

# Are you deaf or do you find it difficult to hear?



If so, this booklet has information on some of the services available from different government organisations and other agencies that may be able to help you.

Disability Support Services

To diagnose a hearing loss you need a professional hearing test, but first, consider visiting your doctor or a specialist ear nurse. They can check your ears for problems like too much wax or an ear infection. They can also recommend and refer you for professional help, like a hearing therapist or an audiologist. Seek this help as soon as possible as there are services and supports available to help you manage your hearing loss.

Here are some symptoms of hearing loss:

- You frequently have to ask people to repeat themselves
- You have difficulty understanding speech in noisy places
- You turn up the volume on your TV or radio so loud that others complain
- You often misunderstand what is being said.

## Who can get help?

If you are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, a range of supports and funding options are available.

## What services are available?



### Hearing Therapy Services

Hearing Therapy Services, funded by the Ministry of Health through LIFE Unlimited, are provided free of charge to people aged 16 years and over, and provide assistance to individuals/family/whanau with managing the impact of hearing loss. No referral is needed and Hearing Therapists are available in most main centres in New Zealand.

For more information, contact LIFE Unlimited Hearing Therapy Services: 0800 008 011, [info@hearingtherapy.co.nz](mailto:info@hearingtherapy.co.nz) or [www.hearingtherapy.co.nz](http://www.hearingtherapy.co.nz).



### Hearing Aids

#### *Veterans' Affairs/War Pensions*

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand provides assistance for veterans of the New Zealand Armed Forces who have

suffered an injury or disablement as a result of their service. If a veteran has an accepted war pension claim for hearing loss, Veterans' Affairs New Zealand can provide funding for the following services:

- Hearing aids
- Audiologist and fitting fees
- Hearing aid repairs
- Hearing aid battery allowance
- Assistive devices e.g. amplified phones, FM systems.

For more information, contact Veterans Affairs New Zealand: 0800 553 003, [veterans@xtra.co.nz](mailto:veterans@xtra.co.nz) or [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz).

### *Ministry of Health*

The Ministry of Health funds a number of services, including:



1. Funding to cover the wholesale cost of hearing aid(s) for eligible people.
2. A hearing aid subsidy for eligible people.
3. Other hearing or alerting equipment such as:
  - call systems with visual or vibrating alerts
  - smoke detectors with visual or vibrating alerts
  - fax machines.



For more information about eligibility criteria and services, contact Enable Information on 0800 171 981 or your local audiologist.

4. Cochlear implants  
The Ministry of Health funds a limited number of cochlear implants for adults through the Cochlear Implant Programme Centres in Auckland and Christchurch.

For more information, contact your local audiologist. If you live outside a main centre, the cost of travel to the hospital for an audiology assessment, surgery and follow up appointments may be covered through the National Travel Assistance Scheme. Find out more by calling 0800 281 222 or on the Ministry of Health website: [www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance](http://www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance).



## ACC

If you lose some or all of your hearing as a result of an accident involving an explosion, or a head, brain or ear injury, or your hearing loss injury is a result of being exposed to a noisy workplace over a long period of time, ACC may be able to help.

For more information, and to discuss your injury-related needs, contact ACC: 0800 101 996 or [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz). If you're Deaf you can also contact ACC on [deaf@acc.co.nz](mailto:deaf@acc.co.nz) or fax 0800 332 354.

## Telephone

If you are struggling to hear on the telephone, you can use the New Zealand Relay service. With a special phone, you dial an operator and type what you want to say. The operator reads your message to the person you're calling. The operator types the person's reply and this appears on your telephone screen. All call content is confidential and no records of conversations are kept.



For more information, contact NZ Relay: 0800 4715 715 or [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz).

## New Zealand Sign Language



New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is one of New Zealand's three official languages. It is a combination of hand shapes, facial expressions and body movements. NZSL contains ideas, sayings and words that are not found in other sign languages, including signs for Te Reo Maori words and ideas.

NZSL Interpreters help ensure Deaf people can access information and support. You can book interpreters through Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand.



## Television Captioning

Captions (subtitles for Deaf and hearing impaired people) are available on many programmes on TV ONE, TV2, TV3, as well as some programmes on TVNZ 6 and TVNZ 7. This is a free service funded by NZ On Air and run by TVNZ.

An ear logo at the beginning of television programmes indicates that the programme has captions.

