



JUNE 1994

**Standards for  
Needs Assessment  
for People with  
Disabilities**

 **MINISTRY OF  
HEALTH**

MANATU HAŪORA



The 'Standards for Needs Assessment 1994' are one of the most advanced tools for ensuring full service user participation in the establishment of suitable support services.

At the present time (2012) the Mental Health National Service Framework includes the following service specifications.

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| <p>NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE CO-ORDINATION: ADULT<br/>TIER THREE. SERVICE SPECIFICATION<br/>MHA18A, MHA18B, MHA18C, MHA18D, MHA18E</p> |
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| <p>NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE COORDINATION: INFANT, CHILD, ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH SERVICES<br/>TIER THREE. SERVICE SPECIFICATION<br/>MHI51A, MHI51B, MHI51C, MHI51D</p> |
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Both documents have the following requirements.

***"Needs assessment:** The assessment process meets the requirement of the Standards for Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (Ministry of Health 1994) and utilises a recognised best practice assessment tool. The assessment process includes:"*

The service specifications can be obtained from:

<http://www.midlandmentalhealthnetwork.co.nz/page/118-MoH-National-Service-Specifications-Project+Signed-Off-Phase-One-Specifications-ADULT>

Copies of the 1994 standards can be obtained via [www.miramare.co.nz](http://www.miramare.co.nz) You can print this.

or Hard copies can be obtained via printing.com Dunedin - Email [dunedin@printing.com](mailto:dunedin@printing.com) for a cost quotation.

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## Foreword

In 1992 the Ministers of Health and Social Welfare produced the public consultation document *Support for Independence: A Discussion Paper for the Delivery of Disability Support Services*.

The people and organisations who responded to the document sent a clear message that assessment was the key to identifying disability support service needs. People with disabilities told us that while a range of assessment mechanisms were necessary for different situations, assessments varied across the country and consistent standards were needed.

In response, the Government made a commitment to having minimum national standards that providers of assessment services should meet. The *Standards for Needs Assessment for People with Disabilities* contained in this manual fulfil that commitment.

In developing the Standards, the Ministry of Health has consulted widely with people with disabilities, caregivers, groups representing people with disabilities, service providers and regional health authorities (RHAs).

The Standards represent a fundamental change in the approach to assessment. In the past, the purpose of assessment was often to determine people's eligibility for existing services - people had to fit the services rather than the other way round.

The new process of assessment will:

- focus on the needs of the person, their caregivers and family\whanau
- be a partnership between the person and their assessor
- recognise the knowledge and experience of the person, their caregivers and family\whanau
- recognise the importance of culture including disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation

The new Standards will be introduced on 1 July 1994. From that date RHAs will be required to purchase assessment services from providers who meet the Standards or can demonstrate that they are working to achieve them.

The manual contains the Standards that assessment services will be required to meet within the next three years. This period of time will allow services to make the organisational changes required and to develop the necessary skills in a planned way.

The implementation of the Standards presents both challenges and opportunities for the providers of assessment services, and gives people with disabilities the process necessary to obtain effective, innovative and appropriate disability support services.



**Jenny Shipley**  
Minister of Health



## Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to the development of the *Standards for Needs Assessment for People with Disabilities*. Drafts of the Standards were widely circulated to consumers, caregivers and providers of disability support services. Valuable assistance was also provided by Maori whanau networks and Pacific Islands fono groups.

In particular, the Ministry of Health extends its appreciation to the members of the National Assessment Working Group who coordinated the development of the Standards.

James Brodie, Special Education Service

Jill Calveley, North Health

Adele Carpinter, Consultant

Di Davies, Ministry of Health

Jane Doherty, Southern Regional Health Authority

Ted Gallen, Central Regional Health Authority

Sue Gates, IHC

Jan Green, Ministry of Health and Caregiver

Kenneth Hand, Editor, Ministry of Health

Carmel Irwin, Ministry of Health

Wi Keelan, Ministry of Health (Senior Maori Advisor)

Jamesina Kett, Waikato Community Living Trust (Maori Representative)

Julie Lowe, Midland Health

Georgina Muir, Central Regional Health Authority

Fiona North, Ministry of Health

Jean O'Callaghan, Southern Regional Health Authority

John Stott, Southern Regional Health Authority

Steph Roberts, New Zealand Income Support Service

Carol Searle, Ministry of Health

Jiff Stewart, Social Policy Agency, Department of Social Welfare

Keriata Stuart, Ministry of Health

Liz Wilson, Consultant

We also wish to acknowledge the direction and support of Bert Biggs, Rehabilitation Studies Massey University; Don MacKenzie, Consultant; John Sinclair, The Treasury; Lester Mundell, Social Policy Agency, Department of Social Welfare; Paul Curry, Ministry of Health and the Disability Support Services Steering Group.

We are grateful to the consumers, caregivers, and organisations who provided valuable data during the consultative phases of the project.

The staff of the twelve services where the Standards were field tested deserve special thanks for giving so much of their time and experience. Thanks also go to the more than sixty individuals and groups who commented on the draft Standards.

To all those people who supported the development of the Standards, including those individuals or organisations which do not appear in these acknowledgments, our grateful thanks to you also.



# Introduction

A new approach to assessments for people with disabilities has been developed by the Government and the disability community. The new approach takes account of the comprehensive needs of people with disabilities, so that appropriate services can be co-ordinated to help meet those needs. This is a change from the current system where people are often assessed for their eligibility for existing support services. The *Standards for Needs Assessment for People with Disabilities* embody the new approach to assessment.

## What is a needs assessment?

A needs assessment is a process of determining the current abilities, resources, goals and needs of a person with a disability and which of those needs are the most important. The purpose of the assessment is to decide what a person needs to achieve independence and participate fully in society, in accordance with their abilities, resources and goals. A person's comprehensive needs may include their recreational, social and personal development needs; their training and education needs; and their vocational and employment needs.

Needs assessments will be carried out by assessment services. A needs assessment service may be provided by a person, a group of people within a larger organisation, or a separate organisation, contracted by a regional health authority.

## What are the Standards for Needs Assessment?

The Standards for Needs Assessment are minimum national standards for assessment services for people with disabilities. The Standards describe what is required for a high quality, effective needs assessment service. The Standards have been designed to ensure that assessment services provide nationally consistent, high quality assessments while allowing for flexibility and innovation in the delivery of those services.

The Standards reflect the kind of assessments that people with disabilities have asked for. They provide assessment in a way which recognises and is compatible with the person's cultural beliefs, values and aspirations. They can be used by all existing disability support services (including residential, vocational, social or educational) and, most importantly, by people with disabilities.

## Who will use the Standards?

The Standards will primarily be used by assessment services, particularly assessment facilitators and specialist assessors; by regional health authorities; by people with disabilities, their caregivers, family/whanau and friends; and by groups which represent people with disabilities.

Regional health authorities will purchase assessment services which meet the Standards and the needs of the people of their regions. They will use the Standards to evaluate and monitor the assessment services they purchase.

People with disabilities will be able to use the Standards to judge the quality of the assessment services they receive. Caregivers, family and whanau, and groups representing, or advocating for, people with disabilities will also be able to use the Standards to evaluate assessment services.





### **The needs assessment process**

A needs assessment is about 'partnership' between a person with a disability and the assessment service; a partnership which recognises and respects the person's knowledge and experience of disability. The assessment service will encourage full participation by the person, their caregivers, family/whanau and friends, if the person wishes those people to be involved.

The person and the assessment service will agree on an assessment facilitator who is acceptable to the person, to manage the assessment process. The assessment facilitator will be responsible for informing the person about the assessment process and ensuring that they understand what is happening throughout. The assessment facilitator will inform the person about their rights and responsibilities, and ensure that the assessment process meets the person's cultural needs.

The assessment process ensures that the person's privacy and the confidentiality of the information they give will be safeguarded. The person has the right to have access to all information arising from their assessment.

caregivers and family/whanau to evaluate whether an assessment service is meeting the Standards.

The Standards are supplemented by six specific guidelines which give more detail on key aspects of the needs assessment process. The Specific Guidelines must be followed to meet the *Standards for Needs Assessment for People with Disabilities*.

