**Guide to Clinical Reasoning and recommending Ministry of Health funded equipment for**

**staff in District Health Boards**

Developed by the Ministry of Health’s EMS Service Accreditation Steering Group representatives from Auckland, Counties Manukau, Hutt Valley and Waitemata District Health Boards, *access*able, Enable New Zealand.

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidelines for Home Health Care clinicians and support staff to recommend Ministry of Health Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) funded equipment for people in their homes, efficiently.

Four key elements of efficiency include:

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| **Time** | For patients to get the equipment they need, when they need it  Use staff time wisely |
| **Cost** | Make best use of rental and permanent equipment within service budget  Minimise duplication of assessment |
| **Quality** | Adhere to best practice and improve systems, with no risk to the patient |
| **Consistency** | Support consistent practice across the service to achieve these objectives |

**General Notes**:

* The safety of the equipment user is paramount
* Equipment is prescribed only if it is *essential* to enable a person to perform their usual daily activities
* “*Essential*” is defined in the *Ministry of Health Equipment and Modification Services Equipment Manual.* Essential means that there is no other viable or cost effective alternative available to meet the person’s needs related to their disability. The provision of equipment would reduce the risk of the person and/or their support people being harmed. Where the person has other long-term support options available, the request for funding cannot be considered as being essential*.*
* If patients or caregivers are safe without an item of equipment, it should not be rented while they are waiting for permanent equipment
* Use the KISS principle – Keep it simple and succeed. Start with basic options first
* District Nurses recommend Ministry of Health List Equipment when they are involved with ongoing client care
* Rental equipment is not to be used in place of *access*able, Enable NZ trial process
* Seek advice from other clinicians or supervisor if unsure which item will meet clinical need

**Service Accreditation**

**Clinical reasoning and decision making guideline**

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| **Questions** | **Consider…..** | |
| 1. What is the issue for the person? | * The person’s perspective: what does he/she say is their need or the problem? Ask them, what can’t they do that they need to do? * Add your assessment findings: what have you noticed about the person? * Ask your self:   + What can they do/can’t they do? E.g. unable to transfer on/off toilet, chairs; unable to get to the toilet on time | |
| 1. What are the specific functional limitations? | **Person**  Why can’t they do it?   * Are there physical limitations?   + Pain, muscle weakness, impaired balance, incoordination, reduced range of movement * What is his/her mobility like?   + Endurance/fatigue   + Respiratory function: short of breath? * Is he/she able to plan and initiate actions * What is his/her cognitive understanding and abilities like? (E.g. Anxiety, memory, confidence, follow instructions…..) | |
| 1. Are there additional factors that influence this issue? | **Social**  Living arrangements  Social support  Prefer personal help over using equipment  Other help (paid or unpaid, e.g. family or friends) available or not  Who else uses this space/room? | **Environment**  Space available  Size  Steps  Layout  Which way the door/s open  Barriers  Floor surface, levels |
| 1. How does this impact on the person’s ability to do the task, or their daily routine? | What cant they do that they need to do?  What are the short, medium or long term impacts of not being able to do these things? | |
| 1. Which of these factors can be influenced or changed? | What would need to happen to influence or change these factors and is this realistic / likely to occur? | |
| 1. What are the options? | What would make a positive difference?  e.g:   * Nothing * Training in a new technique or method of doing the activity * Refer to occupational therapist, physiotherapist for specialist input * Carer or carer training required * Modify the environment: will equipment be enough? * Short-term or long-term need? * Trial solution | |
| 1. If equipment is the option, what will address the needs? | * What is available? * Will the equipment suit the client and the environment? * Will or can the client, family, caregivers use the equipment? * Does the client meet Ministry of Health (MoH) criteria? * Can I order this equipment from the MoH’s list?   + Yes? Go ahead and order the equipment.   + No? Discuss with or refer to occupational therapist. | |
| 1. Does this solution solve the actual issue? | * Is the person safe? * Do they use the equipment? * Do they use the equipment safely? * If it doesn’t solve the issue who can you refer to? | |

**Figure 1**: Decision-making tree for applying for *EMS* funding of list equipment

Need for Equipment established

Determine what equipment needed

(use clinical reasoning tool as guide)

Yes

No

Organise

short term

loan or rental as per

DHB policy

Does disabled person qualify for

Ministry of Health funding for

long term equipment

No

Liaise with OT / PT

or Team leader to

discuss options

(or provide information on self-funding)

Yes

Yes

Equipment delivered to person’s home

Follow up visit or phone call if not

delivered by prescribing clinician

Complete Enable / Accessable

or DHB equipment application form &

send as per Specified DHB process

No

The next section of the document provides examples of equipment available under Service Accreditation together with information to support clinical reasoning.

