

Hearing Aid Services Manual

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ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual outlines the eligibility criteria, funding guidelines, roles and responsibilities and the processes to be used when claims and applications for Hearing Aid Services funded by the Ministry of Health are being considered.

This manual is for:

- Approved Assessors who complete hearing assessments for people with hearing loss and submit applications or claims for Hearing Aid Services on the person's behalf
- manufacturers and distributors of hearing aids and accessories
- people with hearing loss, their families, whānau and/or support people who wish to understand more about this service.

For the purposes of this manual, an Approved Assessor refers to:

- an Audiologist who is a full member of the New Zealand Audiological Society, holds a current Certificate of Clinical Competence and is working within their scope of practice.
- an audiometrist who is an audiometrist member of the New Zealand Audiological Society and is working within their scope of practice.

This Manual covers the Ministry of Health's funding guidelines and includes:

- Hearing Aid Services funded by the Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of Health guidelines for the provision of Hearing Aid Services.
- Roles and responsibilities of different parties throughout the assessment, claims, application and approval process.

The processes, forms and templates that are used by Enable New Zealand, the Ministry of Health's contracted services manager for the management of Hearing Aid Services, are available at the web address opposite.

Throughout this manual the term 'person' refers to the person with a hearing loss.

*An **Approved Assessor** undertakes a hearing and hearing needs assessment with the person and, if indicated, submits an application or claim for hearing aids for an eligible person.*

Information about professional standards is available at the New Zealand Audiological Society website:

<https://www.audiology.org.nz/>

www.Enable.co.nz/hearing

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1. Introduction to Hearing Aid Services

1.1 What are Hearing Aid Services?

Hearing aid services are one of the many services funded

by the Ministry of Health (known throughout this manual as the Ministry) through Disability Support Services.

To ensure that provision of hearing aids are affordable within defined budgets, service allocation is evaluated against the following principles:

- i. they make an effective contribution towards helping people with hearing loss to live, as far as possible, as others do in their own homes and communities
- ii. they represent value for money both now and in the future
- iii. they are allocated fairly through a consistent, principled and equitable approach
- iv. they reflect a lifetime perspective by recognising that the hearing aid services that are most appropriate for a person may change over time.

The Ministry contracts with the hearing aid services manager, to administer and manage hearing aid services nationally.

2. Funding Guidelines for Hearing Aids

This manual contains the funding guidelines for the Ministry's two hearing aid schemes.

- 1) Hearing Aid Funding Scheme: Funding to cover the full price, as indicated on the Ministry of Health's Approved Hearing Aid List, of the hearing aid/s on behalf of eligible people (see section 3).
- 2) Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme: A subsidy of up to \$511.11 (incl. GST) towards payment of the hearing aid/s for eligible people (see section 4).

2.1 Process

Before any application or claim for funding can be considered, the person needs to have an assessment of their hearing and hearing needs with an Approved Assessor.

The Approved Assessor should identify the person's need for a hearing aid in conjunction with them and recommend the most appropriate and cost effective solution that is likely to be of most benefit to them.

Where the Approved Assessor identifies that the person is eligible for services as outlined in this manual, they may either make:

- an **application** for funding through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme or,
- a **claim** for a subsidy through the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme.

Approved Assessors hold areas of accreditation which relate to their qualifications and scope of practice. For more information go to:
[Approved Assessors/Hearing Aids](#)

For a list of members of the New Zealand Audiological Society go to:
<http://www.audiology.org.nz>

If the person is not eligible for hearing aid funding or the hearing aid subsidy, or a hearing aid is not considered as being the most suitable solution for the person, the Approved Assessor should discuss other options that will minimise the impact of hearing loss for the person.

2.2 Eligibility

To be eligible for the Ministry's Hearing Aid Services, the person will meet all of the following:

- have a permanent hearing loss as determined by a hearing assessment and hearing needs assessment
- not be eligible for cover or entitlement through ACC, the ACC and the Ministry of Health jointly, or from Veterans' Affairs New Zealand
- live in New Zealand
- be a New Zealand resident or be eligible for health and disability services under a reciprocal health agreement with another country.

In addition, particular access criteria apply before funding can be approved under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme (See Section 3.2, Meeting the Access Criteria for the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme).

2.2.1 Definition of hearing loss

Hearing loss is defined as a permanent sensorineural or conductive hearing loss with:

- a) Hearing thresholds of $\geq 20\text{dBHL}^1$ on the pure tone audiogram **and** evidence of other auditory dysfunction evidenced by abnormal results on **one** or more of the following tests:
 - speech testing in quiet
 - speech testing in noise
 - pure tone acoustic reflex thresholds
 - Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions (DPOAE), or
 - Transient Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions (TEOAE).

OR

- b) Hearing thresholds of $\leq 20\text{dBHL}^2$ on the pure tone audiogram **and** evidence of other peripheral auditory dysfunction evidenced by abnormal results on **two** or more of the following tests:
 - speech testing in quiet
 - speech testing in noise

¹ Clark 1981 Scale of hearing impairment, as used by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

² Clark 1981 Scale of hearing impairment, as used by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

For other services and support available for people with hearing loss, go to:

Deaf Aotearoa deaf.org.nz

Hearing Therapy Services

lifeunlimited.net.nz/hearing/

Hearing Association of New Zealand

hearing.org.nz

Blind Foundation (deafblind services) blindfoundation.org.nz

National Foundation for the Deaf

www.nfd.org.nz

*See **Appendix A** for eligibility criteria for publicly funded health and disability services. More information about eligibility and reciprocal health agreements is available at:*

www.moh.govt.nz/eligibility

- pure tone acoustic reflex thresholds,
- Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions (DPOAE), or
- Transient Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions (TEOAE).

For people who have a hearing loss of less than 20dBHL, funding approval is contingent upon the successful outcome of a controlled trial with objective data obtained to demonstrate the benefit of hearing aid/s (for example, speech perception, questionnaire, classroom measures).

2.3 Approval system for Ministry of Health funded hearing aids

2.3.1 Definition of hearing aids

Hearing aids are defined as personal electronic amplification devices that are used wholly or principally by people with hearing loss to alleviate the impact of their hearing loss.

A hearing aid must be capable of being adjusted to have its acoustic output tuned in a frequency specific manner (through manual control or a computer) and verified in the ear by a hearing health professional in order to meet the unique hearing needs of a person with hearing loss.

Devices which provide amplification but cannot be adjusted to an individual's hearing loss do not meet the definition of hearing aids.

Bone conduction and bone anchored devices are covered within the Ministry's definition of hearing aids but cochlear implants are not.

Cochlear implants are funded to eligible people by the Ministry of Health through a separate funding stream to hearing aid funding.

Remote Microphone systems, formerly known as FM systems, are usually considered as accessories to hearing aids unless the receiver component is included within the hearing aid case.

2.3.2 Notification

As therapeutic devices, hearing aid ranges must be notified using the WAND system operated by Medsafe (a division of the Public Health section of the Ministry of Health). Medicines and medical devices are controlled via the Medicines Act (1981). WAND is a notification system in case of product warnings being used by various regulatory bodies that are monitored by Medsafe.

WAND means Web Assisted Notification Devices. For more information on this, go to: [Medsafe/WAND](https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/eng/wand/)

All importers of products described as hearing aids (and other therapeutic devices) should register their products with WAND, and should have a product registration number for each device range.

2.3.3 Ministry of Health Approved Hearing Aid List

The Ministry keeps a list of approved hearing aids, the **Approved Hearing Aid List**, which is managed and regularly updated by the hearing aid services manager on its behalf.

All hearing aids available for funding, whether through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme or the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme, must be named on this list.

The Approved Hearing Aid List is updated every three months. Prices notified by the manufacturers for the list only apply to hearing aids supplied through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

2.3.4 Approval for inclusion on the Approved Hearing Aid List

Approval for inclusion on the Approved Hearing Aid List is sought from the Audiology Section, School of Population Health, University of Auckland, following registration through WAND. Approval is normally based on satisfactory documentation of compliance with relevant international standards. Testing could be necessary for devices where documentation is inadequate in some respect.

2.4 Remote Microphone Systems

A Remote Microphone system means a system that typically consists of a transmitter microphone and receiver/s. The microphone is used to pick up the speaker's voice and transmit it to the person wearing the receiver/s which may be connected to their hearing aids or a streamer. This system is used for improving speech comprehension for the person when they are in difficult listening situations.

Remote Microphone systems were formerly known as FM systems

Remote Microphone systems are typically considered accessories to hearing aids.

2.5 Hearing Aid Accessories

Hearing aid accessories enhance the functionality of a hearing aid, but are not necessary for the operation and maintenance of the hearing aid, and do not need regular replacement.

Examples of accessories:

- *Remote controls*
- *Wireless devices*

Funding for other assistive or personal listening devices which take the voice or sound to the ear by ear buds or headphones (i.e. are not connected directly to a hearing aid) can be considered through Hearing Assistive Technology, under the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services funding scheme. Certain access criteria apply.

