



MINISTRY OF  
HEALTH

MANATU HAURA

# Needs Assessment and Support Services for Older People

What you need to know

May 2011

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New Zealand Government

## Important information and disclaimer

The information in this booklet is intended to provide general information to the public, and is not intended to address specific circumstances of any particular individual or entity. All reasonable measures have been taken to ensure the quality and accuracy of the information available in this booklet.

The information in this booklet should not be construed as legal or professional advice and readers should take specific advice from qualified professional people before undertaking any action following information received from this booklet.

If you would like more information about any of the information covered in this booklet, and how it might apply to your situation, talk to your DHB, or one of the other agencies listed at the end of this booklet.

NASC Services are available for people of all ages. This booklet has been developed to assist older people (generally over 65) who have age-related needs.

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MANATU HAUORA

# Introduction

The information in this booklet tells you, and your family and whānau, how to access needs assessment and home support services to help you maintain your independence and quality of life.

Care and support services are available to help you participate in your community and stay in your own home as long as you are able.

Your district health board (DHB) funds services for older people, to help with your ongoing support needs at home. Your local DHB provides a Needs Assessment Service, which may be known as a NASC.

## Eligibility

You must be a New Zealand citizen or resident who is eligible for publicly funded health or disability services under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000.

## What are home support services?

Home support services are the services or things that help you to stay in your home as you age. These services may include, for example, help with showering, dressing, cleaning or meal preparation and essential shopping.

The booklet *Long-term Residential Care for Older People: What you need to know* provides information about residential care (see page 23).

# What is included in this booklet?

The booklet covers the following:

- What a Needs Assessment Service does (page 5)
- How to access your local Needs Assessment Service (page 5)
- Why you must have a needs assessment (pages 6–7)
- Your pathway to support (pages 8–14)
- Responsibilities and rights (pages 15–16)
- If you get stuck (page 16)
- Other support services (pages 17–18)
- Other assistance (page 18)
- Contact details for DHB Needs Assessment Services (pages 19–21)
- More information (pages 22–23).

## What is not included

If you want help with things like gardening, please read the information on page 18 about the Disability Allowance available from Work and Income.

### **If you want information about residential care:**

Residential Care Information Line: freephone 0800 737 777

This phone service provides information for people considering rest-home or long-stay hospital care, or who are already in care.

### **Ministry of Health website information about residential care**

<http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/hop-longtermresidentialcare-stepstotake>

# What a Needs Assessment Service does

A Needs Assessment Service or NASC works with people who have a health or disability concern to help support them to continue living at home. A NASC can:

- talk with you, your carer/family or doctor to understand your needs and eligibility for support
- discuss your concerns and arrange for an assessment to ensure you get the right support for your needs
- assess what support your family/whānau can give and what support they might need in order to be able to help you
- refer you for specialised assessments from other services if you need them.

## How to access your local Needs Assessment Service

You, or someone else (with your consent), can refer you to have your needs assessed to find out what is the best support for you. A trained health professional works with you to identify what you have difficulty doing and to prioritise your needs.

You work together to decide what support you need. Support services may include, for example, personal care, home help or equipment to make your home safer for you.

## How to contact your local needs assessment service

Your local NASC's contact details are listed on pages 19–21, or you can find contact details for your local NASC by checking the list on the Ministry of Health website:

[www.moh.govt.nz.nsf.indexmh/hop-supportservicesaccess](http://www.moh.govt.nz.nsf.indexmh/hop-supportservicesaccess)

- If you get an answer phone, leave a message with your name and phone number, and someone will call you back.

## Why you must have a needs assessment

Every person who wishes to receive disability support services funded by a DHB must have a needs assessment. To get any funded services, you must be assessed as requiring such services. DHBs have to prioritise access to services – people with the highest needs receive services first.

The purpose of the needs assessment is to gather information about:

- what you can and can't manage at home
- what help and support you already have
- what you most need to improve your quality of life

so you can be supported to stay at home and keep your independence.

Some services, such as household support (eg, cleaning), are available only to community services card holders.

However, if you need other support such as personal care, you may be eligible for some funded household support services.

‘Personal cares’, which include helping you get out of bed, showering, dressing and medication assistance, are funded by your local DHB and access to them does not require a community services card.

Your NASC can advise you about your eligibility for funded services and whether you qualify for these services. Any help you get from natural supports (eg, family members living with you) will be taken into account when your needs are being considered.

