

## Eligibility Criteria for Funding Assistance for Hearing Aids

### 1. Funding to cover the wholesale cost of hearing aid/s can be provided to<sup>1</sup>:

- Pre-schoolers, and children and young people up to the age of 21 years if they are in primary, secondary or tertiary education.
- Adults with complex needs aged 16 years<sup>2</sup> and over who meet certain criteria described below.
- Adults who have a Community Services Card and also meet certain criteria described below.

### 2. All other people eligible for Ministry of Health funded services will be able to receive a Hearing Aid Subsidy of up to \$500 (inc. GST) per hearing aid.

#### Replacement hearing aids and repeat subsidies

Funding for the wholesale cost of hearing aids for adults will generally be provided no more than once every six years, except in exceptional circumstances which must be described in detail by the audiologist when the application is made. Approval for replacement hearing aids within this timeframe will be based on the person's individual circumstances, and the overall budget availability.

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

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

#### Repairs to Hearing aids

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Following an assessment and recommendation undertaken by an audiologist who has membership of the New Zealand Audiological Society, for the most cost-effective solution to meet the person's needs

<sup>2</sup> For adults aged 16 up to 21 years in secondary or tertiary education hearing aids will be provided through the Children's Hearing Aid Fund administered by Enable New Zealand

**1. Funding to cover the wholesale price of a hearing aid/s<sup>3</sup> can be provided to<sup>4</sup>:**

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

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Evidence to be kept on the audiologist's file</b>
<p><b>Hearing aid user from childhood:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The person has a hearing loss which is severe or greater (i.e. with an average of 3 worst thresholds from 500 Hz, 1 kHz, 2 kHz and 4 kHz equal to or greater than 70 dB in the better ear) AND</li> <li>The person has been using hearing aids since childhood and would normally have received publicly funded devices through the Children's Hearing Aid Fund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Evidence of long-term hearing loss and details of hearing aid use from childhood (i.e. prior to 16 years of age).</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Dual or multiple disability:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The person has a significant visual disability</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The person has a significant physical or intellectual disability which impacts on their ability to communicate effectively and safely.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The corrected vision does not exceed 6/24 in the better eye OR</i></li> <li><i>There is a significant limitation in the binocular central field or vision not less than 10° in extent at the widest diameter, or the overall binocular visual field is no greater than 30° at its widest diameter</i></li> <li><i>Evidence of optometrist/ophthalmologist examination/report or RNZFB membership</i></li> <li><i>Evidence of the disability and its impact on the person's communication</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sudden and severe hearing loss<sup>5</sup></b></p> <p>Within the previous 6 months, a permanent hearing loss must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developed suddenly (i.e. over 1-14 days)</li> <li>consist of a significant increase in the person's thresholds (i.e. at least 30 dB on average in one ear or both), AND</li> <li>result in a severe hearing loss (i.e. with an average of 3 worst thresholds from 500 Hz, 1 kHz, 2 kHz and 4 kHz equal to or greater than 70 dB in the better ear)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Evidence in the history of a sudden bilateral hearing loss, where possible including records of person's hearing prior to the sudden event</i></li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Note that the funding for hearing aid/s covers the wholesale cost of the device/s only, and excludes any associated audiology service costs

<sup>4</sup> Following an assessment and recommendation undertaken by an audiologist who has membership of the New Zealand Audiological Society, for the most cost-effective solution to meet the person's needs

<sup>5</sup> Note that people who are eligible for cover or entitlement for services by ACC are not eligible for Ministry of Health funded services

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

AND, fulfil one of the following criteria<sup>6</sup>:

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

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

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to the Ministry of Health Equipment Manual for definitions