

DRAFT **accessible** HEARING AID SERVICES PROCESS

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HOW TO COMPLETE APPLICATIONS AND CLAIMS REQUESTING FUNDING APPROVAL FOR HEARING AID FUNDING AND SUBSIDY SCHEMES

1. General Information about Completing Applications and Claims

- Applications and claims for the provision of Ministry of Health funded hearing aids must follow the guidelines and processes outlined in this Manual; Parts 1 & 2.



Throughout Part 2 the term hearing aids means, the hearing aid instrument, hearing accessories and FM systems.



Refer to Part 1 of this manual for more detail about the eligibility criteria, and definitions for the provision of Ministry of Health funded hearing aids.

- Requests for funding will only be accepted on the correct forms:
Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application form
Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Trial Continuation form
Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repair form
Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme Claim form



*These forms are available from the **accessible** website www.accessible.co.nz or on request by email: hearing@accessible.co.nz or telephone on 09 620 1700 (or 0508 001 002 for people outside Auckland)*

- These forms may need to be updated from time to time and Assessors will be notified of this via their primary contact address (ie, email, fax or mail) that has been listed with the Disability Support Services Approved Assessor Accreditation database managed by Enable New Zealand.



Please ensure you keep your Approved Assessor contact details up to date with Enable New Zealand 0800 17 19 81 or email assessor.info@enable.co.nz.

- Where a specific request is made by the Assessor, **accessible** will provide the updated forms and related information in a master copy only, the Assessor will need to arrange copies for day to day use.
- Applications and claims for hearing aids will only be accepted from an Assessor whose area of accreditation allows them to recommend hearing aids as per the Disability Support Services Approved Assessor Accreditation Framework managed by Enable New Zealand.
- If the Assessor does not hold the appropriate accreditation for recommending hearing aids, the application or claim can be countersigned by an Assessor who holds accreditation in Hearing. The Assessor countersigning the application or claim must provide their Accreditation number and confirm they will be responsible for the application or claim.
- Applications or claims which have had no activity on them for 6 months will be abandoned.

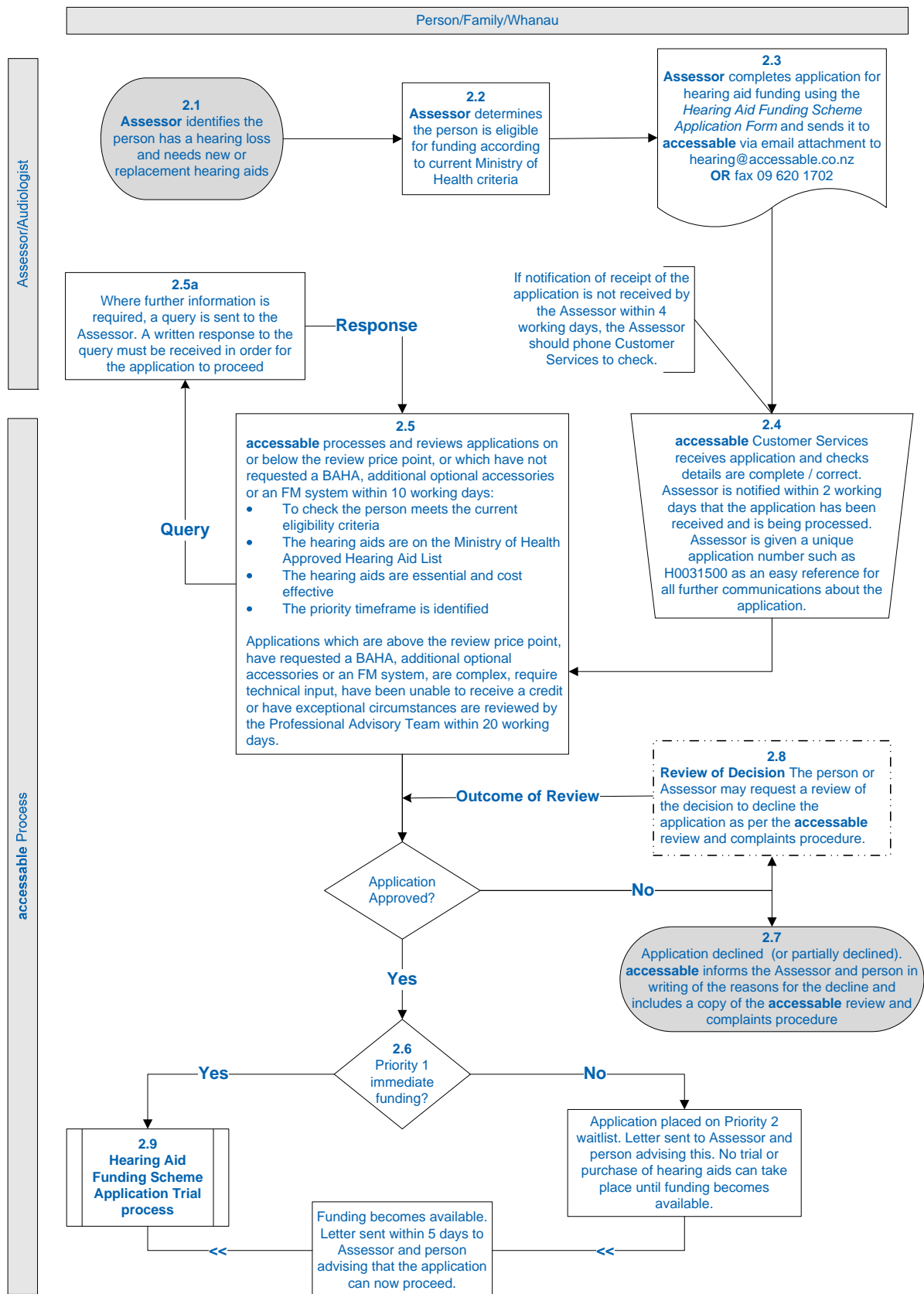


*An application or claim will be abandoned where **accessible** has not received a response or an update from the Assessor / Audiology Provider within 6 months.*

PART 2

- **accessible** does not provide **verbal approval or decisions** about hearing aid funding or subsidy. A formal decision from **accessible** will only be in writing in response to a complete application or claim.
- The Assessor is responsible for ensuring the person is aware of the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria, processes and likely timeframes for the provision of the hearing aids.
- The Assessor is responsible for discussing the relevant *Guide to Getting Hearing Aids* booklet with the person. This includes determining that the person agrees to the application being made and that the information contained in the application is true and correct and the person gives permission for information to be used and disclosed as noted in the Privacy Statement.
- The Assessor is responsible for ensuring the person and their support people know how to use the hearing aids and what to do to look after them. This includes informing the person how to get repairs if the hearing aids break down and who will be responsible for the cost of repairs.

2. HEARING AID FUNDING SCHEME APPLICATION Process



2. Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application Process



The following numbering correlates to the process flowchart for easier reference.

2.1

- The Assessor is responsible for completing an assessment of the person's hearing and hearing needs in relation to the environments in which the person usually lives, works or studies.

2.2

- The Assessor is responsible for establishing eligibility for Ministry of Health funding and identifies that the;
 - person meets the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria.



Documentation demonstrating how the person meets the eligibility criteria must be held on the Assessor's file for review / audit purposes.

- hearing aids are essential to meet the person's disability related need
- hearing aids are the most cost effective solution to meet the need and all identified alternatives have been considered
- an application requesting funding for the hearing aids is required.



The Assessor ensures the person is aware of the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria, processes and likely timeframes for the provision of the hearing aids.

- Where a person is not eligible for Ministry of Health funding for the hearing aids, alternative funding options may be explored between the person and Assessor.

