ACC's new way of supporting clients: Q&A for providers

22 August 2019

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Understanding our new way of supporting clients

What's changing?

We're changing how we support our clients, especially those who require more support from us than just treatment funding, around 6% of claims we manage. Over the next year, we will be rolling out this new way of supporting our clients:

- Clients requiring more than just treatment funding will be matched to a recovery team based on what's needed to support their recovery. More information about our new recovery teams may be found on our website at: http://bit.ly/ACCClientSupport.
- A team will be able to assist clients who don't need 1:1 support from ACC during their recovery. These teams are based in 5 locations: Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton, and Auckland.
- Clients who need 1:1 support to support their recovery will be matched to a recovery team member as close as possible to where they live. Where that isn't possible, we'll match them to support within their region. In the rare case that we can't provide community or regional support (or in instances where a client would prefer support provided from outside of their community and region), we'll match the client to a team member elsewhere in the country.
- An example of how clients access our new way of providing support can be viewed in the brief animation found on our website at: http://bit.ly/ArohasStory.

How is ACC changing?

Our clients have asked us to work with them in a different way. To do this we:

- Improved our systems for claim lodgement and client payments.
- Implemented a new team structure for client-facing roles, so we can match our support to a client's individual needs. These recovery teams enable us to better respond to your questions with consistent and accurate information, without the need for call backs or voicemails.
- Introduced online tools, so clients can self-manage their claims when they want to.
- Centralised administrative tasks, so our recovery team members can dedicate more time to directly supporting recovery.
- Invested in new technology to enable many of these changes.

What new technologies are you talking about?

ACC has reduced the time it takes to match a client with the person/team that can support their recovery using real-time analytics. This technology helps ACC to identify clients likely to need support with their recovery, assess what type of recovery support is required, and match them to the right person or team to assist.

Additional new technologies include:

- Automated matching of clients to the best support for their needs. If their needs change, so will the support we give them.
- ACC claim acceptance and contact details are now sent to clients by text notification.
- Faster access to digital information.
- Claim and client summary software will highlight relevant information for those working with teams of clients.

We will collect and analyse client feedback using an automated system. (We plan to expand this system to include providers in future.)

Is a client always managed by the same team?

We will ensure clients are matched to the right team throughout their recovery, which may change over time to accommodate their needs. If the transition to a different team is the right thing to do, we'll discuss it with the client, and in some cases the provider.

- A client may move from team support to 1:1 support, or vice versa, depending on their needs.
- 1:1 support is provided when it's needed to support a client's recovery, and as their needs change the team they're matched to will also change.
- Clients with complex yet stable injuries (e.g. mental injury or spinal injury) can be matched to the support of a team, rather than 1:1 support.

How does ACC decide what level of support is provided?

What you can tell us about a client's support needs helps us match a client to the right team to support their recovery. In addition to your input, we also:

- Use data analytics at claim lodgement help match a client to the right team, based on a range of factors related to a client, including claims history and injury.
- Where clients have multiple injuries, they all contribute to how we match them to the right team.
- Clients aged 17 and under with a sensitive claim will always have 1:1 support.

What if ACC gets it wrong or a client's circumstances change?

Whenever we're checking in on a client's recovery, ACC team members will consider whether there's been a change in the client's needs. Team members will have a discussion with the client about transitioning to a more suitable team prior to any changes being made to how we support a client's recovery. This could be a shift from 1:1 to the support of a team, or vice versa.

Of course, if you feel a client is not receiving the right support from ACC, please let us know.

Will sensitive claims be managed in the same way?

Instead of having a centralised Sensitive Claims Unit in Wellington, we are expanding that team across eight locations providing 1:1 support to clients with sensitive claims:

- Whangarei
- Newmarket
- Hamilton
- Tauranga
- Hawke's Bay
- Wellington
- Christchurch
- Dunedin.

This gives clients better access to face to face contact with us where it supports their recovery. We'll aim to match clients to the nearest suitable team member who can work with them. If a client prefers to work with someone further away, we can accommodate that. When a claim is lodged, it's matched to a team member who'll engage with the client and work with them through to the supported assessment and into treatment.