**Equipment guidelines**

The following section provides specific guidance related to equipment that is available through service accreditation. Note examples may differ by brand from those currently available through the EMS Providers.

**1. Bathroom Equipment**

**General Notes:**

* Assess functional mobility and transfers
* Is he/she able to mobilise to/from the bathroom, toilet? (including in a wheelchair or with a carer)
* Once there, is he/she able to safely transfer onto the toilet or to the bath or shower?

**Bathing or Showering**

* Can other techniques be used to meet the person’s essential hygiene needs (basin washing)?
* Will this impact on skin integrity?
* Start with basic options (bath-board; swivel bather or shower stool; then shower chair)
* If level access showering facilities are already available, may still be able to meet need with basic options

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| **Bath Step**    **Bath step**  **Langham adjustable** | **Bath Step**    **Bath step**  **Ashby 2 step** |
| **Bath board**  **Bath board - Cosby** | **Bath board**  **Bath board - Derby** |
| *Advantages:*   * Light * Easy to use, and move * Requires little storage room * Good for people who enjoy a shower, but have difficulty transferring across the side of the bath, and who are a little unsteady on their feet   *Disadvantages:*   * Provides no trunk support for people with poor balance * Should be used only in conjunction with a hand-held shower set | |

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| **Transfer bench**  **Transfer Bench with suction cups** |  |
| *Advantages*   * For people who wants to use a shower, but require back support, side support, &/or a hand grip * Transfer bench has adjustable height legs   *Disadvantages*   * Must be able to lift legs over the side of the bath * Bulky to lift out of the bath for other bath users * Needs storage space in bathroom | |

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| **Shower stool**  **Adjustable legs**  **No arms** | **Shower Stool**    **Shower Stool – wing handles** |
| **Shower Stool**    **Shower Stool with arms**  **Shower stool with arms – maxi – 50mm** | **Shower chair**  **Shower chair with arms**  **Shower chair without arms** |
| *Advantages*   * Provides support for people who cannot stand for the length of time it takes to have a shower * Light, and transportable * Have adjustable-height legs * There is a range of designs to suit non-complex needs   *Disadvantages*   * Might need to be moved for other shower users * Requires storage space in the bathroom when not in use | |

**2. Bed Accessories**

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| **Bed lever**  **Bed Lever - Standard** | **Bed lever**  **Wooden base** - **Metal hoop**  **Reinforced** |
| **General notes**   * Assess functional mobility and transfers * Is the person able to transfer by him/herself or with the help of another person? * Can other techniques be used to transfer safely? * Will this impact on skin integrity?   *Advantages*   * Assists person to transfer on and off the bed * Fits most beds, under the mattress * Can be used to assist with bed mobility e.g. rolling towards the lever * Can give a sense of security to the user that he/she won’t fall out of bed   *Disadvantages*   * Needs to be positioned carefully, otherwise might get in the way of the getting in and out of bed * Might get in the way of making the bed * Needs to be installed correctly (under the mattress) for safe use | |
| **Over bed table**    **Over bed table** | **Bed cradle**    **Bed cradle – non-adjustable** |
| **Over-bed pole**    **Lifting pole attached to 385 bed** | **Over-bed pole**    **Over-bed pole**  **Freestanding** |
| **General notes**   * Assess functional mobility and transfers * Is the person able to transfer by him/herself or with the help of another person? * Can other techniques be used to transfer safely? * Will this impact on skin integrity?   *Advantages*   * Can assist person to lift self, change position, or relieve pressure in bed * Works best when person can also use it themselves   *Disadvantage*   * Need enough strength on shoulder, arm and hand, to reach the handle, hold a grip, and hold some body weight | |

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| **Bed Raisers**    **Single bed raiser – 4”** | **Bed Raisers**    **Double bed raiser – 4”** |
| *Advantages*   * Assist person to transfer on and off the bed * Can be an alternative solution to prescribing a high/lo hospital bed   *Disadvantages*   * Can be awkward to install under the bed; heavy beds are a particular hazard * The bed cannot be moved easily while bed raisers are in situ | |