### **The Needs Assessment Manual**

The Needs Assessment Manual is made up of two parts: the Standards and the Specific Guidelines. A glossary of terms is also included in the Manual.

The Standards are based on seven key principles which embody the objectives of the assessment process. Each standard has a commentary which contains more detail about how assessment services are expected to perform. Each standard also has its own performance indicators. The performance indicators are questions that can be asked by RHAs or people with disabilities, their









# Standards for Needs Assessment for People with Disabilities



## PRINCIPLE

Participation of community members and groups will support the development of assessment services which are flexible, easy to have access to, and responsive to the community they serve.

### Standard 1 Entry to be easy

#### Standard 1.1

**The assessment service will distribute clear information about the service, ensuring that it is widely known.**

The assessment service will outline what assessment is, and will provide information about the service - where it is located, how to make contact and what it provides.

The service should ensure that information is available in English, Maori, Pacific Islands and other languages and in a variety of forms of communication (such as large print, braille, tape) that reflect the needs of people using the service.

Information must be widely available and promoted throughout the community. This could be achieved by providing information to community networks and organisations who specialise in communicating with particular groups - for instance Disability Information Centres or Citizens' Advice Bureaux - or people such as general practitioners or district nurses. Several assessment services could establish joint initiatives to advertise in this way.

#### Performance indicators 1.1

- ▶ What methods does the service use to inform people about the assessment service?
- ▶ What information is provided in these communications?
- ▶ Are pamphlets and booklets about how to contact the service available to people free of charge?
- ▶ Is this information available in the appropriate community languages and forms of communication?
- ▶ Does the service carry out promotion programmes? What are some examples?

#### Standard 1.2

**The assessment service will action all referrals and assessments promptly and appropriately.**

When a person contacts the assessment service about an assessment, the service will determine whether the person has disability-related needs, or needs arising from some other cause.



When a person with a disability has needs not related to the disability, they should be advised which agency to contact. For example, an acute health need would be referred to another health agency; income or housing difficulties would be referred to the New Zealand Income Support Service or Housing New Zealand.

When a person contacts the service about an assessment, the service will obtain enough information from them to ensure the person receives a prompt assessment from the most appropriate person. The information will be recorded and passed on to the assessment facilitator.

The service will ensure that assessment facilitators are able to contact a range of specialist assessors (for example, vocational, mental health, special education) to provide a comprehensive assessment.

### **Performance indicators 1.2**

- ▶ Does the service carry out assessments promptly and appropriately? How is this measured?
- ▶ How does the service gather information from people who are assessed and/or referral agencies to determine whether the service is appropriate for them?
- ▶ What type of advice/referral is provided where a person has health needs not addressed by the service? What are some examples of this?
- ▶ Does the service have access to a range of specialist assessors to provide comprehensive assessments? How does this happen?
- ▶ Do staff develop and maintain liaisons with relevant agencies and services (such as hospitals, GPs, specialists, schools, workplaces, government agencies)? What are some examples?

### **Standard 1.3**

**The assessment service will have established procedures to ensure that people in crisis are referred to services which can provide immediate assistance.**

The assessment service will have guidelines, known to all staff, which identify a crisis. The guidelines will have an after-hours contact. Staff will know the appropriate people or agencies in their area to whom they can refer people in crisis.

### **Performance indicator 1.3**

- ▶ Does the service have an established procedure for responding to people in crisis for assessment after hours (for example, roster system, telephone diversion to local casualty unit)? How does this occur?

#### **Standard 1.4**

##### **The assessment service will be accessible to all people with disabilities.**

Wherever possible, the assessment should be carried out in the person's home. If the person being assessed has urgent needs, their preference for the location of the assessment is paramount.

The service will be located in a convenient place close to public transport. It should be well signposted in languages appropriate to the local community. Access to buildings will comply with statutory codes.

The service will obtain assistance for people who have alternative communication needs (for example, people who use sign language) and those for whom English is a second language.

#### **Performance indicators 1.4**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>► Where are assessments generally carried out?</p> <p>If assessments are generally carried out at the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is the service located in a visible and convenient part of the community it serves?</li><li>• can the service be easily reached by public transport?</li><li>• is there an easily read signpost in the vicinity of the service directing people to its location?</li><li>• does the service have an easily read sign prominently displayed outside the building with the service's name, telephone number and hours of operation? Does the sign have</li></ul> | <p>information in the appropriate community languages?</p> <p>► Does the telephone system operate efficiently, and does it provide information 24 hours a day (a recorded message or call diversion unit may be required)?</p> <p>► Does the service inform people in its community who have alternative communication needs of the availability of interpreters when using the service? How does this occur?</p> <p>► Does the building comply with all statutory codes on access to buildings?</p> <p>► Does the service have documented entry procedures which are friendly to visitors and are followed by all staff?</p> |
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#### **Standard 1.5**

##### **The assessment service will have simple, efficient and welcoming entry procedures.**

Obtaining an assessment should be as easy as possible. A person should be able to initiate the assessment process through a visit or telephone call. They may refer themselves, or be referred to the service by another agency such as a GP.

The first visit should take place within two weeks following first contact with the assessment service.

#### **Performance indicators 1.5**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>► What steps are taken to make people feel welcome to the service? What are some examples of this?</p> | <p>► How long after first contact is made does the first visit usually take place?</p> |
|---|--|



## Standard 2 Written policies and procedures

### Standard 2.1

#### **The assessment service will have written policies and procedures followed by all staff.**

The assessment service will have documented policies and procedures which reflect current knowledge and principles of assessment. These will be consistent with the objectives of the service, and with statutory legislation and regulations (for example, the Health Information Privacy Code) and the requirements of professional bodies.

The assessment service will have policies for the assessment of Maori, Pacific Islands peoples, and other ethnic groups.

The assessment service will have clear written directives for staff regarding the scope or limitations of their responsibilities and activities.

The service will consult with consumers in the development of policies and procedures. Policies and procedures involving all aspects of the assessment process will be reviewed and updated at least annually.

### Performance indicators 2.1

- ▶ Are there documented, dated policies and procedures which reflect current knowledge and principles of assessment?
- ▶ Are these consistent with the objectives of the service, statutory legislation, and regulations (for example, the Health Information Privacy Code) and the requirements of professional bodies?
- ▶ Are staff actively involved in the formulation of policies and procedures?
- ▶ How are the views of consumers and caregivers included in the formulation of policies and procedures?
- ▶ Are there policies and procedures for the care of Maori, Pacific Islands peoples and other ethnic groups?
- ▶ Do the policies and procedures provide clear directives detailing the scope and limitations of the responsibilities and activities of the service's staff?
- ▶ When were the policies and/or procedures last reviewed?

## PRINCIPLE

People with disabilities will be assessed through a process which is coordinated, culturally safe, flexible and responsive to the specific needs of people and their caregivers.

### Standard 3 The assessment process will be culturally safe

#### Standard 3.1

**The assessment service will have policies which ensure that assessments are conducted in a culturally safe manner.**

'Cultural safety' can be defined as the provision of services in a way that recognises and is compatible with the person's cultural values, beliefs and needs. This may include the person's disability group, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

Assessment service staff will take account of the cultural background and preferences of the person being assessed. The assessment service will consult with cultural groups in its community, and take account of the ways in which people from different cultures give and receive information and services.

The assessment service will discuss and negotiate with the person:

- the selection of an assessment facilitator who understands their cultural needs and is prepared to do what they can do meet them
- an agreed process for the assessment which is suitable to them
- the place in which they feel comfortable and would like the assessment to take place
- the people they would like to attend their assessment, recognising the importance of family/whanau, caregivers and community support, and the person's right to have an advocate present.

#### Performance indicators 3.1

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|---|---|
| ▶ Is the person being assessed consulted about their preference of assessment facilitator?                  | ▶ Is the assessment process always discussed with the person to decide appropriate methods to proceed?                                  |
| ▶ Is the person being assessed consulted about who will attend the assessment and where it will take place? | ▶ Are traditional or alternative assessment practices and/or resources used where appropriate? What are some examples of this?          |
| ▶ Are assessments conducted in a place where the person feels safe? How does the service know this?         | ▶ Does the service consult with the appropriate cultural groups in the provision of assessment services for them? How does this happen? |





### **Standard 3.2**

#### **The assessment service will ensure the needs of Maori are met throughout the assessment process.**

All assessment services must have policies and procedures which enable the delivery of culturally safe services to Maori.

