

Introduction to the Ministry of Health Equipment and Modification Service accreditation framework for allied health professionals

Information for professional groups and current specialised assessors

July 2010

Introduction

During 2009, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) completed the development work to establish a revised accreditation framework (the framework) for allied health professionals undertaking assessments that may then result in applications for equipment and modification services for people with disabilities.

An expert advisory group, comprising representation from relevant clinicians working in District Health Boards (DHBs) and other assessment services, has been working with the Ministry to prepare for the implementation of the framework, which will commence on 30 August 2010.

This update provides general information about the framework that will replace the current assessor accreditation scheme that has been in operation since the early 1990's. These changes will not have any direct impact upon the assessments undertaken by current specialised assessors and where credentialling is a new requirement, the Ministry has put in place a number of training opportunities to support specific skill development.

Framework overview

The framework¹ has three levels of accreditation for access to Ministry funded equipment and modification services. These levels are:

- i) **Approved Assessors** – allied health professionals (for example occupational therapists and physiotherapists) whose existing graduate level training is considered sufficient to assess for and recommend Ministry of Health funded equipment (for example commode chairs, walking frames, household management items) and basic housing modification services.

Approved Assessors will also include other support personnel such as service co-ordinators working for organisations supporting people who have sensory loss.

- ii) **Credentialed Assessors** – specific service areas where additional training requirements will be necessary before clinicians can recommend Ministry of Health funded equipment and modification services. These service areas will include wheeled mobility and postural management, communication assistive technology, housing modifications, and vehicle purchase and modifications.

¹ Refer to attached *Accreditation Framework*, for further information

- iii) **Service Accreditation** - specific service areas, primarily community health services, can be accredited to allow District Health Board staff to undertake assessments for certain equipment items (for example low cost, low risk, high volume equipment such as shower stools and over toilet frames) thereby reducing duplication of assessments and streamlining equipment provision.

Enable New Zealand will continue to manage the administration of the accreditation framework. This will include receiving and processing accreditation status applications from assessors and sending reminders to assessors one month prior to the expiry of their accreditation, which is valid for a three year period.

Timeframes

The framework is being introduced in stages with approved and credentialed assessor levels being available from the 30th August 2010.

Service accreditation is expected to be available to District Health Boards who were not part of the service accreditation pilot project in early 2011. Further information about service accreditation will be available towards the end of 2010.

Transition process

Under the current Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services requirements, people completing assessments have been accredited or registered as 'specialised assessors'. The majority of these specialised assessors will be automatically transitioned to the new accreditation programme as either an Approved or Credentialed Assessor where they will have six months to complete any requirements needed to maintain their status for a further three year period.

People who are already registered on the Enable New Zealand data base will receive notification of transition requirements as they pertain to them. An overview of the transition process is shown in the *Transition Overview*, which is attached to this document.

Meeting accreditation requirements

Before making an application for a credentialed area, assessors will need to successfully complete learning and development requirements, depending on the particular credentialling area concerned.

In all cases, the employer² is expected to endorse the application and monitor the ongoing competence of the assessor.

Individual Assessor Responsibility

All assessors will need to successfully complete an on-line core module of approximately 20-40 minutes duration that is aimed at ensuring familiarity with the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services' eligibility and application requirements.

² Note the professional standards monitor role has been disestablished under the new accreditation framework. Where a person is self-employed, they will be required to have a supervisor.

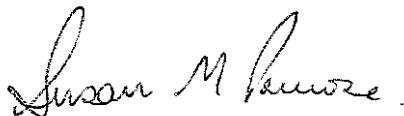
Applicants who require an annual practising certificate to practice in New Zealand will need to provide a copy of this to Enable New Zealand. If an assessor has not completed requirements within six months they will need to make a full application to be an EMS assessor.

To support assessors to develop and/or maintain competencies, the Ministry has confirmed funding for a number of learning and development programmes in the 2010 year. These are outlined in the attached *Learning and Development Programmes*.