2.6 Bone Conduction and Bone Anchored Hearing Aids

When a person is unable to use an air conduction hearing aid, a bone conduction (BC) or bone anchored (BA) hearing aid may be considered.

2.6.1 Bone Conduction (BC) Hearing Aids

A BC hearing aid on a soft band is generally trialled before a BA hearing aid is considered for a person for whom conventional hearing aids are not suitable due to a medical condition.

The average age of a child to have surgery for a BA hearing aid is 4 years, which aligns with the expected life of a BC hearing aid if it were provided for a child in infancy.

Until children are old enough and a surgery date has been decided, BC hearing aids should be considered in the first instance as a more cost effective option.

Bilateral BC hearing aids can be considered where they are clinically needed and all relevant access criteria have been met.

2.6.2 Bone Anchored (BA) Hearing Aids

The expected life of a BC hearing aid fitted in infancy is likely to be about four years. If the abutment surgery date is planned within two years of the need to provide a replacement BC hearing aid, due to loss or damage, or because of a change in the person's hearing needs, consideration may be given to the provision of a BA hearing aid to be worn on a head band until the surgery has been undertaken. In such circumstances, it may be more economical to replace the BC hearing aid with a BA option.

In such situations, the Otorhinolaryngologist (ORL) and the Approved Assessor must provide rationale as to why a BA device is appropriate for the child and supply the confirmed surgery date. It is recommended that BA hearing aids are managed by a team of hearing professionals to ensure joint clinical and surgical decision making (for example, audiologist, ORL and Advisor on Deaf Children (AODC)).

Bone Anchored hearing aids may also be fitted for older children and adults where conventional hearing aids are unsuitable to meet their needs due to a medical condition. Rationale must be provided by the ORL and the Approved Assessor, along with the planned surgery date.

The Ministry will contribute towards the cost of the hearing aid portion of the device referred to as 'the sound processor'. The sound processor can be attached to a surgically implanted component called an abutment or can be worn on a head band. The surgery, abutment and implant are either funded through the public health system (via the District Health Board) or privately.

Loan sound processor devices are available from relevant suppliers or clinics which can be trialled with a head 'band' to ascertain if the person is likely to gain benefit before an application for funding is made. This trial is not usually lengthy. If the trial is successful an application may be made for funding for the sound processor.

The usual eligibility and access criteria for funding of hearing aids will apply. This means that some people

needing a BA hearing aid will be eligible for funding towards the price of the sound processor (for the hearing aid funding scheme) and others will be eligible to receive the hearing aid subsidy of \$511.11 (incl. GST) towards this cost.

3. Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

Hearing aid funding includes applications for:

- a hearing aid/s and hearing aid accessories
- a bone conduction or bone anchored hearing aid
- a Remote Microphone system.

Hearing aid funding excludes:

- consumable items for hearing aids
- cochlear implants or speech processors for cochlear implants
- “second hand” or refurbished hearing aids
- assistive listening devices
- devices that have microphones and amplification systems that are designed primarily for other uses, such as stereos and mobile phones
- any service costs associated with the assessment, trial or fitting of a hearing aid.

Funding will only be approved for hearing aids which are listed on the Ministry’s Approved Hearing Aid List. Hearing aids recommended by the Approved Assessor must be considered to be the most cost-effective option to meet the person’s hearing needs.

3.1 Eligibility for hearing aid funding

Eligibility means the right to be considered for publicly funded services. It is neither an entitlement, nor a guarantee, to receive any particular service.

Funding for the cost of hearing aids will be considered for people who, following a hearing assessment and a hearing needs assessment, have an identified permanent hearing loss as defined in this manual and are either:

- i) a child or young person up to the age of 21 years who is in full time study; or a pre-schooler
- ii) an adult 16 years of age or over who has complex needs
- iii) an adult 16 years of age and over who has a

The hearing aid services manager administers hearing aid funding on behalf of the Ministry of Health. The hearing aid services manager is required to approve funding for the most appropriate and cost effective option to meet a person’s needs.

Cost effective refers to the most economic and suitable solution to meet the person’s hearing needs. This may not necessarily mean the cheapest option.

A hearing assessment includes taking, interpreting and recording an audiogram and other related testing.

A hearing needs assessment is a comprehensive assessment of a person’s hearing function, communication needs and rehabilitation options. It includes recommendations for achieving the person’s hearing goals as agreed between the person and the Approved Assessor

community services card and is either working full time, in full time study, seeking employment, engaged in voluntary work or is the main carer for a dependent person.

3.1.1 Children and young people

This includes:

- pre-schoolers
- children and young people up to the age of 21 years if they are in full time study

Full time study includes pre-school education, compulsory education (primary, secondary, correspondence school and home schooling), tertiary level education and vocational training.

See section 3.1.3 for definition of **tertiary level education or vocational training**

3.1.2 Adults 16 years of age and over who have complex needs

The person who has complex needs will have experienced one or more of the following:

i. Moderately-severe or greater long-term hearing loss since childhood

- The average of a person's 3 worst hearing threshold levels, which have been measured at audiometric frequencies of 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz, is equal to or greater than 56 dB HL in the better ear.
- The person has had a continuous need for hearing aids since childhood.

The Approved Assessor must be able to confirm that the person has experienced moderately-severe or greater hearing loss in their better ear since childhood. Confirmation may be sought from:

- the person's family
- an ORL specialist, or
- the person's GP.

Having a continuous need for hearing aids since childhood means that even though the person may not have worn hearing aids as a child, they did have a need for them (for example, they may have chosen not to wear them in childhood).

ii. Sudden and moderately severe or greater hearing loss during adulthood

- Within the last six months, over a period of 1 to 14 days, the person has developed a significant increase in the person's hearing threshold level of at least 30 dB HL on average in one or both ears.
- This has resulted in the average of the person's three worst hearing threshold levels, which have been measured at audiometric frequencies of 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz, being equal to or greater than 56 dB HL in the better ear.

Supporting documentation from an ORL specialist could be obtained by the Approved Assessor and held on the person's file.

Funding under this criterion only covers services for six months following the sudden loss – this includes ear moulds, repairs, and accessories.

The person is eligible to receive hearing aid funding once only following the onset of sudden and moderately severe hearing loss during adulthood.

iii. Hearing loss and a significant visual disability

The person will have vision loss which impacts on their ability to communicate effectively. Vision loss includes one of the following:

- the person's corrected vision, with lenses, does not

The person who has a significant visual disability will generally be eligible for membership of the Blind Foundation. They do not have to be a member of the Blind Foundation to be eligible for services under this criterion.

Evidence of the extent of the person's visual disability can be obtained from

- exceed 6/24 in the person's better eye, or
- the person has significant limitation in their residual visual field which is generally not greater than 20° in the widest diameter in their better eye.

iv. Hearing loss and a significant intellectual disability

The person will have significantly below average general intelligence combined with significant problems with adaptive functioning that:

- has been formally tested by a qualified assessor and a diagnosis of intellectual disability has been made, and
- reduces their ability to communicate effectively and safely.

The Approved Assessor will need to confirm the diagnosis of a person's intellectual disability before eligibility under this criterion can be considered. Confirmation may be made by one of the following:

- their family or whanau
- their main carer, if they are living in a community home which is managed by a provider who is contracted through the Needs Assessment Service Co-ordination (NASC) organisation
- the local NASC.

The diagnosis of intellectual disability may be made after the person turns 18 years of age but it must be evidenced that the developmental delay occurred in the developmental period before they turned 18.

The Approved Assessor must consider the combined impact of both the person's intellectual disability and their hearing loss. The presence of an intellectual disability that does not limit the person's ability to communicate effectively or safely would mean that they would not be able to access services under this criterion.

People who have other conditions which impact on their cognitive functioning are not eligible for funding under this criterion, for example, dementia and mental health disorders.

v. Hearing loss and a significant physical disability

The person will have a significant long-term physical disability that affects their ability to communicate effectively and safely.

The Approved Assessor must consider the combined impact of both the person's physical disability and their hearing loss. The existence of a physical disability that does not limit the person's ability to communicate effectively or safely would mean that they would not be

their optometrist, ophthalmologist or a sighting of their Blind Foundation membership.

If a person with an intellectual disability is receiving services which are funded through the Ministry of Health's Disability Services, or they are living in a community residential home which is funded through Disability Support Services, this will confirm their eligibility to access the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme due to a dual disability (intellectual disability and a permanent hearing loss).

Examples of how an intellectual disability could impact on a person's ability to communicate effectively and safely:

A person with a hearing loss and an intellectual disability and who also has challenging behaviour because carers have difficulty getting their instructions understood.

A person with a hearing loss and an intellectual disability who is unable to understand social cues and responds inappropriately to questions or conversation.

