Home Modification Access and Prioritisation Policy
NSW Home and Community Care Program

Version 1.0
Community Care Directorate
Ageing, Disability and Home Care
Department of Family and Community Services NSW
June 2012
Document approval

The *HACC Home Modification Access and Prioritisation Policy* has been endorsed and approved by:

______________________________
Chris Chippendale
Executive Director, Community Care
Approved: 27 June 2012
☒ Signature on file

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1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program provides basic maintenance and support to those with moderate, severe or profound disabilities and their carers, in order to prevent inappropriate or premature admission to residential care, and promote independent community living.

HACC home modification services can assist clients with the cost of minor home modifications (such as grab rails and access ramps) and major home modifications (such as improving access into and within the home).

This policy aims to improve the fairness, equity and timeliness of HACC home modification services. It introduces a single point of access to home modification services across NSW and a standardised approach to prioritisation of clients and management of waiting lists.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NSW Service Type Guidelines for Home and Community Care – Home Modification 2012 (‘the Home Modification Guidelines’).

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to service providers delivering home modification services to clients of HACC home modification services in NSW. The policy covers clients who:

■ are referred to the HACC program’s Community Care Access Point on or after 1 July 2012 and
■ are assessed as eligible to receive home modification services under the HACC program.

The policy applies equally to clients who own their property and tenants in rental accommodation who are eligible for HACC home modifications (refer the Home Modification Guidelines).

This policy does not apply to home modification services provided outside the HACC Program.

2 Policy

HACC home modification services are not an entitlement. All clients will be assessed for eligibility and prioritised based on relative need in order to best manage available program resources.

Access to HACC home modification services is through the Community Care Access Point (CCAP) which determines eligibility for HACC services.

■ Where the client is eligible for HACC services the CCAP allocates a priority rating before referring the client to a HACC home modification service provider.
■ Where the client is found to be ineligible for HACC services, the CCAP provides the client with information about other home modification options and services.

The use of a priority rating will:
■ ensure that access to services is based on a priority rating rather than a first come first served basis
■ reduce instances of low priority clients receiving services at the expense of higher priority clients who are deemed at greater need or risk
■ ensure that clients’ needs will be re-assessed when there are significant changes to their circumstances potentially resulting in an adjustment of their priority rating.

Following receipt of a referral a home modification service provider uses the CCAP’s priority rating to guide the initial response time for service intervention or the initial priority placement on the waiting list.

Where required service providers will arrange a home modification specific assessment by a registered occupational therapist (OT) and a licensed builder. This determines the priority and time frame for service delivery based on available resources.

Services are responsible for waiting list management and client communication. To facilitate this, standardised communication templates have been prepared for use by services (refer section 2.3.2 Client communication).

Clients and their advocates have the right of appeal against an eligibility or prioritisation assessment. The appeals process is outlined in section 3.1 Appeals.

2.1 Access to HACC home modification services

From 1 July 2012 all referrals for HACC home modification services in NSW are processed through the Community Care Access Point (CCAP). This is designed to improve consistency in determining HACC eligibility. HACC home modification services no longer assess clients for HACC eligibility.

There are multiple government programs and departments which fund home modifications. These programs have different eligibility requirements to the HACC program and consideration must be given to these by the referrer. Examples of these include:

■ Packaged care provided to eligible people through the Department of Health and Ageing. These include Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) and Extended Aged Care at Home Packages (EACH and EACH-Dementia)
■ HACC-like services provided to eligible veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs
■ Participants in the Young People in Residential Aged Care Program

If a client is receiving a home modification through one of the above programs, a HACC service should not duplicate the service already being received.

Occupational therapists should refer clients in the above programs directly to a Level 1 home modification provider and not to the Community Care Access Point. They will be charged at the ‘full cost’ rate.

2.1.1 Referrals to the CCAP

Referrals to the CCAP can be made by:

■ individual members of the community (such as clients, families and carers)
■ services (non-government and government providers)
■ specialist professionals (occupational therapists and other allied health professionals).

