

## **Part 13: Aids and appliances (equipment)**

This Part of the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines is made under the *Motor Accidents (Lifetime Care and Support) Act 2006* (the Act), including sections 11A, 11AA, 23, 28 and 58.

This version of Part 13 of the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines (the Guidelines) takes effect on the date of gazettal in the NSW Government Gazette and applies to any assessment of treatment and care needs relating to aids and appliances made on and from that date in respect of any participant in the Scheme, whether interim or lifetime, and whether accepted into the Scheme before or after the date of gazettal.

The Lifetime Care and Support Authority (Lifetime Care) may waive observance of any or parts of this Guideline. Waiving observance of all or part of this Guideline in any particular circumstances is not an indication that Lifetime Care will waive observance of this or any other Guideline in any other circumstances.

### **1 Reasonable and necessary aids and appliances**

- 1.1 Lifetime Care considers treatment and care needs for an aid or appliance (also referred to as equipment or assistive technology) to be reasonable and necessary when:
- a) the aid or appliance is required as a result of the motor accident injury;
  - b) the aid or appliance will meet the participant's needs and is consistent with their goals;
  - c) other treatment or care options have been considered and the aid or appliance is determined to be the most appropriate option in the circumstances;
  - d) the aid or appliance will achieve one or more of the following:
    - i. increase or maintain independence;
    - ii. increase or maintain participation;
    - iii. improve or maintain mobility;
    - iv. aid communication;
    - v. relieve pain or discomfort;
    - vi. maintain health or prevent ill-health;
    - vii. assist a return or entry to vocational, educational or leisure activities; or
    - viii. increase or maintain the safety of the participant, their family, carers or attendant care workers.
- 1.2 The reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to aids and appliances will not generally include expenses for:

- a) items that are not the most cost-effective solution to meet the participant's injury-related needs;
- b) repair or replacement due to the participant intentionally neglecting, abusing, losing or misusing an aid or appliance, except where the neglect, abuse or loss has occurred as a result of the participant's injury;
- c) continence aids, supplies or other consumables where the participant is an inpatient, or where a bed fee includes the provision of these aids or supplies; or
- d) replacement or repair of items when the repair or replacement is covered under warranty or insurance;
- e) an aid or appliance that does not comply with Australian Standards, where applicable, or that is not registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration, where applicable; and
- f) replacement or upgrade of an item when an existing item meets the participant's injury-related needs.

## **2 Method of assessment and criteria used to determine reasonable and necessary treatment and care needs for or in connection with aids and appliances**

2.1 The assessment of treatment and care needs for the provision of aids and appliances must:

- a) be made in collaboration with the participant; and
- b) take into account the participant's individual needs, social and physical environment.

2.2 When making an assessment of needs in connection with an aid or appliance, Lifetime Care adopts the *Professional Criteria for Prescribers* developed by Lifetime Care and NSW Health that aim to guide best practice in the prescription of aids and appliances by defining the required qualifications and levels of experience that prescribers must possess. These can be accessed on Lifetime Care's website at: [www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au) and the website of NSW Health.

2.3 Information required by Lifetime Care to make an assessment includes:

- a) clearly stated participant-centred goals addressing the need for the item(s);
- b) justification for the item(s), including the relationship to the motor accident injury and criteria listed in Part 6 of the Guidelines as to the question of whether the aid or appliance is reasonable and necessary;
- c) clinical assessments;
- d) the aid or appliance has been successfully trialled (where possible) and the participant is able to safely use the aid or appliance within the intended environment of use;
- e) implementation procedures for the aid or appliance are outlined, including any associated training requirements; and
- f) written support from the participant's education facility if the aid or appliance is to aid a return or entry into an educational activity.