Examples of how a physical disability could impact on a person's ability to communicate effectively and safely :
A person who has difficulties with expressive communication due to a neurological condition

A person who has limited movement because of their disability, which restricts their ability to turn to the direction of sound or to use visual cues for lip-reading.

eligible for services under this criterion.

The person's physical or neurological condition is likely to impact on their speech production (volume or articulation) or non-verbal communications so that, when combined with a hearing loss, their disability impacts on their ability to respond or communicate the needs effectively and reliably to others.

3.1.3 Adults aged 16 years and over

Adults aged 16 years and over who **have a community services card and** are either:

- working full time, or
- in full time study (tertiary level or vocational training), or
- seeking employment, or
- engaged in voluntary work, or
- are the main carer of a dependent person.

- Full time work

Full time work is employment that is at least 30 hours per week or more, or which achieves a degree of financial independence that is at least the same as the person could earn from Jobseeker Support.

If the person is unable to work 30 hours per week due to the limitations of their **disability**, funding approval may be considered if the person is working at their maximum capacity. This will require supporting documentation from either a medical practitioner or an allied health professional.

- Tertiary level education or vocational training

The course(s) must be full time. The course length must be at least a calendar or academic year and the content of the course must support the person working towards future employment.

Written confirmation of the course, including acceptance onto the course, start and finish dates and the purpose of the course is required.

If the person is unable to undertake a full time course due to the limitations of their **disability**, funding approval may be considered if the person is studying at their maximum capacity. Written confirmation from either a registered medical practitioner, allied health professional or disability advisor/co-ordinator who is based in a tertiary institution is required and should be held on the person's file by the Approved Assessor.

- Seeking employment

The person is actively seeking work and is registered for employment with Work and Income, Workbridge or other employment support services. This could include services associated with specific disability organisations such as Deaf Aotearoa and the Blind Foundation.

For more information on the community services card go to:
www.workandincome.govt.nz

For more information, go to:
[Work and Income - Jobseeker Support](#)

*To be eligible under the criterion of "disability" the person must have a **disability** as defined by the Ministry of Health – either a physical, intellectual sensory or age-related disability, or a combination of these, that is likely to: remain after the provision of treatment and/or rehabilitation, and continue for at least 6 months, and impact on their ability to do some everyday tasks, resulting in a need for ongoing support.*

Tertiary level education could include any course that is designed to support a person into employment. It does not have to be a university or Polytechnic, but could include training in an apprenticeship if the course is full-time and runs for at least a calendar year.

- Engaged in voluntary work

The person is engaged in voluntary work for a minimum of 20 hours per week with a recognised community-based voluntary, not-for-profit agency which provides voluntary services for the benefit of the community as a whole and is able to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the work.

This means that they must have been involved for a minimum of 8 weeks and will be intending to work in that role for at least 12 months.

Written confirmation of the voluntary work must be provided with the application.

A recognised voluntary organisation is an organisation that is confirmed as meeting all of the following criteria: non-profit, that is, not returning profits to their owners or directors and not primarily guided by commercial goals institutionally separate from government, so that while government funds may be received, the organisation does not exercise governmental authority self-governing, which means the organisation controls its management and operations to a major extent, and not compulsory, which means that membership and contributions of time and money are not required by law or otherwise made a condition of citizenship.

- Main carer

A main carer is an unpaid carer who lives with the person and provides the majority of their care.

A main carer will have a hearing loss themselves and require hearing aids to look after a dependent person in their care.

A **dependent person** is a person who requires full time care because of one of the following:

they are a child aged 13 years or under, or
they have long-term disability related needs.

This does not include people living in residential care or community residential support as their funding arrangement generally comprises full-time, ongoing support.

3.2 Meeting the Criteria for the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

Funding for hearing aids can be considered when one or more of the eligibility requirements as set out in section 3.1 above have been met.

In some circumstances, additional access criteria apply before funding for some services can be considered.

Examples of recognised voluntary community-based organisations are the Cancer Society and Red Cross.

A main carer will have a hearing loss and have difficulty communicating safely and effectively with the person they are caring for at home.

For example, the main carer may be the mother of young children or an older person caring for a disabled spouse.

Community residential support services provide 24-hour support at the level necessary for people to have a safe and satisfying home life.

3.2.1 Funding of Accessories

Accessories which enhance the functionality of the hearing aid and are considered to be an essential requirement to meet the person's hearing or hearing needs, will be considered for funding.

This includes remote control or wireless devices and electronic drying containers where the person's unique circumstances mean that specific accessories are a cost-effective solution to accompany the hearing aids.

The accessories may be required to support the person to do one or more of the following if no other cost-effective support options are available to meet their needs:

- be the main carer of a dependent person
- study full time (tertiary level education or vocational training)
- work full time (at least 30 hours per week or working at their maximum capacity due to the limitations of their **disability**)
- be actively seeking work as a registered jobseeker
- undertake voluntary work for a minimum of 20 hours per week for a recognised community-based, not for profit, organisation.

Funding for other assistive devices may be available through the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Services funding stream (Hearing Assistive Technology). For example, alerting devices and personal amplifiers.

*To be eligible under the criterion of "disability" the person must have a **disability** as defined by the Ministry of Health – See section 3.1.3 Full time work.*

3.2.2 Funding of Remote Microphone Systems

Remote Microphone systems can be considered for pre-schoolers and adults where there is clear rationale provided by the Approved Assessor as to the essential need for the device.

Applications for Remote Microphone systems should include a description of the situations and settings for use.

In addition, for pre-schoolers, the Approved Assessor should obtain an endorsement of the recommendation from the child's Advisor on Deaf Children.

3.2.3 Remote Microphone systems for students in compulsory education

As Remote Microphone systems for school students (including both the receivers and the transmitter) are primarily required in classroom and school settings, they are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Health's responsibility is to fund hearing aids where these are primarily required to support a child in their daily living.

The Ministry of Education's Assistive Technology Service will consider funding Remote Microphone systems for students who are identified as having special learning needs, and therefore receive additional support for learning from their school or Special Education. The allocation of a personal Remote Microphone system must be considered as a part of a support package for a student

who experiences difficulties with hearing (including auditory processing disorder, see Glossary) and not as the sole intervention strategy.

To be eligible for assistive technology support, students must already be receiving support through one of the special education initiatives, including the Special Education Grant.

3.2.4 Funding of Bone Conduction Hearing Aids

Bone Conduction (BC) hearing aids can be considered where there is clear rationale provided by the Approved Assessor as to the essential need for the aids. This is usually for medical reasons, for example, the child has discharging ears or no ear canals.

Applications for BC hearing aids should include the medical reason/s for the consideration of BC hearing aid/s. Funding can be approved for bilateral BC hearing aids where they are clinically needed. Approved Assessors should confirm that the person has a long-term need (at least six months or more) for the hearing aid/s being considered.

3.2.5 Funding of Bone Anchored Hearing Aids

Bone Anchored (BA) hearing aids can be considered where there is clear rationale provided by the Approved Assessor and the ORL specialist as to the essential need for the aids.

Applications for BA hearing aids should include the following:

- the medical reason for the consideration of BA hearing aids
- the outcome of the trial of the BA or BC hearing aids
- confirmation of the planned date of surgery
- the reason why BC hearing aids are not being considered.

Following the outcome of a successful trial, an application can be made for funding for the sound processor.

Funding for bilateral BA hearing aids will be considered when a person has bilateral atresia. Bilateral BA hearing aids for people who have other conditions will be considered by the Ministry's Environmental Support Services (ESS) Review Panel on a case by case basis.

3.3 Funding availability for replacement hearing aids

- Adults

Funding for hearing aids for adults aged 16 years of age and over will generally be provided no more than once every 6 years.

- Children

Funding for hearing aids and their replacements is available up to a maximum of 3 times within a 6 year period for pre- schoolers and those from 5 years of age, up to 21 years of age if they are in primary, secondary or tertiary education.

Replacement hearing aids are only available when the person's hearing aids can no longer be repaired or modified to meet their changed needs and replacement hearing aids are the most cost effective option.

3.3.1 Funding due to Genuine and Exceptional Circumstances

If the Approved Assessor requests consideration of an application or claim that does not meet the Ministry's eligibility or access criteria for funding, genuine and exceptional circumstances may apply.

In some circumstances the services manager may forward the request for consideration under genuine and exceptional circumstances to the Ministry's ESS Review Panel. Decisions are made on a case-by case basis.

The services manager or the Ministry's ESS Review Panel may, in genuine and exceptional circumstances, approve hearing aid funding at intervals of less than 6 years for adults or more frequently than 3 times in six years for children.

3.4 Average price target of hearing aids

The Ministry has set an average price target for each hearing aid that is funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme. This average price includes the value of the hearing aid, any operational parts (including earmoulds) and essential accessories. This average price target is published by the Ministry's hearing aid services manager on its website as it may change from time to time.

The purpose of setting an average price target is to encourage cost-effective solutions from Approved Assessors for the recommended hearing aids and to manage the prices of hearing aids.

