

Bone Anchored Hearing Aids

Process for consideration of Ministry of Health funding; March 2010

- 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 only 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 in the public health system (via the District Health Board) or privately, but not by the Ministry of Health.
- 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 usually not lengthy.
- Where the trial is successful the application is made for funding for the sound processor from the relevant Ministry of Health contracted provider, Accessable or Enable New Zealand¹.
- 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 wholesale cost of the sound processor and others will be eligible to receive the hearing aids subsidy of \$500 towards this cost. The new eligibility criteria for different funding levels, which were introduced on 3 March 2010, are included in this document.
- In addition, rationale is required from both the surgeon and audiologist that this device is appropriate and essential for the associated condition.
- At the time of application to Accessable or Enable New Zealand 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 audiologist and the surgeon to coordinate the timing of the approval of the EMS funding with the timing of the person’s surgery.

¹ Note that the application will be submitted to either Accessable or Enable New Zealand based on their place of residence if they are eligible for full funding towards the cost of the BAHA. If the person is eligible for the hearing aid subsidy, the application will be processed by Enable New Zealand.

Eligibility for Funding for Hearing Aids

Groups of People	What used to be available	What have we moved to – from 3 March 2010
1. Children and Young People		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschoolers • Children and young people up to the age of 21 if in primary, secondary or tertiary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get fully funded hearing aids – no limit on type or cost 	Continue to get fully funded hearing aids –these will be purchased from a limited range, selected via competitive tender processes
2. Adults with Complex Needs aged 16 years and over		
<p>Adults who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ had severe long-term hearing loss since childhood, or ➢ had onset of sudden and severe hearing loss during adulthood, or ➢ a dual disability (such as deaf/blind or hearing loss and an intellectual disability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people 16 years and over - can get funded hearing aids if they are working, studying, doing voluntary work, caring for a dependent person or have a dual disability • People under 65 years - can get a subsidy of \$198 (inc. GST) if they are not working, studying, doing voluntary work or caring for a dependent person or have a dual disability – mainly beneficiaries • People 65 years and over- can get a subsidy of \$500 (inc. GST) if they are not working, studying, doing voluntary work or caring for a dependent person <p>Note – Subsidies are available once every 5 years</p>	<p>Fully funded hearing aids (wholesale cost) for all adults in this group, even if they don't hold a Community Services Card</p> <p>Hearing aids will be purchased from a limited range, selected via competitive tender processes</p>
3. All other Adults aged 16 years and over		
<p>Adults who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ working (greater than 30 hours per week), or ➢ studying full time (aged over 21 years), or ➢ doing voluntary work (greater than 20 hours per week), or ➢ caring for a dependent person full-time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get fully funded hearing aids 	<p>Fully funded hearing aids (wholesale cost) provided to people if they have a Community Services Card</p> <p>Hearing aid subsidy of \$500.00 (inc. GST) available for people who do not have a Community Services Card</p> <p>Note – Subsidies will be available once every 6 years</p>
<p>Adults who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ not working full time, or ➢ not studying full time, or ➢ not doing voluntary work (greater than 20 hours per week), or ➢ not caring for a dependent person full-time, ➢ and do not have complex needs as in 2 above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People under 65 years - can get a subsidy of \$198 (inc. GST) • People 65 years and over- can get a subsidy of \$500 (inc. GST) <p>Note – Subsidies are available once every 5 years</p>	<p>Hearing aid subsidy of \$500.00 (inc. GST) available</p> <p>Note – Subsidies will be available once every 6 years</p>