

## Guidelines to be approved as a Workplace Rehabilitation Provider

### Introduction

Workers who become ill or injured at work should receive early rehabilitation support from their employer to minimise the impact of their illness/injury, and support a timely return to work.

WorkCover WA approves workplace rehabilitation providers (WRP) to assist employers and injured workers with return to work processes. WRPs engage health professionals such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists or psychologists with expertise in physical, psychological and/or workplace barriers which may prevent a timely return to work.

**WorkCover WA has adopted the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities': *Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers* as the basis for the approval of WRPs, and the setting of standards in Western Australia. These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the *Principles of Practice*.**

### Approvals and renewals

Section 156 of the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981* outlines WorkCover WA's powers to regulate, approve and revoke authority for WRPs to operate. The legislation refers to WRPs as 'vocational rehabilitation providers'.

In considering applications for approval or renewal, WorkCover WA assesses WRPs against *Approval Criteria* and *Conditions of Approval*. The criteria and conditions are derived from the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HCWA) *Principles of Practice* and WorkCover WA's performance standards and requirements.

WRPs approved in other states are required to complete all requirements to be accredited in Western Australia.

**WorkCover WA will continuously monitor and assess WRPs performance as part of the accreditation and regulatory process.**

These Guidelines outline WorkCover WA's:

- *Approval Criteria* for WRP applications and renewals (Section 1)
- *Conditions of Approval* which apply to approved WRPs (Section 2), and
- Application and renewal process (Section 3).

### Terms used in this document

#### **Workplace Rehabilitation Provider (WRP):**

A WRP is the organisation responsible for providing effective rehabilitation support for an injured worker. The organisation may be a corporation, partnership, sole-trader or some other type of business with an Australian Business Number (ABN).

#### **Consultant:**

A consultant is the individual(s) employed by a WRP to provide services based on the assessed needs of a worker and/or the workplace. The nature of the employment relationship between the WRP and the consultant (e.g. employee or contractor) is immaterial to the requirements of the approval criteria. The WRP must ensure its consultant(s) meet the minimum qualifications and experience.

### WorkCover WA Online and WorkCover WA website

WorkCover WA Online is used to record workplace rehabilitation referrals and outcomes.

Whenever a worker is referred for workplace rehabilitation, the insurer or self-insurer records the referral in WorkCover WA Online. It is the responsibility of the WRP to enter outcomes into WorkCover WA Online.

The WorkCover WA website includes resources to assist WRPs use WorkCover WA Online, and provides advice on registration, managing accounts, and other requirements.

## SECTION 1: APPROVAL CRITERIA

### Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities Principles of Administration

WRPs must demonstrate the capacity to comply with the HCWA *Principles of Practice: Part 2 – Principles of Administration*, relating to the competence and qualifications of consultants and governance processes. For administrative purposes, Part 2 is considered before Part 1.

This is a summary of the principles and WorkCover WA's expectations. Refer to the HCWAs *Principles of Practice* for the full descriptors when making an application or renewal.

Principles six and seven are the core administrative criteria for approval. In particular, WRP's must have at least one person in its management structure with a relevant qualification and at least five years' demonstrated workplace rehabilitation experience.

#### Principle six: Competent and qualified professionals

WRPs must maintain an applied knowledge of HCWAs *Principles of Practice* and the workers' compensation legislation.

There is a requirement for WRPs to maintain relevant professional registration or membership. Participation in ongoing professional development and effective communication skills are essential.

WRPs must also operate ethically and comply with the standards, guidelines and codes of their profession.

A minimum of 12 months' experience is required of WRPs. Where WRPs have less than 12 months' experience a comprehensive induction and learning plan must be completed with at least 12 months' supervision.

#### Principle seven: Appropriate governance processes

WRPs must apply systems to ensure:

- customer focused service delivery
- conflicts of interests are identified and managed, and
- malpractice is prevented, managed and reported.

WRPs must collect data to undertake reporting and analysis against WorkCover WA requirements and cooperate with WorkCover WA in performance and compliance assessments.

WRP's must meet relevant state and commonwealth legislative requirements for operating a business and have the appropriate level of insurance and financial administration.

### WorkCover WA modifications of the Principles of Administration

WorkCover WA modified the list of relevant professions contained in HCWAs Principles of Practice by adding the following professions:

**Chiropractor** – registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

**Speech Pathologist** – accredited with Speech Pathology Australia.

**Psychologist** – recognises provisionally registered Psychologists

**Rehabilitation Counsellor** – recognises Associate and Affiliate (with supervision) membership of Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors.

- In addition to the requirements of Part 2, WorkCover WA requires WRPs to agree not to contract out case management without prior written approval.
- WRPs are also required to demonstrate the capacity to ensure:
- reasonable consultant caseloads
- the ability to match a consultant's skills, knowledge and experience with the worker's injury, needs and complexity, and
- effective case handover practices

## SECTION 2: CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This section sets out the *Conditions of Approval* with which WorkCover WA expects a WRP to comply.

