

## Working with Vocational Rehabilitation Providers

---

The Vocational Intervention Program (VIP) is a model of service integration, in which community BIRP teams work in partnership with vocational rehabilitation providers to support a person with a brain injury return to work.

BIRP clinicians need to understand how vocational providers deliver vocational services for people with brain injury.

The information for BIRP clinicians provided in this resource includes:

- The referral process to a vocational provider.
- Useful information to include in the referral
- Partnership development with vocational providers
- NDIS and DES considerations

The information provided in this document is from the perspective of vocational providers, BIRP clinicians and icare who support vocational services for people with brain injury.

### **The referral process:**

Before making a referral ensure you have the client's consent to release information about their injury.

- Most vocational providers will have their standard referral form, which can be found on their website. If there isn't a standard form, consider using the VIP referral form template.
- Some providers have a 'make a referral' tab on their website and you can fill in the details.
- If in doubt about the referral process call the vocational provider.
- Email the referral form to the provider administration team, or consultant if you have had a prior discussion. Follow up with a phone call to confirm referral has been received.
- Ensure the funding agency coordinator (NDIS, icare) is aware you are making the referral.
- Consider inviting the vocational provider consultant to the client's case conference if it is thought the information will assist the vocational process.

### **Useful information to include in the referral:**

- Whether funding for vocational services is approved by the funding agency e.g icare, NDIS, and the funding details.
- Be cognisant that language may be different between funding agencies
- The completed client information summary tool assists vocational providers understand the impact of the person's brain injury in a work environment.
- Include the client's weekly therapy schedule so the vocational provider can schedule services around therapy appointments.
- Contact details for the client's BIRP clinical lead or case manager.
- Pertinent details of previous discussions with the client regarding vocational options including identified goals.
- Summary of outcomes and results of assessments completed with the client that are relevant for vocational services.
- Any sensitive topics that should be avoided during initial discussions with the client.

- For icare-funded clients, include the participant status or claim status. For example interim participant, liability accepted. This assists the vocational provider understand if there are any time restrictions for program completion.
- Client attributes that may assist in matching them to the most appropriate consultant, e.g gender, age, and experience.
- Providers may not accept your referral if they don't feel they have the right expertise or consultant to meet your client's needs.

**Additional NDIS considerations:**

- Include the support categories in the client's NDIS where vocational funding is allocated.
- Include the client's plan management arrangements (self-managed, agency-managed, or plan-managed) and relevant contact details.

**DES referrals considerations:**

- If the client is not in receipt of Centrelink benefits, they are not eligible for a DES service. However, there are exemptions so it is important to check.
- If the client has a medical exemption for work, it may be more difficult to engage them in the vocational process, and more productive to wait until they are approaching the end of this exemption period.
- The client may be asked to undergo an ESAT – Employment Services Assessment (completed at Centrelink). You can attend this assessment with your client if they agree, or provide information about the cognitive impacts of the client's brain injury. The ESAT assist to determine the client's assessed funding level for vocational support.
- The client has the right to choose their DES provider. If your BIRP team has a partnership with a particular DES provider, you could suggest the provider to your client, explaining your reasons.
- If the client doesn't nominate a DES provider, Centrelink will nominate and allocate one. It is possible to change DES providers but less disruptive if the client has the most appropriate provider at the outset.

**Details unique to developing relationships in regional and rural areas:**

- There are specific challenges in developing relationships with vocational providers in regional areas. The small number of client referrals, very few vocational providers, and higher staff turnover can restrict partnership development with vocational providers.
- Some metropolitan providers are offering and delivering regional and rural services in particular areas. Even though they don't have knowledge of the open employment market, they are an option if a local vocational provider cannot be engaged.
- The resources developed for the VIP can guide new and inexperienced vocational providers.