

# Purchasing Rules changes and an update on Equipment and Modification Services (EMS)

From Monday 18 March, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People is making changes to its Purchasing Rules and Equipment and Modification Services (EMS). This is to ensure that people who have the highest priority for EMS receive it first.

The changes will remain in place until we have completed work with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau to develop long term settings, which will ensure our funding is being spent where it is most needed.

Whaikaha commissions disability support services for almost 50,000 people and funds equipment and home and vehicle modifications for approximately 100,000 people through EMS.

We have been facing increased demand for support, some of which is not related to supporting those with a disability themselves. So, these changes allow us to pause and to work with our disability community to develop criteria for flexible funding going forward.

We acknowledge that this has caused concern and been difficult for our community, disabled people, their families, whānau, and family carers.

## Changes to Purchasing Rules

The Purchasing Rules describe what disability support funding can be used to buy, when using Individualised Funding, Enhanced Individualised Funding, Choice in Community Living, Personal Budgets or Carer Support.

Changes to the Purchasing Rules does not reduce the amount of funding that is allocated to disabled people (or carers).

You can find and download the Purchasing Rules on our Purchasing Guidance webpage at [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/purchasingrules](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.whaikaha.govt.nz%2Fpurchasingrules&data=05%7C02%7CRebecca.Haig007%40whaikaha.govt.nz%7C56b7733414074172975a08dc48af236f%7Ce40c4f5299bd4d4fbf7ed001a2ca6556%7C0%7C0%7C638465165397879492%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=cSSiRTu412JBlR4wZOPNB24DIiK7rJ1%2FRGe1SMGWJqE%3D&reserved=0).

## What happens if a person has already made a purchase, and it is no longer allowed under the new rules?

We recognise that some people may have incurred expenses before 18 March 2024, that would now no longer fall within the Purchasing Rules.

However, there is a grace period up until 29 March 2024, where claims that fall within the previous Purchasing Rules can be submitted for payment.

Those expenses must be claimed by 12 April 2024.

All claims that fall within this grace period will be processed up until 12 April 2024.

It will be helpful to provide as much detail as possible showing the date of purchase or quote.

## Equipment and Modification Services (EMS)

Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) assist disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori to live as independently and safely as possible.  Equipment such as wheelchairs, customised standing frames, customised seating systems, adjustable beds, communication devices, and housing and motor vehicle modifications for disabled people are included in EMS.

Whaikaha is working with equipment and modification assessors and allied health teams to put in place prioritisation measures. This will ensure that people who have the highest priority for EMS receive it first.

## What types of travel are funded or not funded?

Domestic travel refers to the costs of travelling between cities or regions to, for example, go on a break. These costs can no longer be paid from your flexible funding.

Travel to and from school is funded by the [Specialised School Transport Assistance (SESTA)](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjgrea004%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CRRRDUVGK%5CSpecialised%20School%20Transport%20Assistance%20%28SESTA%29) (<https://tinyurl.com/pndnhptx>).

Local transport may also be partly funded by other agencies through the [Total Mobility Scheme](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nzta.govt.nz%2Fresources%2Ftotal-mobility-scheme%2Ftotal-mobility.html&data=05%7C02%7Caccessibility%40msd.govt.nz%7C2a7900b036ab4d6c6bba08dc493ecd38%7Ce40c4f5299bd4d4fbf7ed001a2ca6556%7C0%7C0%7C638465781278763063%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=PmUNxlbj7Km5vlH13f3%2F9ZkId9QEEggqebbjKGhm3QQ%3D&reserved=0) ([https://tinyurl.com/3pbt778u](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F3pbt778u&data=05%7C02%7Caccessibility%40msd.govt.nz%7C2a7900b036ab4d6c6bba08dc493ecd38%7Ce40c4f5299bd4d4fbf7ed001a2ca6556%7C0%7C0%7C638465781278769527%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dSrk3%2BU%2FuaFXo3vyPTDNhd6aOXhK610EBtjYwMv7p98%3D&reserved=0)).

NZTA and Regional Councils subsidise the costs of local transport for eligible people in many cities, which we understand includes many disabled people.

Our expectation is that these subsidies are accessed before considering the use of disability support funding to pay for local travel, which is independent of a support worker.

‘Expenses that are a necessary part of providing support’ may include the costs a support worker incurs when taking a disabled person to go to the supermarket or engage in other activities outside the home. These costs can continue to be met from your flexible funding.

In Between Travel refers to the time and travel costs that support workers incur when they are travelling from one client to another, as part of working for the same employer. In between travel does not generally apply in Individualised Funding.

Please contact your Host for questions about specific proposed uses of funding.

## More information and Q&As

The Purchasing Rules, examples of the rules in action and helpful links can be found at [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/purchasingrules](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/purchasingrules).

You can find our frequently asked questions, which will be updated regularly at [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/Q-As-PG-EMS](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/Q-As-PG-EMS). This information is currently not available in alternate formats.

Equipment and Modification Services webpage at [Equipment and Modification Services | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/for-service-providers/equipment-and-modification-services) (and <https://tinyurl.com/yeyn3ktb>).

Carer Support webpage at [Carer Support | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/support-and-services/carer-support-and-respite/carer-support) (and <https://tinyurl.com/29n5whs6>).

## Next steps

Whaikaha will work with the disability community on medium and longer-term plans that strengthen and ensure the financial sustainability of the disability support system. We need to develop the criteria to ensure that support goes to those most in need. We will do this in consultation with the community over the coming months.

## How to contact Whaikaha

If you want to get in touch, you can:

* Email: contact@whaikaha.govt.nz
* Visit our website at: [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us/](http://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us/)
* Phone: 0800 566 601
* Text: 4206

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8am - 5pm.
Wednesday: 9:30am - 5pm

New Zealand Relay is a telecommunications service for people who are Deaf, Deaf-blind, experiencing hearing loss or have a speech condition: [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz)

**End of information: Purchasing Rules changes and an update on Equipment and Modification Services (EMS)**

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