We know that over time, needs change, and for many clients once they are in active treatment their need for contact with ACC reduces. For some clients, this means that their needs could be met by a small team of dedicated specialist Recovery Assistants. In these cases, we'll have a conversation with the client to ensure that they are comfortable with this approach.

Specialised recovery teams are being introduced to assist both providers and clients. These teams were created in response to providers and clients who asked us to find a way to make information about claims available without the need for voicemails and call backs. We know having someone always available is important for our providers and having a team available will reduce delays in receiving approvals for services. Clients 17 and under will always have 1:1 support.

Our model is flexible so that we can change the levels of support for our clients as their recovery needs change. We will always have a conversation with the client and their lead provider to discuss potential changes to their support first.

Changes to how you contact us

How do I get in touch with ACC?

ACC is introducing a new phone system and contact phone numbers. As we implement this, calls to previous numbers will redirect to the new number for a fixed period.

Testing locations in Hawke's Bay and Hamilton implemented the new system in August, which required a change to contact phone numbers. If this change has affected you, you'll know because either:

- You were notified about the new contact number; **or**
- You were redirected when you called, and you confirmed the new contact details during that call.

The new phone system and different email contacts will take effect from September as we implement our new approach around the country. We'll share additional details with you closer to the time they take effect.

There are no changes to our Provider Contact Centre number: 0800 222 070.

Understanding why ACC is changing

Why is ACC introducing a new approach?

Put simply, ACC's clients have told us they'd like us to work differently and be easier to interact with. Overall, we're aiming to:

- provide better service to our clients
- operate more efficiently and respond to rising claim volumes
- to reduce the time it takes clients to return to independence, where possible

How did ACC decide on this new approach?

Our clients told us that they need us to make it easier for them to work with us, to simplify and speed things up, and ensure our service is consistent.

We looked at the recovery experience from the client's perspective, and redesigned the way we help people recover from injury.

We tested this new approach with more than 25,000 clients supported by 100 employees in Hamilton and Hawke's Bay. In January 2019, we trialled a team-based approach to managing some sensitive claims clients who were actively engaged in long-term treatment with a lead provider.

Across all our testing, most clients have preferred the new approach and feedback has been largely positive. We have already worked to make those changes to the way we support our clients.

We ran a 3-phase internal consultation process, because of the extent of change being introduced, which concluded in June 2019. All our people had the opportunity to provide feedback and considered changes were made based on that feedback.

Implementation

When and where is the change happening?

We're implementing the new approach across the country, starting in Dunedin and surrounding regions in September 2019. This means that, for almost a year, we will have two systems running at the same time. If you work across a large area, you may work with both at the same time.

It's important to also note that:

- No offices are closing in the towns and cities in which we currently operate.
- The indicative rollout plan is:
    - September 2019: Dunedin, Timaru, Alexandra, Invercargill
    - February 2020: Hamilton, Tauranga, Whakatane, Rotorua, Gisborne, New Plymouth
    - March 2020: Christchurch, Nelson, Greymouth
    - April 2020: Manukau, Auckland, Albany, Henderson, Whangarei
    - June 2020: Wellington, Hastings, Palmerston North, Hutt Valley, Masterton, Porirua
- Our website (http://bit.ly/ACCClientSupport) has more information on ACC recovery team locations.

How is ACC implementing the changes?

ACC is building a team to provide extra support for clients as we roll out our new way of supporting our clients. This team will manage some clients while ACC recovery team members prepare for their new roles.

We will continue supporting our clients' recovery during the transition period, while simultaneously working to improve our services. We're also:

- making some physical changes to our offices.
- deploying new technology for our teams.
- building new teams within ACC (team members, team structures, etc.)

- establishing new or different client relationships externally (new matches of clients to recovery teams / team members).
- monitoring to ensure successful implementation.
- adopting more client-centred language. You may notice this in publications, conversations, and correspondence.

What can current ACC clients expect during the transition?

Many clients will experience a change in who at ACC works with them to support their recovery. They'll be notified about those changes as part of their regular interactions with ACC. Some clients will have a new contact person for 1:1 support, others will have contact details for the support of a wider team. We aim to let most providers working with the client know as well.