An organisation **must agree** to adhere to the *Conditions of Approval* to be approved as a WRP.

## HWCA Principles of Service Delivery

WRPs must deliver services in accordance with HCWAs *Principles of Practice: Part 1 – Principles of Service Delivery*.

This is a summary of the principles and WorkCover WA's expectations. Refer to HCWAs *Principles of Practice* for the full descriptors when making an application or renewal.

### Principle one: Adopt a biopsychosocial approach to build capacity through work participation

WRPs are to adopt a biopsychosocial approach to build capacity through work participation. WRPs must identify risks and needs when planning interventions including:

- identification of the biological, psychological and socio-economic risk factors and barriers to return to work, and
- development and use of strategies to address biopsychosocial risk factors.

WRPs are to build capacity through work when they:

- collaborate with the worker and the support team
- provide independent, timely and evidence-based advice, and
- assist the employer and treating providers.

### Principle two: Empower the worker and employer to achieve the goals of return to work

WRPs are to empower the worker and the employer to achieve return to work goals by supporting and motivating the worker and employer to be actively involved in the process and the program.

### Principle three: Deliver outcome driven workplace-based rehabilitation services

WRPs are to identify individually tailored goals, and support goals to be cost effective by ensuring:

- objective information is collected from the worker
- treating providers are engaged early

- processes are in place where goal achievement is slow, absent or where there is no capacity for work, and
- return to work strategies are realistic and meaningful.

### Principle four: An evidence-based approach to service design and delivery

WRPs are to apply contemporary and evidence-based best practice. They must:

- maintain knowledge of industry trends
- use assessment and reviews to demonstrate the need for intervention, and
- exercise good judgment in providing services.

### Principle five: Service that results in a measurable benefit to the worker and employer

WRPs must provide services with a measurable benefit to the worker and employer. They must use objective measures to:

- track and evaluate return to work outcomes
- measure progress against goals
- communicate progress with the worker
- terminate services in a timely manner, and
- ensure the durability of goal attainment.

## WorkCover WA Performance Standards

WRPs must commit to achieving WorkCover WA's *Performance Standards* when applying to become a WRP and provide evidence of compliance when seeking to be renewed.

Compliance with the *Performance Standards* will also be assessed during WorkCover WA's independent evaluations and assessment of compliance with the *Service Requirements*.

### Minimum Return to Work Rate

WorkCover WA requires WRPs to achieve a minimum return to work rate of 85% for cases involving the same employer and/or a minimum return to work rate of 65% for cases involving a new employer.

## Data Entry Timeframes

WRPs must comply with WorkCover WA data entry requirements.

## Activity Requirements

A WRP is to demonstrate it has or will manage at least 12 workplace rehabilitation cases within any workers' compensation jurisdiction for each 12 month period within the 3 year approval period.

## WorkCover WA Service Requirements

The WorkCover WA *Service Requirements* set out specific service and practice processes required. They cover:

- initial assessments and service delivery plans
- workplace rehabilitation assessments, and
- the provision of other services.

**Note: a review of the *Service Requirements* will occur in 2020-21.**

A WRP must agree to:

- undertake annual self-evaluations
- participate in independent evaluations as required by WorkCover WA, and
- ensure documentation is on file to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the *Approval Criteria* and the *Conditions of Approval* (including the *Service Requirements*) and make information available to WorkCover WA upon request.



## SECTION 3:

### APPLICATION AND RENEWAL PROCESS

To apply to be a new WRP, complete the application form on the WorkCover WA website.

New WRPs are typically approved for three years. An *Application for Renewal*, available on the WorkCover WA website, is to be completed as part of the renewal process.

There are no fees for new or renewed applications.

Both the application and renewal has three parts:

#### Part A: Application Details

An applicant must include:

- business ownership details
- association or connection with other organisations which supply workers' compensation services
- referees (initial application only)
- statements relating to conflicts of interest
- professional or criminal proceedings against the organisation
- copies of relevant insurance policies,
- signed declarations for *Approval Criteria* and *Conditions of Approval*.

#### Part B: Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval

In an initial application the WRP must demonstrate how it will conform to WorkCover WA's *Approval Criteria* and *Conditions of Approval*.

In a renewal application the WRP must state how it has conformed to the *Conditions of Approval*.

As relevant, a succinct statement for each *Approval Criteria* and *Conditions of Approval* is required.

#### Part C: Statement of Commitment to the Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval

Applicants must sign a statement of commitment to the *Approval Criteria* and the *Conditions of Approval*. The statement outlines WorkCover WA expectations and includes the WRPs acceptance WorkCover WA may withdraw an approval where requirements are not met.