



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.  
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

# Visual Rehabilitation Service

## Operational Guidelines

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November 2025

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## Useful contacts and telephone numbers

Please see below contact details for teams across ACC that can assist you with any queries you have while providing services to ACC clients.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| ACC’s Provider Contact Centre              | Ph: 0800 222 070  | Email: <a href="mailto:providerhelp@acc.co.nz">providerhelp@acc.co.nz</a>   |
| ACC’s Client Helpline                      | Ph: 0800 101 996  |   |
| Provider Registration                      | Online Registration:  | Website: <a href="#">ACC24 Register as an ACC health provider</a>           |
|  | Ph: 04 560 5211   | Email: <a href="mailto:registrations@acc.co.nz">registrations@acc.co.nz</a> |
| ACC eBusiness                              | Ph: 0800 222 994  | Email: <a href="mailto:ebusinessinfo@acc.co.nz">ebusinessinfo@acc.co.nz</a> |
| Health Procurement                         | If you have a question about your contract or need to update your details, please contact the ACC Health Procurement team:<br>Email: <a href="mailto:health.procurement@acc.co.nz">health.procurement@acc.co.nz</a><br>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 <a href="#">this link</a> 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:<br>Email: <a href="mailto:socialrehab@acc.co.nz">socialrehab@acc.co.nz</a>  |   |

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](http://www.acc.co.nz/for-providers).

## Who are these guidelines for?

These guidelines are designed to support the interpretation of the [Visual Rehabilitation Services – Service Schedule](#) (the Contract).

These guidelines are intended to be used by:

- ACC Recovery Team Members, and
- ACC’s contracted Supplier and providers of Visual Rehabilitation Services.

These Operational Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- The [Visual Rehabilitation Service contract](#) (Service Schedule)
- ACC’s [Standard Terms and Conditions for health contracts](#).
- ACC’s [Travel Policy for Providers](#) (see section on travel later in this document)

These documents can be found on [acc.co.nz](http://acc.co.nz).



## Purpose

The purpose of the Visual Rehabilitation Service is to assess an ACC client's needs in relation to their vision loss following an injury and provide rehabilitation interventions to assist the client to live as independently as possible.

## About Visual Rehabilitation Services

This service is provided by ACC's sole Supplier, Blind Low Vision NZ (BLVNZ) and is delivered nationally. This service supports clients with vision loss caused by a covered injury, to participate in their usual activities of everyday life (including work or school). Clients are supported to regain skills or learn new strategies to adapt to everyday life, such as how to move around within their community, complete activities of daily living and engage and communicate using new adaptations. Counselling support and equipment is also provided where assessed as being required to meet an injury related need.

## Client eligibility and referral

### Eligibility

ACC determines whether a client is eligible for this Service.

Clients are eligible for this service if they have vision loss as a result of a covered injury **and** have:

#### Adults

- 6/24 vision; or
- Less than 6/24 vision with corrective lenses (as certified by a registered optometrist or a registered ophthalmologist); **and** did not have 6/24 vision or less before the injury; or
- A field of vision 20 degrees (or less) in the widest diameter (as certified by a registered optometrist or a registered ophthalmologist) before their injury; **and** did not have a field of vision 20 degrees (or less) in the widest diameter prior to the injury; or
- Has significant functional impact following vision loss as a result of the covered injury.

#### Children (aged 15 years and under, or 21 years and under if still attending school)

- 6/18 vision; or
- Is a child or young adult who is enrolled with Blind and Low Vision Education Network New Zealand.



## Exclusion

If a client was registered as blind with the Supplier before their injury, we expect them to access the Supplier independently of ACC.

## Referrals

Services commence on receipt of a referral from ACC on an ACC075 form. The referral should provide sufficient information to enable the Supplier to undertake a well-informed and timely assessment of the Clients' needs.

### Referrals should include:

- Client details
- Relevant clinical history related to the Client's vision loss
- Copies of any previous, relevant, reports or documents held on file at ACC (including any recent GP, ophthalmic, or other relevant specialist reports). If the Supplier requires additional information, this can be requested from the Recovery Team Member.
- Reason for referral/purpose of assessment (rehabilitation outcome being sought).

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

## Service overview

### Assessment

For new Clients or where a previous Client has been re-referred into this service, a detailed initial assessment of the person's rehabilitation needs should be sent to ACC.

The initial assessment report should provide detail about the Client's needs, goals and recommended supports.

