

Behaviours to uphold the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights

A resource for ACC staff

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Introduction

The purpose of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights, effective 1 February 2003, is to meet the reasonable expectations of claimants about how ACC should deal with them.

It confers rights on claimants and imposes obligations on ACC. ACC has a number of strategies in place to help it meet the obligations imposed by the ACC Code. These include agreed customer service behaviours and the adoption of the ACC values.

This document lists the rights and obligations in the ACC Code and identifies the customer service behaviours, the ACC values and additional behaviours identified by staff, which can be used to uphold each right.

Spirit of the ACC Code

The table below identifies key messages from the spirit of the ACC Code and lists eight essential behaviours staff can use to uphold them.

Key messages from the spirit of the ACC Code

- 1 The ACC Code encourages positive interactions between ACC and claimants.
- 2 For ACC to assist claimants, a partnership based on mutual trust, respect, understanding and participation, is critical.
- 3 Co-operation is key to effective rehabilitation.

Eight essential behaviours to uphold the spirit of the ACC Code

All ACC staff uphold the spirit of the ACC Code by:

- 1 putting people first, injuries second
- 2 telling the truth and keeping promises
- 3 helping claimants to receive their entitlements
- 4 ensuring behaviour is professional in every respect
- 5 setting up working relationships with claimants and staff that enhance individual self-esteem
- 6 being sensitive to culture, values and beliefs
- 7 making decisions based on facts, not assumption, bias or prejudice
- 8 communicating in a clear, simple and helpful manner, to minimise the potential for misunderstanding.

Right one

Right ① You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Our obligations

- We will treat you with dignity and respect.
- We will treat you with honesty and courtesy.
- We will recognise that you may be under physical, emotional, social, or financial strain.

Customer service behaviours

- **Friendly, Professional, Consistent.**
 - We demonstrate ACC values.
 - We use and pronounce customer name/ title correctly.
 - We offer appropriate assistance in a manner that indicates keenness to assist.
 - We answer the phone in a professional manner.
 - We ensure correspondence is to a professional standard and is understandable.

Additional behaviours that support right one

Staff with claimant contact

- Putting people first, injuries second.
- Taking responsibility by not passing the buck.
- Paying attention to greetings, courtesies and pronunciation.
- Tailoring our approach to each claimant's needs.
- Keeping claimants regularly informed.
- Keeping ourselves educated about the effects and impacts of injury.
- Recognising that claimants are often under physical, emotional, social or financial strain.
- Being honest and straightforward.
- Empathising with the claimant.
- Listening actively and responding appropriately.
- Recognising that each claimant is unique.
- Offering encouragement and understanding.
- Responding with compassion, patience and understanding.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Keeping internal customers informed so that claimant's needs can be met.
- Recognising that claimants are our customers.
- Creating a professional, respectful workplace that supports work with claimants.
- Responding to internal requests in a timely manner.
- Acting on facts, not assumptions.
- Acknowledging that some claimants have lost trust in the organisation.
- Designing processes that engender trust.
- Providing consistent and professional service to all claimants.
- **The right to be treated with dignity and respect underpins all the rights.**

Relevant ACC values

- **Customer Service.**
 - Meets ACC Corporate identity standards – in all correspondence, correct corporate dress standards, etc.
 - Keeps customer files/record up to date and confidential.
 - Delivers services in a culturally appropriate manner/medium.
 - Builds effective relationships with other professionals.
 - Actively seeks feedback on service delivery and adjusts behaviour.
 - Constantly seeks new opportunities to widen networks and build productive professional relationships.

 - **Integrity.**
 - Raises questions or concerns with the person(s) concerned directly.
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Right two

Right ② You have the right to be treated fairly and to have your views considered.

Our obligations

- We will treat you fairly.
- We will listen to you and consider your views.
- We will take into account, and be responsive to any impairment you may have.

Customer service behaviours

- **Acknowledge the injury and its impact.**
 - We acknowledge the injury and its impact.
 - We discuss the help claimants need and what ACC can offer.
 - We discuss expected recovery time.

