

Ministry of Health and Housing New Zealand Corporation

Principles for the Provision of Housing Modifications funded by the Ministry of Health for People with Disabilities November 2013

This document sets out the key principles agreed by both the Ministry of Health and Housing New Zealand when modifications are being considered for eligible disabled people who are tenants in Housing New Zealand Corporation houses.

The following abbreviations are used in this document:

Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC)
Ministry of Health (Ministry)
Equipment and Modification Services (EMS)

Definitions:

EMS Assessor (housing) – an occupational therapist who is registered on the Ministry's EMS Accreditation Framework as:

- an Approved Assessor for basic housing modifications
- a Credentialed Assessor for complex housing modifications

EMS Service Provider - the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Service contracted providers for the management of applications requesting funding for housing modifications.

Minor housing modifications – generally costing between two hundred and two thousand dollars (excluding GST) such as threshold ramps and internal and external handrails

Major housing modifications - higher cost complex modifications including ramps, accessible bathrooms, fencing, and kitchen modifications.

State house - premises owned by the Crown, HNZC or Housing New Zealand Limited (HNZ) and let or to be let by or on behalf of HNZ or HNZC for occupation by any person as a place of residence

Private houses leased by HNZC - premises owned by someone outside the Crown, HNZC or HNZ, and let or to be let by or on behalf of HNZC or HNZ for occupation by any person as a place of residence

General Principles

1. The EMS Assessor undertakes the assessment and makes the most cost effective recommendation for housing modifications that are compliant with all funding guidelines and legislation, to meet the disability related needs of the person. If that recommendation does not meet approval by HNZC, HNZC will work with the EMS Assessor to agree an alternative solution.

If the solution is not resolved within three months from the request being received the case will be referred to the Equipment and Modifications Service Review Panel.

2. Each Party will comply with the Privacy Act when sharing information.

Minor Modifications

3. Where a disabled person is living in a state house and an EMS Assessor has made an application for minor housing modifications to meet their disability related needs, HNZN will generally approve the modifications.

A process map for Minor Housing Modifications has been agreed between HNZN and the Ministry of Health. This document provides an overview of the process and roles and responsibilities of each party when managing an application for minor housing modifications.

Major Modifications

4. Where a disabled person is living in a state house and an EMS Assessor has made an application for major housing modifications, HNZN will undertake a check to determine if the house is suitable for long-term tenancy for the disabled person and/or their family or whanau before approving any major modifications. No major modifications shall be carried out before HNZN provides its written approval to those modifications.

If the house is not suitable then HNZN will check to determine if there is a more suitable home available that better meets the disabled person's needs and arrange for the disabled person and/or their family or whanau to move to that home. HNZN will liaise with the EMS Assessor with an update at 3 monthly intervals.

A process map for Major Housing Modifications has been agreed between HNZN and the Ministry of Health. This document provides an overview of the process and roles and responsibilities of each party when managing an application for major housing modifications.

Relocation by HNZN

5. Where a person is living in a modified state house, and through a HNZN initiated transfer, the person relocates to another state house, HNZN will seek to relocate that person to an accessible state house in the first instance. If a suitable accessible house is not available, HNZN will facilitate and pay for modifications to the person's new house. In some circumstances a person may be placed in a suitable temporary house until a modified house becomes available.
6. Where a HNZN tenant/s is living in a state house that has previously been modified by Ministry funding, and the modifications are subsequently no longer required, HNZN will seek to relocate them if another person/family with disability related needs requires the modified home.

Second modifications of the same type

7. The Ministry will consider applications for second modifications for HNZC tenants where they have genuine and exceptional circumstances for needing to move, eg shared care families (separated parents) or relocation to another centre for change of employment as noted in the EMS Housing Manual.

Private houses leased by HNZC

8. Private houses that are leased by HNZC will not be modified to meet a person's disability related needs, with the exception of minor modifications (approved by HNZC). HNZC will offer a transfer to a state owned property should more major modifications be required.

Additional HNZC work

9. Should HNZC require additional work to be completed over and above the Ministry funded modification to comply with HNZC's policies and standards, HNZC will cover the additional costs of this work, eg:
 - the height and extent of the wet wall lining to a bathroom over and above the Ministry funded level access shower area,
 - 'make good' that is over and above the Ministry funded modification, eg the exterior finish to match adjacent state houses,
 - retaining a bath when a level access shower is installed,
 - fire protection sprinkler system and any other emergency safety options over and above what is required by the Building Code and any applicable fire and emergency safety standard regulations, and
 - any other standard specified by HNZC over and above Ministry funded modifications.
10. HNZC will not approve the fitting of deadlocks in its homes due to the Building Code. Families need to be able to get out of the house in an emergency without using a key to unlock the access door. Alternative safety options will need to be agreed by the multidisciplinary assessment team which will include at least the EMS Assessor, EMS Housing Advisor and HNZC Asset Manager.
11. Where additional HNZC work is required to complete the agreed Ministry funded housing modifications the EMS Service Provider's building contractor will provide a separate written quote to the EMS Service Provider for the cost of this work.

The EMS Service Provider will liaise with the HNZC Asset Manager to obtain approval for the additional work. Where approval is given this will be by a HNZC purchase order authorisation for the agreed work and costs.

The EMS Service Provider's building contractor will complete the HNZC work and Ministry funded modifications and invoice the EMS Service Provider for both works separately.

The EMS Service Provider will invoice HNZN on their purchase order authorisation for the agreed work and costs.

Repairs and maintenance

12. Where, during the construction process the EMS Service Provider's building contractor identifies rectification work is required to enable a Ministry funded modification to be completed in a state house:
- The building contractor will inform the EMS Service Provider of the scope of the rectification work, including photos where possible, and provide a written quote to the EMS Service Provider
 - The EMS Service Provider will liaise with the HNZN Asset Manager to obtain approval for the additional work. Where approval is given this will be by a HNZN purchase order authorisation for the agreed work and costs
 - The EMS Service Provider's building contractor will complete the HNZN work and Ministry funded modifications and invoice the EMS Service Provider for both works separately.
 - The EMS Service Provider will invoice HNZN on their purchase order authorisation for the agreed work and costs.