### The assessment report should include:

- An assessment of the Client's level of vision loss and the impact on their daily life
- Consideration of the Client's needs and goals in the following areas: Activities of Daily Living, Orientation and Mobility, Literacy and Communication, Equipment, Housing Modifications.
- Whether the Client has emotional support needs which would benefit from counselling
- Timeframes, including when the Progress Report will be sent to ACC
- Recommended rehabilitation interventions



### The recommended rehabilitation options should include:

- Recommendations for the most appropriate and cost-effective services to achieve the rehabilitation outcome(s)
- Expected frequency and duration of each rehabilitation intervention recommended (for example, one hour per week for eight weeks)
- Rationale to support each recommended rehabilitation option
- Pricing for each option
- Current and potential future requirements for rehabilitation interventions.

The initial assessment report must be sent to ACC with a Rehabilitation Plan for approval before proceeding with the provision of rehabilitation interventions or counselling support to the Client.

### Rehabilitation Plan

Where rehabilitation interventions have been recommended in the Assessment report, a Rehabilitation Plan should be sent to ACC along with the Assessment report.

The Rehabilitation Plan should set out the detail of the rehabilitation input required into a plan and include: the type, quantity (how many hours and frequency), duration and the approximate date the rehabilitation interventions will be completed.

### Rehabilitation interventions

Following approval of the planned rehabilitation interventions as set out in the Rehabilitation Plan, the Supplier will proceed with working with the Client on the agreed rehabilitation interventions. The focus is the provision of independent living skills to help the Client be as independent as possible in their everyday life.

### Rehabilitation interventions include:

- Daily Living Activities such as:
  - Banking skills and money identification
  - Dressing, clothing care and organisation.
  - Personal care including hygiene and grooming
  - Household tasks such as doing laundry, ironing, cleaning, removing the rubbish etc
  - Leisure activities
  - Maintaining safety
  - Medication identification and management
  - Preparing, serving, and eating meals
  - Shopping
  - Social Skills
  - Using and maintaining equipment for independence
  - Using the phone



- Orientation and mobility services to provide Clients with skills to enable the Client to walk safely and travel independently in the community. This includes:
  - Training to identify surroundings, including home, community, work, and school, as appropriate
  - Training to travel to destinations safely and independently, including catching the bus, walking, catching a taxi
  - Training to use orientation and mobility devices, eg white canes.
- Literacy and Communication Services to provide the Client with necessary skills to use adaptive communications and technology to achieve independence in everyday life, including:
  - Entering into a vocational rehabilitation programme with one of ACC's contracted providers.
  - Instruction and coaching in how to access information
  - Learning new reading and writing skills, such as braille
  - Learning how to use adaptive technology.

### Request for Specific Rehabilitation intervention or item

Where a Client has an accepted ACC claim for their vision loss and has previously been engaged with BLVNZ, and the Client only needs one service or a single rehabilitation intervention, an initial assessment may not be required. For example, the Client may have previously received ACC services and now requires a one-off or short-term intervention such as:

- Specialised equipment
- Counselling
- Activities of daily living programme
- Advice to a Housing Assessor has been requested regarding a Housing Modification Assessment.

In these instances, ACC may make a referral to the Supplier via email requesting the Supplier to provide the required rehabilitation intervention.

Alternatively, a Client may approach the Supplier and request further short term supports or an intervention. In these instances, an email to ACC requesting approval will be sufficient. The email to ACC should include the type of support requested, the quantity, frequency and duration of the specific supports required.

If approved, ACC will provide a Purchase Order for the specific rehabilitation service requested.



## Progress Reports

The assessment and rehabilitation plan will state how long the Rehabilitation interventions are expected to take and will state when the Progress Report will be sent to ACC - which should be midway through the Rehabilitation programme. For example, if the Rehabilitation programme is expected to run for a period of six months, a progress report will be sent to ACC by the end of month three.

The progress report should provide information about the Client's progress against the goals and timeframes as stated in the rehabilitation plan and whether the services provided are meeting the Client's needs or whether any additional support is required.

Progress Reports may be short and set out in bullet point style. A lengthy report is not required and information already provided in the Assessment report does not need to be repeated.

### **Note:**

Progress reports are not required where the support provided is a single intervention provided over a short time period (for example the provision of equipment which does not require any training or instruction).

## Requests for Further Rehabilitation Services

### **Within 6 months of Client's exit from the service**

The Supplier may request approval for further hours or further rehabilitation interventions without a new referral being required if it is less than 6 months of the Client having exited from the Visual Rehabilitation Service, or within 6 months of the Completion Report being submitted to ACC. Examples of this situation could include: the Client's rehabilitation needs have changed (eg their vision has deteriorated), or the rehabilitation equipment is not fit for purpose, or the rehabilitation plan is not working as well as expected.