2.3

- The Assessor completes an application using the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application* form.
- It is essential that all parts of the application form are filled out completely and correctly to prevent delays in needing to return to the Assessor to get the missing information. The Assessor :
 - completes the Assessor details
 - completes the Person's details (ethnicity, age etc)
 - completes the Assessor declaration & the Person's agreement



The Assessor confirms, by ticking the Person's agreement that the person meets the Ministry of Health eligibility criteria and agrees to the application being made and that the information contained in the application is true and correct and the person gives permission for information to be used and disclosed as noted in the Privacy Statement They have been given a copy of the relevant Guide to Getting Hearing Aids booklet.

- completes the additional information, which is required by the Ministry of Health for reporting purposes
- completes the hearing aid details from the *Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List* noting the total price of the hearing aid and accessories



Refer to the Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List which is updated quarterly and is available from the website www.accessable.co.nz. Information about the Ministry of Health Average Price Target is available in Part 1.

PART 2

- identifies that the hearing aids are on or below the review price point, and a BAHA, additional Optional Accessories or FM system has not been requested. Therefore only a brief explanation in the box at the bottom of page 3 is required
- identifies the hearing aids are above the review price point or a BAHA, additional Optional Accessories or FM system has been requested and the Assessor includes;
 - o a copy of a recent audiogram and
 - o a completed Audiologist report providing clear rationale supporting the essential need for this level of proposed hearing aids, technological features or additional optional accessories / FM system
- for children and young people up to 21 years of age in full time education, follows the process below for ordering new custom earmould:

A new custom ear mould is required for a new hearing aid.

(Note: ITE shells integrated with the hearing instrument are not be able to be pre-ordered)

Step 1

Audiologist orders new custom earmould from the manufacturer including the following information on the manufacturer's order:

- child's name and date of birth, and
- a code made up of the pre-fix ***HAF** & child's NHI #
- Audiologist / Audiology Provider's name.

***HAF = New** identifies the operational part is for new hearing aids.

Manufacturer processes Audiologists new earmould order and provides the item to the Audiologist. The Manufacturer invoices **accessible** including:

- the code **HAF** & child's NHI #
- child's name and date of birth
- description of item ordered and quantity
- Audiologist / Audiology Provider's name

Step 2

Audiologist completes the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application form* and on Page 3, 2a) 'Operational Parts' notes:

- ear mould & quantity ordered
- manufacturer's name and date the pre-order was made



For all people 16 years and over, the Assessor completes the *Prioritisation for Hearing Aid Funding Scheme form* to describe the person's recommended priority for the provision of hearing aids. Hearing aids for children 15 years and under are generally not subject to prioritisation and will be considered Priority 1. Please leave the *Prioritisation for Hearing Aid Funding Scheme form* page blank.



The Assessor sends the completed application to **accessible**. The application may be e-mailed as an attachment to hearing@accessible.co.nz, faxed to 09 620 1702 or mailed to **accessible**, PO Box 27 804, Mt Roskill, Auckland, 1440. To prevent duplication, only one form of delivery is required.

2.5a Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application Query

- Where information provided is unclear or inconsistent with Ministry of Health eligibility criteria, **accessible** processes, or more information is required; a query is sent to the Assessor, eg rationale is insufficient to establish eligibility or essential disability related need or cost effectiveness or timing (priority).
- Queries are generally written and sent by e-mail, or fax (where there is no e-mail contact) but a phone call may be made by the Professional Advisory or Customer Services Teams where there is a quick simple answer or the query requires discussion for clarification.



In all circumstances a written response to the query must be received in order for the application to proceed. Where there is no further activity on an application within 6 months it will be abandoned.

2.6 Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Approval by accessible

- Where the application has been reviewed and funding is available, it will be approved Priority 1, and receive immediate funding.
- Where the application has been reviewed and can be approved but funding is not available, it is approved Priority 2 and will be added to a waitlist until funding becomes available. When funding becomes available written notification of this will be made to the Assessor and person within 5 working days of funding availability.



No trials can proceed until written notification is received from **accessible** that funding has become available. Where an application has been added to the waiting list, **accessible** will notify you of the estimated timeframe for funding to become available.

2.7 Application Declined or Partially Declined

- Where an application is received and eligibility or essential disability related need is unable to be established or where the Assessor does not support the application, the request for funding will be declined.
- A letter will be sent to the Assessor, with a copy to the person, outlining the reasons for the decline of Ministry of Health funding.
- The application will be declined and withdrawn from funding.
- Where an application has been received and some items of hearing equipment can be approved for funding and some items must be declined, this is called a partial decline:
 - in this case the items which meet the criteria will be approved and the request for trial of these items actioned.
 - for the items where essential disability related need is unable to be established, they will be declined. A letter will be sent to the Assessor, with a copy to the person, outlining the reasons for the partial decline of funding.
 - the funding approval letter will be amended to indicate the hearing equipment / items approved for funding and those declined.



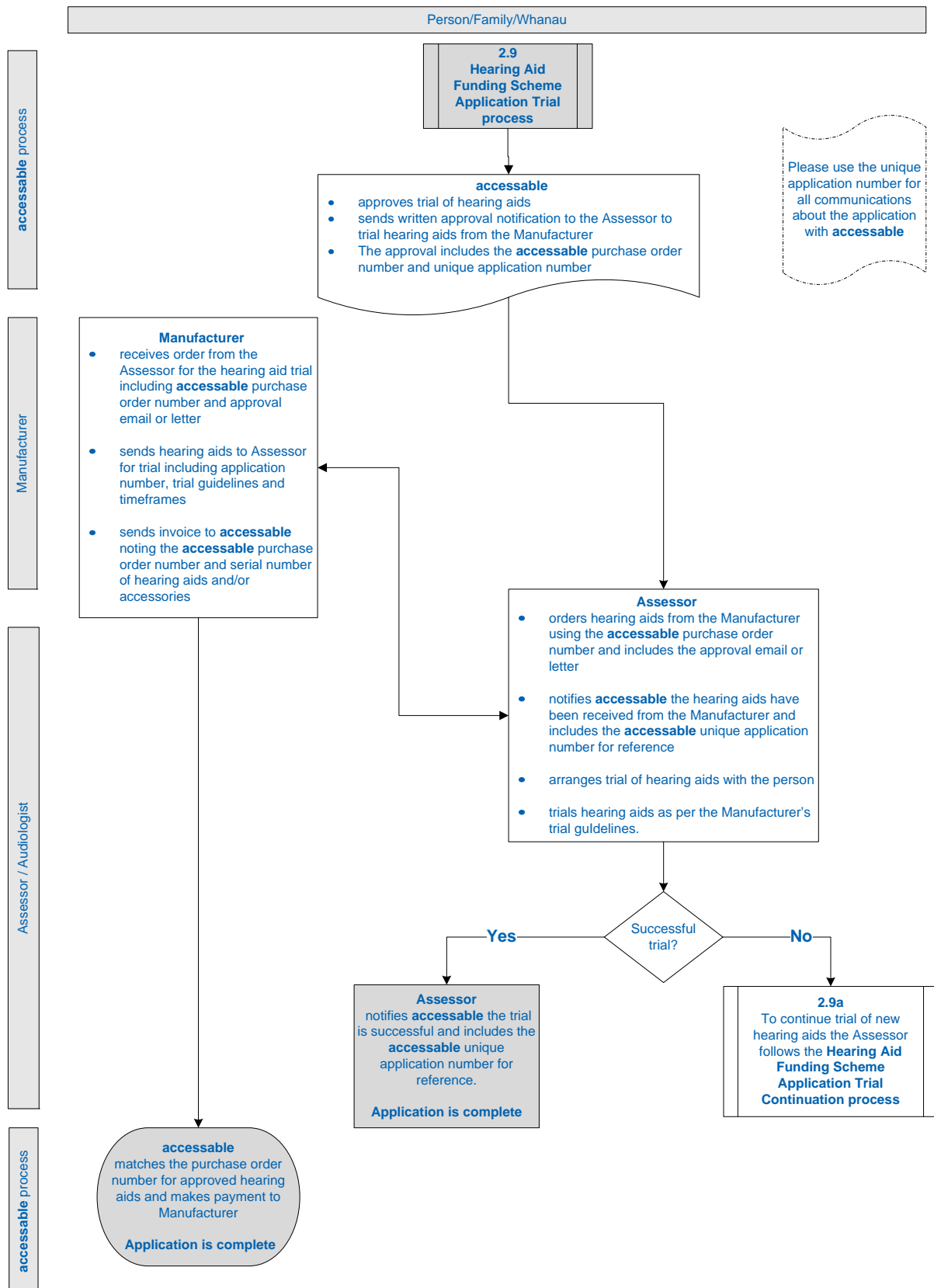
A copy of the **accessible** Review and Complaints Procedure will be included with the letter to the person. The pamphlet can be viewed on the **accessible** website www.accessable.co.nz

