

# Information for audiologists

Information on how we work with audiologists, and what they need to know to work with us.

## Our role

We want:

- veterans to have access to suitable hearing aids as quickly as possible after a hearing loss or tinnitus claim is accepted.
- to streamline the process for all parties:
  - veterans
  - Audiologists
  - Veterans' Affairs.
- Audiologists to exercise their professional services within a clear set of parameters.

Contributing to the costs of hearing aids to veterans with hearing loss and tinnitus is a key part of social rehabilitation and assisting in restoring a veteran's independence to the maximum extent practicable.

## What has changed

We have reviewed our Hearing Loss policy and developed two separate schedules of fees:

Hearing aid schedule of fees (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/hearing-aid-schedule-of-fees/>)

Support and maintenance schedule of fees (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/schedule-of-fees-for-support-and-maintenance/>)

We will issue six-month purchase orders issued for the provision of hearing aids and a two-year purchase order for support and maintenance. A subsequent purchase order for support and maintenance is able to be requested every two years.

We will amend these schedules from time to time if there is evidence to support that.

A significant change from the previous process is that we no longer require a quote, a report, and an overscale form, or the Individual Care Plan. The new purchase order is a pre-approval for hearing aids to be provided within the scope of the schedule.

We expect that Audiologists will act in accordance with the intention of the schedule and recommend a cost-effective aid that satisfactorily meets the reasonable hearing needs of the veteran and at the lowest possible price.

The separation of schedules has an impact on invoicing. The Audiologist will submit only one full and final itemised invoice for the hearing aids within six months of it being issued.

Invoices for the support and maintenance services can be submitted from time to time within the two-year window.

We will only contract with members of the NZAS to provide hearing aids for veterans.

We expect that Audiologists will comply with the NZAS Best Practice Guidelines.

In particular, we expect that Audiologists will develop a rehabilitation plan and finalisation form with the veteran and hold it

in their files.

If we think that the best practice standards are not being met, we will work with NZAS to rectify those situations.

## Schedule of fees for hearing aids

This schedule is based on recent purchasing history at Veterans' Affairs for hearing aids and, in collaboration with NZAS, to reflect the standard hearing aid needs for the majority of veterans. These fees have been developed by reviewing our data over recent years of approved hearing aid applications. We have consulted with other government organisations and believe this schedule accommodates the provision of suitable, cost-effective hearing aids for 90% of veterans.

We expect veterans to be provided with cost-effective aids that meet their social and vocational needs, based on the Audiologist's needs assessment. We will pay for or make a contribution towards the provision of hearing aids and associated costs. Hearing aids are funded at the manufacturer's wholesale cost except for hearing aid accessories, moulds and hearing aid consumables, which are at full retail price.

The schedule is intended to create a realistic set of parameters to enable professional judgment to be exercised; it is not a target to be reached. We expect that the majority of invoices will come in well under the maximum amount in this schedule, based on our analysis of our very recent data. There will be a rigorous auditing program to ensure Audiologists are working to their best practice standards and invoicing appropriately to cover the costs associated with the veteran's treatment.

For any veterans that have a hearing loss claim with ACC it is expected ACC will be the primary funder for the aids, and Veterans' Affairs will be charged the remaining costs that the veteran would otherwise be expected to pay.

## Schedule of fees table

Hearing Aid Setup (6 month maximum)	Approved maximum (Excluding GST)	Approved maximum (Including GST)
Initial Hearing Assessment, including full needs assessment	\$280	\$322
Hearing Aids: suitable for the veteran's hearing loss based on wholesale cost from the manufacturer (max of 2 aids)	\$2100 per aid Manufacturer's wholesale list price	\$2415 per aid Manufacturer's wholesale list price
Fitting Fee, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>fitting appointment with training and education for the veteran,</li><li>regular follow-up appointments and adjustments as required throughout trial period,</li><li>administration time to manage the trial period,</li><li>trial of alternative hearing aids if necessary.</li></ul>	\$1220 (or \$800 for single aid)	\$1403 (or \$920 for single aid)
<b>Total 'up to' amount</b> Consumables relating to fitting — moulds and impressions:	<b>\$6,840</b> Up to \$260 (or \$130 per aid)	<b>\$7,866</b> Up to \$322 retail price

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• solid moulds.</li> </ul> Hearing Aid Setup (6 month maximum)	Approved maximum (Excluding GST)	Approved maximum (Including GST)
Consumables relating to fitting — moulds and impressions:	Encased moulds up to \$440 (or \$220 per aid)	Up to \$506 retail price
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encased receiver moulds.</li> </ul>		
Contribution to a battery charger where required	\$500 retail price	\$575 retail price
Contribution to an electronic drying machine where necessary	\$200 retail price	\$230 retail price
Failed fitting fee	\$750 (instead of fitting fee)	\$862.50 (instead of fitting fee)
<b>Total 'up to' amount</b>	<b>\$6,840</b>	<b>\$7,866</b>

## What about aids or accessories that do not fit within the schedule

If the Audiologist believes that the veteran requires hearing aids outside the schedule, you can make an Exceptional Circumstances application on behalf of the veteran. You will need to explain the clinical and social reasons for the exception and why standard hearing aids will not meet the veteran's needs. The Exceptional Circumstances form needs to be sent to the veteran's case manager (see the original Purchase Order for veteran's Case Manager)

Hearing aid exceptional circumstances criteria (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/hearing-aid-exceptional-circumstance-criteria/>)

 [Hearing Exceptional Circumstances form \[PDF, 355 KB\] \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Forms/Hearing-Exceptional-Circumstances-Form.pdf\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Forms/Hearing-Exceptional-Circumstances-Form.pdf)

All applications for Exceptional Circumstances will be reviewed by an independent Audiologist contracted to Veterans' Affairs.

