

Workers Care - Employment of an injured worker's family member or friend as a support worker

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Family as Support Worker	2
3. Requirements	3
4. Monitoring	4
5. Version Control and Document History	4

1. Introduction

Workers Care acknowledges the vital role that families have in the lives of injured workers. Our model of service delivery is injured worker-centred, with injured workers and families being involved in developing their goals and decisions about living in the community and the services they receive.

This policy supports the independence, dignity, and privacy of the injured worker.

Workers Care has appointed a panel of approved attendant care providers to deliver attendant care services to Workers Care workers. It is strongly recommended that panel providers are used to deliver attendant care services to injured workers. The panel providers have quality standards in place and the requisite skills to deliver services to meet the injury related needs of injured workers.

Attendant care services are delivered by attendant care workers, also known as support workers. For the purpose of this policy, the term “support worker” will be used in place of “attendant care worker”. Support workers provide injured workers with assistance to complete day-to-day activities that are difficult to manage because of their injury. This can include personal care, managing medication, home rehabilitation programs, and participating in community activities.

Attendant care services should be provided by support workers with no familial or social relationship to the injured worker. These workers are specifically trained to meet the injured worker’s needs and assist in achieving their personal goals whilst supporting the integrity of family and social relationships.

2. Family as Support Worker

Workers Care will not, in general, approve the engagement of an injured worker’s family member or friend as a paid support worker. For the purposes of this policy, the term “family member” will be used to represent either family member or friend. Engagement of a family member as a support worker may create an unintended financial relationship between the injured worker and family member which can have unintended consequences on their existing relationship and on the independence of both persons in the longer term.

In exceptional circumstances, where no other options are available to meet an injured worker's needs, Workers Care may consider exploring the potential for engagement of a family member as a support worker. Requirements for this to be approved are:

- all attempts to find a suitable provider of supports from either Workers Care approved panel providers, off-panel providers, or alternative types of support to meet their injury specific needs have been unsuccessful
- the family member is employed through, and trained by, an attendant care provider
- the arrangement is for a fixed and limited period

A family member's need for employment or an income source is not considered an appropriate justification for them to become a paid support worker.

A family member engaged as a support worker is required to be employed through an approved attendant care provider so that they have the appropriate support, skills, and training to meet the worker's specific care requirements. This minimises risks to the worker and to the family member, while also ensuring the appropriate insurance coverage is in place at all times.

3. Requirements

Workers Care considers a range of factors when a worker applies for a family member to be engaged as a support worker. These include but are not limited to:

- the circumstances surrounding the request
- any potential risks to the worker or others
- what strategies can be adopted to mitigate the identified risks

A worker must also have an approved care need and current care needs assessment when applying.

If Workers Care considers that there are exceptional circumstances and the risks are appropriately identified and managed, Workers Care will seek an approved panel attendant care provider to employ the family member and advise the provider that Workers Care has endorsed the request. The provider will then assess whether the family member meets their requirements to become a paid support worker. This endorsement will be for a limited period and include conditions on the employment of the family member.

The attendant care provider is not required to consider employing a family member if their own

policies do not support this type of engagement, or to progress with recruitment if they consider that the family member does not meet their employment requirements. If they elect to do so, the provider must engage the family member in accordance with their organisation's employment policies and procedures and afford the family member the same rights and responsibilities as other employees for the duration of their employment.

4. Monitoring

Workers Care in conjunction with the attendant care provider will undertake ongoing monitoring of any engagement of a family member as a support worker.

The engagement can be reviewed by Workers Care and the attendant care provider at any time. It will be reviewed at the end of any approved care period and where the circumstances of the worker or the care program have changed. The engagement shall not extend beyond an approved care period without review.

5. Version Control and Document History

Version	Author	Change Summary	Approval Date
v0923	Jeff Tonge		22/09/2023