

WorkCover

QUEENSLAND

Accredited Rehabilitation and Return to Work Program

Version 1.0

1 July 2024

Table of contents

Overview.....	3
About WorkCover Queensland	3
What happens if a worker sustains a work-related injury or illness?	3
Roles, rights, and responsibilities for rehabilitation and return to work.....	3
What does research tell us about the benefits of work?.....	5
What is our accredited rehabilitation and return to work program?	5
Rehabilitation and return to work planning	7
Support for workers to access early psychological support services for mental injuries	9
Supporting rehabilitation and return to work for workers	10
What happens if a worker is unable to return to their pre-injury employer or duties due to their injury? ...	12
What is a return to work services provider?	12
Employment Connect	14
Policy and procedures	14
Implementation	15
Measurement and evaluation.....	16
Privacy	17
Concerns or complaints.....	18

Overview

This document sets out WorkCover Queensland's Accredited Rehabilitation and Return to Work Program (**the Program**) as required under the [Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003](#) (Qld) (**the Act**).

The Program is our approach and overall system in relation to rehabilitation and return to work.

Additional information on our Program is available here <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/rehabilitation-and-return-to-work>

About WorkCover Queensland

WorkCover Queensland (**WorkCover**) is the main provider of workers' compensation insurance for Queensland. We are a government owned statutory body established under the Act.

Our vision is to be the best workers' compensation insurer and make a positive difference to people's lives.

We do this through partnering with and supporting our customers to keep Queenslanders working, through:

- trusted partnerships which underpin our focus on return to work outcomes
- tailored quality experiences for workers and employers
- creating value for business through innovative and sustainable outcomes; and
- influencing and investing in injury risk reduction.

Our [2024 – 2028 Corporate Plan](#) sets out more detailed information including our corporate goals, activities and our performance indicators.

What happens if a worker sustains a work-related injury or illness?

If a worker sustains a [work-related injury or illness, the first steps are:](#)

- see a doctor or go to the hospital immediately for initial treatment
- get a [work capacity certificate](#) from their treating doctor
- let their employer know what has happened as soon as they can and provide a copy of their work capacity certificate to their employer
- [make a claim](#) with WorkCover and provide a copy of the work capacity certificate as we can only provide support from the date the doctor first assessed the injury.
- [start their recovery](#) as soon as they can.

Further information on [what to do if an injury or illness occurs](#), [making a claim](#), [the claim process](#) and [getting back to work](#) are available on our [website](#).

Roles, rights, and responsibilities for rehabilitation and return to work

WorkCover

The recovery and return to work process after a work-related injury or illness requires all parties to work together.

WorkCover's role is focussed on supporting timely, effective, and sustainable rehabilitation and return to work outcomes for all workers after a work-related injury or illness.

WorkCover does this by collaborating with all parties on the recovery and return to work process including the worker, their employer, providers, and other stakeholders to help rehabilitate the worker so they can return to work promptly and safely.

WorkCover's responsibilities as an insurer are set out under section 220 of the Act, specifically that WorkCover must take all reasonable steps to secure the rehabilitation and early return to suitable duties of workers who have an entitlement to compensation and workers who are participating in our Program.

Specifically:

- Workers will have the right to request referral to, or WorkCover may decide to make the referral, to the Program at any stage during the statutory claim.
- WorkCover must refer a worker to the Program if the worker's entitlement to compensation has ceased and the worker has not returned to work.
- WorkCover is not required to refer a worker to the Program if we are satisfied that the Program is not able to assist with rehabilitation for the injury or if they are already participating in the Program.
- The worker will be entitled to remain in the Program until they have returned to work, they are unwilling or unable to participate in the Program, or the Program is unable to further assist the worker with rehabilitation.
- The worker's participation in the Program will also end if a worker receives a payment for damages for the injury, receives a redemption payment for the injury or has received compensation for the injury for five years.

WorkCover will advise the worker upon entry into our Program and this process is set out later in this document.

In instances when a request to be referred to our Program is denied or access to our Program ends, a worker will be issued with written reasons outlining why the Program has been denied or ended. This document also explains to the worker their review rights under the Act.

WorkCover must take all reasonable steps to coordinate the development and maintenance of rehabilitation and return to work plans (**RRTWP**) for workers who have sustained an injury. Further information on our approach to rehabilitation and return to work planning is set out later in this document.

When dealing with customers who have English as a second language, WorkCover operates under the [Queensland Government Language Service Policy](#). This policy deals with access to interpreters and translated information for people from linguistically diverse backgrounds. An interpreter or translator service should be provided in situations where a person has difficulty communicating in English. This includes those who require an interpreter due to hearing impairment (via sign language or Teletypewriter). When a person requests an interpreter (or translation of a document) they will be provided with this service.

