

Special rehabilitation for injured workers

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Workers who lose their ability to work due to work-related injuries now have a chance to be “rehabilitated” and return to work, thanks to a new programme being introduced by the Social Security Organisation (Socso).

Under the “Return to Work” programme, the agency will pay for the workers’ treatment until they are able to resume work.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Fong Chan Onn

said the programme was crucial to enable workers to resume a productive life.

Motivation and counselling will also be provided to help the workers regain the confidence to return to work.

Fong was speaking after launching the first rehabilitation centre under the programme, which is run jointly with DBC Malaysia, at Ampang Plaza today.

However, he said the centre, equipped with modern equipment and established rehabilitation programmes from countries like

Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, was only for those who are suffering from severe spinal injuries.

“We are giving priority to this category because spinal and cervical injuries do not only happen in factories but also in offices, such as while using computers.

“This is the first step. We will be opening rehabilitation centres for other injuries in future. We are already looking at rehabilitation for workers who have lost their hands and fingers.”

Fong said another centre

was expected to be opened in Ipoh soon.

He said employers could play a role by re-hiring rehabilitated workers or re-assigning them to other posts.

Fong said of the 9,000 workers permanently disabled in 2003, between 2,000 and 3,000 suffered from back and cervical pain.

If they could be rehabilitated, the RM147 million paid to them could be reduced. Socso also paid RM158.37 million to 2,500 workers in 2003.



SEEKING RELIEF: Ramlah Maalim, 37, undergoing the rehabilitation programme for backache at Ampang Plaza.