If you are not eligible for DHB funded services, your NASC can advise you about agencies in your area that are able to provide you with the services you need, at your own cost.

### **Privacy and confidentiality**

(Health Information Privacy Code 1994)

Any personal and/or medical information you provide as part of a needs assessment is private and confidential and will be used only for the purpose of your needs assessment.

# Your pathway to support

## Pathway to needs assessment and receiving support services

### 1. Referral

You or someone else contacts the Needs Assessment Service at your DHB to refer you for assessment.



### 2. Assessment

An assessor works with you to identify your abilities, goals and ongoing support needs.



### 3. Care plan

Your assessor develops a care plan to meet your goals and support needs, based on your assessment.



### 4. Service co-ordination

Your service co-ordinator identifies the most appropriate services and support options to meet your needs.

Services are arranged based on your care plan.



### 5. Monitoring and review

Your need for services is checked at regular intervals to ensure the support you receive continues to suit your needs.

If your needs change, you can ask for a review of your support services at any time.

## 1. Referral or self-referral – by doctor, family, self, other

You, or your doctor, community health worker, family member or a friend can (with your consent) refer you to your local DHB NASC and ask for a needs assessment to find out what help you need. Your enquiries are welcome. You might be asked questions like your age, where you live and what your concerns are. The NASC may ask for your consent to contact your doctor or a family member.

### How to refer

Your local NASC's contact details are on pages 19–21, or find contact details for your local NASC by checking the list on the Ministry of Health website:

[www.moh.govt.nz.nsf.indexmh/hop-supportservicesaccess](http://www.moh.govt.nz.nsf.indexmh/hop-supportservicesaccess)

- If you get an answer phone leave a message with your name and phone number, and someone will call you back.
- You should be told if you are being placed on a waiting list.
- If you have referred yourself, your doctor may be contacted for further information.

## 2. Needs assessment

The assessor is a trained health professional who works with you to identify what you have difficulty doing and to prioritise your needs.

### They want to find out:

- whether you need support to stay in your home/community and the level/types of support wanted and needed – for example, equipment, household support, personal care

- what family/whānau support you have now, or could have
- what support you receive from your health professionals (doctor, physio, etc)
- your eligibility for support (whether you/your household has a community services card)
- your cultural needs
- where they might refer you for more help. If you and the assessor agree it is required, you may be referred for a more in-depth assessment with a specialist or therapist.

Your first assessment may be by telephone or a home visit. You will receive a phone call or letter to confirm your assessment phone call or home visit time. You can ask for a home visit if that is your preference. If you have trouble with hearing, seeing, speech or language – or English as a second language – or have thinking difficulties such as dementia, you should be assessed face to face at a home visit.

In some areas, you may arrange to go to the NASC or another agreed place for your assessment. Language translators will be available if needed, and you can ask if a Māori or Pasifika needs assessor is available through your Needs Assessment Service.

### Phone assessment

The phone assessment is a conversation lasting about 20 to 30 minutes based on a set of questions that will provide the assessor with the required information. The telephone assessment may give enough information to develop a care plan for you, or to action a simple request. If it doesn't, the needs assessor will arrange to visit you at home. If you find it hard to hear over the phone, tell them.

The assessor wants to know what you need help with. You might like to have someone from your family/whānau or a friend with you during the phone assessment so that the assessor can talk to them as well. When you talk to your assessor on the phone, it's best to be ready with your concerns about your daily living activities, and tell them everything so they understand the full picture.

- First the assessor tells you what the call is about and what happens during the call, and lets you know you can ask for the assessment findings to be reviewed.
- If you are alone for your assessment, the assessor may ask you for the name and contact details of someone they can contact to discuss the assessment (with your consent).
- The phone assessment covers, for example:
  - personal details and general questions about your home, ethnicity, language, etc and why you have been referred
  - daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, managing medication, meal preparation, ordinary housework, phone use, personal hygiene, vision, nutrition, health, toilet use and mobility. Your pain levels, breathlessness and any levels of depression are also covered.

### **Home visit – face-to-face assessment**

The assessor arranges to visit you at a time that suits you both. A home visit usually takes 1½ to 2 hours. You can also have someone from your family/whānau or a friend with you to support you while the assessment is being done.

The home visit assessment is like a long conversation, where you answer some questions and tell the assessor about your concerns. Most assessors bring a laptop computer with them

to fill in answers to questions about your health and activities. They find this useful to record information for developing your care plan.

