

Workplace rehabilitation – Host employment placement guideline

QH-GDL-401-5-1:2021

1 Statement

This Guideline provides advice on best practice implementation of host employment placements and is a supporting document to the Workplace rehabilitation standard.

This Guideline provides supporting information on processes for:

- managing host employment placements for injured/ill workers undertaking workplace rehabilitation
- managing internal host employment placements within Queensland Health
- managing external host employment placements outside of Queensland Health as arranged through the workers' compensation insurer or income protection insurer.

2 Application

This Guideline applies to all accountability areas and includes employees within the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services (HHSS), in relation to the provision of workplace rehabilitation for work-related injury/illness and for non-work-related injury/illness, including income protection and health management cases; and to all eligible workers accessing workers' compensation and income protection benefit entitlements.

Compliance with this Guideline is not mandatory, but sound reasoning must exist for departing from the recommended principles within a Guideline.

3 Requirements

3.1 Workplace rehabilitation system

- Rehabilitation and return to work (RTW) support of a worker with an injury or illness affecting their capacity to perform their usual duties, follows the workplace rehabilitation process as outlined in the Workplace rehabilitation Standard.
- The four stages for managing the rehabilitation of workers with a work-related or non-work-related injury/illness are:
 1. Stage 1– immediate support and administrative processes
 2. [Stage 2– planning for RTW/stay at work](#)
(including consideration of host employment placements)
 3. Stage 3– implementing and managing the RTW plan
 4. Stage 4– evaluating and reviewing RTW outcomes
- In some workplace rehabilitation cases, consideration may need to be given to planning and managing a temporary host employment placement for an injured/ill worker in a different role and

different work area from their pre-injury role, due to barriers existing to resuming the pre-injury role in the worker's usual work unit.

- Barriers to an early return to work in the pre-injury work unit may arise due to the injured/ill worker's presenting medical capacity and/or availability of suitable duties in the pre-injury work environment.
- A temporary host employment placement will be considered in an alternate suitable work environment to facilitate earlier resumption of work through workplace rehabilitation, for an agreed duration, until the worker is medically cleared to resume the pre-injury role in their usual workplace.
 - Rehabilitating and recovering at work can significantly improve the outcome for an injured worker. The Royal Australasian College of Physicians' position statement: *Realising the health benefits of work* highlights that work plays an important role in the rehabilitation process, because 'doing' promotes recovery.
 - Host employment placements should attempt to keep injured workers within their own industry, in order to maximise transferable skills and meaningful work conditioning by doing similar work, which will ultimately assist the injured worker to return to their pre-injury role.
- When a host employment placement is required, this will usually be identified during Stage 2 – planning for RTW/stay at work, however sometimes the requirement for host employment placement will be identified when reviewing the rehabilitation and RTW goal following failed RTW attempt/s at Stage 3.

3.2 Stage 2– Planning for RTW (Host employment placements)

- The purpose of planning for RTW is to ensure a co-ordinated, safe and sustainable RTW for injured/ill workers.
- The agreed RTW plan identifies a specific RTW goal that matches the worker's capabilities and should be meaningful and relevant to the worker's underlying skills and abilities.
- Rehabilitation and RTW goals are prioritised according to the Hierarchy of RTW (wherever feasible).

3.2.1 Hierarchy of RTW, where 1. is the first preference:

1. Return the worker to their usual job, in their usual work area.
2. Return the worker to a different job, in their usual work area.
3. Return the worker to their usual job, in a different work area.
4. Return the worker to a different job, in a different work area.
5. Seek a RTW option through temporary host employment, deployment or redeployment.
6. Seek a RTW option with a different employer, through the relevant workers' compensation or compulsory third-party insurer, for cases where compensable entitlements exist.

3.2.2 Host employment placements

- Sometimes an injured/ill worker is not initially able to return to their pre-injury role, due to their employer not having available suitable duties that match their capacity or due to the

existence of workplace conflict involving the worker which has not yet been suitably addressed to facilitate a RTW in that location.

