

For information on
19 June 2018

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Rehabilitation Services for Injured Employees

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the present situation of rehabilitation services for injured employees in Hong Kong.

Rehabilitation Services for Injured Employees in Hong Kong

2. The Hospital Authority (HA) provides a comprehensive range of rehabilitation services to patients based on their clinical needs. The treatment goal is to provide rehabilitation services as soon as the medical condition of the patient is stabilized. The rehabilitation services are delivered by a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals involving doctors, nurses, allied health professionals in various settings including inpatient, outpatient, day care and outreach services. Like other patients, employees who sustained injury at work can receive necessary treatment and rehabilitation services in hospitals and clinics under the HA according to their clinical needs.

3. Moreover, the Voluntary Rehabilitation Programme (VRP) implemented by the insurance industry since March 2003 serves as an additional channel for injured employees to receive free rehabilitation services in the private sector through the insurers' arrangements to facilitate their speedy recovery and early return to work under safe circumstances. Under VRP, the participating insurers will pay for all the rehabilitation services and the injured employees need not shoulder any costs in this respect. The participating insurers would identify appropriate cases, initiate contacts with the injured employees, invite them to join VRP on a voluntary basis and arrange rehabilitation services for those who are willing to join. In general, rehabilitation services may include medical treatment, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, etc., and the types of rehabilitation services to be provided would depend on the injured employees' individual circumstances and needs. The concerned rehabilitation professionals are qualified health care professionals registered under the relevant Ordinances. The injured employees can

make their own decision on whether or not to accept the insurers' invitation. Participation in VRP otherwise will not affect the rights and benefits of the injured employees under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, and their entitlements to statutory compensation will still be calculated in accordance with the Ordinance.

4. At present, there are 17 insurers participating in VRP. Based on the information given by the participating insurers, the total number of cases of injured employees joining VRP from March 2003 to June 2017 was 25 518.

5. The Labour Department (LD) regularly conducts surveys of the participating insurers and injured employees to keep in view the implementation of VRP. For the latest full-year figures, in 2016, the participating insurers invited the injured employees in a total of 3 674 cases to join VRP, of which the injured employees in 3 505 cases (i.e. 95% of 3 674 cases) accepted the offers. Among these 3 505 cases participated in VRP in 2016, the employees in 2 004 cases (i.e. 57% of 3 505 cases) completed rehabilitation in the same year. Of these, the employees returned to work in 1 823 cases (i.e. 91% of 2 004 cases). Among the injured employees who joined VRP in 2016 and responded to LD's survey, 80% considered that VRP was in general helpful to them.

6. LD recognises that rehabilitation services are very important to ensure the recovery and early return to work of injured employees. LD is pleased to listen to the views of different stakeholders and will continue to monitor whether the above-mentioned work can provide appropriate rehabilitation services for injured employees. LD will also pay close attention to different modes of referral and rehabilitation for occupational injury cases with a view to facilitating early recovery and return to work of the injured employees, and consult other government departments and relevant organisations when necessary.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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