To request additional hours for further rehabilitation supports within six months of the Client exiting the service, the Supplier will update the Assessment report and advise ACC what further rehabilitation or counselling interventions are required.

ACC may also identify that the Client requires further rehabilitation interventions or supports and will provide a Purchase Order approving the provision of agreed further supports. A new assessment is not required.

### **More than 6 months of Client's exit from the service**

If it is more than six months since the Client exited the Service or the Completion Report was sent to ACC or where there has been a substantial change to the Client's situation (eg: the



Client has a new place of work or has moved house) and a new assessment is required, a new referral is required from ACC.

## Counselling

Counselling services are provided to Clients to assist them to deal with stress and trauma associated with their vision loss.

The initial assessment (BL01) includes one hour to allow for an assessment of the Client's emotional support needs.

This will allow the service provider to assess the Client's emotional needs and consider whether counselling or any other emotional support related to the Client's injury is needed. If the Assessor determines that the Client has counselling needs, the Assessor will include this recommendation in the Assessment report.

The Assessor should include the required number of counselling hours, duration and frequency in the Rehabilitation Plan. If counselling hours are approved by ACC, the Supplier will arrange and coordinate counselling for the Client and invoice ACC for the approved hours under BL07.

ACC does not fund counselling sessions which are not related to the Client's covered injury. Counselling is directed to Client who is funded by ACC. Counselling sessions may include the Client's parent when the Client is a child, or the Client's spouse/support person when the Client is present during the counselling session.

## Case Conferences

Case conferences support the Client's rehabilitation plan by ensuring that there is co-ordination amongst the agencies supporting the Client, and that all parties supporting the Client are included in any discussions. This will ensure timing is co-ordinated and each party understands who is responsible for the services delivered and support being provided.

The purpose of a case conference is to:

- Review the Client's plan, including identifying clear goals and interventions
- Ensure services are co-ordinated in a timely manner and in a manner which best suits the Client and their whānau and each agency is clear about their role
- Address problems and/or barriers to the Client's rehabilitation
- Discuss the next steps in the Client's rehabilitation; this may include onward referrals to other service providers eg: MSD, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education.

ACC or another agency working with the Client may request a case conference be held. ACC or another agency working with the Client may take the lead in organising it.



If the Supplier requests the case conference, they will request funding from ACC. ACC will fund any ACC-contracted Suppliers' time to attend the case conference.

## Equipment for Independence

Equipment for independence includes manufactured items to help Clients carry out their daily living activities. Equipment specifically designed to be used for people with vision loss is excluded from the Managed Rehabilitation Equipment Service (MRES) contract and is provided by the Supplier and may be purchased under this service.

Specialised equipment for Clients with vision loss which may be purchased under this contract is listed in **Appendix 1**.

The Supplier has assessors who will assess the Client's needs to ensure the right piece of equipment with the right adaptive features specific to the application and use are recommended for purchase. Smart phones or laptops are supported by adapted technology are the mostly widely used equipment items used for communication.

In considering whether equipment should be funded under this contract, Assessors need to consider the wider Client context. For example:

- Natural supports available
- Co-morbidities
- What is the most suitable equipment to help the Client towards their goal?
- Cost effective solutions such as modification of current equipment
- Injury related requirements rather than personal preference.

### Equipment items which cost less than \$800 (excl GST) - BL12

Equipment up to a cumulative total of \$800 (excl. GST) may be purchased by the Supplier without requesting approval from ACC. This means an invoice for equipment may be submitted to ACC using code BL12 without requesting a Purchase Order approval.

### Equipment items which cost more than \$800 (excl GST) - BL06

If an Assessor identifies that the Client may benefit from rehabilitation equipment not available via the Supplier, and/or the item exceeds \$800, approval must be requested from ACC.

If the cumulative total of equipment item costs more than \$800 (excl. GST), or the limit has been exceeded over the life of the claim through previous provision of equipment, the Supplier will provide the following information to ACC with the request for approval:

- The specific equipment needed
- The cost of each equipment item
- How the equipment will assist the Client to achieve their goals.



If approved, ACC will issue a Purchase Order with the Service Item Code BL06. The Supplier will use the BL06 code when invoicing ACC for the approved equipment items.

## Housing Modifications

If modifications are required to the Client's house, ACC may refer the Client for an assessment under the Housing Modification Assessment contract.

When a Housing Modification Assessment is underway, the Housing Assessor may contact the Visual Rehabilitation provider for advice to ensure that any proposed modifications are appropriate to meet the Client's requirements related to their vision loss.