Workers

Workers who sustain a work-related injury or illness have specific obligations under the Act to satisfactorily participate in rehabilitation designed to assist in their recovery as soon as possible after their injury or illness occurs. This includes satisfactorily participating in any return to work program or suitable duties arranged by WorkCover, which incorporates planning for their return to work with their employer.

Employers

Employer must take all reasonable steps to assist or provide the worker with rehabilitation. This includes cooperating with WorkCover to take all reasonable steps to secure the rehabilitation and early return to suitable duties of a worker. Employers have additional obligations in relation to appointing rehabilitation and return to work coordinators and workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures under the Act.

Further information on [Understanding rehabilitation and return to work terms, roles and responsibilities](#), [Rehabilitation roles and responsibilities](#), [Worker commitments](#), [Employer obligations](#), [Other roles on your rehabilitation](#) are available on our [website](#).

What does research tell us about the benefits of work?

WorkCover takes an evidence-based approach to rehabilitation and return to work.

Research confirms work is good for health and wellbeing. The Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians has published '[Realising the Health Benefits of Good Work](#)'. Research conducted by the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) highlights that being off work for long periods of time can significantly reduce the likelihood of ever returning to work and can have a negative effect on them and their family.

Based on this evidence, we promote stay at work, or if a worker needs to take a break from work, we encourage early and safe recovery at work.

WorkCover supports AFOEM's focus to improve health and recovery outcomes and reducing barriers to care for people experiencing work injuries as part of the '[It Pays to Care](#)' paper. We are fully cognisant that when an injury or medical condition occurs in a compensable setting, the chance of a poor health outcome is significantly higher than for the same condition in a non-compensable setting, including higher work absences and long-term disability rates. We understand that being out of work long term is associated with poorer physical and mental health, and this is more likely in a compensable setting. There is a need to focus on reducing work disability and to ensure work injury systems are fit-for purpose.

Based on this evidence, our program utilises a **tailored care and support approach** to claims management. Further information on this approach is set out later in this document.

Further to this evidence, we are committed to putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and providing quality experiences. We partner with our customers and stakeholders to deliver innovative and sustainable outcomes, creating value for Queensland businesses and workers. Our values of **excellence, integrity, responsiveness, and respect** are incorporated into everything we do. Our people also aim to live our customer strategy principles – **empowered, valued, easy, fair, and transparent, and consistent** – with every customer interaction.

Further information on our [vision, values and goals](#), our [research initiatives](#) including [customer feedback](#) are available on our [website](#).

What is our accredited rehabilitation and return to work program?

WorkCover utilises an in-house model for the determination and management of statutory claims.

We focus on identifying recovery at work or return to work opportunities and risks at the outset of a statutory claim, even before liability is accepted. This is our **tailored care and support approach** to claims management.

Our tailored care and support claims management approach is the evolution of our successful Recovery Blueprint pilot project, which we developed in partnership with researchers at Monash University and is backed by extensive research and data. The research demonstrated the benefits of identifying specific risk factors that may delay the recovery from injury, or impact on a successful return to work, and supports an early intervention approach in those claims. The research tells us that by responding to the risks that have been identified, there is an increased chance of a successful outcome.

At its core, this claims management approach is tailored towards the individual and their circumstances. We recognise that everyone has different needs and will require different levels of support at different times throughout their claim.

We provide tailored care and support through two key methods:

- assigning a **care profile** at claim determination
- utilising **care conversations** and **information gathering** tools to engage and understand the progress of recovery for a worker

When a claim is accepted WorkCover assigns a **care profile**. There are a number of factors that a care profile is based on; and it is assigned using information that we know about the worker at that time. Factors taken into consideration are based on [Monash's Best Practice Statement](#).

Once assigned a care profile, workers are placed with the appropriate Claims Representative or Customer Advisor to support them through their recovery. The approach aims to ensure workers are getting the right help at the right time.

However, a care profile can be changed when additional information on a delayed recovery and/or return to work becomes available and there is a need for this in order to best support the worker. This means the assigning of a care profile is not isolated to data driven system smarts but involves human consideration, decision making and intervention when required.

A care profile is based on a typical duration of recovery, risk of prolonged recovery and risk of a non-return to work outcome.

Claims with **no identified risk** of prolonged recovery and/or a non-return to work outcome will remain with a Claims Representative to monitor to ensure the worker is recovering.