It's important to note that clients will still be able to access the service they need from us and will soon be invited (if they haven't already) to start using ACC's online tool MyACC.

Impacts: within ACC

What are the changes for ACC staff?

In the 5 centralised ACC locations (Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton, and Manukau) we are increasing our staff numbers. This involves role changes for those currently in those locations, as well as recruiting new team members.

In our other locations, the type and number of roles will vary. For some there will be an increase in staff, in others there will be a decrease. The mix of roles at those locations in the old and new systems, along with people's preferences and experience for the new roles, influence the specific impacts for people.

The most common affected jobs are:

- Branch / site manager
- Case co-ordinator
- Case manager
- Case officer
- Service co-ordinator
- Support co-ordinator
- Team Manager.

Overall the number of people working in client services will increase from ~1800 to ~1900.

Does ACC still have case managers?

ACC will continue supporting our clients, though roles, responsibilities, and titles will change.

What are the new roles?

- Listed below are common role titles, old and new. They are not equivalents as they are different roles; there are some role titles you'll no longer see.

Previous roles include	New roles include
Branch / site manager	Client service leader
Case co-ordinator	Recovery administrator*
Case manager	Recovery assistant*
Case officer	Recovery co-ordinator*
Service co-ordinator	Recovery partner*
Support co-ordinator	Team leader
Team Manager	Treatment and support assessor
Claims manager	(Specialist) cover assessor
Claims officer - entitlements	

* Together, these roles will provide the support that was previously provided in branches, short term claim centres, and the sensitive claims unit.

Impacts: for providers

Will I notice much difference?

If you don't currently have much contact with our case managers/officers, or support/service/case co-ordinators, you won't notice a lot of change in your interactions with ACC; however, your patients/clients will notice how much easier it is to work with us.

If you have regular contact with case managers/officers or support/service/case co-ordinators, you'll notice the changes more. See below for more information on how you'll be affected. Your patients/clients will also notice how much easier it is to work with us.

What benefits will I see?

Although our goal is to improve the client experience, we're confident that in time you'll notice the following benefits:

Speed

We'll be more responsive when you need to contact us. We will work as a national team to help clients who don't need 1:1 support so there's always someone there to take your call or respond to your email. Even with a short pause (30-60 seconds so our recovery team member can review notes) as we access the relevant client information, resolving your query in one call avoids delays associated with voicemails and call backs.

Consistency

Our administration team will specialise in types of work that were previously a component of many people's jobs, including referrals, processing approvals, creating and updating purchase orders, and requesting health records. Specialisation will improve consistency and efficiency.

Expertise

Team members will be doing what they do best: recovery teams with clients who need 1:1 support have the support of an administration team. This means they have more time to devote to the important conversations that support our clients' recovery. Our team members will be more available for you, clients, and employers.

Client Satisfaction

Regardless of the way you interact with ACC, we know your job can be made more difficult if your patient/client finds it challenging to get the support they need. We're confident that you'll also experience the indirect benefits of making it easier for clients to work with us. Clients involved in testing our new approach reported 7% higher satisfaction levels, and returned to independence 2.3 days faster.

What can I do to help make this a success?

If you lodge claims, you can help by ensuring accurate diagnosis, client contact information, and employer details at lodgement. Getting the right information means we match the client to the right team first time.

Once we've rolled out to your area and you've started interacting with our new teams, give us your feedback by completing a brief survey (http://bit.ly/providerheartbeat). If you want to talk to someone about your comments, you can request a call back within the survey.

Tell us about your patient's/client's recovery needs, so we can match them to the right team. That includes psychosocial factors as well as information about their physical recovery.

When calling a team that works with clients that don't need 1:1 support, be prepared for a pause as we access the relevant client information. Even with a pause, getting things resolved in one call is faster than voicemails and callbacks.

What if my patient/client needs more help?

Please share information with us about your patient's/client's recovery needs. What you tell us helps us match your patient/client to the right team. That includes psychosocial factors, as well as information about their physical recovery.

