

Equipment and Modification Services (EMS)

Decision-Making and Complaints Processes

1. Services not supported by the EMS Assessor

Where the EMS Assessor does not support (fully or in part) a person's wish for equipment or modifications, the EMS Assessor could work through what interventions could best meet the person's needs, seeking advice from an EMS Advisor if they wished.

When housing modifications are being considered, this may benefit from a Housing Clinic and engagement with other parties such as NASC, Housing New Zealand, behaviour support specialists, etc. Where a high cost, complex wheelchair is being considered, this may benefit from advice through either the Wheelchair Outreach Clinic (managed by Enable New Zealand) or the ACCESS Clinics (managed by Accessable).

If the outcome of the consultation process confirms that the person is not eligible to receive services, does not meet the criteria for specific services or equipment or modifications are not considered to be the most appropriate solution to meet their needs, the EMS Assessor cannot complete the Prioritisation Tool (if this is required) or submit a Service Request to Accessable or Enable New Zealand.

The EMS Assessor should work with the person and their family or whānau to establish other support options or services that would better meet the person's needs.

2. Review of an assessment by an EMS Assessor

The person may seek a second opinion or re-assessment from another EMS Assessor if they are not happy with 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 EMS Assessor's Service Manager or Supervisor to request a second opinion
- contacting **Enable New Zealand (Phone 0800 17 1981)** for a list of EMS Assessors who have the required accreditation to carry out the assessment
- contacting their local NASC organisation
- contacting another EMS Assessor for a privately funded assessment.

3. Review of a Proposal by the Ministry's EMS Review Panel

The EMS Review Panel reviews proposed requests for equipment and modifications in the following situations:

- services are estimated to cost over \$25,000 (GST excl.)
- clarification of the Ministry's operational policy is required
- funding is being requested as a reimbursement due to the person having already purchased the equipment or modifications.

Proposals will be submitted by Accessable or Enable New Zealand before a Service Request has been made by the EMS Assessor.

4. Making a complaint about any disability support service

If a client has a concern about any disability support service they are receiving they should first talk or write to the Manager of the specific service. The provider of the service will have a complaints process.

If they need support and information to do this they can contact the Health and Disability Advocacy Service on:

- Freephone: **0800 555 050**
- Website: <http://advocacy.hdc.org.nz/>
- Email: advocacy@hdc.org.nz

5. Making a complaint about the outcome of the EMS Prioritisation Tool, i.e. funding not being available for equipment or modifications

If a client is not happy with or does not accept the outcome of the Prioritisation Tool i.e. funding is not available for their equipment or modifications and they wish to take this further, they should be advised to contact:

The Ministry of Health's Disability Support Services

- Freephone: 0800 373 664
- Website: <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services>
- Email: dsdcomplaints@moh.govt.nz

If they need support and information to do this they can contact the Health and Disability Advocacy Service on:

- Freephone: **0800 555 050**
- Website: <http://advocacy.hdc.org.nz/>
- Email: advocacy@hdc.org.nz

Important information for EMS Assessors about the prioritisation process

The Ministry of Health funds equipment and modification services that are assessed as meeting the essential needs of a person with a disability and that support their independence and safety in the most cost-effective way.

The reality is that the demand for health and disability services far outweighs available resources. Therefore, the Ministry's funding is targeted to people with disabilities who are considered to have the greatest needs and the ability to benefit from the proposed equipment or modifications. This ensures that more people with disabilities have access to funding that will assist them in their daily life.

EMS Assessors need to take ownership of the prioritisation process and assure clients that the assessment is about clarity and fairness, and that all disabled people are prioritised using the same national EMS Prioritisation Tool. Disabled people from all disability groups were involved during the design of the Prioritisation Tool and the criteria against which all disabled people will be measured are what disabled people identified as being important to them. These criteria are the five areas of life outlined in the Impact on Life questionnaire.

While a complaints process is available for people not satisfied with the outcome of the Prioritisation Tool, it should be made clear that the Prioritisation Tool is a fair, transparent and equitable way to determine the greatest need and ability to benefit from the equipment and modification services, and that complaining may not change the outcome.

Importance of the EMS Assessor explaining the prioritisation process to the client

Should a complaint be made regarding the Prioritisation Tool outcome it is important that the EMS Assessor feels confident that they have followed correct process.

All EMS Assessors must complete the online training before they are able to use the EMS Prioritisation Tool so will have gained an understanding of the process to be followed at the time of assessment.

- The EMS Assessor should give the client the printed information sheet and also fully explain the prioritisation process and the Impact on Life questionnaire to the client. They should then check to see if the client and/or their family/whānau have understood the explanation.
- The information sheet given to the client provides the following information:
 - The Ministry of Health has a set amount of money to pay for all the equipment and modifications that could assist disabled people.
 - The Ministry has to be fair and equitable when deciding who gets funding for equipment and/or modification services, and therefore a priority rating system is necessary. Priority is determined using the same national Prioritisation Tool that takes into account a person's need, risk and ability to benefit from the services.
 - The outcome of the assessment is either 'funding available' or 'funding not available'.
 - If the person's needs change, they can ask to have another assessment and complete another Impact on Life questionnaire.
 - The EMS Assessor will explore other support options with the client if the Prioritisation outcome is 'Funding not available'.

It is important to set expectations around the availability of funding at the time of assessment and before the Prioritisation Tool is used.