**3. Kitchen & Living Room**

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| **Chair platform/raiser**      **100mm**  **150mm**  **50mm**  **75mm**  **Adjustable platform** | **Chair platform/raiser**    **Chair Platform**  **(Lazy boy)** |
| **Chair raiser**    **Chair Raiser Round Grey Stackable (4)** | **Chair blocks**    **Chair Blocks Wooden adjustable (4)** |
| **Chair blocks**    **Chair Raiser Round Grey, Stackable (4)** | **Sofa raiser**    **Sofa Raiser – 4”** |
| **General notes**   * Assess the person’s functional mobility and transfer ability first * The chair raisers must be installed on an even surface * They must feel secure and steady to the user as they transfer in and out of the chair   *Advantages*   * Enable a person to transfer in and out of chairs, sofas, and armchairs * Portable   *Disadvantages*   * Chair is not easily moved while raisers are in situ | |
| **Kitchen trolley**    **Kitchen trolley**  **Metal**  **Adjustable height** | **Kitchen trolley**    **Chair Raiser Round Grey Stackable (4)** |
| **Kitchen trolley**    **Kitchen trolley, Chevron** |  |
| **General notes**   * Kitchen trolleys are not mobility aids * If the person requires a mobility aid, refer him/her to a physiotherapist   *Advantages*   * Enables person to carry items as he/she goes about their usual daily activities   *Disadvantages*   * Not secure, steady enough to be used as a mobility aid * They have no brakes | |
| **Utility chair**    **Rehab Chair, Adjustable height,**  **Fixed padded arms** | **Perching stool**    **No arms or back, Adjustable height** |
| **Perching stool**  **With back, Adjustable height**  **No arms**  **With arms** |  |
| **General notes**   * Perching stools are for use when the person needs to restrict, or is already restricted in, the degree of flexion possible in the hip or knees   *Advantages*   * Enables the person to sit while working at a high bench/table * Transportable * Sturdy | |

**4.** **Toilet**

**General Notes:**

* Assess functional mobility and transfers
* Toilets come in a variety of shapes and sizes, you might have to experiment to find the toilet aid that best fits the person’s need and their toilet
* Start with the basic options (raised toilet seat, or over toilet frame)
* Consider other available options (bedside commode in place)
* If nothing else meets the person’s essential toileting need, consider a mobile shower commode chair

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| **Raised Toilet Seat**    **Savanah 2”**  **Savanah 4”** | **Raised Toilet Seat**    **Raised Toilet Seat**  **Derby 2”**  **Derby 4”** |
| **Raised Toilet Seat**    **Raised Toilet Seat**  **Hi-Loo 60mm**  **Hi-Loo 100mm** |  |
| *Advantages*   * Portable * Usually able to be put in place and removed fairly easily * Enables easier transfer on and off the toilet, especially for tall people   *Disadvantages*   * Not suitable for heavy people * May not be comfortable to use * May make normal evacuation a little harder | |
| **Over Toilet Frame**    **Viking, straight arms**  **Viking, angled arms** | **Over Toilet Frame**  **OTF, 600mm**  **OTF, 500mm** |
| **Toilet Surround**    **Toilet Surround** | **Toilet Aid**    **Toilet Surround** |
| **General note**   * Check the position of the toilet outlet, so that the frame can fit around or over it   *Advantages*   * Provide additional support when using and transferring on and off the toilet * Sturdy * Suitable for heavy people * Adjustable-height legs   *Disadvantages*   * Bulky * Can be difficult to remove for other toilet users * Can be uncomfortable to use | |

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| **Commode**    **3 in 1 commode** | **Commode**    **Bedside Commode**  **Beside Commode,** *extra large* |
| **General note**   * If incontinence is an issue, ensure that an incontinence assessment has been completed before you consider a commode | |

**5. Walking Frames**

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| **Pacer** |
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| **General note**   * + Many of the walkers available can be requested with brakes to increase stability and control   *Advantages*   * Provide stability and increased base of support while standing/walking * Foldable for car transportation * Lightweight * Removable tray/basket for carrying objects * Height-adjustable handles for optimum walking posture   *Disadvantages*   * Can be difficult for some clients to fold/unfold * Caution needed on ramps (esp if steep) * Difficult to carry up/down stairs * Ski/stopper versions only suitable for indoor use * May not be stable on grass, stony surfaces |