Or, if during the initial assessment, the assessor determines that housing modifications may be required, the Visual Rehab provider should include the advice in the assessment report to ACC and provide the contact details of the Visual Rehabilitation provider's liaison person.

The Housing Assessor will contact the Visual Rehabilitation Supplier's liaison person for advice on the modifications. Once ACC receives the assessment from the Housing Assessor, ACC makes a decision regarding the type of housing modifications ACC will fund. The Visual Rehabilitation provider should not provide recommendations on specific housing modification solutions.

## Accessible Format Service (Transcription Service)

The Accessible Format Service (AFS) (also known as Transcription Services) converts information into a format that can be used by a person with loss of vision. ACC may use the AFS service for transcribing ACC information into formats that are easily accessible for the Client. This can include fact sheets, pamphlets or letters into any of the following formats:

- Braille
- Disc
- Electronic
- Audio
- Tactile diagrams
- Collage.

Requests from ACC for AFS services will be made on a ACC076 form. If the Client or provider requests additional items to be transcribed for example information to support a return to work (e.g. training manuals, tactile diagram of the workplace layout etc), these costs can be included in the equipment provision of the contract.

## Did Not Attend

ACC will approve up to three instances where a Client has not attended scheduled appointments. The Supplier can invoice ACC without requiring the service code being added to



the Purchase Order. The Supplier should notify ACC as soon as possible of the Client's non-attendance. Records must be kept by the Supplier for auditing purposes.

## Exclusions to Visual Rehabilitation Service

The Visual Rehabilitation service does **not** include:

- Attendant care
- Childcare
- Equipment other than specialised equipment
- Home help
- Housing modifications
- Lawn mowing and home maintenance
- Medical consumables
- Referrals for communication and assistive technology (see further note below)
- Specialist nursing
- Training for Independence (see further note below)
- Transport for Independence
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (although the Visual Rehabilitation service can be used to help a Client achieve their vocational goals).
- Clients who require Communication and Assistive Technology (not Visual Rehabilitation services)

## Referrals for Communication and Assistive Technology (CATA)

Clients who have communication needs resulting from their injury (such as those with a traumatic brain injury) may require an assessment under the CATA contract, to comprehensively evaluate their injury-related communication requirements within a single assessment.

The Supplier should advise ACC either in the assessment report or separately via email if an assessment of the Client's communication needs under the CATA contract is required.

ACC makes referrals for to the CATA service on an ACC081 form. The CATA Supplier will request input into the assessment process from the Supplier as required.

## Other Services provided under other ACC contracts

Information about services provided under other contracts (eg Training for Independence, Housing Modification Assessments, Transport for Independence etc) may be found on ACC's external website under [Recovery Services Directory](#).



## Service timeframes

Service timeframes for the provision of services to Clients and the submission of reports are specified in clause 12 of the Service Schedule. Where a timeframe cannot be met it is important to notify ACC as soon as possible so that ACC can contact the Client to understand and address any issues that are impacting on the timeframe and agree new timeframes.

## Service Exit

Once the Client has received all approved services and their rehabilitation plan has been completed, the Supplier will submit a Completion Report to ACC. The Completion Report should include an evaluation of whether the Client has met their goals and whether there has been an improvement in their level of functioning in the areas assessed.

The Client is also considered to have exited the service if they withdraw from the service, or the Purchase Order has expired.

## Service monitoring

The Supplier will provide ACC with an Annual Report for the year ending 31 October. The report will be submitted on an agreed template by the 30 November. The Annual Report will include the Supplier's performance against the following measures:

- Provision of rehabilitation plans
- Client reported rehabilitation outcomes
- Timeliness of service provision and Client reporting (including rehabilitation plans, progress and completion reports).

## Travel and Accommodation

ACC's Travel Policy for Providers is available on [acc.co.nz](http://acc.co.nz). The Travel Policy sets out the responsibilities for Suppliers and providers delivering services within designated geographical areas.

Given that this Service is delivered to ACC Clients nationwide, the geographical boundaries referred to in the Travel Guidelines do not apply. However, the Supplier should adhere to the travel policy in regards to all other requirements in the Travel Policy to minimise travel costs.



ACC will pay the costs of accommodation costs up to a maximum of the amount stated in the service schedule plus GST per day with prior approval. This includes:

- Hotel costs to a maximum of the amount stated in the service schedule plus GST per night.
- Meals and incidental allowances to a maximum of amount stated in the service schedule plus GST per 24-hour period.
- (the costs are subject to pricing adjustments, please refer to the latest Service Schedule for updated pricing).

Accommodation costs do not include reimbursement for alcohol and mini-bar expenses incurred.