Occupational therapists can complete the Home Modifications Application Form for
OTs (refer Attachment A) and attach relevant drawings, job specifications and recommendations when making the referral to the CCAP.

- any other referring agency (General Practitioners, hospitals).

If a client is known to be ineligible for HACC services they should not be referred to the CCAP. Information on eligibility is outlined in the *NSW Guidelines for HACC Funded Services*.

Referrals to the CCAP can be made through:

- telephone 1300 731 556
- fax (02) 9407 7778
- TTY 1300 550 073, 02 9407 7720.

The CCAP will assess all referrals using standardised assessment tools and procedures.

If a client is HACC eligible, the CCAP will:

- give the client information on HACC home modification services and fees, potential waiting times for service and privacy and confidentiality provisions
- collect relevant referral information from the client
- refer the client, including relevant personal information, to a HACC home modification service provider in the client’s local area
- send on the OT assessment if already completed
- give each client a priority rating.

Aboriginal people will have their needs assessed by CCAP’s Aboriginal assessor, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds will be able to access interpreters if required.

If a person is not eligible for a HACC service, the CCAP will advise that they are not eligible and provide information on other options, such as home modification services charged at the market rate and services provided by other organisations (such as the Independent Living Centre and the Home Modification Information Clearinghouse).

### 2.2 Prioritisation

All clients assessed by the Community Care Access Point (CCAP) will be given a priority rating based on the standardised assessment and needs analysis. This rating is to be used by services to ensure timely and consistent contact with clients.

The priority rating will be a value of one to nine, where one indicates the highest level of need and nine a relatively low level of need. Descriptions of the priority ratings are outlined in *Table 1*. The priority rating is related to general community care needs and identifies the expected prioritisation order.

Prior to referring the client to the service provider, the CCAP will inform the client of their priority rating and give a general indication as to what this means. For example, clients with a priority rating of 1 will be told that they are a high priority and are likely to have a formal assessment conducted by a registered occupational therapist (OT) and licensed builder in the near future. Clients who receive a priority rating of 9 will be told that they have a relatively low level of priority and may not receive a service, and will be presented with other options.
Table 1 – Priority rating and description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Low function, Needs a carer but has no carer or carer arrangements have already broken down OR medium function with significant psychosocial or other problems and needs a carer but has no carer or carer arrangements have already broken down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium function with no psychosocial or other problems and needs a carer but has no carer OR carer arrangements have already broken down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low function, carer arrangements are unsustainable OR medium function with significant psychosocial or other problems, carer arrangements exists but are unsustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Medium function with no significant psychosocial and other problems and carer arrangements exist but are unsustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>High function with psychosocial or other problems, no behavioural or cognitive problems and needs a carer but has no carer or carer arrangements have already broken down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Low function, carer arrangements exist and are sustainable OR medium function with significant psychosocial or other problems and carer arrangements exist and are sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>High function with psychosocial or other problems, no behavioural or cognitive problems, carer arrangements are unsustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Medium function with no significant psychosocial or other problems and carer arrangements sustainable OR no carer required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>High function with psychosocial or other problems, no behavioural or cognitive problems and carer arrangements sustainable OR no carer required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service providers are required to contact clients within three days of accepting a referral from the CCAP to acknowledge receipt of a referral. (Service providers have 14 calendar days to accept a referral from the date the referral is made by the CCAP.) At this stage service providers can reiterate the priority rating and give clients a time frame for the home modification specific assessment.
Due to variable resources, availability of OTs and other influencing factors it is acknowledged that time frames for assessment will vary between service providers in different regions and during different times of the year. Services providers are required to manage this process based on local knowledge and context.

Using the priority rating, service providers are to contact clients and conduct:

- a work health and safety assessment
- organise the OT assessment if not already provided
- organise the licensed builder assessment if not already provided.

The above assessments may reveal information which requires a client’s priority rating to be reviewed. If this is the case the service provider can use this information, in the context of available resources, to re-prioritise clients.