Where there are significant numbers of Maori consumers, services should develop effective consultative relationships to provide an understanding of the kawa (cultural etiquette) of local iwi (tangata whenua) and other Maori consumer groups.

Staff resources and the design of the service building will facilitate the participation of whanau and extended family in the assessment process.

The assessment service will ensure that all staff are aware of the impact of their own culture upon people from other cultures, particularly Maori. The service will have adequate numbers of appropriately trained staff who practice in a culturally safe manner available to meet the needs of Maori.

The assessment service will ensure that where possible, Maori people are assessed by other Maori and are able to use their own language during assessment.

#### **Performance indicators 3.2**

- ▶ Does the service have policies and/or procedures for the care of Maori?
- ▶ Are there Maori assessment staff in the service?
- ▶ Does the service facilitate the participation of a kaumatua or Maori consultant to ensure cultural safety if the person prefers this? What are some examples?
- ▶ Are all assessments carried out at the assessment centre? Where else are assessments carried out?
- ▶ How does the service ensure the participation of family/whanau in the assessment process?
- ▶ Does the service consult with tangata whenua and/or Maori consumer groups?
- ▶ Do human resource policies take account of cultural issues by:
  - inclusion of cultural knowledge in job descriptions
  - induction and continuing training?

### **Standard 3.3**

**The assessment service will ensure that the needs of Pacific Islands peoples and other ethnic groups are met throughout the assessment process.**

The service will have policies and procedures in place to ensure that assessments are undertaken in a way which is culturally safe for Pacific Islands peoples. The service will recognise that within Pacific Islands communities there are many different cultures, and they are not uniform in their language and cultural practices.

The assessment service will have policies and procedures in place to ensure that assessments are undertaken in a way which is culturally safe for people from other ethnic groups.

### **Performance indicators 3.3**

- ▶ Are there policies and/or procedures for the assessment of Pacific Islands peoples and other ethnic groups?
- ▶ Are there any assessment staff from Pacific Islands and other ethnic groups?
- ▶ What contacts does the service have with Pacific Islands groups and other ethnic groups?
- ▶ Are non-Pacific Islands staff offered any form of cultural awareness training?
- ▶ Does the service facilitate the participation of respected individuals or consultants and interpreters from the Pacific Islands and other ethnic minorities to ensure cultural safety, if the person being assessed prefers this?





## PRINCIPLE

The assessment service will uphold the rights of people being assessed to informed decision making and independent expression, and will treat them with dignity and consideration. The person, their family/whanau and caregivers will be respected for their knowledge and experience of disability.

### Standard 4 People-oriented process

#### Standard 4.1

**The assessment service will treat the person being assessed with dignity and respect at all times.**

The person being assessed and the assessment facilitator will be partners in the assessment process. In policy and in practice, the person, their caregivers and family/whanau will be respected for their knowledge and experience of disability.

The assessment process will recognise that each person and their situation is unique. Staff of the service will show proper respect for cultural and personal beliefs, acknowledging their importance to the person's well-being.

#### Performance indicators 4.1

- ▶ Does the service have a policy and/or procedure to ensure that staff show proper respect for a person's cultural and personal beliefs? How does it ensure that the policy is carried out?
- ▶ Are people encouraged to comment on how they respond to the service?

#### Standard 4.2

**The assessment service will preserve the person's rights.**

The service will implement appropriate measures to ensure the rights and interests of people being assessed are protected.

The assessment service will have a written procedure known to staff, which identifies when people are unable to represent their own interests. This will include identifying whether a person is of testamentary capacity or in need of the protection afforded under the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988. There will be written procedures covering the steps that should be taken if staff believe that a person being assessed cannot represent their own interests.

All assessors must have an understanding of legislation and regulations which identify the age at which a client is entitled to speak and decide on their own behalf.

The assessment service should have information available on how to obtain support for people who cannot represent their own interests.

#### **Performance indicators 4.2**

- ▶ Are staff familiar with all aspects of the policy on the rights and responsibilities of people being assessed?
- ▶ Is appropriate information available for people who cannot represent their own interests?
- ▶ Does the service ensure that people being assessed receive written information about their rights? How does this happen?

#### **Standard 4.3**

**The assessment service will provide opportunities for family/whanau and caregivers to participate in the assessment process, with the knowledge of the person being assessed.**

The assessment process must respect that the person, their family/whanau and caregivers have the right to be involved at all stages of the assessment.

It is important that family/whanau and caregivers are consulted during the assessment, and that their support or service is not overlooked when developing an understanding of the person's current support system. However, the assessment service must ensure that the person being assessed knows how they will be involved. When family/whanau are involved, the assessment facilitator will ensure that they understand the purpose of the assessment, what will happen, and their role in the process.

The needs of caregivers should be considered. The assessment facilitator will assess the person with the disability, but also ensure that the caregiver knows they can refer themselves separately for an assessment of their own needs.

The assessment service will ensure that members of the family/whanau or caregivers who may wish to be interviewed separately from the person being assessed have this opportunity, but that the person being assessed is aware that this will happen.

Where people are unable to represent themselves due to the nature of their disability (see Standard 4.2), the assessment service will gather information from the person who has the right to represent the needs of the person being assessed.

#### **Performance indicators 4.3**

- ▶ How does the service ensure that family/whanau or caregivers are able to participate in the assessment?
- ▶ Is the informed consent of the person being assessed sought before family/whanau and caregivers are involved in the assessment?
- ▶ Does the assessment facilitator explain the purpose of the assessment and the role of the family/whanau and caregiver in the assessment? How is this done?
- ▶ Are the needs of the family/whanau and caregivers identified during the assessment process? How does this occur?
- ▶ Are there facilities to meet the wishes of family/whanau or caregivers who may want to be interviewed separately from the person being assessed?



#### **Standard 4.4**

##### **The person being assessed will agree who will be present during their assessment.**

The person being assessed has the right to know the names of all people attending and the reasons for their presence.

There will be occasions when people other than the assessment facilitator ask to attend an assessment (for example, for training). The assessment facilitator should ensure that the person being assessed knows if anyone else wishes to be at the assessment, in time for them to make an informed decision about who should be present.

Some people may wish members of their family/whanau or other people to be present, or excluded, when particular information is being collected or when some sensitive topics are being discussed. The assessment facilitator must respect the person's rights to agree who will be present and help facilitate this.

#### **Performance indicator 4.4**

- ▶ Does the assessment facilitator obtain the informed consent of the person about who will be present at the assessment? How is this done?

#### **Standard 4.5**

##### **The assessment is to be undertaken in an environment that is comfortable for the person and appropriate to their needs.**

The ideal place to do the assessment is in the person's home, or in a place where the person feels comfortable (such as a marae health centre). However, for reasons such as the need for special equipment, or costs to the service, this may not always be possible. The service should be flexible in meeting the person's preference, but must achieve a balance between quality and efficiency of the service.

The assessment should be undertaken in a non-intrusive environment, which respects the person's right to privacy. Facilities at the assessment service should provide a warm relaxed atmosphere.

#### **Performance indicators 4.5**

- ▶ Are assessments carried out in people's homes? Are assessments carried out at other places (such as marae centre, school or workplace)?
- ▶ If the person being assessed cannot come to the service, are special arrangements made to meet their preferences during the assessment?

## PRINCIPLE

People undertaking any assessment will be competent, knowledgeable about the disabilities of people they assess, respectful of people with disabilities, their family/whanau and caregivers, and acceptable to the person being assessed.

### Standard 5 The appropriate people will be involved in the assessment process

#### Standard 5.1

**The assessment facilitator will work with the person being assessed to identify and prioritise their needs.**

The person being assessed makes an essential contribution to the assessment. Without their full involvement the assessment will not be accurate or comprehensive.

The assessment facilitator will explain to the person their right to be fully involved in, and be acknowledged for the experience they bring to, the assessment. The assessment service will recognise the person's contribution by seeking their participation in all decisions made about the assessment process, and when gathering information about their needs.

