

In November and December 2022, WorkplaceNL surveyed injured workers who have been involved in Early and Safe Return to Work (ESRTW) and Labour Market Re-entry (LMR) formal training and employment readiness. This was carried out in response to recommendations identified during public consultations on ESRTW and LMR conducted in November 2021.

An external firm, Narrative Research, randomly selected list of approximately 2,400 clients and sorted the list into three groups: LMR - Employment Readiness, LMR - Formal Training and ESRTW. In order to further protect our client's privacy and anonymity, a WorkplaceNL employee (Team Lead) contacted a total of 30 injured workers, 10 in each of the three program areas, to gather feedback on their experiences.

Below are the questions that were asked to each of the groups. Question A was asked to the ESRTW group and question B was posed to the LMR groups.

- A. Describe your experience with ESRTW and what else can be offered to support your recovery at work?
- B. What has been your experience with the type and quality of Labour Market Re-entry (LMR) supports provided by WorkplaceNL or its' external providers (such as Vocational Rehabilitation Associates (VRA) or Fit for Work).x

The results of these one-on-one interviews are outlined below:

Table 1: Results of One-on-One Interviews with Injured Workers

	Positive Comments	Areas for Improvement
LMR - Formal Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrained and working in home community – great program • Excellent case manager • Great opportunity to start a new career • LMR planner was fantastic and helped identify options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could WPNL get assigned seats at colleges to avoid waitlists • Took too long to assess maximum medical recovery • Slow getting travel reimbursements • Didn't get to retrain in first choice program • Addressing issues in retraining program to try and make successful for worker instead of identifying direct entry option
LMR – Employment Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External clinics excellent to deal with • Great program • Aptitude testing was great • Gives workers a chance at a new career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanted full EEL and no suitable options – thus disappointed with outcome. Had to appeal but got EEL in the end • Inaccurate functional information given to LMR planner • Ensuring that options match transferrable skills or functions • Psychometric testing is long and can take days to complete

	Positive Comments	Areas for Improvement
ESRTW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic Based Occupational Rehabilitation (CBOR) is really good • Connection with the workplace is great from a mental health perspective • Great to be back to work and supported by WorkplaceNL • Employer was supportive by providing a resting bench • Case manager very supportive and empathetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes difficulty reaching case manager • Hard to get updated medical each month • Employers need to be clear on what workers' restrictions are. • If an injured worker is doing alternate work, it needs to be explained to the worker that what they are doing is meaningful and productive work

Next Steps

WorkplaceNL continues to proactively help workers stay at work through Early and Safe Return to Work (ESRTW). We plan to explore more individualized return-to-work approaches, taking into account some of the feedback obtained from these surveys. We are also reviewing return-to-work processes to make them more efficient.

With regards to Labour Market Re-Entry (LMR), research is currently being completed across the country, to further explore modifications to the LMR supports that WorkplaceNL provides.

Efforts to strengthen Return-to-Work and LMR are both included in our 2023-25 Strategic Plan. We will continue with research in 2023 with a lens to modifying the delivery of ESRTW and LMR services throughout 2024 and 2025.