## Quality of service provision

The Supplier will ensure that service providers delivering services under this contract participate in continuous professional development to ensure that the quality of service provision is maintained. In particular, service providers delivering Adaptive Technology and Communications and Literacy and Communication services should keep up to date with the latest technological changes and advances.

The Supplier will regularly review the training needs of service providers and arrange training to ensure all service providers keep up to date with current knowledge resources and best practice in the field of service provision for people with visual impairment.

## Incidents and reportable events

The following incidents and risks should be reported to ACC immediately:

- Notifiable Events (as defined by the Health and Safety At Work Act 2015) in relation to the services delivered for ACC or on our behalf
- Personal or organisational threats by an ACC Client or their representative (eg bomb threats, death threats)
- Likely media risk
- Privacy breach
- Client death (any cause)
- Health and Disability Commission 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

Clause 8.16 of the Standard Terms and Conditions (see acc.co.nz) sets out Suppliers' responsibilities regarding Health and Safety and what should be reported to ACC.

Please use our online [Reporting health and safety incidents](#) form (see "For Providers" page on acc.co.nz) 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.

## Forms and Letters

| Reference     | Name of form/letter                       | Completed by | Sent to                        | Purpose   |
|---------------|---|--------------|--------------------------------|---|
| ACC075        | Initial Needs Assessment Referral         | ACC          | Supplier                       | Form used to refer a vision impaired client for an initial needs assessment   |
| ACC076        | Rehabilitation Services Referral          | ACC          | Supplier                       | Form used to refer a vision impaired client for rehabilitation services   |
| VIS01         | Initial Needs Assessment Referral         | ACC          | Client                         | Letter to inform a client that a referral has been sent for an initial assessment   |
| VIS02         | Rehabilitation Services Referral          | ACC          | Client                         | Letter to inform a client that a referral has been sent for rehabilitation services. A copy is sent to the provider.  |
| ACC081        | Social Rehabilitation Assessment Referral | ACC          | Social Rehabilitation Supplier | Form used to refer a client for an assessment of their social rehabilitation needs  |
| BLVNZ Form    | Assessment and Plan of Action Report      | BLVNZ        | ACC                            | Form used to provide information about client's function and goals and identifies rehabilitation needs and timeframes. Can also be used for reassessments             |
| BLVNZ Form    | Progress Report                           | BLVNZ        | ACC                            | Form used to provide information about client's progress towards rehabilitation outcomes, any changes to the plan, or where additional information is provided to ACC |
| BLVNZ Form    | Completion Report                         | BLVNZ        | ACC                            | Form used to provide information about achievement of goals, any barriers identified and any recommendations for other services                                       |
| Annual Report | Supplier Performance Reporting Template   | BLVNZ        | Portfolio Manager, ACC         | To provide information about the Supplier's performance against the objectives as set out in Table 3 of the Service Schedule.   |



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Specialised equipment

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#### Items included

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- Adaptive Technology including Training and Installation
- Bold Line Pads
- Braille Board Games
- Braille Electronic Display
- Braille Electronic Note Taker
- Braille Embosser
- Braille Labellers and Tape
- Braille Label Sheets
- Braille Mechanical Writing Equipment
- Braille Paper
- Braille Playing Cards
- Braille Slate and Stylus
- Braille Time Pieces, eg watches, clock, timer
- White Canes
- Cane Tips
- Portable Video Magnifier
- Hand-held video magnifier
- Digital Voice Recorder
- Daisy (Digital Audio Devices)
- Electronic Voice Organisers
- Environmental Modifications, e.g. Illumination Levels
- Felt Tip Markers
- Glare Resistant Glasses
- Hand Magnifiers
- Large Print Dymotape Labellers and Tape
- Large Print Telephones (SIM card)
- Low Vision Clock
- Low Vision Watch
- Magnifying Lamps
- Monoculars
- Deafblind Communication Devices and Applications
- Self-Threading Needles
- Signature Templates
- Slate and Stylus
- Stand Magnifiers
- Tactile Watch
- Talking Clock
- Talking Microwaves
- Talking Scales (kitchen or bathroom)
- Talking Tape Measure
- Talking Watch
- Free Standing Task Lighting
- Training Package for Key-Boarding Skills
- Victor Reader Stream (Digital Audio Device)
- Writing Frames

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#### Items Excluded - Assistive Technology items not provided under this Contract.

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- Desktop Video Monitor
  - Electronic Mobility Devices
  - Digital devices, peripherals and accessories, including desktop and mobile hardware
  - Multifunctional printers
  - Adaptive software including screen readers, screen magnification and synthetic voices
  - Deafblind Communication Devices and Applications
-