The person's input will be sought, recorded and used to identify and prioritise their needs. At the end of the assessment process, the assessment facilitator and the person being assessed will record that they are in agreement on the outcomes.

#### Performance indicators 5.1

- ▶ Are people formally advised that they have a valuable role in the assessment and determination of priorities? How is this done? How does the service ensure this is always done?
- ▶ Has the person being assessed recorded their agreement or other comments regarding the outcome of the assessment process?
- ▶ Is the person being assessed asked to participate in the assessment? How does the service ensure this happens?

#### Standard 5.2

**The assessment facilitator will ensure that people have access to advocacy services.**

The assessment service will ensure that the person's right to advocacy is safeguarded. The service will have an established procedure which enables the person or their representative to obtain an advocate who is independent of the service.

Information about how to contact an advocate will be readily available in a variety of ways to meet the disability needs of all people who use the service. Specific Guideline 3 provides more information on advocacy services.



## **Performance indicator 5.2**

- ▶ Does the service have a policy and/or procedure to ensure that the person's access to advocacy services is preserved? How does this operate? How does the service ensure this happens?

## **Standard 5.3**

**The assessment facilitator will ensure that the person is fully informed of all steps in the assessment process.**

The person being assessed must understand what is happening at all times. The assessment facilitator will provide information so that the person understands their rights and responsibilities throughout the assessment process. The person being assessed should always have opportunity to ask for clarification of what is happening.

The person being assessed should be able to withdraw from the assessment if they wish to. If a person chooses to withdraw from their assessment, the assessment facilitator will ensure they understand that this may compromise their eligibility for services funded by the regional health authority.

## **Performance indicators 5.3**

- ▶ Are there policies and/or procedures to ensure that staff keep the person informed at all stages of the process on what is happening? How is this done? How does the service ensure it is done?
- ▶ If people want to withdraw from the assessment, how are they advised of the implications?

## **Standard 5.4**

**The assessment service will maintain continuity of personnel wherever possible.**

Continuity of assessment staff helps to build a trusting relationship between the person being assessed and the people involved in the assessment.

The service will allocate an assessment facilitator to work with the person being assessed. If it is at all possible, the same assessment facilitator will work with them throughout the assessment. The assessment facilitator's name will be entered on the person's record.

## **Performance indicators 5.4**

- ▶ Is an assessment facilitator appointed for each assessment? How does this occur?
- ▶ What steps are taken to ensure continuity of care?

### **Standard 5.5**

#### **The person has the right to be assessed by someone they trust.**

The person will be assessed by the most appropriate member of the assessment team. Where it is possible, they will have a choice of assessment staff and the ability to change their assessment facilitator if they wish to.

#### **Performance indicators 5.5**

- ▶ What steps are undertaken by the assessment facilitator to build a good relationship between themselves and the person being assessed?
- ▶ Where possible, is the person able to have an assessment facilitator of their choice? What are some examples? What happens when a person wants to change their assessment facilitator?

### **Standard 5.6**

#### **The assessment facilitator will ensure that all aspects of the assessment process are effectively coordinated.**

The assessment facilitator will ensure that:

- the process of assessment is as simple or as specialised as each person requires
- all appointments as part of the assessment are coordinated and timed to meet the needs of the person being assessed
- all information is brought together and compiled in the assessment report
- the person and their family/whanau or caregivers are kept informed during the process of assessment.

For more information on the role and responsibilities of the assessment facilitator, see Specific Guideline 2.

The assessment service will ensure the assessment report is received by the appropriate service coordination function, and that only relevant information is transferred to other agencies. This protects the person's privacy and ensures that the person being assessed will not have to give information more than once.

#### **Performance indicators 5.6**

- ▶ Is there an assessment facilitator responsible for coordinating the entire process of assessment?
- ▶ Is the assessment process coordinated and timed to meet the needs of the person being assessed?
- ▶ How does the service ensure that the necessary information is sent to other agencies?
- ▶ Is the agreement of the person being assessed sought in these cases? How is this done?
- ▶ Are records kept to ensure each step of the assessment process is completed? How does it ensure this is always done?



### **Standard 5.7**

**The assessment service will ensure that assessment facilitators hold appropriate qualifications and keep up to date with developments in their area of disability and assessment.**

The assessment facilitator will:

- have appropriate qualifications and competencies in their specific field of expertise
- be able to advise the person of the range of specialist assessment options available
- explain to the person their rights and responsibilities during the assessment.

The assessment service will also ensure that assessment facilitators have opportunities to develop their skills in, and knowledge about, improving in needs assessment.

### **Performance indicators 5.7**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ▶ Do all assessment facilitators hold recognised and relevant qualifications in their field of assessment? | ▶ How are staff who perform the assessment facilitation role encouraged to maintain and improve their skills in the field of assessment? Is there a budget for skills development? |
|--|--|

### **Standard 5.8**

**The assessment service will ensure that specialist assessors hold appropriate qualifications, currently practise in a relevant field, and keep up to date with developments in their area of assessment.**

The assessment service will ensure that all specialist assessors are appropriately qualified to provide a quality assessment based on established professional standards. The assessment service will also ensure that all staff have access to professional development.

Services will ensure that assessors, who may or may not be staff of the service, are available to meet the needs of Maori. Services will also provide assessors to meet the needs of Pacific Islands peoples and those of other ethnic groups.

### **Performance indicators 5.8**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ▶ Do all assessment staff hold recognised and relevant qualifications in their field of assessment?  | ▶ What steps do the assessment service have to take to ensure that sufficient assessors are available to meet the needs of Maori?   |
| ▶ Are staff encouraged to maintain and develop their professional skills in the field of assessment? | ▶ What steps do the assessment service have to take to ensure that sufficient assessors are available to meet the needs of Pacific Islands peoples and other ethnic groups? |
| ▶ What forms of professional development are available to staff?                                     |   |

### **Standard 5.9**

**At the request of the person being assessed, the service will facilitate participation of a specialist in Maori tikanga from the person's iwi or other Maori group.**

Services should develop effective consultation links with local iwi. The participation of a kaumatua or specialist from the iwi will ensure that the service meets the preference of Maori, where requested, to be assessed by people who from their cultural perspective are recognised, competent practitioners.

### **Performance indicator 5.9**

- ▶ Is a specialist in Maori tikanga (as recognised by the iwi and the person) available to participate in the assessment process if the person so wishes? How does the service ensure this happens?

### **Standard 5.10**

**The service will ensure that all assessors undertake assessments only in the area of their own competence.**

When a specialist assessment is required, that assessor will have proven competence in that field. If they are not competent, they will refer the person being assessed back to the assessment facilitator, who will arrange for an assessor with the appropriate skills and qualifications.

### **Performance indicator 5.10**

- ▶ What steps are taken to ensure that assessments are only carried out by people who are appropriately qualified in the area being assessed?





## PRINCIPLE

Communicating information regarding all aspects of assessment will promote self-determination and choice for people with disabilities. This will include information about their individual rights and obligations throughout the assessment process, and the availability or choice of assessment services.

### Standard 6 Information will be provided to the person being assessed

#### Standard 6.1

**Information will be provided to the person being assessed in a way that is appropriate to their communication needs.**

The assessment report will be presented in a form which is appropriate to the communication needs of the person being assessed. This may require interpretation or translation in some cases. Alternative communication forms (such as braille, tape, bliss symbols, facilitative graphics) will be used when necessary.

#### Performance indicators 6.1

- ▶ Are assessment forms available in languages and formats representative of the disability groups and community the service deals with?
- ▶ Are copies of the assessment forms available to the person being assessed or their caregiver and/or the person representing their interests?

#### Standard 6.2

**The person will be given information about their rights and responsibilities. This should be explained to them before they consent to take part in an assessment.**

The Rights and Responsibilities document (which can be found in Specific Guideline 1) will be given to the person at the beginning of the process, or before the assessment if possible. The document outlines the rights and responsibilities of a person during their needs assessment. The assessment facilitator will confirm that the person understands the document before the needs assessment takes place.