Claims with an **identified risk** of prolonged recovery and/or a risk of a non-return to work outcome will be allocated to a Customer Advisor who is responsible for the management of the claim and the rehabilitation for the worker. This allocation to and management by the Customer Advisor will constitute WorkCover referring the worker to our Program under section 220(2)(a).

WorkCover will advise the worker upon entry into our Program. This will include initial phone confirmation by the Customer Advisor, plus additional communication via email with links to supporting information on our Program as required.

A worker who is being monitored by a Claims Representative may also request to be referred to the Program during their statutory claim under section 220(2)(b).

WorkCover's ongoing management of the claim under our Program includes:

- Initial claim conversations with the worker and employer confirming details, setting expectations, and outlining responsibilities and obligations under the Act including:
- Worker – obligation to participate in rehabilitation (Section 232)
- Employer – obligation to assist or provide rehabilitation (Section 228)
- Insurer – responsibility for rehabilitation and return to work and referral to the Program (Section 220)
- Communication (including case conferencing) with the worker, employer, providers, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the rehabilitation is goal directed and person-centred with timely and appropriate service provision having regard to the individual worker's injury, the objectives of the RRTWP and the worker's rate of recovery. This communication is thoroughly documented in our claims management system. Information is also made available to workers via our [secure Worker Assist app](#); and to employers via our [secure WorkCover Connect portal](#).
- Communication includes our people undertaking **care conversations** which are focussed on assisting workers to understand their injury, individual circumstances, challenges and understand their goals. Our care conversations allow us to build rapport, show empathy, gather information, educate on resources and support for recovery from injury, and influence a sustainable return to work outcome. These care conversations are also utilised with employers and providers.
- Use of electronic **injury questionnaires** with workers - these are evidence-based surveys, validated by research that help us better understand a workers' individual circumstances and their risk of a poor return to work outcome.
- Development and facilitation of the RRTWP with the worker, employer, and providers.
- Collaborating with the worker, employer, and providers to develop suitable duties programs.
- Sourcing host employment, job placement and training where appropriate.
- Monitoring ongoing liability and understanding when additional return to work support and intervention is required.
- Making referrals for return to work/workplace rehabilitation services (including work site visits to assist with return to work) and independent medical examinations.

WorkCover utilises an additional **specialised** care profile for claims requiring specialist support and intervention. This includes latent onset claims such as asbestosis and silicosis, as well as brain injury, spinal cord injury, severe burns, and amputations. Claims with a **specialised** care profile are all managed by a centralised team of Customer Advisors as part of our program.

Further information on our [Recovery Blueprint project](#), Monash University's [Best Practice Principles](#) and [Best Practice Statement](#) are available on our [website](#).

Rehabilitation and return to work planning

Upon referral to a Customer Advisor, workers are advised they have been referred to our Program, meaning they will receive the services and support appropriate to their individual needs. This support includes the development of a RRTWP. These workers are provided with information outlining their rights relating to participating in their RRTWP, the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in the plan, the privacy of their RRTWP consistent with the [Information Privacy Act 2009 Qld \(the IP Act\)](#) and how they may raise any concerns relating to their plan.

RRTWP are developed in conjunction with the worker, employer, and any relevant stakeholders, considering individual circumstances. The early development of the RRTWP commences with contacting relevant parties to gather information to understand the worker's circumstances and progress their recovery and return to work. Initial conversations include:

- Outlining expectations, roles and responsibilities of each party as well as ensuring all parties understand the process and obligations when needed.
- Gaining an understanding of the worker's occupation, work duties, employment arrangement, the event, injury and symptoms, treatment, and investigations (past and present), pre-existing injuries, capacity for work, availability of suitable duties, access to online services, and any barriers or flags.
- Gaining an understanding of any factors that research shows may lead to a delay in return to work or recovery. These factors include the worker's return to work and recovery expectations, social support available, psychological impacts of injury including the worker's ability to cope with their injury, general health conditions, access to return-to-work focussed treatment, and knowledge of the workers' compensation process.

Gathering this information allows a RRTWP to be developed. Internally, on claims for ongoing total or partial incapacity or mental injury, these plans are referred to as On Track plans. On Track plans are stored in a single screen maintained digitally within WorkCover's claims management system. Changes and updates to On Track plans can easily be completed and a version history of each plan is maintained on the claim. On Track plans are visible to all users of the system and provide a detailed overview of the claim and the plan for achieving a positive recovery and return to work outcome.

RRTWPs are specifically tailored to the needs and circumstances of a worker and their employer and as such, the level of detail included in these plans varies depending on the complexity of the injury and the worker's individual circumstances and needs.

