



Finnish Institute of  
Occupational Health

# *Return to work- Overview of the systems in the Nordic countries: FINLAND*

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# Vocational rehabilitation (Waddell et al, 2013)

“Vocational rehabilitation is whatever helps someone with a health problem **to stay at, return to and remain in work** . It is an **idea** and an **approach** as much as an **intervention** or a **service**. ”

Waddell G, Burton A K, Kendall NAS. Vocational Rehabilitation. What works, for Who and When? Department for Work & Pensions. Series:Health, work and wellbeing – evidence and research, 2013. Saatavissa.  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/hwwb-vocational-rehabilitation.pdf>.

# Both early-intervention and RTW in Finland

- In Finland as a part of vocational rehabilitation we had a tradition of **the work-related early-intervention vocational rehabilitation** till the spring 2016, where focus was on **the support to stay at work**, the early-onset vocational rehabilitation.
  - Over 13 000 rehabilitees annually.
  - Intensive R&D-work till the end of 2014 (Seppänen-Järvelä et al 2015). Ongoing research: Evaluation of the effect to (potential) rehabilitees of the cessation of the activity (Juvonen-Posti et al 2016).
- Other vocational rehabilitation services have the RTW or re-employment as the main focus.

# Responsibilities of the stakeholders 1/2:

## Multi-disciplinary system of rehabilitation for working age people

(Juvonen-Posti, Lamminpää, Rajavaara, Suoyrjö, Töttermann 2016)

Stakeholder	Target group	Rehabilitation responsibility and forms of service
1. Employer	<i>Employees</i>	WDM, occupational safety and health in work and workplace design, support to work (dis)ability
2. Occupational Health Service	<i>Employees ja enterprenauers, who have difficulties in their work performance</i>	Work ability support, follow-up of sickness absence, guidance to rehabilitation, coordination
3. Healt care	<i>Clients with regognized need for rehabilitation</i>	Medical rehabilitation, guidance to multi-diciplinary rehabilitation
4. Pension Insurance Institution	<i>Employees or enterprenaurs, who have due to their sickness risk for a permanent work disability.</i>	Vocational rehabilitation, guidance to other vocational or multi-diciplinary rehabilitation
5. Insurance company	<i>Need for rehabilitation due to a work or traffic accident or occupational disease</i>	Medical and vocational rehabilitation

# Responsibilities of the stakeholders:

Multi-disciplinary system of rehabilitation for working age people

(Juvonen-Posti et al 2016)

Stakeholder	Target group	Rehabilitation responsibility and forms of service
6. Finnish Social Insurance Institute (Kela)	<i>Citizens with a disease or disability causing an essential weakening of their work or learning ability and in their earning potential. Severely disabled</i>	Vocational Medical, Rehabilitation Psychotherapy Discretionary basis: vocational, medical, multi-disciplinary
7. Administration of Employment and the Economy	<i>People with a disability or illness; reduces their chances of getting a job, maintain or advancing in a job</i>	Discretionary basis, all employment services can be used in the vocational rehabilitation purposes
8. Social Service	<i>Disabled according to the Disability Services Act People at the risk of social exclusion or exclusion from the labour market</i>	(Social) Disability Services Social Rehabilitation
9. Service providers and NGOs	<i>Clients to whom rehabilitation services are organized People who are in a difficult labor market or every-day-life situation</i>	Vocational Medical Social

# Effects and efficiency of the system

- Employees from middle-size and bigger workplaces, who have permanent full-time jobs, have access to vocational rehabilitation.
- The needs are insufficiently met especially within unemployed, people in non-permanent jobs and entrepreneurs.

(Juvonen-Posti ja Pensola (toim.) 2016. Kohti koordinoitua yhteistoimintaa. Ammatillisen kuntoutuksen työnjako. Työterveyslaitos)

- Has vocational rehabilitation prevented work disability and prolonged work careers in Finland?
  - Early-intervention: decrease of 3 sickness absence days, not cost-beneficial (Syöryö 2010; Saltychev 2012)
  - RTW by PII: RTW -rates after rehabilitation 58-64 % according to the yearly follow-up (2006-2015)
  - Re-employment: interventions have short term (less than 2 yrs) effects

# Coordination and collaboration

- **We had the law:** Rehabilitation Client Cooperation 1991-2002 and 2003-2014 aiming to national, regional and local coordination.
  - Every stakeholder **has the legal obligation** to give guidance of the proper services (in their 33 laws)
  - **A long tradition** in the rehabilitation counselling
- **Poor or lacking coordination** in the Finnish multi-disciplinary system of rehabilitation for working age people
- (New) Local collaboration e.g. between SII ja job offices
  - Rehabilitation/work ability coordinators or coaches



# Major changes in the service system and processes

- The major reform of health&social services and regional government:
  - from over 400 actors to 18 autonomous counties
  - public and private H&S-services
    - Services will be integrated in a customer-oriented way in accordance with people's needs.
    - Proposal on the customer's freedom of choice and multisource financing.
    - Aims to improve the sustainability of public finances.
- The Finnish Reformation Committee of Rehabilitation 1.9.2016-30.9.2017

Four key factors for the success in the multi-disciplinary rehabilitation

- make the room for rehabilitee's empowerment

- **Early recognition of the need** for rehabilitation.
- **Goal setting** and planning of the rehabilitation process **with the rehabilitee**.
- **Multi-disciplinary know-how and resources enough** in "scanning", planning and carrying out the rehabilitation
- **Agreed long-term (enough) follow-up**, and in the need for change agree on new solutions.



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# *Thank you!*



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