### **What you will talk about**

The assessor will ask, for example, about your ability to do things like showering and dressing. They will ask about your memory, health, your activities and any support you currently receive in your community.

The assessor will also ask about your appetite and eating, whether you have any breathing difficulties, and about any depression or pain symptoms. For safety planning, the assessor may want to look at your bathroom and toilet areas, and the medications you are using.

If you have someone who helps you at home, that person should be there for your assessment. If your carer has needs, these can be assessed too.

## **3. Your care plan**

Your assessor will develop a care plan based on the information from your assessment and outlining the support recommended for you in your home. You will get a letter of outcome or a copy of your care plan, which will be reviewed at regular intervals – or you can ask for a review at any time, if you feel you need it.

## **4. Support services and their co-ordination**

You and your assessor or service co-ordinator (this may be the same or a different person) work together to decide what support services you need and your choice of provider of these

services. Support services provide practical care and support you to live as independently as possible.

### **What support services are available**

To help improve your quality of life, support services must be acceptable to you, appropriate for your needs and available in your area.

Such services may include:

- personal care – getting out of bed, showering, dressing, medication management
- equipment to help with your safety at home
- household support – cleaning, meal preparation
- carer support – help for the person who lives with you and/or looks after you for 4 hours or more each day.

### **Specialist and therapy assessment services**

Your needs assessment may show that you could be supported by therapy or specialist services, such as:

- a speech-language therapist – to assess your communication or swallowing needs
- a physiotherapist – to assess your needs for help to maintain your physical activity by treating injuries, showing you how to prevent future injuries, and advising on improving your mobility and reducing pain
- an occupational therapist (OT) – to look at your home and help with changes such as hand rails to aid you in the bathroom or toilet, or moving to a downstairs bedroom if you can't manage stairs

- a dietician – to assess and advise you on your nutrition needs and eating patterns
- a social worker – to support you through your decisions and provide information about advocacy and other community supports
- a medical specialist
- a geriatrician (older people’s specialist) to look at your health and specific medical issues.

There may be a fee for these specialist services, depending on whether you see a therapist or specialist through the DHB or at your own cost.

If you need specialised equipment or modifications you may be referred to a specialised assessor for items funded through Enable or Accessable (see page 22).

## 5. Monitoring and review

Your support needs will be monitored at regular intervals by your service provider – at least once a year – and you can ask for a review of your services at any time if you feel you need more, less or different support. You may be phoned, sent a letter, or receive a home visit.

A phone assessment may be used first to review your situation to see if you need more services or a full assessment, or if you no longer require services. This can be arranged for a time that suits you and your support person best. When you talk to your assessor on the phone, it’s best to be ready with your concerns about your daily living activities and to tell them everything, including what has improved or got worse so they understand the whole story.

## Responsibilities and rights

The DHB is expected to provide disability support services that:

- offer flexible, responsive and needs-based support options
- focus on the person and, where relevant, their family and whānau
- enable people to make real decisions about their own lives.

### The Needs Assessment Service is expected to:

- keep appointments, or tell you if they can't
- encourage and enable you to take an active role in the needs assessment and service co-ordination process
- respect your culture and lifestyle when they work with you
- respect your choice of the amount and type of involvement you want in your care and support
- provide an interpreter if you need one
- invite you to have someone with you for the assessment
- adhere to the Health and Disability Commissioner's Code of Rights  
[www.hdc.org.nz/media/24833/brochure-code-white.pdf](http://www.hdc.org.nz/media/24833/brochure-code-white.pdf)
- take your comments and complaints seriously.

### Waiting times

Most Needs Assessment Services respond to referrals by contacting you within 1 to 3 days. If it is really urgent, contact will be within 24 hours. Less urgent needs assessments are usually carried out within 20 working days with support services starting within 10 working days after assessment.

Lower priority needs may take up to 6 weeks to gain support services.

## You are expected to:

- keep appointments, or tell your assessor if you can't
- provide full and accurate information to help with your assessment
- tell your assessor about any changes that might affect your needs
- tell the Needs Assessment Service if you change address or phone number
- tell the Needs Assessment Service or your home-based service provider and your care worker if you are going on holiday
- tell the Needs Assessment Service or service provider if you are having any problems with the support you are getting
- tell your provider if your living situation changes – for example, family coming to stay.