- Temporary host employment placements may be considered within the RTW Hierarchy at 3), 4) or 5), where barriers exist to resuming the pre-injury role in the worker's usual workplace.
- Temporary host employment placements may occur with a different work area/division within the same business, a different HHS, an external government department or a private sector employer.
- Host employment placements facilitate short-term workplace rehabilitation and work conditioning in an alternate employment environment matching the injured/ill worker's documented medical restrictions, for an agreed duration until the worker is medically cleared to resume the pre-injury role in their usual workplace.
- In workers' compensation cases, host employment placements outside of Queensland Health are to be arranged through the insurer, WorkCover Queensland, to ensure that all parties are indemnified under either WorkCover's host employment process called 'Recover at Work' (RAW) or the public sector host employment process, called 'Gov2Gov Recovery at Work' (RAW).
- In income protection cases where QSuper is the income protection insurer, host employment placements outside of Queensland Health are to be arranged through QSuper, to ensure that all parties are indemnified under the public sector host employment process, called 'Gov2Gov Recovery at Work' (RAW).
- In Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance cases, host employment placements inside or outside of Queensland Health are to be arranged through the relevant CTP insurer, to ensure all parties are indemnified through insurance arrangements for host employment placements overseen by the Queensland Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC).

3.3 Internal host employment placements

- In such instances workplace rehabilitation planning may include returning the injured/ill worker to work in a different location with the same (home) employer or with a different (host) employer within Queensland Health, such as another HHS or other Department of Health division/agency, for a short-term period, for example up to six weeks, or as negotiated.
- The focus of a host employment placement should be on continuing rehabilitation in an alternate employment environment of equivalent remuneration and conditions, wherever possible, in accordance with the employee's documented medical restrictions.
- Where a host employment placement has been identified as being required, the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC) shall liaise with the line manager to discuss available options and assist the line manager with prioritising potential host work units in other areas of the business.
- Where a host employment placement is identified and agreed upon by all parties, the worker's capability to undertake the tasks of a host employment suitable duties program shall be approved by their treating medical practitioner.

- For the duration of the host employment placement, a host employment placement agreement and an agreed workplace rehabilitation suitable duties program, as outlined in the Workplace rehabilitation standard, shall be documented.
- The host employment placement agreement outlines the following workers' compensation insurance arrangements for the injured worker's subject claim whilst participating in a host employment placement:
 - Host placement within the home HHS/division:
 - Aggravation of existing injury – covered under home entity's WorkCover policy
 - New unrelated injury – covered under home entity's WorkCover policy.
 - Host placement with another HHS/division:
 - Aggravation of existing injury – covered under home entity's WorkCover policy
 - New unrelated injury – covered under host entity's WorkCover policy.
- Workers shall return to their pre-injury work unit and position when the host employment program is complete. Should this not be attainable a reasonable adjustment outcome may be sought through rehabilitation or Human Resource (HR) processes.

3.4 External WorkCover host employment placements

- In situations where an injured/ill worker is entitled to workers' compensation, the workers' compensation insurer must take the steps it considers practicable to secure the rehabilitation and early return to suitable duties of workers, in accordance with section 220 of the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*.
- In workers' compensation cases, Workcover Queensland may, at times, identify suitable host employment placements external to Queensland Health, for an injured worker to undertake work conditioning for a temporary period, until their work capacity increases to allow ongoing workplace rehabilitation in their usual workplace.
- Any external host employment placements are to be arranged through the insurer, WorkCover Queensland, to ensure that all parties are indemnified under the insurer's host employment Recovery at Work (RAW) program.
- The RAW program is coordinated by WorkCover Queensland and can place injured workers in short term host employment with host employers (external to Queensland Health), who have agreed to host injured workers at their workplace and who have an established record of successful RTW outcomes with their own workers.
- RAW programs are usually of three to six weeks duration. WorkCover Queensland pays the host worker's wages when they participate in a host employment placement and indemnifies the host employer (external to Queensland Health) from any liability associated with an injury which may result during the host employment period.
- The host employer benefits from the services of an additional skilled worker. The host employer is also able to pre-screen a potential host employee prior to agreeing to a placement. At the end of the host employment placement, there is no obligation to employ a host employee. However, if a RAW employer does offer that worker a permanent role, WorkCover Queensland will provide 6 months exemption for any claims arising from an aggravation of the compensable injury.