2.8 Review of Decision



Refer to Section 5 in this Part for more detail.

2.9 HEARING AID FUNDING SCHEME APPLICATION TRIAL Process



2.9 Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Approval to Trial Hearing Aid

- The Assessor is notified in writing of the funding approval to trial the hearing aids. **accessible** sends written notification either by email, fax or post to trial the hearing aids from the Manufacturer, including the **accessible** purchase order number and approval email / letter.
- The Assessor orders the hearing aid for trial from the Manufacturer using the **accessible** purchase order number and includes the approval email / letter
- The Assessor notifies **accessible** of receipt of the hearing aids from the Manufacturer and includes **accessible**'s purchase order and application (unique reference) number.
- The Assessor arranges and completes the trial of hearing aids with the person. As the hearing aids/accessories are purchased at the initiation of the trial, the Assessor discusses with the person about their responsibility for arranging insurance cover for the hearing aids as soon as possible.



The Assessor trials the hearing aids with the person as per the Manufacturer's trial guidelines, terms and conditions and timeframes.

- The Manufacturer receives the order from the Assessor for the hearing aid trial with the **accessible** purchase order number and a copy of the approval email / letter.
- The Manufacturer sends the hearing aids to the Assessor for trial including the purchase order number, **accessible** application (unique reference) number and trial guidelines.
- The Manufacturer invoices **accessible** for the approved funding price of the hearing aid as per the *Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List* and include the hearing aid serial number.
- **accessible** pays the Manufacturer for the approved hearing aids as per the payment terms.

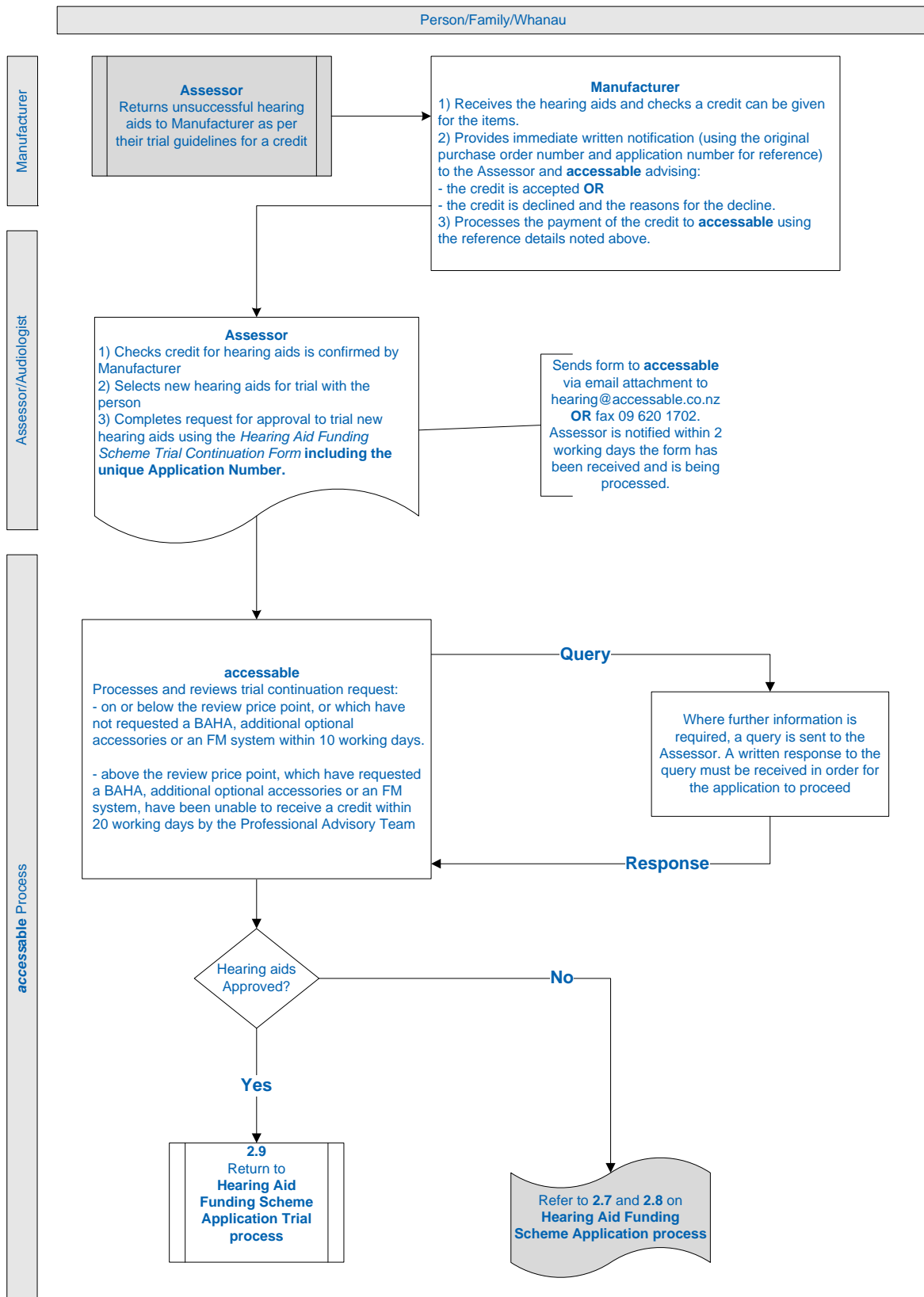
Successful Trial:

- The Assessor notifies **accessible** in writing;
 - that the trial was successful and that the person has been provided with the hearing aids, and includes the **accessible** application (unique reference) number.
 - the application is complete.

Unsuccessful Trial

- The hearing aids trialed were unsuccessful and new hearing aids will be requested for trial. Follow the Trial Continuation process **2.9a**.

2.9a HEARING AID FUNDING SCHEME TRIAL CONTINUATION Process



2.9a. Making a Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Trial Continuation Application

- The hearing aids trialed were unsuccessful and new hearing aids are being requested for trial.
- The Assessor returns the hearing aids to the Manufacturer as per their trial guidelines for a credit. Includes the original **accessible** purchase order number and/or application (unique reference) number.
- The Manufacturer receives the hearing aids returned from the Assessor, including the purchase order number and/or application (unique reference) number and checks a credit can be given.
- The Manufacturer provides immediate written notification (using the original purchase order number and application number for reference) to the Assessor and **accessible** advising:
 - the credit is accepted OR
 - the credit is declined and the reasons for the decline.
- The Manufacturer completes provision of a credit to **accessible** using the original **accessible** purchase order number and/or application (unique reference) number.
- The Assessor confirms a credit has been accepted and selects new hearing aids for trial with the person and completes the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Trial Continuation* form using the **original accessible application number** to request the new hearing aids for trial.
- It is essential that all parts of the application form are filled out completely and correctly. The Assessor :
 - completes the hearing aid details from the *Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List* noting the price of the hearing aids
 - where relevant includes information about why a credit has not been provided by the Manufacturer
 - identifies that the hearing aids are on or below the review price point, and a BAHA, additional Optional Accessories or FM system has not been requested. Therefore only a brief explanation is required in the box at the bottom of page 3 is required
 - identifies the hearing aids are above the review price point or a BAHA, additional Optional Accessories or FM system has been requested and the Assessor includes;
 - a copy of a recent audiogram and
 - a completed Audiologist report providing clear rationale supporting the essential need for this level of proposed hearing aids, technological features or additional optional accessories / FM system.