Additional behaviours that support right two

Staff with claimant contact

- Putting people first, injuries second.
- Offering information, without waiting to be asked.
- Responding appropriately to people with disabilities.
- Listening professionally.
- Taking time to repeat information or explain it until we are sure the claimant has understood.
- Using a consultative approach.
- Being proactive.
- Ensuring a consistent approach.
- Meeting service promises.
- Exploring options together.
- Paraphrasing and checking understanding.
- Fully informing of all options in a clear and simple manner.
- Staying open and not pre judging.
- Asking what the claimant's issues are.
- Treating others as you would wish to be treated.
- Encouraging the claimant to own their rehabilitation.
- Not using ACC jargon.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Using a consultative approach.
- Making it easy for staff to navigate and understand new information.
- Proactively offering information.
- Clearly explaining legislation.
- Valuing and listening to feedback from frontline staff.

Relevant ACC values

- **Customer Service.**
 - Identifies customer needs by asking, listening and seeking clarification.
 - Listens to the customer's point of view, seeks clarification and checks understanding.
 - Looks at issues from the customer's perspective as well as their own.

 - **Integrity.**
 - Treats people fairly and impartially – according to their needs, not role, status or personal characteristics.

 - **Valuing people and their diversity.**
 - Shows respect for, and sensitivity towards, the needs of others that may be based in culture, gender or disability.
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Right three

Right ③ You have the right to have your culture, values and beliefs respected.

Our obligations

- We will be respectful of, and responsive to, the culture, values and beliefs of Maori.
- We will be respectful of, and responsive to, all cultures, values and beliefs.

Customer service behaviours

- There are no specific cultural behaviours listed in the customer service programme.

Additional behaviours that support right three

Staff with claimant contact

- Not assuming a culture, value or belief.
- Checking our claimant's cultural, values or belief-based needs.
- Using interpreters (when necessary).
- Listening to claimants' needs and perspectives.
- Supplying brochures, website, and information in other languages (where available).
- Working in partnership with claimants.
- Establishing relationships with Iwi and Maori service providers.
- Consulting with Pae Arahi.
- Offering alternatives and exploring options.
- Establishing what is important to the claimant and understanding why.
- Checking with the claimant about their individual needs.
- Following up to ensure needs have been met.
- Displaying a willingness to learn about and respond to other cultures.
- Encouraging whanau participation.
- Being open minded and flexible.
- Recognising the principle of partnership.
- Offering a choice of providers.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Ensuring the right training is in place.
- Supplying access to the right services, eg interpreters.
- Consulting with appropriate groups.
- Providing timely advice when needed.
- Integrating knowledge and practice about culture values and beliefs into the internal services.
- Making sure we understand the information needs of specific groups.

Relevant ACC values

- **Valuing people and their diversity.**
 - Understands the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in the delivery of services and relationships with communities and stakeholders.
 - Uses gender neutral language.
 - Shows respect for and sensitivity towards the needs of others that may be based in culture, gender or disability.
 - Checks on and pronounces names correctly.
 - Uses correct Maori pronunciation.
 - Identifies what cultural protocols may apply in different situations, and ensures they know how to behave appropriately.
 - Actively seeking to become familiar with the cultural needs of customer groups and working in ways that take these into consideration.

 - **Customer Service.**
 - Delivers service in a culturally appropriate manner/medium.
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Right four

Right ④ You have the right to a support person or persons.

Our obligations

- We will welcome you and your support person(s) provided that the safety of all involved can be assured.

Customer service behaviours

- There are no specific customer service behaviours for right four.

Additional behaviours that support right four

Staff with claimant contact

- Advising and encouraging claimants to have a support person or persons present.
- Using an interpreter service, when appropriate.
- Providing information on how to obtain a support person or who they can bring.
- Discussing what all parties expect from a meeting and setting realistic agenda and timeframes.
- Acknowledging, welcoming and including the support person.
- Taking responsibility for managing the meeting, staying focused and moving on.
- Clarifying the role of the support person and addressing any privacy issues.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Ensuring that relevant training is applicable and available.
- Communicating updates/issues from support and advocacy groups to frontline staff.
- Establishing links with support and advocacy organisations.
- Providing appropriate information to support and advocacy groups.
- Welcoming the involvement of support persons.
- Establishing effective links with support and advocacy organisations, service providers, employers and iwi.

Relevant ACC values

- **Valuing people and their diversity.**
 - Modifies own behaviour, communication style in recognition of an individual's diversity.
- **Participation.**
 - Values the involvement and contribution of all people.

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Right five

Right 5 You have the right to effective communication.

