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Home and Community Support (HCS)

Travel Guidelines

Updated July 2024

Version 4

Introduction

This guide is the key reference document for all contributions to travel payable by ACC relating to the Home and Community Support (HCS) contracts, including Return to Independence and Maximise Independence.

It is provided to assist both ACC Suppliers and ACC staff with the interpretation of payment for travel from 1 July 2021.

Supplier's responsibilities

We expect suppliers to:

- Have enough treatment providers and support workers in each contracted geographical area to deliver services to ACC clients in that area.
- Send the closest treatment provider and/or support worker to deliver services to ACC clients (unless there are clinical reasons for sending another provider).
- Obtain prior approval from ACC for any treatment provider or support worker travel required outside contracted geographical areas (please be aware we may decline such travel).
- Ensure your treatment providers and support workers understand ACC's expectations regarding travel including:
 - Using and invoicing only for the most direct route practicable.
 - Coordinating client supports to optimise journey times and distance traveled.
 - Using telehealth where this is available and clinically appropriate (allied health only).
 - Invoicing us just for the actual time spent travelling.
- Have systems and processes in place to ensure that travel invoiced to ACC is consistent with ACC Travel policy and is accurate.
- On request, provide ACC with information to support invoicing for treatment provider and support worker travel including receipts for any travel claimed.

When we'll pay for travel

ACC contributes towards treatment provider and support worker travel where the travel is:

- Needed to deliver services to ACC clients.

- Using the most direct route practical from the supplier's facility or base or the treatment provider's home (whichever is closest).
- Only for actual time spent travelling to see ACC clients i.e. not for any down time or breaks between appointments/visits.

Suppliers may only deliver services outside the supplier's contracted geographical areas where ACC has specifically approved the provider's travel.

Where the contract for services with ACC does not allow for ACC to contribute towards provider travel, the supplier must obtain ACC's agreement before any travel. ACC's approval will specify what travel is covered and how much we will pay.

What we'll pay for travel

The amount ACC contributes to treatment provider and support worker travel is specified in the contract for services. Please review the service schedules in the HCS- Return to Independence and HCS- Maximise Independence contracts for services for the travel distance and travel time rates, and the travel code prefix and suffix for the contracted service.

For the purposes of this guide, the boundaries for geographical areas match the boundaries for territorial authorities (there are 67 territorial authorities comprising 13 city councils including the Auckland council, 53 district councils, and the Chatham Islands territory). The boundaries for territorial authorities are maintained by Statistics New Zealand - see [Geographic Boundary Viewer](#)

The funding methodology detailed within this guide has been put in place to support the 'In Between Travel' Settlement.

What is In-Between Travel?

Part A of the 2014 In-Between Travel Settlement means home and community support workers are being paid for travel between clients. This is known as In-Between Travel (IBT).

The In-Between Travel Settlement was agreed by:

- The Crown (Ministry of Health).
- Providers of Home and Community based Support services.
- Unions, on behalf of Home and Community based Support service workers.
- All 20 district health boards (now areas).

The Settlement Agreement was signed in November 2014. It includes a Variation made in August 2015 and a second variation made in October 2016.

The obligations of providers under Part A of the Settlement are now included in the [Home and Community Support \(Payment for Travel Between Clients\) Settlement Act 2016](#).

It is critical that suppliers have systems and processes for ensuring that billing for travel time accurately reflects the workers wage level.

These arrangements enable ACC to pay suppliers sufficiently for them to meet their obligations to employees under the settlement agreement and legislation.

Qualifying Travel

Travel can be invoiced for when:

- The Supplier has taken all reasonable steps to minimise travel costs by the employee.
- The travel is necessary to provide services covered under the Home and Community Support Contract with ACC.
- The travel is the distance to a client from the previous place of service.
- In the case of the first visit, travel is calculated from the start point which is usually the support workers normal residence.
- Travel is paid to the end point when travel is deemed as exceptional from the last client of the day.
- The employee must move from one client property to another to claim travel i.e. travel must occur.
- Travel claimed as exceptional travel is deemed as necessary under the exceptional travel criteria.
- Travel is made in the most direct practical route from the last place of service or start point.

Travel cannot be invoiced for:

- Travel provided to non-ACC clients.
- Travel to the 'start point' or from the 'end point' on the same day. [See table below.](#)
- Travel time or distance spent between appointments that does not relate to travelling to an ACC client.
- Travel on a date when a service was not provided to the client.
- Travel that does not meet the criteria for exceptional travel.
- Travel where no legitimate / accurate records have been kept identifying that the amount claimed is reasonable.
- Support Workers using their own vehicles to transport ACC clients.

Definitions are defined below:

Term	Definition
Start point	The 'start' point is defined as the employee's home (usual place of residence).
End point	The 'end' point is defined as the employee's home (usual place of residence).
Visit	A visit is the travel from the previous client to the client receiving the ACC service. This is travel one-way, from one client to another. Note where this is the first visit of the day a visit is from the start point to the ACC client receiving service.

1. Type of travel

Eligible travel will either be funded either as a band or as exceptional travel.

Funding	Definition
Band	A band is payable where a visit is equal to or less than 15kms. Funding is based on a fixed fee for both travel time and distance. Both the travel time and distance fixed fee should be claimed. No other travel payment is applicable.
Exceptional travel	Exceptional travel is paid for a qualifying visit that exceeds 15kms. Exceptional travel is paid on an actuals basis for both time and distance. No other travel payment is applicable. Travel to provide service for clients must meet the criteria detailed in section 6.

Note: travel should be calculated on a single visit basis (do not add the travel for the day together to determine if travel is payable based on a band or exceptional basis – the funding calculation should be based on a single visit).

