



Return to work different employer / different job

Ms S began to experience problems with tendonitis due to the repetitive movements involved in her work and eventually was unable to undertake her duties. She was referred for a vocational assessment to assess suitable work options given the problems with pain in her arms. At the assessment the Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor asked Ms S about her previous work experience, qualifications and job preferences and a careers interest inventory was administered. Ms S researched a number of the possible job options presented and after careful consideration of the retraining requirements, pay and conditions and demand in her local labour market decided to focus on Sales Manager positions. Ms S and her Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor felt that a period of voluntary work would help her trial the job duties and build up her work tolerances for paid employment. During the work trial it became obvious that although Ms S liked the work, a Sales Manager position was likely to involve some tasks for example lifting and typing that would aggravate her condition. When Ms S commenced job seeking she focused on positions where there was some flexibility over these tasks. Ms S also research Government schemes that could help her prospective employer to accommodate her condition.

Return to work different employer / same job

Mrs H was in her 50's, feeling exhausted and ineffective in her job as an inspector and had a perception that she 'wasn't up to it'. The rehabilitation assessment recommended an individual stress audit, referral for counselling, a workplace assessment and case management. The workplace assessment described the following employment conditions: flexi sheets showing long work hours; generic job descriptions not outlining her specific job tasks; no training plan for the department; departmental business plan setting out new targets, restructuring and different focus; recent introduction of new computer software and; Mrs H's acting supervisor having little background in her job. After feedback on her stress audit results, negotiation with her employer concerning the workplace assessment report and three counselling sessions Mrs H reflected on her work environment and applied to a different organisation to work in a similar position.

Return to work different employer / different job

Mr E was working as a farmhand when he began to experience problems with his back when undertaking heavy work or twisting. He put up with the pain stoically until his GP advised him that his work was causing further degenerative problems and signed him off 'sick'. Following a rehabilitation assessment the case manager contacted his employer to discuss alternative duties but nothing appropriate was available, so with the employers consent, a vocational counselling process was started. Mr E was linked into local resources to assist him work out his benefit entitlements, further training options and job seeking support and encouraged to use his extensive local contacts to try and locate appropriate employment. A local farmer

offered Mr E working and was prepared to amend the duties to include only lighter work. After liaison with Mr E's treating therapist a work trial was set up to ensure that he would be able to manage these duties without further aggravating his back and could cope with the cold and damp conditions. At program closure Mr E was working part-time in his new job on a proportional benefit basis.

Return to work different employer / voluntary work

Mr D was referred by an insurer to assess his return to work potential. At assessment it became clear that Mr D had significant mobility, functional capacity, independent living problems and low transferable skills so rehabilitation support for a return to paid employment was not recommended. Mr D however was very keen to contribute to society in whatever way possible and considered voluntary work as an option. His rehabilitation plan outlined assistance to help him obtain and maintain home based voluntary work. This was underpinned by a letter from his referrer giving Mr D permission to undertake voluntary work within the policy conditions. Mr D drew on his family and peer network to locate interesting voluntary work within his capacity.

Claim negotiated

Mrs C was referred via a re-assurer for assistance with returning to work after breast cancer. The case manager was initially asked to contact Mrs C to ascertain her motivation and the possibility of her returning to her own occupation or one that used her transferable skills. Mrs C presented as extremely motivated to return to an occupation of her choice but not one related to her previous career. The case manager developed a list of jobs that would use her transferable skills and together they clearly identified problem areas with a return to these posts. She also realistically presented the functional difficulties that Mrs C may experience with her chosen occupation and recommended further research. After some reflection Mrs C decided to negotiate a payout on her claim enabling her to set up in business, therefore avoiding some of the functional capacity issues involved in being a practitioner, whilst entering the occupation of her choice.

(Although typical of our work these case studies are not based on any particular individuals)