
Supplement

to Work-Life Balance:

a resource for the State Services

Sections One–Eight





Contents

Section One: The Range of Work-Life Balance Options and Solutions	S3
Flexible working arrangements	S3
Leave	S4
Child and elder care	S4
Health and wellness initiatives	S5
Work-life balance culture/environment	S5
Section Two: Ways of Gathering Information from Staff	S7
Conducting a work-life balance survey	S7
Holding individual interviews	S8
Running a consultation process	S8
Establishing a formal work-life balance committee or forum	S8
Running focus groups	S9
Section Three: Cost-Benefit Analysis	S12
When to assess the costs and benefits	S12
Steps in assessing costs and benefits	S13
Where to get the information	S13
Difficulties with assessing costs and benefits	S13
Section Four: Relevant Legislation, Government Policy and Current Government Initiatives	S15
Legislation	S15
Government policy	S17
Current Government initiatives	S17
Section Five: Examples of Policies and Procedures	S19
Department of Internal Affairs – Work and Family/Whānau Guidelines	S19
Department of Conservation – Balancing Work and Personal Responsibilities	S30
Section Six: Guide to Developing a Work-Life Balance Work Plan	S37
Section Seven: Communication Plan Template and Example	S39
Section Eight: Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties at each Step of Work-Life Balance Interventions – expanded description	S42
Employee	S43
Union/s	S44
HR manager	S45
Line manager	S48
Senior manager	S49



Section 1

The Range of Work-Life Balance Options and Solutions

Every organisation and individual faces different work-life balance issues. Correspondingly there are work-life balance solutions that will suit different situations and address different needs. Organisations need to ‘pick and mix’ from the options to find the right combination to fit their environment and to have the most impact in addressing the work-life balance needs of their employees.

This section lists a range of work-life balance solutions under five broad categories:

- flexible working arrangements (the organising of work hours)
- leave (time out of the workplace)
- child and elder care (assistance with family needs)
- health and wellness initiatives (preventing and managing the stress from work and life)
- work-life balance culture/environment (the organising of work and management style).

Under each of these categories is a range of options.

Flexible working arrangements (the organising of work hours)

- flexible hours (change the start and end times of the work day)
- job share (share a full-time position with another employee)
- compressed work week (work full-time hours in fewer than five days)
- part-time (reduce the number of hours worked each day or week)
- time banking (work extra hours in advance and take equivalent time off at an agreed time)
- work reduced hours for a specified period of time (temporarily reduce to part-time hours)
- term-time work (divide full-time hours across school term weeks and take leave during school holidays)
- gradual retirement
- work away from the office (work from home or from a remote office)

- collective options (require participation by all or most employed in a unit or work area)
- self-roster (staff schedule their working day times)
- annual hours scheme (distribute staff hours to meet changing levels of need across the year, e.g. winter may be busier than summer).

Leave¹ (time out of the workplace)

- educational leave
- leave of absence, e.g. sabbatical
- parental leave (including allied organisational strategies aimed at ensuring staff on parental leave do return to the workplace – for instance, inviting them to work social functions, sending them a regular newsletter, keeping them up to date with significant changes)
- transition-to-retirement leave
- community leave (leave provided to undertake voluntary work)
- bereavement and tangihanga leave
- buyable leave, where an employee can buy additional leave through a proportional reduction in salary
- breaking leave entitlements into hourly blocks (e.g. to allow for time off during the day to attend school functions)
- employment breaks (short-term leave without pay)
- leave banking, where an employee takes a reduced salary for a defined period of time and ‘banks’ the reduced amount toward an extended period of leave for purposes such as further study or travel. This is a long-term approach – e.g. staff work for four years at 80% of salary and have the fifth year off on 80% of salary.

For additional information and case studies, see the State Services Commission publication, *New Leave Arrangements*, at <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/new-leave-arrangements>

Child and elder care (assistance with family needs)

Assistance with care

- on-site childcare
- emergency carer leave or back-up childcare
- childcare subsidy
- dependant leave (additional sick leave)
- childcare expenses in relation to work travel
- school holiday programme

¹ In addition to statutory minimum requirements (e.g. holiday leave, parental leave)

- after-school care programme.

Information services

- resource material for new parents (e.g. information on pre-school options)
- advice seminars on elder care options (e.g. checklist for what to look at with retirement villages)
- information on local care providers.

Sensitive practices

- access to phone to make and receive calls from family members, or to make confidential calls, e.g. to doctor
- provision of car parks on an ‘as needed basis’ for days when people have dependant care responsibilities, such as going to a child’s school event, going with a parent to the doctor
- work-based support groups for staff with elder care responsibilities
- breastfeeding area (private area with appropriate facilities).

Health and wellness initiatives (managing the stress from work and life)

- good health and safety practices
- gym membership or subsidy
- smoking cessation initiatives
- employee assistance programme
- medical check-ups
- medical insurance
- flu shots
- eye tests
- showers and changing facilities
- bicycle parking
- study assistance
- budgeting advice
- time management and planning skills
- stress management training.

Work-life balance culture/environment (the organising of work and management style)

Organising the work

- meet in core hours (avoid scheduling meetings early or late, if possible)

- avoid overnight meetings if possible
- ensure fair and transparent workloads
- offer different work arrangements under the same conditions (e.g. offer part-time work that is well paid and has access to training and career development)
- ensure adequate staffing levels (to allow staff to take time off and not have to work extra hours).

Checking the management style

- examine the messages that staff receive (what behaviours are being role modelled?)
- look at what behaviours are rewarded (are people being rewarded for their visibility or for what they achieve?)
- recognise the work-life balance needs of staff
- reduce the amount of overtime worked
- improve workload management
- encourage the taking of annual leave
- take an open-door approach to problems (within good guidelines, business/personal needs can be met).

The solutions that result from looking at the work environment are possibly the most influential in terms of the employee's work-life balance. The fostering of an environment that is more 'work-life balance friendly' requires support. Ways of supporting this change are:

- making improvements to the quality of the management training and support in the work-life balance area (for experienced managers, to give them a focus on new ways of looking at things; for new managers, to provide endorsement for those who may be nervous about exercising discretion)
- ensuring leadership and role modelling from the leaders of the organisation
- rewarding managers who encourage and achieve good work-life balance for their employees and who have a good work-life balance themselves.



Section 2

Ways of Gathering Information from Staff

There are many different ways of canvassing staff for their thoughts and ideas on work-life balance. The method that is best for a particular situation will depend on a number of factors, such as the size of the organisation, the size of the sample (do you want to contact every person, or will a sample suffice?), the style of the organisation, the geographical spread of staff (are they all in one office or spread out across the country?), and cost and time considerations.

Some options for collecting information from staff about work-life balance include:

- conducting a work-life balance survey
- holding individual interviews
- running a consultation process
- establishing a formal work-life balance committee or forum
- running focus groups.

It may be that a combination of the different options is what is right for your organisation.

In this section, the different options are discussed. For each of the options there is a brief description, followed by a discussion of the issues. Information about running focus groups is developed in greater detail.

Conducting a work-life balance survey

Surveys are a comprehensive way of gathering information about the needs of your workforce. It is a particularly good method when there are large numbers, when everyone in the organisation is to be consulted, or when people are in different locations throughout the country. It allows for the widest involvement of all employees.

Potential drawbacks of surveys are that employees need to be motivated to respond, there is the possibility of low response rates, and responses and ideas can be limited to the questions asked.

While the information is easy to analyse if closed questions are used, responses may not be particularly valuable. Open-ended questions result in more detailed information, but can often be difficult and time-consuming to analyse.

For examples of work-life balance questionnaires, refer to either of the following publications:

- New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. *It's About Time! A Union Guide to Work-Life Balance*, Wellington, NZCTU, November 2004, which can be downloaded at <http://www.nzctu.org.nz./policy/109996693920232.html>
- EEO Trust. *Work and Family: Steps to Success /Te Mahi me te Whānau:Ngā Upane ki te Angitu*, Auckland, 1996, pp 21-23.

These work-life balance survey examples can be adapted for use in your own organisation. However, it is a good idea to test the survey with a small number of people before you send it throughout the organisation. (Consider language, style, ease of instructions, examples/initiatives that may be specific to your organisation.)

Holding individual interviews

Conducting interviews can be a low-cost or a high-cost option, depending on the number of staff you interview and their geographical spread. Interviews can be a good strategy to employ in combination with another option, such as a survey, where interviews can allow you to explore interesting results from the survey in more detail. It can also be a way of testing solutions without raising staff expectations (as might be the case by the inclusion of possible solutions in a survey). People can provide more in-depth answers through interviews and more detail can be provided to the interviewee to clarify what is meant by a particular question.

Running a consultation process

- Running a consultation process can be an effective method of obtaining feedback and ideas from a wide range of staff. This may be a useful way of gathering information from staff, once the organisation has identified the main work-life balance issues and has developed some ideas about solutions.
- Running a consultation process could range from communicating with staff via a document (e.g. posted on the Intranet or sent out through the email network) and asking for submissions, through to running a series of briefings and inviting submissions, or running a series of focus groups with staff. More detail on running focus groups can be found later in this section.

