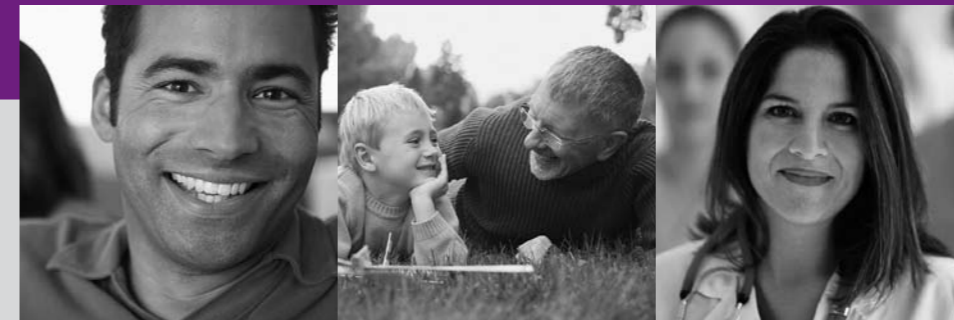


Achieving work life balance

Retention and attraction
strategies for WA Health

Delivering a Healthy WA





Foreword

The State Health Advisory Committee on Work Life Balance... and Creating Family Friendly Workplaces has been established by the Minister for Health to advise and make recommendations to the Director General of Health on policies, plans and practices/initiatives that will create Work/Life balance within Western Australian Health; and to promote and assist health services to develop and implement such initiatives.

Committee membership is drawn from WA Health management, WA Health Family Friendly Network, Western Australian health sector unions, community members with an interest, personal knowledge or experience of work, life, balance, representatives from the Department for Community Development and the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection. It has an Independent Chair appointed by the Minister for Health.

The Committee's priority objective is to assist the WA Health in becoming an 'Employer of Choice' through the development of a range of incentives that deliver access for ALL employees to flexible working arrangements which will both retain current staff and enable the attraction of new employees.

This publication outlines many opportunities and solutions to enable employees to request Work Life Balance in their work-places. As well, it contains "Tools for Managers" to assist line managers in the implementation of Work Life Balance initiatives.

The Advisory Committee is confident this publication will assist employees within WA Health to achieve successful access to Work Life Balance.

Yours sincerely
Dr Cheryl Davenport
Chair, State Health Advisory Committee on
Work Life Balance ... and Creating Family Friendly Workplaces



Introduction

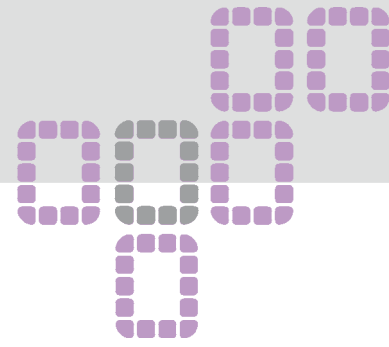
This publication identifies:

- 10 essential management actions for creating work life balance
- 10 most essential attraction and retention strategies; and
- 101 attraction and retention strategies.

These strategies cover a wide range of issues and are drawn from a range of resources. It is acknowledged that some of these strategies, or elements of some, have already been implemented in some areas of the Government Health sector. However, there is scope for wider implementation of greater flexibilities across all occupational groups and levels of employees.

The strategies outlined in this document are proposed as recommendations for managers and supervisors to consider for implementation in their work areas to assist employees achieve a better balance between work, family and life commitments.

The benefit in creating a workplace that openly and honestly supports employees with family and personal responsibilities is an increased ability to attract and retain skilled employees.



