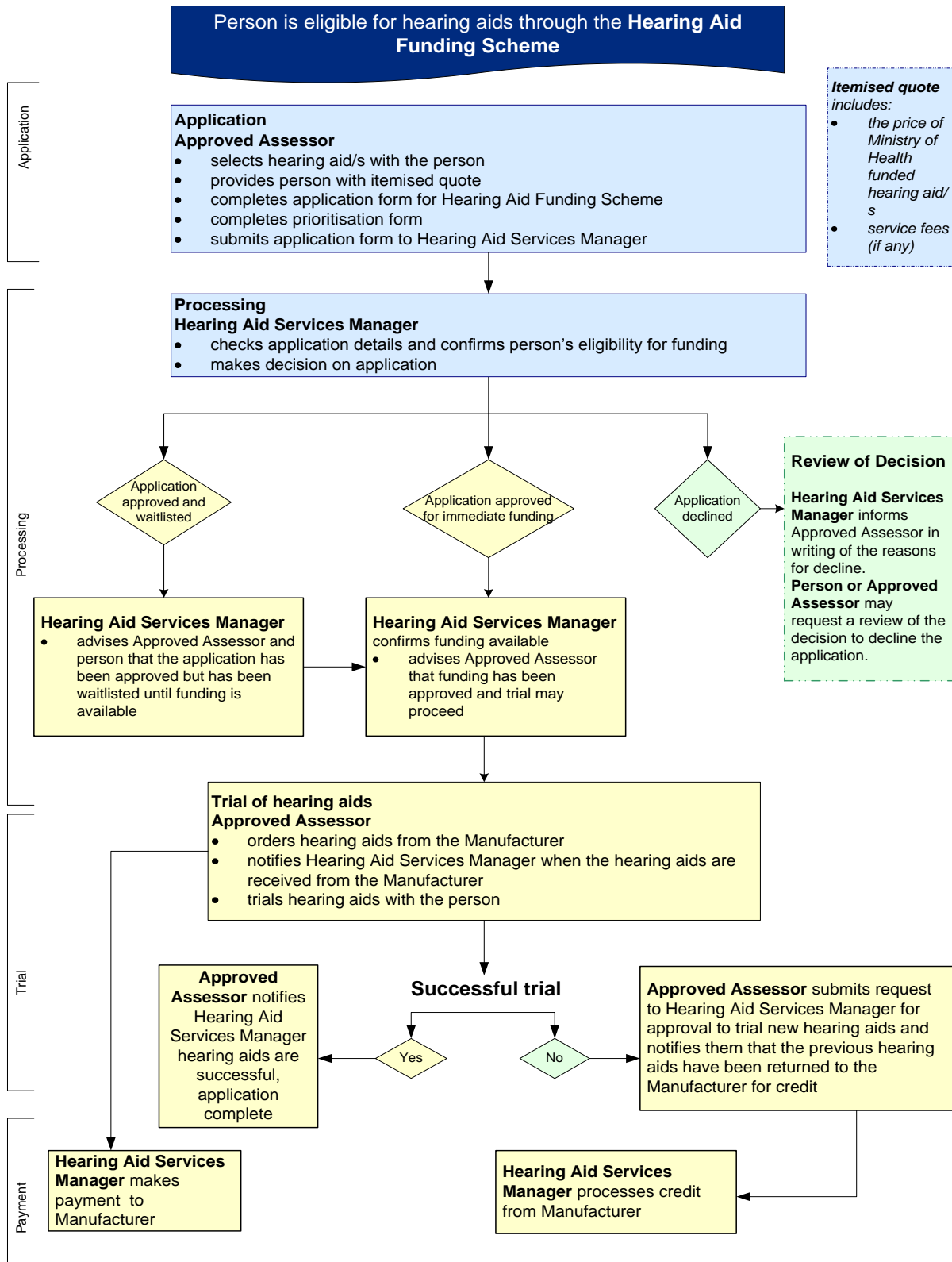


For a definition of 'full time study' see section 3.1.1.



A recognised voluntary community-based organisation is an established non-profit organisation that provides voluntary services for the benefit of the community as a whole. Examples include the Cancer Society, IDEA Services or CCS Disability Action. Schools, kindergartens, Kōhanga Reo, sporting organisations and churches are not regarded as recognised community organisations for the purpose of this funding.

Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application process (map 3)



3.2 FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Funding for hearing aids for adults aged 16 years of age and over will generally be provided no more than once every 6 years.