## If you get stuck

If you have concerns about your assessment and the support you have been offered as a result, you can talk to your Needs Assessment Service contact. If you believe your concerns have not been addressed ask to speak to the DHB Portfolio Manager for older people.

If you believe your consumer rights under the Health and Disability Commissioner's Code of Rights have been breached, you can contact the office of the Health and Disability Commissioner, freephone 0800 112 233.

# Other support services

## Respite care services

‘Respite care services’ refers to the short-term or temporary care of a person receiving regular care in order to provide the usual informal carer with a break (respite) from their caring role. Respite care services may be allocated as part of the service co-ordination process following a needs assessment and can take the form of:

- residential respite in an aged care setting, or
- authorisation of a certain number of days of Carer Support Subsidy, or
- day care, including dementia day care.

Where Carer Support Subsidy allocations are made, the older person requiring care, or the informal carer, makes their own arrangements for respite either in-home or in a residential care setting.

## Carer support subsidy

The Carer Support Subsidy is funded by a DHB to provide subsidised funding to assist informal (unpaid full-time) carers to take a break from their caregiving role. The Carer Support Subsidy contributes toward the cost of alternative care (eg, in-home care, residential respite care, day care) for the client, for a specific number of days per year based on the assessed need.

Carer Support Subsidy allocation is reviewed annually.

# Other assistance

## Disability Allowance (available from Work and Income)

Disability Allowance is a weekly payment for people who have regular, ongoing costs because of a disability – such as gardening, medicines, extra clothing or travel.

Access to the Disability Allowance depends on how much you and your spouse or partner earn.

You may get a Disability Allowance if you:

- have a disability that is likely to last at least six months
- have regular, ongoing costs because of your disability that are not fully covered by another agency
- are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
- normally live in New Zealand and intend to stay here.

Contact Work and Income for more information on freephone 0800 552 002 or check their website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/disability-allowance.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/disability-allowance.html)

# Contact details for DHB Needs Assessment Services

## North Island

### Northland – Hokianga

Hauora Hokianga / Hokianga Health

Website: [www.nhl.co.nz](http://www.nhl.co.nz)

Phone: (09) 405 7709

### Northland – Whangarei

Services for Older People, Northland DHB

Website: [www.nhl.co.nz](http://www.nhl.co.nz)

Phone: (09) 430 4131 or  
0800 888 890

### Auckland – Central Auckland

NASC, Auckland DHB

Website: [www.adhb.govt.nz](http://www.adhb.govt.nz)

Phone: (09) 307 4949 ext 27852

### Auckland – Waiheke Island

Waiheke Island Health Trust

Website: [www.adhb.govt.nz](http://www.adhb.govt.nz)

Phone: (09) 307 4949 ext 27830

### Waitemata – North Shore & Rodney

NASC, Waitemata DHB

Website: [www.waitematadhb.govt.nz](http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz)

Phone: (09) 442 7171

### Waitemata – Waitakere

NASC, Waitemata DHB

Website: [www.waitematadhb.govt.nz](http://www.waitematadhb.govt.nz)

Phone: (09) 442 7171

### Counties Manukau – Auckland

NASC, Counties Manukau DHB

Website: [www.cmdhb.org.nz](http://www.cmdhb.org.nz)

Phone: (09) 276 0040

### Waikato

Disability Support Link – Health Waikato DHB

Website: [www.waikatodhb.govt.nz](http://www.waikatodhb.govt.nz) Phone: (07) 839 8883 or

0800 55 33 99

### **Bay of Plenty – Tauranga**

Support Net – Kupenga Hao Ite Ora, Pacific Health

Website: [www.bopdhb.govt.nz](http://www.bopdhb.govt.nz) Phone: (07) 571 0093

### **Bay of Plenty – Whakatane**

Support Net – Kupenga Hao Ite Ora, Pacific Health

Website: [www.bopdhb.govt.nz](http://www.bopdhb.govt.nz) Phone: (07) 306 0986

### **Lakes – Rotorua & Taupo**

Lakes Needs Assessment Service Coordination Service

Website: [www.lakesdhb.govt.nz](http://www.lakesdhb.govt.nz)

#### **Rotorua Office**

Phone: (07) 343 1030 or (07) 343 1031

Email: [LakesNASC@lakesdhb.govt.nz](mailto:LakesNASC@lakesdhb.govt.nz)