If there are significant waiting lists for OTs which may impact on a client’s safety, providers can apply to the NSW Home Modification and Maintenance Services State Council (NSW HMMMSSC) which holds a pool of funding for conducting one-off assessments by independent OTs. OT services purchased in this way must be for priority clients and adhere with the Home Modification Guidelines.

If a client is a low priority and resources are limited it may be unlikely that a client will receive a HACC home modification service. The client should be advised of this as soon as possible and presented with other options for consideration, such as purchasing a private service. If a client chooses, they may be placed on a waiting list. This should be managed as outlined in section 2.3 Waiting list management and client communication.

### 2.3 Waiting list management and client communication

#### 2.3.1 Waiting list management

As demand for HACC home modification services is high, it is anticipated that not all eligible clients will receive a service. In order to effectively manage demand within available resources and address client expectations of service, providers are required to maintain and review waiting lists of eligible clients.

Services should be provided to as many clients as possible, based on their prioritisation rating, within available resources.

All clients who have not yet received a service are to be placed on a waiting list.

Service providers should ensure:

- all clients are advised that there is a waiting list for service, and that the waiting time may change depending on relative prioritised need
- all clients are advised that the maximum time they can remain on the waiting list is 12 months
- waiting lists are reviewed regularly including each time a new referral is received
- clients are placed on the waiting list in order of priority (not chronology)
- waiting lists are formally reviewed in line with the requirements of the Community Care Common Standards on a quarterly basis, to align with funding periods
- appropriate correspondence is sent to people on the waiting list (refer section 2.3.2 Client communication).

Clients who are less likely to receive a service, due to a low priority rating or limited resources, are to be advised that it is unlikely they will receive a HACC home modification
service. These clients should be asked if they wish to go on the waiting list, and be given alternative options (such as private purchase of the modification).

Clients cannot remain on waiting lists indefinitely. If a client has been on the waiting list for 12 months without receiving a service, and their needs have not changed, they are to be notified that they will be removed from the waiting list.

Standard communication to clients on waiting lists, including outlining the re-application process in the case of changing needs, has been developed to assist in managing client expectations (refer section 2.3.2 Client communication).

2.3.2 Client communication

Service providers are required to contact clients within three days of accepting a referral from the Community Care Access Point (CCAP) to acknowledge receipt of the referral. (Service providers have 14 calendar days to accept a referral from the date the referral is made by the CCAP.)

Following this, standard correspondence should be sent to clients to confirm the conversation and outline their status on the waiting list.

Four standardised letters have been developed for service providers to use in the following scenarios:

- client has been assessed as a priority and is likely to receive a service. The client is currently on the waiting list however it is likely the service will be delivered in the near future (refer Attachment B)
- client has been assessed a relatively low priority, is unlikely to receive a service, and has been placed on the waiting list (refer Attachment C)
- client has been on the waiting list for three months and remains a low priority on the waiting list (refer Attachment D)
- client has been on the waiting list for 12 months, is not going to receive a service, and will be removed from the waiting list (refer Attachment E).

Core information and wording of these letters should not be altered, although the letters can be tailored to meet specific client requirements (eg translation).

3 Further information

3.1 Appeals

If clients are not satisfied with the decision regarding their eligibility or prioritisation they can lodge an appeal. Appeals should be made first to the service provider and then to the local ADHC office.

- Service provider

  - Coordinator review: clients should first ask their coordinator for an internal review of the problem. The home modification service will respond within seven days.
  - Management review: if their complaint is not resolved clients can ask for a review by the service manager. Clients must do this in writing. The home modification service manager will respond within 10 days.
ADHC

- ADHC regional office: if their concern is not resolved clients can appeal to the local ADHC office. ADHC’s Regional office will respond in 30 days.

The Regional offices can escalate complex appeals to the Community Care Directorate in ADHC’s Central Office for response within 30 days.