The average price target does not include applications for Remote Microphone systems or Bone Anchored Hearing Aids.

The average price of all hearing aids, operational parts and accessories which have been approved through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme will be assessed against the average price target. This assessment will be undertaken by the services manager on a rolling 6 month basis. Regular feedback is provided by the services manager to audiology providers on their achievement of this average price target.

The services manager will contact an audiology provider where they have exceeded the average target price over the 6 month period. If a satisfactory explanation is not provided, a review will be undertaken.

Items included within the average price for each hearing aid are:

- the hearing aid (including Bone Conduction hearing aids)
- ear moulds and other operational parts
- any essential accessories.

Items not included within the average price are:

- Remote Microphone systems
- Bone Anchored hearing aids
- repairs
- replacement parts.

3.5 Repairs

Ongoing repairs of hearing aids purchased through hearing aid funding for eligible people will be met if the repair is:

- necessary to re-establish the proper function of the hearing aid, and
- cost effective for meeting the person's needs.

Repairs that will not be funded include:

- consumable items
- where the hearing aid is covered by warranty
- the cost of assessment or fitting of a repaired hearing aid
- payment for repairs to children's hearing aids. These repairs are provided through the Ministry of Education's deaf education centres
- payment for repairs to hearing aids purchased with a hearing aid subsidy. These repairs are the responsibility of the person
- payment for repairs where the person is no longer eligible for the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

Examples of consumable items include batteries, wax guards and microphone covers.

To be able to get funding for hearing aid repairs the person must continue to meet the eligibility and access criteria for the hearing aids provided through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

For example, if they have a Community Services Card but are no longer studying full time or caring for a dependent person, they will no longer be eligible for repairs to be made to the hearing aid.

3.6 Insurance

All insurance premium costs are the person's responsibility.

3.7 Replacement under insurance claim

Where a hearing aid is covered by insurance and a replacement is required due to the hearing aid being lost or damaged, the hearing aid services manager will consider applications from the audiology provider for reimbursement of the portion of the hearing aid which:

- are not met by insurance
- do not exceed the amount of hearing aid funding that would otherwise be available.

Requests for a replacement hearing aid under insurance must include:

- a written statement from the Approved Assessor that the replacement hearing aid is the most appropriate and cost effective solution
- a letter from the insurer stating the insurance claim has been accepted and the amount payable by the insurer.

Where funding is being requested for replacement of hearing aids that are partially met by insurance, the 6 year period for an eligible person does not apply.

3.8 Costs not covered by the Ministry of Health

- Payment of costs associated with assessment, fitting or other service fees charged by an audiology provider.
- Provision of hearing assistive technology. This is available through Equipment and Modification Services funding.
- Provision of Remote Microphone systems for children attending primary or secondary education up to 21 years of age. This service is provided by the Ministry of Education.
- Payment for repair of children's hearing aids. These repairs are provided through the Ministry of

An audiology provider includes a private provider or a District Health Board service.

Examples of hearing assistive technology include assistive listening devices and visual or vibrating alert systems.

Education's deaf education centres.

4. Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

The hearing aid subsidy provides a contribution of \$511.11 (incl GST) towards the cost of a hearing aid for each ear of an eligible person.

The hearing aid subsidy can be used for one of the following, subject to specific criteria being met:

- a hearing aid and hearing aid accessories
- a Bone Conduction or Bone Anchored hearing aid
- a Remote Microphone system.

The hearing aid subsidy cannot be used for:

- consumable items for hearing aids
- cochlear implants or speech processors for cochlear implants
- "second hand" or refurbished hearing aids
- assistive listening devices
- devices that have microphones and amplification systems that are designed primarily for other uses, such as stereos and mobile phones
- any service costs associated with the assessment, trial or fitting of a hearing aid.

Funding will only be approved for hearing aids which are listed on the Ministry's Approved Hearing Aid List.

The subsidy is available no more than once in every 6 years for an eligible person (for each ear).

4.1 Eligibility

Claims for the hearing aid subsidy will be accepted where the person has a permanent hearing loss, is 16 years of age or over, and

- is not eligible for funding through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme, or
- is not eligible for funding from ACC, the ACC and Ministry of Health jointly or Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

4.2 Insurance

All insurance costs are the responsibility of the owner of the hearing aid.

4.3 Costs not covered by the Ministry of Health

- Payment of costs associated with assessment, fitting or other service fees charged by an audiology provider.
- Provision of assistive listening devices.
- Provision of Remote Microphone systems for children attending primary or secondary education up to 21 years of age. This service is provided through the Ministry of Education for eligible students.

For a CROS system, the person may claim only one subsidy.

For a BICROS system, the person may claim two subsidies.

Two subsidies may be claimed towards a BA or BC hearing aid if it can be confirmed that the unilateral device acts as a bilateral aid in that it stimulates both cochleae.

This means that further subsidies for either ear may not be available for the person within the six year period, unless their needs change and they meet the criteria for funding under genuine and exceptional circumstances.

Refer section 2.2.1 Definition of Hearing Loss.

Assistive listening devices may be funded for people who meet specific access criteria through Equipment and Modification Services. For more information go to:

- Payment for repair of hearing aids purchased with a hearing aid subsidy. These repairs are the responsibility of the consumer.
- Payment of the full hearing aid subsidy for a hearing aid which costs less than the value of the Hearing Aid Subsidy.

In situations where a person has purchased hearing aids independently, before a claim can be considered, the Approved Assessor must:

- determine that the hearing aids selected by the person are appropriate to meet their needs, and
- conduct the fitting of the hearing aid/s.

5. Priority Guidelines

Priority guidelines ensure the people at most risk are given access to available funding.

Applications for hearing aids provided through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme are prioritised based on the person's hearing needs and the impact of their hearing loss.

Applications for hearing aids for children aged 15 years and under are generally not subject to prioritisation.

The Approved Assessor will evaluate the person's hearing needs and risk factors and record these on the relevant forms as supplied by the services manager.

Priority for funding may be upgraded if the Approved Assessor advises the hearing aid services manager that the person's needs or access to interim options change and the hearing aids are required more urgently.

6. Privacy Act

The information provided within the application and claim forms may be used:

- for the purposes of assessing the need for funding for hearing aids by the Ministry
- for the collection of statistical information such as gender, ethnicity and disability type to assist the Ministry to develop a clear picture of the needs of people with hearing loss and to ensure that access to Disability Support Services funding is as fair and equitable as possible within existing budgets, and
- for other such functions as permitted under law.

The hearing aid services manager may provide the Ministry with information about the hearing aid services the person receives.

The provision of information in the application form is voluntary but consideration of funding approval may

[Equipment Manual](#)

*All hearing aids must be listed on the **Approved Hearing Aid List** to be eligible for the Hearing Aid Subsidy.*

Prioritisation is based on the needs of the person and may vary according to demand for services and budget availability.

If a waiting list is in place, the hearing aid services manager will inform the person and the Approved Assessor in writing and give an indication of when funding is likely to be available.

depend upon all of the information being provided.

The person has the right to access the information held about them and to have corrections made to this information.

The Health Information Privacy Code applies to the information collected within the application form.

7. Other funding options

7.1 ACC

ACC provides equipment and services for people who are entitled under the Accident Compensation Act 2001.

ACC will fund an assessment to determine the extent of an eligible person's hearing loss. If the person's hearing loss is caused by a mix of injury and non-injury factors, the person will be eligible for some hearing aid funding from ACC and some funding from the Ministry. ACC manages this process.

If the person's hearing loss is assessed as being fully injury related, they may be eligible for hearing aid funding from ACC.

For further information contact ACC regional branch offices or Call Free: 0800 101 996 (claim enquiries)
www.acc.co.nz

7.2 Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education pays for Remote Microphone systems (previously known as FM systems) for eligible students in compulsory education to support their access to the school curriculum.

Repairs to children's hearing aids and Remote Microphone systems are co-ordinated and paid for by the Ministry of Education's deaf education centres.

For more information, go to:
[Apply for assistive technology](#)
[Fact sheet on Auditory Processing Disorder](#)

7.3 Veterans' Affairs New Zealand

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand provides advice and facilitates the delivery of a range of services to veterans and their families. Case managers connect veterans and their families to appropriate services within the community that best address their needs and assist with improving and maintaining their quality of life.

The focus is on the Case Manager facilitating access to existing publicly funded health and disability services, and to the entitlements that are available through the war pensions' framework and other social services.

For further information contact Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

0800 4 VETERAN (4838372)
Email: veterans@xtra.co.nz
www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz

7.4 Work and Income

Work and Income provides a number of payments and advances (in the form of recoverable loans) for people who are unable to pay for immediate and essential items. Work and Income will review the person's financial

Call Free; 0800 559 009
Deaf-Link Free Fax:
0800 621621
[Work and Income - recoverable assistance for hearing aids](#)

situation to determine the help available. The person does not have to be on a benefit to receive this help.