Claims that are monitored by Claims Representatives also have RRTWP developed. These RRTWP are more concise in nature reflecting the worker's individual circumstances and needs e.g., a brief file note in our claims management system.

For claims that require an On Track plan, the initial plan is completed within five (5) business days of allocation to the Customer Advisor and is updated to reflect any changes in the direction or goal of the rehabilitation objectives for the worker. Any amendments to the plan will be communicated to all relevant parties.

An On Track plan should be written clearly and set out:

- A high-level summary of the claim including the worker's pre-injury occupation and working hours, how the injury was sustained and all accepted work-related injuries.
- Clear and appropriate rehabilitation objectives including how those objectives will be achieved, short and long-term goals, and the details of the rehabilitation required to meet the goals and objectives.
The worker's RTW status and expected timeframes to return to suitable duties and full pre-injury duties, and how the worker's employer can support RTW.
- Treatment and rehabilitation (type and timeframes) including an estimation of how many sessions the worker may require, and the period of time treatment will be required, following consultation with treating health providers.

- Any psychosocial factors or barriers identified that may prevent the worker from returning to work and strategies to address these.
- Timeframes, review mechanisms and dates for review.

Both RRTWP and On Track plans will be developed in consultation with a worker, their employer and treating health providers. Workers will be advised of their RRTWP/On Track plan and notified of their right to receive a copy of the plan. A worker can request a copy of their RRTWP/On Track plan from their Claims Representative and/or a Customer Advisor at any stage during their claim.

Support for workers to access early psychological support services for mental injuries

Workers with a mental injury can usually access psychological treatment funded by WorkCover to support their recovery.

To access these early psychological support services, workers need to have lodged a WorkCover claim and have a medical certificate from their doctor confirming the diagnosis of a mental injury.

Under the Act, WorkCover must take all reasonable steps to offer early psychological support services to workers with an application for compensation for a mental injury sustained on or after 30 October 2019.

Early psychological support services are available to workers during the 'prescribed period' which starts from the day the application is made and ends on the day WorkCover makes a decision on the application.

These early psychological support services might include:

- GP appointments
- counselling or psychology sessions
- psychiatry appointments
- medication, such as antidepressants.

WorkCover can also help with mediation services between a worker and their employer, to support recovery and the return to work process.

WorkCover does not cover early psychological support services related to:

- in-patient hospital costs
- costs related to a hospital stay, such as nursing, or medications received in hospital.

If the claim is accepted, the services covered by WorkCover can continue as per the recommendations of their treating medical practitioner.

If the claim is not accepted, WorkCover will advise the worker that services are no longer funded. **Please note:** Any services that have been previously funded by WorkCover are not required to be repaid by the worker.

A worker is not obliged to participate in early psychological support services during the determination of their claim. However, WorkCover must always inform eligible workers that we can coordinate early psychological support to help them with their recovery.

WorkCover will contact workers at the earliest opportunity to discuss eligibility and options available to them relating to early psychological support services. This is undertaken in several ways:

- Phone conversation – this conversation will be documented in our claims system. This conversation is designed to support workers to obtain the right support service at the right time as prescribed by their treating medical team. The conversation will take place with Customer Support Representatives, Claims Representatives and/or Customer Advisors at the earliest opportunity.
- An SMS and/or email will be issued to workers - this includes a link to our website where the worker can find further information regarding early psychological support services. This SMS and/or email is automatically sent to workers at initial registration of the claim (where contact details are known). Where automated correspondence is not sent due to unknown customer details at the time of registration, a work item will be raised to the claim owner with instructions on the next steps prompting for either the SMS or email correspondence to be sent manually to the customer once their details are obtained.

If early psychological support services should not be funded during the determination, WorkCover must conduct an internal review before making a final decision. This decision is not reviewable by the Workers' Compensation Regulator, as such a reason for the decision letter is not offered to the worker.

Further information on [mental injuries](#) are available on our [website](#).

Supporting rehabilitation and return to work for workers

WorkCover must take all reasonable steps to secure the rehabilitation and early safe return to suitable duties for workers.

Our approach to rehabilitation is focussed on ensuring the worker's earliest possible return to work; or maximise the worker's independent functioning.

This includes focussing on returning the worker to:

1. Pre-injury duties; or if not feasible
2. Other suitable duties (temporary or permanent) at the worker's pre-injury employer; or if not feasible
3. Other suitable duties (temporary or permanent) with another employer; or if the first three options are not feasible
4. Maximise the worker's independent functioning.

