

16 May 2016

Lee M

fyi-request-3857-ae3548e4@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Lee M

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 5 April 2016 to Hon Nikki Kaye, Minister for ACC, asking for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Question 1

“In a letter written by Gabby Boag (then) Senior Advisor, ACC Government Services to a Mr Anthony Jordan (using this FYI website) dated 28 2014, it was stated that; “...ACC has developed best practice case management principles around the use of medical assessments.”

I requested a copy of the ACC’s “best practice case management principles around the use of medical assessments” in a letter dated 22 January 2015.

(...) I was not provided with the “best practice case management principles around the use of medical assessments” information I had specifically requested, and as so clearly described by Gabby Boag. Instead, I was provided me with copies od two internal policy documents that are unrelated to “the use of medical assessments” and which are titled “Principles of client centric services” and “Principles of effective three point contact”.

It is not possible that the ACC does not have the information that Gabby Boag referred to as abovementioned and I am again requesting that I be provided with a copy of the ACC’s “best practice case management principles around the use of medical assessments.”

Question 2

“Mr Darrel Read of the ACC’s Southern Short Term Claims Centre Gradual Process Team advised me in a letter dated 13 March 2015 that; “,,, the use of Occupational Physician Assessments within the Work Related Gradual Prcoess team are used as a tool to determine cover, we do not have a standard policy and as it is not the same as a Vocational Medicine Assessment or an initial Medcial Assessment.” Yet, Mr Read had earlier advised me in an e-mail dated 11 February 2015 that – in relation to the ACC’s request that I attend an Occupational Physician – S55 of the AC Act would apply “in conjunction with our team policy.”

(...)

I am requesting a copy of the “team policy” that Mr Darrel Read referred to as quoted above.”

Your request was transferred to ACC under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act and was received by ACC on 15 April 2016.

Our response

Question 1

In your request you have explained that you are dissatisfied with ACC's response to your request of 22 January 2015 asking for a copy of ACC's "*best practice case management principles around the use of medical assessments*" referred to in a response to Anthony Jordan dated 28 January 2014 which was posted on the FYI website. ACC provided you with the information referred to in the response to Mr Jordan.

In preparing the response to Mr Jordan, ACC took the view that he was asking on what basis ACC staff determine how, when, and who to refer their clients for assessment. Mr Jordan did not detail a specific type of assessment or client situation. The principles Ms Boag was referring to are the starting points for all front line staff dealing with clients. These are the documents that were provided to you.

Given the vast range of ACC entitlements available, spanning social and vocational rehabilitation, and including regular assessments to determine injury status, there are many policies and processes that staff are required to follow. By way of example only, here are a few different scenarios:

- Application for home help – an assessor needs to visit the client in their home to determine their injury-related needs
- Application for weekly compensation – a medical certificate confirming diagnosis and duration of incapacity is generally acceptable
- Incapacity extends beyond expected recovery duration – a referral to a specialist medical clinician may be necessary to ensure the appropriate treatment and rehabilitation initiatives are being followed
- Treating practitioner indicates non-medical conditions have come into play - referral to a specialist medical clinician may be necessary to distinguish between injury and non-injury related factors
- Application for an Independence Allowance – a referral to a provider is determined based on the client's injury/diagnosis
- Application for elective surgery after a client has returned to independence – ACC needs to consider what clinicians to involve, to assess whether or not the application is directly linked to the covered injury
- Application for assistance with pain management – may require referral to an orthopaedic specialist, or a psychologist for a cognitively-based pain management programme
- Vocational Independence – may require referral to multiple assessors to ensure all covered injuries are evaluated (e.g. orthopaedic for a back injury and a psychologist or psychiatrist for mental injury and so forth)

Each entitlement has a different set of policies and processes that staff are required to follow. However, the starting point for all front-line staff dealing with clients are the processes mentioned to Mr Jordan and provided to you, as explained above. There

is more information that ACC staff use, but what they refer to will depend on the individual circumstances of each client.

Claims Help Information and Policy System

ACC's standard policies and processes have not been held in paper copy for many years now, but were replaced with an electronic staff intranet database, known as the Claims Help Information and Policy System, or CHIPS. A key benefit of this system is that it allows for the instant updating of information, which makes it a living database.

This database consists of over 50,000 pages of work material which are not ordered consecutively like a book. Rather, it is a constructed database of individual documents accessed via electronic searches using either key words or subjects. Each individual page relies on a network of hyperlinks to navigate between different layers of the page's material. There is no easy way to print a paper copy of all the information relating to client referrals for all the different types of entitlements and assessments, and retain the use of relevant hyperlinks.

This is not to say that ACC cannot collect and provide information from CHIPS. It helps however if requesters specify the actual processes and policies they are interested in; for instance, standard policies and processes relating to the medical aspects of the vocational independence process.

In response to your original request, you were provided with the principles that Ms Boag was referring to in her response to Mr Jordan. If there are further processes and policies that you are interested in, we recommend you make a new request specifying these.

Question 2

As ACC is unable to locate the email dated 11 February 2015 from Darrel Read that you are referring to, we ask that you provide us a copy of said email in order to assist us in providing you with a response to this part of your request.

Queries or concerns

If you have any questions, ACC will be happy to work with you to answer these. You can contact us at GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz or in writing to *Government Services, PO Box 242, Wellington 6140*.

You have the right to complain to the Office of the Ombudsman about our decision. You can call them on 0800 802 602 between 9am and 5pm on weekdays, or write to *The Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143*.

Yours sincerely

Government Services