



Specialist Neurological and Vocational Rehabilitation

Frequently Asked Questions For Employers and Line Managers



Question index

This page lists all Frequently Asked Questions in this document. Click any question to navigate directly to the answer. You can return to this page by clicking 'FAQ' in the bottom corner of each page.

What is neurorehabilitation?

What is neurological vocational rehabilitation?

I have seen someone from occupational health at work, is an occupational therapist the same thing?

What should I tell the individual about why Krysalis is involved?

What if the employee is unaware of our concerns about their diagnosis and work performance?

What if we want to share information with the occupational therapist that we do not wish to disclose?

What is the best way for everyone to work together?

The Assessment

What are the first steps?

How does the assessment process work?

Will the assessment tell us about the individual's work capabilities?

Will the assessment provide an outline of a return-to-work plan if an individual is off work?

What happens to the report when it is written?

How long will it take to receive the assessment report?

Vocational Rehabilitation

I have not heard of neurological vocational rehabilitation before; what is it?

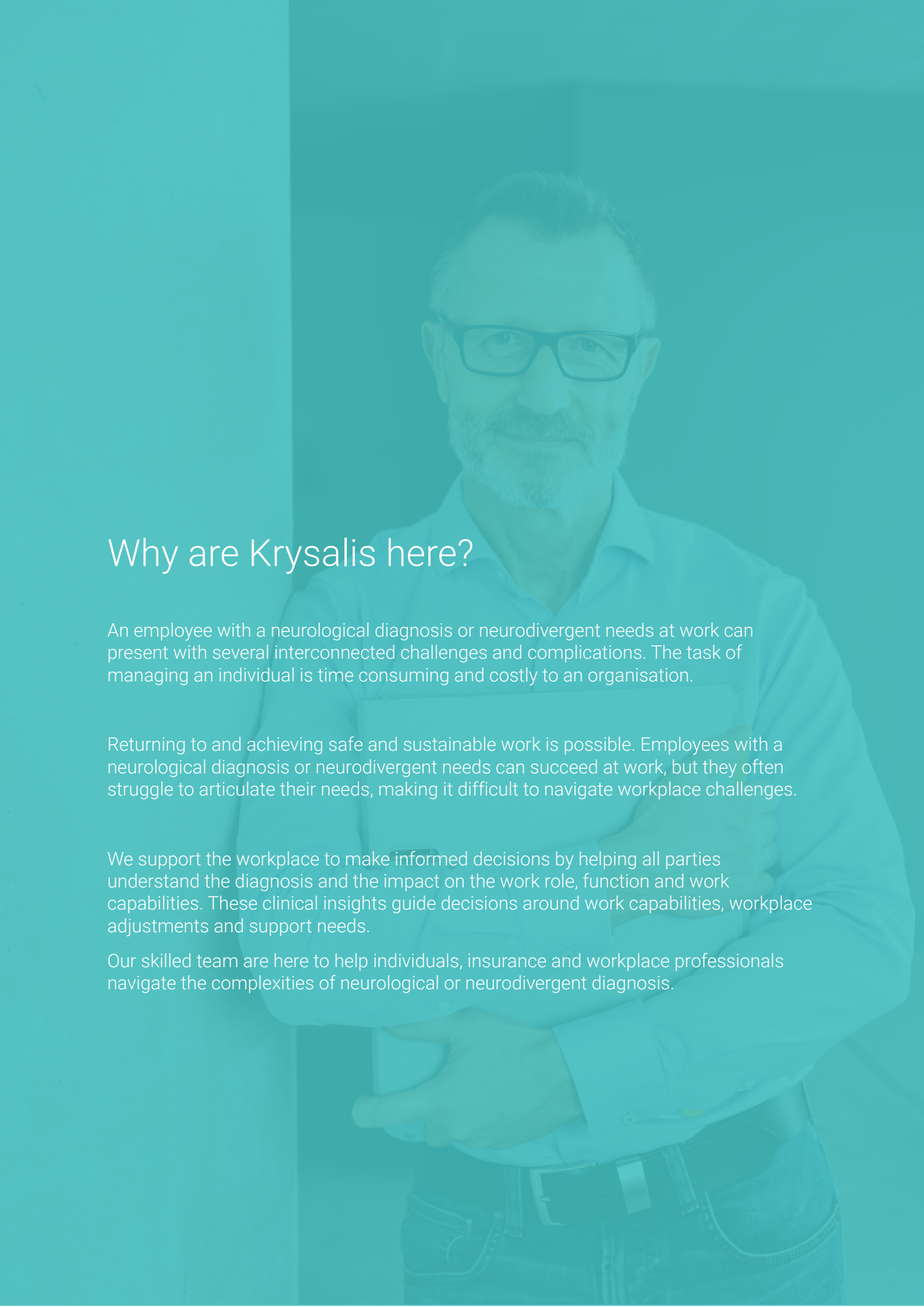
What does an occupational therapist who is skilled in neurological vocational rehabilitation do?

How does a vocational rehabilitation programme normally work?

