

# **Social Rehabilitation Aids and Appliances**

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# Policy

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance on administering eligibility for **aids and appliances** under social rehabilitation. This document should be read together with separate papers on:
- *Rehabilitation Services Eligibility*
  - *Rehabilitation Section of Your Plans*
  - *Social Rehabilitation*
  - *Travel Costs for Treatment and Rehabilitation*
- 1.2 For the policy on *Hearing Aids and Appliances* please refer to the separate paper of that title.

## 2. Legislative Reference

- 2.1 The relevant legislation is the Veterans' Support Act 2014 (the Act), sections 115, 120-124, and 212, and clauses 7 and 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 2.

## 3. Eligibility for Aids and Appliances

- 3.1 **Go to section 4 of separate paper on Social Rehabilitation**

## 4. Applications for Aids and Appliances

- 4.1 The provision of aids and appliances will be decided on the basis of needs assessments undertaken at the time of a **veteran's** application for an entitlement or for rehabilitation services (**see section 6 of the separate paper on Rehabilitation Services Eligibility**).
- 4.2 When deciding whether to provide or contribute to the cost of an aid or appliance, Veterans' Affairs will consider:
- any **rehabilitation outcome** that would be achieved by providing it; and
  - whether the aid or appliance is prescribed by a suitably qualified **health practitioner**

*Clause 8, Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014*

- whether the aid or appliance is normally prescribed in New Zealand for the condition or as part of a treatment for a condition, with a view to a rehabilitation outcome

- whether the aid or appliance sought is necessary, appropriate and of the quality required to resolve/treat the **accepted injury or illness**
- what the likelihood is that the aid or appliance will rectify the problem and whether appropriate therapeutic treatment would be a more effective approach
- what period of time the aid or appliance will likely meet the veteran's needs given the current impairment and the prognosis
- whether the aid or appliance sought would be the most cost-effective option to achieve the rehabilitation outcome
- what the DHB or ACC/AEP has provided and/or recommended.

## 5. Needs Assessment

5.1 Veterans' Affairs may request an assessment by an occupational therapist to determine what the veteran's needs are and which aids and/or appliances are relevant and appropriate to the treatment being provided for the veteran's accepted disability and the rehabilitation outcome expected. **See also section 6 of separate paper on Social Rehabilitation.**

5.2 Assessment may result in a number of options, such as:

- providing aids and appliances to promote the veteran's **independence** in function and activities of daily living
- providing aids and appliances with a view to the veteran achieving vocational, social and/or medical independence
- educating the veteran in doing activities of daily living in different ways, with or without additional aids and appliances (**see separate paper on Social Rehabilitation Training for Independence**)
- providing aids and appliances and educating the veteran on their use to help them perform activities of daily living.

5.3 In some cases, the occupational therapist may ask to check that an item, once delivered, is safe and suitable to meet the veteran's needs.

5.4 A follow-up visit by the occupational therapist may be needed, with Veterans' Affairs approval, to ensure that equipment is correctly installed, to provide instructions for its use and to check the veteran and their family/whanau understand how to use and maintain it.

5.5 The occupational assessor may need to visit the veteran's place of employment to determine what type of aid or appliance may aid the veteran in the workplace.

5.6 The Rehabilitation Advisor will approve the aids and appliances and record them in the rehabilitation section of the veteran's Your Plan along with the agreed outcomes expected from the approval of the aid or appliance.

- 5.7 The veterans' needs may be reassessed (**see section 9 of the separate paper on Rehabilitation Section of Your Plans**). As a veteran's life circumstances change options other than aids and appliances within the veteran's **home** may need to be considered and whether the veteran is at risk in their current environment or state of independence. Alternative accommodation for the veteran may be a solution to ensure the veteran's safety and wellbeing (for example residential care at the veteran's expense or through alternative sources of funding such as Ministry of Social Development residential care subsidy).

## 6. What Veterans' Affairs will cover

- 6.1 Veterans' Affairs is required to provide suitable replacement if the aid or appliance currently owned or possessed is unfit to assist in restoring the veteran's independence because of its age or condition.
- 6.2 Veterans' Affairs may provide an aid or appliance by way of hire for a defined term if the hire is a cost effective alternative to the purchase of that aid or appliance.

*Clause 8(3)(b) and (6), Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014*

- 6.3 Veterans' Affairs will only provide a replacement on the basis of an assessment by an appropriate health practitioner of the need for replacement and provision of details of a more suitable aid or appliance to meet the veteran's needs. The veteran must not dispose of the existing aid or appliance until this assessment has been completed and Veterans' Affairs has given approval for funding the replacement.

## 7. Limitations on what Veterans' Affairs will cover

- 7.1 In general, District Health Boards provide equipment to patients on short-term loan for up to six weeks from the date they are discharged from an inpatient, day-patient, outpatient or emergency department service. There is no requirement therefore for Veterans' Affairs to cover the costs of such aids and appliances.
- 7.2 Veterans' Affairs will not provide funding for aids or appliances if they are provided by public health services or the ACC on a long-term basis. If the DHB or ACC has declined to provide the aid or appliance, Veterans' Affairs will consider their reasons for declining and may also decline.
- 7.3 In addition, Veterans' Affairs is not required to:
- provide any aid or appliance if the veteran already owns, or possesses on permanent loan an aid or appliance which performs a similar function to the one(s) requested (unless it is too old or in bad condition/not fit for purpose)
  - pay for maintenance, repairs or replacement of any aid or appliance or consumable items in association with an aid or appliance that the veteran has neglected, abused or misused

- provide equipment or aids if the veteran had suitable items but disposed of them
- provide any artificial implant, unless the implant is implanted as part of a surgical procedure approved by Veterans' Affairs (but for cochlear implants see below)

*Clause 8(2), (3), (4) and (5), Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014*

- replace lost or stolen or damaged aids and appliances (veterans are expected to have, and self-fund, household insurance cover for the aid and appliance that Veterans' Affairs provides)
- fund general household objects, e.g. beds, leisure equipment.

