

Equipment for People Who Are Deaf or Have Hearing Loss

July 2016

Are you Deaf or do you have a hearing loss? If you need equipment to help you to live safely and communicate with others, the Ministry of Health may be able to help.

Who can get equipment?

If you are a New Zealand resident ordinarily living in New Zealand and you have a permanent hearing loss that isn't covered by ACC or Veterans Affairs, you may be able to get equipment through the Ministry of Health. You must be in New Zealand at the time of receiving services.

If you have both injury and non-injury related hearing loss, you may be able to get funding for hearing aids from both ACC and the Ministry of Health. This joint funding is administered by ACC.

Hearing aids

You may be eligible for Ministry of Health-funded hearing aid(s) if you have:

- had significant long-term hearing loss since childhood
- had onset of sudden and significant hearing loss during adulthood
- a dual disability (such as deaf/blind or hearing loss and an intellectual disability) that impacts on your ability to communicate effectively.

You may also be eligible for Ministry of Health-funded hearing aid(s) if you have a Community Services Card and the hearing aids are essential for you to:

- work full time (30 hours each week or more) or be registered as seeking work
- study at tertiary level or do vocational training leading to future employment (aged over 21 years)
- do voluntary work (20 hours each week or more)
- safely look after a dependent person who lives with you full time.

For more information about funding for hearing aids, go to www.health.govt.nz and search for 'Guide for getting hearing aids: Hearing aid funding scheme'.

Hearing aid subsidy

If you need a hearing aid but do not have a Community Services Card or are not in any of the above situations, you may be able to get help with the cost of the hearing aid through a subsidy.

For more information about the hearing aid subsidy, go to www.health.govt.nz and search for 'Guide for getting hearing aids: Hearing aid subsidy scheme'.

Hearing aids for children

The Ministry of Health provides funding for hearing aids and Remote Microphone Systems for preschoolers and hearing aids for children and young people aged 20 years and under who are studying at school or tertiary level. An audiologist working in your local district health board will be able to tell you more about this funding.

Batteries, maintenance and repairs of hearing aids for children are provided free of charge by the Deaf education centres.

For more information, go to www.health.govt.nz and search for 'Equipment for children and young people who are deaf or have hearing loss'.

How can I get hearing aids?

If you want to get some funding assistance from the Ministry of Health towards the cost of hearing aid(s), you must have your assessment and recommendation for the hearing aid(s) undertaken by an 'approved assessor' who may be either: an audiologist who is a full member of the New Zealand Audiological Society (MNZAS) or an audiometrist member of the New Zealand Audiological Society working within their scope of practice. You can have your assessment with an approved assessor working at a district health board or in private practice. If you visit a private assessor, you will have to pay for this assessment and any fitting costs.

The approved assessor completes an assessment of your needs and may recommend hearing aid(s). If you need hearing aids for any of the reasons outlined above, the approved assessor can make an application to Enable New Zealand for funding assistance. You may need to pay towards the costs of the hearing aid(s) if you are receiving the hearing aid subsidy.

What does Enable New Zealand do?

Enable New Zealand manages all applications for hearing aids, hearing devices and the hearing aid subsidy.

Enable New Zealand can arrange repairs of funded hearing aids and devices for adults. See your approved assessor about repairs to, and the cost to repair, your hearing aids. You will have to pay for any repairs to hearing aids that have been bought with assistance from the hearing aid subsidy.

Assistive hearing and alerting equipment

If you need equipment other than hearing aids to enable you to work or study, or to help you live safely in your own home, you may be able to get help through the Ministry of Health.

Assistive hearing and alerting equipment include items such as personal listening systems and visual or vibrating alerts (eg, smoke detectors or door bells). Standard amplified telephones and smoke alarms are not funded by the Ministry of Health.

Assessors for alerting equipment can be audiologists, hearing therapists or service coordinators from Deaf Aotearoa and the Blind Foundation (Deafblind services).

Some people may prefer to use a personal listening device rather than a hearing aid. These devices may be more suitable for people who have visual problems or have difficulty physically managing hearing aids. Audiologists and hearing therapists will be able to give you advice about personal listening systems.

The assessor completes an assessment of your needs and may recommend assistive hearing or alerting equipment. If you need such equipment for any of the reasons outlined above, the assessor can make an application to Accessable or Enable New Zealand for funding assistance.

Accessable (if you live in Auckland or Northland) and Enable New Zealand (if you live elsewhere in New Zealand) receive applications from assessors for assistance with hearing and alerting equipment and check these applications to ensure the assessor has considered the different support and equipment options available. This is so any equipment you receive is suitable and the best for you.

For more information, contact:

Hearing aids

Enable New Zealand
Call free: 0800 17 1981
Fax: (06) 353 5876
www.disabilityfunding.co.nz

For assistive hearing and alerting equipment

Accessible (Auckland/Northland)
Call free: 0508 001 002
Fax: (09) 620 1702
www.accessable.co.nz

Enable New Zealand (rest of New Zealand)

Call free: 0800 17 1981
Fax: (06) 353 5876

www.disabilityfunding.co.nz

For hearing aids, hearing devices and assistive hearing and alerting equipment.

Service

Deaf Aotearoa promotes Deaf awareness and the use of sign language, and provides a range of services to the community such as education programmes and interpreter services. They can work with you to help you get the equipment you need.

Ph/TTY: (09) 828 3282

Fax: (09) 828 3235

Hearing Therapy Services are funded by the Ministry of Health and provided free of charge. Hearing therapists can assess your hearing needs, provide information about hearing aids and other equipment, teach you how to improve communication and help you get the equipment you need.

Call free: 0800 008 011

Fax: (04) 499 5853

www.life.nzl.org

Members of the New Zealand Audiological Society are specialists at diagnosing hearing problems and the non-medical treatment of hearing loss. Treatment options include hearing aids, assistive listening devices, counselling and education in listening skills.

Call Free 0800 625 166

Email mail@audiology.org.nz

www.audiology.org.nz

Cochlear implants

The Ministry of Health provides funding for a cochlear implant for eligible people who have a severe hearing loss and who are not helped by hearing aids. See www.health.govt.nz and search for 'Cochlear implants' for more information.

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