WorkCover will collaborate with the worker's pre-injury employer to identify options for returning to pre-injury duties or suitable duties. We will aim to connect and engage the worker with the key people at their place of employment. This might include the following:

1. Rehabilitation and return to work coordinator (**RRTWC**)
2. Supervisor.

We will work together to develop shared goals and objectives that will be set out in their RRTWP and any subsequent suitable duties program (**SDP**) to support their return to work.

A worker's SDP will be developed by WorkCover in consultation with the worker, their employer, their treating providers, and any external providers engaged by WorkCover to help them with their plan. We will closely monitor the progress against these goals, facilitate any adjustments to the plan as necessary and help keep things on track towards their end goals.

We will also engage with employers to ensure they meet their own obligations to assist or provide rehabilitation under section 228 of the *Act*. This includes cooperating with us to allow us to meet our own obligations under section 220 of the *Act* and ensuring they are taking all reasonable steps to assist or provide the worker with rehabilitation of a suitable standard (as set out in the [Guidelines for Standard of Rehabilitation](#)) from the day a worker is injured. We will request employers specifically provide written evidence to us on why they are unable to provide the worker with suitable duties.

A Customer Advisor may also engage an external Return to Work Services provider who specialises in return to work services to work in consultation with us, the worker, the employer, and relevant stakeholders to help them achieve their rehabilitation and return to work goals.

If the pre-injury employer is unable to provide appropriate suitable duties, WorkCover will look at host employment placement (**HEP**) for the purposes of rehabilitating a worker back to their pre-injury role.

The benefits of a HEP to a worker include a quick and safe return to work, opportunity to develop a range of work skills and improve work fitness, less disruption to family, work, and social life, as well as improved employment and financial security, less time spent recovering from an injury and potentially a reduced level of impairment.

A Customer Advisor will consider a HEP to help facilitate rehabilitation and offer an alternate opportunity and location for sourcing suitable duties. HEP is only used once it has been determined that the pre-injury employer does not have suitable duties available. Prior to sourcing a potential HEP, a Customer Advisor will consider the intended goals so that the most appropriate employer is:

- **Work hardening:** The host employer provides a place of employment to perform work tasks. The worker builds their capacity to work as they recover from their injury and return to their pre-injury role.
- **Vocational placement:** If the worker cannot return to their pre-injury role, WorkCover identifies a host employer who has a vacant job that the worker may be able to temporarily fill once they are able to work again. The ideal outcome is that the worker remains at work with that place of employment even after their claim finishes.

Customer Advisors are able to identify and implement HEP options however, they may also engage WorkCover may engage an external Return to Work Services provider (to assist with identifying and sourcing the HEP).

An alternative HEP option is WorkCover's [Recover at Work program \(RAW\)](#). It is an initiative to proactively identify and promote HEP opportunities using our existing employer networks. Through RAW, we can identify those employers in our networks who already have a positive approach to providing return to work opportunities for their own workers and who would be prepared to provide those same opportunities to workers from other employers.

In determining the worker's suitability for host employment with a RAW employer a Customer Advisor will need to consider the length of partial incapacity and the worker's attitude and skills. If the worker is a suitable candidate, a

Customer Advisor will search the RAW employer database within WorkCover's claims system for available opportunities.

WorkCover offers an incentive to host employers if they provide paid employment following the host placement. A six month exemption is offered to employers and this policy indemnifies a new employer against costs of a work related aggravation of the original injury and covers aggravations for six months from the commencement of paid employment.

There will be no costs added to the new employer's premium. For this to be processed, the host employer needs to send us the application for compensation, together with a copy of the six month exemption letter. If it is considered to be a new / different injury, then the new claim will be registered against the new employer's policy.

What happens if a worker is unable to return to their pre-injury employer or duties due to their injury?

In instances where a worker is unable to return to their pre-injury employer or duties due to their work-related injury, we will look at options for alternative employment by providing support with reskilling or retraining, vocational assessments, job coaching and advice and access to employment network services. Consideration may also be given to funding necessary and reasonable training that will assist them in achieving a sustainable return to work outcome.

Sometimes we are unable to provide all these services on our own. When this occurs, we will engage an external Return to Work Services Provider who specialises in workplace rehabilitation services to work in consultation with us, the worker, the employer, and relevant stakeholders to help them achieve their goals.

What is a return to work services provider?

While in most cases a worker's rehabilitation and return to work is straight forward, some may need extra assistance with returning to work and a Customer Advisor may also engage an external Return to Work Services Provider who specialises in workplace rehabilitation services to work in consultation with us, the worker, the employer, and relevant stakeholders to help them achieve their rehabilitation and return to work goals.

