



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Referrer Information Kit

Community Aids and Equipment Program



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Eligibility criteria	3
2.2 Not eligible	4
2.3 Persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria	4
3. Equipment criteria	5
3.1 Equipment categories	5
4. Home environment criteria	6
5. Home modification criteria	6
6. Issuing and returning equipment	7
7. CAEP structure	7
7.1 Referrer	7
7.2 Service provider/budget holder	8
7.3 Specifier	9
8. CAEP equipment process	10
9. CAEP Referral form	11

1. Introduction

The Community Aids and Equipment Program (CAEP) is funded by the State Government and administered by the Department of Health. CAEP provides basic and essential equipment for people who meet the CAEP eligibility criteria. Access to CAEP funded equipment is guided by the CAEP Manual, which outlines the policies and procedures as well as the basic and essential equipment that can be funded.

The program objectives of CAEP are to:

- provide essential and basic equipment to CAEP eligible people to support them to manage at home.
- provide a service that enables equitable access to aids and equipment within consistent guidelines.
- apply administrative and equipment resources within the program to ensure maximum benefit to the target group.

The purpose of this Information Kit is to aid referrers and community organisations to help eligible individuals access CAEP appropriately and effectively.

2. Eligibility criteria

CAEP funds basic and essential equipment that enables people with long-term health, disability or age-related functional impairment to live in their own homes.

Individuals must test their eligibility with National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or My aged Care (MAC) before applying to CAEP:

- Under 65 years old, refer to the NDIS.
- Aged 65 years and older, refer to My Aged Care.
- If the person is declined access by NDIS or My Aged Care, who would otherwise meet CAEP eligibility, the person may access CAEP.

CAEP will fund aids and equipment from the CAEP imprest list for people with a long-term health, disability or age-related functional impairment living in the community who meet the below criteria:

- are holders of one of the following Australian cards:
 - Pensioner Concession Card
 - Health Care Card, or Demonstrate financial hardship
- are eligible for Disability Support for Older Adults (DSOA) or Continuation of Support Arrangements (COSA)
- are living at home (owned, mortgaged or rented) in the community, or in a state-funded residential facility
- have not received compensation settlement
- are not currently accessing funding through NDIS or MAC
- are not a current hospital inpatient, outpatient or day patient or have been in the last 3 months

A person living in a government or non-government hostel, group home or social or community housing accommodation is eligible for personalised and portable equipment only.

2.2 Not Eligible

CAEP will not fund aids and equipment for people who meet the below criteria:

- are currently hospital patients, that is, inpatients, day hospital patients or outpatients of a hospital who should be discharged with ongoing availability of equipment or installations to ensure safe discharge and prevent re-admission
 - Inpatients, outpatients and day patients may be eligible for CAEP services if the reason for their intervention in the hospital is not related to the equipment need, or they are only attending for review/maintenance purposes, that is not active or therapeutic intervention.
- a person living in a government or non-government hostel, group home or social or community housing accommodation, who requires equipment for communal use or structural modifications
- any structural modification or equipment that address Occupational Health and Safety issues of paid care workers
- are funded by aged care funding or are a resident in a Commonwealth funded Residential Aged Care facility
- are eligible for equipment under other government funded programs including NDIS or MAC.
- are eligible for funding through private health insurance. It is the responsibility of the person to advise their Service Provider if they have Private Health Cover that provides rebates on equipment. CAEP funding may be provided to cover gap costs for persons with private health cover, but only for items basic and essential to the person's functional needs as assessed by the CAEP Service Provider.
- Are Ex WANDIS/ CoS AT&HM persons who are eligible for equipment via the Department of Communities

Holders of a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Veteran Card (Gold, White or Orange) must demonstrate they are not entitled to the item through the DVA. Written documentation from DVA stating the person is not entitled to DVA assistance and the reason for this decision is required.

2.3 Persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria

If a person has an assessed urgent and critical need for an item, but does not meet the eligibility criteria, then an out-of-policy request can be made to the budget holder for consideration. CAEP will consider applications on a case-by-case basis. This includes persons on My Aged Care high level packages who would otherwise meet the CAEP criteria, who are at risk and who provide documentation from their MAC provider stating they have insufficient funds.