#### **Taupo Office**

Phone: (07) 376 1041 or (07) 376 1042

### **Tairāwhiti – Gisborne**

NASC, Te Puna Waiora

Website: [www.tdh.org.nz](http://www.tdh.org.nz) Phone: (06) 869 0570 ext 8758

### **Taranaki – New Plymouth**

Taranaki DHB Interim NASC Service

Phone: (06) 757 8935

### **Hawke's Bay**

Options Hawke's Bay, Hawke's Bay DHB

Website: [www.hawkesbaydhb.govt.nz](http://www.hawkesbaydhb.govt.nz)

Phone: (06) 870 7485 or 0800 339 449

### **Whanganui – Wanganui**

Access Ability – Wanganui

Website: [www.wdhd.govt.nz](http://www.wdhd.govt.nz)

Phone: (06) 348 8411

### **MidCentral – Palmerston North**

Supportlinks

Website: [www.midcentral.co.nz](http://www.midcentral.co.nz)

Phone: (06) 353 5899 or  
0800 221 411

**Wairarapa – Masterton**

FOCUS, Wairarapa DHB

Website: [www.wairarapa.dhb.org.nz](http://www.wairarapa.dhb.org.nz) Phone: (06) 946 9813**Hutt Valley – Lower Hutt & Upper Hutt**

Nurse Maude Care Coordination

Website: [www.huttvalleydhb.org.nz](http://www.huttvalleydhb.org.nz) Phone: (04) 566 2226 or  
0800 662 225**Capital & Coast – Wellington**

Capital &amp; Coast Care Co-ordination Centre

Website: [www.ccdhb.org.nz](http://www.ccdhb.org.nz) Phone: (04) 238 2020**South Island****Nelson – Nelson-Marlborough**

Support Works, Nelson-Marlborough DHB

Website: [www.nmhs.govt.nz](http://www.nmhs.govt.nz) Phone: (03) 546 3980 or 0800 244 300**Canterbury – Christchurch**

Older Persons Health, Canterbury DHB

Website: [www.cdhb.govt.nz](http://www.cdhb.govt.nz) Phone: (03) 337 7765**South Canterbury – Timaru**

NASC Timaru

Website: [www.scdhb.co.nz](http://www.scdhb.co.nz) Phone: (03) 687 7114 or  
(03) 687 7118**West Coast – Greymouth**

Carelink

Website: [www.westcoastdhb.org.nz](http://www.westcoastdhb.org.nz) Phone: (03) 768 1308 ext 805**Southern – Dunedin**

NASC, Southern DHB

Website: [www.southerndhb.govt.nz](http://www.southerndhb.govt.nz) Phone: (03) 470 9111**Southern – Invercargill**

NASC, Southern DHB

Website: [www.southerndhb.govt.nz](http://www.southerndhb.govt.nz) Phone: (03) 214 5725 or  
0800 223 225

## More information is available at:

- Your local branch of Age Concern, see the phone book or check their website:  
[www.ageconcern.org.nz/contact-age-concern](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/contact-age-concern)
- New Zealand Home Health Association, phone 04 472 3196 or check their website: [www.nzhha.org.nz](http://www.nzhha.org.nz)
- Carers New Zealand, freephone 0800 777 797 or check their website: [www.carers.net.nz](http://www.carers.net.nz)
- Ministry of Health website:  
[www.moh.govt.nz/olderpeople](http://www.moh.govt.nz/olderpeople)
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Eldernet website: [www.eldernet.co.nz](http://www.eldernet.co.nz), click on *Services for those at Home*
- Enable, freephone 0800 362 253 or check their website: [www.enable.co.nz](http://www.enable.co.nz), or if you live in Auckland or Northland, contact Accessable on freephone 0508 001 002 or email [info@accessable.co.nz](mailto:info@accessable.co.nz) for equipment and modifications
- Health and Disability Commissioner, freephone 0800 112 233
- MSD Seniors website:  
[www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/seniorcitizens](http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/seniorcitizens)
- Work and Income website: [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz)

## You can talk to:

- your local DHB Needs Assessment Service (see pages 19–21)
- Information Line, on freephone 0800 737 777 for home support or residential care queries
- Your local DHB Portfolio Manager for Health of Older People (see pages 19–21)

*Long-term Residential Care for Older People: What you need to know*, is a Ministry of Health booklet – for a free copy:

phone (04) 496 2277

email [moh@wickliffe.co.nz](mailto:moh@wickliffe.co.nz)

or write to

Ministry of Health Publications

c/o Wickliffe Ltd

PO Box 932

Dunedin



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