A worker may request their Customer Advisor to refer them to Return to Work Services Provider throughout the life of the claim. The Customer Advisor will assess the request to ensure that a referral is appropriate and will provide meaningful support and outcomes.

Return to Work Services Providers, also known as workplace rehabilitation providers, are organisations comprised of qualified health professionals who specialise in supporting the complex needs of workers and employers to achieve timely and sustainable return to work outcomes. They are independent of other stakeholders and provide expert opinions and solutions to help resolve workplace injuries. They may also help to address risk factors that can affect a worker's ability to recover at, or return to, work.

WorkCover engages Return to Services Providers under a procurement process and in line with the [Return to Work Services Table of Costs](#). This process and provider panel aligns with the requirements in the [Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers](#) published by the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA).

WorkCover's [return to work services provider panel](#) can be viewed on our website.

The types of services delivered by a return to work services provider may include:

SERVICE	DESCRIPTOR
Workplace Evaluation/Assessment (Worksite assessment)	This involves the provider visiting the workplace usually with both the worker and employer to complete an assessment/evaluation of the workplace to identify appropriate duties for the worker considering job performance and recommend possible solutions, identification of suitable duties, advice on workplace design, modification or provision of aids and appliances.
Suitable Duties Program (SDP)	Documentation of suitable duties for a worker, detailing specific information necessary for a safe and effective return to the workplace.
Job seeking skills assessment	Identification of transferable skills to a new job/career or to assist in finding a host placement.
Job preparation service	Career counselling and job search preparation which may include interview preparation and practice, job seeking skills and resume writing.
Job placement service - New employer	Actively sourcing and placing a worker in new employment includes durable recover at work placements.
Job placement service - Work Hardening	Actively sourcing and placing a worker in an appropriate temporary job placement where the current employer is unable to provide appropriate duties for the worker. Includes temporary RAW placements.
Vocational assessment	Comprehensive evaluation of a worker's job potential and identification of realistic vocational options in the current job market or environment.
Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE)	Assessment of a worker's functional capacity for work or potential to return to suitable work where the information is not available through other means. It is a comprehensive assessment of a worker's functional abilities tested in an in-rooms environment.
Monitoring Suitable Duties program	Communication with relevant stakeholders including worker, employer, doctor, and insurer about a worker's progress on an existing suitable duties program.

Further information on [rehabilitation and return to work](#) including [Recover at Work](#) is available on our [website](#).

Employment Connect

Employment Connect (**EC**), is a specialised service offering within our Program, specifically designed for those workers who may need more targeted rehabilitation and vocational support.

Customer Advisors may elect to offer the EC service offering to workers based on identified rehabilitation needs and individual circumstances.

We may make rehabilitation available to a worker who has a current common law claim on our own initiative or if the worker asks. This would involve a referral to EC. In making this EC referral, consideration of previous participation in our Program will be undertaken.

EC is focussed on the individual and understanding how we can better support them to achieve their goals. We want to focus on the individual's current needs to better understand how we can support and empower them in their journey towards their future needs.

We do this by undertaking an early, whole person initial needs conversation and assessment with them to best understand their current circumstances and to identify potential barriers that we may need to work through together. We need to better understand what may be impacting on their capability to return to employment or increase their employment capacity, and then assist in developing their goals. This person-centred approach is the key to EC.

Developing a tailored goal-orientated RRTWP designed to meet a worker's needs may include:

- a self-managed and supported pathway; or
- the use of more specialised rehabilitation and return to employment services with ongoing support; or
- a hybrid version of both as required. This will involve the co-development and agreement on an action plan with key goals and steps to help support them on their specific journey.

A worker will be able to outline the goals that they identify in their personal *My Future Action Plan*. This will set out the worker's short-term goals as milestones so they can track their success. Their action steps are what they are going to commit to or bring as part of building their future. We will support them in creating their action plan and we will be here to support them to achieve their goals. We will review this plan together regularly as well as make any adjustments needed to achieve their goals.

The worker will have an EC support person, a Customer Advisor, who will be available and easy to access with the aim to support, assist, monitor, adjust, change the focus, and help them progress towards the agreed outcomes and be there for the worker throughout the life of the EC service offering.

We encourage workers to maintain open communication to ensure we are providing them the necessary support for them to meet their return to work goals as part of the program. We will also regularly check in with workers as they progress on their plan to make sure they are on track to be successful against their goals. We will check in with all other parties to ensure we are all connected and on track for a successful outcome.

Policy and procedures

WorkCover has in place policies and procedures that identify how we approach rehabilitation and return to work return to work options for workers and employers. These policies and procedures are available for our claims staff on our intranet.