7.5 Workbridge

Where a person is unable to access funding from the Ministry, Workbridge will consider funding a Remote Microphone system or other relevant devices if they are at risk of losing their job due to their hearing loss.

[Workbridge Support Funds](#)

Call free: 0800 824 824

<http://www.dia.govt.nz/>

7.6 Lottery Grants Board

The Lottery Individuals with Disabilities Committee will consider funding applications from people with communication related disabilities for equipment that will facilitate direct communication with others. Those who meet the eligibility criteria for funding through the Ministry of Health or other Government Agencies for items they require are not eligible for lottery grants.

Further information is available from the Lottery Grants Board, Department of Internal Affairs.

7.7 Private purchase

The person, their family or whānau may choose to purchase the hearing aid/s themselves. If so, all costs associated with the purchase of the hearing aid, including repairs, will be the responsibility of the person.

8. Roles and responsibilities

The provision of hearing aid services involves a number of different people and organisations. Their responsibilities are outlined below.

8.1 The person, their family, whānau and/or support person

- Participate in an assessment with an Approved Assessor and work with them to determine which hearing aid, if any, best suits their needs.
- Contact the Approved Assessor or audiology provider if dissatisfied with any part of the assessment process.

8.1.1 For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

- Work with the Approved Assessor to obtain the necessary information required to complete an application for funding.
- Read, complete, sign and return the documentation required in order for the application to progress. Seek clarification where it is required.
- Work with the Approved Assessor to determine when a repair to a hearing aid has been satisfactorily completed.
- Make arrangements with the audiology provider regarding payment.
- Contact the Approved Assessor, audiology provider or hearing aid services manager if dissatisfied with the decision regarding funding for hearing aid purchase or repair.

8.1.2 For the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

- Make payment to the audiology provider for any balance owing on the payment for the hearing aid, and other service fees, if any, over and above the subsidy.
- Contact the Approved Assessor, audiology provider or hearing aid services manager if dissatisfied with the decision regarding the hearing aid subsidy.

8.2 Approved Assessor

- Explain to the person and other relevant people:
 - the current Ministry of Health eligibility criteria
 - the roles and responsibilities of relevant people according to the Ministry of Health criteria and processes
 - the requirement to provide the most cost effective and appropriate solution to meet the person's hearing needs
 - the application or claim process, priority guidelines, and likely timeframes
- Assess, in conjunction with the person, their hearing and hearing needs in accordance with the:
 - New Zealand Audiological Society Standards and Scopes of Practice
 - Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Early Intervention Programme (UNHSEIP) Protocols, where applicable.
- Work with the person to ensure that the hearing aid is appropriate to meet the person's needs and is correctly fitted and adjusted for the person.
- Complete an application for hearing aid funding or make a claim for hearing aid subsidy according to the processes as required by the hearing aid services manager. Applications will only be accepted from an Approved Assessor working within their scope of practice who holds the relevant area of accreditation.
- Explain to the person and/or their support people the ongoing care and maintenance of the hearing aid or accessory.
- Comply with the requirements of the **Hearing Aid Services** Notice when making an application or claim for hearing aids on behalf of an eligible person.

For more information about the Accreditation Framework see the glossary or go to:

[EMS Assessor Accreditation Framework - Hearing Aids](#)

For a copy of the Hearing Aid Services Notice, go to:

[Hearing Aid Services Notice](#)

8.2.1 For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme

During the application process

- Ensure that the person is given the following information before they trial a hearing aid:
 - the amount of hearing aid funding for the recommended hearing aid
 - an itemised list of what the person may have to pay themselves, for example, assessment or fitting fees
 - an estimate of time before funding is likely to become available
 - the *Guide to Getting Hearing Aids*.
- Discuss and explain the person's hearing and hearing

For information about ordering copies of the Guide to Hearing Aids, go to:

[Ordering the Guide to Getting Hearing Aids booklets](#)

needs assessment with the person.

- Make an application to the hearing aid service manager to trial hearing aids for an eligible person.
- Complete the prioritisation assessment when making an application using the relevant forms as supplied by the services manager.

Support the person throughout the trial and selection process.

Trial and selection

- When notified by the hearing aid services manager that funding is approved and available, review the application and provide confirmation to the hearing aid services manager that the application is still accurate and correct.
- When the application has been confirmed by the hearing aid services manager, order the recommended hearing aid from the manufacturer.
- Where the application is no longer accurate or correct, notify the hearing aid services manager and consider making an application for a different hearing aid or funding scheme that meets the person's changed needs or circumstances.
- Where the trialled hearing aid does not meet the person's needs:
 - return the trialled hearing aid to the manufacturer
 - inform the hearing aid services manager that the hearing aid has been returned, including the reasons for the return
 - request approval for the person to trial another recommended hearing aid, if relevant.

An Approved Assessor must not seek any payment from an eligible person towards the cost of a hearing aid that is subject to an application through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

For repairs

- Confirm with the person whose hearing aid needs to be repaired that they are still eligible for hearing aid funding.
- Make an application to the hearing aid services manager according to the repairs process as advised by the services manager, for hearing aid repairs where the hearing aid is the most appropriate and cost effective solution.
- Before any hearing aid repairs are arranged, ensure that the person is given the following information:
 - a quote for the repair cost
 - the amount of funding available for the repair.
- Work with the person to ensure that the hearing aid repair has been satisfactorily completed and the hearing aid has been returned to them.

8.2.2 For the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

- Ensure that the person is given the following information before trial of a hearing aid:
 - the retail price of the hearing aid
 - the amount of hearing aid subsidy that is available for each hearing aid
 - a description of the services provided by the

For information about ordering copies of the Guide to Hearing Aids, go to: [Ordering the Guide to Getting](#)

- audiology provider
 - a written quote for total amount payable by the person excluding the hearing aid subsidy
 - the *Guide to Getting Hearing Aids*.
- Discuss and explain the person's hearing and hearing needs assessment with the person.
- Submit a claim for payment of the hearing aid subsidy to the hearing aid services manager, subject to a successful trial of the hearing aid/s and the person's acceptance of the selected aid/s.

[Hearing Aids booklets](#)

If the cost of the hearing aid is less than the value of the hearing aid subsidy, the Approved Assessor may claim only the actual price of the hearing aid and not the amount of the hearing aid subsidy. The actual cost includes, but is not limited to, discounts for bulk purchases of hearing aids

8.3 Audiology Provider

- Ensure the person is eligible for hearing aid services funding or the subsidy.
- Verify that the Approved Assessor has the qualifications and experience to enable them to competently perform the role of an Approved Assessor.
- Ensure that assessments and recommendations for hearing aid services by the Approved Assessor meet the New Zealand Audiological Society's Standards of Practice and the Approved Assessor is working within their Scope of Practice.
- Follow up on concerns raised by the hearing aid services manager about aspects of specific applications or claims from an Approved Assessor.
- Coordinate a peer review of applications submitted by an Approved Assessor where concerns have been raised about specific or successive applications or claims.
- Ensure that the Approved Assessor provides the most appropriate and cost effective hearing aid for the person, and it is fitted and adjusted to meet their needs.
- Establish and publish a complaints procedure for the person, their family or whānau.
- Ensure that hearing aid services are provided in a prompt, efficient, professional and ethical manner.
- Maintain and preserve full clinical records in accordance with best clinical practice.
- Comply with the requirements of the Hearing Aid Services Notice (2011).
- Monitor the average price target of hearing aids and accessories which are funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.

8.4 Hearing Aid Services Manager

- Administer, as the Ministry's contracted hearing aid services manager, Ministry funding within the budget allocated annually by the Ministry, and in a way that ensures that people who have the most urgent need for hearing aids have their needs met first.
- Provide information and updates on Ministry policy and procedural changes to Approved Assessors and audiology providers.
- Administer a fair and transparent process for prioritising funding for hearing aids if demand exceeds

available budget.

- Ensure that hearing aid services provided are nationally consistent, equitable, affordable and timely.
- Assess the cost effectiveness, appropriateness and priority of applications for hearing aids requested under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.
- Monitor audiology providers' adherence to the average target price and provide regular feedback to them on this.
- Notify an audiology provider where their average price per hearing aid is over the average price target for hearing aids funded through the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.
- Follow up with audiology providers who have not met the average price target over a 6 month period and undertake a review as necessary.

8.4.1 For the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Processing applications

- Process applications from Approved Assessors in accordance with current Ministry funding guidelines.
- Advise the audiology provider of the outcome of the application within 20 working days. This may require seeking additional information from the audiology provider to support the application.
- Refer applications to the Ministry of Health's ESS Review Panel for a decision as applicable.
- Where an application is approved, notify the Approved Assessor in writing if there is a waiting list and include the timeframe for which funding will be available.
- Where an application is declined, notify the Approved Assessor in writing of the decision and the reasons for this.
- Assess applications with regard to the priority of the application, in relation to other applications of its kind.
- When funding for a waitlisted application becomes available, notify the person and the audiology provider within 5 days and seek confirmation from the audiology provider that the application is still accurate and correct.
- Consider applications to order and trial an alternative recommended hearing aid for people whose needs have changed since the application for funding was first made.
- Undertake a review of the decision to decline an application if requested by the person, the Approved Assessor or the audiology provider.
- Maintain accurate records of individual claims and applications for hearing aid purchase or repair.
- Maintain, in conjunction with manufacturers, the Ministry's Approved Hearing Aid List and publish this for Approved Assessors and audiology providers.

