

Rehabilitation services

Creating a Graduated Return to Work (GRTW) plan

Returning to work after an injury or illness can often be relatively straightforward. But for some, it may be a long and potentially complex process.

A Graduated Return to Work plan (GRTW) is designed to help people overcome difficulties following illness or injury and support them back into the workplace.

We will work with you, your employee, and their GP or consultant to create a GRTW plan tailored to your employee's needs.

What is a GRTW plan?

After a period of absence, your employee may not be able to immediately work full-time. They may need to work fewer days, reduce their daily hours, only carry out part of their usual role or modify the work they are doing.

Our GRTW plan will provide practical steps to help your employee work towards a successful and sustainable return through building up or reducing their hours and/or duties in line with their progress. Regular reviews will help ensure their plan remains achievable.

Remember, no two plans are the same. How long the plan lasts entirely depends on your employee's illness or injury – their recovery and what your business can accommodate.

Every GRTW plan should have:

- ✓ Rehabilitation aim/Return to work goals
- ✓ Employer's contact details
- ✓ Guidelines for the rehabilitation plan
- ✓ Timescale
- ✓ Review dates
- ✓ Sign off and agreement section

For handy templates to help get you started, please call our **Rehabilitation Administration Support team**.

Call **01306 873401** from 8am to 5pm **Monday to Friday** or email RHM.Enquiries@unum.co.uk

1. REHABILITATION AIM AND RETURN TO WORK GOALS

Typically, you should:

- Agree an anticipated date for your employee to be back and working their normal hours and duties – giving all parties a clear goal to aim for
- Clearly discuss, agree and record if the employee is aiming to return to their original role, a different role, or a role that has changed permanently
- Reassure your employee that the GRTW plan will be reviewed regularly if they have any setbacks
- Agree with your employee what duties they are expected to carry out and record them clearly
- Remember that someone with a physical condition may have restrictions with sitting, standing, lifting etc.
- Reduce potential stress points for employees with stress-related conditions for a period of time
- Reduce or eliminate targets or customer contact where necessary

2. EMPLOYER CONTACT DETAILS

Make sure your employee has a specific contact at your company, such as a line manager or HR person, while they work through their GRTW plan.

3. GUIDELINES FOR THE REHABILITATION PLAN

You have certain responsibilities to your employee under the Equality Act.

You should consider:

- Reasonable adjustments to their workplace
- Possible restrictions and limitations
- Details of who is responsible for monitoring your employee's workload
- How often the monitoring/reviewing will take place

You may need to amend some actions, activities or tasks after a review. This will depend on:

- Their achievements so far
- Any problems reported or identified by you or the employee
- Ongoing or extra treatment plans or the need to attend medical appointments

You should document any amendments to the plan in this section and review them during follow-up meetings (see 'Review Schedule').

For more information on the Equality Act, visit [Acas](#) or [gov.uk](#)



The overall plan is designed to build up the employee's hours and duties as their stamina and confidence increases

4. REHABILITATION SCHEDULE

Agree the schedule with your employee. Make sure it clearly shows what days they will work, how many hours and when their breaks will be. In the early stages, it may help the employee to work every other day rather than consecutive days, especially if their condition is tiring or painful.

Generally, slowly increasing the number of hours your employee works is the best approach. Setting extremely challenging goals may lead to setbacks. Be prepared to be flexible too. Depending on your employee's condition, you may need to change the duration of each phase – by weeks or even months. Your employee's GP or your Occupational Health Department may be able to help in providing timescales.

5. REVIEW SCHEDULE

Decide who will be responsible for reviewing your employee's progress, such as a line manager, HR representative or Occupational Health department. You should also confirm the frequency of reviews and the dates.

Ideally, reviews should be face-to-face and aim to discuss how the employee is coping with the schedule, their progress and getting their feedback on any issues they may have. This will help ensure any setbacks or problems can be tackled immediately.

Other points to consider:

- During the early phases of the GRTW plan, reviews need to be more frequent and include a review following your employee's first week back at work
- As the GRTW plan progresses, reviews can gradually tail off until the employee returns to work full time and their condition stays stable
- During reviews, check that any technical and environmental workplace adaptations and modifications are appropriate
- Always encourage your employee to move on to increased tasks if they're progressing well
- Praise and constructive feedback are very important during the reviews

6. SIGN OFF AND AGREEMENT SECTION

It is important that you and your employee agree with the plan and are willing to sign it off. Ideally, your employee's GP should also be made aware of the GRTW plan and given the opportunity to comment on and agree it.

If their GP has any concerns, it can be worthwhile contacting them personally to talk through their concerns. Alternatively, your own Occupational Health provider, or the employee's consultant may be happy to sign the plan off. Remember though, you cannot contact your employee's GP or consultant unless you have your employee's written consent.

For more information on consent, please visit [Fit for Work](#).

Click here for our [guide to writing to your employee's GP](#).



