

An Information Kit for *BIRP Clinicians*

# Vocational Intervention Program

July 2021

# Vocational Intervention Program

## Employment Pathways: A Guide for BIRP Clinicians

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# 1. Program Overview

## The Program (VIP)

The Vocational Intervention Program is an employment program established within the NSW Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program (BIRP) in partnership with selected vocational providers.

The BIRP is a network of 12 adult brain injury rehabilitation services operated by NSW Health.

The VIP was an initiative of two state government bodies: NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) and icare (Insurance & Care NSW). The program was implemented initially as a pilot (VIP1, 2014-7) involving 6 BIRP sites partnered with 3 vocational providers; then scaled up as a state-wide program (VIP2, 2018-21) involving all 12 BIRP sites partnered with 20 vocational providers (private and DES providers).

The aim of the VIP was to develop employment pathways for people with brain injury in NSW, to improve the experiences and outcomes in returning to work. At the core of the program is the collaboration between BIRPs and vocational (including DES) providers.

The VIP research project has concluded and the model established as a sustainable approach to manage employment programs for clients of the BIRPs.

The VIP2 Implementation report can be found here: [ACI Website Link.](#)

For many years, there has been low participation of people with brain injury in employment (29%), particularly considering around 75% of BIRP clients were working at the time of their injury.

The list of VIP providers across the 12 BIRP sites is at: [ACI Website Link.](#)

## Goals

The goals of VIP continue to be:

- a) Develop and maintain local partnerships that improve the system of support for people with brain injury in NSW.
- b) Build greater expertise for managing employment for this client group.
- c) Increase employment outcomes for people with brain injury in NSW.
- d) Improve the health and wellbeing of people with brain injury.

## More information

More information about VIP and employment for people with brain injury is available at:

[TBI Training Website Link.](#)

Or by email:

[ACI-BrainInjuryRehab@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ACI-BrainInjuryRehab@health.nsw.gov.au)

## 2. Program Pathways

Employment services are provided using existing funding schemes:

- *Disability Employment Services* (DES)
- *Insurance schemes* (icare Lifetime Care, icare Workers Care, icare Workers Insurance, Income Protection, Compulsory Third Party)
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme* (NDIS).

**Note:** some clients will be eligible for more than one funding source and may benefit from

the expertise and programs/subsidies of two schemes (e.g. DES provider plus private vocational provider funded by Lifetime Care)

### Two Pathways

There are two pathways available within VIP:

*Fast Track* – for clients resuming previous employment.

*New Track* – for clients preparing for and seeking new employment.

### 2A. Fast Track

Returning to the same workplace after injury is usually the preferred pathway for people following brain injury and most likely to succeed, due to the familiar environment, routine, tasks and social support.

Clients are referred by BIRP clinicians whilst undergoing rehabilitation that is preparing them for employment.

#### *Key elements*

The key elements of Fast Track:

- a) Early referral and preparation for work in conjunction with BIRP team.
- b) Assessment of the workplace - gathering details of the cognitive and physical work demands.
- c) Clients begin work, either partial duties or full duties on reduced hours. If their

previous position is not suitable or unavailable, then all familiar roles with their pre-injury employer should be considered ahead of new or unfamiliar roles.

- d) A 'suitable duties' plan - includes specific strategies to manage physical and cognitive issues (e.g. use of a diary, written notes etc) and a schedule of hours.
- e) Return to work (RTW) programs typically involves gradually increasing hours, reviewing restrictions and providing feedback.

#### *Case study videos*

*Phillip's Fast Track story - returning to work in aged care*

*Ian's story - returning to work with support of a DES provider*

[ACI Website Link](#)

## 2B. New Track

New Track is for clients seeking new employment, focused on preparation for work, individualised job seeking, on-site training and longer-term support.

Some clients have an identified employment goal and can seek their own employment, however the majority of clients will require assistance to identify goals, plan and undertake job seeking and/or retraining.

Often in rehabilitation, a 'stepping stone' approach is required, to gradually gain skills and the work capacity required to achieve the employment goal. This might involve voluntary work, a work experience placement or training course. These activities, along with vocational counselling, will often assist the person to clarify their post-injury capacity, explore realistic opportunities and determine future pathways.