7.4 Veterans' Affairs may fund adjustable beds or chairs where a suitable health practitioner has assessed that there is a specific need and this equipment cannot be provided by the public health system or ACC. If Veterans' Affairs does decide to fund, it will do so on the condition that:

- the veteran insures the adjustable chair or bed and is responsible for routine maintenance
- if there are any functional problems with the chair or bed, the veteran will contact Veterans' Affairs who will work with the veteran and the warranty conditions to arrange repair
- if the veteran sells the bed or chair, Veterans' Affairs will not replace it (the veteran should discuss with Veterans' Affairs the possibilities for disposal, such as gifting to the RSA).

7.5 Veterans' Affairs will not fund cochlear implants (**Go to separate policy on Hearing Aids and Appliances**).

7.6 **Go to separate paper on Dental Treatment** for dental implants.

## 8. Veterans Living Overseas

8.1 The social rehabilitation aids and appliances policy applies equally to all New Zealand veterans, irrespective of their country of residence.

## 9. Travelling Overseas

9.1 Veterans' Affairs is not responsible for the cost of repair or replacement of aids and appliances that are lost or damaged while a veteran is travelling overseas.

9.2 Veterans who are travelling overseas should ensure that aids and appliances that they take with them are covered for loss or damage by travel insurance.

## 10. Reviews, Appeals and Complaints

- 10.1 If a veteran disagrees about a decision concerning eligibility for an entitlement or service **see separate policies on Reviews and Appeals**. If a veteran is concerned about Veterans' Affairs' administration of an entitlement or service **see separate policy on Complaints**.

## Glossary

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### **accepted injury or illness** [policy definition]

Means an injury, illness or condition that Veterans' Affairs accepts as being service-related.

### **aid or appliance** [clause 7 Schedule 2]

Means any item likely to assist in restoring a veteran to independence.

### **guardian** [section 7]

Has the same meaning as in section 15 of the Care of Children Act 2004.

### **health practitioner**

[section 5(1) of Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, as referenced by section 7 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014]

Means a person who is, or is deemed to be, registered with an authority as a practitioner of a particular health profession

### **home** [section 7]

- (a) means residential premises in which the veteran lives and that are owned, rented, or otherwise lawfully occupied by the veteran or the veteran's parent, guardian, spouse or partner; and
- (b) includes residential premises in which the veteran proposes to live after they are built and that will be owned, rented, or otherwise lawfully occupied by the veteran or the veteran's parent, guardian, spouse, or partner; and
- (c) includes any other premises in which the veteran lives and for which the veteran is solely responsible for home maintenance; but
- (d) does not include any hotel or motel, or any hospital, hostel, rest home, or other institution.

### **independence** [clause 7 Schedule 2]

Includes the capacity to function in the following areas:

- (a) communication
- (b) domestic activities
- (c) educational participation
- (d) financial management
- (e) health care
- (f) hygiene care
- (g) mobility
- (h) motivation
- (i) safety management
- (j) sexuality
- (k) cognitive tasks of daily living, such as orientation, planning, and task completion
- (l) use of transport.

### **member of the armed forces** [section 7]

Means a person who is or has been a member of the New Zealand armed force raised by the Governor-General on behalf of the Sovereign,—

- (a) whether in New Zealand or elsewhere; and
- (b) whether before or after the passing of this Act.



**partner** [section 7]

Means a civil union partner or a de facto partner.

**qualifying operational service** [section 8]

Means:

- (a) service on any deployment treated as a war or emergency for the purposes of the War Pensions Act 1954; or
- (b) service on any deployment declared to be operational service under section 9.

**qualifying routine service** [section 8]

Means service in the armed forces before 1 April 1974 that is not qualifying operational service.

**rehabilitation outcome** [clause 7 Schedule 2]

Means:

- (a) before an individual rehabilitation plan is agreed, a rehabilitation goal, objective, or result determined by Veterans' Affairs
- (b) if an individual rehabilitation plan is agreed, a goal, objective, or result specified in the plan.

**veteran** [section 7]

Means—

- (a) a member of the armed forces who took part in qualifying operational service at the direction of the New Zealand Government; or
- (aa) a member of the armed forces who took part in qualifying routine service before 1 April 1974; or
- (b) a person—
  - (i) who has been—
    - (A) appointed as an employee of the Defence Force under section 61A of the Defence Act 1990; or
    - (B) seconded to the Defence Force with the permission of the Chief of Defence Force; and
  - (ii) who took part in qualifying operational service at the direction of the New Zealand Government; or
- (c) a person who, immediately before the commencement of Part 3 of this Act, is eligible for a pension under the following provisions of the War Pensions Act 1954:
  - (i) section 19 (but only if the person was a member of the forces);
  - (ii) section 55 or 56;
  - (iii) Parts 4 and 5.