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He Whakaora.
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Communication and Assistive Technology Assessment Services

Operational Guidelines

May 2023

This is a living document and will be updated as required.

Useful contacts and telephone numbers

Please see below contact details for a number of teams across ACC that can assist you with any queries you have in the course of providing Allied Health Services to ACC clients.

ACC's Provider Contact Centre	Ph: 0800 222 070	Email: providerhelp@acc.co.nz
ACC's Client/Patient Helpline	Ph: 0800 101 996	
Provider Registration	Ph: 04 560 5211	Email: registrations@acc.co.nz
	Fax: 04 560 5213	Post: ACC, PO Box 30 823, Lower Hutt 5040
ACC eBusiness	Ph: 0800 222 994, Option 1	Email: ebusinessinfo@acc.co.nz
Health Procurement	If you have a question about your contract or need to update your details, please contact the ACC Health Procurement team: Email: health.procurement@acc.co.nz Ph: 0800 400 503	
Engagement and Performance Managers (EPMs)	Engagement and Performance Managers can help you to provide the services outlined in your contract. Contact the Provider Helpline or visit this link for details of who the EPMs in your region are.	
ACC Recovery Services Portfolio Team	If you have any questions for the ACC Portfolio Team: Email: socialrehab@acc.co.nz	

ACC's website can provide you with a lot of information, especially our "Health and Service Providers" section. Please visit www.acc.co.nz/for-providers.

Table of Contents

Who are these guidelines for?	4
What is assistive technology?	4
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	4
Computer Access Aids	4
Environmental Controls	4
Purpose	5
Service Overview	5
Assessment	5
Re-assessment	5
Complexity	6
Equipment	6
Equipment trialing	7
Equipment ordering	7
Fitting and set-up	7
Training	7
Clients with a visual impairment	7
Equipment for clients with a visual impairment	7
Service timeframes	8
Complaints	9
Incidents and reportable events	9
Reporting health and safety incidents – on-line form	10
Service monitoring	10
Appendices	11
Appendix 1: Complexity Framework Tool	11
Appendix 2: Equipment usefulness	11
Appendix 3: Common reasons for abandonment of assistive technology	12
Appendix 4: Contract timeframes	12
Operational Guidelines - Changes Log	14

Who are these guidelines for?

The following information is designed to help you interpret the [Communication Assistive Technology Assessment Services Service Schedule](#) (the Contract).

These guidelines are intended to be used by:

- ACC Recovery Team Members, and
- ACC's contracted suppliers and providers of Communication Assistive Technology Assessment Services.

These Operational Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Contract, and with the [Managed Rehabilitation Equipment Services \(MRES\) Operational Guidelines](#).

What is assistive technology?

"Assistive Technology" means any item, piece of equipment or product system that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of clients with disabilities.

For the purpose of this service, Communication Assistive Technology includes, but is not limited to:

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Both unaided and aided methods of communication. Unaided communication systems rely on the user's body to convey messages. Examples include gestures, body language and/or sign language. Aided communication methods can range from paper and pencil to communication books or boards to devices that produce voice output (speech generating devices or SGDs) and/or written output. Electronic communication aids allow the user to use picture symbols, letters and/or words and phrases to create messages.

Computer Access Aids

Includes head-pointers, modified or alternate keyboards, switches activated by pressure, movement or sound, touch screens, special software, eye-gaze technology and speech to text software that enable people with disabilities to use a computer. This category includes access to smart phones.

Environmental Controls

Any piece of equipment that allows a person with a disability to control aspects of their environment that are operated by electricity (i.e. lights, TV, telephone, etc.).

Purpose

The Communication Assistive Technology Assessment service includes:

- assessment of clients' assistive technology needs
- trialing of assistive technology, where assistive technology has been identified as being appropriate
- providing recommendations to ACC based on that assessed need
- providing training and support to the client (and their family/whanau) once equipment has been supplied.

Client Eligibility and Referral

Eligibility will be decided by ACC, but clients will be those clients who are expected to have an increased ability to communicate with the use of communication assistive technology.

Services commence on receipt of a referral from ACC on an ACC081 Form. The referral should provide sufficient information to enable a rapid, accurate and relevant assessment of the clients needs.

Referrals should include:

- Client details
- Relevant clinical history
- Copies of any previous, relevant, assessment reports
- Reason for referral/purpose of assessment (i.e. outcome being sought)

If insufficient information is provided, the assessor must contact ACC at the earliest opportunity, identifying what additional information is required.

Service Overview

Assessment

The key aim of the service is to assess clients' current and future communication assistive technology needs and to provide recommendations to ACC. It may be entirely appropriate that no assistive technology is required, or low technology solutions are recommended.

Re-assessment

Clients' needs change over time and a re-assessment may be requested to either confirm that the supports provided are still appropriate or to make new recommendations.