### *Key elements*

The key elements of New Track:

- Program intensity adjusted to the pace of the client.
- Client goals are based on their current strengths.
- Client choice of work goal needs to be balanced with consideration to safety and suitability.
- Gradual/stepping stone approach, including work experience placements.
- On-job support (for new learning).
- Creating a feedback system & providing advocacy.

### *Case study videos*

For an example of a client trialling new employment, see 3 New Track case stories here:

*Julian's story - finding a new job as a gardener*

*Antony's story - finding a new role in IT.*

*Daniel's story – getting started within a supported workplace.*

[ACI Website Link](#)



Is the client ready?	Yes	No	Comments
e) Does the client have the required physical tolerances?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
7) Is the client free from substance use that could compromise program engagement?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>8) Has a funding source been identified and approval/eligibility confirmed?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check DES eligibility where applicable (page 10)</li> <li>• Is there funding that can be accessed or requested in an NDIS plan?</li> </ul>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Risks to note?</b> Are there any risks related to the client's condition to highlight in the referral? e.g. client with reduced high level balance who wants to return to their pre-injury role as a roofer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Are there any financial disincentives to working?</b> (such as income protection policy or pending legal settlement etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

## 4. Key features of an employment program for a person with brain injury

Implementation of the VIP and feedback obtained throughout the program from clients, BIRP clinicians and vocational providers highlighted the following key features in supporting clients with a brain injury with employment.

- **Commence services with a pre-referral** ('meet and greet') meeting so the client understands what an employment program involves.
- **Get the timing right** – together with the client and vocational provider, determine the client is ready to commence employment considering medical, cognitive, physical, behavioural and psychological factors.
- **Flexibility** of servicing that is **responsive** and adjusts to individual needs of the participant.
- Provision of **education** on brain injury to the **employer** if client is agreeable to disclosure of injury
- For Fast Track clients –
  - **Thorough assessment** of a client's work role, including allied health input.
  - **Regular monitoring** of the RTW through contact with client and employer including workplace visits as required.
  - Continually upgrading the RTW program, introducing new tasks and hours at a **pace suitable to the client**
- For New Track clients –
  - **Thorough initial assessment** by the vocational provider to determine a suitable job goal, considering the client's strengths and preferences with input from the BIRP clinician.
  - **Utilisation** of all appropriate interventions and incentives to support the client achieve a successful outcome ie. work trial, employer incentives, supported wages, on the job support.
- **Ongoing collaboration between BIRPs and providers** through joint appointments with clients, case reviews and progress updates
- **Work collaboratively** with other providers for clients eligible for dual funding ie, DES, icare, NDIS to explore pre-vocational options, extended work experiences, on the job support etc.



## 5. Funding & Referral Pathways

Program		Reference	<i>New Track</i>	<i>Fast Track</i>
Disability Employment Services (DES)	DES: Commonwealth-funded program helping people with disability, injury, or illness find work	Page 10	✓	
	DES Work Assist: provides support to eligible employees who have difficulty fulfilling the requirements of their role due to their injury, disability or health condition.	Page 13		✓
Insurance-funded	icare: NSW Government agency, including the following schemes:  <b>Lifetime Care:</b> provides treatment, rehabilitation and care for people who are severely injured in motor accidents in NSW, regardless of fault.  <b>Worker's Care:</b> provides insurance coverage and care for people severely injured at work  <b>Worker's Insurance:</b> provides insurance coverage and care for people injured at work (excluding severe injury).	Page 15	✓  ✓  ✓	✓  ✓  ✓
	CTP insurance: provides a safety net for anyone injured in a motor vehicle accident in NSW.	Page 17	✓	✓
	Income protection: a financial safety net and pays a percentage of wages, for a set period.	Page 18	✓	✓
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	NDIS: provides reasonable and necessary funding to people with a permanent and significant disability to access supports and services.	Page 20	✓	✓

Note: Some clients will be eligible for more than one funding source and may benefit from the expertise of 2 providers (e.g. DES provider plus private vocational provider funded by Lifetime Care).