Establishing a formal work-life balance committee or forum

A work-life balance committee could be an ongoing forum or a committee that is established for a particular purpose, e.g. to develop an organisation's work-life balance plan. In forming a work-life balance committee, it is essential to clarify:

- the purpose of the committee
- the membership of the committee
- who the committee reports to
- the relationship of the committee to other key parties, e.g. the HR manager.

It is important to have a wide representation of the workforce on the committee, including both management and union representatives.

Examples of how organisations are using work-life balance committees are given in Chapter Six of *Work-Life Balance: a resource for the State Services*. Section 6.1.3 contains an example from the Education Review Office, where they established a work-life balance forum to identify and problem-solve work-life balance issues. Section 6.5.1 offers an example from the Northland regional office of the Ministry of Social Development, which has set up a steering group to develop a wellness policy and develop practical ways of supporting staff wellness.

“ *One of the most useful things we have done regarding work-life balance was to establish the work-life balance forum. It provides an avenue for staff to raise their concerns and air their views and a place where management and the union can discuss the issues and try to come up with a solution.* ” (HR Advisor from ERO).

For more information on developing a joint working group, including a sample terms of reference, refer to the NZCTU's *It's About Time! A Union Guide to Work-Life Balance*. This publication can be downloaded from:
<http://www.nzctu.org.nz/policy/109996693920232.html>

Running focus groups

A focus group involves bringing together a group of people to talk about issues that have relevance to a larger group of people. It is important the group is representative of the wider group and that the people within the group accurately represent the views of the employees they represent.

Focus groups are a good option when an organisation:

- *wants to explore lots of ideas and issues* and go deeper than is possible with a survey. As focus group questions are open-ended and interactive, many issues can be explored. Because of their open and exploratory nature, focus groups can also stimulate discussion about things that were not anticipated
- *wants to develop a survey*. A focus group discussion can help define the most important issues, and because participants define those issues in their own words, the discussion can be a useful tool in developing a survey. A focus group can also help to reveal issues or potential solutions that should be probed further
- *knows little about the important work-life balance issues* that are being faced by employees or are stuck for what ideas may work.

The group dynamic can result in better responses than discussing an issue with an individual, as people can build on each other's comments. This can lead to the group developing creative solutions. Additionally, the group dynamics allow the observer to analyse the 'unspoken' language, and how other participants react to ideas through their responses, body language or lack of response.

The following are some guidelines for conducting focus groups².

At the beginning

Be very clear about:

- why the focus group is being undertaken
- what you want to achieve from it
- how you will use the information.

Size and membership of focus group

Focus groups work best when there are between 8-10 participants. Enough people need to be included to stimulate discussion and generate a variety of views. However, having too many people can mean the group is difficult to control or that some people may feel uncomfortable about contributing. Consider the mix of people, and particularly consider the desirability for all members to feel comfortable – if a person's manager is present they may not feel as willing to contribute.

Timing and scheduling

Leave plenty of time for the focus group – allow at least 90 minutes. Before the focus group is scheduled to occur, brief participants on:

- when and where the discussion will be held and what time to allow for it
- the purpose of the focus group
- confidentiality – assure them that their comments will remain confidential to the group
- what the results will be used for
- contact details, in case they have any concerns following the meeting.

Preparation

In developing the questions, consider:

- the number of questions (don't have too many – less is more)
- the order of the questions (e.g. from general to specific).

Where possible, use open questions rather than closed, as open questions make for better discussion. Use probes rather than prompts, e.g. “Could you give me an example of that?”, “What effect has that had on you?”.

Recording the focus group

There are two options for recording the discussion from the focus group:

- Write notes (It can be difficult to take both notes and facilitate. It is ideal to have two people, one to ask the questions and one to record.)
- Tape the discussion (People can be sensitive to this, so ensure that you ask permission in advance.)

² Adapted from Trade Union Congress, *Changing Times: a TUC Guide to Work-Life Balance*, London, TUC, 2001, p 25

Running the focus group

At the beginning of the focus group, it is important to introduce the facilitators and re-state the purpose of the focus group.

Ask participants to introduce themselves and establish or remind them of the rules of the group, e.g. respect, confidentiality, etc.

During the focus group, try to include everyone. Monitor the pattern of contributions and try to ensure everyone gets a chance to contribute. Having set clear ground rules, intervene if they are not being complied with.

When closing the focus group, signal your last question and ask for final comments. Thank the participants for their contribution and discuss what will happen with the notes from here.

Ensure that the notes are written up as soon as possible after the focus group has been completed, to ensure you capture the detail.

Further information on focus groups is contained in the NZCTU's *It's About Time! A Union Guide to Work-Life Balance*. The publication can be downloaded from:
<http://www.nzctu.org.nz/policy/109996693920232.html>



Section 3

Cost-Benefit Analysis³

When considering which options to use in your work-life balance strategy, it is essential to assess the costs and benefits of each one. The assessment may be quantitative or qualitative, or a combination of both. The level of detail required will depend on:

- the nature of the option
- the information available
- the information required by your organisation's decision makers.

In some cases, just identifying the types of costs and benefits will be enough. In others, being able to refer to costs and benefits of similar initiatives carried out in New Zealand and overseas is enough to convince senior managers. Few organisations do a full cost-benefit analysis of any of their human resource policies or programmes, relying instead on a realistic assessment of costs and benefits. If a full cost-benefit analysis is required, get help (if you need it) from qualified people inside your organisation or from a consultant.

Be realistic about what is necessary and what is possible. Keep it as simple as possible.

When to assess the costs and benefits

Assessing costs and benefits will be necessary when you need:

- *to examine the current costs of not having a strategy.* This can be used to motivate your organisation to implement a work-life strategy, e.g. cost of staff turnover due to family responsibilities
- *to identify the costs and benefits of implementing a proposed option.* This will help you decide if a specific option is worth implementing and to compare it with alternative options, e.g. the expected costs of introducing paid parental leave may include remuneration of staff on leave and costs associated with replacement staff, while the expected benefits may include reduced staff turnover and staff taking shorter periods of parental leave
- *to identify the costs and benefits of an existing policy.* This is necessary to evaluate the policy's effectiveness, e.g. the costs of part-time work may include administration and accommodation, while the benefits may be greater flexibility and reduced absenteeism.

³ This material is reproduced and adapted, with permission, from the EEO Trust publication *Work and Family: Steps to Success/Te Mahi me te Whānau: Ngā Upene ki te Angitu*, Auckland, 1996, pp 34-36

Steps in assessing costs and benefits

- determine the likely scope of the work-life option you are considering
- identify the types of costs and benefits associated with this option
- measure or attribute financial values to the costs and benefits where possible. Where not, describe costs and benefits
- analyse the costs and benefits over the relevant time frame.

The case study in Appendix B of the EEO Trust publication *Work and Family: Steps to Success*⁴ illustrates how this process could be used when a detailed cost-benefit analysis is needed.

The costs and benefits identified in the boxed checklist on the next page have been experienced by employers as they implemented different work and family strategies.

Where to get the information

Your level of analysis will depend on how much of the information you need is available. You may find some of the information you need from:

- your organisation's human resources records
- your organisation's financial records
- surveys of your organisation
- other employers
- Statistics New Zealand
- the Internet
- specialist articles or books on work-life issues
- EEO Trust data base
- consultants.

It may be enough to use average or typical costs, rather than knowing the exact costs for your organisation. You may be able to get such average or typical costs from other employers, from general surveys of employment costs, or from other research.

Difficulties with assessing costs and benefits

Difficulties can arise in assessing costs and benefits when:

- *the data is not available.* The systems for collecting the data may not be in place or are not sufficiently flexible to give you the information you need
- *the data is too complex.* There may be too many other variables which also affect the benefit or cost you wish to assess
- *the data is not quantifiable.* Benefits such as increased morale and loyalty are difficult to quantify
- *the data takes too long to collect.* The costs of collecting the data must be kept in proportion with the costs of implementing the option
- *the financial benefits may not be immediately obvious.* It is often far easier to count the costs than to attribute financial values to the benefits.

4 Op. cit.



Costs and Benefits: Checklist

Do these benefits apply to your option?

- lower staff turnover
- higher rate of return from parental leave
- increased productivity through reduced anxiety and distraction
- reduced absenteeism
- positive or improved public relations
- increased equal employment opportunities
- increased morale, commitment and motivation
- improved employment relations
- increased ability of staff to attend training courses
- increased ability of staff to work overtime
- increased ability of staff to be flexible to meet organisational requirements

Do these costs apply to your option?

- equipment
- replacement staff
- additional supervision
- procedural changes
- remuneration
- training
- administrative costs
- lost productivity
- construction or other establishment costs, e.g. child care centre
- staff time of those involved in investigating and implementing options
- consultancy costs
- time away from the organisation's primary goals

For further information, refer to:

- A case study using this cost-benefit analysis approach at Appendix B of EEO Trust, *Work and Family: Steps to Success/Te Mahi me te Whānau: Ngā Upane ki te Angitu*, Auckland, 1996
- State Services Commission. *Cost-Benefit Analysis of EEO in the Public Service*. Wellington, 1998
- Torrie, Rae. "A Reasonable Request? A Reasonable Response? EEO and Cost-Benefit Analysis" in Sayers, J. and Tremaine, M. (eds) *The Vision and The Reality – EEO in the New Zealand Workplace*. Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, 1994.



Section 4

Relevant Legislation, Government Policy and Current Government Initiatives

A number of New Zealand laws establish minimum terms and conditions of employment, while many government policies provide leadership and guidance to government organisations on being a good employer.