Trial and selection

- Make payment for the selected hearing aid to be trialled where funding has been approved and the

For more information, go to: [Hearing Aid Services Notice](#)

An application may be queried by the hearing aid services manager or reviewed by a professional advisor if it does not contain sufficient information to determine:

- *that the person is eligible for and meets the access criteria for hearing aid services*
- *that the hearing aid recommended by the Approved Assessor is on the Approved Hearing Aid List*
- *that the recommended hearing aid is the most appropriate and cost-effective option to meet the person's needs*
- *the priority of the application.*

The Approved Hearing Aid List includes:

- *hearing aids that are eligible for hearing aid funding and subsidy*
- *the length of time that hearing aids will be supported by the manufacturer*

- person has received the hearing aid.
- Respond to complaints by following the established review and complaints process.
- Advise the person and the Approved Assessor in writing of any anticipated delays in funding.
- Advise the Ministry of any ongoing application where a decision has not been reached within 6 months.
- Where a dispute has arisen following an application for hearing aid funding, facilitate the resolution of such disputes.
- Manage the payment processes for the purchase of hearing aids.

For repairs

- Develop and implement a process for the timely and efficient management of hearing aid repairs.
- Assess applications for funding for hearing aid repairs. Where the application is declined, provide the reasons.
- Make payment for approved hearing aid repairs when the hearing aid repair has been completed satisfactorily and the eligible person has received the repaired hearing aid.

- the price (excl. GST) of those hearing aids.

The following factors are considered when repairs are requested:

- the estimated cost of the repairs
- the age of the hearing aid
- whether multiple hearing aid repairs have already been undertaken
- the full cost of the replacement hearing aid.

8.4.2 For the Hearing Aid Subsidy Scheme

- Assess the Approved Assessor's claim for payment of the hearing aid subsidy on behalf of an eligible person who has trialled and selected a hearing aid.
- Make payment of the subsidy to the audiology provider where the person has received the hearing aid and the hearing aid is on the Approved Hearing Aid List.

8.5 Manufacturers and distributors of hearing aids and accessories

- Submit requests to the University of Auckland for new hearing aid models to be approved for sale and use in New Zealand.
- Establish a contract with the Ministry before making hearing aids available on the Approved Hearing Aid List.
- Supply information about the approved hearing aids to the hearing aid services manager for inclusion in the Approved Hearing Aid List.
- Provide information for the Approved Hearing Aid List in an agreed format which includes the hearing aids which are eligible for hearing aid funding and subsidy, the length of time the hearing aids will be supported by the manufacturer and the price of the hearing aids.
- Supply hearing aids and accessories available on the Approved Hearing Aid List on order from audiology providers or Approved Assessors.
- Submit invoices to the hearing aid services manager for the cost of hearing aids and accessories that have been approved for supply under the Hearing Aid Funding Scheme.
- Process credit returns to the hearing aid services manager for hearing aids purchased through the

The Hearing Instrument Manufacturers and Distributors Association (HIMADA) consists of New Zealand registered companies involved in the manufacturing, importing or wholesale distribution of hearing instruments within New Zealand.

Hearing Aid Funding Scheme which have been returned following an unsuccessful trial.

8.6 Ministry of Health

- Develop and implement eligibility and access criteria for the provision of Hearing Aid Services.
- Manage and monitor the contract with the services manager to ensure that quality services are provided in a timely, fair and efficient manner and administered within budget.
- Review relevant applications through the ESS Review Panel and communicate decisions to the hearing aid services manager within 10 working days of the receipt of an application.
- Follow up with the hearing aid services manager where a decision regarding an application has not been reached within 6 months.

9. Reviews

9.1 Review of assessment by an Approved Assessor

The person may wish to seek a second opinion or re-assessment from another Approved Assessor if they are not happy with any aspect of the service they have received. This would need to be arranged by the person, their family or whānau. They could do this by:

- contacting the Approved Assessor's manager or supervisor to request a second opinion or re-assessment
- contacting the hearing aid services manager for a list of alternative Approved Assessors who could carry out the assessment.

All costs associated with getting a second opinion or re-assessment will be the responsibility of the person.

9.2 Review by the Hearing Aid Services Manager

If the person, the Approved Assessor or audiology provider, is not satisfied with any decision that has been made about an application or a claim for hearing aid services, they may request a review of this decision within 3 months of the application or claim being declined. Additional information in writing, supporting their request, should be provided.

- The person, their Approved Assessor and/or audiology provider will be advised of the outcome or progress of the review within 10 working days of receipt of the request for a review.
- If the person is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of decision, they may request a second review which will be undertaken by the Ministry of Health's ESS Review Panel.

9.3 Review by the Ministry's Environmental

Support Services Review Panel

The Ministry of Health's Environmental Support Services (ESS) Review Panel (the Panel) considers requests that:

- result from the person, their family or whānau, or the Approved Assessor or audiology provider, requesting a second review of the decision made by the hearing aid services manager
- require clarification of the Ministry of Health's Hearing Aid Services operational policy
- require consideration of funding approval due to a person's genuine and exceptional circumstances.

The Panel will consider requests where the hearing aid services manager has declined hearing aid services funding, hearing aid subsidy, repairs or the reimbursement of replacement costs which are not fully covered by insurance.

The Panel may approve a person's claim or application where:

- departure from the Ministry's usual procedures will improve the outcomes for the person, and
- the application is made within 3 months of the initial claim or application being declined, and
- there are genuine and exceptional circumstances that justify the approval of the claim or application.

The objectives of the Panel are to ensure that all decisions regarding applications and claims are:

- considered in a nationally consistent way
- transparent and fair
- based on the Ministry's agreed funding criteria.

The Panel will inform the hearing aid services manager of its decision within 10 working days of receipt of an application. The hearing aid services manager will then advise the person and the Approved Assessor of the Panel's decision. Only applications and claims forwarded by the hearing aid services manager, using the ESS Review Panel template for Hearing Aid Services will be considered by the Panel.

The hearing aid services manager may consider an application or claim if a person's genuine and exceptional circumstances are clearly defined.

10. Glossary of terms and definitions

10.1 Accreditation Framework

A framework established by the Ministry of Health for health professionals undertaking assessments that may result in applications for equipment or modification services for eligible people. This includes assessments for applications and claims for hearing aids.

10.2 Approved Assessor

The ESS Review Panel may, in genuine and exceptional circumstances, approve hearing aid funding at intervals of less than 6 years for adults or more frequently than 3 times in a 6 year period for children.

For more information on the Accreditation Framework go to: [EMS Assessor Accreditation Framework](#)

An appropriately skilled and qualified health professional who has been approved under the Accreditation Framework to undertake assessments and submit applications or make claims for hearing aid services.

The Approved Assessor will be responsible for maintaining their accreditation registration with the Approved Assessor database, held by Enable New Zealand.

Accreditation may be removed from an Approved Assessor in one or more of the following circumstances:

- an audit shows a consistent pattern of inappropriate recommendations made on behalf of eligible people or applications or claims do not align with the Ministry's funding guidelines
- they show a consistent pattern of not complying with the correct application or claim process, or with the requirements as set out in the Hearing Aid Services Notice
- they have not maintained the appropriate qualifications and competencies to enable them to remain as an Approved Assessor.

The Approved Assessor must advise Enable New Zealand of any change in their:

- employer details,
- Mentor details, or
- contact details.

10.3 Audiology Provider

An audiology provider is an individual or organisation that employs Approved Assessors and is authorised to provide Hearing Aid Services under the Hearing Aid Services Notice. This includes independent practitioners, private providers and District Health Boards.

10.4 Auditory Processing Disorder

Auditory processing disorder (APD) is presumed to originate in the brain and is characterised by a persistent limitation in the performance of auditory activities and significant consequences for participation³.

This definition is adapted from and based closely on the definition adopted in the Canadian Guidelines⁴. The Canadian definition adopts the ICF approach which considers activity and participation limitation.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), is a classification of health and health-related domains. As the functioning and disability of an individual occurs in a context, ICF also includes a list of environmental factors. ICF is the World Health Organisation (WHO) framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels.

10.5 Better Ear

³ Draft definition proposed by the Joint Ministries APD Reference Group, 2015

⁴Based on the Canadian Guidelines on Auditory Processing Disorder in Children and Adults: Assessment and Intervention, December 2012; Canadian Interorganizational Steering Group for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

Better ear means the ear with the lesser hearing threshold level at the relevant audiometric frequency.

