



Australian Government

Comcare

Rehabilitation case manager core capabilities



REHABILITATION CASE MANAGER CORE CAPABILITIES

Comcare has developed a set of core capabilities for the roles of:

- > **Rehabilitation Case Managers** (RCMs)
- > Supervisors and
- > Claims Managers.

The RCM core capabilities set clear standards for the operational and strategic elements of the case manager role across the scheme.

This document can be used to assist:

- > RCMs in obtaining the best possible outcomes for employees with an injury/illness
- > employers to recruit appropriately skilled and experienced people to RCM roles
- > new RCMs to identify skills required for the role
- > existing RCMs to identify current skills and areas for development

What is the role of the RCM?

An RCM is the employer representative responsible for managing employee rehabilitation and supporting recovery and return to work. An RCM holds delegation, under the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (SRC) Act, to coordinate and manage the rehabilitation process.

The role is both:

- > **operational** – helping employees with an injury/illness through a tailored and planned case management approach
- > **strategic** – contributing to and supporting effective rehabilitation management across the organisation.

For further information about the role, visit the [RCM Handbook](#) on the Comcare website.

1. Knowledge of workers' compensation and other legislation and relevant laws

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| 1.1 Understand and apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Part III of the SRC Act> the Guidelines for Rehabilitation Authorities 2019 (the Rehabilitation Guidelines)> the Guide for Arranging Rehabilitation Assessments and Requiring Examinations 2024 (the Guide) | > recognise the purpose and intent of the SRC Act and apply this in the management of an employee's rehabilitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">> identify and apply the rehabilitation provisions (Part III) of the SRC Act, the Rehabilitation Guidelines and the Guide> understand other provisions of the SRC Act that may impact the management of a case e.g. relating to reconsiderations and reviews. |
| 1.2 Understand the Comcare workers' compensation scheme | > understand how claim costs impact liabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none">> understand the financial costs of workplace injuries within the organisation and the Comcare scheme> understand relevant case law about SRC Act rehabilitation provisions. |
| 1.3 Understand and apply other legislation which may apply in any given case | > understand and apply other relevant legislation that may impact rehabilitation and return to work practices e.g. disability discrimination, privacy, freedom of information and fraud. |

2. Understanding and promoting key rehabilitation concepts

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| 2.1 Understand and apply the health benefits of good work | > identify elements of 'good work' for supporting safe and durable recovery and return to work
> consider the <u>health benefits</u> of good work when identifying suitable duties and employment
> emphasise and explain the benefits of a safe and durable return to work |
| 2.2 Understand the importance of acting early and adopt early intervention practices | > work with all stakeholders to enable a supportive workplace which encourages safe work practices and early reporting of injuries
> contact employees as early as practicable
> identify the potential for early intervention
> triage high risk and/or multi-factorial claims and arrange for appropriate rehabilitation as a priority. |
| 2.3 Apply the principles of employee empowerment | > adopt an employee centred approach that empowers employees to play an active role in their own recovery
> provide the employee with information and support on their rights and responsibilities, the workers compensation system and <u>return to work process</u> . |
| 2.4 Understand and apply the principles of the biopsychosocial model | > anticipate difficulties and identify barriers in the rehabilitation process as early as possible
> consider all factors impacting the employee and the rehabilitation process (i.e. biopsychosocial factors)
> work in collaboration with the employee and other stakeholders to address barriers to return to work
> consider innovative strategies to overcome barriers and achieve positive return to work outcomes. |