Information will be available in languages and forms which are easily understood by all groups in the community, including Maori, Pacific Islands peoples and other ethnic groups. The service will also obtain assistance for people who have alternative communication needs.

#### Performance indicator 6.2

- ▶ Does the assessment facilitator confirm that the person being assessed understands their rights and responsibilities? Show examples of how this happens.

### **Standard 6.3**

**People will have information about the action to take if at any time they are dissatisfied with the assessment.**

The assessment service will have information available to all people being assessed about the range of steps which can be taken to resolve disputes. It will be in forms which can be easily understood by all users of the service (see Specific Guideline 6 for more information).

#### **Performance indicators 6.3**

- ▶ Is there an established complaints and review system? How does this operate? Is information available on how people can use the system?
- ▶ How does the assessment service ensure that all complaints are properly handled?

### **Standard 6.4**

**The person will have access to any information recorded in connection with their assessment.**

The assessment service will ensure that the person being assessed has access to any information gathered or recorded in connection with their assessment. A copy of the final assessment report will always be given to the person.

The service will ensure that only relevant information is transferred to other agencies, and is only transferred with the knowledge and permission of the person being assessed.

#### **Performance indicators 6.4**

- ▶ Are people able to have access to all written information on their assessment?
- ▶ Are people provided with a copy of their final assessment report?
- ▶ Is the knowledge and permission of the person being assessed sought before information about them is transferred to another agency?



## PRINCIPLE

People being assessed will have access to information arising from their assessment. Their privacy and confidentiality will be safeguarded.

### Standard 7 Collection, storage and transfer of information will be carried out in a secure, confidential manner

#### Standard 7.1

**All information gathered during an assessment will be subject to the Health Information Privacy Code and the Privacy Act 1993.**

The assessment service will ensure that it complies with the requirements of the Code and the Act. The assessment facilitator will ensure that the person being assessed is aware of their rights under the Code and the Act. Where family/whanau or caregivers may want information they provide to be kept confidential, the service should ensure that it complies with the requirements of section 29 of the Privacy Act, as discussed in the Code.

#### Performance indicators 7.1

- ▶ How does the service ensure that it complies with the Health Information Privacy Code and Privacy Act 1993?
- ▶ Does the assessment facilitator inform the person being assessed of their rights under the Code and Act? How does the service ensure this is always done?

#### Standard 7.2

**The assessor will maintain accurate records of the process and outcome of assessment.**

All information collected during the assessment process will ensure the development of a full and accurate report. Everyone who enters information on a person's records will ensure that all information gathered or recorded is relevant and up to date.

#### Performance indicators 7.2

- ▶ Are there clear and appropriate procedures for the recording of the information collected during the assessment process?
- ▶ How does the service ensure information is relevant and up to date?
- ▶ Are assessors provided with any training on methods of keeping records?

### **Standard 7.3**

**All information collected will be treated as confidential, and all records kept secure.**

The assessment service will have established policies and procedures for safeguarding the information contained in records against loss, damage, or use by unauthorised persons.

Specific measures will be taken to ensure that computerised records are kept confidential.

There will be established procedures to ensure that appropriate information is transferred to other agencies only when permission has been given by the person concerned. Services will maintain awareness of the need for security and confidentiality when transferring information, for instance in the use of fax machines.

For further information on this principle, refer to Specific Guideline 5.

### **Performance indicators 7.3**

- ▶ Are there policies and/or procedures to ensure the confidentiality and security of records? How is this done?
- ▶ Is there a procedure to ensure that only appropriate information is transferred to other agencies? How is this done?





## PRINCIPLE

The self-determination and choice of people with disabilities and their caregivers will be promoted by an assessment process which incorporates their views and goals, and which produces an accurate summary of their needs as the basis for informed service planning and choice of services.

### **Standard 8    The outcomes of the assessment will be an accurate identification of individual needs**

#### **Standard 8.1**

**The outcome of the assessment should not be influenced by considerations of the availability of services or resources.**

Assessment should be conducted in an environment which is independent of service coordination and provision. The assessment service should be able to demonstrate that the outcomes of assessments are not influenced by existing disability structures and services.

#### **Performance indicator 8.1**

- ▶ How does the assessment service ensure that the assessments are independent of service coordination and provision?

#### **Standard 8.2**

**The assessment service will produce a comprehensive and accurate assessment of the person's abilities, resources, goals and needs.**

The assessment service will provide a comprehensive and accurate description of the person's needs in all the environments they participate or wish to participate in.

The assessment report will include the person's views and, where appropriate, the views of the caregiver. The assessment report will identify all areas where the person may be assisted to enhance independence and improve function by being referred to the appropriate service.

Refer to Specific Guideline 4 for details of what elements should be contained in the report.

#### **Performance indicators 8.2**

- ▶ How does the service collect the information required to identify the needs of the person being assessed? How does it place them in order of priority?
- ▶ Are the views of the person being assessed and (where appropriate) the views of family/whanau and caregivers included in the report? How is this done?
- ▶ Does the assessment report meet the criteria as listed in the Specific Guideline *Completing the Needs Assessment Report: Guidelines for Assessment Facilitators* which accompanies the Standards?
- ▶ Do assessment facilitators receive training in how to write an assessment report?

### **Standard 8.3**

**The assessment service will ensure that people who need vocational and educational assessments receive them.**

Vocational and educational needs are integral to a person's abilities, resources, goals and needs.

The assessment service will ensure that all young people under 21, as part of their assessment, have received an assessment of their educational and developmental needs. If they have not already received an assessment, or if their needs have changed, they should be referred to the Special Education Service (SES). The information from the SES assessment will form a part of the assessment report.

The assessment service will ensure all people between the ages of 14 and 65 have received a vocational assessment. If they have not already received an assessment, or if their needs have changed, they should be referred to the appropriate local vocational service. The information from the vocational assessment will form a part of the assessment report.

#### **Performance indicators 8.3**

- ▶ Does the service have access to specialist educational and vocational assessors?
- ▶ Do all people between the ages of 14 and 65 receive a vocational assessment?
- ▶ Does the information collected during the vocational assessment form part of the assessment report?
- ▶ Do all young people under the age of 21 receive an assessment of their educational and developmental needs? How does this happen?
- ▶ How is the information from the special education assessment included in the assessment report?

### **Standard 8.4**

**The person and their assessment facilitator will discuss the process and confirm that their report is accurate.**

The assessment facilitator will discuss with the person (and, where appropriate, their family/whanau and caregivers) the steps of the assessment process, and confirm that the person understands the final report. This is to ensure that the views of the person, and others where appropriate, have been accurately reflected. The person being assessed will have the opportunity to record their comments on the accuracy of the report and any changes made.

#### **Performance indicators 8.4**

- ▶ Do the reports reflect all of the views expressed during the assessment process?  
Whose views are recorded:
  - assessor
  - person being assessed
  - whanau/family and caregivers
  - other staff
  - other people, at the request of the person being assessed.
- ▶ Do people undergoing assessment discuss with staff the accuracy of the assessment reports on their completion?



### **Standard 8.5**

**The assessment facilitator will refer the person being assessed to the appropriate service coordination agency.**

When the needs assessment report has been completed, the assessment service will have established procedures to refer people to the appropriate place for service coordination, and to check that action has been taken.

### **Performance indicator 8.5**

- ▶ How does the assessment service ensure people are referred for appropriate service coordination?

### **Standard 8.6**

**The person will have the right of review if they are dissatisfied with the assessment.**

Where the person being assessed, or the person representing their interests, does not feel that the assessment produced a full and accurate identification of the person's needs, they may ask to have the assessment reviewed. If a review is required, the person or the person representing them should apply first to the assessment service or assessment facilitator. If they are not satisfied, they may directly approach the regional health authority.

More details can be found in Specific Guideline 6.

### **Performance indicators 8.6**

- ▶ Is the person made aware that they have the right to have their assessment reviewed?
- ▶ Is there a review system? Is information available on how to access the review system?