CAEP will consider CAEP referrals for clients on NDIS when the functional impairment and need for the equipment is not related to the disability for which they receive NDIS funding.

3. Equipment criteria

CAEP was established to assist people to remain in their own homes within their community. The eligibility criteria states: Individuals must be “in a residential situation that is structured to encourage independent living and live in the community for most of the time”. These residential situations do not include nursing homes or hospitals.

Accordingly, the main purpose of CAEP is to provide essential equipment to CAEP eligible people to support their independent functioning at home.

The CAEP essential criteria to be addressed are:

- equipment is essential for independent functioning and functional care at home
- equipment must be the most basic model/type that meets the clinical need
- equipment must be for personal use only, that is not communal use
- equipment is required for use in the person's primary residence
- the item costs more than \$50
- equipment is required for safety and behavioural purposes where applicable.

3.1 Equipment Categories

CAEP will fund equipment from the categories listed below. The Imprest list in the CAEP manual has information on the individual aids and equipment and the funding limits under the following categories:

- Communication Aids
- Daily living: bed equipment, personal hygiene, toileting equipment
- Postural Seating and positioning
- Transfer Aids: including hoists,
- Mobility Aids: Crutches, walking sticks and walking frames
- Wheeled Mobility devices: wheelchairs, scooters, strollers
- Specialised Footwear
- Orthosis: spinal, upper and lower limb, lymphoedema and compression garments
- Environmental Access Control units
- Safety: helmets
- Respiratory Appliances: ventilators, humidifiers, CPAP
- Structural Modification and Installations: ramps, rails, bathroom modifications

CAEP will consider funding items not listed on the Imprest list on a case-by-case basis.

4. Home environment criteria

CAEP defines the community as the person's primary residence and includes external access to the clothesline, letterbox, and garage (where relevant). The Department of Health appointed CAEP officer would consider individual cases for full access to the home's external environment when that environment is a farm or a few acres of land.

CAEP may fund equipment for purpose outside the home where access is essential for daily home functioning, for example, a scooter/power wheelchair to access:

- medical and dental services
- shops /services where there is a need to purchase food, pay bills and obtain other requirements for home functioning.

Where a non-equipment option meets the same need, that option must be pursued first. Strategies such as the use of respite, shopping when the client is at school, or using the local taxi service must be explored. The applicant must demonstrate that these strategies are either not an option or are an impractical alternative to supplying the equipment for essential broad community access.

Factors to consider when assessing which is the most practical solution include:

- frequency of need (that is, several times a week)
- other supports and options
- intermittent home-based need where there is regular fluctuation in the person's abilities to manage without the equipment.

Each piece of equipment requested through CAEP must meet the home environment criteria and any specific criteria for that item as defined in the CAEP manual and imprest list.

5. Home Modification criteria

CAEP will fund structural modifications for CAEP eligible persons when:

- The person has not received CAEP funding for structural modifications during the previous five years.
- The dwelling for which the structural modifications are planned:
 - Is a domestic residence (owned, mortgaged or rented).
 - Is not an institution or group home.
 - Is the person's primary residence, i.e. it is the home in which they spend most of their time. Modifications to respite accommodation will not be funded.
 - Meets minimum building standards prior to the modification. commencing. It is the person's/ family's/ carer's responsibility to ensure these minimum building standards are met.

6. Issuing and returning equipment

CAEP equipment is provided to people as a long-term loan until no longer needed. People receive the most appropriate basic and essential equipment to address their functional need. Equipment provided may be refurbished or purchased from a supplier.

When people no longer need the equipment, they should advise the prescribing therapist. The prescribing therapist can arrange for equipment collection if the equipment can be refurbished for use by someone else.

7. CAEP structure

CAEP structure is set out below:

- Referrer
- Service provider /budget holder
- Specifier.

7.1 Referrer

An applicant who requires an item of equipment will need to be referred to CAEP to access funding from either:

- a medical practitioner or allied health professional
- a disability sector organisation with the expertise to refer from within their organisation
- in rural and remote areas, a community nurse, remote area nurse, clinical therapist or local coordinator may refer applicants.

A referral is required from a recognised Referrer for initial specification of aids and equipment. A new referral is not required for replacement of items or new equipment for the same health, disability, or age-related need unless there is significant changed need or clinical indicators that suggest a new referral is warranted.