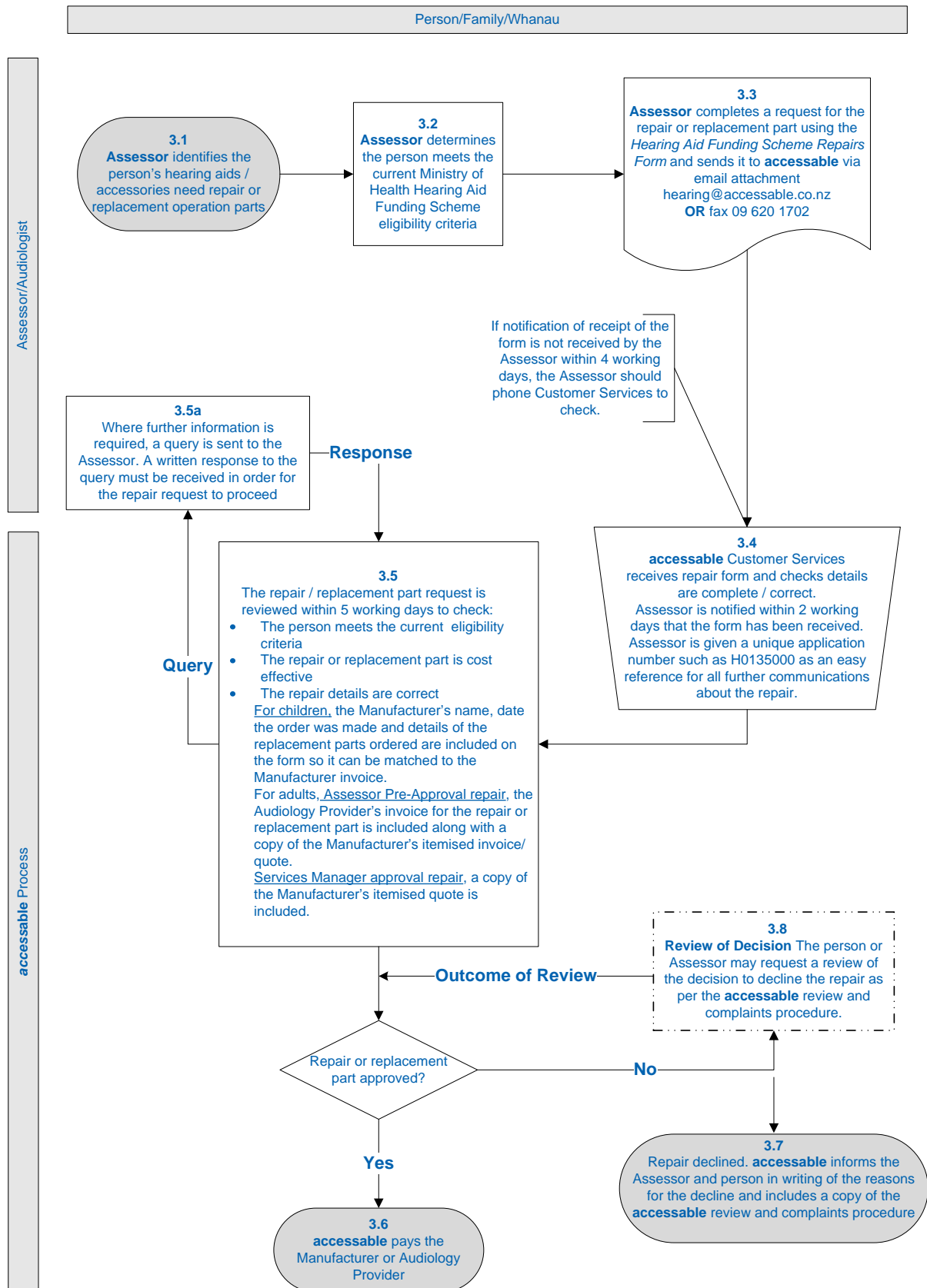


The form may be e-mailed as an attachment to hearing@accessible.co.nz, faxed to 09 620 1702 or mailed to **accessible**, PO Box 27 804, Mt Roskill, Auckland, 1440. To prevent duplication, only one form of delivery is required.

Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Trial Continuation Approval by accessible

- The application has been reviewed, and it can be approved for trial. Return to 2.9 above for trial process.

3. HEARING AID FUNDING SCHEME REPAIRS or REPLACEMENT PARTS Process



3. Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repairs and Replacement Parts Process



The following numbering correlates to the process flowchart for easier reference.

General Information about Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repairs

- The routine maintenance of the hearing aid is the responsibility of the person. This includes:
 - the care and use of the hearing aid as per the Manufacturers or Assessor's instructions, and the cost of replacement batteries.
 - all insurance costs are the responsibility of the person.
- The costs for repair of the hearing aid for eligible people will be met by **accessible** except:
 - where the equipment remains within the guarantee or warrantee provisions for the item
 - where the repairs are required as a result of damage to hearing aid and/or componentry caused by careless or inappropriate use, this will be the responsibility of the person
 - where the person is not eligible for Ministry of Health funded repairs
 - for costs associated with assessment, fitting or other services fees charged by the Audiology Provider .
- For pre-schoolers, children and young people up to 21 years of age in full time education, repairs for hearing aids and FM systems are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.
- Replacement operational parts eg domes and tubes, custom earmoulds / re-shells will be considered for funding under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme for eligible children and adults.
- Where a hearing aid is considered beyond economical repair (BER) the person will be advised to contact an Audiologist to carry out a re-assessment for new hearing aids and determine if the person is eligible for Ministry of Health funding for the provision of the new hearing aids.



*Hearing aids or accessories that are not considered cost effective to repair are considered beyond economic repair (BER). Information from the Manufacturer or Audiology Provider about the viability of the hearing aid or accessories will be considered, and a final decision about the repair will be determined by **accessible**.*

Making a Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repair or Replacement Part Request

3.1

- The Assessor is responsible for identifying that the hearing aids need repair and it is economical / cost effective for the repairs to be undertaken.

3.2

- The Assessor is responsible for establishing that the person meets the current Ministry of Health Hearing Aid Funding Scheme eligibility criteria for the provision of hearing aids and therefore eligible for funded repairs.
- Where a person is not eligible for Ministry of Health funding for the hearing aid repairs, alternative funding options may be explored between the person and Assessor.

3.3

- The Assessor completes a repair request using the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repairs* form.
- It is essential that all parts of the repairs form are filled out completely and correctly. The Assessor :
 - completes the Assessor and/or Audiology Provider details
 - completes the Person's details (ethnicity, age etc)
 - completes the Assessor declaration
 - ticks the box to confirm the person meets the current Hearing Aid Funding Scheme eligibility criteria



Documentation demonstrating how the person meets the eligibility criteria must be held on the Assessor's file for audit / review purposes.