This section provides a list of the relevant legislation and policies as at March 2005, with a brief description of how they pertain to work-life balance. Readers should bear in mind that examples quoted throughout this publication reflect HR practice at the time of writing.

Useful website links are included below.

Legislation

■ ***Employment Relations Act (ERA) 2000***

This Act regulates most aspects of the employment relationship. It promotes collective bargaining. The ERA underpins the role of the union in the work-life balance area.

■ ***Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987***

This Act prescribes minimum entitlements with respect to parental leave for male and female employees, and protects the rights of employees during pregnancy, and during and following parental leave.

Section 71 of the Act entitles certain employees to paid parental leave. As from 1 December 2004, eligible workers will be entitled to 13 weeks of paid parental leave. This increases to 14 weeks from 1 December 2005.

■ ***Human Rights Act 1993***

Section 21 of this Act describes the grounds on which it is illegal to discriminate. For some people, it is precisely their membership in these categories that may influence their desire and choices to improve their work-life balance. The prohibited grounds of discrimination are the following:

- sex, which includes pregnancy and childbirth
- marital status

- religious belief
- ethical belief
- colour
- race
- ethnic or national origins
- disability
- age
- political opinion
- employment status
- family status
- sexual orientation.

■ ***Holidays Act 2003***

This Act sets out the minimum entitlements to:

- annual leave
- public holidays
- sick leave
- bereavement leave.

The Act provides a foundation of basic entitlements that are supportive of employees seeking to achieve work-life balance.

■ ***Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992***

This Act is about making work activities safe and healthy for everyone connected with them. The Act highlights and makes explicit that it covers stress and fatigue as potential work hazards and sources of harm, and that certain behaviours may create a hazard in this arena. This has significant implications for the role of the employer in managing the stress and workloads of their employees.

■ ***State Sector Act 1988***

This Act sets out to ensure that every employer in the State Services is a good employer; to promote equal employment opportunities in the State Services; and to provide for the negotiation of fair conditions of employment in the State Services.

Government policy

■ *Partnership for Quality Agreement*

The Partnership for Quality Agreement aims to develop an open, co-operative relationship between the PSA and departmental management, with the objective of contributing to the effectiveness of the New Zealand Public Service and enhancing the quality of employment in the sector⁵. The Agreement informs and provides the context for the way work-life balance arrangements should be developed and implemented within a government organisation.

■ *EEO Policy to 2010*

The EEO Policy to 2010 identifies the three conditions that need to be present for diversity in the workplace to exist. One of these is an inclusive, respectful and responsive organisational culture. Implicit in this is the need for access to work-life balance provisions.

The EEO Policy to 2010 can be accessed at:

<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/eeo-policy-to-2010>

Current Government initiatives

Department of Labour Work-Life Balance Project

This project is about getting more people to think about work-life balance issues and helping more people to enjoy the benefits. The aim is to find out what is already being done in organisations, and to see what other practical solutions could work for employers and employees.

For more information on this project go to:

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/worklife/index.asp>

Pay and Employment Equity Unit

This unit has been established within the Department of Labour to oversee the implementation of the five-year plan of action that resulted from the Pay and Employment Equity Taskforce. It aims to reduce the gender pay gap across the Public Service, public health and public education sectors.

The Pay and Employment Equity Taskforce Report (1 March 2004) highlighted work-life balance as one of many issues relating to the gender pay gap. Work being undertaken by the Department of Labour is examining the impact of family responsibilities on the gender pay gap, in particular in relation to the participation of women in the workforce.

5 State Services Commission and New Zealand Public Service Association. *Partnership for Quality – Guidelines for Departments*, 2000

Useful general websites

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz>

This website provides free public access to unofficial versions of New Zealand statutes (Public, Local, and Private Acts) and Statutory Regulations. You can search and browse this material free of charge. The legislation on this website is sourced from Brookers. This is a temporary website until the Public Access to Legislation Project is completed, at which time an official Parliamentary Counsel Office website will be established that will provide free public access to New Zealand legislation.

<http://www.workinfo.govt.nz>

This website provides information about recent changes in employment legislation including amendments to the Holidays Act, Paid Parental Leave Act, Employment Relations Act and Health and Safety in Employment Act.

<http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz>

This website provides information about employment relations, including employment conditions, rights and obligations.

<http://www.osh.govt.nz>

This website contains information on the Health and Safety in Employment legislation.



Section 5

Examples of Policies and Procedures

Excerpts from departmental policy relating to work-life balance have been included throughout the Work-Life Balance resource. This section contains two full departmental examples of work-life balance policies as at March 2005 from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) and the Department of Conservation (DOC). Incorporated within the Department of Internal Affairs' policy are vignettes illustrating aspects of the policy in practice.

Department of Internal Affairs – Work and Family/Whānau Guidelines



Message from the Chief Executive

Kia ora koutou

Getting a balance into our lives is crucial. We are setting high standards of business excellence, and need to ensure that this means working smarter, not necessarily longer. These guidelines have been developed because we recognise that while work is an important part of the lives of all people in DIA, we have other responsibilities as well. The guidelines are based on the belief that people who feel valued, and are able to balance work, family/ whānau responsibilities and outside interests, are likely to be more productive workers and make better business decisions.

Several recent studies have reported the link between employee loyalty and family-friendly policies. One study, published in the June 1995 issue of *Personnel Psychology*, showed that when employees feel their employer cares about them, they are more willing to support change, stay late if needed, work an extra day, and be more flexible. They are also more loyal and more likely to stay with the organisation. Another study, conducted by the Families at Work Institute, shows that family-friendly policies and benefits gain employee commitment and loyalty better than any other programme. One US bank's work and family programmes have provided the company with a competitive advantage in retaining skilled individuals and attracting new talent. "At NationsBank, we have a simple philosophy," said the CEO. "If we take care of our associates, they will take care of our customers, and that, in turn, takes care of our stakeholders. It's the way we do business."

At DIA our purpose is to serve and connect citizens, communities and government to build a strong, safe nation. To be real we need to model the value we place on community. These work and family/whānau guidelines will help us to do that – by enabling DIA people to play a role in their families and communities as well as being highly productive paid workers.

I ask you all to bring these principles alive and make them work. We will all benefit.

Nāku noa, nā

Chris Blake, Chief Executive

Introduction to Policy

The term “family” means whānau, multi-generational families, same-sex families and close-knit small groups of people who come together and function as a family.

The DIA Work and Family/Whānau Policies are available in the HR Information Database and include Flexible working hours, Flexible working arrangements, and Leave.

DIA’s policies to assist people to balance their work and family responsibilities, affect employment conditions in three particular areas:

Flexible working hours

- start and finish times
- compressed working hours
- time-banking.

Flexible working arrangements

- part-time work (permanent or temporary)
- job share and job split
- part-year employment
- flexible working locations.

Leave

- parental leave
- dependant care leave
- bereavement/tangihanga leave
- special purpose leave
- cultural leave.

Staff have family responsibilities if they:

- are expecting or adopting children
- have children of all ages
- have elderly dependants
- have partners needing care
- have dependants with disabilities or long-term illnesses
- are experiencing crises or celebrations in their extended families and communities.

Families are different in terms of:

- *household arrangements* (e.g. those with or without children, one and two-parent families, blended or extended families, lesbian or gay couples, parents with children now living away from home and group households)

- *cultures, values, beliefs and actions* (e.g. how they organise their childcare or eldercare arrangements) often linked to their ethnic backgrounds and the different ages and stages at which they choose to have children
- *economic and employment status*
- *level of support* from friends and relatives.

Note: The term ‘dependants’ is used through the guidelines. Dependants are people who rely on us for financial, emotional and/or practical support. Depending on the circumstances, dependants can be children, partners, parents, relatives, flatmates, friends, neighbours.

Family/whānau responsibilities come in all shapes and sizes

- Some responsibilities will be unpredictable or arise only out of emergencies, such as travelling to a tāngi or taking a child with a broken arm for treatment.
- Other responsibilities may be periodic or occasional, such as having the children for the school holidays, taking your turn to look after an elderly parent or supporting a partner undergoing cancer treatment.
- Many people have regular and ongoing family commitments such as everyday care for children or elders or relatives with disabilities.

Supporting people to balance work and family/whānau responsibilities

Guiding principles for managers – walking the talk!

Get in first

It’s a good idea to periodically let your staff know that you realise they need to balance their work and home lives. Set the scene for the times when the two sets of demands conflict and they do need to discuss workable solutions with you and the team.

Flexibility is the key

Increasing the flexibility in working arrangements is the key to managing work and family. You need to know that as a manager you can be assured of a timely, quality, high impact out-turn. Even though people may have to balance their work and family commitments, you as their manager can still get the results you are looking for, provided you are visibly supportive of staff having flexible arrangements at times.

Go for Win/Win

Look to achieve win/win solutions when discussing work/family issues. There is much to be gained from coming to an arrangement that benefits the individual staff member, the team and the business. When someone needs to alter their working arrangements for a while for family reasons, get their colleagues involved in helping to work out the solution. That way everyone wins.

Throw away the “If you give them an inch . . .” mentality

Try not to be hampered by the “precedent” mentality – “If I let her do that, everyone else will want to do it too.” When looking for a solution to a work/family issue, it works well to treat each situation on an individual basis, and to communicate clearly with staff about **why** a different arrangement is happening for someone. Keep the secrecy to a minimum.

