

Workplace Rehabilitation Provider Monitoring Framework

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Introduction

This document outlines Comcare's approach to managing approved Workplace Rehabilitation Providers (WRPs) including service delivery, compliance, and performance requirements.

Comcare expects that WRPs will:

- > comply with operational standards and conditions of approval.
- > use contemporary and evidence-based practices, including a focus on the health benefits of good work.
- > deliver effective and efficient services that achieve the best outcomes for employees and employers.

Comcare will monitor the compliance, service delivery and performance of WRPs to confirm these expectations are met. This monitoring will be done in collaboration with WRPs, Rehabilitation Authorities¹ (the employer responsible for a person's rehabilitation and return to work), employees, and other relevant stakeholders.

Background

WRPs play an important role in the recovery and return to work (RTW) process, and support Comcare's strategic priority to deliver better RTW outcomes.

Comcare approves and manages WRPs in accordance with the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act), and instruments made under the SRC Act. Rehabilitation Authorities in the Comcare scheme must use a Comcare approved WRP when engaging a provider to deliver rehabilitation programs.

The Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA), Australian Defence Force Joint Health Command and Seacare also use Comcare approved WRPs for workplace rehabilitation services.

Comcare has developed a Workplace Rehabilitation Provider Management Framework (Framework) which comprises of:

- > [Operational Standards](#) (Standards)
- > [Criteria for Approval and Renewal](#) (Criteria)
- > [Conditions of Approval](#) (Conditions)
- > Workplace Rehabilitation Provider Monitoring Framework (WMF) – this document

The purpose of the Framework is to establish the performance and compliance requirements, and expectations for the provision of workplace rehabilitation programs and services under the Comcare scheme. All Comcare approved WRPs are required to comply with all aspects of the Framework.

¹ For a person who suffers an injury as an employee of the Commonwealth, a Commonwealth authority or licensee, the rehabilitation authority is the principal officer of the entity currently employing the employee; or if there is no current employer, the entity that most recently employed the employee.

WRP service delivery requirements

Comcare expects WRPs to deliver evidence based, outcome driven workplace-based services that build employee capacity and empowerment, and result in measurable benefits for the employee. This approach is described in the [Head of Workers' Compensation Authority \(HWCA\) Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation](#), which are underpinned by 5 key principles:

National Principles of service delivery

One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Build capacity	Empower	Outcome driven	Evidence based	Measurable
Adopt a biopsychosocial approach to build capacity through work participation	Empower the employee and employer to achieve the goals of RTW	Deliver outcome driven workplace-based rehabilitation services	An evidenced based approach to service design and delivery	Services that result in measurable benefit to the employee and employer

Comcare approved WRPs are required to provide services in line with the HWCA Principles of Practice.

Comcare's approach to monitoring compliance with the Standards and Conditions

Comcare approved WRPs are required to demonstrate compliance with the Standards and Conditions, and Comcare may require an approved WRP to demonstrate compliance with the Criteria, Standards and Conditions at any time.

Comcare primarily monitors WRP compliance and performance through the WRP portal, using information supplied by WRPs, including the rehabilitation program closure reports. WRPs are responsible for ensuring the information contained in the WRP Portal is accurate and current at all times.

Comcare may also request, and consider, data and information from other sources including rehabilitation authorities (employers), claims managers, employees and other stakeholders. WRP performance is also considered in the context of scheme and industry trends.

Comcare's WRP portal

The WRP portal is the primary source for monitoring and measuring WRP performance, compliance and service delivery. WRPs are expected to use the portal to communicate with Comcare and keep all records current, including but not limited to:

- > WRP business details including contact details and names of senior management, primary contacts
- > insurance details including Certificates of Currency
- > consultant professional registration certification
- > complaints
- > any misconduct, civil penalties or criminal proceedings
- > any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Compliance with the Standards and Conditions

It is important that approved WRPs read and understand their obligations under the Standards and Conditions. The following is a summary of key requirements (please refer to the [Standard](#) and [Condition](#) for detailed information):

Reference to Standards	What the WRP must do
Standards relating to effectiveness, availability, and cost	1. Ensure services are effective. 2. Ensure rehabilitation services are timely and suitably available. 3. Ensure costs are reasonable.
Standards relating to governance	1. Comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to, those relating to work health and safety, privacy, and confidentiality. 2. Maintain appropriate and secure records management practices. 3. Implement measures and policies to detect and prevent fraud. 4. Maintain appropriate and secure rehabilitation services and financial records.
Standards relating to financial solvency	1. Be financially solvent for the entire approval period.
Standards relating to qualifications and practices of individuals (consultants) providing rehabilitation services	1. Ensure consultants are relevantly qualified, undertake appropriate professional development, and are aware of, and understand, Comcare and WRP guidance and policies relating to the provision of rehabilitation services. 2. Ensure consultants have at least 12 months professional experience in providing rehabilitation services or are supervised by a person with 12 months experience in providing services. 3. Ensure consultants have current professional registration. 4. Ensure consultants complete Comcare specified training. 5. Ensure consultants provide ethical services.