Funding for hearing aids and their replacements is available up to a maximum of 3 times within the 6 year period for pre-schoolers and those from 5 years of age, up to 21 years of age if they are in primary, secondary or tertiary education.

Replacement hearing aids are only available when the person's hearing aids can no longer be repaired or modified to meet their changed needs and replacement hearing aids are the most cost effective option.

3.3 AVERAGE PRICE TARGET OF HEARING AIDS

The Ministry of Health has set an average price target for each hearing aid, including any essential accessories, which is funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme. This average price target is published by Accessable on its website as it may change from time to time.

The purpose of setting an average price target is to encourage cost-effective solutions from Approved Assessors for the recommended hearing aids and to manage the prices of hearing aids.

The average price target does not include applications for FM Systems or Bone Anchored Hearing Aids.

The average price of all hearing aids and accessories which have been approved through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme will be assessed against the average price target. This assessment will be undertaken by Accessable on a rolling 6 month basis. Regular feedback will be provided to audiology providers on their achievement of this average price target.

Accessable will contact an audiology provider where they have exceeded the average target price over the 6 month period. If a satisfactory explanation is not provided, a review will be undertaken.



The Ministry of Health's EMS Review Panel may, in genuine and exceptional circumstances, approve hearing aid funding at intervals of less than 6 years.



For details on the average price target go to:
www.accessable.co.nz/hearing

3.4 REPAIRS

Ongoing repairs of hearing aids purchased through hearing aid funding for eligible people will be met if the repair is:

- necessary to re-establish the proper function of the hearing aid
- cost effective for meeting the person's needs.

Repairs that will not be funded include:

- consumable items
- where the hearing aid is covered by warranty
- the cost of assessment or fitting a repaired hearing aid
- payment for repair of children's hearing aids. These repairs are provided through the Ministry of Education deaf education centres.
- payment for repair of hearing aids purchased with a hearing aid subsidy. These repairs are the responsibility of the person
- payment for repair where the person is no longer eligible for hearing aid funding.

3.5 REPLACEMENT UNDER INSURANCE CLAIM

Where a hearing aid is covered by insurance and a replacement is required due to the hearing aid being lost or damaged, Accessable will consider applications from the audiology provider for reimbursement of the portion of the hearing aid which:

- are not met by insurance
- do not exceed the amount of hearing aid funding that would otherwise be available.

Where funding is being requested for replacement of hearing aids that are partially met by insurance, the 6 year period for an eligible person does not apply.

3.6 INSURANCE

All insurance costs are the responsibility of the owner of the hearing aid.

3.7 COSTS NOT COVERED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

- Payment of costs associated with assessment, fitting or other service fees charged by an audiology provider.
- Provision of hearing assistive technology. This is funded through Equipment and Modification Services funding.
- Provision of FM systems for children attending primary or secondary education up to 21 years of age. This service is provided by the Ministry of Education.
- Payment for repair of children's hearing aids. These repairs are provided through the Ministry of Education's deaf education centres.



Hearing aid funding includes the previous Children's Hearing Aid Fund, the previous EMS scheme and the current Hearing Aid Services Funding Scheme.



To be eligible for funding for hearing aid repairs the person must meet the eligibility criteria for the current Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.



Eg Examples of consumable items include batteries, domes and microphone covers.



Applications for a replacement hearing aid under insurance must include:

- *a written statement from the Approved Assessor that the replacement hearing aid is the most appropriate and cost effective solution*
- *a letter from the insurer stating the insurance claim has been accepted and the amount payable by the insurer.*



Examples of hearing assistive technology include assistive listening devices and visual or vibrating alert systems. For more information, see the Equipment Manual at: www.disabilityfunding.co.nz www.accessable.co.nz

4. HEARING AID SUBSIDY SCHEME

The hearing aid subsidy provides a contribution of \$511.11 (incl GST) towards the cost of a hearing aid for each ear of an eligible person.

The hearing aid subsidy can be used for one of the following:

- a hearing aid and hearing aid accessories
- a bone anchored hearing aid
- an FM system.



For definitions of hearing aids, hearing aid accessories, bone anchored hearing aids and FM systems, see the glossary.

The hearing aid subsidy cannot be used for:

- consumable items for hearing aids
- cochlear implants or speech processors for cochlear implants
- second hand hearing aids
- assistive listening devices
- devices that have microphones and amplification systems that are designed primarily for other uses, such as stereos and mobile phones
- any service costs associated with the assessment, trial or fitting of a hearing aid.