Please tell us if you think your patient/client isn't matched to the right team and/or we're not supporting your patient's/client's recovery as best we can. Please contact the current person or team that's working with your client, and help us to better understand what they need.

It's important we focus on matching the patient/client to what they need to support their recovery.

MyACC: a new online tool for clients

What can clients do online through MyACC?

- View and update personal and claim information
- View contact details for the person/team working with them at ACC, and request a callback
- Apply for weekly compensation and manage related information (bank account, tax code, hours worked, and medical certificate expiry)
- Request transport assistance by taxi
- Request home help and basic equipment items

- Request reimbursement for pharmaceutical and travel expenses
- Give authority to collect medical/health records and other information.

Can all clients use MyACC?

MyACC will be rolling out as part of the roll out of our new way of supporting clients.

Clients supported by our new recovery teams will receive an invitation to register for MyACC. Clients needing more support from ACC than paying for treatment will be supported by a recovery team and will have the option of also using MyACC to manage their claim online.

Not all clients supported by our new recovery teams will have access to MyACC. Some exceptions include clients under the age of 16 or those with more specialised needs.

How much of a claim can a client manage through MyACC?

Clients can use MyACC to manage their claim and personal details, organise payments and other support, or ask for their recovery team to contact them.

Clients who lodged a claim prior to September 2017 will not be able to use MyACC to see injury information, manage sensitive claims, manage more complex requests, or delegate access to an advocate or carer.

Using MyACC doesn't mean other ACC assistance is unavailable. We're still a phone call away if that is how a client wants to contact us, or if they need assistance that can't be accessed through MyACC.

Where do clients access/download MyACC?

Clients matched to a recovery team will receive an invitation to register for MyACC.

As MyACC a browser-based portal rather than an app, it's not available via the App Store or Google Play.

Information for contracted providers:

What does this mean for relationships I've built up over the years with local branches?

If you worked with multiple ACC branches, you've probably noticed that they don't always work the same way. One of the reasons we're implementing a new approach is to improve consistency of practice across the country.

Given job changes at our locations, there may be changes in the team members working there. If you're regularly working with those team members to support our clients, you'll soon build a relationship with the new teams just as you have done with case managers previously.

We appreciate that at a relationship level, it can be unsettling to work with a wider range of people, and to have less frequent or predictable contact with each of them. However, we're confident that once you're used to it you'll start to see the benefits.

When you're working with a client who doesn't need 1:1 support to help their recovery, you'll be working with a team member who you may not know and who may not be in your region. That may be a change from our old system and we acknowledge it will take some adjustment.

For providers of assessment and rehabilitation services, we know that your relationship with a branch has been an important part of your overall relationship with ACC. If you provide services to clients who need 1:1 support to help their recovery, you'll continue to work with our team members at locations nearby. You'll continue to build and maintain relationships with our team members through the work you do together to support our clients.

How can I build relationships with the teams in centralised locations?

The teams in the 5 centralised locations are working with clients across the country, and thus providers across the country. We need to be fair about provider contact with these teams beyond what is needed to support a specific client.

We have about 2,000 contracted providers nationwide, plus thousands of individual health professionals, supporting our clients. It's not practical to have all interested providers arrange meetings with those teams, and it's not fair to allow meetings for some, but not others.

Instead we encourage providers to consider creating a presence online (a website or digital catalogue, for example) that will allow our team members or clients to quickly and easily access up-to-date information about you or your business/practice.

How will ACC's new teams, and those elsewhere in the country, know about me and my work? Can I meet the new teams or provide them with brochures, etc. about my business/practice?

Contract information is always available to ACC team members, so they know who can provide services regardless of distance from client or provider. We encourage providers to consider their online presence, (a website or digital catalogue, for example), and consider if it provides sufficient information about you/your company/your work for ACC team members to make an informed decision about the services you provide. We will continue to improve the information available to our recovery teams through our internal knowledge base, so they can make informed decisions.

Will the amount of work ACC refers to me change as it implements these changes?

It's possible that referrals may vary from historic patterns alongside ACC's rollout of this new way of supporting clients. While we don't make any commitments about referral volumes and there could be many other causes, we want to hear from you if you're experiencing problems.

