

## Step 5: Having a Return to Work conversation



### KEY FACTS:

- To make sure of your successful return to work, you will need to have a return to work conversation with your manager. You will also need to work with your manager to develop a return to work plan, and a plan for reviewing work and health. The [return to work conversation guide](#) can help you do this.
- Poor return to work (RTW) conversations have an impact on the manager as well as the employee. Many managers find discussions around mental health and RTW difficult. Bear this in mind throughout the RTW conversation. Be confident to steer conversations in ways you think are best for your RTW. For example, if the manager is only focusing on policies and procedures, give them a chance to talk about your mental health: it is likely that they are not sure how to discuss this.



### WHAT TO DO:

- Make sure you have prepared for the return to work conversation. Use the exercises in Step 4 and read the Return to work conversation guide to help with this.
- Both you and your manager can use the [return to work conversation guide](#) to support you through this conversation.
- This conversation should take place in the first week of your return. However, depending on the length of your absence, you may find it useful to have some time to settle back into work first.
- You may want to ask a trusted colleague to sit in on the meeting. You can ask them to take notes or summarise the discussion for you.
- You and your manager can summarise the meeting and agree and write up a return to work plan. Your manager may need to consult other people before agreeing to the actions, so do not be alarmed if they do not agree to a final return to work plan during the meeting.



### WHAT TO SAY:

- Try to be as open, honest and specific as you can be. This will help your manager understand what you feel you can or cannot do at work. It will help them to work with you to develop the best way forward.
- Doing the exercises in Step 2 and Step 4 will help you translate your thoughts and feelings in to words and actions. Use these to help you talk to your manager.