

Treatment and support changes from 1 October 2026

Information for workers

What's Changing

From 1 October 2026, NSW workers compensation laws introduce new Reasonable and Necessary requirements for assessing treatment and support requests. They apply to all requests received on or after that date, including requests on existing claims.

What does this mean for me?

Treatment requests will continue to be considered individually. However, the information provided to support requests will become increasingly important in helping treatment providers, workers and insurers understand:

- How treatment relates to the workplace injury.
- The outcomes and benefits being achieved through treatment.
- How treatment supports recovery and function, including evidence of, or anticipated, improvements in symptoms and functional capacity.
- How treatment is helping you progress towards your recovery goals and whether other appropriate treatment options have been considered.

Additional information may sometimes be required to help support treatment and service requests to ensure the treatment continues to align with recovery goals and expected outcomes.

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Supporting recovery and positive outcomes

The updated requirements place a stronger focus on recovery goals, functional improvement, participation, return to usual activities and understanding how treatment supports recovery.

How can we work together?

- Discuss your recovery goals with your treatment provider and Case Manager so treatment remains focused on what is important to you and your recovery.
- Share information about how treatment is helping you so your treatment team and Case Manager can better understand the benefits and improvements you are experiencing.
- Understand what outcomes your treatment is working towards and how treatment supports your recovery, function and return to usual activities.
- Attend appointments and participate in treatment planning so your treatment team can monitor progress and adjust treatment where needed.
- Respond to requests for information where required to help support timely decisions and avoid unnecessary delays.

Why might additional information be requested

We may ask for more information to understand your treatment goals, recovery progress, functional improvements and how treatment relates to your workplace injury. Clear information helps us make timely, informed decisions.

What you need to know

- Changes apply from 1 October 2026
- Applies to treatment requests received from 1 October 2026, including existing claims
- Recovery goals and functional outcomes remain important considerations
- Information from you and your treatment team helps support treatment decisions
- Clear treatment goals and measurable progress and outcomes are increasingly important
- Working together supports better recovery outcomes

Working together to support your recovery

Your recovery is supported by a team, including your treatment provider, employer, Case Manager and other support services. Sharing your recovery goals, treatment progress and functional improvements helps everyone work together to support your recovery and return to usual activities.

The clearer your goals, progress and outcomes, the easier it is for everyone to help.

Need help?

Speak with your Case Manager, nominated treating doctor or your employer (where appropriate) if you have questions about your recovery or treatment.

Further information

The Reasonable and Necessary requirements are established under NSW workers compensation legislation, including Section 60 of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and Clause 8P of the Workers Compensation Regulation 2016 (as amended).

Further information is available through SIRA.



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Information for employers

What's changing

From 1 October 2026, NSW workers compensation laws introduce new Reasonable and Necessary requirements for assessing treatment and support requests. They apply to all requests received on or after that date, including requests on existing claims.

What does this mean for agencies?

Treatment requests will need stronger supporting information. Many will still be approved, but some may need more information or be assessed differently.

You may notice:

- More questions from workers about treatment requests and approvals.
- More contact between workers, providers and insurers.
- Greater focus on recovery goals and treatment outcomes.
- Ongoing recovery and recovery-at-work conversations.
- Requests for workplace information that may help support recovery planning.

Employers don't approve treatment, but agencies still play a key role in supporting recovery and keeping workers connected to work.

Understanding the four key considerations

Treatment and service requests will be assessed with consideration to four key areas.

Treating the compensable injury:
Treatment should be intended to treat the compensable workplace injury.

Clinical justification:
Treatment should be clinically justified, including evidence of, or anticipated, reduction in symptoms and improvement in functional capacity.

Recovery outcomes and value:
Treatment should support recovery outcomes and demonstrate benefits that are proportionate to the cost of treatment.

Cost-effective alternatives:
Other treatment options may be considered to check the proposed treatment is appropriate and value for money.

Supporting workers through change

Throughout recovery, ongoing support and communication helps workers to stay connected, informed and focused on achieving sustainable return-to-work outcomes.

- Maintaining regular communication.
- Supporting recovery conversations.
- Encouraging workers to discuss treatment-related questions with their Case Manager and treating provider
- Continuing to support recovery-at-work planning.
- Identifying suitable work opportunities where appropriate.
- Supporting workplace adjustments that assist recovery.