The role of the referrer is to undertake the following:

- identify a person's clinical need for equipment
- complete an initial check on a person's eligibility for CAEP
- determine the appropriate service provider
- inform the service provider by phone, email and/or mail about the referral, providing the service provider with all necessary information (refer to the CAEP referral form)
- inform the applicant to contact the service provider for their catchment area to find out the service provider's process (that is, where do they go, who do they see for what purpose).

7.2 Service provider/budget holder

A service provider is an organisation that has entered into an agreement with the Department of Health to provide aids and equipment for people who meet the CAEP criteria.

CAEP has entered into agreements with CAEP service providers to ensure that, in most cases, applicants can access services in their local area.

CAEP currently has 3 types of CAEP service providers:

Health service provider

Department of Health hospitals and community health centres are grouped into the following designated regions and each of the services listed below have CAEP funding for corresponding postcodes:

- East Metropolitan Health Service
- North Metropolitan Health Service
- South Metropolitan Health Service
- WA Country Health Service.

Disability sector organisation provider

Organisations that provide CAEP services for people with disability with COSA and DSOA funding are referred to as disability sector organisation providers. The disability sector organisation providers listed below have CAEP funding:

- Ability WA
- Therapy Focus.

Specialist service provider

Organisations providing specialised services are specialist service providers. People can access their local service providers for routine equipment and may be able to access a specialist service provider for specialist equipment at the same time. There are 2 specialist service providers for CAEP:

- EMHS Specialist equipment service –for complex equipment needs
 - Alternative and augmentative communication systems.
 - Customised manual and power wheelchairs.
 - Pressure management.
 - Specialised postural seating, positioning equipment and protective helmets.
 - Orthotic appliances
- Specialist Respiratory Service: CAEP funded respiratory appliances to manage respiratory failure, sleep hyperventilation and/or obstructive sleep apnoea for CAEP eligible clients. Direct referral from GP or WA Sleep Specialist is required.

People who are wishing to access the Specialist equipment service should approach their CAEP service provider. If the local service provider is not able to provide the service or equipment, then the person can be referred by the local CAEP service provider to the CAEP specialist service. **

The role of the CAEP service provider is to undertake the following:

- confirm eligibility and that the referral contains all relevant information
- manage their allocated budgets
- specify and provide equipment
- repair and maintain equipment
- ensure equipment specification is consistent with current clinical best practice
- be competent to assess, specify, prescribe, and issue equipment or to seek senior colleague advice and ratification of assessment etc., when required
- comply with the current Therapeutic Goods Administration legislation.

7.3 Specifier

A specifier is a CAEP recognised or registered health professional who undertakes equipment prescription.

Recognised specifiers for CAEP:

- Registered Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Orthotist
- Physiotherapist
- Podiatrist
- Speech Pathologist
- EMHS Specialist Equipment Service
- Specialist Respiratory Service