Reference to Conditions	What the WRP must do
Conditions relating to notification requirements	1. Notify Comcare of any change of persons holding principal or management positions, and consultants delivering rehabilitation services. 2. Notify Comcare of any change in ownership, or trading and/or business name. 3. Notify Comcare of any matter which could affect the WRP's capacity to meet the Operational Standards and/or Criteria. 4. Notify Comcare of any professional misconduct, civil penalty or criminal proceedings being taken against the WRP, or individuals engaged by the provider. 5. Notify Comcare of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. 6. Notify Comcare of any agreement which the WRP has entered into with another person or WRP to provide services to the approved WRP in connection with a rehabilitation program and notify Comcare of any; (i) withdrawal from; or (ii) material breach of; or (iii) termination of the agreement. 7. Notify Comcare if the WRP is no longer financially solvent, has entered voluntary financial administration, or is subject to bankruptcy proceedings.
Conditions relating to compliance	1. Comply with the Framework. 2. Provide information to Comcare, as requested, to demonstrate compliance with the Conditions, Standards and WMF. 3. Ensure at least one member of the WRP's senior management is relevantly qualified and has at least 5 years' experience providing rehabilitation services as a relevantly qualified person.
Conditions relating to performance	1. Manage over the 3-year approval period, on average, 5 rehabilitation programs per 12 month period, unless exceptional circumstances apply. 2. Satisfy Comcare that the WRP has achieved an appropriate RTW rate consistent with the published measures set out by Comcare.

Performance measures

Comcare will monitor performance using a range of measures. These measures combine to monitor the effectiveness and [cost of rehabilitation services](#),² as well as the extent to which WRPs are achieving an appropriate RTW rate.

Comcare will measure WRP RTW performance using rehabilitation program closure reports submitted into the WRP portal. The National Data Set Work Status codes³ are used to record work status. Comcare provides the data rules for each performance measure.

WRPs are required, at the cessation of involvement in a rehabilitation program (section 37 only), to submit a closure report for that rehabilitation program into the WRP portal. This applies for all rehabilitation programs managed by a WRP in the Comcare scheme (including both Licensees and Commonwealth Agencies).

WRP RTW primary performance measures

WRP's performance will be assessed annually against two primary performance measures:

- > RTW rate physical injury
- > RTW rate psychological injury

Following this assessment, WRP's will be set 12-month targets for both physical and psychological claims based on previous performance. Where, at the end of the previous 12 months, a WRP's performance is:

- (i) within the top 25 percentile, their 12 month target will be to remain in the top 25 percentile
- (ii) between 25 to 50 percentiles, their 12 month target will be a 10% improvement
- (iii) between >50 to < 25 percentiles their 12 month target will be a 10% improvement
- (iv) within the bottom 25 percentile their 12 month target will be a 20% improvement.

If a WRP fails, after 12 months, to meet one or both performance targets, Comcare will commence a staged response to address these performance issues, as outlined in the section **Addressing compliance and performance issues**.

Details of primary performance measures

Performance Measures	What the measure does	Data definition
1. RTW rate – physical	Confirms whether a RTW outcome was achieved following service delivery	Measured using: > Rehabilitation program closure date (i.e. completion date) > Assessing relevant work status code at completion. > Outcomes are presented as 'RTW' or 'no RTW'
2. RTW rate – psychological	Confirms whether a RTW outcome was achieved following service delivery	Measured using: > Rehabilitation program closure date (i.e. completion date) > Assessing relevant work status code at completion. > Outcomes are presented as 'RTW' or 'no RTW'

² Comcare publishes Fee Guidance for WRP services. This Fee Guidance is updated annually.