Your role in recovery

A collaborative approach can help ensure workers receive the support they need at the right time and that recovery goals remain aligned across all stakeholders.

- Working with workers, Case Managers and treatment providers to support recovery goals and recovery-at-work outcomes.
- Sharing relevant information about the worker's role, workplace requirements and available workplace supports where appropriate.
- Working collaboratively to identify suitable work opportunities that support recovery and participation.
- Supporting recovery-at-work plans and workplace adjustments where appropriate.
- Participating in recovery discussions and case conferences where required.
- Maintaining regular communication with workers and key stakeholders involved in recovery.
- Supporting a shared understanding of recovery goals, functional outcomes and next steps.

Working together

A collaborative approach supports better recovery outcomes and helps ensure workers receive appropriate support throughout their recovery journey.

- Recovery goals
- Functional outcomes
- Treatment objectives
- Measurable improvements and progress achieved
- Workplace supports
- Next steps in recovery

Information that may support recovery planning and treatment requests

- Current duties and role requirements.
- Functional demands of the role.
- Available suitable work opportunities.
- Workplace adjustments.
- Recovery-at-work plans.
- Workplace-based recovery opportunities.

This information may assist providers and insurers in understanding the worker's role, workplace needs and how treatment and services supports recovery and participation at work.

What you need to know

- Changes apply from 1 October 2026
- Applies to treatment requests on new and existing claims
- Employers continue to play an important role in supporting recovery and return to work
- Recovery goals and functional outcomes are increasingly important
- Treatment decisions remain the responsibility of the insurer
- Early communication supports positive recovery outcomes
- Recovery-at-work remains an important part of the recovery journey

Need help?

Contact your Claims Service Provider, Account Manager, visit the NSW Workers Compensation Reform Hub or access available reform resources and webinar recordings.

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Information for treatment providers

What's Changing

From 1 October 2026, NSW workers compensation laws introduce new Reasonable and Necessary requirements for assessing treatment and support requests. They apply to all requests received on or after that date, including requests on existing claims.

What does this mean for providers?

The information used to support treatment requests will become increasingly important. While many treatment requests may continue to be approved, some requests may require additional information or be assessed differently under the new requirements.

Four key considerations

Treating the compensable injury:
Clearly identify the diagnosed workplace injury and how the proposed treatment relates to that injury.

Recovery outcomes and value:
Demonstrate recovery goals, functional improvement and how treatment supports participation, everyday activities and recovery at work. Explain the actual or anticipated outcomes of treatment and how those outcomes are proportionate to the cost of treatment.

Clinical justification:
Provide a clear clinical rationale, including evidence of, or anticipated, reduction in symptoms and improvement in functional capacity.

Cost-effective alternatives:
Explain the actual or anticipated outcomes of treatment and, where appropriate, demonstrate that alternative treatment options have been considered and explain why the proposed treatment remains appropriate.

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Working Together

A collaborative approach supports better recovery outcomes.

Recovery goals should be understood by all stakeholders involved in the worker's recovery.

Progress, outcomes and any barriers to recovery should be discussed and communicated regularly.

Early clarification and information sharing can help minimise delays and reduce the need for follow-up requests.

Provider checklist

- [ ] Is the treatment directly related to the compensable workplace injury?
- [ ] Have recovery goals been identified?
- [ ] Is there a clear clinical rationale for the treatment or service requested?
- [ ] Are measurable outcomes documented?
- [ ] Has progress been monitored and outlined?
- [ ] Does the request support recovery and return to work outcomes?
- [ ] Have alternatives options been considered?
- [ ] Would an independent reviewer understand why the treatment is required?

Practical tips

What recovery goals is the worker working towards?

What progress has been made?

How is treatment helping recovery?

What outcomes are expected next?

How will success be measured?

What you need to know

Changes apply from 1 October 2026

Applies to treatment requests on new and existing claims

Recovery goals, progress and outcomes should be clearly documented

Clinical rationale should be clearly documented

Treatment requests should clearly demonstrate the relationship between the workplace injury, proposed treatment and expected outcomes

Clear information supports timely decision-making