10.6 Cochlear Implant

A cochlear implant is a device that is surgically implanted in a person's cochlear and that works through electrical stimulation to provide a sense of sound to a person who has a severe or profound hearing loss that cannot be improved by a hearing aid.

10.7 Consumable Items

Consumable items, in relation to a hearing aid, mean components of the hearing aid that are necessary for either the operation and/or its maintenance and that will need to be replaced over time.

For example, batteries and microphone covers.

10.8 Decibels (dBHL)

dBHL means a logarithmic scale of sound intensity expressed in decibels and referenced to average normal hearing.

10.9 Dependent Person

A dependent person is a person who requires full time care because they are either a child of 13 years or under or because of their long-term health or disability needs.

10.10 Hearing Aid

A hearing aid is a personal electronic amplification device that is used wholly or principally by a person to alleviate the impact of their hearing loss.

A hearing aid:

- a) must be capable of being adjusted (through manual control or computer have its acoustic output tuned in a frequency specific manner) and verified in situ by a hearing care professional in order to meet the unique hearing needs of an individual with hearing loss
- b) includes hearing aid accessories
- c) excludes:
 - cochlear implants
 - devices that have microphones and amplification systems that are designed primarily for other uses, such as stereos and mobile phones:
 - consumable items (for example, batteries)
 - second-hand hearing aids.

10.11 Hearing Aid Accessories

Hearing aid accessories, in relation to a hearing aid, means optional equipment that has the purpose of enhancing the functionality of the hearing aid.

For example, remote controls, wireless devices and Remote Microphone systems.

10.12 Hearing Assessment

A hearing assessment includes the taking, interpretation, and recording of the results of an audiogram (and related testing).

10.13 Hearing Needs Assessment

A hearing needs assessment:

- a) means a comprehensive assessment of a person's hearing function, communication needs, and rehabilitation options, and
- b) includes recommending options for achieving the person's hearing goals as agreed between the approved assessor and the person during the assessment process.

10.14 Hearing Loss

Hearing loss means:

- a) a permanent sensorineural or conductive hearing loss with hearing thresholds of $\geq 20\text{dBHL}^5$ on the pure tone audiogram **and** evidence of other auditory dysfunction evidenced by abnormal results on **one** or more of the following tests:
 - speech testing in quiet
 - speech testing in noise
 - pure tone acoustic reflex thresholds
 - Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions (DPOAE), or
 - Transient Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions (TEOAE).

OR

- b) a permanent sensorineural or conductive hearing loss with hearing thresholds of $\leq 20\text{dBHL}^6$ on the pure tone audiogram **and** evidence of other auditory dysfunction evidenced by abnormal results on **two** or more of the following tests:
 - speech testing in quiet
 - speech testing in noise
 - pure tone acoustic reflex thresholds
 - Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions (DPOAE), or
 - Transient Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions (TEOAE).

10.15 Hertz (Hz)

Hertz is the international measure of frequency where 1 Hertz equals 1 cycle per second.

10.16 Manufacturer

The manufacturer is the person or company who manufactures or distributes hearing aids to audiology providers.

10.17 Needs Assessment Service Coordination organisation (NASC)

Needs Assessment Service Coordination (NASC) organisations provide a single point of contact to identify a

The local NASC organisation may be able to assist with determining whether a person has an intellectual or a physical disability that meets the definitions as described in this manual.

⁵ Clark 1981; Scale of hearing impairment, as used by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

⁶ Clark 1981 Scale of hearing impairment, as used by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

range of support options for eligible disabled people. Such options can include a support package with one or more services funded through the Ministry's Disability Support Services or District Health Boards, such as personal care, household management, respite care and residential care.

10.18 New Zealand Audiological Society (NZAS)

NZAS is the professional body within New Zealand which promotes the profession of audiology through leadership, advocacy and education. Its members adhere to agreed Standards of Practice issued by NZAS.

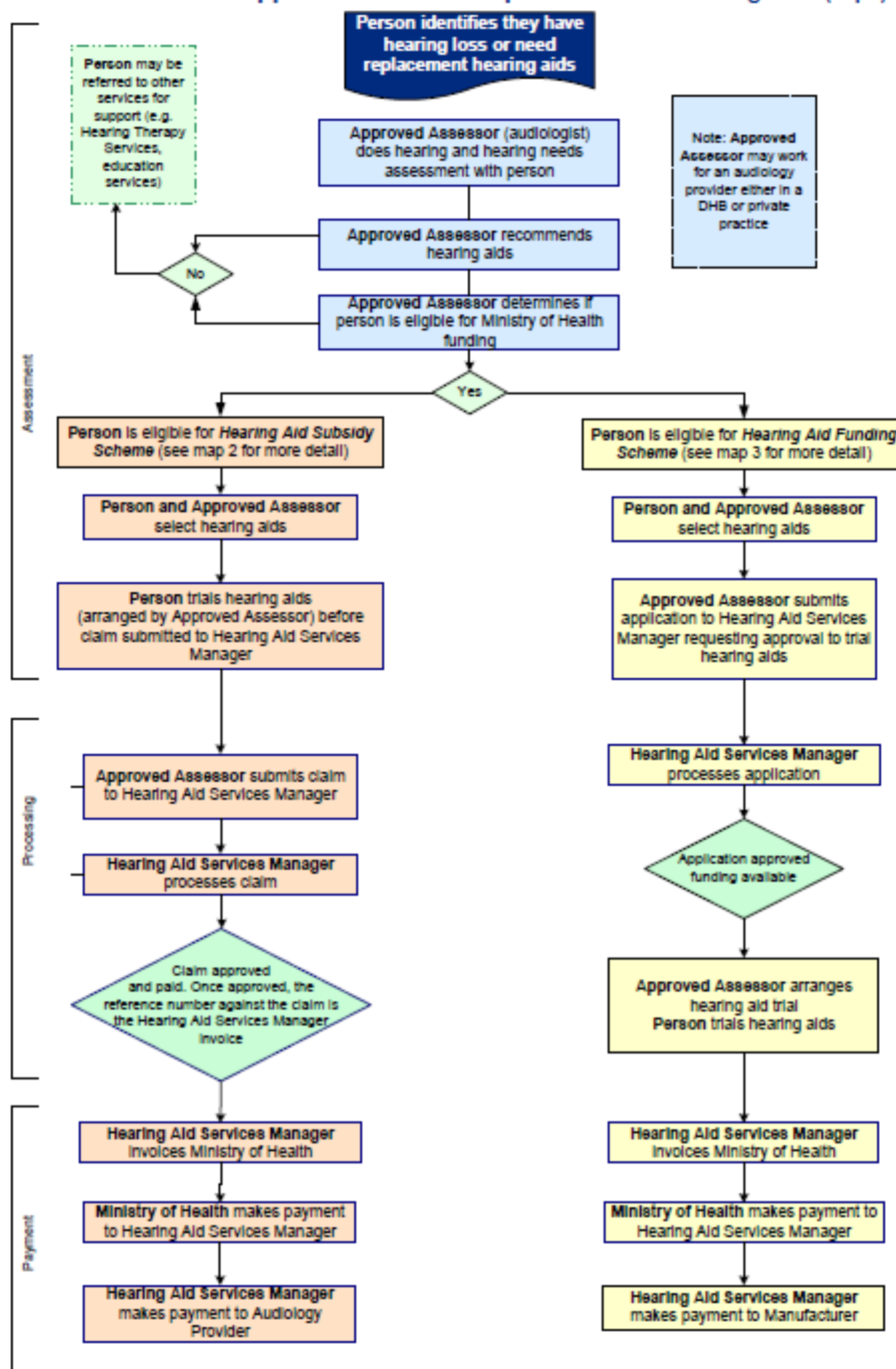
10.19 Professional Advisor

An audiologist, who is a current full member of NZAS, engaged by the services manager to provide advice on applications or claims for hearing aids which require specialist technical or clinical input.

