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Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Eligibility Criteria

The client must meet one of these criteria to be eligible for access to the Funding Scheme

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# **Hearing Aid Funding Scheme Eligibility Criteria**

## Adults with complex needs aged 16 years and over

### Moderately-severe or greater long term hearing loss since childhood

* The average of a person’s 3 worst hearing threshold levels, which have been measured at audiometric frequencies of 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz, is equal to or greater than 56 dB HL in the better ear and
* The person has had a continuous need for hearing aids since childhood.

*Having a continuous need for hearing aids since childhood means that even though the person may not have worn hearing aids as a child, they did have a need for them (for example, they may have chosen not to wear them in childhood).*

### Sudden and moderately-severe or greater hearing loss during adulthood

* Within the last six months, over a period of 1 to 14 days, the person has developed a significant increase in the person’s hearing threshold level of at least 30 dB HL on average in one or both ears.
* This has resulted in the average of the person’s three worst hearing threshold levels, which have been measured at audiometric frequencies of 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz, being equal to or greater than 56 dB HL in the better ear.

*The person is eligible to receive hearing aid funding once only following the onset of sudden and moderately severe hearing loss during adulthood.*

*Funding under this criterion only covers services for six months following the sudden loss – this includes ear moulds, repairs, and accessories*

## Dual or multiple disability

### Visual

* Hearing loss and a significant visual disability. The person will have vision loss which impacts on their ability to communicate effectively. Vision loss includes one of the following:
* the person’s corrected vision, with lenses, does not exceed 6/24 in the person’s better eye, or
* the person has significant limitation in their residual visual field which is generally not greater than 20° in the widest diameter in their better eye.

*The person who has a significant visual disability will generally be eligible for full membership of the Blind Foundation. They do not have to be a member of the Blind Foundation to be eligible for services under this criterion.*

*Evidence of the extent of the person’s visual disability can be obtained from their optometrist, ophthalmologist or a sighting of their Blind Foundation membership.*

### Intellectual

* Hearing loss and a significant intellectual disability. The person will have significantly below average general intelligence combined with significant problems with adaptive functioning that:
* has been formally tested by a qualified assessor and a diagnosis of intellectual disability has been made, and
* reduces their ability to communicate effectively and safely.

*The Approved Assessor will need to confirm the diagnosis of a person’s intellectual disability before eligibility under this criterion can be considered. Confirmation may be made by one of the following:*

* *their family or whanau*
* *their main carer, if they are living in a community home which is managed by a provider who is contracted through the Needs Assessment Service Co-ordination (NASC) organisation*
* *the local NASC.*

*The diagnosis of intellectual disability may be made after the person turns 18 years of age, but it must be evidenced that the developmental delay occurred in the developmental period before they turned 18.*

*The Approved Assessor must consider the combined impact of both the person’s intellectual disability and their hearing loss. The presence of an intellectual disability that does not limit the person’s ability to communicate effectively or safely would mean that they would not be able to access services under this criterion.*

*People who have other conditions which impact on their cognitive functioning are not eligible for funding under this criterion, for example, dementia and mental health disorders.*

### Physical

* Hearing loss and a significant physical disability. The person will have a significant long-term physical disability that affects their ability to communicate effectively and safely.

The Approved Assessor must consider the combined impact of both the person’s physical disability and their hearing loss. The existence of a physical disability that does not limit the person’s ability to communicate effectively or safely would mean that they would not be eligible for services under this criterion.

The person’s physical or neurological condition is likely to impact on their speech production (volume or articulation) or non-verbal communications so that, when combined with a hearing loss, their disability impacts on their ability to respond or communicate the needs effectively and reliably to others.

## **Adults aged 16 years and over who have a community services card and are either in:**

### Full time work

* Full time work is employment that is at least 30 hours per week, or which achieves a degree of financial independence that is at least the same as the person could earn from receiving Jobseeker Support.
* If the person is unable to work 30 hours per week due to the limitations of their disability, funding approval may be considered if the person is working at their maximum capacity. This will require supporting documentation from either a registered medical practitioner or an allied health professional.

### Seeking paid employment

* The person is actively seeking work and is registered for employment with Work and Income, Workbridge or other employment support services. This could include services associated with specific disability organisations such as Deaf Aotearoa and the Blind Foundation.

### Voluntary work

* The person is engaged in voluntary work for a minimum of 20 hours per week with a recognised community-based voluntary, not-for-profit agency which provides voluntary services for the benefit of the community as a whole and is able to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the work.
* This means that they must have been involved for a minimum of 8 weeks and will be intending to work in that role for at least 12 months.
* Written confirmation of the voluntary work must be provided with the application.

### Caring for a dependent

* A main carer is an unpaid carer who lives with the person and provides the majority of their care.
* A main carer will have a hearing loss themselves and require hearing aids to look after a dependent person in their care.
* A dependent person is a person who requires full time care because they are a child aged 13 years or under, or, they have long-term disability related needs.
* A dependent person does not include people living in residential care or community residential support as their funding arrangement generally comprises full-time, ongoing support.

### Tertiary level education or vocational training

* The course(s) must be full time. The course length must be at least a calendar or academic year and the content of the course must support the person working towards future employment.
* Written confirmation of the course, including acceptance onto the course, start and finish dates and the purpose of the course is required.
* If the person is unable to undertake a full time course due to the limitations of their disability, funding approval may be considered if the person is studying at their maximum capacity. Written confirmation from either a registered medical practitioner, allied health professional or disability advisor/co-ordinator who is based in a tertiary institution. This information should be held on the person’s file by the Approved Assessor.