Our obligations

- We will communicate with you openly, honestly and effectively.
- We will respond to your questions and requests in a timely manner.
- We will provide you with an interpreter when necessary and reasonably practicable.
- We will provide information in a form which you can access, in a timely manner.

Customer service behaviours

- **Keeping customers informed of progress.**
 - We explain the process.
 - We outline the timeframes.
 - We proactively contact all parties.
 - We inform parties of decisions before giving in writing (if appropriate).
 - We keep customers informed of progress.
- **Informing people of their entitlements.**
 - We know all the entitlements available.
 - We ensure that the customer is given full information.
 - We check that the customer understands the services, their role in accessing those services and ACC's role in providing the services.
- **Keeping service promises.**
 - We give accurate information.
 - We meet commitments made to customers.

Additional behaviours that support right five

Staff with claimant contact

- Listening professionally.
- Setting and meeting professional standards for all claimant communication.
- Being proactive.
- Supplying or welcoming an interpreter service when appropriate.
- Demonstrating professional communication skills.
- Giving clear explanations and describing processes.
- Avoiding jargon and explaining terminology wherever possible.
- Giving bad news or significant decisions with sensitivity - planning the best approach, environment, and venue.
- Communicating decisions in person, then following up in writing.
- Presenting a range of options to claimants.
- Giving choices where choices exist.
- Having buddy system in place so claimant can still talk to someone if their case manager/case co-ordinator is not available.

- Being sensitive and adapting to the claimant's communication difficulties (literacy, hearing impairment, visual impairment, brain injury).
- Offering both verbal and written information.
- Asking claimants to confirm their understanding.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Ensuring processes are clear, simple and unambiguous.
- Promoting ACC as a professional organisation.
- Answering requests from staff in a timely manner.
- Providing clear information for claimants, the public and potential claimants.
- Creating positive and professional first impressions.

Relevant ACC values

- **Customer Service.**
 - Takes responsibility for the outcome of the interaction with customers and providers.
 - Builds effective community networks that will assist customers.
 - Agrees appropriate referrals to other providers with customers.
 - Consistently meets service promises made to customers.
 - Keeps commitments and promises made to customers.
- **Integrity.**
 - Is open and honest in dealings with others – tells the truth.
- **Teamwork.**
 - Models open communication – through the sharing of information and knowledge.
 - Demonstrates active listening skills.
- **Valuing people and their diversity.**
 - Modifies own behaviour communication style in recognition of an individual's diversity.
- **Participation.**
 - Demonstrates respect for people and their ideas, and provides support in having these ideas be heard.

Right six

Right ⑥ You have the right to be fully informed.

Our obligations

- We will provide information on how to make a claim for cover and entitlements.
- We will keep you fully informed.
- We will provide you with full and correct information about your claim, entitlements, obligations and responsibilities.
- We will inform you if your entitlements change.
- We will give you information about how we provide services, and how to access them.
- We will discuss expected time frames with you.
- We will inform you of your review and appeal rights under the Act.

Customer service behaviours

- **Informing people of their entitlements.**
 - We know the entitlements and the applicable rules.
 - We ensure that the customer is given full information.
 - We check that the customer understands the services, their role in accessing those services and ACC's role in providing the services.
- **Keeping service promises.**
- **Speed of delivery.**
 - We meet standards for payments, returning phone calls, IRP's, etc.
 - We meet internal service delivery timeframes.
- **Keeping Customers Informed.**
 - We set appropriate expectations.
 - We make proactive outbound calling to reduce the need for further inbound calls.

Additional behaviours that support right six

Staff with claimant contact

- Giving clear information to current and potential claimants.
- Providing advice on other agencies that can assist, when ACC is unable to.
- Knowing what claimants are entitled to and giving them full information.
- Expecting that claimants may access their files.
- Being positive when advising claimants that they are entitled to more than they are currently receiving.
- Valuing claimant and ACC time.
- Discussing timeframes.
- Proactively contacting claimants with progress updates especially when a timeframe may not be met.
- Using tools such as Pathway, fact sheets, and brochures to give full and accurate information.

- Ensuring claimants participate in any decision making about any aspect of their claim.
- Promoting discussion that enhances claimants' understanding.
- Ensuring claimants fully understand and accept the impact of decisions before they sign anything.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Ensuring that treatment providers are well informed about ACC entitlements and services.
- Ensuring employers are well informed about their obligations to employees who are claimants and ACC entitlements and services.
- Creating easily accessible processes for accessing information.
- Interpreting and explaining legislation.