Employer Responsibility

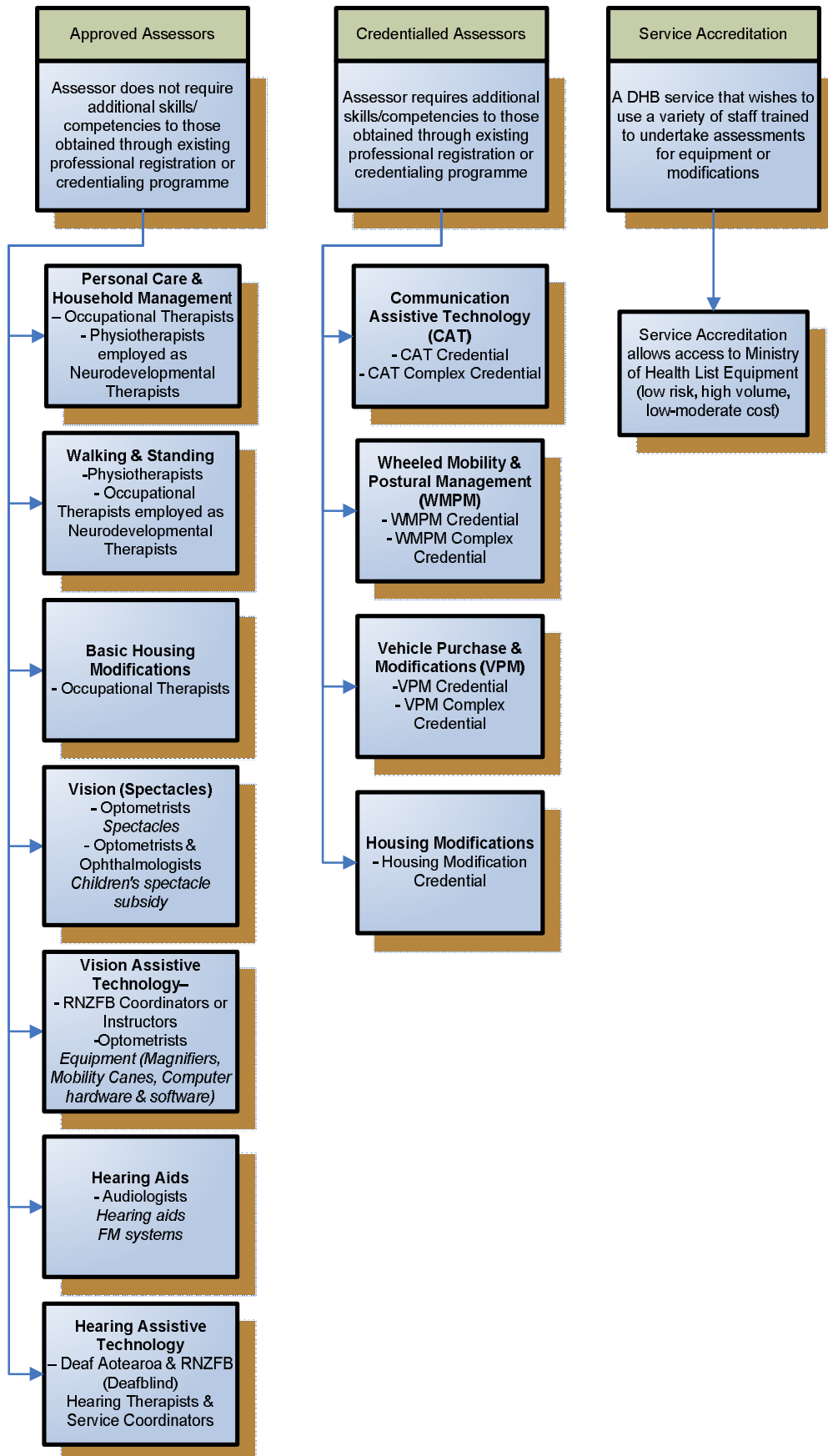
When making an application for an Approved Assessor area, such as Hearing Assistive Technology, the employer will need to endorse the application declaring that the applicant has sufficient skills and experience to undertake assessments competently.

If you have any immediate queries, please contact Christine Howard-Brown, who is leading this work on the Ministry's behalf. Email: chris.hb@paradise.net.nz or phone 021 439 775.



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Accreditation Framework



Transition overview

Existing Status		New Status	Requirements – complete within 6 months:
Household Management	Approved Assessor	Personal Care & Household Management	Core Module
Personal Care		Personal Care & Household Management	Core Module
Walking		Walking & Standing	Core Module
Standing Frames		Walking & Standing	Core Module
Vision Assistive Technology		Vision Assistive Technology	Core Module
Hearing Assessment		Hearing Assessment	Core Module
Hearing Assistive Technology		Hearing Assistive Technology	Core Module and Annual Course
Accessible Region ³ Household Management & Personal Care Assessors undertaking Basic Housing Modification Assessments		Basic Housing Modification	Core Module (must be an Occupational Therapist)
Housing Modification Assessment (Enable New Zealand) and Accessable Region Household Management & Personal Care Assessors undertaking Complex Housing Modification Assessments	Credentialed Assessor	Housing Modification Assessment	Core Module and On-Line Housing Modification Programme
Communication Assistive Technology - Face to face - Written		Communication Assistive Technology	Core Module and Communication Assistive Technology Programme
Seating Level 1		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management	Core Module and Review Assessment and Employer Declaration
Seating Level 2		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management	Core Module and Review Assessment and Employer Declaration
Seating Level 3		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management - Complex	Core Module and Case Study and Employer Declaration
Lying		Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management	Core Module and Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management Programme within six months
Vehicle Purchase & Modification Assessment		Vehicle Purchase & Modification Assessment - Complex	Core Module and Competence Checklist and Employer Declaration
Wheelchair			No equivalent – will need to apply for Wheeled Mobility & Postural Management ⁴

³ Includes Auckland and Northland

⁴ Note those current specialised assessors who hold a seating registration will be transitioned to wheeled mobility & postural management

Learning and Development Programmes

The Ministry has confirmed funding for the following learning and development programmes in the 2010/11 year:

- *An on-line Equipment and Modification Services Assessors Core Module*
- *A series of Non-Complex Wheeled Mobility and Postural Management Programmes* provided by Seating to Go
- *A series of Complex Wheeled Mobility and Postural Management Programmes* provided by Seating to Go
- *A series of Communication Assistive Technology Programmes* provided by Assistive Technology Alliance New Zealand (ATANZ) Trust
- *An On-Line Housing Modification Credentialing Programme*
- *Annual Hearing Assistive Technology Programme* facilitated by Life Unlimited Hearing Therapy Services

On-line learning and development programmes will be published on the Ministry of Health Innovation website along with more detailed information about other learning and development programmes and the framework.

Notifications will be sent to the wider health sector and individual specialised assessors who are named on the Enable New Zealand data base.