Common Concerns Expressed by Individuals

The employee wants to return to work, but they don't feel ready yet; how can we help them?

The assessment report recommends neurological vocational rehabilitation pathways; what are these?



Why are Krysalis here?

An employee with a neurological diagnosis or neurodivergent needs at work can present with several interconnected challenges and complications. The task of managing an individual is time consuming and costly to an organisation.

Returning to and achieving safe and sustainable work is possible. Employees with a neurological diagnosis or neurodivergent needs can succeed at work, but they often struggle to articulate their needs, making it difficult to navigate workplace challenges.

We support the workplace to make informed decisions by helping all parties understand the diagnosis and the impact on the work role, function and work capabilities. These clinical insights guide decisions around work capabilities, workplace adjustments and support needs.

Our skilled team are here to help individuals, insurance and workplace professionals navigate the complexities of neurological or neurodivergent diagnosis.

Frequently asked questions

The basics

What is neurorehabilitation?

Neurological and neurodivergent conditions include a group of diagnoses that affect the working of the brain and central nervous system. An individual living with a neurological or neurodivergent diagnosis may experience one or many symptoms.

These symptoms are hard to understand, they are often interrelated and affect movement, thinking skills and mood, causing challenges with everyday living.

They can cause problems with how a person feels, their energy levels, sleep patterns, and their ability to communicate, and live and work alongside others.

Neurological rehabilitation is a specialist approach delivered by occupational therapists who understand how the brain and central nervous system works and the factors that influence symptoms. This knowledge can be used to help an individual overcome or manage the symptoms.

What is neurological vocational rehabilitation?

Neurological vocational rehabilitation is provided by an occupational therapist who specialises in neurological rehabilitation treatment techniques and has expertise in working with individuals and professionals in the workplace.



I have seen someone from occupational health at work, is an occupational therapist the same thing?

Occupational therapists and an occupational health nurse or physician have separate roles.

Occupational health professionals are medical professionals who are interested in the work environment and the health and safety of employees. They work to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses. An occupational health practitioner focuses on medical needs and workplace health and safety.

Occupational therapists are rehabilitation professionals who are interested in individual employees. They deliver personalised and specialist interventions to assess and enhance an individual's work performance.

An occupational therapist focuses on functional performance and skill acquisition.

A Krysalis beneficiary recovering from a stroke describes the difference here:

'My occupational health physician approached things differently from my occupational therapist. The occupational health doctor was focused on the condition and diagnosis; my occupational therapist was focused on function, looking in detail at how my condition impacted my abilities. This was more helpful to everyone to build a picture of what I could and could not do within the role.'

Things to consider before the assessment

What should I tell the individual about why Krysalis is involved?

We have prepared a frequently asked questions document for individuals, and we encourage the workplace, if possible, to talk through the content of the document with all parties before the assessment.

What if the employee is unaware of our concerns about their diagnosis and work performance?

Being open about your concerns and fostering a safe environment where an individual can express their needs is essential.

We understand that speaking to an individual about the impact of their needs or their diagnosis can feel daunting, and it can be hard to know how to begin opening a conversation. Often, being honest about how challenging the situation is for everyone will be helpful.

If you have concerns and need advice, please contact Krysalis for support. Opening channels of communication and having conversations about the process from the outset are essential for good outcomes.

What if we want to share information with the occupational therapist that we do not wish to disclose?

We understand that some information you share with us needs to be kept confidential. If this is the case, please make it explicitly clear that you are disclosing privileged information when speaking to us.

What is the best way for everyone to work together?

Collaboration and open communication are essential from the outset.

At the referral stage you will be assigned to a named clinical services coordinator who will be available to support you with day-to-day questions.

You will be allocated a neurological occupational therapist when we move to the assessment stage.

We recommend that you identify a trusted person within the workplace to work closely with our team and the individual; this does not need to be the line manager, but it helps. It could also be someone from HR or occupational health depending on the size of your organisation.

The Assessment

What are the first steps?

The assessment considers the diagnosis and all the needs and factors that influence and impact work.

How does the assessment process work?

In general, an assessment is completed with an individual online. Sometimes, usually due to an individual's needs, it is necessary to assess in-person or on the telephone.

The assessment explores the impact of neurological symptoms on the individual and considers the job role and the work environment.

The assessment process includes a series of questions that need to be answered by the workplace professionals responsible for the individual. The questions explore the role, workplace, and employer expectations. This information is essential as it helps us to build a picture of the job demands.

Will the assessment tell us about the individual's work capabilities?

Krysalis offers a variety of assessments that explore the work potential of an individual and their therapeutic needs. A work capacity assessment is the only assessment that advises on an individual's fitness for work status.

All assessment reports, if appropriate, include recommendations for workplace adjustments. However, it is not always possible to provide advice regarding workplace adjustments from a single assessment, depending on the impact of symptoms.

All assessment reports include a clinical opinion on current work barriers to aid decision making regarding next steps.

All assessment reports provide a judgement on work potential and include recommendations, if appropriate, for vocational rehabilitation or therapeutic support to change fitness for work status or work skills and capabilities.