*Assistive listening devices are funded through Equipment and Modifications Services. For more information go to:
www.disabilityfunding.co.nz/
www.accessable.co.nz*

Funding will only be approved for hearing aids which are listed on the Ministry's Approved Hearing Aid List.

The subsidy is available no more than once in every 6 years for an eligible person (for each ear).

4.1 ELIGIBILITY

Claims for the hearing aid subsidy will be considered where the person is:

- i. 16 years of age or over
- ii. not eligible for funding through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme
- iii. not eligible for funding from ACC, the ACC and Ministry of Health jointly or Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

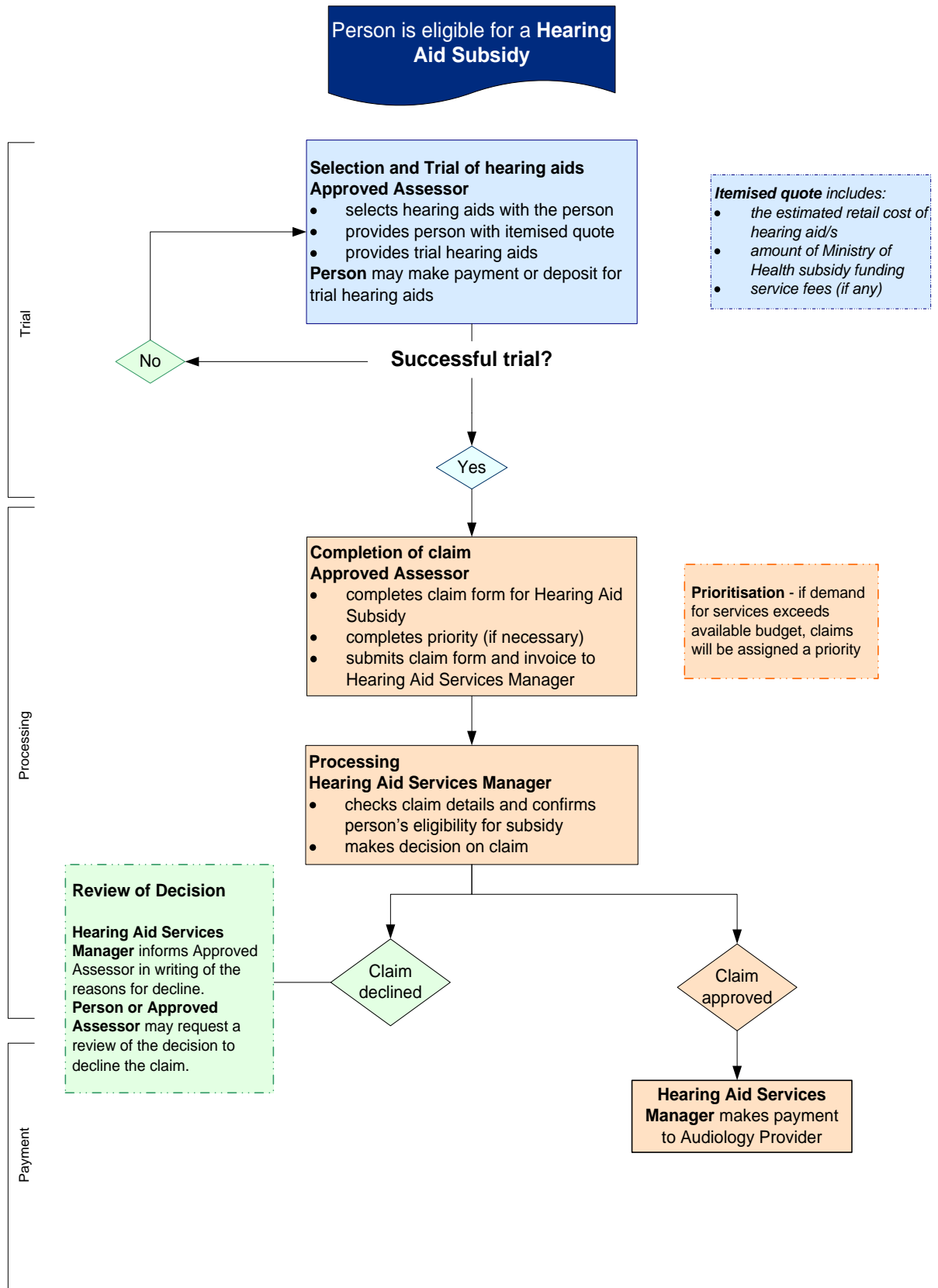
4.2 INSURANCE

All insurance costs are the responsibility of the owner of the hearing aid.