## 5. DES Referral Pathways:

The Disability Employment Services is the Commonwealth–funded program that helps people with disability, injury or illness find and maintain work. Further information: [DSS Web site](#)

### 5A. DES New Track Referral Pathways

#### Eligibility

##### General eligibility

A job seeker is eligible for DES if they:

- have a disability, injury or health condition;
  - are aged at least 14 years but have not yet attained the Age Pension qualifying age;
  - are at or above the minimum legal working age in their state or territory;
  - have a future work capacity with intervention of at least eight hours per week;
  - are an Australian resident;
  - are not studying full time; and
  - are not working at or above their Employment Benchmark hours (not applicable for Work Assist participants).
- an Eligible School Leaver;
  - a Special Class Client (*job seekers who have acquired a disability, injury or illness as a result of being present and directly affected at extreme events such as natural disasters, acts of terrorism*);
  - a Disability Support Pension applicant who has been referred to undertake a Program of Support through DES; or
  - an NDIS participant.

#### Employment Services Assessment / Job Capacity Assessment

An Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) or Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) is an assessment used to identify a person's barriers to finding and maintaining employment, their work capacity and ongoing support needs. An ESAt is required for a client to be referred to a DES provider. JCAs are primarily used for Disability Support Pension claims but may result in a referral to a DES provider.

*Effective from 1 July 2021* the Government announced that two groups of job seekers will no longer be eligible to commence a DES program:

- job seekers who are assessed as being able to work at least 30 hours per week; and
- job seekers who are not in receipt of an allowance or pension.

For this second group of non-allowees, there are exceptions that will allow the participant to commence a DES program from 1 July 2021 if they are:

## Incentive programs:

A variety of programs and incentives are available to enhance work opportunities, including wage subsidies, equipment and workplace modifications

[Job access link to subsidies and support](#)

## Information to consider when referring a client to a DES Provider

- An initial meeting before referral is actioned is helpful to discuss expectations, DES requirements and ensure the client is keen to proceed.
- If a client is on a medical exemption, DES providers are unable to commence a client's program until the exemption ends.
- If a client provides medical evidence to Centrelink indicating they are ready to engage in job seeking activities and this ends the medical exemption period, they will commence having participation requirements while they remain on an income support payment.
- Centrelink will require current medical evidence if the client hasn't participated in an ESAt within the last two years. Evidence needs to be provided to Centrelink by the DES, Job Active provider or client prior to the ESAt being booked.
- Some clients (non-voluntary) will have job seeking requirements where they are required by Centrelink to be linked to a provider.
- If a client is a voluntary participant (ie. DSP, NDIS participant not on income support payment) they can choose to exit a DES program. However, while they are a DES participant, the DES provider will typically expect regular attendance at appointments and participation in agreed activities.

- A client can change DES provider by phoning the DES transfer line 1800 805 260.

Exceptions to the above may apply. Please contact the DES provider as the information is subject to change.

## Support for younger clients

There are a number of programs and subsidies available for young people including:

- Eligible school leavers program (ESL) - assists students (in their last year of school) with significant disability to transition to post-school open employment. Students may be eligible if they received additional educational funding due to their disability  
[ESL guidelines](#)
- PaTH Internships – provides opportunity to participate in work trials (4-12 weeks) for young people (17-24 years)  
[Link to Path Internship](#)
- Transition to Work - supports young people (15-24) on their journey to enter employment or complete education  
[link to TTW](#)

