

Environmental Support Services (ESS) Work Programme

March 2009

Equipment and Modification Services' Improvement Programme

After the detailed review of Environmental Support Services was completed in 2005 by the Disability Resource Centre, Auckland, the Ministry of Health's Disability Support Services group set up a work programme to make improvements to the way equipment and modifications (housing and vehicles) were provided. The past three years have seen several changes and the additional funding from Budget 2007 resulted in many new services and supports being able to be provided for disabled people of all ages.

But there is still much work to be done. We have therefore recently engaged the assistance of Acqumen and Associates to support ongoing service improvements in the way the Ministry of Health provides equipment and modifications to disabled New Zealanders. Acqumen will undertake this work on the Ministry's behalf utilising a team with extensive experience in Environmental Support Services, in the wider health and disability sector and with other government departments. During the course of the work programme they will make contact with many people who work in areas which have some involvement with the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services.

The Acqumen Team

The following people from Acqumen will be involved in the work programme:

Mark Brown (Project Manager)

Mark has worked in the social services, health and disability sectors for the last 20 years and held a senior executive position with a large disability services organisation. Before this he was a Senior Locality Manager for the Health Funding Authority and the Ministry of Health.

Carmel Daly

Last year Carmel completed a review of issues related to complex housing modifications and will continue this work through EMSIP. Carmel is also working with the New Zealand Guidelines Group on the implementation of the recently developed New Zealand Guideline for Autism Spectrum Disorder on behalf of the Ministry's of Health and Education.

Christine Howard Brown

Chris has worked on several projects with the Ministry of Health and ACC and was part of the project team that recently developed an outcomes focus to Home Care Support Services for people with disabilities. Chris has extensive experience in service development within the health and disability sector.

Jo Esplin

Jo recently worked with the Carer's Alliance and the Ministry of Social Development to facilitate and provide advice on the new Carer's Strategy. Her work currently includes working with the Ministry's of Education and Health on a review of the joint Equipment and Therapy Protocols.

What's covered in the work programme?

The work programme, known rather affectionately as **EMSIP** (Equipment and Modification Services' Improvement Programme), will start in early April and be completed by the end of November 2009. The following areas of work will be covered:

Complex Housing Modifications - this will further explore the income and asset testing regime, the complexities of high cost and complex housing modifications, an education programme for older people to support them to prepare for changing housing needs and training options for Specialised Assessors. Project Leader - Carmel Daly

Prioritisation of Services – this project will look at how effective the current system of prioritising applications is and develop options for alternative models to prioritise services should this be necessary. Project Leader – Jo Esplin

Measurement of Service Quality and Outcomes – this project will attempt to answer the question of whether the supports that have been provided for disabled people are the best that could have been done; have they added value to the person's life or living arrangement or not? It will also look into the development of a system that can evaluate the introduction of new technologies. Project Leader – Mark Brown

Assessor Accreditation - this work will build on the first phase of a review undertaken by the Ministry in 2008 and will involve all the key "assessor" groups. It will also provide support to a pilot project being undertaken by four DHBs which is looking at extending accreditation beyond the current limited scope for key allied health professionals. Project Leader – Chris Howard-Brown

Equipment Purchasing and Provision – this work will provide a "big picture" view of the relationship between the provision of equipment for short and long term use, and to explore whether different arrangements can be implemented to achieve a more seamless transition of equipment from one funding pool to another. This workstream will also take a high level look at the refurbishment system. Project Leader – Chris Howard-Brown

How can you help?

This work programme is extensive and will need to involve many key people working in the disability sector. Input from disabled people will be provided through the Disability Services' Consumer Consortium and the aged care sector. We do hope that you will support the Project Team if you are asked to, by contributing to the different workstreams during the course of this work.

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