Family/whānau-friendly through and through

Don’t wait until a crisis situation arises to talk about flexibility in working arrangements. A culture of personal and team responsibility at work enables people to work out for themselves how they are going to deal with family/life demands and contribute fully to work. Flexible options can be offered in recruitment advertisements (you may attract a real winner that way!); or in team talks; or in the performance assessment.

What about the men?

Remind yourself and others that men, as well as women, need to balance their work and home lives. Work and Family Policies increase the opportunities for men (and women) to be more involved in caring for their families, without adverse reaction from managers and colleagues.

Whānau support

People may feel more comfortable in discussing leave and other options with their manager or team leader in a culturally appropriate manner. They may wish to invite whānau support to participate in the conversation, to present particular views and to enable the issue to be discussed more fully.

Flexible working hours, arrangements and leave: practices and policies for balancing work and family/whānau



1 Flexible working hours

Flexibility in the way in which hours are worked is the single most helpful factor that enables people to balance their work responsibilities and their family responsibilities. This came through strongly in the responses to the 1995 survey on work and family responsibilities

1.1 Flexible start and finish times

Flexibility around start and finish times enables staff to vary the times that they begin or finish their working day, provided they work their contracted number of hours each week or fortnight. Managers and staff may find it useful to examine the options around flexible start and finish times, and choose those most suited to the people and the business.

Tips and traps

- When people have the flexibility to vary their hours according to family demands, both the employer and the employee benefit. The employee can manage work and home more effectively, and the manager is not approached each time an adjustment needs to be made to the way hours are worked. Flexible start and finish times allow for children or elders to be dropped off or picked up from daycare at particular times.
- Flexi-time works best when staff in the team are multi-skilled. If, for example, one of the counter staff is called away urgently to a family member in hospital, there are others who have the appropriate customer service skills to pick up the counter work.
- It's a good idea to talk with managers and colleagues about what arrangements work best and what changes you may need from time to time. That way it's a no surprises approach when an emergency occurs.

*Merrilyn's partner, Ross, sometimes needs to travel on business. He usually picks up their two year old from day care each day. When he's away, Merrilyn needs to do both the drop off **and** the pick up. For the few days Ross is away, Merrilyn has an arrangement that she will work 6 1/2 hours each day at the office, and either take evening work home or work longer hours when Ross returns.*

1.2 Compressed working hours

Compressed hours refers to an arrangement that staff may have to work longer hours on specified days during a week or fortnight, in order to reduce the number of days worked or the number of hours on a particular day. This arrangement can apply to an individual, a team or a whole work group.

Tips and traps

- Compressed working hours can assist when someone is needing a regular time during the working week to attend to family needs, e.g. to do the rostered pick-up from school or elder care centre.
- If compressed hours can be arranged so that both staff and employer benefit, there can be huge payoffs in goodwill and reduced absenteeism, according to LWR Industries, Christchurch.

Six months ago the "production" team agreed to try a new system of hours. They work 8 1/2 hours Monday through Thursday, then have Friday afternoons off. This fits in well with their peak work flows and gives them an opportunity to have "extra" time to attend to "the rest of life" matters. The team loves it; their manager is happy; Sally and Bill, who both have school age kids, are home when they get home from school; and Tessa has a round of golf with a friend.

Tilly has been selected to represent her region in netball. During the winter months, she often has to travel with her team on a Friday afternoon. Tilly and her manager have agreed that Tilly will work longer hours on two other days of the week.

1.3 Time-banking

Time-banking is a more formalised time in lieu system. It works well in businesses that have peaks and troughs in their schedules through the year. When a period of long hours is being worked, there is an agreement that the overtime hours will be banked and taken as leave at a later time. Employees have the option of taking the accrued hours as a block during a slower period.

Tips and traps

- Managers and staff can talk about time banking and decide if it is suitable for the nature of the business.
- It may be a good idea to trial time-banking before a firm decision is made.
- Be clear about how much time people can accumulate, the timeframe in which that time must be used, and what factors will influence when they can use that time.
- The advantages of time-banking are that:
 - It is effective in motivating staff during a period of long hours being worked.
 - Staff can give back to their families the time taken away from them when they were working long hours.

Last year, Sam, who manages the community applications unit, agreed that people 'bank' their extra hours during peak periods. He has noticed that when people can look forward to time off later, staff (and their families) are happy to go the extra mile during the tough times. Sam's giving 'time banking' the thumbs up!

For two weeks each summer, Mai works as a team leader at a Youth Camp run by her community. The DIA business she works for uses time-banking during peak periods, which are always during the winter months. Mai is able then to use her banked hours for when she goes on camp.



2 Flexible working arrangements

2.1 Part-time work

Part-time work is the term that applies to any arrangement in which the employee works fewer than full-time hours.

Tips and traps

- Talk together as a team about routinely advertising positions offering part-time employment as an option. You may attract capable people who are not available for full-time employment. The job may be one that can be done in fewer than full-time hours, or one that can be job-shared or job-split (refer 2.2 and 2.3).
- Managers may find that their concerns about increasing costs (administration, space, equipment, training), by employing part-time workers, is balanced by the benefits. It is well-documented that generally part-time workers are proportionally more productive than their full-time colleagues.
- Sometimes minimal job re-design can provide an opening for a talented part-time worker. For example, a shift in priorities within the business can lead to the re-shaping of a job as part-time. (A useful reference is *The Design and Management of Part-time Work within the Public Service*, available through HR.)

Billy has been working full-time for two years. He is a promising soccer player, and has hopes of being selected to play in the national team. He would like to work 6 hours a day, to give him more time for training. Alex, the manager, is aware that another staff member, Sara, would like to increase her hours now that her mother is in full-time care. And here is a golden opportunity. So Alex, Billy and Sara decide together how they will re-organise the tasks so that the work gets done (job re-design). Billy ends up working a 30-hour week, and Sara increases from 20 to 30 hours, and Alex is delighted at how well the arrangement is working.

2.2 Permanent part-time employment

People are contracted to work an agreed number of hours each week on a permanent basis. They are entitled to the same benefits (on a pro-rata basis) as their full-time colleagues.

During the strategic planning process, Karen, the strategic manager, and her team, discuss the skill sets they will need to have on board to achieve their business results. Their aim is to attract high quality applicants to the specialist positions, but their budget will only allow for part-time salaries. So it is quite by accident that Karen realises that it is not only the salary that people are attracted to. Obviously, offering part-time employment brings some very talented people out of the woodwork – people who wish to work part-time for family or lifestyle reasons.

2.3 Part-time employment on a temporary basis

Sometimes called “reduced hours”, part-time work on a temporary basis involves a written agreement between employee and employer that the person will work part-time for a period.

Tips and traps

- Part-time work on a temporary basis is often used when a person returns from parental leave, enabling them to balance their work and the care of their young child. It can be an arrangement that includes working from home (refer 2.5).
- For a worker who is caring for their elderly, frail parent while the main carer is away or sick, temporary part-time work may be a welcome option.

Daniel shares the care of his son, who has cystic fibrosis, with his partner Alan. When his mother dies, Alan flies to London for the funeral and to support his dad. Daniel discusses with his manager, Bill, the possibility of working part-time for the four weeks that Alan is expected to be away. This arrangement would involve others in the team sharing the tasks that Daniel would normally be doing, so Bill brings them into the discussion. Together they come up trumps!

2.4 Job share

Job-sharing is a system of work where two people take the responsibility for one full-time position. They divide the work, pay, holidays and other benefits between them according to the time they work.

Tips and traps

- Job-sharing offers a solution to part-time arrangements in a job that requires continuity and a full-time commitment.
- It works well when there are two people involved who have similar skills and good communication with one another.

Whina and Mere, both sole parents, have been working together on a community development project for the last two years. They notice that DIA is advertising a job that requires similar skills to theirs. They decide to make a job-share application. The selection panel recognises their collective strengths and evaluates them more highly than other applicants for the job.

2.5 Job split

A job-split occurs when two people are contracted on an individual basis to do a full-time job. It is similar to a job-share except that their salaries and entitlements are assessed according to the individual's experience and skill levels.

Tips and traps

- A job split is suitable when the two people are differently skilled and experienced, and will pick up different components of the same job. They need to communicate well with one another, as they are still accountable for making sure the whole job is done well, even though they have different areas of responsibility within it.

When Frank and his partner separated, they chose to share the care of their two pre-school children between them. Frank, wanting to minimise further disruption to the children's lives, decided to avoid placing them in day care. He was looking to work the one week out of two that his children were with their mother. Because he loved his job, Frank was very reluctant to let it go, especially as it was undergoing exciting developments. He had an idea that Tilly, whom he had been consulting on IT matters, just might be interested in working within the organisation, and thought his manager might be drawn by the cost savings generated by that arrangement. They set the job up as a "job split" – with Frank retaining his permanent collective contract. (He received some income support as his reduced income was within the range of entitlement.) Tilly was put on a fixed term contract for 12 months. Frank and Tilly negotiated a clear performance agreement with their manager, and ensured that they communicated regularly about the job.

