

# Completing interRAI Contact Assessments over the Telephone

## Purpose

This document reminds users that the interRAI Contact Assessment may be used over the telephone. International studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of the assessment including use over the telephone.

Using the Contact Assessment over the telephone is common practice for some DHBs. A telephone protocol for the Contact Assessment has been in place for assessors since 2012.

Telephone assessments are useful to understand the complexity of the Client's condition, the need for specialised services and to understand their urgency for more in-depth assessment such as the need for an interRAI Home Care assessment.

## Telephone Protocols updated for the COVID-19 pandemic

Older people with significant hearing difficulties, 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. *For the COVID-19 situation proceed if there is another person present and ask them to use the speaker phone (if available).*

Good practice, as well as the expectations of the Health and Disability Consumer Rights, requires that the person must be clearly 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, allowing the person time to arrange another person to be present. *For the COVID-19 situation a phone call to arrange the assessment is recommended.*

At the beginning of the assessment the assessor should introduce themselves, provide the purpose of the assessment, outline what they can expect will happen during the call and inform them they can seek a review of the assessment finding if they wish.

The assessment should be conducted like a conversation and be finished within 20-30 minutes.

It is reasonable for the assessor to ask some clarifying questions to elicit the required information, but additional assessment items are not required.

The assessor should ask the person for the name and contact details of a family or whānau member that the assessor could also contact to discuss the assessment, if required and/or if desired by the person.

Discussing potential service plans or preferences with the person is reasonable, provided this is completed within the 30-minute time frame and does not pre-empt the analysis of assessment results. Allow time for the person to ask the assessor questions as well.

Contact assessments can only be undertaken by a competent interRAI Contact Assessment assessor, or those currently in interRAI Contact assessment training.

Contact assessments should only be undertaken in instances where a full Home Care assessment can be undertaken should the Contact assessment results indicate that this is required. *For the COVID-19 situation if a home care is required urgently, a Guideline for Completing Community-Based interRAI Assessments via a Live Stream Video is available on [www.interrai.co.nz](http://www.interrai.co.nz).*