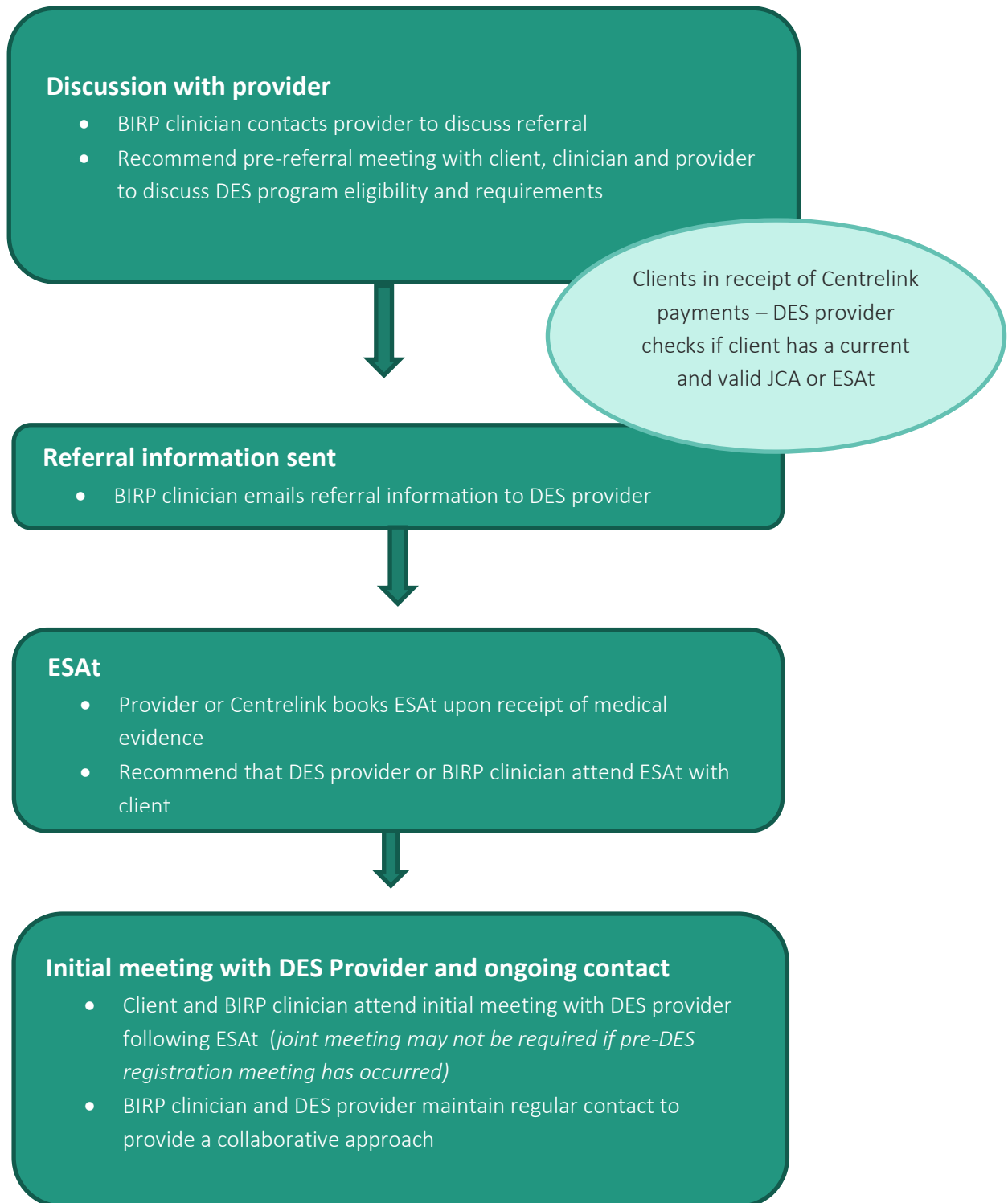
Further information is available by contacting your local DES provider

## Other supports:

Information on apprenticeships/ traineeships and smart and skilled courses is available at: [NSW apprenticeships and traineeships](#)  
Support for apprenticeships for a person with a disability

[Disability Apprenticeships and Traineeships](#)

## DES New Track Referral Pathway



## 5B. DES Fast Track Referral Pathway

### Fast Track Services via DES (Work Assist)

DES providers can provide Fast Track participants support via a program called Work Assist (previously known as 'Job in Jeopardy'). Work Assist is available for eligible clients who have difficulty fulfilling the essential requirements of their role due to their injury, disability or health condition.

Clients can directly register with a DES Provider without undertaking an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) or Job Capacity Assessment (JCA).

Clients can be referred if they have already returned to work (and are experiencing difficulties) or are ready to plan their RTW.