2.4 The following procedures are to be followed in the prescription of an aid or appliance:

- a) the prescription must be conducted by a health professional or team of professionals with recognised qualifications and relevant experience in prescribing that category of equipment;
- b) Lifetime Care requires the prescriber to have a higher level of experience where the complexity of the participant's needs, the equipment, any associated risks, or a combination of these factors, is high;
- c) reference to the list of equipment for the corresponding injury level found in *Guidelines for levels of attendant care for people with spinal cord injury* should be made for participants with a spinal cord injury. These can be accessed on Lifetime Care's website at: [www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au);
- d) reference to *Summary of the Guidelines for the prescription of a seated wheelchair or mobility scooter for people with a traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury* should be made if the prescription is for a seated wheelchair or mobility scooter. These can be accessed on Lifetime Care's website at: [www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au);
- e) an Equipment Request Form must be completed except where the equipment can be directly ordered through Lifetime Care's contracted supplier, or Lifetime Care has advised that an Equipment Request Form is not required. These can be accessed on Lifetime Care's website at: [www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au);
- f) the prescriber must follow the *Professional Criteria for Prescribers* and the *Professional Criteria for Prescribers of Exercise and Fitness Equipment*. These can be accessed on Lifetime Care's website at: [www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au); and
- g) one or more quotes are to be provided if requested by Lifetime Care.

### **3 Hire of aids and appliances**

3.1 Lifetime Care will consider the hire of an aid or appliance to be more appropriate than the purchase of an aid or appliance when:

- a) the participant's medical condition, functional status or circumstances are likely to change in the foreseeable future;
- b) the prescriber is unsure of the functional benefits of the aid or appliance and needs to confirm its benefits through a longer-term trial of the aid or appliance before purchase;
- c) the participant's living arrangements are not known, and it is not possible to confirm that the aid or appliance will be functional in the home environment; or
- d) the need for the aid or appliance is for the short term only.

3.2 Lifetime Care may fund the hire of an aid or appliance when it is more cost effective to hire the aid or appliance than purchase it.

#### **4 Maintenance and repair of aids and appliances**

- 4.1 Lifetime Care considers maintenance and repair of an aid or appliance to be reasonable and necessary when:
- a) the need for maintenance or repairs results from normal wear and tear;
  - b) the need for maintenance or repairs is routine as recommended by the manufacturer or to meet industry standards; or
  - c) an adjustment is needed due to growth or other change in the participant's needs.
- 4.2 Lifetime Care may fund maintenance and repair of an aid or appliance when:
- a) the maintenance or repair is not covered under warranty or covered by insurance; and
  - b) the cost of the maintenance or repair is consistent with Lifetime Care's contribution towards the purchase or modification of the aid or appliance, where Lifetime Care has accepted partial liability for it.

#### **5 Replacement of aids and appliances**

- 5.1 Lifetime Care considers replacement of an aid or appliance to be reasonable and necessary when:
- a) the item is still required by the participant;
  - b) the participant's needs have changed due to growth or change in function and modification to the item is not feasible; or
  - c) the need to replace the aid or appliance is the result of normal use over a reasonable period of time and repair to the item is not feasible.
- 5.2 Lifetime Care may determine that an Equipment Request Form is not required in the instance that a participant's needs have not changed and the item requested is to replace the same as one previously prescribed due to the result of normal use over a reasonable period of time.

#### **6 General household and personal items**

- 6.1 General household and personal items may be funded when the need for a different general household or personal item is directly related to the motor accident injury.
- 6.2 General household and personal items include, *for example*:
- a) *beds and mattresses*
  - b) *domestic goods such as a washing machine*
  - c) *personal computers*
  - d) *tablets and smartphones*
  - e) *bicycle helmet*
  - f) *standard footwear.*
- 6.3 Lifetime Care considers treatment and care needs for general household and personal items to be reasonable and necessary when:
- a) a specific item or type of item will increase the participant's independence;