Looking ahead, ACC's Health Service Strategy and our new way of supporting clients are aligned and share the goal of supporting clients to recover better and sooner. In future, this may influence the type, volume, and duration of services our clients need. We're partnering with providers to develop new ideas, and to design and test new ways of working together to meet clients' recovery needs. What we learn through this process will inform how we design and purchase future services.

How will a provider be chosen for a particular client?

Clients continue to have choice, if they want to exercise it. Where a client chooses not to select a provider, a recovery team member will select a provider for them. Also:

- If no provider has been identified when the administration team is making the referral, they'll select a provider from those contracted.
- The cost of provider travel can influence selection. We're responsible for making sure rehabilitation is cost-effective.

Will contracts change?

ACC will update contracts to make any necessary changes e.g. references to out-of-date role titles or contact details. We will likely incorporate these changes into scheduled contract variations.

Where there are changes to contact details e.g. new email addresses, we'll communicate with you directly about these and the parts of the country to which they apply.

Until transition is complete, many providers will work with (and contracts will apply to) both the old and new systems concurrently.

Information for providers working with sensitive claims clients

How will patients/clients get the service they need if there's no more sensitive claims unit?

ACC is investing in more people to work with these clients. This gives clients better access to face to face contact with us where it supports their recovery. It also enables better engagement with providers and community organisations, to ensure the right support for our clients.

When will 1:1 support be provided?

When a sensitive claim is lodged, it's matched to a recovery partner who'll engage with the client, and work with them through to the supported assessment and into treatment.

For claims that need 1:1 support to progress their recovery, our approach is to match the client to the nearest suitable recovery team member who can work with them. If a client prefers a more distant team member, we can accommodate that preference.

In order of preference we'd match the client to a team member in:

- The closest location with a suitable team
- Another location in the area with a suitable team
- Another location elsewhere in the country with a suitable team.

Clients aged 17 and under will always have 1:1 support.

Where will 1:1 support be provided?

ACC will have new teams providing 1:1 support in eight locations around the country:

- Whangarei
- Newmarket
- Hamilton
- Tauranga
- Hawkes Bay
- Wellington
- Christchurch
- Dunedin.

When will you use a team rather than 1:1 support?

We know that over time, needs change, and for many clients once they are in active treatment their need for contact with ACC reduces.

For some clients, this means that their needs could be met by a small team of dedicated specialist Recovery Assistants. In these cases, we’ll have a conversation with the client to ensure that they are comfortable with this approach. By having a team specialised to manage our clients, this will ensure much more timely responses so that when our providers make contact, someone is available to respond. We know having someone always available is important for our providers and having a team available will reduce delays in receiving approvals for services.

Our model is flexible so that we are able to change the levels of support for our clients in line with their changing recovery needs. We will always have a conversation with the client and their lead provider to discuss potential changes to their support first.

What if a client has both mental and physical injuries?

At any one time between 5-7% of sensitive claims clients will have physical injury that they need support from ACC with. Unless the client doesn’t want it, or the client’s needs don’t require 1:1 support, the injuries will now be managed together by one person. This enables integrated, client-centred rehabilitation planning and supports.

How will you maintain sensitive claims clients’ privacy?

We’ll continue to provide training to team members and have system controls in place for file access to ensure confidentiality of sensitive personal information. Our system limits on who can access sensitive claims records remain unchanged; team members only access client records when necessary to support a client’s recovery.

Information for treatment providers

If a client has multiple injuries, do you take them all into account when matching them to the right team?

Yes.

Do you consider co-morbidities when matching a patient/client to the right team?

Yes—however, if the co-morbidity is not injury related we may not be aware of it, or the extent to which it affects your patient’s/client’s recovery. Please tell us how other conditions are likely to impact recovery and support needs.

Why doesn’t my patient’s/client’s consent form have a signature?

Clients can give authority for ACC to collect information from health professionals through MyACC and you should expect to see this more frequently as MyACC becomes more widely adopted. Some clients will continue to give ACC authority via a signed form.

When we request health information from providers based on authority provided online, we'll attach to our request a document (the ACC6300D) that:

- Shows you what the client has authorised
- Documents the online authorisation.