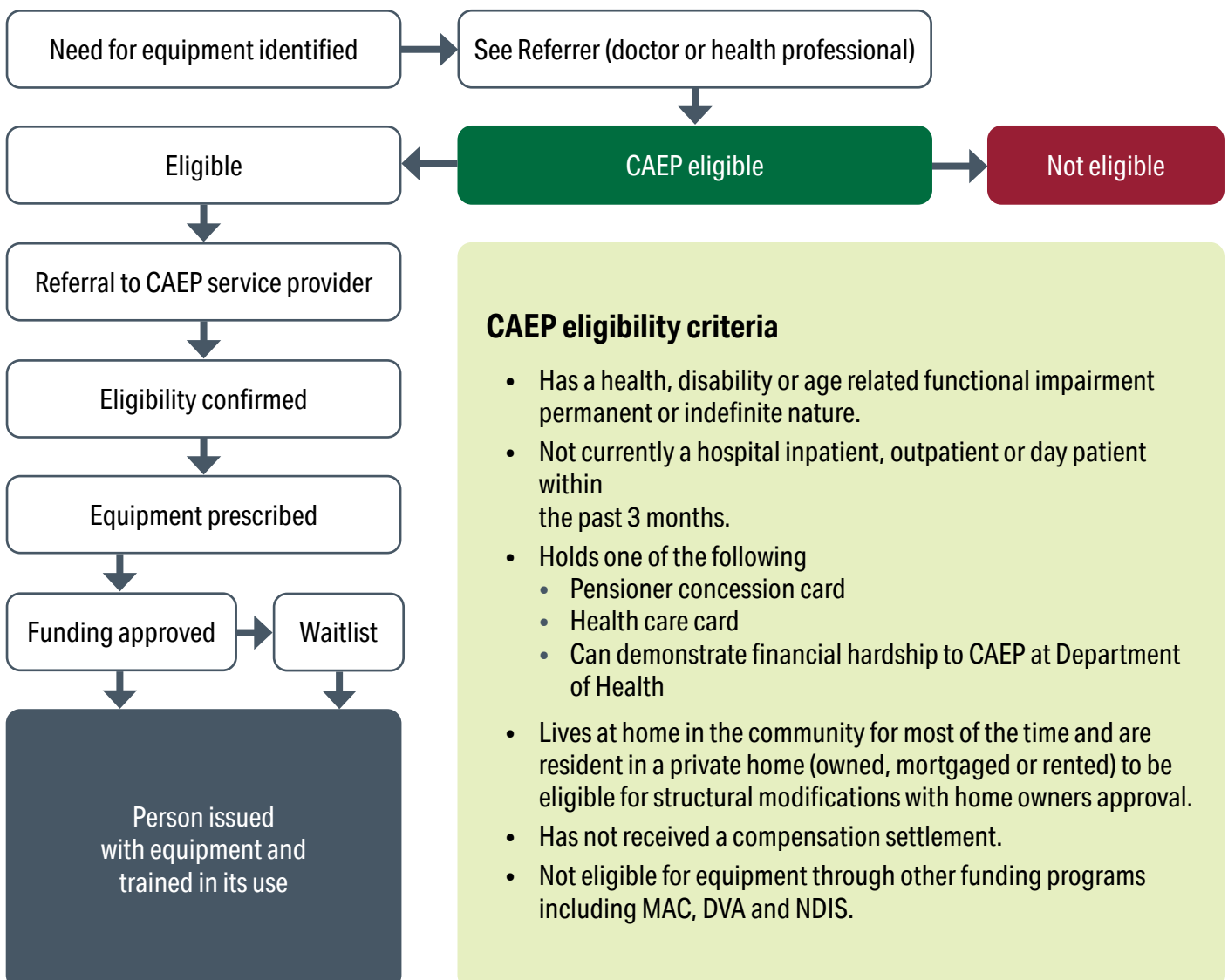
The role of the CAEP specifier is to undertake the following:

- confirm that the applicant meets CAEP eligibility criteria
- advise the applicant on the CAEP process and inform them of their consumer rights and responsibilities
- undertake equipment specification consistent with current clinical best practice
- assess, specify, prescribe and issue equipment
- ensure the request is consistent with the CAEP guidelines
- liaise with referrer where appropriate
- submit equipment application to the relevant budget holder
- gain approval from CAEP service provider to spend CAEP funds
- check that the equipment supplied meets the specifications, is fit for purpose and in good working order
- supply aids and equipment to the applicant, including any training and instructions about using and maintaining the equipment
- review equipment to ensure ongoing suitability and the need for maintenance / repairs.

8. CAEP equipment process

The steps below outline the process that is to be followed when applying for and receiving CAEP funded equipment:

- Need for equipment identified
- Person obtains a referral from a doctor or therapist.
- The referrer advises the person on the CAEP process and refers them to the relevant CAEP service provider / budget holder.
- The CAEP service provider confirms CAEP eligibility (if not eligible the process stops at this point)
- The service provider/ budget holder organises an appropriate specifier for the person.
- The specifier assesses the person and recommends the appropriate item of equipment to meet their functional need.
- CAEP service provider may accept external equipment prescriptions from external specifiers as appropriate
- The specifier contacts the service provider/ budget holder and applies for funding.
- The service provider /budget holder approves funding and orders equipment prescribed for the person when funding is available.
- The specifier trains the person and/or their family and carers in the use of the equipment.



9. CAEP Referral form

The referral form is available on the [CAEP website](#).

All completed CAEP referral forms should be sent to the correct CAEP service provider as identified by postcode, listed in the Postcode Listings document available through the CAEP website.

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