These policies and procedures address:

- our operations and commitment to rehabilitation and return to work
- how we monitor and satisfy the requirements of the *Act* as they relate to rehabilitation and return to work
- our commitment to work with employers and providers to achieve the best outcome for workers.

These policies and procedures are reviewed annually or sooner if required to ensure they remain current and in line with the *Act* and best practice. We also undertake ongoing evaluation of return to work outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of current policies and procedures.

Continuous improvement initiatives are in place to ensure the current systems and policies for return to work remain appropriate and ensure return to work outcomes of the program are achieved (for both workers and employers).

Our [website](#) also sets out information and guidance for workers, employers, providers, and other stakeholders as they relate to rehabilitation and return to work.

Information about our Program will have a designated section under the [Rehabilitation and Return to Work](#) section of our website and will be published following formal notification of accreditation from Office of Industrial Relations (**OIR**). This will include various resources and guidelines for workers, employers, providers, and other stakeholders as they apply to our Program.

Implementation

WorkCover is committed to ensuring that our claims staff are appropriately skilled and trained. We have rigorous selection and recruitment strategies to ensure we appoint people who match our values and have the skills and knowledge to support our corporate strategy, in particular successful rehabilitation and return to work outcomes.

In conjunction with the [Personal Injury and Education Foundation \(PIEF\)](#), WorkCover have developed our new **Claims Capability Framework** which outlines the core capabilities for our people to be successful in their roles. It has been developed for our key claims roles of Customer Advisor and Claims Representatives. This framework helps provide clear expectations and enables us to develop and deliver consistent training aligned to these capabilities.

We support ongoing staff professional development through:

- standardised and centralised onboarding and training programs for our new staff
- ongoing technical and professional training, delivered both internally and externally
- specialist claims reviews and clinics undertaken by internal subject matter experts and/or by external providers such as allied health and medical providers.
- feedback from peer reviews and quality assessments of claim files
- sharing industry specific and relevant medical and allied health learnings through social media sites (such as industry spaces, Viva Engage)
- access to relevant professional publications such as RTW Matters
- involvement in industry forums, industry events, seminars, workshops, and webinars as appropriate

- records of training completed is recorded in the individual's own learning and development plan within our My Place system (our central source to record and store all learning, development, and performance records for our people).
- ongoing performance measurement and monitoring that includes RTW outcomes. These measures and results are discussed in monthly one on ones, team meetings and annual performance reviews.

WorkCover is committed to engaging with our customers and external stakeholders to improve their knowledge and support of our corporate strategy. We not only communicate regularly with employers and providers, but we also work in partnership with key stakeholders including medical and allied health associations, unions, employer, and industry bodies to help educate and improve our relationship with their members.

External medical and allied health providers can have a significant impact on our service delivery and outcomes. WorkCover has established provider panels to support our claims staff and deliver services to our customers. These include:

- Return to Work Services
- Audiology
- Medical and Allied Health
- Independent Medical Examiners.

Providers are appointed via an open tender process and are closely monitored against service level standards and performance reporting to ensure they are supporting our business objectives including return to work outcomes.

Further information on our [provider panels](#) is available on our [website](#).

Measurement and evaluation

WorkCover's [2024 – 2028 Corporate Plan](#) sets out our performance indicators. These include:

- average weekly compensation paid days
- average annual statutory claim cost
- final return to work (RTW) %
- average common law claim cost
- funding ratio
- average premium rate (target)
- breakeven premium rate
- management and levy expense rate
- customer experience measure (injured workers and employers).

WorkCover's Board and Executive Leadership Team monitor our performance against these measures on a monthly basis and the results are reported in our [Annual Report](#).

A range of performance measures for rehabilitation and return to work are also monitored by the business. These are tracked in our claims system, dashboards, monthly operational reporting, and data analytics applications.

These measures include:

- average weekly compensation paid days
- average stay at work %
- average first return to work days
- return to work % at 4, 6 and 12 weeks
- final return to work %
- final return to work % (by return to work hierarchy).

Internal quality assessments and reviews by internal and external auditors are conducted regularly. These reviews focus on key aspects of claims management and legislative requirements to identify training, areas of improvement and development opportunities and ensure that we are meeting our legislative obligations.

In addition to monitoring our overall return to work results, we also review any specific trends that might occur within an industry, geographical location, or injury type. We also monitor return to work results and initiatives in other jurisdictions to ensure we are implementing best practice strategies and achieving good results in comparison with other schemes.

Privacy

The privacy and the confidentiality of personal information is important to WorkCover.