2.6 Part-year employment

Part-year employment offers employees a number of weeks' unpaid leave per year. This means that employees work an agreed number of weeks per year, by agreement with the employer, with an agreed number of weeks' unpaid leave, and are entitled to sick leave provisions on an accrued basis and annual leave provisions on a pro-rata basis. The arrangement must be agreeable to both the employer and the employee.

Tips and traps

- It is suggested that applications for part-year employment be negotiated on a year by year basis.
- This option is not restricted to a certain number of weeks of unpaid leave per year. The number of weeks is agreed between the employer and individual employees.
- Weeks to be taken as LWOP are agreed at the beginning of the arrangement and may be changed by agreement.
- Part-year employment is especially suitable in areas where workloads fluctuate during the year.
- This option enables businesses to retain employees who otherwise may resign because of family responsibilities, which make 52 week employment difficult or impossible.
- Part-year employment may allow employers to provide short term work opportunities for other employees who are on parental leave, career breaks or are seconded from another area.

Elizabeth's elderly father, who needs constant care lives with her sister, Jane, in Timaru. Each July, their dad comes to Wellington for a change of scenery, and to give Jane a break. Elizabeth has negotiated to work 11 months of the year, so that she is free to care for her father during July.

2.7 Flexible working locations

Over the next few years, we are likely to see a steady increase in the incidence of working away from the office. Most jobs have portable components to them, which enables people to work from home at times. Increasingly, with laptop computers and telecommunication links, staff are able to manage their jobs effectively in their home, hotel or other suitable environment. Working from home enables people to both care for sick dependants and complete some of their work requirements. It is a means of reducing absenteeism and sick leave.

Tips and traps

- When staff need to work from home, ensure that they have the means necessary to do their job effectively. They may need to come in to the office to pick up work and a laptop computer, or these could be couriered to them (if, for example, they cannot leave a sick child).
- If people are working off-site for an extended period, ensure that they are coming in to the office for meetings and as needed.
- It is a safeguard for all to be clear about the amount of work that is expected, and to check-in at intervals on progress. The practice of flexible working locations will be threatened if it is not utilised responsibly.

Fred's partner has had a hysterectomy, with post-operative complications. After she comes home from hospital, Pat needs to stay in bed for a week. Fred arranges with his manager to stay at home and care for her until a family member is available in three days' time. In the meantime, he works from home, checking data and completing a report. Extra work is couriered to him as he needs it. This arrangement is a lifesaver. For Fred, who has no sick leave available at a time when Pat is not earning; for Fred's manager, who is relieved that the work is still getting done; and for Pat, who has welcome breaks from Fred's fussing!

2.8 Children at work

There may be times when children come to work with their parents. The situation may arise that the worker may be working from home or on leave because their child has been unwell, yet may need to come in to work for a short period.

Tips and Traps

Having children at work usually works best for parents, children and colleagues if:

- it is not a frequent occurrence
- if the children are not at work for too long
- if they are quietly and happily occupied
- if the parent has checked whether colleagues are agreeable to children coming in to work.

Susie has been working from home for the last day while little Willie recovers from a spill off his bike. Susie's manager phones and asks if she can come in to an urgent meeting that afternoon. Susie checks how long the meeting will be and lets her manager know that Willie will be coming with her.



3 Leave

3.1 Parental leave

Parental leave is the name given to a period of extended unpaid leave, which can be taken by either parent after the adoption or birth of a baby. From 1 July 2002 paid parental leave which is taxpayer funded, of up to 12 weeks is available to eligible employees. The person's job is normally filled on a temporary basis. Parental leave, which is applied for in writing at least one month before leaving, may begin 6 weeks prior to the birth or adoption.

Tips and traps

- The eligibility criteria for parental leave depends on the contract the person is on and the length of time they have worked for DIA.
- The chances of retaining skilled staff are increased when contact is maintained with the person while they are on parental leave by:
 - sending them staff newsletters.
 - inviting them to work celebrations.
 - offering them temporary work.
 - telling them about vacancies in case they wish to apply.
- Staff returning from parental leave should let the employer know at least one month prior.
- Check to see if reduced hours on a temporary basis are desired.
- Ensure that the job of the person on parental leave is ready for them on their return.

When Erin was 6 months pregnant she told her manager, Betty, that she would be taking parental leave from 3 weeks prior to the due date of the baby's birth, and that she expected, all going well, to be off work for 12 months. Erin confirmed these plans in writing. James was recruited on a 12 months contract to do Erin's job.

After little Rosie's birth, Betty and the staff continued contact with Erin, keeping her in touch with office news, and checking if she was interested in learning opportunities, one-off pieces of work or vacant positions that were being advertised.

Erin returned to work 12 months later, feeling in touch with what had been happening, and valued as a worker. For the next 6 months she worked reduced hours (temporary part-time). James, the temporary worker, was able to continue, and a new contract was drawn up for him – a fixed term, part-time contract for 6 months.

3.2 Dependant care leave

Currently, leave for the purpose of caring for dependants is deducted from a person's sick leave entitlement.

Tips and traps

- There is a danger that people will reserve their sick leave for when they need to care for sick dependants, rather than take sick leave when they themselves are unwell.
- There are times when people can be out of both sick leave and annual leave. It is best if they discuss this situation with their manager, so that when they are required to take leave to care for sick family members, a workable option is available, e.g. an agreement to work extra hours at a later date; anticipated annual leave; special leave; leave without pay. If a staff member feels that their manager is tuned in to their circumstances, they are less likely to take unexplained absences.

Tom's old auntie lives with his family. When his auntie goes into hospital in the nearby city, Tom needs to take a couple of days off work, to provide transport and liaise with doctors. However, Tom used up his sick leave a few months ago when he had pneumonia. His boss, Marilyn, is aware of the situation and has suggested to Tom that he either takes leave without pay now, or makes up the time on the odd Saturday during the busy period. Marilyn is cautious about Tom taking annual leave now, as she knows that he will need that later for a well-earned rest.

3.3 Bereavement/tāngihanga leave

When a person close to an employee dies, they may be granted bereavement leave on full pay. The amount of leave granted will depend on the circumstances.⁶ The Leave section of this database provides guidelines for managers.

Tips and traps

- Practices around dealing with grief and dying can vary considerably. Some people may prefer to return to work soon after the funeral. For others, there may be cultural beliefs and practices that need to be honoured. Sometimes, these obligations may involve long-distance travel to the tāngi (which may last for several days); considerable expense; and extended hospitality to family who may come from afar.
- A manager may feel that he/she cannot treat people differently, and may have difficulty approving extended leave when it is needed. Managers need to keep in mind that patterns of grieving differ from person to person and from culture to culture, and that a person is more likely to be ready to return to work if he or she feels that they are being supported by their manager and colleagues.
- Awareness-raising about different cultural practices relating to death and funerals is needed for managers and staff.

When Matiu's father passed away in Auckland, many relatives travelled from the Cook Islands for his funeral. As Matiu is the eldest son, he is expected to be the host for all the visitors during their stay in New Zealand, as well as overseeing the organisation of the funeral. Because of the circumstances – his position in the family and the cultural practices that need to be observed – Matiu needs to be away from work for some time and incurs considerable personal expense during this time. His manager, Malcolm, is aware of the cultural circumstances, as are Matiu's colleagues. They keep in touch with Matiu periodically while he is away. Malcolm makes sure that the expectations around when Matiu will return to work, and whether or not he is paid for the full period he is away, are clear to them both. When he is able, Matiu comes back to his work family, appreciating the support he has received.

3.4 Special purpose leave (with or without pay)

In rare circumstances, leave with or without pay is approved by a manager.

⁶ Refer to the provisions of the Holidays Act 2003 for the minimum entitlements for bereavement leave.

Tips and traps

- Special leave becomes an option when other forms of leave are not appropriate or other leave entitlements are exhausted.
- A manager may look at the possibility of special purpose leave once they are aware of the situation a staff member is in which may cause them to be absent from work for a period of time.
- A person, because of their position in the community, may need/wish to attend a cultural event/hui because of their position in the community as well as being a representative of DIA. Special leave may be appropriate in these circumstances.
- Alternatively, a person can take the initiative and explore the possibility of fulltime or part-time special leave (with or without pay) with their manager.

When Rob's partner became frail with cancer, the family wanted to care for her at home. Rob talked to his manager, Stuart, about taking an unspecified period of leave, pointing out that he had already used up his annual and sick leave. Stuart arranged for Rob to have special leave on pay until income support payments came through, and then again for two weeks over the time of the funeral, when costs for the family were particularly high.

Hemi's hapu/home town community host a 5 day lecture session in Waipawa each August. Hemi and his manager have negotiated special leave with pay for 3.5 of the 5 days, because Hemi's attendance will benefit both Hemi and the department. For the remaining 1.5 days Hemi has negotiated special leave without pay. In this way, his annual leave entitlements are not exhausted. Hemi is happy, and his manager and colleagues will be informed of what happens in the lecture sessions.

Department of Conservation – Balancing Work and Personal Responsibilities

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Principles
- 3 Specific policies
- 4 Resolution of differences

1 Introduction

Purpose

This policy is designed to assist employees to balance work and responsibilities for children, dependants, other relatives or people to whom they have an obligation, or people with disabilities or illness. The situation may be an unexpected crisis or an ongoing commitment.

The Department recognises the benefits to both the Department and employees if the workplace is supportive of staff balancing conflicting demands of work and personal responsibility. It is also recognised that this is an important issue for many employees as well.