# Specific Guidelines to the Standards for Needs Assessment



## Specific Guideline 1 The rights and responsibilities of people being assessed

### Your Rights

- 1 You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- 2 Your knowledge and experience of disability must be respected
- 3 Your cultural and personal background, beliefs and values must be taken into account during your needs assessment
- 4 You must be informed about your rights and responsibilities in the needs assessment process before you agree to take part
- 5 You have the right to be involved in and informed at all stages during the assessment process
- 6 You are entitled to receive information in a form that you can understand
- 7 You may decide who will or will not be present at your needs assessment, for example, caregivers, family/whanau or friends
- 8 Your privacy and confidentiality must be respected at all times
- 9 You have the right to have access to all the information about your needs assessment, and to know how that information will be used
- 10 You can refuse to have, or to withdraw from, a needs assessment at any time
- 11 You have the right to raise any concerns you have about the needs assessment service and have them dealt with promptly



# Your Rights Explained

## **1 You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.**

You will not be discriminated against because of your culture values, or beliefs. Where possible, the needs assessment will take place in an environment in which you feel comfortable, and involve people who you choose.

You will be treated with courtesy at all times. Staff will speak politely to you, explain things fully, answer any questions you have, and be punctual in keeping appointments. If there is a delay for some reason, you will be told as soon as possible and given the choice of either making another appointment or being made comfortable while you wait.

## **2 Your knowledge and experience of disability must be respected.**

Your knowledge and experience of disability means that you have a good understanding of what your needs are. The assessment service will respect and use your knowledge and experience to achieve the best possible assessment of your needs.

## **3 Your cultural and personal background, beliefs and values must be taken into account during your needs assessment.**

Each service will have policies for meeting the needs of Maori, Pacific Islands peoples, and people of other cultural and ethnic groups. You should be able to have a needs assessment that is comfortable for you. This will mean:

- having an assessment facilitator who understands your cultural needs and is prepared to do what they can to meet them
- negotiating a process for the needs assessment that suits you

- having the needs assessment carried out in a place you feel comfortable
- deciding who you want to be present at your needs assessment, including support people (such as whanau, family or friends) or an advocate
- refusing permission to people you do not wish to be at your assessment.

The service will try to be flexible, but sometimes it may not be possible to meet all your needs - for example, if you live a long way from town, it may not be practical for the needs assessment to take place at your home. You should talk to the needs assessment facilitator to see what is possible.

## **4 You must be informed about your rights and responsibilities in the needs assessment process before you agree to take part.**

As well as describing the needs assessment process and answering your questions, an assessment facilitator should give you information about your rights and responsibilities and discuss these with you. They should also provide you with information about what you can do if you are not satisfied with any aspect of the needs assessment service. This information should be in a form which you can understand, and should be provided before you have your needs assessment.

## **5 You have the right to be involved in and informed at all stages during the assessment process.**

An assessment facilitator should explain what a needs assessment involves. This includes what will happen, how long it will probably take, what specifically will be required of you, and what options you have (such as choosing the assessment facilitator if this is possible).

The assessment facilitator should also explain what you can hope to achieve from taking part in a needs assessment and what will happen afterwards.

You have the right to ask questions. For example, you may want to know what a facilitator's qualifications and experience are before you agree to work with any particular facilitator. You will be working closely with your assessment facilitator, and the outcome of the assessment matters to you, so it's important to find someone you can get along with and trust.

The needs assessment process is reasonably flexible, and you can come to agreement with your assessment facilitator about what will happen before and during the assessment.

## **6 You are entitled to receive information in a form that you can understand.**

Information that is provided to you should be in a form that you can understand and use. This will usually be in some permanent form (print, large print, tape or computer disk) so that you can take it away with you. The information will be explained to you if you require it, and you are entitled to use the services of an interpreter or translator when necessary.

## **7 You may decide who will or will not be present at your needs assessment.**

### ***7a People to support you***

You may want to have particular people (your family/whanau, caregivers and friends) present to support you during your needs assessment. This is your right, and you may invite whoever you want to be with you. However, you may have to meet associated expenses such as

travel, accommodation and food costs for these people. If you invite too many people there may not be much room, or opportunities for people to contribute. Discuss this with your assessment facilitator before the assessment.

### ***7b People not directly involved in the needs assessment***

Besides you and your assessment facilitator, other people may need to be at part or all of your needs assessment because they have particular knowledge or skills that are necessary. Other people (parents, friends, professionals, students) may want to attend part or all of your needs assessment for various reasons. You should be consulted privately beforehand for your permission to have such people attend. If you do not want them to be there, it is your right to say so.

If there is a stranger at your needs assessment, you have a right to ask who they are and what they are doing there. If they do not need to be there to help with your needs assessment, and you do not want them there, you can ask the assessment facilitator to have them leave. This situation should not arise. If it does happen, talk to your assessment facilitator to ensure that it does not happen in future.

## **8 Your privacy and confidentiality must be respected at all times.**

You should be able to control who is at your needs assessment, and who sees or hears information regarding it. Such information should only include things that are directly relevant to your needs assessment. Things such as past criminal records or previous relationships are not relevant to your present disability support needs, and should not be examined or recorded. If you do not see why the needs assessment facilitator requires some information, ask to have its significance explained.



The needs assessment service must get your permission to share any information related to your needs assessment every time they intend to share it; for example, before passing it on to a specialist or anyone involved in service planning. You will always know who is going to see it.

The information will be stored in a safe place so that only those people who are meant to see it will have access to it.

### **9 You have the right to have access to all the information about your needs assessment, and know how that information will be used.**

At any time you can ask to see your needs assessment records, and the service will show them to you. You may be shown the information on a computer screen but you can usually get this information printed out, so that you can take a copy away with you.

You have the right to have any information you do not understand explained to you. The service must give you a copy of the final report to keep at the end of your needs assessment.

If the information that has been recorded is not correct, you can ask to have it corrected. If the service refuses to do this you can ask to have a statement describing the correction you sought attached to the record, so that anyone looking at the record will know this. If you are not satisfied, you can take any of the actions outlined in paragraph 11 to resolve the problem.

### **10 You can refuse to have, or withdraw from, a needs assessment at any time.**

You do not have to go through with a needs assessment. The choice is yours. The assessment facilitator will discuss your options with you. Without a needs assessment,

however, you probably will not be able to receive disability support services funded by your regional health authority.

### **11 You have the right to raise any concerns you have about the assessment service and have them dealt with promptly.**

It is important that you understand and are satisfied with what is happening. Your needs assessment facilitator will be happy to answer any questions that you have about the needs assessment at any time. You can contact the assessment facilitator between visits if necessary.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your needs assessment service there are a number of things you can do, including using the services of an advocate. The range of actions you might take may include:

- talking to the assessment facilitator about it
- talking to the service manager about it
- using the official complaint system of the assessment service.

If the service does not respond to your satisfaction, you can approach your regional health authority.

You are entitled to receive a good service, and will not be penalised in any way if you choose to take any of these actions.

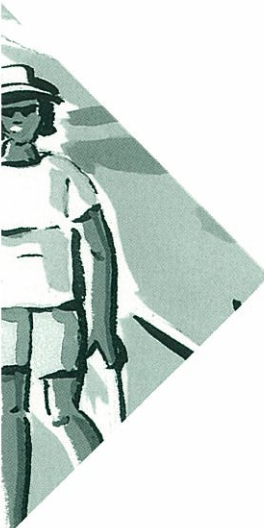
If you want an advocate to act on your behalf that is up to you, but you may have to meet any costs yourself. If for some reason it is essential for you to use the services of an advocate, then it is possible that the regional health authority will meet some or all of the costs, depending on your personal circumstances.

## Your Responsibilities

- 1 It is your responsibility to let the assessment service know as soon as possible if you are unable to keep an appointment
- 2 You must provide full and accurate information so that the best possible needs assessment can be done.
- 3 It is your responsibility to inform the assessment facilitator of any change in your circumstances that affect your needs

## Your responsibilities explained

### **1 It is your responsibility to let the assessment service know as soon as possible if you are unable to keep an appointment.**



Most needs assessment facilitators have many people to see, and will need to use their time efficiently and effectively. This does not mean that your time with them should be rushed, or that you should feel there is no time to ask questions or raise concerns. When making appointments, however, you should make sure that the appointment time does not clash with other commitments and that you will have enough time to complete what is necessary during the appointment. You should consult with the needs assessment facilitator about how long you will need.