3. Applying legislation and delivering better practice rehabilitation

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| 3.1 Adopt a methodology for the planning, coordination and management of cases | > manage cases in accordance with organisational procedures and governance, including early intervention practices, risk identification and escalation, and structured reporting
> ensure cases are regularly reviewed in collaboration with key stakeholders and based on timeframes relevant to the injury or illness. |
| 3.2 Determine the need for rehabilitation and effectively exercise a determination under the SRC Act | > determine the need for a rehabilitation assessment or rehabilitation program
> arrange for a rehabilitation assessment if the employee requests one in writing
> ensure rehabilitation assessments are undertaken within the requirements of the SRC Act, the Guide and the Rehabilitation Guidelines
> ensure rehabilitation programs are undertaken within the requirements of the SRC Act and the Rehabilitation Guidelines. |
| 3.3 Engage, manage and monitor a Comcare approved WRP to deliver return to work services | > understand Comcare's <u>WRP Performance Monitoring Framework</u> (including service delivery requirements)
> select and engage a Comcare approved workplace rehabilitation provider (WRP), matching expertise with nature and complexity of the case
> negotiate and establish expectations with the WRP specifying timeframes for their service delivery and desired rehabilitation outcomes
> monitor and manage WRP services and costs, applying the service delivery requirements and considering <u>WRP fee guidance</u>
> provide feedback to the WRP and Comcare on the quality of service delivery based on formal service level agreements or agreed service provision. |
| 3.4 Coordinate the development of a rehabilitation program | > consider recommendations for the provision of a rehabilitation program
> develop rehabilitation programs to facilitate and ensure a timely, safe and durable return to good work and/or a return to health and/or community
> consult with the employee on the proposed rehabilitation program
> engage collaboratively with key stakeholders (e.g., the supervisor, medical practitioner, treatment providers(s) and WRP) during the development of a rehabilitation program
> collaborate with the Claims Manager regarding progress and next steps
> ensure suitable duties are outlined in the program and, where relevant, reasonable adjustments are made
> ensure the program includes specific rehabilitation goals (SMART goals); key responsibilities of all stakeholders; the services to be provided and estimates of the cost and duration of these services when a WRP is involved. |
| 3.5 Monitor the progress of a rehabilitation program | > monitor the employee's progress against the goals of the rehabilitation program in consultation with supervisor and WRP (if engaged)
> ensure stakeholder meetings are arranged to facilitate the achievement of the rehabilitation goal
> encourage supervisors to maintain regular and supportive communication with the employee
> regularly review progress towards the goals to ensure they remain realistic; amend the goal if required
> collaboratively engage with the employee and key stakeholders (supervisor, medical practitioner, treatment provider(s) and WRP) to ensure the rehabilitation program and suitable duties are consistent with medical advice. |
| 3.6 Determine need for case closure and provide post return to work support | > consider the need to close the rehabilitation program in consultation with employee and key stakeholders
> complete case closure upon achievement of the rehabilitation goals and distribute a copy of the Closure Record to relevant stakeholders
> assess the need for and arrange ongoing support for the employee and supervisor. |
| 3.7 Maintain records | > gather, record and distribute information specific to the case in accordance with organisational and legislative requirements (including privacy principles)
> ensure case records are secure, accessible and accurate. |

4. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement

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| 4.1 Communicate and consult effectively with employees and key stakeholders | > understand and communicate the roles of each stakeholder in the rehabilitation process
> provide clear information about rehabilitation and return to work to ensure the employee and stakeholders are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the SRC Act
> cultivate open, honest and transparent communication with stakeholders
> maintain a consultative approach with key stakeholders to support the achievement of rehabilitation goals. |
| 4.2 Show sound interpersonal skills in difficult circumstances | > engage effectively with people in difficult circumstances
> use problem-solving and conflict resolution skills to support positive recovery and return to work outcomes. |

5. Values and attributes

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| 5.1 Provide leadership in injury management | > maintain technical expertise in better practice rehabilitation management
> identify and apply lessons learned from previous relevant experiences to current case management approaches
> influence senior management to take a proactive, visible approach to health and safety and ensure suitable duties are provided. |
| 5.2 Show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives | > use language that is appropriate and respectful
> create and foster a safe environment for employees and other stakeholders. |
| 5.3 Be of good character and authenticity | > behave honestly and with integrity
> act with care and diligence
> maintain appropriate confidentiality. |
| 5.4 Demonstrate resilience and perseverance | > self-assess coping abilities and strategies regularly and if required, seek support and assistance in de-briefing cases
> persevere in achieving optimal outcomes. |
| 5.5 Show sound judgement and demonstrate a sensible, practical approach | > exercise sound judgement and decision-making with an awareness of potential implications
> provide flexibility and adaptability to changes in programs, medical conditions, workplace conditions. |

6. Contribute to systems, policies and performance reporting

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| 6.1 Contribute to rehabilitation management systems, policies and performance monitoring | > contribute to the development, review and continuous improvement of rehabilitation management systems and rehabilitation policies
> contribute to the setting and review of targets for improved rehabilitation outcomes
> contribute to the collection and analysis of injury management and return to work outcome data and the reporting of this data. |
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What qualifications can I undertake to further my case management skills?

- > Certificate IV in Injury Management
- > Diploma in Injury Management

Where to get further information and support.

- > Visit the [RCM Handbook](#) for detailed information about the role
- > For information about the role of the RCM and available training visit [Comcare website](#)
- > For information about the health benefits of good work, visit the [Comcare website](#)
- > Attend [RCM forums](#). For more information, email [Provider Frameworks and Return to Work](#)
- > Email [Provider Frameworks and Return to Work](#) with any further queries.

Other useful references

- > [It pays to Care – Bringing evidence informed practice to work injury schemes](#)
- > [Person centred case management](#)

Other relevant legislation

- > [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- > [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- > [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- > [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#)

