

High Cost Treatment Pool (HCTP) – FAQs

What is the High Cost Treatment Pool?

- The High Cost Treatment Pool (HCTP/the Pool) is funded by Te Whatu Ora for one-off treatments that are not funded by the public health system in New Zealand. This includes treatments only available outside New Zealand, or only in private New Zealand hospitals.
- The purpose of the Pool is to provide equitable access to complex treatment for eligible people throughout New Zealand.

Who can make an application to the HCTP?

Applications to the Pool can only be made by a public hospital specialist on a patient's behalf with supporting documentation and recommendations for treatment.

Applications are made, for example, after:

- A referral is made to a hospital specialist from a patient's general practitioner (GP) or Private Specialist, and consultation with hospital specialist has occurred, or
- A specialist decides that a person who has been in hospital needs further complex care that is not available in the public health system in New Zealand.

Only district staff and specialists can email HCTP@health.govt.nz for the application form and further information. All other queries will be automatically replied to with a response to to contact their primary care provider (GP) or district specialist in the first instance.

Who evaluates applications and how long does it take for an application to be processed?

The process from initial consultation with a public hospital specialist to an application being submitted to the HCTP can take time.

Once an application and supporting documentation has been received, the HCTP team will evaluate and process the application within 15 working days, not including public holidays or weekends. The process includes an initial review of the application by the HCTP team for completeness and a review by the HCTP Clinical Panel. In some instances, this may require further information and discussion with the district referrer, potential treatment provider and/or other subject matter experts. This may take longer than the indicated 15 working days. An application may be accepted, declined or be put on hold awaiting further assessment/information but the referring district specialist will be advised at the time.

Who is eligible for funded treatment through the High Cost Treatment Pool?

Those eligible for treatment funded through the Pool are:

- A New Zealand citizen (under the Citizenship Act 1977 or the Citizenship (Western Samoa) Act 1982)
- A New Zealand resident who has a resident visa
- Australian citizens and permanent residents who live, or are intending to live in New Zealand for two years or more
- Refugees and protected persons
- And some other special eligibly listed on Te Whatu Ora website

What high cost treatments are eligible for funding?

High Cost Treatment includes medical treatments only available overseas, complex cases, or treatments currently available outside public hospitals. A complex case means a case that may require case management due to its rarity, clinical complexity and high cost.

The general eligibility criteria are:

- the treatment must have proven efficacy through appropriate clinical trials, and preferably also have been established as effective through regular application
- treatment would lead to reasonable prospects of survival and to an improved quality of life after treatment
- the treatment is well established and not an experimental form of treatment
- the treatment is cost-effective.
- Failure to receive the treatment would likely result in serious irreversible deterioration in the patient's condition, or an inability to recover lost function, or significant impairment to normal development of a child.
- Failure to receive the treatment could deny an adult with a lifelong disability access to treatment which would lead to a marked improvement in their quality of life.

Do I have to pay for Travel?

No. All travel and accommodation is organised and covered by your district of domicile, that is your local district, once a contract is agreed and signed between Te Whatu Ora and the treatment provider. Insurance is also arranged by the district at no cost to the patient.

Am I required to send any information to the High Cost Treatment Pool?

No, patients should not send the HCTP team any medical information such as NHI number, diagnosis, treatment plan or other personal information. The specialist at your district will ensure all relevant information is submitted.

What happens if my condition isn't covered by the High Cost Treatment Pool?

You should discuss the matter with the specialist who made the referral on your behalf. They will be able to explain the reason for the outcome and discuss options.