Travel Band

Funding for a travel band is made under two service item codes. One for time and one for distance. The amount for each is fixed. The funded payment has been calculated based on the weighted average of thousands of visits to determine the weighted average travel time and distance payable. Individual travel times and distances may vary from the average (over and under).

The band for travel distances $\leq 15\text{km}$ is based on 3.7kms and 8.5 minutes.

As of 1 January 2022, the single travel time band has been replaced with 5 bands, to reflect the Support Workers ordinary wage.

Exceptional Travel

ACC Standard Terms and Conditions in relation to invoicing states that -- '0.2(d) 'invoices be supported by GST receipts if expenses claimed and any other verifying information reasonably requested by ACC. ACC suppliers need to do everything they can to minimise the travel needed by carers.'

To support your prior approval request for exceptional travel, ACC can request evidence to support your billing.

- Vacancy advertising specific to this client.
- Attempts made to provide local carers for client.
- Is this a training gap or is it due to client choice?
- Is the client living in a remote / rural location that limits recruitment?

ACC will consider exceptional travel requests once all documentation has been received.

Exceptional travel is funded based on actuals recorded and claimed based on the following formula:

Time: (Hourly rate/60) x number of minutes travelled.

Distance: Km rate x number of kilometres travelled.

Travel time and distance should be rounded to the nearest whole minute or km.

As of 1 January 2022, the single exceptional travel time band has been replaced with 5 bands, to reflect the Support Workers ordinary wage.

Note payment is made via a travel band or through exceptional travel for a visit, not both.

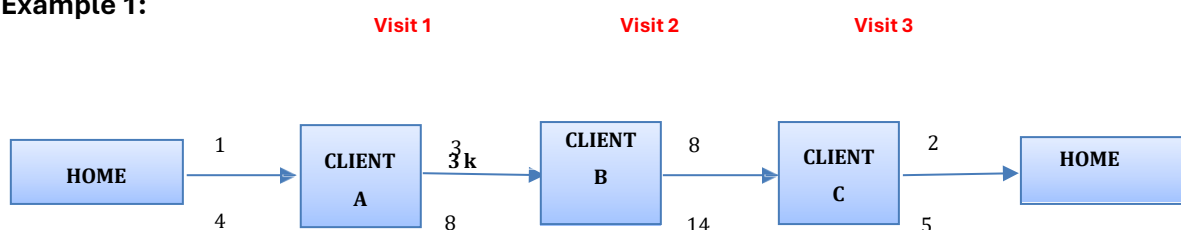
Exceptional travel may be claimed where no other Home and Community Support employee is available who can meet the specific needs of the client.

Employers must actively manage exceptional travel and take reasonable steps to recruit workers that meet the client's needs in the most efficient and effective way. The client's specific support needs can arise from:

- Their disability.
- Their medical conditions or injury.
- Their behaviour.
- Their age.
- Other major factors e.g. family circumstance, accommodation, employment, social involvement cultural, language, gender or other relevant social factors

Travel Examples

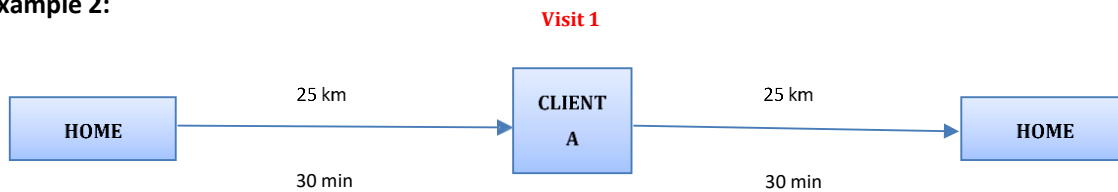
Example 1:



Visit	From	To	Time	Distance	Band		Exceptional	Comments
					≤15 km	>15 km		
ACC visit 1	Home	Client A	4 min	1 km	✓	✗		Band only
ACC visit 2	Client A	Client B	8 min	3 km	✓	✗		Band only
ACC visit 3	Client B	Client C	14 min	8 km	✓	✗		Band only
Home	Client C	Home	5 min	2 km	-	-		Not eligible

- 3 x band should be billed

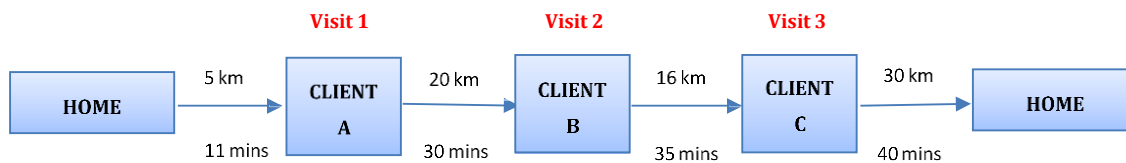
Example 2:



Visit	From	To	Time	Distance	Band =<15 km	Exceptional >15 km	Comments
ACC Visit 1	Home	Client A	30 min	25 km	✗	✓	Actuals
Home	Client A	Home	30 min	25 km	✗	✓	Actuals (exceptional)

- 50 km and 60 minutes should be billed

Example 3:



Visit	From	To	Time	Distance	Band =<15 km	Exceptional >15 km	Comments
ACC visit 1	Home	Client A	11 min	5 km	✓	✗	Band only
Not ACC visit	Client A	Client B	30 min	20 km	-	-	Not billable to ACC
ACC visit 3	Client B	Client C	35 min	16 km	✗	✓	Exceptional
Home	Client C	Home	40 min	30 km	✗	✓	Exceptional - Bill ACC as last client ACC

- 1 x band should be billed
- 46 km and 75 minutes