

## Equipment and Modification Services - Information for Specialised Assessors

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### **Increased demand for Ministry of Health funded Equipment and Modification Services**

The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) provides a significant level of funding for equipment and modifications to support disabled people of all ages. Over the past few months the number of people needing these services, coupled with increasing costs of equipment and housing modifications, has resulted in a higher level of expenditure than budgeted for this financial year.

A considerable amount of increased funding has been added to the Equipment and Modification Services budget over the past 3 years. To illustrate this, \$51 million was spent on equipment and modifications in 2006/07, this increased to \$55 million in 2007/08 and the overall budget for equipment and modifications services in the current financial year is \$61 million.

Accessible and Enable New Zealand have put a number of measures in place to ensure that this budget is not overspent by year end (30 June 2009). This does not mean that we have “run out of money”, but it does mean that some people will have to wait longer for services to be in place.

Accessible and Enable New Zealand do not provide equipment for short term loan use - this is the responsibility of District Health Boards. Therefore, we are confident that any delays to the provision of equipment and modifications will generally not result in people needing to stay in hospital for longer periods.

### **Applications for Common List / Standard List Equipment**

All applications for Common / Standard List equipment will continue to be processed within usual timeframes. This means that equipment that is high in volume and generally lower in cost will be able to be provided to eligible disabled people within a four week period. In many cases, Common / Standard List equipment is available in a much shorter timeframe.

Equipment which has been refurbished is readily available for prompt delivery. This returned equipment must, as always, be considered as the first option when deciding how a person’s identified needs could best be met. Specialised Assessors need to ensure that they utilise suitable refurbished equipment wherever possible as this is a most cost-effective and efficient way of meeting the needs of many disabled people.

## **Applications for Complex Equipment, Housing Modifications and Vehicle Purchase and Modifications**

Accessible and Enable New Zealand are working with senior clinical leaders and Specialised Assessors to determine whether the equipment and/or modifications are needed promptly to meet the person's safety needs. This may mean that some applications can be reprioritised and people will wait a little longer for their services to be provided.

### **The Longer Term**

Unfortunately, the current level of demand cannot be sustained into the new financial year and beyond. We are therefore working to develop a prioritisation system which will be more equitable, transparent and consistent than the current method. This will support Specialised Assessors, their clients and Accessible and Enable New Zealand to manage the demand for services and to understand the reasons for such prioritisation. In addition, a review of current targeting regimes will be undertaken which may result in changes to some of the current thresholds which have been in existence for many years.

This work is being completed on the Ministry's behalf by Acqumen, as part of the Equipment and Modification Services Improvement Programme. Acqumen will be engaging with key stakeholders during this project to ensure that a wide range of views and feedback is captured before any possible changes are confirmed. Acqumen is working with members of the Ministry's Technical Reference Network, which is made up of specialised assessors from across the country and other interested people.

If you have an interest in Prioritisation matters and wish to have your name added to the Technical Reference Network circulation list please send an email to the Equipment and Modification Services Improvement Programme project manager, Mark Brown, [mark@mgbrown.net.nz](mailto:mark@mgbrown.net.nz) .

Contacts: Sue Primrose and Sarah Hamlin

Service Access Team, Disability Support Services