If you cannot keep an appointment for some reason, let the needs assessment facilitator know as soon as possible. Someone else may be able to use your appointment time.

### **2 You must provide true and accurate information, so that the best possible needs assessment can be done.**

The purpose of the needs assessment is to gather information about your needs and priorities to determine what assistance can be arranged to help you. It is important, therefore, that you give the needs assessment facilitator accurate information.

Any information that you give during the needs assessment will be treated confidentially.

### **3 It is your responsibility to inform the needs assessment facilitator of any change in your circumstances that affect your needs.**

If your circumstances change during the needs assessment, or have changed since your last assessment, you should let the needs assessment facilitator know. This could include things like a change in goals, living environment or support needs.

A change in your living circumstances may affect what your needs are or your priorities. This should be recorded because the needs assessment will be of limited use if it is not up to date.



## Specific Guideline 2 The role and responsibilities of assessment facilitators

### Introduction

Individual needs assessment is the first step towards receiving disability support services. It helps the person being assessed to identify their abilities, resources, goals and needs across all environments in which they currently operate, or wish to operate. The outcome of the needs assessment will be summarised in an assessment report which will provide the basis for service coordination. The whole process of needs assessment, and the link with service coordination, will be coordinated by an assessment facilitator.

The assessment facilitator has the primary responsibility for ensuring the successful outcome of assessment for the person. They will achieve this by:

- carrying out the initial assessment
- coordinating any specialist assessments and collating the reports
- serving as first point of contact for any queries the person may have during the assessment process
- conducting further general or specialist assessments when they are able to
- working with the person to decide on the priority of needs to be met
- writing up the assessment report and signing it off with the person
- making sure that the person understands the next steps to accessing services
- passing on all relevant information from the assessment process to the agreed service coordinator.

Compatibility between the person being assessed and the assessment facilitator will be a major factor in deciding which assessment facilitator should work with the person.

### Functions of assessment facilitators

#### 1 Carry out the initial assessment

The first step after contact is the initial interview between the assessment facilitator and the person (with family/whanau, caregivers and friends as appropriate). At this interview the assessment facilitator will:

- ensure that the person meets the definition of “disability” (contained in the glossary)
- explain to the person what they can expect during the assessment and afterwards
- explain the significance of assessment in the total process of getting disability support services, and make sure the person understands that a need identified will not necessarily be met by RHA-funded services
- advise people of the assessment service options
- explain to the person their rights and responsibilities regarding assessment

- gather background information. This will include:  
basic personal information  
general description of circumstances at home  
social support networks  
work/education/leisure activities  
indication of any needs currently being met by formal services or informal support
- identify any previous initial or specialist assessments, and ensure that this information is used if it is still valid, to prevent unnecessary repetition of assessment
- on the basis of this initial information, identify whether further assessment is required or whether the person can immediately be either advised that they do not meet the requirements for disability support services or will be moved on to service coordination
- provide information of alternative sources of assistance for people who do not need a disability needs assessment.

## **2 Coordinate and arrange any specialist assessments**

When need be, the assessment facilitator will:

- make appointments with specialist assessors
- check progress on waiting lists for assessment, including indicating apparent urgency of need
- collect and collate reports from specialist assessors
- ensure that the person has had the opportunity to read any such reports
- ensure that all necessary specialist assessments have been completed, and their results considered and included in the assessment report.

Specialist assessments include assessments of ability, resources, goals and need in the areas of:

- personal care
- household tasks and home management of environmental control
- mobility
- communication
- vocation
- education
- housing/accommodation
- employment.

## **3 Serve as first point of contact**

The assessment facilitator will be the first point of contact for any queries the person may have about assessment, or about reassessment if their situation later changes.



#### **4 Conduct such further general or specialist assessments as they are qualified to**

The assessment facilitator may need to work further to help the person make a more detailed assessment in the areas identified generally at time of initial interview. The assessment facilitator may also carry out specialist assessments where they are qualified to do so. However, such specialist assessments are distinct from the assessment facilitator role, even if undertaken by the same person.

#### **5 Work with the person to decide the priority of needs to be met**

When all specialist assessments are completed and all needs identified, the assessment facilitator will work with the person to determine the priority for meeting those needs. Every effort should be made to reach agreement of priorities between the person, the assessment facilitator and any appropriate caregivers or support people. If such agreement cannot be reached, the views of the person and the conflicting views of the assessment facilitator or family/whanau or caregivers must be recorded in full in the assessment report. This will assist in service coordination.

#### **6 Write up the assessment report and sign it off**

The assessment facilitator is responsible for writing up the assessment report in the format required by the Standards. The report should refer to the outcomes of any specialist assessments, and the assessment facilitator must ensure that copies of such assessments are securely attached. The assessment facilitator must discuss the draft assessment report with the person, and ensure that the report truly reflects the person's abilities, goals and needs, and the priority with which they wish these to be met. When the assessment facilitator and the person agree the report is complete, they will sign it.

#### **7 Make sure that the person understands the next steps to accessing services**

The assessment facilitator should ensure that the person understands the next steps necessary to get access to services. In most cases this will involve moving to the service coordination phase. In some situations these functions may be undertaken by the person who is the assessment facilitator. The advantages of this are that it:

- reduces the number of people with whom the person needs to relate
- makes best use of the breadth of knowledge and understanding gained by the assessment facilitator
- provides a good opportunity for continuity between assessment and service coordination
- minimises the need to transfer information and prevents delays.

Where the assessment facilitator is also the service coordinator, the assessment facilitator must take particular care to ensure that the needs assessment is not influenced by consideration of available services of state assistance.

#### **8 Pass on all relevant information from the assessment process to the service planner and coordinator**

The assessment facilitator must ensure that all necessary information is passed on to the service planner and coordinator. This will generally be the completed assessment report with all attachments. In passing on information the assessment facilitator must meet the relevant assessment standards.

## Specific Guideline 3 Advocacy Services

### Introduction

The assessment service will have an established procedure which enables the person, their family/whanau and caregivers to have access to an advocate (if this is what they desire) who is independent of the service, culturally safe, and flexible and responsive to the needs of the person, their family/whanau and caregivers. The assessment facilitator will ensure that the person's right to advocacy is upheld.

The person is entitled to have a representative or advocate act on their behalf. This may be a member of their family/whanau, caregivers or friends, or a member of a professional or religious group nominated by the person.

If a person has the capacity to speak for themselves they should do so during the assessment.

A person may be unable to participate in the assessment in an informed manner. If a person is unable to represent their own interests, the assessment service will have identified the appropriate procedures to ensure that the rights of the person are preserved. This may mean referring the person to a family court and having a person with power of attorney appointed by the court to act on the person's behalf under the Personal and Property Protection Act 1988.

Informed consent is not always possible if the person is confused. However, if the process is explained sensitively to the person, family/whanau and caregivers by an advocate acceptable to them, confusion about the assessment process can be minimised.

### Types of Advocacy

The types of advocacy implicit in the Standards for Needs Assessment are:

#### *Self advocacy:*

Speaking on one's own behalf in terms of one's wants, needs and desires.

#### *Informal advocacy:*

A member of the family/whanau, a friend or caregiver is nominated by the person to speak on their behalf.

#### *Formal advocacy:*

Formal advocates may or may not be paid for their services. They are members of organisations, voluntary service workers, field workers, for example, DPA, health professionals, district inspectors or official visitors who are nominated by the person to speak on their behalf.

### Functions of an Advocate

The functions of an advocate are to:

- act on behalf of the person being assessed for disability support services
- ensure that the person being assessed has been made aware of their rights and responsibilities during the assessment process
- ensure a procedure for the resolution of disputes is available within the assessment service, and that the person has been informed of its existence and understands how to access the procedure
- represent or assist the person who is not satisfied with their assessment to achieve resolution of the complaint by agreement between the people concerned
- provide assistance to people who want to complain through any formal or informal procedure that exists for resolving that complaint.