- completes the hearing aid repair details identifying that the repair is cost effective and economical (ie hearing aid is not beyond economical repair)
- identifies the repair details relevant for children or adults:

For Preschoolers, Children and Young People up to 21 years of age in full time Education:

- Replacement operational part eg domes and tubes, custom earmoulds / shells are funded under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme for eligible people.

A replacement custom ear mould / shell, domes & tubes is required for an existing hearing aid.

Step 1

Audiologist orders replacement earmould /shell, domes & tubes from the Manufacturer including the following information on the manufacturer's order:

- child's name and date of birth, and
- a code made up of the pre-fix ***HAR** & the child's NHI #
- Audiologist / Audiology Provider's name.

***HAR = Replacement** identifies the operational part is a replacement for existing hearing aids.

Manufacturer processes Audiologists replacement ear mould / shell, domes/tubes order and provides the item to the Audiologist. The Manufacturer invoices **accessible** including:

- the code **HAR** & child's NHI #
- child's name and date of birth
- description of item ordered and quantity
- Audiologist / Audiology Provider's name

Step 2

Audiologist completes the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repair & Replacement Part form* (first page only) and notes:

- ear mould / shell, domes/tubes & quantity ordered
- manufacturer's name and date the replacement order was made.

- **accessible** matches the Audiologist's replacement part details requested on the form to the Manufacturer's invoice for payment in the normal payment terms.

For Adults:

Assessor Pre-Approval Repair or Replacement Parts

- Where the Assessor determines the person is eligible and the repair is cost effective and within the \$235.00 excluding GST in a 2 year period threshold per ear, the Audiology Provider can arrange repair of the hearing aid directly with the Manufacturer or Distributor.
- The Assessor completes the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repairs* form and attaches:
 - their Audiology Provider's invoice for the repair or replacement operational part (domes and tubes, custom earmoulds / re-shells)
 - a copy of the Manufacturer or Distributor's itemised quote/ invoice
 - records the hearing aid serial number for the repair.
- **accessible** has a record of the repair, and makes payment to the Audiology Provider in the normal payment terms.

Services Manager Approval Repairs or Replacement Parts

- Where the repair price exceeds the Assessor Pre-Approval \$235.00 excluding GST in a 2 year period threshold per ear approval must be sought from **accessible** prior to the repair being completed

PART 2

- The Assessor completes the *Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repairs* form including a copy of the Manufacturer or Distributor's itemised quote for the repair and the hearing aid serial number with the repair request.
- **accessible** makes a decision to approve or gather more information or decline the repair if it is not cost effective. **accessible** sends the Assessor approval to undertake the repairs as quoted.
- The Assessor requests the repair from the Manufacturer or Distributor as per their quote. The Audiology Provider attaches their invoice for the repair as per the Manufacturers approved quotation details.
- **accessible** makes payment to the Audiology Provider in the normal payment terms.



accessible is unable to make payment for the cost of the repairs until they are approved.



The Assessor sends the completed repair request to **accessible**. The form may be e-mailed as an attachment to hearing@accessible.co.nz, faxed 09 620 1702 or mailed to **accessible**, PO Box 27 804, Mt Roskill, Auckland, 1440. To prevent duplication, only one form of delivery is required.

3.4 Receipt of Hearing Aid Repair Request by accessible

- The repair request is checked to see if the information provided is clear, complete and consistent with **accessible** processes so the request can be loaded into the **accessible** database.
- The information and repair details are loaded into the database and allocated a unique reference number known as the application number eg. H0059530.



Please use the application (unique reference) number for all future communications related to this repair request.

- Confirmation that the repair request has been received at **accessible** and is being processed, including the application (unique reference) number, is sent to the Assessor within 2 working days.



If you have not received a confirmation that your repair request has been received and loaded into the system for processing within 4 working days please ring accessible Customer Services to follow up.

3.5 Repair Request Review within 5 working days

- The repair request is checked and approved where the following is established;
 - the person meets the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria for hearing aid funding and therefore for the repair or replacement part
 - for adults, the Audiology Provider's invoice and a copy of the Manufacturer's itemised invoice / quote is included along with the hearing aid / accessories serial number

- for children, details of the replacement parts orders, the Manufacturer's name, date the pre-order was made (as per the process noted above)
- the hearing aid repair is cost effective and economical.

3.5a Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Repair Query

- Where information provided is unclear or inconsistent with Ministry of Health eligibility criteria, **accessible** processes, or more information is required a query is sent to the Assessor, eg invoice or quote does not appear cost effectiveness or the person is not eligible for the repair.
- Queries are generally written and sent by e-mail, or fax (where there is no e-mail contact) but a phone call may be made by the Professional Advisory or Customer Services Teams where there is a quick simple answer or the query requires discussion for clarification.



In all circumstances a written response to the query must be received in order for the repair request to proceed. Where there is no further activity on a repair application within 6 months it will be abandoned.

3.6 Hearing Aid Repair Approved

- The Assessor or Audiology Provider will be notified in writing of the funding approval for the repair. Payment will be made as per the usual payment terms to either the Audiology Provider or the Manufacturer.

3.7 Repair Declined

- Where a repair request is received and eligibility or cost effectiveness of the repair is unable to be established or where the Assessor or Manufacturer does not support the repair, the request for funding will be declined.
- A letter will be sent to the Assessor, with a copy to the person, outlining the reasons for the decline of Ministry of Health funding.
- The repair request will be withdrawn from funding and declined.



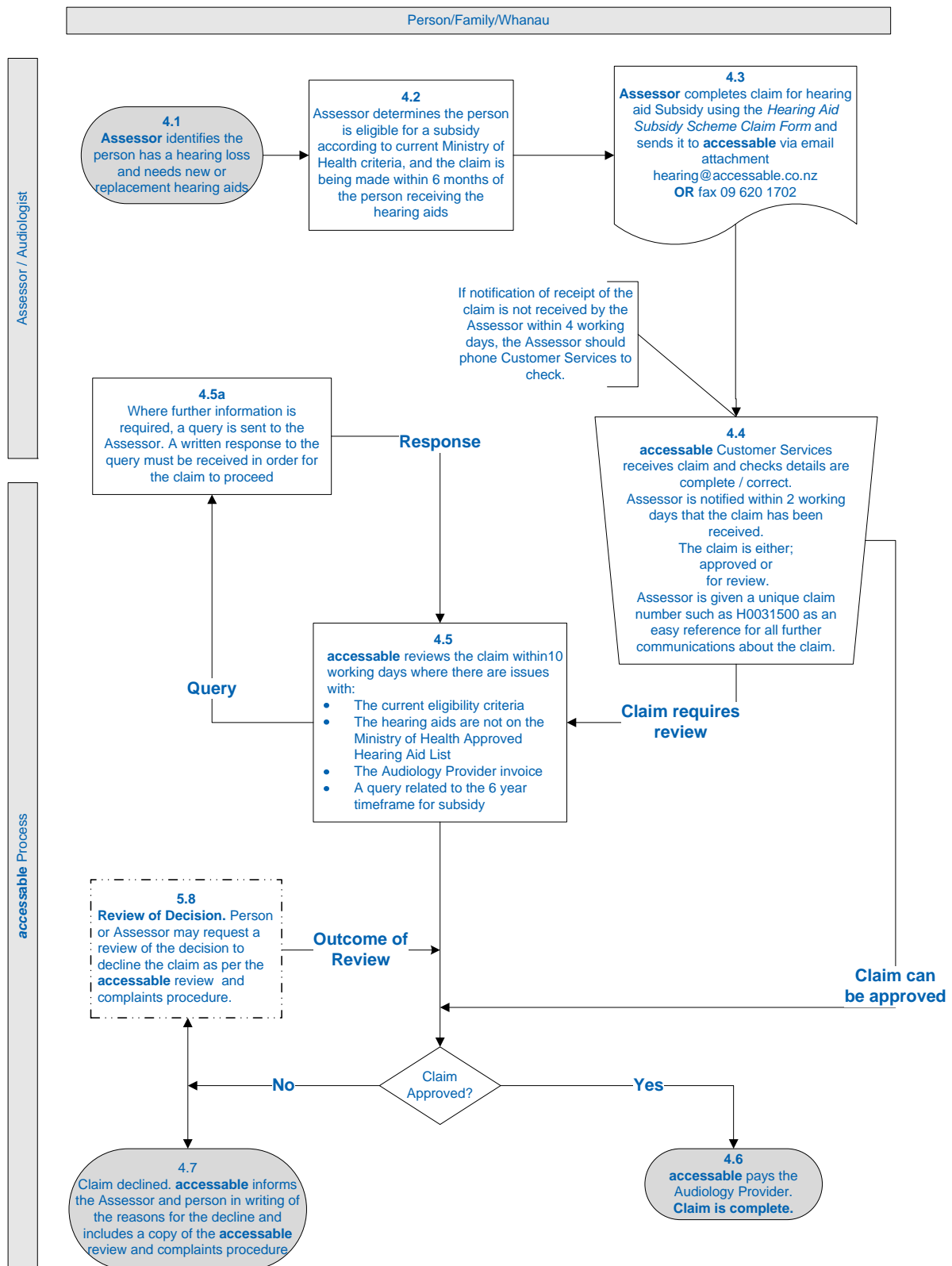
*A copy of the **accessible** Review and Complaints Procedure will be included with the letter to the person. The pamphlet can be viewed on the **accessible** website www.accessible.co.nz*

