

Practice Guideline for Equipment and Modification Services and NASC

September 2010

For some disabled and older people, collaboration between Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisations and Equipment and Modification Service (EMS) assessors and EMS providers¹ is necessary. This is to make sure that the person's abilities, resources, goals and support needs are fully assessed and considered during the development of relevant therapy, rehabilitation and support plans. Working together will also ensure that services and supports, particularly costly housing modifications, provide the most appropriate and best value for money to meet the needs of the person and their family/whanau or carers.

To date, the quality of this collaboration has been variable and often very limited. To address this gap, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) has developed a **Practice Guideline: Interface between Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination and Equipment and Modification Services Assessors and Providers** (Guideline). This Guideline has been developed with NASCs and EMS Assessors and providers and will be operational from 6 September 2010.

Guideline Requirements

In some cases where a referral and collaboration between agencies is **mandatory** and this must occur before an application for equipment or modification is made. There are also times when the need for collaboration is considered **flexible** because of the person's needs and circumstances. The following table outlines when communication and shared planning is required between the NASC and EMS Assessors is either mandatory or flexible.

Group	Status
People with behavioural needs who may require Equipment Modification Services	Mandatory
People who may require high cost (exceeding \$25,000) and/or complex housing modifications	Mandatory
People with rapidly deteriorating degenerative conditions e.g. muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease	Flexible
People who have high cost support packages through NASC and/or complex situations	Flexible
Carer stress e.g. the EMS Assessor may identify that a carer is under stress and that this may jeopardise the stability of a person's support system	Flexible

¹ EMS providers are Accessable who are contracted to provide services in the Greater Auckland region and Northland. Enable New Zealand is contracted to provide services in all other parts of the country.

Guideline Requirements

EMS and NASC Joint Report

EMS Assessors and NASCs are required to complete an **EMS and NASC Joint Report** for each person who meets one of the above indicators. This will summarise the outcomes of the engagement between NASC and the EMS Assessor and assist the EMS providers and/or the EMS Review Panel² with consideration of the application.

From 6 September any application that has a mandatory requirement and does not include an EMS and NASC Joint Report will not be processed by either Accessable or Enable New Zealand. Instead the application will be returned to the EMS Assessor for full completion. Regrettably, in these situations, delivery of the service to the disabled or older person will be delayed until the requirement is met.

Where collaboration is flexible and dependent on a person's needs and circumstances the EMS and NASC Joint Report should be completed and filed. The EMS provider may request the report when the EMS application does not provide sufficient justification for the recommended solution.

Children with challenging behaviour

Alongside this new Guideline, the Ministry recently introduced a new process for the consideration of high cost or complex housing modifications and equipment for children who have challenging behaviour. This was developed because of our concern that in many such applications, there is limited or no evidence of consideration of how the child's wider behavioural issues will be addressed or that a multi-team approach has been taken. This new process was developed with considerable consultation with representatives from Child Development Services in DHBs and also representatives from NASC and the EMS providers. It was introduced in May this year.

If you have any immediate queries, please contact Karen Hunter, who is leading this work.

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² EMS Review Panel supports consistency of decision-making by reviewing applications referred by EMS providers, those applications that exceed \$25,000 (GST excl) and/or require clarification of policy.