## Specific Guideline 4 Completing the Needs Assessment Report: Guidelines for Assessment Facilitators

### The Purpose of the Needs Assessment Report

- 1 The needs assessment report will contain all the information required to identify and place in order of priority the person's needs. This information will assist the planning, provision and coordination of disability support services. The report must contain the *Required Elements of the Needs Assessment Report* listed below. Assessment services whose existing reporting format contains these elements may continue to use their format. Assessment services which lack such a reporting format are required to develop a reporting format which contains these elements.
- 2 The *Required Elements of the Needs Assessment Report* and the *Areas of Need* will ensure that consistent information is gathered and recorded by the assessment service. Consistency will ensure that:
  - the report will be useful anywhere in New Zealand
  - the quality of the report will be similar for all people
  - no area of need is overlooked
  - consistent information is provided to regional health authorities (RHAs) for future planning.
- 3 The Required Elements and the Areas of Need also allow the needs assessment report to be flexible, permitting innovation by assessment services to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

**Only information which is directly relevant to the assessment should be sought and recorded**

### Required Elements of the Needs Assessment Report

- 4 The needs assessment report will contain:
  - biographical information including name, date of birth, age, gender, ethnicity
  - the person's present living situation
  - the person's current employment, education, training, recreation and social activities
  - the person's current support networks, for example, family, friends, neighbours, organisations and professionals
  - the person's goals and needs in each of the relevant areas outlined in the section entitled Areas of Need
  - the environments in which these goals are to be met, and needs are experienced
  - the benefits of having these needs met
  - the desirable time frame for having these needs met (particularly a need that may be urgent)
  - the person's priorities for having these needs met
  - if the priorities of the person and their family/whanau or caregivers differ, or the assessment facilitator considers that the priorities of the person may not meet government objectives of service provision, the report will:
    - record the priorities of the person
    - record the priorities of the family/whanau or caregivers
    - record the compromise priorities negotiated between the person, their caregivers, family/whanau and/or assessment facilitator
    - record any dissenting view of the assessment facilitator.



A person may not identify needs in some areas, or may choose not to discuss some areas of their life. These opinions should be respected, and should be noted in the needs assessment report.

## Areas of Need

### Personal care needs

nutrition - eating and drinking  
hygiene - bathing, toileting  
dressing  
positioning (in chair, bed etc)  
physical exercise  
comfort  
medication delivery and monitoring effects  
pain relief/reduction

### Domestic and household management needs

parenting  
housework  
cooking  
gardening  
environmental control (drawing curtains, turning lights, heaters, etc on and off)  
personal business management (paying bills, banking, writing letters)  
shopping  
visits to doctors, lawyers, NZISS etc

### Vocational and employment needs

### Training and education needs

### Communication needs

interacting face-to-face  
interacting over distance  
recording information

### Mobility needs

at home  
in the community

### Rehabilitation needs

to increase functioning level and comfort in the following areas:

physical  
cognitive  
emotional  
spiritual  
social  
cultural

### Recreational, social and personal development needs

### Accommodation needs

### Income needs

### Caregivers' support needs

respite  
information  
training  
support - personal and practical

### Environment(s) in which needs must be considered

the person's home  
place of work/education/training  
community facilities  
social venues  
prospective settings



## Specific Guidelines 5 Rules and Guidelines on the Collection of Information

### Collection, use and transfer of information

A needs assessment report format has been developed to collect all the necessary information, and to consider how the needs assessment facilitator might determine and report the relative importance and urgency of identified needs so that service coordinators can allocate services, where limited, to those in greatest need.

A copy of the assessment report, or relevant sections, will be made available to the service coordinator if RHA-funded services are needed. The person must permit the transfer of the assessment report to the service coordinator if RHA-funded services are to be provided.

### Access to Information

The person will have access to any information recorded in connection with their assessment, including information about their rights and responsibilities during the assessment. The person also has the right to obtain a correction to any information recorded during the assessment process. This should be explained to them before they take part in an assessment.

The assessment service will ensure that only relevant information is transferred to other agencies, and that the person gives their permission.

There are many people involved in the needs assessment process, and subsequent steps in getting access to services. People seeking access to information should only receive it if they can establish with good reason their need to do so under the terms set out in the Health

Information Privacy Code, and they should only receive information that is directly relevant to that purpose. This may mean, for example, that a service provider only receives excerpts from the needs assessment report relating to the service they provide.

### Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the person's information must be maintained. The information recorded during the assessment should be retained in their records. A copy will be provided to the person, and also to the service planner/coordinator if the person wants to access services purchased by the RHAs.

Where needs assessment information is to be used in aggregate form (for example, for RHA service planning or accountability purposes) personal identifiers should be removed by the information holder before being passed into other hands, and all possible steps should be taken to ensure the person cannot be identified.

### The Privacy Act 1993

The Health Information Privacy Code has been established to provide specific guidelines for all RHA funded agencies to assist them to comply with the Privacy Act 1993 regarding the information collected, used, held, and disclosed by the agency.

## Specific Guideline 6 Complaint and Review Procedures

The assessment service will have established procedures for dealing with complaints, in a manner which respects the dignity and independence of the person, family/whanau and caregivers.

If the person being assessed, or the person representing their interests, does not believe that the assessment produced a full and accurate identification of the person's needs, they may ask to have the assessment reviewed.

They may make a complaint or ask to have their assessment reviewed, if they are not satisfied (a) with the needs assessment process; and (b) that the outcome of the needs assessment process is a full and accurate reflection of their needs.

The complaint or review should be made by the person, or the people representing their interests to, the assessment facilitator or the assessment service. If the person is not satisfied with the outcome, they may directly approach the relevant regional health authority.

Complaint procedures are to be easy for people to use, and should comply with the following principles:

- all parties have a chance to be heard
- records of complaints and their resolutions will be included with the person's assessment information
- rights of appeal must be clearly stated
- frivolous or vexatious complaints can be screened out
- the person conducting the investigation must be impartial.

There should be no barriers to making a complaint. The special or personal needs of the complainant must be recognised and services such as interpreters or advocacy services should be provided as required. Other parties, such as caregivers and family/whanau, should also be able to make complaints, with the consent of the person being assessed.

Assessment services should ensure that complaint and review procedures are culturally safe. The assessment facilitator should be aware of the cultural needs of the person, their family/whanau and caregivers. The complaints procedure will be comfortable for Maori and Pacific Islands peoples and other cultural and ethnic groups in the service's community.



The following definitions apply to people or roles referred to in the Standards:

**Assessment Facilitator:** the person who takes overall responsibility for ensuring that the rights of the person being assessed are safeguarded throughout the assessment process. The assessment facilitator assists the person being assessed to identify and place in order of priority their needs, and to summarise these needs in an appropriate assessment report. The assessment facilitator may be a person who also undertakes a specialist part of the assessment.

**Assessment Service:** the unit, whether one person, a group of people within a larger organisation, or a stand-alone organisation, with whom the regional health authority contracts to deliver assessment services.

**Caregiver:** the person or people providing continuing care to the person with the disability on an informal basis (usually a member of the person's immediate family/whanau or a friend). This role is usually not the caregiver's formal employment.

**Cultural safety:** the provision of services in a way that affirms, recognises and is compatible with the person's cultural values, beliefs and needs.

**Disability:** A person with a disability is a person who has been identified as having a physical, psychiatric, intellectual, sensory or age-related disability (or a combination of these) which is likely to continue for a minimum of six months and result in a reduction of independent function to the extent that ongoing support is required.

Where a person has a disability which is the result of personal injury by accident which occurred on or after 1 April 1974 it should be determined whether they are eligible for entitlements from the Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Corporation.

Where a person has both a disability and personal health need the services provided to address those needs are disability support services and personal health services respectively. The acute mental health services needed by people with a psychiatric disability are considered to be disability support services.

**Fanau:** customary Pacific Islands extended family.

**Fono:** a meeting of Pacific Islands peoples.

**Kawa:** protocol.

**Service coordination:** the development of a package of services which are responsive to the needs identified by the needs assessment. Planning a service package requires knowledge of which solutions are possible, and which criteria must be met to obtain services.

**Tangata whenua:** literally the people of the land. The local iwi or tribe who hold spiritual authority over the land are referred to as having mana whenua.

**Tikanga Maori:** traditional and contemporary Maori cultural practices or customs.

**Whanau:** customary Maori extended family.