3.8 Review of Decision



Refer to Section 5 in this Part for more detail.

4. HEARING AID SUBSIDY SCHEME CLAIM Process



4. Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme Claim Process



The following numbering correlates to the process flowchart for easier reference.

4.1

- The Assessor is responsible for completing an assessment of the person's hearing and hearing needs in relation to the environments in which the person usually lives, works or studies.

4.2

- The Assessor is responsible for establishing eligibility for Ministry of Health funding and identifies that;
 - the person meets the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria.



Documentation demonstrating how the person meets the eligibility criteria for subsidy must be held on the Assessor's file for audit / review purposes.

- the hearing aid is cost effective
 - o a claim requesting funding of a subsidy towards the hearing aid is required and the claim is made within 6 months of the person receiving the hearing aids



The Assessor ensures the person is aware of the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria, processes and likely timeframes for the provision of the hearing aids.



Where a person is not eligible for Ministry of Health funding for the hearing aids, alternative funding options may be explored between the person and Assessor.

4.3

- The Assessor completes a claim using the *Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme Claim* form.
- It is essential that all parts of the claim form are filled out completely and correctly. The Assessor:
 - completes the Assessor details
 - completes the Person's details (ethnicity, age etc)
 - completes the Assessor declaration & the Person's agreement



The Assessor confirms, by ticking the Person's agreement that the person meets the Ministry of Health eligibility criteria and agrees to the claim being made and that the information contained in the claim is true and correct and the person gives permission for information to be used and disclosed as noted in the Privacy Statement They have been given a copy of the relevant Guide to Getting Hearing Aids booklet.

- completes the hearing aid details from the *Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List*



*The Assessor sends the completed claim to **accessible**. The claim may be e-mailed as an attachment to hearing@accessible.co.nz, faxed to 09 620 1702 or mailed to **accessible**, PO Box 27 804, Mt Roskill, Auckland, 1440. To prevent duplication, only one form of delivery is required.*



Refer to the Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List on the website www.accessible.co.nz

4.4. Receipt of Hearing Aid Subsidy Claim by accessible

- The claim is checked to see if the information provided is clear, complete and consistent with **accessible** processes so the claim can be loaded into the **accessible** database.
- The claim information and hearing aid details are loaded into the database and allocated a unique reference number known as the claim number eg. H0059530.



Please use the claim (unique reference) number for all future communications related to this claim.



*If you have not received a confirmation that your claim has been received and loaded into the system for processing within 4 working days please ring **accessible** Customer Services to follow up.*

4.5. Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Claim Review within 10 working days

- The Assessor is notified within 2 working days that the claim has been received at **accessible** and that the claim is either:
 - approved where there are no issues or
 - for review.
- Subsidy claims for hearing aids are checked to establish the following;
 - the person meets the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria
 - the hearing aids are on the *Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List* and the Audiology Provider's invoice details are correct
 - the person has not received a subsidy within the last 6 years
- The claim needs to be reviewed where there are issues eg eligibility, the Audiology Provider's invoice or the subsidy time period. This review is completed within 10 working days of receipt.

4.5a Hearing Aid Subsidy Claim Query

- Where information provided is unclear or inconsistent with Ministry of Health criteria or **accessible** processes, a query is sent to the Assessor eg issues about the person having received a subsidy within the past 6 years or with the invoice
- Queries are generally written and sent by e-mail, or fax (where there is no e-mail contact) but a phone call may be made by the Professional Advisory or Customer Services Teams where there is a quick simple answer or the query requires discussion for clarification.



In all circumstances a written response to the query must be received in order for the claim to proceed. Where there is no further activity on a claim within 6 months it will be abandoned.

4.6 Hearing Aid Subsidy Approval

- The claim can be approved immediately; **accessible** makes payment to the Audiology Provider as per the normal payment terms.
- The claim is complete.

4.7 Claim Declined

- Where a claim is received and eligibility is unable to be established or where the Assessor does not support the claim, the request for subsidy will be declined.
- A letter will be sent to the Assessor, with a copy to the person, outlining the reasons for the decline of the Ministry of Health subsidy.
- The claim will be withdrawn from funding and declined.



A copy of the **accessible** Review and Complaints Procedure will be included with the letter to the person. The pamphlet can be viewed on the **accessible** website www.accessable.co.nz

4.8 Review of Decision



Refer to Section 5 in this Part for more detail.

5. REVIEW, COMPLAINT AND AUDIT PROCESS

- All review, complaint or audit procedures initiated by **accessible** will comply with the Health and Disability Service's Consumer Rights Regulations, 1996.
- At any stage in the review, complaint or audit process, the person is entitled to access the services of an independent advocate as per the Health and Disability Commissioners Act, 1994.



*The services of the Health and Disability Commissioner are available to a complainant for the preparation and submission of a complaint to **accessible**.*

*Health and Disability
Commissioner
PO Box 1791 Auckland
Phone: (09) 373 3556
Fax: (09) 373 3557*

5.1 Review of Decision Process

- If the person and/or advocate, Assessor or Audiology Provider are not satisfied with a decision made by **accessible**, they should first discuss their request for a review with an **accessible** Professional Advisor. This request for a review can be made either verbally or in writing by the person and/or advocate, the Assessor, or Audiology Provider.



*The request for a review of **accessible**'s decision must be made within 3 months of the application or claim being declined.*

- The request should contain any additional information and documentation, which the person and/or advocate, the Assessor, or Audiology Provider feels is relevant to the review.
- The results of the review, and/or progress of the review and/or the action to be taken will be forwarded to the person and/or advocate, the Assessor, or Audiology Provider within 10 days of the request being received by **accessible**.
- If the person and/or advocate, the Assessor, or Audiology Provider are still not satisfied with the outcome of the review, a request for a further review of decision can be made to the General Manager of **accessible**. The results of this further appeal will be forwarded to the person and/or advocate, the Assessor, or Audiology Provider within 10 days of the request.
- If the person and/or advocate, the Assessor, or Audiology Provider are still not satisfied with the result of the General Manager's review, they may request a second review by the Ministry of Health's Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) Review Panel.