3.5 External Government to Government host employment placements

- The Queensland public sector Gov2Gov Recovery at Work (RAW) program aims to benefit employees and agencies by increasing the number of meaningful host employment work placement available to employees.
- Gov2Gov RAW is a collaboration between WorkCover Queensland, QSuper and public sector agencies.
- Government agencies that have elected to participate in the Gov2Gov RAW program meet monthly to identify potential placements for deidentified recovering employees.
- Potential participants may be identified by their agency or WorkCover/QSuper customer advisors.

3.5.1 Eligibility criteria for Gov2Gov RAW placements

- The employee must have been off work due to illness or injury for greater than five days.
- The employee must be covered by a current WorkCover claim or QSuper income protection claim.
- The employee's subject injury/condition has been medically endorsed as allowing partial/full work capacity, such that the employee can engage in a graduated return to work plan.
- All reasonable options to host in alternate work areas within their place of employment have been exhausted.
- The employee is willing to participate in the program, noting it is anticipated to be only a short-term placement up to six to eight weeks.

3.5.2 Aims and benefits of the Gov2Gov RAW program

- The Gov2Gov RAW program aims to improve return to work outcomes for injured / ill employees where barriers exist to rehabilitating in the pre-injury role in the worker's usual workplace.
- The Gov2Gov program facilitates best practice workplace recovery through early intervention in supportive environments for recovery at work.
- There are no agency costs associated with participation.
- Financial support may be available to cover salary costs for up to eight weeks for WorkCover Queensland cases
- Financial support may be available for QSuper cases (negotiated on an individual basis).
- Host agency protection is available in relation to injury exemption and indemnity.
 - For WorkCover cases, WorkCover's existing host employment deed process applies to all host employment placements outside of the current employer/ policyholder business. This provides coverage and indemnity for the host employer and the current insured policyholder, whilst the placement is undertaken.
 - For QSuper cases, QSuper will provide indemnity insurance for the duration of the placement and will also fund a workplace assessment by an external provider prior to the placement. The host worker will be paid their full QSuper income protection payment while on the host employment placement. At conclusion of the placement, the worker is able to continue on their income protection payment whilst they remain eligible.

3.5.3 At completion of a Gov2Gov RAW program

- A Gov2Gov RAW placement can be extended beyond the initial agreed timeframe, at the discretion of the host agency and with agreement of all stakeholders.
- On completion of a Gov2Gov RAW host placement, it is anticipated the employee will return to their current employer, either to resume their usual work role or other suitable role/duties, should workplace rehabilitation be required.
- On occasion a host agency may wish to offer paid employment to the injured/ill worker upon completion of the Gov2Gov RAW program. This represents an excellent outcome and host agencies are encouraged to offer ongoing employment opportunities, where available, and with agreement of all stakeholders.
- A host employer who chooses to employ an injured/ill worker will be indemnified by WorkCover Queensland against any further aggravation to the subject injury/illness for a period of six months, from the date of commencement.