The outcome should benefit employees, minimise disruptions to work outputs, and help the Department retain skilled staff. The aim is to achieve desired conservation outputs while balancing the personal responsibilities employees may have.

Managers should view sympathetically proposals from employees for some flexibility to accommodate these demands, and the application of the policy is to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Impact on employees

Most employees experience the impact of personal responsibilities on their work at some time in their working lives. Employees may have relatives or others for whom they have ongoing responsibilities or for whom they become responsible for a period.

Personal responsibilities affect both men and women. Men are increasingly playing an active role as parents, and are entitled to share parental leave with their partners. Anyone can have elderly or ill relatives.

Different values may also affect different employees' personal obligations.

Impact on the department

If employees are distracted by worry about personal responsibilities, this may impair their work performance. It is in the interests of the Department to help employees manage any impact of their personal obligations on their work so that cost and disruption to work outputs are minimised. The Department cannot afford to lose skilled, experienced employees because they cannot balance their personal commitments with working.

Constraints

The following factors impact on both the Department and its employees in attempting to balance work and personal responsibilities:

- Many DOC workplaces are located in communities with limited facilities and few services.
- Policy decisions by other agencies, which are beyond DOC's control, impact on DOC employees – especially in small communities, e.g. closure of rural schools and Correspondence School Units; introduction of the 4 term year; Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) criteria for childcare subsidies; government policy on market rentals for housing.
- Staffing numbers and small work units can make flexible working arrangements difficult.
- Financial and other constraints have influenced decisions not to subsidise or establish childcare centres, holiday or after school care programmes, or subsidise routine childcare costs.
- Working for periods requiring absence from home is a component of some jobs.
- Employees may find it difficult to take leave during school holidays when workloads are highest.
- It can be difficult for an employee to take full parental leave in remote locations, especially where the employee may be living in the only available accommodation.
- Working in remote locations can create stress for partners who may not be able to find suitable work, adequate social contact, shopping or leisure amenities and activities.

- Elderly parents and dependants living a considerable distance away from the person's work location can compound the worry of arranging suitable care for them.

There are, however, a number of policies that are within the Department's control and resources, which can assist employees to balance work and personal responsibilities.

2 Principles

External obligations are likely to affect all employees at different times in their working lives. They may be short-term crises or long-term commitments.

An effective policy on balancing work and personal responsibilities can benefit both employees and the Department by enabling employees to manage personal obligations, while maintaining work outputs and retaining valuable skills and experience.

The Department cannot interfere or take responsibility for its employees' personal obligations. It can, however, take steps to help employees meet their family commitments and also continue to do a good job. This is in everybody's interests.

Helping employees balance work and personal responsibilities requires good management practice taking into account:

- The needs of employees with personal commitments.
- Operating requirements.
- The impact on other employees – in that workplace and elsewhere.
- Costs and benefits to the Department.

Although it is recognised that the policy will not be able to cover every individual situation, it must be applied fairly across the Department.

Without compromising achievement of its conservation results, or the service the Department provides, the Department's approach is to try wherever possible to allow employees to meet personal responsibilities.

Managers will respond objectively to proposals from staff for some flexibility to accommodate their personal obligations, subject to means being available to ensure that the work of the Department is done on time and to the required standard.

There will, however, be occasions when application of the criteria set out in this policy, and the need to be consistent and fair to all employees, lead to a manager declining an employee's request in terms of the discretionary provisions in this policy.

3 Specific policies

Workloads

Many employees work unpaid extra time either at work or by taking work home. The Department does not expect this. Employees who find that they cannot fulfil their work commitments within the specified working hours should discuss this with their manager.

Solutions may include:

- Ensuring that business plan commitments are realistic given levels of staffing and skill available.

- Better organisation of work time by the employee and their manager.
- Review of business plan commitments if circumstances change during the year.
- Setting realistic performance standards during PPR interviews, and keeping workloads under review throughout the year.

Where overtime is unavoidable and agreed to in advance, employees should either be paid for the time or take time off in lieu. Commitments of employees above the overtime bar are to be monitored to ensure that they are not being expected to work unreasonable hours.

Work organisation

Where work organisation is creating pressures for an employee beyond the workplace (e.g. a parent is required to be away from home for lengthy periods), affected employees and their managers are encouraged to consider options for organisation of work to achieve outputs while interfering less with employees' family lives.

Options which could be considered include:

- Rotating such work among as many employees as possible.
- Offering suitable projects as training and development opportunities nationally.
- Reviewing the length of time staff are required to be away from home without a break.
- Offering such work to employees with relevant skills who are willing and able to spend time away from home.

Work demands outside working hours

When employees are required to attend to departmental business outside their normal working hours, this should be monitored to ensure that it does not impose an unreasonable burden on the employee and his or her family. Time off in lieu or flexible working hours agreed in advance, enable employees to compensate for this intrusion of their work into their personal or family time. Responsibility for this type of work should also be shared as widely as possible amongst employees so that it does not fall unfairly on a few.

There are unavoidable occasions (such as residential training courses) when employees must be away from home. Overtime is not payable for attendance at courses, seminars, conferences etc., or for travelling outside the ordinary hours of work.

Organisers of meetings and courses will endeavour as far as possible to schedule the programme to minimise time away from home.

Flexible working hours

The use of flexible working hours as outlined in the relevant section of the employee's applicable Collective Agreement, Individual Agreement or Individual Employment Contract/Agreement should be explored. In some work situations – especially in the field – operational requirements may limit flexibility.

The following guidelines are provided to help managers decide if it is appropriate to agree to the use of flexible working hours whilst balancing operational requirements.

Flexible working arrangements may cover:

- Arrangements to work a different pattern of hours from the normal pattern in the work unit.
- Occasional/ad hoc flexible arrangements to meet one-off situations (e.g. to enable an employee to take a child to a specialist appointment, or attend a school event).
- A temporary arrangement to cover a difficult period (e.g. school holidays).
- Managers should view requests for flexible arrangements objectively, taking into account whether the job can be done:
 - To defined standards.
 - Within the required timeframe.
 - Without unreasonable impacts on other employees.

In considering proposals from employees, managers will take into account:

- The employee's reasons for seeking the arrangement.
- The impact on other employees.
- The impact on output/productivity.

Some positions preclude flexible working hours for an individual employee. Where the work requires the incumbent to be available during regular core hours, this should be indicated in the Job Description.

Part time work

Employment may be available on a permanent part time or job share basis as long as the work is capable of being performed on that basis, and the manager agrees.

The following criteria are provided to help managers determine whether a job must be carried out by one full time person:

- Part time or job sharing is not appropriate if the same person must be available throughout the standard working day or week because continuity is essential to provide an acceptable level of service.
- Part time or job sharing may be possible where work can be broken down into discrete tasks or projects which can be allocated to more than one person, or where continuity is not required to provide an acceptable level of service.

Part time/job share

When considering a vacancy, managers should decide whether the position could be filled by some combination of part time work or job sharing.

Details of any part-time and/or job share conditions attached to a position should be discussed with the Human Resources Advisor and clearly spelled out in the advertisement – and in the Job Description – so that the would-be applicant is fully conversant with the terms on offer before lodging an application.

Part time work requested by employee

Reducing to part time hours may be agreed to for a limited specified period of up to 12 months. Such arrangements are subject to agreement by the manager and are to be formalised in writing by the manager so that all parties are fully aware of the terms of the new arrangement and their obligations.

Payment for work by employees' partners in remote locations

In some Area Offices/Field Centres in remote locations, employees' partners carry out support duties, which are important to the efficient and effective operation of the Department in that location. Where this is predicted in advance, arrangements to recognise the particular circumstances are agreed at the time of appointment.

If it becomes apparent after taking up a position that unforeseen essential work is being done by a partner of a DOC employee because of staffing levels in remote locations, the employee should discuss the situation with their manager with a view to reaching an appropriate arrangement either to reduce the workload or compensate the partner.

Employment of near relatives

The Department has a policy and process to be followed when considering near relatives of current employees for employment or putting in place any restrictions to manage either reporting relationships or risks of collusion where near relatives are employed.

Working from home

The Department has a policy and process to be followed when considering applications from employees to work from home.

Tour of duty postings

Some permanent Conservancy positions are approved by GMT for filling on a tour of duty posting basis for a specified period, up to 5 years, to meet both the operational needs of the Department and the interests of the employee. Decisions to designate a position for tour of duty posting are based on the remote location or the nature of the work.

Such postings will assist employees to plan moves within the Department taking into account future requirements of their families.

In defining such positions the Department will take into account such factors as:

- Degree of isolation.
- Access to community services including schooling.

Personal travel by employees in remote locations***Time***

The Department recognises that employees in remote locations will from time to time need to travel on family business or to access some services during office or retail hours.

Managers may approve occasional time for such travel during working hours, or allow employees to make up time on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:

- The reason for the travel.
- Work requirements.
- Availability of services within the immediate location.

Use of departmental vehicles for private or combined personal/work purposes

Approval for private use of departmental vehicles by employees and/or family in isolated localities, who do not possess their own vehicles, will be restricted to exceptional circumstances.

Employees who are authorised to use departmental vehicles for private use are to pay for all private running costs, except in case of an emergency.

All of those travelling in departmental vehicles must comply with departmental policies and safety requirements.