4.3 COSTS NOT COVERED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

- Payment of costs associated with assessment, fitting or other service fees charged by an audiology provider.
- Provision of FM systems for children attending primary or secondary education up to 21 years of age. This service is provided by the Ministry of Education.
- Payment for repair of hearing aids purchased with a hearing aid subsidy. These repairs are the responsibility of the consumer.

Hearing Aid Subsidy Claim process (map 2)



5. PRIORITY GUIDELINES

Priority guidelines ensure the people at most risk are given access to available funding.

Applications for hearing aid funding are prioritised based on the person's hearing needs and the impact of their hearing loss.

Applications for children aged 15 years and under are generally not subject to prioritisation.

The Approved Assessor will evaluate the person's hearing needs and risk factors and record these on the *Prioritisation for Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Form* (This form is part of the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Form*).

Priority for funding may be upgraded if the Approved Assessor advises Accessable that the person's needs or access to interim options change and the hearing aids are required more urgently.



Where there is a waiting list, Accessable will inform the person and the Approved Assessor in writing and give an indication of when funding will be available.



Prioritisation will be based on the needs of the person and may vary according to demand for services and budget availability.



For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Form, go to:
www.accessable.co.nz/hearing

6. PRIVACY ACT

The information provided within the application and claim forms may be used:

- for the purposes of assessing the need for funding for hearing aids by the Ministry of Health
- for the collection of statistical information such as gender, ethnicity and disability type to assist the Ministry of Health to develop a clear picture of the needs of people with hearing loss and to ensure that access to Disability Support Services funding is as fair and equitable as possible within existing budgets
- for other such functions as permitted under law

Accessable may provide the Ministry of Health with information about the hearing aid services the person receives.

The provision of information in the application form is voluntary but consideration of funding approval may depend upon all of the information being provided.

The person has the right to access the information held about them and to have corrections made to this information.

The Health Information Privacy Code applies to the information collected within the application form.

7. OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

7.1 ACC

ACC provides equipment and services for people who are entitled under the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2001.

ACC will fund an assessment to determine the extent of an eligible person's hearing loss. If the person's hearing loss is caused by a mix of injury and non-injury factors, the person will be eligible for some hearing aid funding from ACC and some funding from the Ministry of Health. ACC will manage this process.

If the person's hearing loss is assessed as being fully injury related, they may be eligible for hearing aid funding from ACC.

7.2 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education pays for FM systems for students in compulsory education to support their access to the school curriculum.

Repairs to children's hearing aids and FM systems are coordinated and paid through the Ministry of Education deaf education centres.

7.3 VETERANS' AFFAIRS NEW ZEALAND

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand provides advice and facilitates the delivery of a range of services to veterans and their families. Case managers connect veterans and their families to appropriate services within the community that best address their needs and assist with improving and maintaining their quality of life.

The focus is on the Case Manager facilitating access to existing publicly funded health and disability services, and to the entitlements that are available through the war pensions' framework and other social services.

For further information contact Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

7.4 WORK AND INCOME NEW ZEALAND

Work and Income provides a number of payments or advances for people who are unable to pay for immediate and essential items. Work and Income will review the person's financial situation to determine the help available. People do not have to be on a benefit to receive this help.

Further information is available from Work and Income, Ministry of Social Development.

7.5 WORKBRIDGE

Where a person is not able to access funding from the Ministry of Health, Workbridge will consider funding an FM system where a person is in danger of losing their job due to their hearing loss.



For further information contact ACC regional branch offices or: Call Free: 0800 101 996 (claim enquiries) www.acc.co.nz



0800 4 VETERAN (4838372)
Email: veterans@xtra.co.nz
www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz



Call free: 0800 559 009
Deaf-Link Free Fax: 0800 621621
www.workandincome.govt.nz

7.6 LOTTERY GRANTS BOARD

The Lottery Individuals with Disabilities Committee will consider funding applications from people with communication related disabilities for equipment that will facilitate direct communication with others. Those who meet the eligibility criteria for funding through the Ministry of Health or other Government Agencies for items they require are not eligible for lottery grants.

Further information is available from the Lottery Grants Board, Department of Internal Affairs.