To ensure that ACC makes appropriately informed decisions, assessment and re-assessment reports must provide sufficient detail about the client's needs and include:

- both the current and potential future requirements of the client
- appropriate low-tech options
- options with supporting reasons for each option provided
- clear pricing for each option
- suitable options including low cost options

Complexity

When the following conditions are met, ACC will pay for the assessment at a higher rate:

- The Complexity Framework Tool has been completed and returned to ACC showing a score of at least 6 out of 17
- The assessor has provided a robust rationale on the form as to why they have scored as complex
- Supporting information has been provided with the tool.

If there is insufficient information or rationale, the Recovery Team Member will discuss this with the assessor.

Once the tool is completed and the Recovery Team Member is satisfied with the information provided, the purchase order can be amended to add the service code for Complex Assessment (ATA04) and remove the service code for Standard Assessment.

For the purposes of this service, complexity refers to the level of detail and work required in assessing the client's needs and providing appropriate, quality recommendations to ACC. Complexity is not directly linked to the client's condition i.e. a clinically complex case does not automatically imply complexity of assessment.

Equipment

In preparing their recommendations, assessors should consider:

- Are low technology options appropriate?
- What technology is already in place/can be upgraded?
- Injury related drivers versus social drivers (e.g. schools requiring children to have access to a tablet)

High end technology (e.g. latest iPhone) will need strong supporting rationale.

Equipment trialling

Equipment trialling presents an opportunity to test technology in situ before final recommendations and decisions are made. Where a trial is indicated, prior approval from ACC is required.

NOTE: ACC does not fund or provide trial equipment. The supplier should develop linkages with equipment providers to obtain suitable, up to date, trial equipment.

Equipment ordering

Equipment is supplied to ACC clients by Enable, ACC's sole national contracted supplier of Managed Rehabilitation Equipment Services (MRES).

If the equipment trial is successful and the provision of equipment is approved by the Recovery Team Member, assessors must follow the processes outlined in the [MRES Operational Guidelines](#) to arrange supply of the equipment.

Fitting and set-up

Once the equipment has been delivered to the client, the assessor may be required to provide assistance to the client (and their family/whanau) in setting up and/or fitting of the equipment. A maximum of two ATA31 (Equipment trial, setup, fitting and training) service items per episode are available with prior approval.

Training

If equipment has been approved and purchased for the client by ACC, the client and their family/whanau/carer will receive training in the safe use and maintenance of the equipment. Training should include any equipment maintenance that can be provided by the client, family/whanau/carer and who to contact if more technical maintenance is required.

Clients with a visual impairment

This service excludes assessment services for clients with a visual impairment. Assessments for visually impaired clients through Blind Low Vision NZ can be requested using the *ACC075 Initial Needs Assessment Referral for the Visually Impaired* form.

Clients with visual impairment may have additional injury related communication requirements – for example, due to a traumatic brain injury - which means that a CATA assessment is the most appropriate assessment to holistically address all of their injury related communication requirements in a single assessment. Talklink Trust can request input into the assessment process from Blind Low Vision NZ as required.

Equipment for clients with a visual impairment

This service excludes the provision of basic visual impairment equipment including:

- Bold Line Pads
- Braille Equipment and Devices
- White Canes and Cane Tips
- Magnifiers – Portable, Stand Magnifiers, Hand Magnifiers, Magnifying Lamps and Hand Held Video Magnifiers
- Digital Voice Recorder
- Daisy (Digital Audio Devices)
- Electronic Voice organisers
- Environmental Modifications, e.g. Illumination Levels
- Felt Tip Markers
- Glare Resistant Glasses
- Large Print Dymotape Labellers and Tape
- Large Print Telephones, Talking Clocks, Talking Watches, Low Vision Clocks and Watches
- Monoculars
- Deafblind Communication Devices and Applications
- Self Threading Needles
- Signature Templates
- Slate and Stylus
- Talking Microwaves
- Talking Scales (kitchen or bathroom) and Talking Tape Measure
- Free Standing Task Lighting
- Writing Frames

Service timeframes

Service timeframes are specified in clause 6.1 of the Service Schedule. Where a timeframe cannot be met it is important that the relevant stakeholders are informed at the earliest opportunity to enable the parties (where required) to:

- Understand, and where possible address, any issues that are impacting on the timeframe
- Agree new timeframes

- Enable on-going communication to ensure that any negative impacts upon the client are minimised.

Complaints

Complaints are defined as any expression of dissatisfaction against the organisation, either written or verbal, by any person receiving support or on behalf of someone receiving support (including ACC).

Complaints can be about (but may not be limited to):

- communication
- service delivery - inadequate, unqualified/untrained staff, tasks not completed
- timeliness
- behaviour
- damages.

Suppliers should have robust complaints policy and procedures to capture all complaints and follow the ACC escalation process.