Use of departmental boats

Where there is adequate public transport to and from islands, this should be used if at all possible. There should be written agreements between the Conservator and employees living on islands who consider they need to use departmental boats for travel for private business, or to transport family members, covering the circumstances in which this is acceptable. All of those travelling on departmental boats must comply with departmental policies and safety requirements.

Transfers on health, safety or welfare grounds

The Department's Recruitment, Selection and Appointment policy provides for approval to be given for a vacancy not to be advertised where the internal transfer of a particular employee is for reasons of health, safety or welfare.

4 Resolution of differences

Where a manager and employee cannot agree on the application of discretionary provisions in this policy, the early advice of the Human Resources Advisor should be sought.



Section 6

Guide to Developing a Work-Life Balance Work Plan⁷

This section supports the development of the work-life balance work plan as described in Chapter Five, section 5.3.3 of the Work-Life Balance resource. The two main steps in developing a plan are defining the parameters and planning for the work.

Define the work-life balance work plan	Plan for the work
<p>Following this part, the project scope should be agreed.</p> <p>Describe the background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the problem? Why is the project being done? Consider the business case <p>Draft a project goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the broad outcome to be achieved? What value will be gained? <p>Develop objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key results? What are the results desired by the end of the project? <p>Identify resource requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider people, equipment, money, space required <p>Define boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the scope of the project? What does the project include? What is not covered by the project? 	<p>Following this part, the project plan will be completed.</p> <p>Identify tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What needs to be done? <p>Assign responsibility to tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should be accountable for what? <p>Schedule activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the timetable for the work? What order do tasks need to be completed in? How long will each task take? <p>Identify milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the important points in this work? <p>Identify deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the outputs of this project? What will be produced?

⁷ Some of the information in this section has been adapted from Trade Union Congress. *Changing Times – a TUC Guide to Work-Life Balance*, London, TUC, 2001

Define the work-life balance work plan	Plan for the work
<p>Identify links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What other internal projects are occurring and what is their relevance to this project?■ Who are the key people involved in other projects and who will be useful contact points? <p>Identify stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Who has an interest in the project?■ Who will need to be kept informed or be consulted?	<p>Identify risks and strategy for risk management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What could go wrong with each of the activities?■ How can the team lessen the risk of failure? <p>Look at parameters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ When are the important deadlines?■ What are the budget constraints?■ What about limitations on other resources? <p>Identify assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What are the assumptions that are being made in the planning? Be explicit. <p>Plan for reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ When will reporting occur?■ Who will the reporting be to?■ What format will the reporting take?



Section 7

Communication Plan Template and Example

This section supports the development of a communication plan as described in Chapter Five, section 5.3.4 of the Work-Life Balance resource.

An example of a communication template is given below. It can be useful to structure the planned communication activities under the communication goals if appropriate.

Audience	Key messages	Medium	Timeframes	Responsibility	Evaluation
<p>Identify the distinct groups of audience for the message, for example Minister, CE, union representatives, staff who need work-life balance, staff who are resistant to work-life balance initiatives, senior managers, line managers, HR staff.</p>	<p>Identify the issues that key messages need to cover and provide examples of possible messages.</p>	<p>Consider internal or external focus, written, oral or visual delivery, informal or formal etc. Use a range of options.</p>	<p>Be specific as to when communication milestones will be met.</p>	<p>Identify who will be responsible for each communication task. Who will develop the material? Who will deliver the message?</p>	<p>Describe how the outcomes of each message will be assessed.</p>

An example of what might be included in a work-life balance communication plan follows:

Communication Goal: Promote the presence of work-life balance policies and culture in the organisation to position the department as an employer of choice.					
Audience	Key messages	Medium	Timeframe	Responsibility	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Potential employees ■ Clients of organisation 	<p>Describe how the organisation supports work-life balance and how employees are supported to achieve work-life balance. Provide examples of initiatives. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are effective policies and practices in place that mean employees are supported to balance their work and personal lives ■ the organisation is supportive of its employees specifically in helping them achieve work-life balance ■ many people within the organisation have flexible hours and work part-time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recruitment material ■ Organisation's external website ■ Statement of Intent 	30 March 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HR Manager (recruitment material) ■ Public Relations Manager (external website) ■ Business Planning Manager (Statement of Intent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When periodically surveying job applicants on how they find the recruitment process, include question about their impression of the organisation's approach to work-life balance

Communication Goal: Empower individuals – show individuals what they can do to further work-life balance for themselves and for others around them.

Audience	Key messages	Medium	Timeframe	Responsibility	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All staff 	<p>Show people how work-life balance can work. Describe what is possible and how to go about achieving work-life balance. Acknowledge and dispel myths about work-life balance and address fears and apprehension. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ everyone can achieve better work-life balance ■ achieving work-life balance does not mean that you can't progress. It means you are managing your work well ■ work-life balance is not just about family needs. It is about everyone achieving a balance with their work and personal lives ■ you can access information about work-life balance initiatives and examples by looking at the Human Resources section of the Intranet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leading story on Intranet ■ Work-life balance Intranet page ■ Message in one of the chief executive's general speeches to staff ■ Pamphlets for coffee tables, notice boards, etc. 	<p>30 May 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HR staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conduct a random phone survey of staff. Contact 15 staff before and 15 staff after the communication material is distributed to see if there is a difference in awareness of what they can do to further work-life balance for themselves or for others around them.

The graphic for Section 8 consists of a grid of squares in shades of orange and brown. The word "Section" is written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, and the number "8" is in a large, grey, serif font. The squares are arranged in a pattern that tapers to the right.

Section 8

Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties at each Step of Work-Life Balance Interventions – expanded description

Possible roles and responsibilities for each of the parties in relation to the five levels of intervention set out in Chapter Five of the Work-Life Balance resource are listed here. They are guidelines only, and should be read with the following caveats in mind.

The union role in relation to work-life balance (whether at strategic, paid organiser or delegate level) will depend on the working relationship that has already been established between the union and senior management, the existence of a partnership agreement in the case of the PSA, and established protocols. It is likely to vary considerably from one government organisation to another.

During the implementation phase (intervention level 3), the roles of the HR manager and leaders will vary according to the organisational decisions taken about who is responsible for ensuring that the work-life balance programme is established and that it progresses as planned. The roles and responsibilities identified at level 3 are therefore more general or more qualified than at other levels.

In this section, there is no extended list of roles or responsibilities for individuals seeking work-life balance for themselves, as the focus here is on those who have *organisational* responsibility for work-life balance. That is, the concern here is with the *position* held by any individual that requires them to take some role or responsibility for work-life balance in the organisation.

The roles and responsibilities for each party are arranged in the following order:

- employee
- union
- HR manager
- line manager
- senior manager.⁸

⁸ For a description of these roles, please refer to Chapter Three of the resource.

Employee

General focus:

- respects colleagues' and manager's work-life balance needs
- participates in development and monitoring of organisational work-life balance strategy.

What the employee can do:

1 Undertake work-life balance assessment and needs analysis

- familiarise self with relevant organisational policy
- be pro-active and lobby for work-life balance, e.g. talk with HR manager, EEO network, union, own manager, manager's manager, talk with colleagues for support
- be clear about own needs
- volunteer possible solutions, bearing in mind the organisation's requirements
- be willing and open to participate in needs analysis process.

2 Develop a strategic approach to work-life balance

- where appropriate, contribute ideas to, or provide comment on, the development of a work-life balance vision
- assist in the identification of the work-life balance areas of focus that are priorities for the organisation
- provide comment in proposed areas of focus for work-life balance.

3 Plan and implement a work-life balance programme

- if a member of a work-life balance committee, contribute to the development of work-life balance initiatives
- if a member of the work-life balance committee, contribute to the development and drafting of the work-life balance plan
- if a member of the work-life balance committee, participate in the development of the communications strategy
- during testing of messages, provide feedback on the impact of messages and mode of delivery
- demonstrate commitment to using work-life balance provisions honestly, responsibly and fairly with respect to their employer and colleagues.

4 Evaluate the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives

- enquire as to when and how the work-life balance plan is being monitored, and when a progress report will be available
- sit on the work-life balance committee and participate in structuring the evaluation process

- participate as requested in activities that are part of the work-life balance evaluation process, e.g. talk about own experience of work-life balance in the organisation in individual interview or focus groups.

5 Review needs and strategic approach

- be willing and open to participate in needs analysis process.

Union/s

General focus:

- assists members when required, to negotiate work-life balance solutions
- works in partnership with employer to represent members' collective views, and develop a work-life balance strategy for the organisation.

What the union can do (at the strategic, paid organiser or delegate level):

1 Undertake work-life balance assessment and needs analysis

- be well versed in work-life balance issues
- be familiar with organisational policy
- understand the business drivers and values that can be used to 'make a case' for work-life balance
- work in partnership with the employer to identify work-life balance needs
- provide examples of work-life balance issues/solutions raised through union role/partnership forum
- clarify business drivers in partnership with management, acknowledging the business constraints and operating context of the organisation concerned.

2 Develop a strategic approach to work-life balance

- provide input into review of business case
- be able to articulate clearly why work-life balance is important to the organisation
- demonstrate personal engagement and buy-in to the reality of work-life balance
- contribute ideas for work-life balance vision
- contribute to the drafting of the work-life balance statement
- provide input into the development of the work-life balance consultation document
- provide comment on proposed areas of focus for work-life balance
- assist in the identification of the work-life balance areas of focus that are priorities for the organisation
- provide input into the development of the work-life balance policy.

