

26 November 2015

Anthony Jordan
fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Jordan

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your email of 28 October 2015, making the following request:

'The current guidelines state that for a concussion/mTBI related injury, entitlement to the use of concussion services, a claimant must have had an injury not more than twelve months old.

For those claimants experiencing subsequent and ongoing impairment(s) as a consequence of concussion/mTBI, please supply the following:

- 1. Access to neuro-optometrist funding where a claimant falls out of the usual time limit mentioned above*
- 2. Current resources (including copies of) the Corporation have available to them in the event a case manager or branch medical advisor requires further research to neurological related visual impairments'*

Concussion Service

The Concussion Service is one of a number of services and interventions available to clients who have an accepted claim for a traumatic brain injury (TBI). It was designed to provide interventions at an early stage – hence the requirement to refer within 12 months of the injury being sustained. The Service seeks to identify clients that are at risk of developing long-term consequences, such as Post-Concussion Syndrome, and provide them with therapy and education, according to their needs.

There are a number of other services suitable to clients who have suffered ongoing impairment resulting from a brain injury for more than 12 months. These include the Neuropsychological Assessment Service, Psychological Services and the Training for Independence Service. ACC clients with moderate to severe brain injuries are managed by ACC's specialised Serious Injury team.

Neuro-optometry

ACC considers that neuro-optometry or behavioural optometry refers to the use of optometric vision therapy (OVT) techniques with patients who have visual impairment associated with neurological problems arising from a TBI.

OVT is available in New Zealand, and ACC currently purchases it on a case-by-case basis. There is no specified time limit post injury for eligibility. ACC is in the process of reviewing the evidence on the effectiveness of OVT, which will help inform our decisions on this type of treatment in the future.

Resources available to staff

Case Managers consider treatment entitlements when they are requested by a client's treatment provider (e.g. physiotherapist, optometrist). When they are uncertain about a treatment that has been requested they are able to make a referral to a Clinical Advisor. This may be a Branch Medical Advisor (BMA), a Branch Advisory Psychologist (BAP), or one of a number of other specialised Clinical Advisors (e.g. Audiology Advisor, Dental Advisor).

ACC's Clinical Advisors, including BMAs and BAPs, are required to keep up-to-date with medical knowledge in their areas of practice. For BMAs and BAPs, this is a requirement of holding an Annual Practising Certificate. In cases where a BMA or BAP requires further guidance they may: confer with other clinical advisors, research the matter independently using their own resources, or seek information from ACC's Knowledge Management Team. This team holds resources on some clinical areas, and can also research areas of interest when requested.

As ACC does not have resources specific to neurological related visual impairment clinical staff would likely access this type of information from medical journals or other resources. Consequently, this part of your request is declined under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act 1982.

Questions or concerns

If you have any further questions, contact us by email at GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz.

You have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman regarding our decision. You can call them on 0800 802 602, 9am to 5pm weekdays, or write to: The Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10 152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely

Government Services
ACC