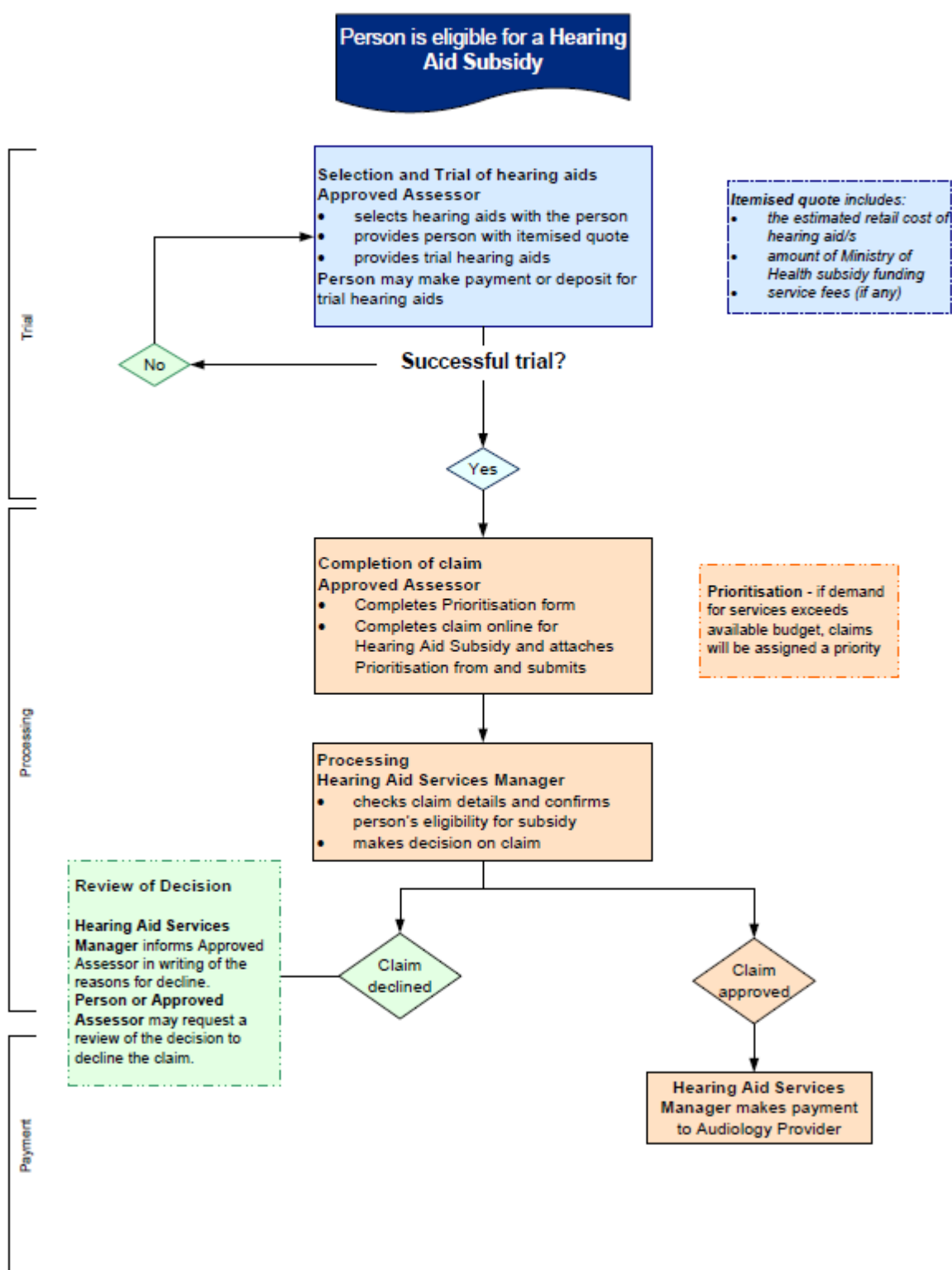
10.20 Remote Microphone system

A Remote Microphone system (formerly known as an FM System) means a system that typically consists of a transmitter microphone and receiver(s). The microphone is used to pick up the speaker's voice and transmits it to the person wearing the receivers, which may be connected to their hearing aids or a streamer.

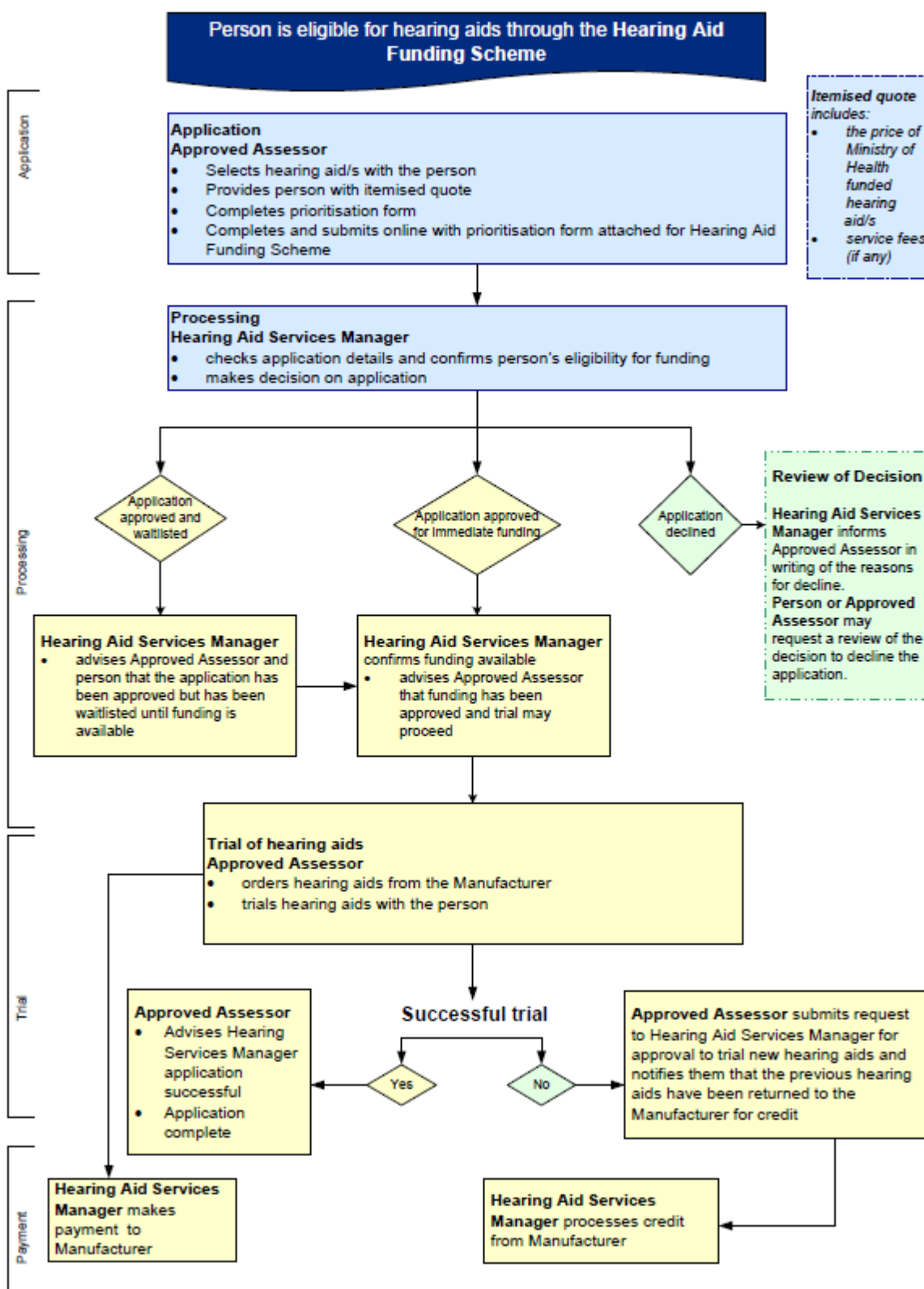
Overview of Application and Claim processes for hearing aids (Map 1)



Hearing Aid Subsidy Claim process (map 2)



Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Application process (map 3)



APPENDIX A - Eligibility

Eligibility criteria for publicly funded Health and Disability Services are set out in the Health and Disability Services Eligibility Direction 2011. The Direction is issued by the Minister of Health under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000. This information is correct as at April 2012.

See [Eligibility Direction](#) for the legal document.

To be fully eligible means a person whom meets the eligibility criteria for *any* publicly-funded health service as per the Eligibility Direction (2011), and must met at least one of the following:

- I. Is a New Zealand citizen.
- II. Holds a resident visa or permanent resident visa (includes residence permits issued before December 2010).
- III. Is a Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident AND able to show that he/she has been in New Zealand or intends to stay in New Zealand for at least 2 consecutive years.
- IV. Has a work visa and is able to show that he/she is able to be in New Zealand for at least 2 Years (including visas/permits held immediately beforehand).
- V. Is an interim visa holder who was eligible for publicly funded health services immediately before his/her interim visa started.
- VI. Is a refugee or protected person OR is in the process of applying for, or appealing to the Immigration and Protection Tribunal for refugee or protection status OR is the victim or suspended victim of a people trafficking offence.
- VII. Is under 18 and in the care and control of a parent/legal guardian/adopting parent who meets one criterion in i-vi above.
- VIII. Is 18 or 19 years old and can demonstrate that, on 15 April 2011, he/she was the dependent of an eligible work visa/permit holder (visa must be still valid).
- IX. Is a NZ Aid Programme student studying in New Zealand and receiving Official Development Assistance Funding (or their partner or child under 18).
- X. Is participating in the Ministry of Education Foreign Language Teaching Assistantship scheme.
- XI. Is a Commonwealth scholarship holder studying in New Zealand and receiving funding from a New Zealand university under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Fund.