3.6 Rehabilitation case closure

- Workers shall return to their pre-injury work unit and position when the host employment program is complete.
- Rehabilitation case closure shall be considered in such instances as:
 - a) the rehabilitation goal has been achieved and a clearance medical certificate has been received e.g. full return to pre-injury or other agreed role.
 - b) a mutually agreed RTW goal has been achieved e.g. hours/duties of pre-injury role permanently modified through agreement by all parties.
 - c) where the suitable duties program is not progressing e.g. hours/duties not increasing towards pre-injury or another agreed role.
 - d) where a safe and sustainable RTW cannot be achieved e.g. significant concerns exist regarding the worker's safety or their injury/ill health prevents an outcome for RTW.
 - e) where work incapacity arising from injury/illness persists but no further workplace rehabilitation involvement is indicated.
- In situations b) – e) outlined above, consultation with the relevant HR unit and the responsible line manager should occur, and the relevant Department of Health HR policies, such as Reasonable Adjustment HR Policy G3 (QH-POL-210), and/or Mental or Physical Incapacity of Employees HR Policy E11 (QH-POL-170) should be considered for application by the HR unit.

4 Legislation

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- Guidelines for standard for rehabilitation second edition: September 2016: Workers' Compensation Regulator, Office of Industrial Relations
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

- *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*
- *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation 2014*

5 Supporting documents

5.1 Authorising Policy and Standard:

- Work health, safety and wellbeing policy QH-POL-401:2020
- Workplace rehabilitation standard QH-IMP-401-5:2020

5.2 Supporting policies

- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service: Public Service Commission: January 2011
- Information security Policy (QH-POL-468:2019): eHealth Queensland
- Information security policy (IS18: 2018) v8.1.1: Queensland Government Chief Information Office: June 2019
- Mental or physical incapacity of employees HR Policy E11 (QH-POL-170): Department of Health
- Reasonable adjustment HR Policy G3 (QH-POL-210): Department of Health
- Records governance policy v1.01: Queensland Government Chief Information Office - Queensland State Archives: April 2019
- General Retention and Disposal Schedule (Administrative Records) QDRS: Queensland State Archives: 1 September 2016
- Position statement: Realising the health benefits of work: Royal Australasian College of Physicians - Australasian Faculty of Occupational & Environmental Medicine: 2011

5.3 Forms and templates:

- Worker authorisation form
- Workplace rehabilitation – your return to work brochure
- Workplace rehabilitation physical capability form
- WorkCover work capability checklist – Assistant in Nursing
- WorkCover work capability checklist – Clinical Nurse Consultant
- WorkCover work capability checklist – Enrolled Nurse
- WorkCover work capability checklist – Registered Nurse
- WorkCover work capability checklist – OSO Cleaners/Porterage
- Workplace rehabilitation psychological capability assessment form
- Workplace rehabilitation suitable duties program
- Workplace rehabilitation progress review form
- Workplace rehabilitation case review and barrier analysis tool
- Workplace rehabilitation host employment placement agreement form
- Workplace rehabilitation evaluation survey

- Workplace rehabilitation checklist: Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators
- Workplace rehabilitation: Manager Checklist
- Workplace rehabilitation: Employee Checklist

6 Definitions

Term	Definition
Accident insurance	Accident insurance is insurance by which an employer is indemnified against all amounts for which the employer may become legally liable, for injury sustained by a worker employed by the employer for— (a) compensation; and (b) damages.
Accountability area	Department of Health divisions and each HHS are accountability areas within Queensland Health.
‘Appropriately qualified’ Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC)	Criteria to be met by current and prospective RRTWCs, under the <i>Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003</i> , in order to perform the functions of a RRTWC under the Act.
Appropriately qualified	‘Appropriately qualified’ is defined in the <i>Acts Interpretation Act 1954</i> as “...having the qualifications, experience or standing appropriate to perform the function...”
Damages	Damages is damages for injury sustained by a worker in circumstances creating, independently of the <i>Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003</i> , a legal liability in the worker’s employer to pay damages to— (a) the worker; or (b) if the injury results in the worker’s death—a dependent of the deceased worker.
Delegate / authorised delegate	The ‘delegate’ is as listed in the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services Health Human Resource Delegations Manuals, as amended from time to time.
Department of Health	The Queensland Government’s Health Department, encompassing the Office of the Director-General and all Divisions. Queensland Ambulance Service is not included for purposes of the intended scope of this document.
Deployment	When an employee is provided with a transfer at level or temporary appointment

