

30 March 2010

31 MAR 2010

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Ref. No _____

Dear Ann

Reviews of home support by telephone

I am following up on your letter dated 9 February 2010.

The Ministry supports the internationally validated **interRAI** Contact Assessment as part of an integrated implementation of **interRAI** assessments in New Zealand when used either face to face or over the telephone. A major reason for its use is to be able to quickly differentiate people with less complex needs, but whose needs may nevertheless be urgent or important, from those for whom a fuller, more detailed assessment is warranted because of their complex needs. In instances where the Contact Assessment is used over the phone it frees up time from unnecessary home visits and can improve the capacity of a DHB to assess and reassess more people, more frequently, and allow assessors and coordinators to focus on those with greatest need, and where a face to face assessment is required. The Ministry has recently advised DHBs that they should establish protocols for telephone assessments that include the following recommendations.

Older people should be advised that an assessment or reassessment is planned. Ideally this is arranged with the older person by letter or alternatively, by a phone call to confirm an appointment time for a different occasion. At the beginning of the telephone call the assessor would advise the older person of the purpose of the call, outline what they can expect will happen during the call, and that they can seek a review of the assessment findings if they wish. The assessor should ask the older person for the name and contact details of a family or whanau member that the assessor could also contact to discuss the assessment if required or if desired by the older person.

The assessment phone call should be conducted like a conversation and be finished within 20-30 minutes. Sounding the client out about potential service planning arrangements or preferences is reasonable provided this is completed within the time frame and does not pre-empt the analysis of the assessment results.

Older people with significant hearing, visual, speech, language or cognitive difficulties such as dementia, or who have English as a second language should be assessed face to face. These issues are usually identified on the original referral for services letter. If not, the assessor should stop the call and make home visit arrangements. Clients must be advised that they can seek a review of the assessment findings if they wish.

The Ministry will be following up with DHBs to confirm their responses.

If you wish to discuss the operation of interRAI further, please contact Brigette on her direct line 04-816 3451 or brigitte_larkins@moh.govt.nz.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely
Manager, Health of Older People