Call free: 0800 824 824
<http://www.dia.govt.nz/>

7.7 PRIVATE PURCHASE

The person, their family or whānau may choose to purchase the hearing aid themselves. If so, all costs associated with the purchase of the hearing aid, including repairs, will be the responsibility of the person.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The provision of hearing aid services involves a number of different people and organisations. Their responsibilities are outlined below.

8.1 THE PERSON, THEIR FAMILY, WHĀNAU AND SUPPORT PERSON

- Participate in an assessment with an Approved Assessor and work with them to determine which hearing aid, if any, best suits their needs.
- Contact the Approved Assessor or audiology provider if dissatisfied with any part of the assessment process.

8.1.1 For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

- Work with the Approved Assessor to obtain the necessary information required to complete an application for funding.
- Read, complete, sign and return the documentation required in order for the application to progress. Seek clarification where it is required.
- Work with the Approved Assessor to determine when a repair to a hearing aid has been satisfactorily completed.
- Make arrangements with the audiology provider regarding payment.
- Contact the Approved Assessor, audiology provider or Accessable if dissatisfied with the decision regarding funding for hearing aid purchase or repair.

8.1.2 For the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

- Make payment to the audiology provider for any balance owing on the payment for the hearing aid, and other service fees, if any, over and above the subsidy.
- Contact the Approved Assessor, audiology provider or Accessable if dissatisfied with the decision regarding the hearing aid subsidy.

8.2 APPROVED ASSESSOR

- Explain to the person and other relevant people:
 - the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria
 - the roles and responsibilities of relevant people according to the Ministry of Health criteria and processes
 - the requirement to provide the most cost effective and appropriate solution to meet the person's hearing needs
 - the application or claim process, priority guidelines, and likely timeframes
- Assess, in conjunction with the person, their hearing and hearing needs in accordance with the:
 - New Zealand Audiological Society Standards of Practice
 - Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Early Intervention Programme (UNHSEIP) Protocols, where applicable.
- Work with the person to ensure that the hearing aid is appropriate to meet the person's needs and is correctly fitted and adjusted for the person.
- Complete an application for hearing aid funding or make a claim for hearing aid subsidy according to the processes as outlined in Part 2 of this manual. Applications will only be accepted from an Approved Assessor who holds the relevant area of accreditation.
- Explain to the person and/or their support people the ongoing care and maintenance of the hearing aid or accessory.



*The registration forms and accreditation standards for Approved Assessors are available from Enable New Zealand. Phone: 0800 17 1981 or:
EMS Assessor Application
Enable New Zealand
PO Box 4547
Palmerston North*



*For more information about the Accreditation Framework see the glossary or go to:
<http://disabilityservices.hiirc.org.nz>*

8.2.1 For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

▪ During the application process

- Ensure that the person is given the following information prior to trial of a hearing aid:
 - the amount of hearing aid funding for the recommended hearing aid
 - an itemised list of what the person may have to pay themselves eg. assessment or fitting fees
 - an estimate of time before funding is likely to become available
 - the *Guide to Getting Hearing Aids*.
- Discuss and explain the person's hearing and hearing needs assessment with the person.
- Make an application to Accessable to trial hearing aids for an eligible person.
- Complete the prioritisation assessment when making an application using the *Prioritisation for Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application Form*.
- Support the person throughout the trial and selection process.



*For the Guide to Hearing Aids and the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application Form go to:
www.accessable.co.nz/hearing*

▪ Trial and selection

- When notified by Accessable that funding is approved and available, review the application and provide confirmation to Accessable that the application is still accurate and correct.
- When the application has been confirmed by Accessable, order the recommended hearing aid from the manufacturer and send a copy of the order to Accessable.
- Where the application is no longer accurate or correct, notify Accessable and consider making an application for a different hearing aid or funding scheme that meets the person's changed needs or circumstances.
- Where the trialled hearing aid does not meet the person's needs:
 - return the trialled hearing aid to the manufacturer
 - inform Accessable that the hearing aid has been returned, including the reasons for the return
 - request approval for the person to trial another recommended hearing aid, if relevant.
- Notify Accessable when the recommended hearing aid has been supplied by the manufacturer for trial and the trial has been successful.



An Approved Assessor must not charge an eligible person for a hearing aid that is subject to an application for hearing aid funding.