Ministry of Health EMS Review Panel

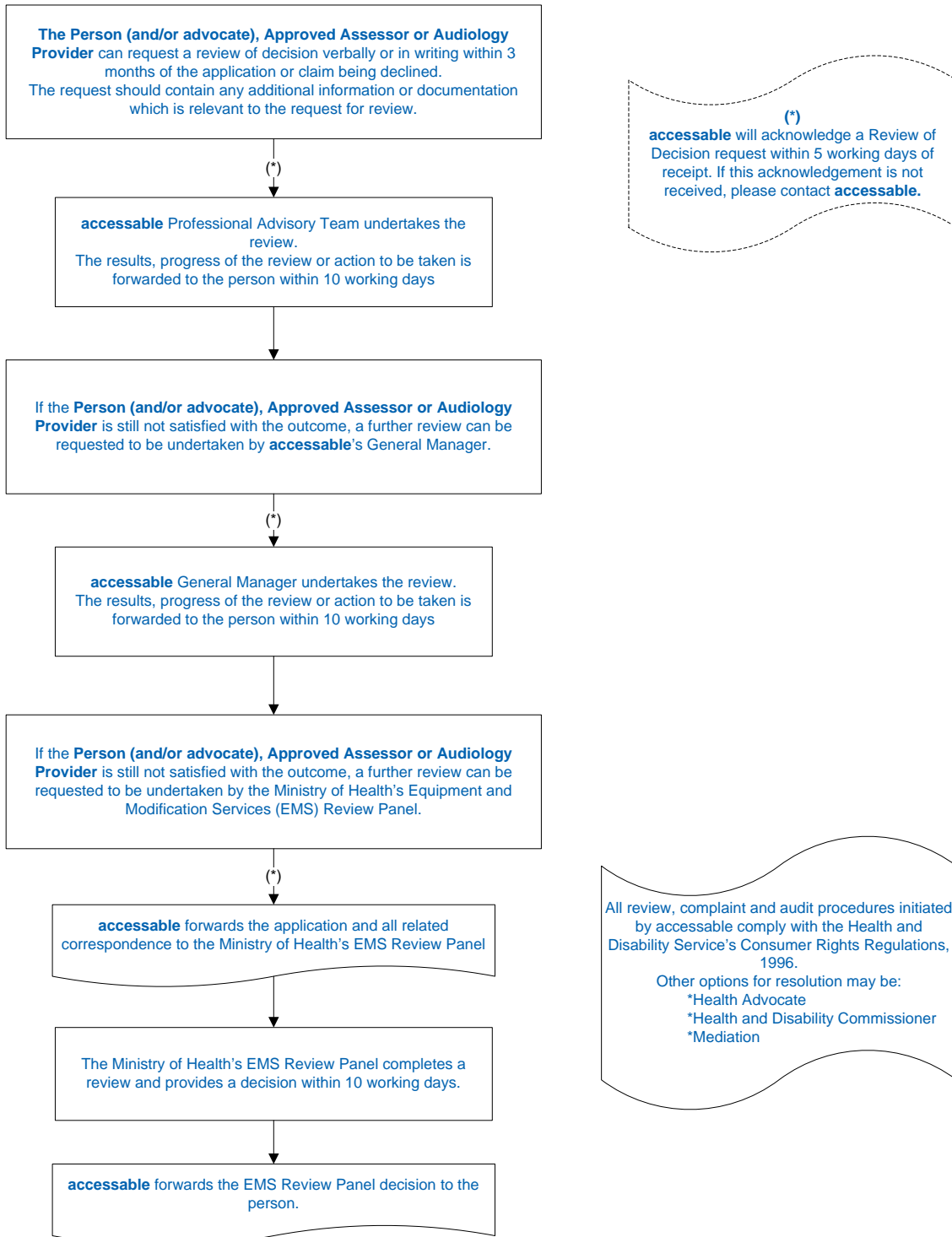
- Applications or claims will be forwarded to the EMS Review Panel at the Ministry of Health where the application or claim;
 - requires a review of a decision made by **accessible**
 - requires clarification of Ministry of Health's Hearing Aid Services operational policy
 - requires consideration of funding approval under genuine or exceptional circumstances
 - requires clarification about repairs or reimbursement of replacement costs which are not fully covered by insurance.
- The Assessor will be notified the application or claim is to be forwarded to the Ministry of Health EMS Review panel.
- The Panel may request further information from the Assessor and **accessible** will forward the query to the Assessor in writing. The Assessor must reply in writing which will be forwarded to the Ministry of Health.
- **accessible** advises the Assessor of the Ministry of Health's decision in writing.



*The Panel will inform **accessible** of its decision within 10 working days of receipt of the review request by the Ministry of Health EMS Review Panel.*

5.1 REVIEW OF DECISION Process

This process can be initiated when the **Person (and/or advocate), Approved Assessor or Audiology Provider** are not satisfied with a decision made by **accessible**.
*Note: It may be helpful for the person (and/or advocate) to discuss **accessible**'s decision with the Approved Assessor to fully understand the issues and how best to proceed.*