Work Assist participants may stay in the same job or may move to another job (but must stay) with the same Employer, with the agreement of all parties.

### Eligibility

For an employee to be eligible for Work Assist their Employer must be of the view that their employee is having difficulties fulfilling the essential requirements of their job, due to the impact of their injury, disability or health condition, and the employee must:

- be currently employed (includes those planning their RTW)
- have been working in that job for at least eight hours per week on average over a consecutive 13-week **period or there is an expectation that the Employment will last for at least 13 weeks with an average of**

**eight hours per week being worked over the 13-week period.**

- be confirmed by the DES Provider as having difficulty carrying out the essential requirements of their particular job, require the assistance available through DES to maintain their employment, and is likely to require ongoing support.

### Work Assist

Work Assist can include, but is not limited to:

- providing advice and assistance to the employee and their employer to identify their barriers to maintaining their employment and implementing strategies to overcome these barriers
- providing advice and assistance to the employee and the employer about how the work may be redesigned
- providing assistance and information to employers and staff to support the employee in the workplace
- interventions such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, pain management or psychological counselling, and
- access to services, workplace assessments and modifications available through the Employee Assistance Fund (EAF).

Ask the DES providers if they have access to allied health clinicians to assist with workplace assessments and graded return to work programs for Fast Track participants.

### Further Information

Further information about Jobs Access and EAF is available at [Jobs Access Website Link](#)

## DES Fast Track ('Work Assist') Referral Pathway

### Discussion with provider

- BIRP clinician contacts provider to discuss referral
- Recommend pre-referral meeting with client, clinician and provider to discuss DES program eligibility and requirements

### Client completes direct registration form (DRF)

- Provider checks eligibility against DES criteria and obtains details of client's medical condition
- Documentary Evidence must include recent (within the last two years) evidence from a suitable qualified professional, containing information about the injury, disability or health condition, including:
  - the nature of the condition
  - how long it will last
  - the effect of the condition on the client, and
  - the effect of the condition on client's ability to do their job
- Confirmation of Employment - signed Employer Form from the Employer. DES provider will seek consent to contact the employer to obtain this information

### Referral information sent

- BIRP clinician provides referral information to DES provider

### Initial meeting with DES Provider and ongoing contact

- Client and BIRP clinician attend initial meeting with DES provider following registration (*joint meeting may not be required if pre-DES registration meeting has occurred*)

### Outcome of assessment and regular contact

- DES provider discusses outcome of assessment and recommendations with client and BIRP clinician. Medical clearance is obtained to support RTW plan.
- Clinician and DES provider maintain regular contact to provide a collaborative approach

## 6. Insurance-funded Referral Pathways

### 6A. icare

#### icare

icare is the NSW Government agency that provides insurance and care services to statutory authorities and people with injuries under various compensation schemes.

icare schemes includes Lifetime Care, Worker's Care and Worker's Insurance.

icare workers insurance acts for the Workers Compensation Nominal Insurer and engages external insurance agents to manage workers compensation claims on its behalf.

The State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) is the NSW Government agency responsible for regulating the NSW workers compensation system.

#### icare Lifetime Care

icare Lifetime Care: provides care for people who are severely injured in motor accidents in NSW, regardless of who was at fault. Lifetime Care funds treatment and care services but does not pay income support to the client.

Lifetime Care's legislation and guidelines does not require a participant to return to work but acknowledge that for many people returning to work is an important part of rehabilitation.

#### icare Workers Care

icare workers care provides insurance coverage and care for people severely injured at work and is managed within the Lifetime Care scheme. These individuals fall under the workers compensation legislation so also receive income support.

#### icare Workers Insurance

icare workers insurance provides insurance coverage and care for people injured at work (excluding severe injury). This includes income support and medical/care services.


#### Consideration of RTW obligations

Lifetime Care participants may be receiving additional benefits, such as through compulsory third party (CTP) or workers compensation insurance, or Centrelink entitlements, all of which may have some RTW obligations.

Some Lifetime Care participants will also have a compensation claim through the CTP scheme. Clarify if the participant has any RTW obligations and ensure that a RTW program has not been initiated by the CTP insurer. These participants may be able to access SIRA vocational programs.

