

25 May 2020

Gloria Ashton

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Tēnā koe Gloria

Your Official Information Act request, reference: GOV-004700

Thank you for your email of 25 April 2020, asking for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I would like all information (internal documents, guidelines, draft contracts etc) regarding contracting of External Clinical Advisors.

I would like to know what safeguards ACC has in place to ensure that External Clinical Advice reports used by ACC are written to an appropriate standard.

Does ACC ultimately bear responsibility to the claimant/the public for both the standard of the ECA report and the Treatment Injury report?

We are unable to provide the documentation requested

Following a search of our internal systems for all information regarding the contracting of External Clinical Advisors (ECA), we found over 500 documents that may be relevant to your request.

To determine whether each document was relevant to your request would require a manual search through the content of each individual document. As this would require a substantial amount of manual collation and research, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act.

We note that in our previous response of 31 October 2019 (ref: GOV-002013), we provided you with the three documents provided to specialists when external clinical medical advice is needed for a claim, along with some background information on ECAs. If there is something specific held in those documents you would like to know more about, or you have an idea of specific information you would like to request in relation to ECAs, we welcome you to make a further request.

ECAs and treatment injury reports

ACC procures ECAs using a letter of agreement for each request for advice, so there is no overall contract for them. An example letter of agreement was provided alongside GOV-002013 (*TI40 Obtaining ECA on treatment injury claim*).

When ACC receives an ECA's advice in relation to a Treatment Injury claim, it is assessed by a Treatment Injury Cover Specialist (TICS), who is a registered health professional. The TICS considers the advice and whether it answers the questions posed to the ECA in the letter of agreement. They will also consider the quality of the report at this time. Feedback is provided to the ECA if required.

The letter of agreement clearly states: The Treatment Injury report is the report written by the TICS when they are issuing a decision to the client and explains the decision. This is ACC's responsibility to ensure the accuracy and quality of the report as it is ACC's document.

Competency of health professionals is the responsibility of the health professional's professional association, for example, the Medical Council of New Zealand or the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand.

Who to contact

If you have any questions, you can email me at GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Sasha Wood

Manager Official Information Act Services
Government Engagement & Support