

Press release: Belgium's first disability case managers

Brussels, 21 April 2009

On Wednesday 22 April 2009, a milestone will be passed: diplomas will be awarded to Belgium's first disability case managers. The knowledge and skills of participants from various sectors (including HRM, occupational health and safety services, mutual health insurance schemes, rehabilitation centres, insurance companies, trade unions and centres for support in returning to work) were optimised during the disability case manager training programme, the main aim being to ensure better support for workers with long-term health problems and/or functional restrictions during the process of reintegration and job retention.

The longer a worker stays off work as a result of long-term health problems and/or functional restrictions, the lower his/her chances of returning to work. In practice, a number of factors make the transition from work incapacity to a state of fitness for work a difficult one. These include the complex legislative framework, the large number of actors involved and psychological barriers.

For the process of reintegration or job retention to be guided properly, it is important for a single central actor, the disability case manager, to coordinate the process. This person needs specific knowledge and skills. Applying the disability case management method will contribute to the advancement of the process, a benefit which represents significant added value for both worker and employer.

The disability case manager programme consists of six different modules: 'Introduction to the disability case management method', 'Legislation', 'Task analysis and job matching', 'Communication with the different stakeholders', 'Implementation of a disability management policy in the business' and 'Case study'.

This was the first time the training programme had been organised in Belgium. The diploma award ceremony will take place at **Kasteel de Maurissens, Weligerveld 6, 3212 Pellenberg**, and will start at 11 am. Roland Waeyaert, adviser on the staff of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities, will speak at the occasion. The next training programme starts on 29 September 2009.

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