Term	Definition
Employer / persons responsible for workers covered under each workers' compensation insurance policy	The employer / persons responsible for workers covered under each workers' compensation insurance policy refers to an entity of Queensland Health, such as the Department of Health or a Hospital and Health Service. When used in relation to financing rehabilitation costs, it means the local work unit of the injured/ill worker.
Event (in the context of work-related injury / illness)	<p>An event is anything that results in injury or illness, including latent onset injury, to a worker. An event includes continuous or repeated exposure to substantially the same conditions that results in injury/ies to a worker, whether the injury/ies happen immediately or over a period.</p> <p>(The above definition is utilised by WorkCover Queensland when determining liability / eligibility for workers' compensation entitlements).</p>
Host employer (HHS / other)	The employer that the injured worker is being placed with outside of the home employer. This includes other HHSs/Divisions/Agencies with Queensland Health and other government or non-government sector employers.
Host employment placement	<p>A temporary rehabilitation program conducted in an alternate suitable work environment, when the injured/ill worker's presenting medical capacity and/or availability of suitable duties in the pre-injury work environment precludes an early return to work in the pre-injury work environment.</p> <p>A Host Employment placement may be arranged, for a time limited period, with a different work unit within the Department of Health or a HHS within Queensland Health, or with a different (external) employer, with the aim of returning the injured/ill worker to their pre-injury work unit/position when the host employment rehabilitation program is complete.</p>
Injury/illness (work-related)	<p>A personal injury arising out of, or in the course of, employment if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the employment is a significant contributing factor to the injury. 2) despite subsection (1) injury does not include a psychiatric or psychological disorder arising out of, or in the course of, any of the following circumstances— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way by the employer in connection with the worker's employment; (b) the worker's expectation or perception of reasonable management action being taken against the worker; (c) action by the Regulator or an insurer in connection with the worker's application for compensation. <p>(The above definition is utilised by WorkCover Queensland when</p>

Term	Definition
	determining liability / eligibility for workers' compensation entitlements).
Injury/illness (non-work-related)	All other injuries or illnesses which do not meet the definition of work-related injury / illness.
Insurer	WorkCover Queensland, Queensland's workers' compensation insurer.
Income protection insurer	QSuper, the Queensland Government superannuation fund and income protection insurer, or other commercial insurer.
Line manager	The manager or supervisor (or delegate) responsible for supervision of the worker in the workplace, and responsible for certain administrative functions, including provision to the payroll service centre of accurate information pertaining to leave taken and hours worked during the injured/ill worker's rehabilitation and return to work program.
Reasonable adjustment	<p>Reasonable adjustment refers to the process where an employer takes account of a person's impairment and makes appropriate temporary or permanent modifications and adjustments to the workplace (including to the employee's role) to lessen the impact of the impairment or enable the employee to commence employment or return to work.</p> <p>Examples of Reasonable adjustment in respective circumstances may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and selection (of potential and existing employees): Providing assistance to facilitate the interviewing process, e.g. wheelchair access, sign language interpreter • Training and career advancement: Providing training information in alternative formats, making adjustments to allow opportunities to act in other positions • Workplace design: Providing access to the workplace, and the provision of specialist equipment where required and reasonable to do so, to allow the person to undertake the duties of the position, e.g. larger screens/font for visual impairment • Temporary disability: Considering whether any adjustment or changes can be made to help the worker do the job. This might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ physical aids or adjustments to the work environment that can help the worker ○ changes to the hours of work or number of hours worked