Relevant ACC values

- **Integrity.**
 - Treats people fairly and impartially, according to their needs, not role, status or personal characteristics.
 - Is open and honest in dealings with others, tells the truth.
- **Customer Service.**
 - Provides the customer with full information so that the customer is able to make well-informed decisions.
 - Is realistic about the extent of services ACC can provide (is clear about what can be provided and what cannot be provided).
 - Consistently meets service promises to the required standard within agreed timeframes.
- **Participation.**
 - Is co-operative, working with others to achieve results.

Right seven

Right 7 You have the right to have your privacy respected.

Our obligations

- We will respect your privacy.
- We will comply with all relevant legislation relating to privacy.
- We will give you access to your information, in accordance with legislation.

Customer service behaviours

- There are no specific customer service behaviours for right seven.

Additional behaviours that support right seven

Staff with claimant contact

- Honouring the ACC Confidentiality and Security Agreement.
- Applying the Privacy Act training principles.
- Conducting interviews in the most appropriate environment.
- Only discussing ACC work with people who are entitled to the information.
- Expecting that claimants may wish to access their files.
- Obtaining consent of the claimant before including participation of family/whanau, employer or other parties.
- Taking care when copying files.
- Checking that we are talking to the claimant when returning claimant calls.
- Being sensitive personal circumstances.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Taking care with claimant information.
- Ensuring that the right training is available to staff.
- Following the ACC standards for media calls.
- Links to values behaviours.
- Customer Service.
- Keeps customer files/records up to date and confidential.
- Integrity.
- Treats personal/sensitive information about others with sensitivity and respect.

Relevant ACC values

- **Customer Service.**
 - Keeps customers files/records up to date and confidential.
- **Integrity.**
 - Treats personal/sensitive information about others with respect.

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Right eight

Right ⑧ You have the right to complain.

Our obligations

- We will work with you to address problems and concerns.
- We will inform you about options available for resolving problems and concerns.
- We will inform you about the complaints process and the normal timeframes for dealing with complaints.

Customer service behaviours

- **We are ACC; we take ownership and responsibility.**
 - We are all employed to deliver the organisation's services.
 - We are the face of ACC and our actions are the actions of the organisation.
 - Demonstrates our commitment to service.
 - Helps us build confidence and trust.
 - Demonstrates that we are reliable.

Additional behaviours that support right eight

Staff with claimant contact

- Advising claimants of how to register a concern, make a complaint, or have ACC's decision reviewed.
- Listening to input from all parties.
- Seeking common ground.
- Being accountable for our own actions.
- Focusing on issues rather than personalities.
- Addressing problems within agreed timeframes.
- Keeping accurate records of all interactions to assist with the resolution of concerns and complaints.
- Discussing and explaining decisions in person before issuing a decision letter.
- Clarifying expectations and fully discussing issues in the first instance.
- Listening and acknowledging concerns and attempting to resolve them.

Staff who do not have claimant contact

- Creating smooth and accessible processes.
- Applying the complaints process fairly and professionally.
- Linking the feedback from complaints to systems, product and process design.
- Creating a professional image for ACC.
- Responding in a timely manner.
- Acting on facts, not assumptions.
- Supporting the complaints processes.

Relevant ACC values

- **Customer Service.**
 - Looks at issues from the customer's perspective as well as their own.
 - Takes responsibility for the outcome of the interaction with customers and providers.
 - Is realistic about the extent of services ACC can provide (is clear about what can be provided and what cannot be provided).
 - **Continuous Improvement.**
 - Learns from experience – is prepared to examine what didn't go well and why.
 - ACC welcomes feedback and the opportunity to improve service.
 - **Teamwork.**
 - Addresses the issues, rather than the person when putting forward an opposing point of view.
 - Works co-operatively with colleagues to generate and share new ideas, new ways of working, to make improvements for the team and/or its customers.
 - **Integrity.**
 - Acknowledges mistakes and seeks to correct them.
 - Publicly supports team and ACC decisions.
 - Honestly acknowledges concerns/difficult issues and works to find resolution.
 - Takes action to resolve concerns/difficult issues.
 - **Participation.**
 - Promotes and models open dialogue.
 - Offers positive solutions for problems, and takes ownership.
-