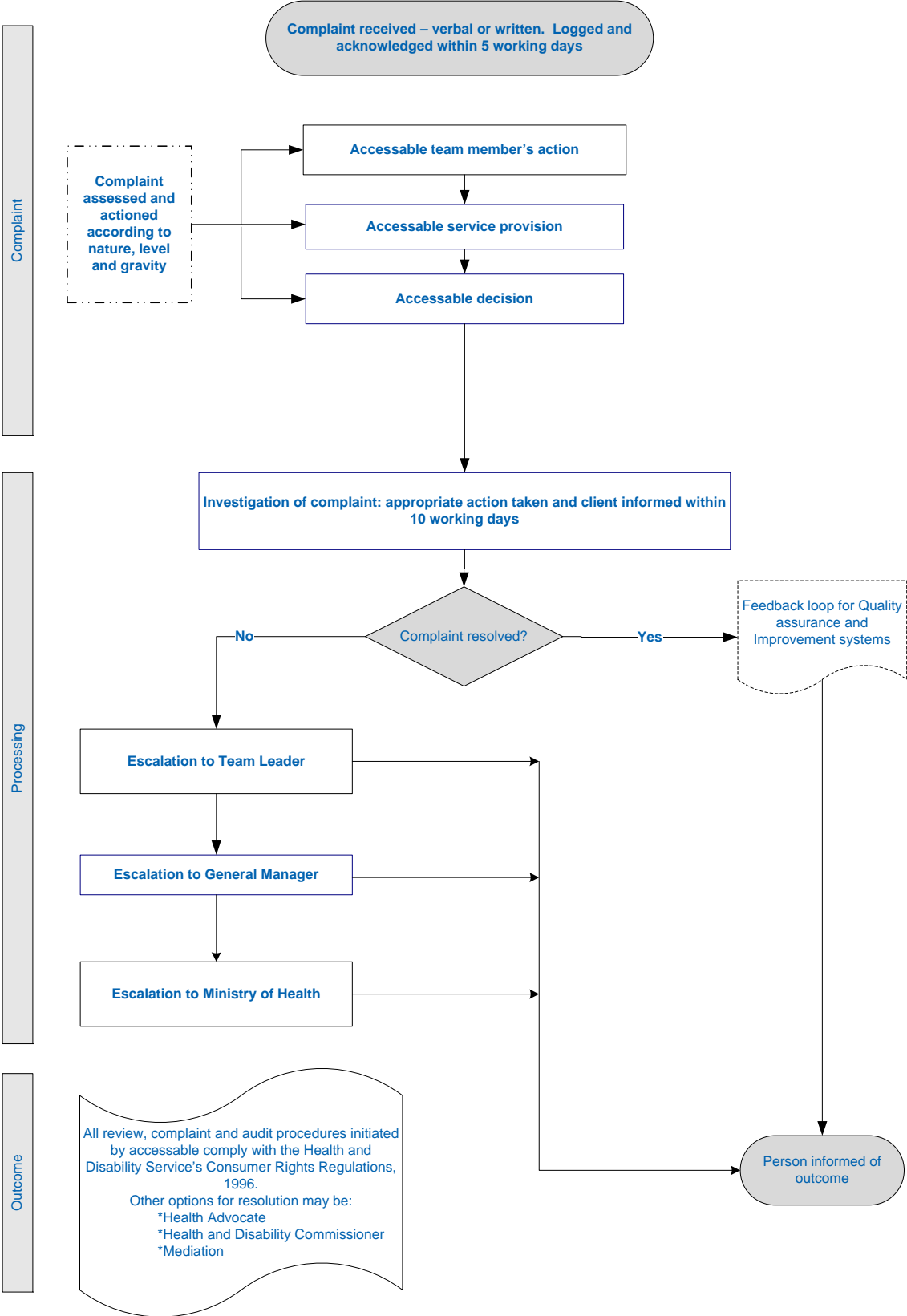
5.2 Complaints Resolution Process

- The Complaints Procedure regarding the actions, processes or decisions taken by **accessible** team members will be available at the request of any person at any time.
- Complaints relating to an **accessible** team member or process should be discussed with the General Manager.
- A complainant will receive any information that may be relevant to his/her complaint that has been held by **accessible**.
- All complaints will be documented in full, investigated and an appropriate action plan developed.
- Complaints will be accepted verbally or in writing.
- The results of all investigations and the action to be taken will be forwarded to the complainant within one week of the complaint being lodged with the **accessible** General Manager.
- The action to be taken will be discussed with the complainant in order to reach a resolution to the satisfaction of all parties and the complainant will be provided with a detailed report. The resolution should include:
 - action to be taken relating directly to the complaint.
 - proposed plan to ensure appropriate training measures are taken to prevent a future occurrence.
 - documentary evidence of policy changes that may be required.
- If a satisfactory resolution to the complaint cannot be agreed upon, the complaint and all documentation is to be forwarded to the Ministry of Health for a review and a decision.



A copy of the **accessible** Review and Complaints Procedure pamphlet is available on the website www.accessible.co.nz

5.2 COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION Process



5.3 Audit of Approved Assessor's Actions by **accessible**

- An audit procedure relating to an Approved Assessor will only be undertaken by **accessible** if:
 - applications or claims from the Approved Assessor are consistently inappropriate when compared with accepted practice within the Hearing Aid Services Manual and / or Hearing Aid Services Notice [2011]
 - there are apparent breakdowns within the guidelines outlined in the Hearing Aid Services Manual.
 - where there are repetitive instances of incorrect recommendations brought to the attention of the General Manager of **accessible**.
- Where the **accessible** team has a concern regarding the actions, applications or claims from an Approved Assessor, the first action to be taken is to contact the Approved Assessor to discuss these concerns.
- If the concerns can be addressed by this direct discussion, no further action will be taken and recorded accordingly. If the concerns cannot be addressed in this manner, **accessible** will contact the Approved Assessor's employer (Audiology Provider) to request an audit.
- The request will be in writing and will include all relevant documentation. The Approved Assessor will be informed of this action.
- Notification of the result of the employer's Audit and the action to be taken is to be forwarded to **accessible** in writing within 10 working days. The results and recommendations of the audit will also be discussed with the Approved Assessor.
- Where the audit shows that the Approved Assessor has followed correct procedure with an acceptable outcome, no further action is to be taken. **accessible** will reassess its interpretation of the process and protocols and recognise that there may be opportunities to implement further internal process improvements.
- Where the Audit shows that the Approved Assessor did not follow the correct procedures, the recommendations should include the action to be taken, which could include;
 - a discussion to be held between the employer (Audiology Provider) and the Approved Assessor to ensure all future applications and claims will follow the correct process
 - a formal discussion to be held between the employer (Audiology Provider), the Approved Assessor, an independent advisor and the Professional Advisor from **accessible**
 - notification to the Ministry of Health of the audit procedure and the actions of the Approved Assessor.



accessible will use its best endeavour to ensure that a person shall not be time disadvantaged as the result of an audit process.



It is the responsibility of the Audiology Provider to audit the actions and outcomes made by the Approved Assessor. The current Ministry of Health criteria, processes and standards must be understood by the employer and the auditor. The relevant criteria and standards will be identified and an assessment made to establish whether or not these have been met.



The Ministry of Health may wish to seek advice from the professional group to which the Approved Assessor is aligned as to the withdrawal of accreditation. This should also include the process that should be followed to allow the Approved Assessor to seek future accreditation.

6. MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

6.1 Registration as a Manufacturer and Distributor

- To register as a Manufacturer and Distributor with **accessible**, forward a completed Manufacturers / Distributors Registration form and send this to: hearing@accessible.co.nz or fax to 09 620 1702
- Ensure **accessible**'s Manufacturer and Distributor records are kept up-to-date with amendments or removal where required.

6.2 Payment of Invoices

- Invoices from the Supplier will only be processed by **accessible** if the correct Purchase Order number has been used as a reference number.
- Payment of invoices is made as per current accounting principles or as agreed with the Manufacturer or Distributor

6.3 Credits

- Credits relating to unsuccessful trials need to be issued to **accessible** as soon as the returned trial hearing aids are received and checked by the Manufacturer or Distributor
- All other credits are to be processed according to standard business practices or as agreed between **accessible** and the Manufacturer or Distributor

6.4 Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List

- **accessible** will maintain the *Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List* which will be updated quarterly 1st August, 1st November, 1st February, and 1st May.
- Only those items approved through the University of Auckland Audiology and Tinnitus Clinic can be included in the *Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List*. Manufacturers and Distributors of hearing aids must complete this process.
- At the time of applying for approval for inclusion on the *Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List*, Manufacturers and Distributors will copy to **accessible** details of the hearing aids including the following information:
 - the hearing aid details, such as model and style (and any accessories included in the funding price of the hearing aid)
 - that hearing aids are current
 - warranty conditions
 - funding price
 - those items no longer current but will continue to be supported for repairs and the length of time that they will be supported
 - those items that are obsolete and must be removed from the List



The Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List is to be treated as "Commercial in Confidence" by all authorised users and must not be distributed without authorisation from **accessible**

6.4 Reporting from accessible

- Manufacturers and Distributors will receive a quarterly report from **accessible** on their share of hearing aids supplied under the Hearing Aid Funding and Subsidy Schemes and the average price of hearing aids supplied under each scheme.

7. AUDIOLOGY PROVIDERS

7.1 Registration as an Audiology Provider

- To register as an Audiology Provider with accessible, forward a completed *Audiology Providers Registration* form and send this to: hearing@accessible.co.nz or fax to 09 620 1702
- Ensure accessible's Audiology Provider's details are kept up-to-date with amendments or removal where required.

7.2 Monitoring of Audiology Providers (and Approved Assessors who are employed by them)

- **accessible** will on behalf of the Ministry of Health measure and report performance on the following aspects of an Audiology Provider's service:
 - on a rolling 6-month basis, the average price of hearing aids that each Audiology Provider applies for through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme
 - every 3 months, assess each Audiology Provider's average price for hearing aids supplied against the Ministry of Health's average price target (which will be published from time to time) and provide regular feedback to them on this
 - if an Audiology Provider's average price for hearing aids funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme is assessed as being over the Ministry of Health's average price target over a 6 month period, write to the Audiology Provider notifying them of this and seek a written explanation
 - if the Audiology Provider's written explanation is not satisfactory, notify the Audiology Provider in writing that a review will be undertaken