

# Housing Modifications for People with Challenging Behaviours

## What are Challenging Behaviours?

- ➔ Behaviour can be described as challenging when it is of such an intensity, frequency or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion.

## How are Housing Modifications for Challenging Behaviours Managed?

- ➔ Housing modifications are considered for people whose challenging behaviour impacts on their safety, placing them or others at risk of harm.
- ➔ Collaboration is needed to provide a management plan to meet the person's needs. An inter-agency team includes the key people who engage with the person and their family or whanau. The team is likely to include therapists, psychologists, behaviour support teams and support agencies such as NASC.
- ➔ The recommendation for housing modifications must be considered in conjunction with other strategies and interventions to ensure the person is provided with the most cost effective and coordinated resources to support them in all environments. Strategies such as parent education, respite options and behavioural support programmes need to be considered before solutions based on restricting a person's environment.
- ➔ For all requests for housing modifications for people with challenging behaviours the Ministry's agreed pathway for the consideration of equipment and housing modifications must be followed.

## Examples of Modifications for Challenging Behaviours (but not limited to)

- ➔ Safe fenced area where the need for fencing is over and above that which is normally required for a person of that age. A safe fenced area which is visible from the commonly used areas of the home to provide adequate supervision can be considered.
- ➔ Safety glass, where there is a high risk of injury to the person, to windows and glass doors of rooms which are essential for the person to use.
- ➔ Security or stable doors, and window restrainers where it is essential to keep the person in a safe environment and/or to maintain their social inclusion and interaction or prevent them from accessing potentially unsafe areas, e.g. a kitchen.
- ➔ Reinforcement of walls where the person's behaviour places their personal safety at risk.
- ➔ Window restrainers where it is essential to prevent the person leaving the house unsupervised.

Note: Construction of barriers to rooms and fencing to the property should not be used as a form of "restraint" to manage challenging behaviour. These modifications can be considered only after less restrictive interventions have been attempted and found to be inadequate.

## What are the Responsibilities of the EMS Assessor During this Process?

During the assessment:

- ➔ Work with the person, their family, whānau and relevant support people to assess the person's functional abilities and disability related needs to determine the desired outcomes for them.
- ➔ Determine whether the person meets eligibility and criteria to access Ministry funded housing modifications, if this is considered to be the most appropriate solution to meet their needs.
- ➔ Discuss with the person, their family, whānau and relevant support people a range of options to determine the most cost effective solution to meet their essential disability related needs.
- ➔ Ensure there is evidence of a team approach who support the proposed behavioural management solution, including collaborating with the NASC to:
  - achieve an alignment between the person's needs and goals and the services provided
  - jointly discuss the appropriateness and cost effectiveness of the different options

During the consideration of housing modifications

- ➔ Seek advice, guidance and support from the EMS Advisor. The Advisor will liaise with the Assessor to determine if a Housing Clinic and/or an onsite visit to the person's home is needed.
- ➔ Seek peer review from colleagues to ensure the consistency and quality of decisions.
- ➔ Complete concept sketches and documentation as required by the EMS Provider, which accurately reflect the existing environment and the proposed modifications.

## What are the Responsibilities of NASC During this Process?

- ➔ Collaborate with the person, their family or whānau, the EMS Assessor and the EMS Advisor to ensure that there is an alignment between the person's identified needs and goals and the support package and services provided.
- ➔ Jointly discuss with the EMS Assessor the appropriateness and cost effectiveness of the different options to meet the person's disability related needs, as described in the Practice Guideline.
  - Identify instances where collaboration with the EMS Assessor is 'mandatory' or 'flexible' and complete EMS and NASC Joint Report where appropriate.

## Further Resources:

- ➔ Ministry of Health Practice Guideline: Interface Between Needs Assessment and Service Coordination And Equipment and Modification Service Assessors and Providers  
[Practice Guideline: Interface Between Needs Assessment and Service Coordination and Equipment and Modification Service Assessors and Providers \(health.govt.nz\)](#)
- ➔ Ministry of Health flowchart: Support for Children and Young People with Challenging Behaviours, Consideration for Equipment and Modification Services  
<http://www.disabilityfunding.co.nz/specialised-assessors/active-updates/active-updates2/?a=17150>
- ➔ Ministry of Health EMS Housing Modifications Manual, Section 6.4
- ➔ Accessable Housing Modification Specification Form, Safe Fenced Area  
[https://www.accessable.co.nz/media/1420/moh-housing-modification-specification-form-safe-fenced-area\\_interactive.pdf](https://www.accessable.co.nz/media/1420/moh-housing-modification-specification-form-safe-fenced-area_interactive.pdf)