- b) a specific item or type of item is required as a result of the motor accident injury; and
  - c) the item will ensure the safety of the participant, family members and attendant care workers.
- 6.4 Lifetime Care will not fund replacement of an aid or appliance where the aid or appliance is a general household or personal item, including examples in clause 6.2, which under normal circumstances would be owned and replaced by the participant or their household. This clause applies even if the aid or appliance in question was initially purchased or funded by Lifetime Care because the participant needed a specific kind of item in this category, and that need necessitated replacement of an equivalent item already owned by the participant or their household. After the initial purchase, Lifetime Care expects the general household or personal item will be replaced by the participant. *For example, if the participant or their household had owned a top-loading washing machine and Lifetime Care funded the purchase of a front-loading washing machine on the basis this would increase the participant's independence and capacity to participate in household activities, Lifetime Care would not fund any replacement for the washing machine at a later date.*
- 6.5 Personal computer aids and appliances will be considered reasonable and necessary when they will achieve one or more of the following:
- a) assist the participant to return to work. This includes working remotely until they can access their workplace;
  - b) are required for a vocational retraining program where the goal of the program has been confirmed by a Work Options Plan and Lifetime Care supports this goal;
  - c) will increase a participant's functional independence in their instrumental activities of daily living such as shopping and money management where the participant:
    - i. lives in a remote location;
    - ii. has a severe physical impairment; or
    - iii. has some other motor accident injury-related condition that inhibits the participant's access to the community.
- 6.6 Personal computer aids and appliances for education will be considered reasonable and necessary when the participant:
- a) is enrolled in distance education, or school or tertiary education that is able to provide remote learning;
  - b) is unable to access their educational institution, including the computer facilities of the educational institution; and
  - c) does not own or have access to suitable computer aids and appliances only where the school or educational facility does not have a 'bring your own device' or similar in place.
- 6.7 The reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to personal computer aids and appliances will not generally include:

- a) the additional cost of software, hardware or peripherals where this is the participant's personal preference and is not required to maximise a participant's independence; or
  - b) the additional cost of software upgrades where this is the participant's personal preference and is not required to ensure that the participant's computer remains serviceable or maximises a participant's independence in computer use.
- 6.8 Short-term internet access will be considered reasonable and necessary when the need is related to the participant's motor accident injury and the participant is:
- a) a hospital inpatient temporarily unable to access their workplace;
  - b) participating in a short-term therapy program delivered via the internet or skype; or
  - c) participating in a short-term return to work program.
- 6.9 Tablets and smart phones are generally considered normal personal items and not an aid or appliance to meet an injury-related treatment and care need. However, a tablet or smart phone and necessary applications will be considered reasonable and necessary when:
- a) the participant requires the device (and applications) as part of a goal-oriented rehabilitation program in which the recommendation is that the item will:
    - i. measurably increase independence. *For example, via a reduction in need for attendant care workers or support workers, and/or*
    - ii. measurably improve an injury related deficit in communication; and
  - b) the participant can demonstrate the ability to effectively use the device and any relevant software for the reasons it has been recommended.
- 6.10 The reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to tablets and smartphones will not generally include:
- a) cellular data or the cost of connecting the device to the internet;
  - b) an upgrade or replacement of the device; and
  - c) applications other than those prescribed to meet an injury related need.

## **7 Aids and appliances for exercise and fitness**

- 7.1 An exercise aid or appliance will be considered reasonable and necessary when the factors listed at clause 1.1 of this Part are met and:
- a) the need for the aid or appliance is related to a participant's goal documented in their plan; and
  - b) the participant's commitment has been demonstrated through regular use of the aid or appliance over a period of time where hire or loan is available.
- 7.2 The reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to aids and appliances will not generally include:
- a) equipment that is available for use in another setting (such as a gymnasium) that is appropriate for the participant to access;
  - b) equipment that is used by the participant solely in other environments. *For example, a physiotherapist's treatment rooms; or*

- c) purchase of an aid or appliance when Lifetime Care considers hire is more appropriate.  
*For example, when there are no definitive living arrangements.*

## **8 Aids and appliances for recreation or leisure purposes**

- 8.1 Aids and appliances for leisure or recreation will be considered reasonable and necessary when the factors at clause 1.1 of this Part are met and it will assist a participant to return to or commence a developmentally appropriate leisure activity.
- 8.2 The reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to aids and appliances will not include large capital items or recreational vehicles, including equipment for elite sports.

## **9 Agreements with participants for aids and appliances**

- 9.1 Lifetime Care may require the participant to enter into an agreement that includes the conditions of use, maintenance, insurance and ownership of an aid or appliance.
- 9.2 If a participant requests a specific aid or appliance which is more expensive than an equivalent item that is required to meet the participant's identified needs, Lifetime Care may pay a reasonable contribution to the cost of that item, measured by reference to the reasonable cost of the equivalent item which would meet the needs in question.