3.2 Contacts

For more information about the HACC Home Modification Access and Prioritisation Policy:

- Clients should contact their home modification service provider
- Service providers may contact:
  - ADHC contract manager (in the local ADHC office)
  - NSW Home Modification and Maintenance Services State Council (info@nswhmms.org or 02 6622 8386)
  - ADHC Central Office, Community Care Directorate (HACCinbox@facs.nsw.gov.au or 02 8270 2397 – Home Modifications Project Team).
Attachment A: Application Form for OTs

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HACC) HOME MODIFICATION SERVICE
APPLICATION FORM FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

This form is to be used by registered occupational therapists who have completed a home visit and have made home modification recommendations for a client. Other widely used and professionally accepted occupational therapist assessment forms (such as NSW Ministry of Health form) will be accepted.

There are multiple government programs and departments which fund home modifications. These programs have different eligibility requirements to the HACC program and consideration must be given to these by the referrer. Examples of these include:

- Packaged care provided to eligible people through the Department of Health and Ageing. These include Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) and Extended Aged Care at Home Packages (EACH and EACH-Dementia)
- HACC-like services provided to eligible veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Participants in the Young People in Residential Aged Care Program

If a client is receiving a home modification through one of the above programs, a HACC service should not duplicate the service already being received.

Occupational therapists should refer clients in the above programs directly to a Level 1 home modification provider and not to the Community Care Access Point. They will be charged at the 'full cost' rate.

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Please complete all fields. If incomplete the application form will be returned to the referrer.
2. Advise the client that the Community Care Access Point (CCAP) will be contacting them to conduct a telephone assessment to screen for HACC eligibility.
3. The CCAP will provide:
   - information to HACC eligible clients about the role of the CCAP, home modifications, fees and prioritisation and refer the client to the local HACC home modification service provider; or
   - information about alternative options and the contact details for the Independent Living Centre and/or Home Modifications Clearinghouse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFEREE NAME</th>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACAT</td>
<td>(Provide phone/ fax/ email/ days of work if relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private OT Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Hospital OT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Hospital OT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE OF BIRTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLIENT’S NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME</th>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Other (Specify):</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>INTERPRETER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

Version 1.0 Updated June 2012
<table>
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<tr>
<th>NEEDED WITH COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>REQUIRED</th>
<th>□ Yes (Specify):</th>
<th>□ Yes (Specify):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDIGENOUS STATUS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal only</td>
<td>□ Aged Pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both Aboriginal &amp; TSI</td>
<td>Disability Pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neither Aboriginal nor TS</td>
<td>DVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Self funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Private rental (landlord consent attached)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other: __________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENURE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>□ Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Private rental (landlord consent attached)</td>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other: __________</td>
<td>Other family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Aged Pension</td>
<td>□ Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disability Pension</td>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DVA</td>
<td>Other family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self funded</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIENT’S USUAL LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Alone</td>
<td>□ Spouse/partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Owner</td>
<td>□ Other family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Self funded</td>
<td>□ Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why does the client need a HACC home modification service and how will this modification benefit the client, carer and agency?**

 profesional comment for service provider:

**Recommendations/snapshot of need:**

*Attach: drawings and written and diagrammatical specifications*

*Note: Scale is approximately equal to 1:20; all measurements in millimetres; please confirm all measurements on site prior to commencing work.*

**Return to:** Community Care Access Point, ADHC  
Phone: 1300 731 556 or **Postal Address:** PO Box 819, Parramatta NSW 2124
Dear <Title> <Last name>

I refer to your recent application for a Home and Community Care (HACC) funded home modification service.

As discussed with the assessor from the Community Care Access Point, you are eligible for a HACC home modification service. The Community Care Access Point sent your details to our organisation to conduct further assessment and prioritise you in line with other applicants for the service.

I am pleased to advise you that your application has been assessed as a high priority. In line with the NSW Service Type Guidelines for Home and Community Care – Home Modification 2012, all home modification services are to be provided in line with an occupational therapist (OT) prescription and by a licensed builder. Services are to provide the maximum benefit in the most economic way. This will be discussed with you by both the OT and the builder.

As you will have been advised, HACC home modifications are not a free service. Your contribution to the service will be based on the cost of the job and your income. This will be assessed and agreed with you prior to work commencing.