³ Safe Work Australia, *National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics* 3rd Edition (Revision 1) October 2012 - Work Status Page 12

Details of other performance measures

WRPs will also be monitored against the following performance measures:

Performance Measures	What the measure does	Data definition
1. Change work status from commencement to completion of service	Confirms whether there has been a change in, and type of, work status following service delivery.	Assesses relevant work status codes at rehabilitation program determination date (i.e. commencement date) and the final rehabilitation plan closure date (i.e. completion date) ⁴ for each rehabilitation program.
2. RTW rate – overall	Confirms whether a RTW outcome was achieved following service delivery.	Measured using rehabilitation program closure date (i.e. completion date) and assessing relevant work status code at completion. Outcomes are presented as ‘RTW’ or ‘no RTW’.
3. Duration of service (closed rehabilitation programs)	Confirms the time taken from commencement of service to completion of WRP service.	Measured by comparing each rehabilitation program determination date to the final rehabilitation closure date for each program.
4. Cost of service (closed rehabilitation programs)	Confirms costs are reasonable relative to service delivery outcomes.	Measured using rehabilitation program cost-to-date for open cases or final rehabilitation program closure date. Results presented in dollars.
5. Durability of service	Confirms service delivery has resulted in a durable return to work outcome.	Measured by assessing relevant work status code at rehabilitation program closure date, compared to the work status code 13 weeks after the rehabilitation program closure date. Outcomes presented as ‘durable RTW’ or ‘no durable RTW’.
6. Employee Experience of service delivery	Confirms whether the WRPs service has met the service delivery indicators.	To be determined.
7. Employer Experience of service delivery	Confirms whether the WRPs service has met the service delivery indicators.	Based on the employer survey provided to employers when closure reports are submitted.
8. Minimum number of cases (Rehabilitation Programs)	Confirms the number of cases the WRP is managing.	Manage over the 3-year approval period, on average, 5 rehabilitation programs per 12 month period.

⁴ References to final rehabilitation program closure date refers to the completion of the WRP’s service on the workers’ compensation claim. For example, the final rehabilitation program closure date will capture all rehabilitation programs associated with a claim, including those where rehabilitation plan alterations have occurred.

Varying the performance measures

It is a condition of approval that WRPs comply with the WMF, as published by Comcare, in force at the time the Conditions were imposed. If Comcare varies the performance measures, targets and associated rules, all approved WRPs will be informed in writing and provided a 30-day notice period of effect.

Addressing compliance and performance issues

Comcare applies a staged response to addressing compliance and performance issues. If an area of concern is identified, Comcare may engage with the WRP on the matter to verify the issue, or seek additional information where required.⁵ Comcare requires the WRP to respond to and/or resolve any identified issues in a timely manner. The specific timeframe for a response or action will be set by Comcare, considering the nature of the issue, and the associated risk.

Where compliance or performance issues are verified, Comcare will inform WRPs, in writing, of the issue, and the stage of response being applied under this WMF. The below table describes each stage of Comcare's approach to addressing compliance and performance issues, the action associated with each stage, and the circumstances when the stage is applicable.

Comcare will generally move through the stages (starting with an Alert) when addressing compliance or performance issues. However, Comcare retains the right to revoke approval at any stage should a serious or systemic performance issue be identified, or if there is a failure from a WRP to address compliance and performance requirements.

Figure 1: Stages of Response

Stage	Action	When is it applied
Revocation	The WRP's approval is revoked. The WRP is no longer able to provide rehabilitation services in the Comcare, DVA, Defence or Seacare schemes.	For serious or systemic performance issues a WRP is unable or unwilling to rectify.
Additional condition of approval	An additional condition is placed on the WRP's approval. ⁶	For significant performance or compliance issues that require an ongoing change to the WRP's approach or operations.
Direction	A WRP must rectify an issue within a specific timeframe and demonstrate to Comcare that this has been completed. A Performance Improvement Plan may be required. The WRP is required to finalise this plan within the timeframe set by Comcare.	For identified performance or compliance issues which require timely attention.
Alert	The WRP should address the issue raised in the Alert, within the timeframe specified by Comcare.	For identified performance and/or compliance issues which require WRP attention.

⁵ WRPs are required under the Conditions of Approval (*Conditions of Approval*, currently in force, for approved workplace rehabilitation providers in the Comcare Scheme) to cooperate with Comcare to demonstrate compliance with the Conditions and Standards.

⁶ Section 34P of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 allows Comcare to place conditions on WRP approval, such as to undertake an action, provide information or address a specific issue.