The terms of authority given via MyACC are no different to the terms of authority given in writing.

What if my patient/client needs more help?

Please share information about your patient's/client's recovery needs. What you tell us helps us match your patient/client to the right team. That includes psychosocial factors as well as information about their physical recovery.

If you think we're not supporting a client's recovery as best we can, tell us. Contact the current person or team that's working with your patient/client, and tell us about what they need.

It's important we focus on matching the client to the support needed for their recovery.

Does the weekly compensation function on MyACC alter how medical certificates are provided?

No. A client is fit for some work if they can be at work, travel to work, or do specified tasks at work. If they can't do any of those, they're fully unfit for work. If they can do some tasks or part of their job, we'll work with you and your patient/client to look at return to work options. Our systems for supporting clients don't change this.

Please continue to certify fitness in the usual format and submit it in the usual way.

How do I know what team my patient/client is in?

Your patient/client will know the contact details for accessing the right support at ACC. If you don't know who to contact for your patient, call our provider contact centre on 0800 222 070. They'll connect you with the right team or person and give you the right contact details for next time.

Providing feedback and resolving issues

How do I provide feedback about these changes?

Automated and integrated feedback channels are a core component of our new way of supporting client recovery. This method of providing feedback will first be available to clients, but will later be introduced for providers. We will inform you when this system is introduced.

In the meantime, we have developed a brief survey (http://bit.ly/providerheartbeat) to capture your feedback: The benefit of using the survey is that it allows for aggregation and analysis. There's a callback request within the survey so if you want to speak to someone personally you can request it there.

You're also welcome to share feedback verbally via usual channels like the Provider Contact Centre and through our Engagement and Performance Managers. Because we can better analyse results of the survey (http://bit.ly/providerheartbeat), we encourage you to use that channel.

The survey isn't suited to information about a specific client or claim. For compliments or concerns about how we're working with a particular client, contact the individual involved. If you're not sure who that is, or there's a team supporting the relevant client, call our Provider Contact Centre on 0800 222 070.

What if I don't like talking to a different person each time I call about my patient/client?

ACC is conscious that for some providers this has been a challenge while we tested new ways of supporting clients. We've acted on this feedback and we've:

- increased our focus on writing high quality case notes.
- developed software for introduction in November 2019, to rapidly highlight relevant client and claim information. This enables faster service by those working as a national team to support a client's recovery.

As you'll know from calls to other large service organisations who don't have a 1:1 relationship with you, it's typical to have a brief pause while a team member accesses the information needed to assist you with your query. Even with a pause, we feel getting things resolved in one call is better for everyone.

We're confident that in time, you'll see the benefits in having a wider team able to respond to you (even with a short pause) rather than voicemails and callbacks with a single team member.

If this is a persistent problem for you, then we're keen to understand why that is via a brief survey (http://bit.ly/providerheartbeat). If there's a change we can make to improve your experience next time, that will be our focus.

Acknowledge that improvements may not be immediate. We're confident that in time you'll see the benefits, for you and your patients/clients.

What should I do if I am not seeing the expected service improvements?

ACC will be doing its best to minimise disruption while we roll out the new approach, however if you're not getting the level of service you need, please tell us. For trends, please complete this brief survey (http://bit.ly/providerheartbeat). For issues with a particular client/claim please contact the person or team working with the client.

Your feedback helps us identify areas where we need to focus our efforts.

How can I give feedback on the new system?

We are keen to hear feedback from providers by completing a brief survey (http://bit.ly/providerheartbeat). If there's a change we can make to improve your experience next time, that will be our focus.

Ensure that we have all the relevant information about your patient's/client's support needs so that we can be sure we've matched them to the right team.

What if there's a problem I can't resolve with the team member?

The approach to resolving issues hasn't changed. Most issues can be easily resolved by talking to the person or team involved.

If there's an issue regarding your patient/client, talk to the recovery team or recovery team member first.

If raising it with a team leader hasn't been successful, the issue should be raised with ACC's Engagement and Performance Manager (EPM). If you work under contract but aren't the contract holder, raise the issue to the contract holder who'll work with the EPM for resolution.