For more information about which programmes are captioned and how to access captions, see [www.tvnz.co.nz/captioning](http://www.tvnz.co.nz/captioning), [email captioning@tvnz.co.nz](mailto:email_captioning@tvnz.co.nz) or call 09 916 7392.

## Can I get help with costs?

### Hearing Aid Bank

If you have financial difficulties and cannot get assistance from government agencies, the NZ Audiological Society (NZAS) may be able to help. The NZAS has a small number of hearing aids donated by various hearing aid companies. The hearing aid bank also has a limited amount of money available to help those in the greatest need. If you feel you are in this situation and need help to buy a hearing aid, contact your NZAS audiologist for further information and the application form.

### Work & Income

Financial help may also be available, including:



- **Disability Allowance:** The Disability Allowance is for people who have ongoing extra costs because of a disability or illness. This allowance can be paid for both children under 18 years and adults. It can help pay for things like regular visits to the doctor, prescriptions, travel because of ill health or disability and hearing aid batteries.
- There are also a number of payments or advances available from Work and Income if you can't pay for immediate and essential items. Work and Income will look at your financial situation to see what help is available - you don't have to be on a benefit to get some of this help.

For more information, contact Work and Income: 0800 559 009 or [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

If you are Deaf, hearing-impaired, or find it hard to communicate by telephone, you can contact Work and Income on:

Deaf Link free-fax: 0800 621 621

Telephone typewriter (TTY): 0800 111 113

Text: 029 286 7170

Email: [MSD\\_Deaf\\_Services@msd.govt.nz](mailto:MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz).

See also the helpful guide for carers at <http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/community/carers/index.html>.

## More information is available from:



### Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand

Ph: 09 828 3282, [national@deaf.co.nz](mailto:national@deaf.co.nz),  
[www.deaf.org.nz](http://www.deaf.org.nz).

Deaf Aotearoa offers education programmes, employment support and access to information and services for the Deaf and hearing impaired. It owns and operates iSign, New Zealand's online NZSL interpreter booking service, provides Deaf Awareness training workshops and other community-based programmes as well as organises the annual NZ Sign Language Week.

### Enable Information Services

Ph: 0800 17 1981, [info@enable.co.nz](mailto:info@enable.co.nz),  
[www.disabilityfunding.co.nz](http://www.disabilityfunding.co.nz).



Enable Information provides disability related information which is free and up to date.



### Hearing Association of New Zealand

Ph: 0800 233445, [enquiries@hearing.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@hearing.org.nz),  
[www.hearing.org.nz](http://www.hearing.org.nz).

Provides free advice, information and support to anyone over 16 years old who has difficulty in their everyday life because of hearing loss or tinnitus. Also offers counseling services and social activities for members.



## National Foundation for the Deaf Inc (NFD)

Ph: 0800 867 446, [enquiries@nfd.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@nfd.org.nz),  
[www.nfd.org.nz](http://www.nfd.org.nz).

NFD supports New Zealanders with hearing loss and encourages hearing preservation. It promotes the interests of people with hearing disabilities by providing advocacy, public education campaigns, information, research and educational scholarships. NFD is an incorporated society with six national member organisations, including the Hearing Association, the NZ Federation for Deaf Children, and professional groups working in the hearing disability sector.

## New Zealand Audiological Society

Ph: 0800 625 166, [mail@audiology.org.nz](mailto:mail@audiology.org.nz),  
[www.audiology.org.nz](http://www.audiology.org.nz).



The New Zealand Audiological Society is the professional organisation for audiologists who are tertiary qualified and are bound by a code of ethics. Information about hearing loss and the location of audiologists in both public clinics and private practices is available in the public area of their website.



## The New Zealand Society of Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery

[www.orl.org.nz](http://www.orl.org.nz).

The Society is a professional organisation for Otolaryngologists. Otolaryngologists are doctors who have completed specialty training in the medical and surgical management of disorders of the ears, nose and throat, including hearing loss. To see an Otolaryngologist, ask your doctor for a referral, or find your nearest Otolaryngologist by using the Doctor Search function on the website.

Published by the Ministry of Health, June 2010  
PO Box 5013, Wellington



ISBN 978-0-478-35978-7 (print)  
ISBN 978-0-478-0-35979-4 (online)  
HP 5123

New Zealand Government