A representative from this service will be in contact with you in the near future to make further arrangements regarding your home modification service.

For any additional information please contact us on <provider phone number>.

Yours sincerely

<Service Provider Sign Off>
Dear <Title> <Last name>

I refer to your recent application to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program’s Community Care Access Point for home modification services.

As discussed with the assessor from the Community Care Access Point, you are eligible for a HACC home modification service. The Community Care Access Point sent your details to our organisation to conduct further assessment and prioritise your request for service in line with other applicants.

Due to demand for HACC home modification services and limited resources, not everyone who has applied for a home modification service may be able to receive a modification. Some people may need urgent modifications, due to personal safety or other reasons, and these needs take precedence and are addressed as soon as possible.

Based on all the information gathered regarding your current circumstances, your level of need in relation to other applicants is such that it is unlikely that you will receive a home modification service in the near future. You have been placed on a waiting list for this service. The waiting list is reviewed every three months. If a service becomes available, you will be notified as soon as possible.

The waiting list is maintained for twelve months and your name can remain on the list for this time. If at the end of twelve months resources have not become available to provide you with a service, your name will be removed from the list. You will be advised of this in writing.

If your circumstances or needs change during this period, please contact the Community Care Access Point on 1300 731 556 as soon as possible and you will be reassessed for service priority.

Should you wish to discuss alternative options to the HACC home modification service you may get helpful information from the Independent Living Centre on 1300 885 886 or the Home Modifications Information Clearinghouse at http://www.homemods.info/. You may also wish to pursue a home modification as a private client through one of the HACC home modification services in your local area. The details of these can be provided by the CCAP.

Yours sincerely

<Service Provider Sign Off>

Version 1.0 Updated June 2012
Dear <Title> <Last name>

I refer to your application to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program’s Community Care Access Point (CCAP) for home modification services.

As previously advised, you have been placed on a waiting list for a HACC home modification service. This list is formally reviewed every three months, and has recently undergone review.

Due to demand for HACC home modification services and limited resources, not everyone who has applied for a home modification service may be able to receive a modification. Some people may need urgent modifications, due to personal safety or other reasons, and these needs take precedence and are addressed as soon as possible.

Based on all the information gathered regarding your current circumstances, your level of need in relation to other applicants is such that it is unlikely that you will receive a home modification service in the near future. Your name will remain on the waiting list and if a service becomes available you will be notified as soon as possible.

The waiting list is maintained for twelve months and your name can remain on the list for this time. If at the end of twelve months resources have not become available to provide you with a service, your name will be removed from the list. You will be advised of this in writing.

If your circumstances or needs change during this period, please contact the Community Care Access Point on 1300 731 556 as soon as possible and you will be reassessed for service priority.

Should you wish to discuss alternative options to the HACC home modification service you may get helpful information from the Independent Living Centre on 1300 885 886 or the Home Modifications Information Clearinghouse at http://www.homemods.info/. You may also wish to pursue a home modification as a private client through one of the HACC home modification services in your local area. The details of these can be provided by the CCAP.

Yours sincerely

<Service Provider Sign Off>
Dear <Title> <Last name>

I refer to your application to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program's Community Care Access Point (CCAP) for home modification services.

As you will be aware, you have been on a waiting list for a HACC home modification service for the last twelve months. During this time there has been a high demand for home modification services in comparison to available resources, and it has not been possible to provide you with a home modification service.

As you are aware, waiting lists are kept for twelve months only, and your name will now be removed from this list.

If your circumstances or support needs have changed, please contact the Community Care Access Point (CCAP) on 1300 731 556 as soon as possible to arrange a reassessment.

Should you wish to discuss alternative options to the HACC home modification service you may get helpful information from the Independent Living Centre on 1300 885 886 or the Home Modifications Clearinghouse at http://www.homemods.info/. You may also wish to pursue a home modification as a private client through one of the HACC home modification services in your local area. The details of these can be provided by the CCAP.

Yours sincerely

<Service Provider Sign Off>