EXAMPLE OF A GRADUATED RETURN TO WORK PLAN

Employee	Mrs Jenny Smith	VRC	John Adams
Condition	Breast cancer	Date first absent	xx/xx/xxxx
Employer contact	Mrs White	Employer	Goodworks Limited
Occupation	Call Centre Consultant	VRC contact number	01306 123456
Life ID	47639-389734		

Current work status: Started graduated return to work plan on dd/mm/yyyy

Rehabilitation aim: To return to full hours working as a Call Centre Consultant - 30 hours per week, Monday to Friday

Return to work goals: **Phase 1:** Return to work, completing 13.5 hours per week with 30-minute break per day by dd/mm/yyyy
Phase 2: Working full time and in own role by dd/mm/yyyy

Expected start dates: **Phase 1** - dd/mm/yyyy **Phase 2** - dd/mm/yyyy

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Breaks	Total hours
Phase 1							
Week 1-2	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	4 hrs 10am-2pm	4.5 hrs 10am-2.30pm			As required	8.5
Week 3-5	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	4 hrs 10am-2pm	4.5 hrs 10am-2.30pm		4 hrs 10am-2pm	30 mins per day	12.5
Week 6-7	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	4.5 hrs 10am-2.30pm	4.5 hrs 10am-2.30pm		4 hrs 10am-2pm	30 mins per day	13
Week 8	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	4.5 hrs 10am-2.30pm			6 hrs 9.30am-3.30pm	30 mins per day	10.5
Phase 2							
Week 9	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	6 hrs 9.30am-3.30pm	7 hrs 9.30am-4.30pm	0 hrs	7 hrs 9.30am-4.30pm	30 mins per day	20
Week 10	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	7 hrs 9.30am-4.30pm	7 hrs 9.30am-4.30pm	0 hrs	7 hrs 9.30am-4.30pm	30 mins per day	21
Week 11	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	Conference early-late	Conference early-late	Hours to be agreed with X	Treatment day	30 mins per day	22.5
Week 12	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	8 hrs 9am-5pm	8 hrs 9am-5pm		8 hrs 9am-5pm	30 mins per day	24
Week 13	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	8 hrs 9am-5pm	8 hrs 9am-5pm	8 hrs 9am-5pm	8 hrs 9am-5pm	Normal breaks	32
Week 14	Jenny doesn't work on Mondays	8 hrs 9am-5pm	8 hrs 9am-5pm	Treatment day	8 hrs 9am-5pm	Normal breaks	24

REVIEW SCHEDULE

Review by: Line manager name

VRC by telephone: Phase 1: dd/mm/yyyy

All parties - formal review: Week 8 and 14

Line manager: Bi weekly updates

Recommendations:

- Jenny is to work within medical restrictions at all times.
- Jenny will need time off for treatment/medical appointments on a 3-weekly basis and she will notify line manager in advance.
- Following successful completion of Phase 1, Jenny, her line manager and her VRC, will review phase 2 duties and hours.
- When Jenny has achieved her agreed rehabilitation goals, support will remain in place for up to 4 weeks to ensure sustainability.
- Rehabilitation support will end following agreement by all parties, and any ongoing support will be provided internally.

Monitoring arrangements

- Daily on site monitoring will be provided by line manager.
- Jenny to immediately report any significant medical change or any difficulties in performing her duties to line manager and the VRC.

	Duties		Restrictions/limitations and recommendations	
Phase 1 1-12 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line manager to advise the team about Jenny's return to work on a phased basis before Jenny returns as agreed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified duties - brief keyboard tasks which can be self-paced and non-workstation tasks, such as handling phone calls and emails. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trials some of the memory strategies in the rehab report to improve concentration, memory and help her manage fatigue. Does not carry out time-critical tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break up repetitive upper limb tasks during the day and where possible share tasks with a colleague. A workstation assessment is to be carried out in Jenny's first week.
Phase 2 35 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadlines and customer meetings onsite to restart. Workload to be appropriate to reduced hours. Jenny will attend the conference away from the office on w/c dd/mm/yyyy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She may rest during the day for up to an hour to ensure she is able to attend the evening social programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenny to continue using strategies to improve concentration, memory and manage fatigue as recommended by VRC. Jenny to continue to take breaks as outlined in the schedule. Gradually return to her management role during phase 2, as her hours build. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict keyboard work to 10-minute periods until her current symptoms are under control and workstation adjustments have maximised support to her right arm. This to be reviewed in early January. She should not lift or carry more than 5kg at present.

<p>Agreement</p> <p>I agree to participate in the above plan, which was developed with my involvement. I understand that the plan will be monitored, reviewed and amended as appropriate.</p> <p>I agree to work with all parties in supporting goals towards achievement of the rehab aim.</p>	<p>Employee: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Signature: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Date: <input type="text"/></p>
	<p>Employer: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Signature: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Date: <input type="text"/></p>
	<p>VRC: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Signature: <input type="text"/></p>	<p>Date: <input type="text"/></p>