3 Plan and implement a work-life balance programme

- assist in the identification of the mix of people to be involved in developing work-life balance in organisation
- contribute work-life balance ideas and solutions
- consider benefits to staff of proposed work-life balance initiatives
- contribute to the development and drafting of the work-life balance plan
- participate in the planning, designing and testing of the communication strategy to ensure a union flavour.

4 Evaluate the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives

- ensure information gathered by the union is made available for monitoring the work-life balance plan
- consider the monitoring report and discuss implications with senior management
- sit on the work-life balance committee and participate in structuring/shaping the evaluation process
- provide information gathered by the union as evidence in the organisation's evaluation of its work-life balance practices
- assist in 'making meaning'/analysis of the information gathered in the evaluation process
- provide input into monitoring and evaluation cycles for the organisation.

5 Review needs and strategic approach

- work in partnership with employer to identify work-life balance needs
- provide examples of work-life balance issues/solutions raised through union role/partnership forum
- provide input into the review process and confirm or redefine the way in which the organisation understands and approaches work-life balance.

HR manager

General focus:

- develops a work-life balance strategy that meets the needs of the employees and the needs of the organisation
- ensures work-life balance is embedded in all HR policies (including provision of training and induction)
- supports individual managers to improve work-life balance in the organisation and find solutions to employees' work-life balance needs
- provides assurance to management that the work-life balance strategy is being appropriately implemented in the organisation.

What the HR manager can do:

1 Undertake work-life balance assessment and needs analysis

- familiarise self in depth with work-life balance issues e.g. websites, what other organisations are doing, literature
- clarify the perceived drivers so far, e.g. why has the HR manager been asked to make this work a priority?
- consider how well current policies cover legal obligations and how well they are used, e.g. talk with other HR staff, manager, and union
- review policies to determine what currently exists in relation to work-life balance
- identify connections with other business and HR initiatives
- develop the profile of staff for needs analysis
- gather information from staff and report on the findings
- support management/union/s in understanding the internal and external environment and the identification of the key drivers for work-life balance
- acknowledge the legitimate role and interest of the union in identifying work-life balance needs
- provide support to senior management as required in the development of the business case.

2 Develop a strategic approach to work-life balance

- ensure quality (relevance, union support, accessibility) of business case
- where business case is inadequate, describe gaps and suggested process for remedy
- support senior management/union in process of personal engagement and commitment to work-life balance
- support the development of the work-life balance vision as required
- coordinate the identification of the areas of work-life balance focus that are priorities for the organisation by:
 - collating and analysing the information
 - developing a consultation document
 - seeking feedback
 - redrafting and making recommendations to senior management
- bring on board and manage specialist input, e.g. staff involved in business planning and the identification of future capability needs
- draft work-life balance policy.

3 Plan and implement a work-life balance programme

- identify mix of people to be involved in developing work-life balance in the organisation, and develop proposal for senior management

- contribute HR perspective and ideas from HR research and body of knowledge
- manage the process of identifying initiatives, where delegated
- coordinate and manage the work-life balance committee, where delegated
- coordinate the development and drafting of the work-life balance plan, if delegated responsibility, or contribute to development drafting of the work-life balance plan
- bring on board and manage specialist input, e.g. corporate planning and finance staff
- coordinate the development of the communications strategy, where delegated
- bring on board and manage specialist input, e.g. internal communications/media staff
- undertake designated responsibilities, as specified in work-life balance plan
- if delegated responsibility for overall plan, maintain watching brief.

4 Evaluate the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives

- manage staff and processes necessary to gather the necessary information to monitor the work-life balance plan
- assess achievement of objectives and activities in the work-life balance plan against specified measures
- report achievement of work-life balance plan to senior management
- determine (with work-life balance committee if one in place) the key evaluation questions
- identify sources of information required, noting that which is available and additional information that needs to be gathered specific to the evaluation (e.g. individual interviews, focus groups interviews)
- manage the evaluation process (whether conducted in-house or by contractors)
- coordinate key people (work-life balance committee if available) to assist with 'making meaning'/analysis of the key findings
- provide report on findings and recommendations to senior management
- develop (with work-life balance committee if one in place) ongoing monitoring and evaluation plan
- identify key evaluation issues in work-life balance for the organisation
- ensure HR systems can deliver the work-life balance information required of them over time.

5 Review needs and strategic approach

- consider how well current policies are used, e.g. consult with staff, manager, union, and refer to results of monitoring
- update the profile of staff
- manage the needs re-assessment process and implement any agreed changes
- trigger and coordinate the review process.

Line manager

General focus:

- explicitly communicates support for work-life balance initiatives
- walks the talk – leads by example
- implements organisational work-life balance strategy (including managing risk-averse work environments)
- works with individual employees to fairly and creatively manage work-life balance and find appropriate solutions (challenge existing practices, identify scope for flexibility and tailoring of options, identify opportunities as well as limitations).

What the line manager can do:

1 Undertake work-life balance assessment and needs analysis

- demonstrate personal engagement with work-life balance principles and practice
- generally familiarise self with work-life balance issues
- familiarise self with work-life balance responsibilities, e.g. legal obligations
- clarify own motivation as a manager for supporting work-life balance policy in organisation
- encourage staff to participate in needs analysis process. Follow up to make sure it happens
- lead by example by participating in needs analysis
- provide input into the development of the business case.

2 Develop a strategic approach to work-life balance

- generate ideas for work-life balance vision statement and provide comment on draft
- provide comment on proposed areas of focus for work-life balance
- provide input to work-life balance policy as requested.

3 Plan and implement a work-life balance programme

- approve time for staff to be involved in developing work-life balance in the organisation
- if a work-life balance committee member, participate in generating work-life balance initiatives
- provide feedback on the workability of proposed initiatives
- contribute to development drafting of the work-life balance plan, or coordinate the development and drafting of the work-life balance plan if delegated responsibility
- if a member of the work-life balance committee, participate in the development of the communications strategy.

- during testing of messages, provide feedback on the impact of messages and mode of delivery
- model work-life balance in personal life.

4 Evaluate the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives

- provide information as requested as part of organisational monitoring of work-life balance
- sit on the work-life balance committee as management representative
- contribute to the work-life balance evaluation process – providing examples of work-life balance in action (or not) in own work area and across the management level.

5 Review needs and strategic approach

- ensure staff participate in needs analysis process
- lead by example by participating in needs analysis
- provide input as requested.

Senior manager

General focus:

- sets the environment that will make work-life balance work
- walks the talk/leads by example by modelling work-life balance in his/her personal life
- sets work-life balance performance expectations for managers, so they find solutions to work-life balance issues of employees
- leads the development of the work-life balance strategy
- ensures that the wider context makes work-life balance possible.

What the senior manager can do:

1 Undertake work-life balance assessment and needs analysis

- generally familiarise self with work-life balance issues
- familiarise self with work-life balance responsibilities, e.g. legal obligations
- determine and articulate the drivers and motivating factors for exploring work-life balance in the organisation
- create supportive environment to encourage staff participation in needs analysis, e.g. statements of support from the top via organisational newsletter, intranet
- lead by example, by participating in needs analysis
- provide input into the exploration of the business drivers for work-life balance
- clarify the key drivers for the organisation, in partnership with the union/s.

2 Develop a strategic approach to work-life balance

- decide need for business case review
- provide input into review and take decisions about required changes to the business case
- be able to articulate clearly and persuasively why work-life balance is important to the organisation
- demonstrate personal engagement and buy-in to the reality of work-life balance
- lead the development of the work-life balance vision statement
- provide input into the development of the work-life balance consultation document
- make decisions on key areas of focus for work-life balance in organisations
- approve work-life balance policy.

3 Plan and implement a work-life balance programme

- assist in the identification of the mix of people to be involved in developing work-life balance in the organisation
- lead the work-life balance committee, where appropriate, or provide guidance to the work-life balance committee
- lead the development of the work-life balance plan
- delegate responsibility for coordinating the planning and drafting
- provide direction in the development of the communication strategy
- determine key communication messages for work-life balance
- sign off on work-life balance communication plan
- maintain oversight of the operationalisation of the work-life balance policy and the achievement of the work-life balance plan
- model work-life balance in personal life.

4 Evaluate the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives

- actively seek feedback on monitoring of the work-life balance plan
- report results of monitoring to staff and the union/s
- undertake to address any issues that are of concern
- specify senior management issues that should be addressed as part of the work-life balance evaluation process
- participate in the work-life balance committee
- report findings of the evaluation to staff
- undertake to address any issues that are of concern in the evaluation process
- advise the HR manager or work-life balance committee of any specific issues that should be addressed as part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

5 Review needs and strategic approach

- create supportive environment to encourage staff participation in needs analysis, e.g. statements of support from the top via organisational newsletter, intranet
- lead by example by participating in needs analysis
- confirm or redefine the way in which the organisation understands and approaches work-life balance.

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State Services Commission
100 Molesworth Street
PO Box 329, Wellington
New Zealand
Phone: +64-4-495-6600
Fax: +64-4-495-6686
Website: www.ssc.govt.nz