Will the assessment provide an outline of a return-to-work plan if an individual is off work?

For individuals off work with a neurological diagnosis or neurodivergent needs the report will not typically include a formal return to work plan. This is because individuals off work often require a bespoke plan and specialist support as part of a vocational rehabilitation programme to achieve sustainable work.

Completing the Assessment Process and Receiving the Report

What happens to the report when it is written?

Once completed, the report will be shared with the individual first so they can review the accuracy of the information. Because the report includes sensitive medical information individuals are given two days to review the report before we can release the document to the referrer.

How long will it take to receive the assessment report?

Because of the assessment and consent process, it can take up to four weeks for the assessment and report to be completed. If you have specific time requirements, please speak to us so we can consider if we are able to support you.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Neurological vocational rehabilitation is a specialist field of rehabilitation designed to support the workplace. At Krysalis, services are provided by occupational therapists for people with neurological diagnosis or neurodivergent needs.

I have not heard of neurological vocational rehabilitation before; what is it?

Neurological conditions are complex and often further detailed exploration of symptoms and work readiness programmes are needed. This may include bespoke treatment plans specific to the individual, their diagnosis and workplace needs. This activity is called vocational rehabilitation.

The primary focus of vocational rehabilitation is to support an individual to realise their work potential. Our role is to ensure individuals are safe in the workplace and positions are sustainable. To make sure we achieve these aims, a bespoke plan is often needed.

What does an occupational therapist who is skilled in neurological vocational rehabilitation do?

They assess the impact of a neurological or neurodivergent diagnosis and can advise on work capacity and potential.

They provide guidance about reasonable adjustments or role modifications.

They deliver specialist neurological vocational rehabilitation and can treat and advise on wellbeing challenges and cognitive, executive, sensory and physical limitations.

They work with workplace professionals to keep people in work and formulate return to work plans for employees who are off work due to injury or illness.

The assessment report recommends neurological vocational rehabilitation pathways; what are these?

If needs have been found the occupational therapist may include recommendations for neurological vocational rehabilitation. The rehabilitation pathways differ in length; some include just a few sessions; others can last between three months and a year.

These pathways indicate the length of time that Krysalis will support the individual and the workplace, not the length of time it will take an individual to get back to work if they are not working.

How does a vocational rehabilitation programme normally work?

Individuals referred to Krysalis often present with a wide range of complex scenarios. Some are out of work and others are transitioning back into work or gradually building up hours to their full capacity. Others maybe working their contracted hours, but their performance is affected by neurological symptoms.

The experience and impact of a diagnosis is unique to each individual and therefore a work programme will be bespoke. Typically, a work programme runs over several weeks or months with a gradual increase in task demands to challenge skills and abilities.

The occupational therapist leads the work plan, but it is a collaborative process that will need to be negotiated and agreed by all parties. As progress is achieved the plan will be reviewed and adjustments made as required.

Common Concerns Expressed by Individuals

Individuals with mild to moderate neurological symptoms who have the potential to work often find themselves with little or no support from the NHS.

There are few NHS vocational rehabilitation services in the UK and working age individuals are rarely asked about their work aspirations.



The employee wants to return to work, but they don't feel ready yet; how can we help them?

Thinking about work can be daunting, especially if they have been out of work for some time or if the symptoms they experience feel overwhelming.

Many people with a neurological diagnosis find it difficult to 'feel ready' because so much is still unknown, or they may feel out of control or overwhelmed.

This is made more complicated by the fact that the support offered to people with neurological conditions to return to work is generally limited.

We understand that people need specialist help and expertise if returning to work is something they want to do or want to explore if work is still a possibility.

An individual returning to work following a neurological accident or illness often benefits from careful management. The first steps are about helping everyone understand the condition and agreeing shared goals.

The employee is working, but they are concerned that others don't understand their needs. We are experiencing challenges within the team, can you help?

The occupational therapist will use their assessment skills to understand the challenges and barriers.

Sometimes these barriers relate to the work environment, at other times they may be because of symptoms, or challenges with understanding and communication.

With consent, we can carry out training or share more detailed information about the individual's abilities and what steps can be taken to improve the situation or make adjustments.

Why are we here?

People living with neurological conditions need access to specialist advice and intervention.

Neuro Logical is a much-needed service at a time when the impact of COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on people with neurological conditions.

It is an unfortunate truth that the quality of care and support available for people who are living with a neurological condition can vary. It can be hard to find where to access support and difficult to access the right treatment, care, and support.

The past 18 months have been some of the most painful and isolating for so many people with neurological conditions. Many people are waiting longer for specialist support, with the number of people waiting more than a year for a neurology or neurosurgery appointment increasing by more than 9000% in the past 14 months.¹

Neuro Logical demystifies neurological rehabilitation, makes sense of complexity, and ensures that people affected by neurological conditions have access to experts.

1. Neurological Alliance - Restarting Services for People with Neurological Conditions after the COVID-19 Pandemic. July 2020



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...realising potential, transforming lives