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ incorporating breaks ○ changes to the duties to be performed. ● Deployment/redeployment: Relocating an employee from one work environment to another <p>Each situation should be assessed on a case by case basis and adjustments should be made to accommodate the incapacity unless it would amount to an unjustifiable hardship on the employer. During a reasonable adjustment process, employees should be treated with respect and allocated duties which are commensurate with their classification, experience and abilities.</p> <p>(The above definition is outlined in the policy subject and attachment in <i>Reasonable adjustment HR Policy G3</i> (QH-POL-210).</p>
<p>Rehabilitation and return to Work coordinator</p>	<p>A rehabilitation and return to work coordinator is a person who—</p> <p>(1a) is appropriately qualified to perform the functions of a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator under the <i>Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003</i>; and</p> <p>(1b) has the functions prescribed under a regulation.</p> <p>(2) A person is taken to be appropriately qualified to perform the functions of a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator under this Act if the person has completed a training course approved by the Regulator.</p>
<p>RiskMan</p>	<p>RiskMan is a statewide incident management system used by Queensland Health to collect, integrate, manage and report clinical (patient) incidents, work hazards and incidents, consumer feedback and risk.</p>
<p>Suitable duties / suitable duties program</p>	<p>In relation to a worker, are work duties for which the worker is suited, having regard to the following matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the nature of the worker's incapacity and pre-injury employment b. relevant medical information c. the rehabilitation and return to work plan for the worker d. the provisions of the employer's workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures e. the worker's age, education, skills and work experience f. if duties are available at a location (the other location) other than the location in which the worker was injured/made ill, whether it is reasonable to expect the workers to attend the other location, and g. any other relevant matters.

Term	Definition
Queensland Health	Queensland Health refers to the public healthcare sector, incorporating the Department of Health and 16 Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).
Redeployment	Permanent appointment of an employee, with their consent, to a lower classification level than the employee's substantive classification level
Unjustifiable hardship	<p>The <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991</i> indicates the issue of whether the supply of special services or facilities to a worker would impose "unjustifiable hardship" on an employer depends on all the relevant circumstances of the case, including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature of the special services or facilities • cost of supplying the special services or facilities and the number of people who would benefit or be disadvantaged • financial circumstances of the employer; • disruption that supplying the special services or facilities might cause • nature of any benefit or detriment to all people concerned. <p>Whether there is unjustifiable hardship depends on the circumstances of the particular case. What might be unjustifiable hardship for one employer or workplace might not necessarily be unjustifiable hardship for another.</p>
Worker (for workers' compensation matters)	<p>A person who works under a contract, and in relation to the work, is an employee for the purpose of assessment for PAYG withholding under the Taxation Administration Act 1953 (Cwlth), schedule 1, part 2-5; and is a person who has sustained a work-related personal injury or illness.</p> <p>(The above definition is utilised by WorkCover Queensland when determining liability / eligibility for workers' compensation entitlements).</p> <p>In the context of the Workplace Rehabilitation System and associated documents, 'worker' can also refer to any worker with an injury or illness who requires rehabilitation support to return to work, which may include those workers with a non-work-related injury / illness who are not entitled to / are not applying for compensation under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 or an Income Protection insurance benefits scheme.</p>
Workers' compensation	Compensation for work-related injury or illness, that is, amounts for a worker's injury payable by an insurer to a worker, a dependent of a deceased worker or anyone else.

Term	Definition
Workers' Compensation Regulator	The office of the Worker's Compensation Regulator, appointed under the Public Service Act 2008, must act independently when making a decision under the Worker's Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003.
Workplace rehabilitation	Rehabilitation of a worker, designed to— ensure the worker's earliest possible return to work; or maximise the worker's independent functioning. Rehabilitation includes— (a) necessary and reasonable— (i) suitable duties programs; or (ii) services provided by a registered person; or (iii) services approved by an insurer; or (b) the provision of necessary and reasonable aids or equipment to the worker.
Workplace rehabilitation system	A system of rehabilitation that is initiated or managed by an employer.

7 Version Control

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	1 December 2016	New Guideline Department of Health Policy Framework review 2016
2.0	1 August 2018	Formatted to Fact Sheet as part of 2018 health, safety and wellbeing management system review
3.0	21 July 2021	Formatted to Guideline in conjunction with 2020 health, safety and wellbeing management system review. Edited to include Queensland public sector Gov2Gov Recovery at Work Host Employment program information.