Incidents and reportable events

The following incidents and risks should be reported to ACC immediately, either by contacting ACC's [Engagement and Performance Managers](#) or calling ACC's Provider Helpline on 0800 222 070.

- notifiable Events (as defined by the HSWA) in relation to the services delivered for ACC or on our behalf
- Client death (any cause)
- personal or organisational threats by an ACC client or their representative (i.e. bomb threats, death threats)
- likely media risk
- privacy breach
- Health and Disability Commission (HCS) or coroner inquest

If you are unsure of what needs to be reported or how to report to us, please contact your Engagement and Performance Manager.

Reporting health and safety incidents – on-line form

Please to use our online form to report Notifiable Events, threats and any other significant risks to health and safety relating to the services you provide for ACC or our clients (refer to clauses 8.15 and 8.16 of the Master Terms and Conditions). The [Reporting health and safety incidents](#) form is available on the For Providers page of our website and is intended to help ACC and our suppliers meet our overlapping responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Service monitoring

Service monitoring (reporting) provides an overview to ACC of the appropriateness of the services delivered (e.g. right equipment, adequate training, improved functional outcomes, ongoing usefulness of equipment), customer satisfaction with the service, highlights any service issues and actions taken to address them. The information provided should be relevant, and will form the basis for service monitoring discussions with ACC.

The monitoring for this service is annually and should include:

- Improvements/Innovations
- Client feedback/Customer satisfaction
- Issues which impact on service delivery and/or timeliness
- Details of Service Providers who have not completed the required number of assessments and the reasons why and the plan to remedy.

You may also include any commentary that you feel may be useful for ACC.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Complexity Framework Tool



Complexity Framework Tool

Appendix 2: Equipment usefulness

Pre and post assessments enable quantification of the ‘value add’ of a program. The following tool is suggested only as a tool to measure the usefulness and effectiveness of equipment provided to a client.

How my equipment impacted upon my life.										
	Before receiving my equipment:					Since receiving my equipment:				
Self-reliance	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5
Ability to participate in activities	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5
Ability to control my life	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5
Ability to interact with my surroundings	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5
My overall satisfaction	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5
My level of frustration	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5
Ability to complete some activities independently without the need for assistance from another person.	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	5

Appendix 3: Common reasons for abandonment of assistive technology

- Unrealistic expectations of the technology and subsequent disappointment
- The device is not adapted to optimise its 'fit' with the user. Moreover, the technology is not adjusted according to the changes in the Client's functional capacity over time
- Limited or no training in device use
- Lack of knowledge about how to use the device(s)
- Ongoing maintenance and repair support not provided
- Mismatch between the Clients cognitive ability and the sophistication of the technology
- Poor fit with the Clients need and his/her environment
- Feelings of embarrassment due to excessive attention
- Negative social judgement
- Denial of need

Appendix 4: Contract timeframes

Requirement	Applicable Timeframe
Notify the ACC referrer if the Referral is Declined	Within five working days of receiving the Referral
Contact the Client to explain the Assessment process, answer any Client questions, confirm whether the Client requires a support person and arrange a suitable time and venue to undertake the Assessment	Within ten working days of accepting the Referral
Complete the initial Assessment	Within ten working days of the first appointment with the client
Complete and submit an initial Assessment Report to ACC	Within ten working days of completion of the Assessment
Submit a revised Assessment Report if the first report is not of an appropriate standard	Within ten working days of notification by ACC that the Assessment Report is unsatisfactory
Notification of outcome: ACC will advise the Service Provider that Assessment and Trials	Within ten working days of receiving the Assessment Report

Requirement	Applicable Timeframe
for a Communication Assistive Technology solution have been approved	
Contact ACC, Client and/or support person to notify potential wait period for Trial equipment or for the next visit to a geographically distant location. Arrange a suitable time and venue to undertake the Assessment/Trial	Within ten working days of receiving the approval
Complete the full Assessment and Trial	Within eight weeks of beginning the full Assessment and Trial
Submit report and training plan to ACC	Within ten working days of completing the full Assessment and Trial
Notification of outcome: ACC approve purchase of Equipment and training plan	Within ten working days of receiving the report and training plan.
Provide set-up and training	In accordance with training plan approved by ACC
Submit a Completion Report to ACC.	Within ten working days of completing the Training Plan approved by ACC

Operational Guidelines - Changes Log

May 2023			
Reference	Change	Wording	Rationale
	Converted to ACC Branded template	N/A	N/A
	Case owners	Recovery Team Members	updated
6	Accessible	Enable	National equipment provider is now Enable
6	Equipment trial, setup, fitting and training	Two ATA31 available	Contractual change - Nov 2022
8	Complaints	Follow escalation process	Updated process
10	Service Monitoring	Now Annual	Contractual change - Nov 2022
Appendix 4	Notify claim is accepted	Notify only if claim declined	Contractual change - Nov 2022
May 2024			
Reference	Change	Wording	Rationale