WorkCover are committed to protecting privacy by responsibly collecting, using, storing and disclosing the personal information we may hold in a manner consistent with the [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(IP Act\) \(Qld\)](#).

We provide a range of workers' compensation services to Queensland businesses and their workers. To provide our services we must collect some personal information.

Personal information is defined in the legislation as:

...information or an opinion, including information or an opinion forming part of a database, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Personal information includes:

- the nature of a worker's injury
- work-related causes of the injury
- rehabilitation and return to work issues, including RRTWP and SDP
- the status of the claim.

Further information on [Privacy](#) and our [Privacy Statement](#) is available on our [website](#).

Concerns or complaints

Insurer decisions

The Workers' Compensation Regulator (**the Regulator**) is responsible for undertaking reviews of insurer decisions under [Chapter 13](#) of the Act. This function is delegated to and undertaken by the OIR, which aims to provide independent, prompt, non-adversarial review of certain decisions made by insurers.

If a worker or employer is unhappy with a decision made by WorkCover, they may be able to ask the insurer for reasons for decision within 20 business days of being advised of the decision.

A worker, claimant or an employer is then able to lodge an application for review with the OIR within 3 months of receiving the insurer's written decision.

Further information on [Independent review of insurer decisions](#) is available on our [website](#).

Complaints

WorkCover recognises the importance of complaints management as part of quality customer experience. We are accountable for our actions and decisions. Customers and stakeholders have the right to complain when an issue arises.

Our complaints management policy was developed in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002-2014 Guidelines for complaint management and the requirement for agencies to implement a complaint management system under section 264 of the [Public Sector Act 2022](#)

WorkCover's complaints management system is based on the following principles:

- enabling complaints—providing easy access to make complaints, ensuring transparency for the complainant
- managing complaints—timely responses reached with objectivity, fairness, equity, and privacy
- facilitating an outcome—ensuring all parties are supported and understand their rights and responsibilities and empowering our people to resolve issues as they arise
- accountability and continuous improvement—clearly explaining the outcome, learning from every complaint, and improving future service delivery
- customer experience—listening to and confirming the context of customer complaints; providing fair and transparent information to customers around WorkCover's processes and communicating openly when responding to customer complaints.

WorkCover's commitment to complaints includes:

- resolving customer complaints quickly and fairly and we empower our people to resolve issues as they arise.
- living our values of excellence, integrity, responsiveness, and respect when doing our work.
- supporting the right of our customers and stakeholders to have their complaints heard and actioned appropriately when they feel we have not met their expectations.
- believing that all customer feedback, both positive and negative, presents an opportunity for improvement.

WorkCover welcomes customer feedback and uses positive and constructive feedback as an opportunity to improve. Our people are expected to treat everyone fairly and equitably. Throughout the complaints process, it is essential that all parties are treated in a respectful manner and their issues are managed with integrity.

We regularly provide information, education, and training to our people on complaints management via on the job coaching, online courses, and resources on our intranet.

WorkCover is committed to providing a safe working environment for our people. This means any aggressive or abusive behaviour towards our people will not be tolerated. Professional conduct is expected of all parties and unreasonable complainants will be dealt with according to WorkCover's managing unreasonable customer conduct policy.

We have a dedicated Corporate Relations Manager who is appropriately trained to oversee complaints resolution and review processes. The Corporate Relations Manager is also responsible for the quality of data recorded and reporting of feedback trends information for continuous improvement.

The WorkCover complaints management system functions as follows:

1. Frontline complaints handling

Our people are empowered to listen to and resolve complaints. Most complaints should not take more than one business day to resolve.

2. Internal complaints resolution workflow

The Corporate Relations Manager is responsible for coordinating the resolution process when the complaint:

- cannot be resolved at the frontline within one working day
- is a written complaint
- is referred by an external agency; or
- is received through social media.

In these circumstances, the Corporate Relations Manager will:

- review complaints and refer them to an appropriate person for investigation and resolution
- review responses to ensure the issue/s has been addressed
- ensure all details are recorded to allow analysis of complaints.

3. External review

If a complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, we will advise of external review options.

Making a complaint

If you would like to make a complaint you can do so in the following ways:

- [Lodge a complaint online](#)
- Call us on 1300 362 128
- Write to the Corporate Relations Manager at GPO Box 2459, Brisbane QLD 4001
- Fax us on 1300 651 387, Attention: Corporate Relations Manager
- Email us at corporate.affairs@workcoverqld.com.au

Further information on WorkCover's [complaints policy](#) is available on our [website](#).

WorkCover

QUEENSLAND

we cover, we care

worksafe.qld.gov.au