▪ For repairs

- Confirm with the person whose hearing aid needs to be repaired that they are still eligible for hearing aid funding.
- Make application to Accessable according to the repairs process outlined in Part 2 of this manual, for hearing aid repairs where the hearing aid is the most appropriate and cost effective solution.
- Before any hearing aid repairs are started, ensure that the person is given the following information:
 - a quote for the repair cost
 - the amount of funding available for the repair.
- Work with the person to ensure that the hearing aid repair has been satisfactorily completed and the hearing aid has been returned to them.

8.2.2 For the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

- Ensure that the person is given the following information before trial of a hearing aid:
 - the retail price of the hearing aid
 - the amount of hearing aid subsidy that is available for each hearing aid
 - a description of the services provided to people
 - a written quote for total amount payable by the person excluding the hearing aid subsidy
 - the *Guide to Getting Hearing Aids*.
- Discuss and explain the person's hearing and hearing needs assessment with the person.
- Submit an claim for payment of the hearing aid subsidy to Accessable, subject to a successful trial of the hearing aids and the person's acceptance of the selected aids.



The Approved Assessor may claim only the actual price of the hearing aid and not the amount of the hearing aid subsidy. The actual cost includes, but is not limited to, discounts for bulk purchases of hearing aids.



For the *Guide to Hearing Aids*, go to:
www.accessable.co.nz/hearing

8.3 AUDIOLOGY PROVIDER

- Ensure the person is eligible for hearing aid services funding or subsidy.
- Verify that the Approved Assessor has the qualifications and experience to enable them to competently perform the role of an Approved Assessor.
- Ensure that assessments and recommendations for hearing aid services by the Approved Assessor are correct.
- Follow up on concerns raised by Accessable about aspects of specific applications or claims from an Approved Assessor.
- Coordinate a peer review of applications submitted by an Approved Assessor where concerns have been raised about the quality of specific or successive applications or claims.
- Ensure that the Approved Assessor provides the most appropriate and cost effective hearing aid for the person, and it is fitted and adjusted to meet their needs.
- Establish and publish a complaints procedure for the person, their family or whānau.
- Ensure the supply of hearing aid services in a prompt, efficient, professional and ethical manner.
- Maintain and preserve full clinical records in accordance with best business practice.
- Comply with the requirements of the Hearing Aid Services Notice (2011).
- Monitor the average price target of hearing aids and accessories which are funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.



For more information on the Hearing Aid Services Notice, go to: [Hearing Aid Services Notice \(2011\)](#)

8.4 ACCESSABLE

- Administer Ministry of Health funding within the allocated budget and in a way that ensures that people who have the most urgent need for hearing aids have their needs met first.
- Provide information and updates on Ministry of Health policy and procedural changes to Approved Assessors and audiology providers.
- Administer a tool that supports a fair and transparent process for prioritising funding for hearing aids if demand exceeds available budget.
- Ensure that hearing aid services provided are nationally consistent, equitable, affordable and timely.
- Assess the cost effectiveness, appropriateness and priority of applications for hearing aids requested under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.
- Monitor audiology providers adherence to the average target price and provide regular feedback to them on this.
- Notify an audiology provider where their average price per hearing aid is over the average price target for hearing aids funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.
- Follow up with audiology providers who have not met the average price target over a 6 month period and undertake a review as necessary.

8.4.1 For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

▪ Processing applications

- Process applications from Approved Assessors in accordance with current Ministry of Health funding guidelines.
- Advise the audiology provider of the outcome of the application within 20 working days. This may require seeking additional information from the audiology provider to support the application.
- Refer applications to the Ministry of Health's Equipment and Modification Services Review Panel for a decision as applicable.
- Where an application is approved, notify the Approved Assessor in writing if there is a waiting list and include the timeframe for which funding will be available.
- Where an application is declined, notify the Approved Assessor in writing of the decision and the reasons for this.
- Assess applications with regard to the priority of the application, in relation to other applications of its kind.
- When funding for a waitlisted application becomes available, notify the person and the audiology provider within 5 days and seek confirmation from the audiology provider that the application is still accurate and correct.



An application may be queried by Accessable or reviewed by a professional advisor if it does not contain sufficient information to determine:

- *that the person is eligible for hearing aid funding*
- *that the hearing aid recommended by the Approved Assessor is on the Approved Hearing Aid List*
- *that the recommended hearing aid is the most appropriate and cost effective solution for the person*
- *the priority of the application, having regard to other applications of its kind.*

- Consider applications to order and trial an alternative, recommended hearing aid for people whose needs have changed since the an application for funding was first made.
- Undertake a review of the decision to decline an application if requested by either the person, the Approved Assessor or the audiology provider.
- Maintain accurate records of individual claims and applications for hearing aid purchase or repair.
- Maintain, in conjunction with manufacturers, the Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List and publish this for Approved Assessors and audiology providers.



The Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List includes:

- *hearing aids that are eligible for hearing aid funding and subsidy*
- *the length of time that hearing aids will be supported by the manufacturer*
- *the price (excl. GST) of those hearing aids*

▪ **Trial and selection**

- Make payment for the selected hearing aid to be trialed where funding has been approved and the person has received the hearing aid.
- Respond to complaints by following their review and complaints process.
- Advise the person and the Approved Assessor in writing of any anticipated delays in funding.
- Advise the Ministry of Health of any ongoing application or claim where a decision has not been reached within 6 months.
- Where a dispute has arisen following an application for hearing aid funding, facilitate the resolution of such disputes.
- Manage payment processes for the purchase of hearing aids.

▪ **For repairs**

- Develop and implement a process for the timely and efficient management of hearing aid repairs.
- Assess applications for funding for hearing aid repairs. Where the application is declined, provide the reasons.
- Make payment for approved hearing aid repairs when the hearing aid repair has been completed satisfactorily and the eligible person has received the repaired hearing aid.



Accessible will consider the following factors when repairs are requested:

- *the estimated cost of the repairs*
- *the age of the hearing aid*
- *whether multiple hearing aids repairs have already been undertaken*
- *the cost of the full hearing aid replacement.*

8.4.2 For the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

- Assess the Approved Assessor's claim for payment of the hearing aid subsidy on behalf of an eligible person who has trialed and selected a hearing aid.
- Make payment of the subsidy to the audiology provider where the person has received the hearing aid and the hearing aid is on the Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List.

8.5 MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTERS OF HEARING AIDS AND ACCESSORIES

- Submit requests to the University of Auckland for new hearing aids to be approved for sale and use in New Zealand.
- Supply information about the hearing aids and accessories to Accessable for inclusion in the Approved Hearing Aid List.
- Provide information for the Approved Hearing Aid List in an agreed format which includes the hearing aids which are eligible for hearing aid funding and subsidy, the length of time the hearing aids will be supported by the manufacturer and the price of the hearing aids.
- Supply hearing aids and accessories available on the Approved Hearing Aid List on order from audiology providers or Approved Assessors.
- Submit invoices to Accessable for the cost of hearing aids and accessories that have been approved for supply under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.
- Process credit returns to Accessable for hearing aids purchased through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme which have been returned following an unsuccessful trial.



The Hearing Instruments Manufacturers and Distributors Association (HIMADA) consists of New Zealand registered companies involved in the manufacturing, importing or wholesale distribution of hearing instruments within New Zealand.

8.6 MINISTRY OF HEALTH

- Develop and implement eligibility criteria for the provision of Hearing Aid Services.
- Manage and monitor the contract with Accessable to ensure that quality services are provided in a timely, fair and efficient manner and administered within budget.
- Review relevant applications through the EMS Review Panel and communicate decisions to Accessable within 10 working days of the receipt of an application.
- Follow up with Accessable where a decision regarding an application has not been reached within 6 months.

9. REVIEWS OF DECISIONS

9.1 REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT BY AN APPROVED ASSESSOR

The person may wish to seek a second opinion or re-assessment from another approved assessor if they are not happy with any aspect of the service they have received. This would need to be arranged by the person, their family or whānau. They could do this by:

- contacting the approved assessor's manager or supervisor to request a second opinion or re-assessment
- contacting Accessable for a list of alternative approved assessors who could carry out the assessment.

All costs associated with getting a second opinion or re-assessment will be the responsibility of the person.

9.2 REVIEW OF DECISIONS BY ACCESSABLE

If the person, the Approved Assessor or audiology provider, is not satisfied with any decision that has been made about an application, they may request a review of this decision within 3 months of the application being declined. Additional information in writing, supporting their request, should be provided.

- The person, their Approved Assessor and audiology provider will be advised of the outcome or progress of the review within 10 working days of receipt of the request for a review.
- If the person is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of decision, they may request a second review which will be undertaken by the Ministry of Health's Equipment and Modification Services Review Panel.

9.3 REVIEW OF DECISIONS BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, EQUIPMENT AND MODIFICATION SERVICES REVIEW PANEL

The Ministry of Health's Equipment and Modification Services Review Panel (the Panel) considers applications that:

- result from the person, their family or whānau; or the Approved Assessor or audiology provider requesting a second review of the decision made by Accessable
- require clarification of the Ministry of Health's Hearing Aid Services operational policy
- require consideration of funding approval under genuine and exceptional circumstances.