Some Lifetime Care participants receive weekly benefits through an insurance scheme and others receive weekly benefits through Centrelink in the form of a disability support pension (which may have participation requirements) or Job Seeker payment (which may have requirement of actively seeking work). These obligations need to be explored and considered as part of any vocational rehabilitation program.

Lifetime Care clients seeking new employment will typically commence with a Work Options Plan (WOP) completed by a suitably qualified vocational rehabilitation consultant usually a rehabilitation counsellor or psychologist.



The Work Options Plan is a tool to explore the vocational options for participants and to develop an action plan to achieve the recommended goals. The Work Options Plan is a fixed price assessment of 6 hours (plus travel) and is expected to be completed across two appointments with the client.

Vocational training (which includes pre-vocational training) may be considered reasonable and necessary where:

- a suitably qualified rehabilitation provider identifies a need relating to a participant's motor accident injury for a participant to undertake vocational training;
- specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based vocational goals have been clearly defined; and
- it can be demonstrated that vocational training will progress these goals

Lifetime Care may make payments for incidental expenses, not exceeding \$1,000, to assist a participant to commence employment where:

- it will address an immediate or short-term barrier that directly prevents the participant from commencing

employment or accepting an offer of employment;

- there is written evidence of a job offer to the participant;
- the need arises before the participant commences employment and receives their first payment from their employer; and
- not provided or to be provided by the employer.

### **Vocational programs for Worker's Care and Workers Insurance**

An array of Vocational programs for Worker's Care and Workers Insurance clients are available including: work trials, funding for workplace equipment and modifications, training to develop new skills and qualifications, financial support to remove barriers for clients and financial incentives via the Job Cover Placement Program to a new employer.

Further information is available at [SIRA Website link](#)

Vocational providers for NSW Worker's Care and Worker's Insurance programs need to be approved by SIRA to provide return to work services.



## 6B. CTP

CTP insurance provides a safety net for anyone injured in a motor vehicle accident in NSW. With changes introduced from 1 December 2017 people injured in an accident can make a claim regardless of fault. Rehabilitation services for those with severe brain injury is managed under Lifetime Care, though they may also have a CTP claim including income support and lump sum compensation.

### Entitlements

#### *All injured people*

All injured people, regardless of fault, are entitled to up to six months of:

- weekly income payments if working at the time of injury (if time off work is needed)
- medical and treatment expenses
- commercial attendant care (for help needed around the home).

Benefits after six months may continue for people not at fault and whose injuries are more than minor injuries. Weekly income benefits can continue for up to three years in total from the date of the accident,) allowing time for the common law claim to be finalised.

#### *More seriously injured people*

People who are more seriously injured, with a whole person impairment of more than 10% are eligible for up to five years of weekly income payments if they lodge a common law claim for damages. Once the common law claim is finalised there are no further weekly income payments.

More information about benefits is available at [SIRA Website Link](#).

#### *Vocational support*

CTP participants may be receiving benefits through workers compensation insurance, or Centrelink entitlements, all of which may have some RTW obligations.

Targeted vocational rehabilitation support programs have been developed to provide funding and support to help people recover at or return to work when assistance is required. These programs are not available to all CTP clients.

Further information on these programs is available at [SIRA Website Link](#)



## 6C. Income protection

### **Income protection insurance**

Income protection insurance is a financial safety net and pays a percentage of wages, for a set period, if the person is unable to work due to a sudden illness or injury. Income protection policies are purchased by an individual to protect their income or may be a component of a person's superannuation policy. Each income protection policy has its own definition of partial or total disability that must be met before a claim is made.

Most income protection policies offer income support for two or five years, or up to a specific age (such as 65). Policies also vary according to what health and rehabilitation services they will cover.

### **Support with vocational activities**

Some but not all income protection policies will fund vocational activities. Additionally, Income Protection Insurers may prefer to engage a vocational provider on their own provider panel rather than a VIP provider.

Due to policy variations, the client is encouraged to contact their insurer to clarify their specific entitlements. Clients receiving a payment from income protection policy may also be eligible for DES which may provide additional supports.

