

# Supporting case management

Better decision making together



Christine Bloomfield, Rehabilitation Practice Manager  
Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Wellington, New Zealand

## Background and aim

There are a range of advisory roles within ACC that provide clinical and rehabilitation advice for the ACC Claims Management staff. ACC has taken a multi-faceted approach to better support its case managers in their role. One strategy has been to model a specific rehabilitation advice service delivered by rehabilitation advisors with allied health or equivalent backgrounds e.g. physiotherapy.

### CASE STUDY



**66 year old male linesman** who sustained a **right rotator cuff tear** lifting a heavy load at work in March 2015. Client had been working for same employer for over 30 years and his **goal was to return to work**. Client had been told he could not have surgery until October as his surgeon was away.

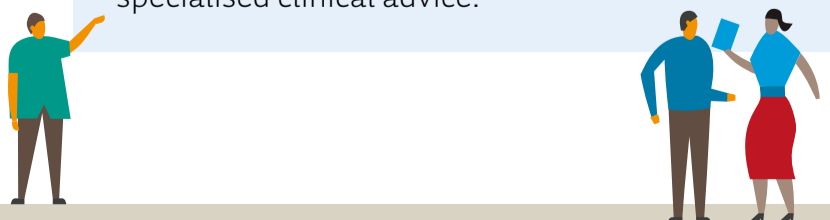
Rehab Advisor (via Rehab Tracking Tool) facilitated urgency in surgery to Case Owner resulting in client having surgery 3 months earlier.  
**Client returned to work in August.**

	Rehab Claim	Cost (k)	Case Match comparison (64 yr male same work type/same injury)	Cost (k)	Case Match comparison (69 yr old male/same work type/same injury)	Cost (k)
<b>Duration = Case Owner Time</b>	132 days paid	< 182 days	236 days paid so far	>182 days	299 days paid	>182 days
<b>Weekly compensation</b>	\$1040 per week for 5 months	22	\$1492 per week from 07/2015	45	\$723 per week from 04/2015	34
<b>Vocational Services</b>	Scoping/Stay at Work (SAW) Level 2 and 4 Service – Vocational Rehabilitation and Work Services	5	Stay at Work (SAW) Level 2 Service	1.2	Scoping, Stay at Work (SAW) Level 2 and 4 Service and Work Ready – Vocational Rehabilitation and Work Services	11
<b>Surgery</b>	Rotator Repair	12.6	Rotator Repair	11.7	Nil	0
<b>Medical Assessments</b>	Nil	Nil	Independent Occupational Assessment (IOA)/ Vocational Independent Medical Assessment (VIMA) – Independent Occupational Assessment	1.7	Vocational Independent Medical Assessment (VIMA)/Vocational Independent Occupational Assessment (VIOA)/ Independent Medical Assessment (IMA)	2.5
<b>Total cost</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>60.6</b>		<b>47.5</b>

## Method

A rehabilitation advice service has been modelled in several ACC Branches in the Auckland and Christchurch regions.

Rehabilitation Advisors have established relationships with local ACC Branch Staff and existing clinical advisors. They complete early reviews and provide rehabilitation advice where clients have complex needs and offer support where case owners are “stuck” with a particular case. Multidisciplinary panels are used as a method to support better rehabilitation decisions and case owners are supported to make more appropriate and timely referrals for specific specialised clinical advice.



## Results



Over 6000 claims have received advice to date and advice provided within an average of two days.

A sample of 49 claims have been reviewed. The review found in over half of these claims the advice provided contributed to a change in the clients rehabilitation plan resulting in an improved rate of rehabilitation.

Over 96% of case owners felt that their approach to the claim had improved and 98% were very satisfied with the service they were provided with.

### CLAIM FILE REVIEWS – Rehabilitation advice reviewed 49 files

Claims	Reduced claim duration	Positive impact on management of claim	Positive outcome for client	Services changed or added	Consideration other clinical advice	Scope of practice	Advice acted upon
Yes	27	38	29	26	43	47	35
No	12	1	8	20	6	1	13
Unkown/ unsure	10	10	12	3		1	1

## Discussion

The indicators suggest that the case management staff value this service, find it easy to access and timely; that they have increased confidence, improved their overall management of more complex claims and reduced their reliance on specialist advice. The analysis of case files reviewed suggests that rehabilitation plans have changed to support more timely and cost effective rehabilitation.

## Conclusion

Indicators are that a new model of providing rehabilitation advice to support ACC case managers is supporting better rehabilitation decisions.



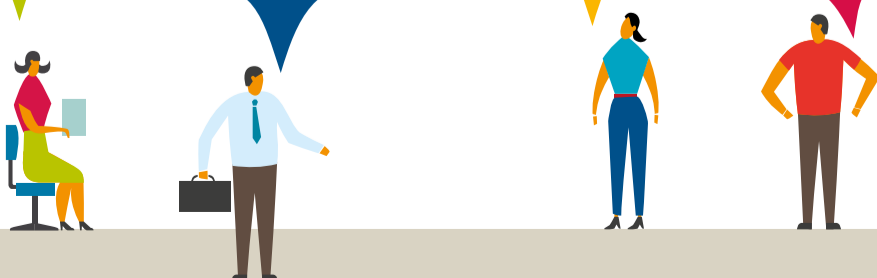
## What do staff say about the service?

*Experienced team manager:*  
“Your rehab knowledge is so much more than mine in many areas. Your advice is extremely valuable.”

“FANTASTIC – thank you so much. After meeting with you I felt excited about my job, it’s wonderful to have such clarity and confidence when working with complex clients...”

“Brilliant the way you have simplified things and make a way towards a workable and realistic solution.”

“This information will assist me when faced with similar claims.”



New Zealand Government