The Panel will consider applications where Accessable has declined hearing aid services funding, hearing aid subsidy, repairs or reimbursement of replacement costs which are not fully covered by insurance.

The Panel may approve a person's claim or application where:

- departure from the Ministry of Health's usual procedures will improve the outcomes for the person
- the application is made within 3 months of the initial application being declined
- there are genuine and exceptional circumstances that justify the approval of the claim or application.

The objectives of the Panel are to ensure that all decisions regarding applications and claims are:

- considered in a nationally consistent way
- transparent and fair
- based on the Ministry's agreed funding criteria.

The Panel will inform Accessable of its decision within 10 working days of receipt of an application. Accessable will then advise the person and the Approved Assessor of the Panel's decision. Only applications and claims forwarded by Accessable, using the EMS Review Panel template for Hearing Aid Services will be considered by the Panel.



The Ministry of Health's EMS Review Panel may, in exceptional cases, approve hearing aid funding at intervals of less than 6 years.

10. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

10.1 ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK

A framework established by the Ministry of Health for health professionals undertaking assessments that may result in applications for equipment or modification services for eligible people. This includes assessments for hearing aids applications and claims.



For more information on the Accreditation Framework go to <http://disabilityservices.hirc.org.nz/>

10.2 APPROVED ASSESSOR

A person who has been approved under the Accreditation Framework to undertake assessments and submit applications or make claims for hearing aid services.

The Approved Assessor will be responsible for maintaining their accreditation registration with the Approved Assessor database, held by Enable New Zealand. Approved assessor status needs to be re-validated every three years.

Accreditation may be removed from an approved assessor if:

- an audit shows a consistent pattern of inappropriate recommendations made on behalf of eligible people or applications or claims do not align with the Ministry of Health funding guidelines
- they show a consistent pattern of not complying with the correct application or claim process
- they have not maintained the appropriate qualifications and competencies to enable them to remain as an Approved Assessor.

The Approved Assessor must advise Enable New Zealand of any change in their:

- employer details
- contact details

10.3 AUDIOLOGY PROVIDER

An audiology provider is an individual or organisation that employs Approved Assessors and is authorised to provide Hearing Aid Services under the Hearing Aid Services Notice (2011). This includes independent practitioners, private providers and District Health Boards.

10.4 BETTER EAR

Better ear means the ear with the lesser hearing threshold level at the relevant audiometric frequency.

10.5 BONE ANCHORED HEARING AID

A bone anchored hearing aid is a surgically implanted system for rehabilitating hearing loss that works through direct bone conduction.

10.6 COCHLEAR IMPLANT

A cochlear implant is a device that is surgically implanted in a person's cochlear and that works through electrical stimulation to provide a sense of sound to a person who is severely or profoundly deaf.

10.7 DECIBELS (dB HL)

dB HL means the hearing threshold in decibels of a given ear at a specified frequency and for a specified type of transducer when measured with an audiometer calibrated to reference equivalent levels for air or bone conduction.

10.8 DEPENDENT PERSON

A dependent person is a person who requires full time care because they are either a child of 13 years or under or because of their long-term health or disability needs.

10.9 HEARING AID

A hearing aid is a personal electronic amplification device that is used wholly or principally by a person to alleviate the impact of their hearing loss.

10.10 HEARING AID ACCESSORIES

Hearing aid accessories enhance the functionality of the hearing aid but are not necessary for the operation or maintenance of the hearing aid and does not need to be replaced over time eg. remotes and wireless devices.

10.11 HERTZ (HZ)

Hertz is the international measure of frequency where 1 Hertz equals 1 cycle per second.

10.12 FM SYSTEM

An FM System is a communication system for improving speech comprehension in difficult listening situations. A microphone is worn by the speaker which transmits the signal wirelessly to a receiver which is worn by a person wearing hearing aids.

10.13 MANUFACTURER

The manufacturer is the person or company who manufactures and/or distributes hearing aids to audiology providers.

10.14 NEW ZEALAND AUDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY (NZAS)

NZAS is the professional body within New Zealand which promotes the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy and education. Its members adhere to agreed Standards of Practice issued by NZAS.

10.15 PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR

An audiologist, who is a current member of NZAS, engaged by the services manager to provide advice on applications requiring specialist technical input.