If the application is approved, the Purchase Order will be amended.

Where a veteran chooses to have higher specification aids with no clinical reasoning, then the Audiologist should arrange a co-payment with the veteran.

## What happens if the Exceptional Circumstances application is declined

If the recommendation for Exceptional Circumstances is declined, the Audiologist will need to discuss co-payment options with the veteran or find a suitable alternative within the schedule thresholds.

## Schedule of fees for support and maintenance

We want to make sure that veterans get the best result from their hearing aids. We recognize that some veterans have no problems with their hearing aids and rarely need to see their Audiologist. Some veterans have higher needs or ongoing problems.

We expect that either the veteran or the Audiologist will advise the veteran's case manager when they are scheduling their first annual check-up following the fitting of a new aid or if the veteran requires consumables or a repair so that a purchase order for support and maintenance can be arranged. Pre-arranging funding will mean more immediate payment of your invoices and a smoother process for all.

We will not pay for repairs that are covered under the manufacturer's warranty.

Audiologists need to remind veterans that it is the veteran's responsibility to insure their hearing aids as we will not replace lost or neglected aids.

It may be useful for a veteran to have an annual check-up, where cleaning and minor repairs may occur to improve the longevity of the devices. It would be expected ear wax removal would also be completed if required to improve the experience of the veteran's aids. Additional appointments have been built into the schedule to cover possible fault-finding appointments up to the annual threshold and can be conducted on an as-needed basis.

## Hearing Aid Maintenance and Support Plan annual amount table

Hearing Aid Support and Maintenance Plan	Proposed new prices (Excluding GST)	Proposed new prices (Including GST)
To meet the ongoing support and maintenance requirements of the veteran's hearing loss condition per year.	\$1,000 (total annual amount)	\$1,150 (total annual amount)
This may cover:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• annual appointments</li><li>• fault finding</li><li>• consumables</li><li>• minor repairs outside of warranty under \$345 including GST</li><li>• ear wax removal.</li></ul>		

## Additional costs table

Annual costs (upon pre-approval by VA)	Proposed new prices (Excluding GST)	Proposed new prices (Including GST)
Off-site repair (after one year)	Major repairs over \$300 per aid (outside of warranty) – Upon application	Major repairs over \$345 per aid (outside of warranty) – Upon application
Home visit if needed	\$80 plus travel	\$80 plus travel
Additional accessories, over cost aids, early replacement	Upon application	Upon application

If a significant repair is needed that exceeds \$300 per aid the Audiologist should complete the Exceptional Circumstance form and send it to the veteran's case manager.

 [Hearing Exceptional Circumstance form \[PDF, 355 KB\] \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Forms/Hearing-Exceptional-Circumstances-Form.pdf\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Forms/Hearing-Exceptional-Circumstances-Form.pdf)

If the veteran has required frequent support over the two-year time period and runs out of funding within the support and

maintenance purchase order, they need to contact their case manager to discuss if there are any options. We expect that the Audiologist will monitor expenditure against the purchase order and will be able to arrange this conversation in advance.

## We will fund replacement aids every six years

When this time is approaching, please email the case manager to request a new purchase order for hearing aids.

If the Audiologist determines that the veteran requires new aids because their current aids are no longer fit for purpose before the six-year replacement timeline, they need to complete the Exceptional Circumstances form and email it to the case manager.

 [Hearing Exceptional Circumstance form \[PDF, 355 KB\] \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Forms/Hearing-Exceptional-Circumstances-Form.pdf\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/assets/Forms/Hearing-Exceptional-Circumstances-Form.pdf)

## How to invoice

There are two types of purchase orders:

- Hearing Aids (with a six-month time limit and an expectation of one full and final invoice)
- Support and maintenance (with a two-year time limit).

We endeavour to process payments within two weeks if you send your invoice to:

- [nzdf-medicalaccounts@paperlessap.co.nz](mailto:nzdf-medicalaccounts@paperlessap.co.nz) (<mailto:nzdf-medicalaccounts@paperlessap.co.nz>)

## Invoicing steps to receive fast payment — Ensure that:

- 1 The invoice is made out to Veterans' Affairs NZ
- 2 The NZDF (VANZ) purchase order number is the correct purchase order for this veteran
- 3 The end date for the purchase order has not been exceeded
  - Six months for hearing aids
  - Two years for support and maintenance.

### 4 The amount of your invoice does not exceed the purchase order amount

For hearing aid invoices, you must invoice for actual costs, not the maximum amounts on the purchase order. Refer to the Hearing Aids Schedule of fees

[Hearing Aid Schedule of Fees \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/hearing-aid-schedule-of-fees/\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/hearing-aid-schedule-of-fees/)

For support and maintenance invoices, you need to keep track of what has been invoiced previously within the lifespan of the purchase order. Refer to the Schedule of Fees for Support and Maintenance.

[Schedule of Fees for Support and Maintenance \(https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/schedule-of-fees-for-support-and-maintenance/\)](https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/for-providers/audiologists/schedule-of-fees-for-support-and-maintenance/)

### 5 The veteran's name and SWN number are correct

Each veteran will have their own purchase order. Only use the purchase order allocated to each veteran.

6 Your GST number is correct

7 Your bank account details are correct

8 The invoice is complete

9 You send your invoice to:

[nzdf-medicalaccounts@paperlessap.co.nz](mailto:nzdf-medicalaccounts@paperlessap.co.nz) (<mailto:nzdf-medicalaccounts@paperlessap.co.nz>)

The invoice must be the **only** document that you send to this address.

For hearing aids, there should be one full, itemised and final invoice.