

Labour Department expands Pilot Rehabilitation Programme for Employees Injured at Work

The Labour Department (LD) today (May 9) increased the industry coverage of the Pilot Rehabilitation Programme for Employees Injured at Work (Pilot Programme). Apart from covering the original construction industry, it has now been expanded to the catering and hotel industry and the transportation and logistics industry with a view to assisting more injured employees in these industries to recover and return to work early.

The three-year Pilot Programme was rolled out in September 2022, adopting a case-management approach to provide prompt and co-ordinated private outpatient rehabilitation treatment services to participating injured employees. The rehabilitation services provided include medical treatment (provided by general practitioners/family physicians, orthopaedic doctors or occupational physicians), physiotherapy, occupational therapy and imaging examination services. Each participant will have a case manager to follow up on rehabilitation treatment and assist with return-to-work arrangements.

An LD spokesman said, "Expanding the Pilot Programme will benefit more injured employees. Funded by the Government, participants only need to pay the same fees as public hospital services for receiving private rehabilitation treatment services. With the waiting time for services saved, participants can benefit from timely treatments. The early recovery and return-to-work of employees can also help maintain the productivity of employers."

Injured employees meeting the following criteria can participate in the Pilot Programme:

1. they were engaged in the construction industry, catering and hotel industry or transportation and logistics industry* at the time of the work injury;
2. they sustained a musculoskeletal injury as a result of the work injury or contracted a musculoskeletal occupational disease prescribed under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO); and
3. they have been, or are expected to be, absent from work for six weeks or more because of the work injury.

(*The work injuries of employees of the catering and hotel industry and transportation and logistics industry happened on or after April 1, 2024.)

The rehabilitation treatment, case management and return-to-work facilitation services under the Pilot Programme are provided by Actmax Limited, a subsidiary of Human Health Holdings Limited, engaged by the

Government. The organisation has established the Work Injury Rehabilitation Office (WIRO) to implement the Pilot Programme in collaboration with its strategic partner, CUHK Medical Centre, under the supervision of the LD.

The LD and WIRO will, based on the reported work injury cases, preliminarily identify suitable injured employees and contact them to introduce the Pilot Programme. Injured employees must undergo a clinical assessment by a case doctor to ascertain that their injuries are suitable for treatment under the Pilot Programme.

The spokesman reminded that employers should comply with the requirement of the ECO on the reporting of work injury cases to the LD as soon as possible so that eligible injured employees can join the Pilot Programme early and receive rehabilitation treatment.

For details of the Pilot Programme, please visit the dedicated webpage of the WIRO (www.prp-wiro.gov.hk) or call 2293 7000.