# Insurance-funded Referral Pathways

*icare, CTP, Income Protection and other insurance schemes*

**Contact insurer**

- BIRP case manager contacts insurer to confirm support for vocational services
- Option 1: Case manager obtains quote for Fast Track or New Track service and submits to insurer for approval
- Option 2: Vocational provider submits quote to insurer for approval

**Lifetime Care - New Track Work Options Plan** is billed at standard 6 hrs at the provider's hourly rate plus travel

**Provide referral information**

- BIRP case manager provides referral information to vocational provider following approval of services

**Lifetime Care - New Track Work Options Plan** First page of the **Work Options Plan** form is completed and provided to the provider with other referral information

**Joint Meeting**

- Client and BIRP clinician attend joint initial meeting with vocational provider

**Outcome of assessment and regular contact**

- Vocational provider discusses outcome of assessment and recommendations with client and BIRP clinician prior to submitting report to insurer
- BIRP Clinician and provider maintain regular contact to provide a collaborative approach

## 7. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Referral Pathway

The NDIS provides reasonable and necessary funding to people with a permanent and significant disability to access the supports and services they need to live and enjoy their life.

To be eligible for the NDIS, the person must:

- have a permanent disability that significantly affects their ability to take part in everyday activities
- be less than 65 years old when they first access the NDIS
- be an Australian citizen, hold a permanent visa or a Protected Special Category visa.

### Employment supports

NDIS is not able to fund or duplicate services that already exist via DES or other programs. However, NDIS may be able to assist if the person needs frequent and ongoing support in the workplace to obtain and retain employment; and/or needs time limited, individualised assistance designed to increase employment related skills and capability (Capacity Building). NDIS supports may also assist clients to become ready to participate in a DES program.

### What the NDIS funds

- Personal care for people who need help at work due to their disability. For example, help with personal care or eating meals.
- Aids and equipment related to a person's disability, like wheelchairs and hearing aids.
- Transition-to-work supports, where the participant needs beyond what is reasonable for their employer to provide. This could include training to learn how to travel to and from work, help building relationships with colleagues and developing basic work skills.

- Individual employment support for people who are not eligible for Disability Support Services (DES).
- Supports for a person with disability to work when they are likely to need extra help to be able to find or keep a job, in addition to DES.

The types of support funded by the NDIS includes:

- On the job support in the workplace
- Employment related assessments and counselling
- Pre-vocational training (e.g. work trials) and other activities to gain the requisite skills for work, including communication and travel.
- Development of RTW program (Fast Track) requiring specific expertise not available in DES.
- School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) is a 2-year program supporting transition from school to employment.

### Managing NDIS Funding

There are three options to manage NDIS funding - self-managed, plan-managed and NDIA-managed. Plan managed and self-managed options provide clients with more flexibility and choice of providers. Clients who are NDIA managed can only choose providers registered with NDIA to provide employment supports.

### Further Information

[NDIS Participant Employment Strategy](#)

[NDIS Employment Supports](#)

## NDIS Referral Pathway

### Contact vocational provider

- BIRP clinician contacts vocational provider to discuss NDIS funded FT or NT employment supports
- Vocational provider contacts support coordinator/ NDIA to confirm availability of funding and submits quote for specialist employment services

Recommend a **pre-referral meeting** to discuss NDIS funded program

### Provide referral information

- BIRP case manager provides referral information to vocational provider following approval of services

### Joint Meeting

- Client and BIRP clinician attend joint initial meeting with vocational provider

### Outcome of assessment and regular contact

- Provider discusses outcome of assessment and recommendations with client and BIRP clinician. Medical clearance may be required to support RTW plan
- Clinician and provider maintain regular contact to provide a collaborative approach



## 8. Additional Forms and Tools

Resources developed during the VIP implementation are available for clinicians and providers use.

Clinicians can find the following forms and tools at: [TBI staff training website](#)  
(Username & password required)

Forms and tools include:

- City of Toronto Behavioural and Cognitive Workplace Assessment
- VIP referral forms
- Client summary tool
- Workplace Assessment report proformas
- Suitable Duties Plan proformas
- VIP Guide for DES Providers