Creating work life balance within the workplace

The following actions are considered to be the most essential for employers that are committed to work life balance:

Ten Essential Management Actions for Creating Work Life Balance

1. **Positive “Work life Balance” thinking** - treating staff as adults who are balancing their work commitments with their family/personal responsibilities, and being positive about making changes to create a more flexible workplace in all aspects of employee relations. The importance of modelling best practice work life balance “from the top” cannot be underestimated.
2. **“Work Life Balance” policy** - have a clear policy statement which announces that the “WA Health is committed to providing a flexible responsive workplace, which enables all employees to balance work and family/personal responsibilities,” which is incorporated into core values statements and corporate plans, and supported by policy guidelines outlining what that means for everyone in the workplace.
3. **“Work Life Balance” employer** - WA Health be promoted as an employer who respects and cares about its employees, who recognises that they will have family and personal responsibilities, and who provides flexibleibilities. Factors shown to impact the most upon staff trying to balance work and life include required hours of work, a lack of flexibility in being able to alter their working hours, time off or leave arrangements, a lack of access to suitable childcare arrangements, and undue stresses and tensions in the workplace which make working life more difficult and/or even unpleasant.
4. **Awareness of entitlements** - increase awareness of employees’ entitlements to access flexible working arrangements, and what assistance and services are available to them directly or by referral.
5. **“Work Life Balance” survey** - conduct a survey to identify staff needs in balancing work and family/personal life responsibilities, current awareness of flexible work options, and suitability of current working arrangements. Incorporate results into the human resource management plan and staff work planning arrangements.
6. **Implement flexible work practices** - this will provide greater flexibility to all employees, including supervisors, managers and other senior staff, and will ensure flexible working hours schedules, rosters and leave arrangements to accommodate their family and personal responsibilities, without detriment or penalty.
7. **Willingness to pilot or trial initiatives** - all managers and supervisors to demonstrate commitment to creating a flexible workplace that supports work life balance by considering employees’ needs and requests, and be willing to pilot or trial new initiatives and implement more flexible working arrangements.
8. **Management accountability** - managers to be responsible and accountable for implementing work life balance arrangements, reducing staff turnover rates and increasing retention rates in their work area. Managers to be made accountable for decisions to refuse employees’ requests for more flexible working arrangements.



9. **Management Training** - training and development programs for managers should include human resource management skills, the benefits of creating work life balance, and how to manage a more flexible workforce.
10. **Pre-exit interviews** - pre-exit interviews that include questions such as whether difficulties in balancing work and family/personal responsibilities were a contributing factor to the employee leaving, to be conducted prior to the employee leaving. This data to be collated analysed and reported to senior management. Where possible, alternative working arrangements should be offered to assist employees remain with a better work life balance.

Work life balance within the workplace

Why do we need them?

Retention and attraction strategies are an important means for attracting and retaining skilled employees - particularly in areas where there is a high staff turnover, difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled staff, a competitive job market, and labour and skill shortages.

One of the first strategies to consider is current work arrangements and management practices that may be contributing to the difficulty in attracting and retaining staff. This may require the assistance of an external person to the work area who may be able to see work and management practices more objectively and therefore obtain more detailed comments and views from both management and staff.

Staff leave an organisation for many reasons, including career advancement, better job opportunities and retirement. These departures may be difficult to prevent. However, another key reason staff - and in particular women - leave their job is to find a better work life balance. Changes to the family situation tends most often to impact upon women and results in increasing difficulty in managing a balance between work and family responsibilities. Factors shown to impact the most upon staff trying to balance work and life include required hours of work, a lack of flexibility in being able to alter their working hours, time off or leave arrangements, a lack of access to suitable childcare arrangements, and undue stresses and tensions in the workplace which make working life more difficult and/or even unpleasant.

Employees who are able to balance their work, family and life commitments have been shown to be happier in their job and are more likely to stay and work towards a rewarding and productive career.

The cost of replacing skilled staff has been estimated by various organisations and businesses to be between \$20,000 - \$50,000 per employee. This includes the cost of lost productivity of the departed employee, and time taken by staff involved in the selection, recruitment, induction and on-the-job training processes to bring the new recruit up to the level of productivity of the former employee. Additional costs are incurred in advertising, engaging recruitment agencies, and temporarily filling the vacancy left by the departed employee until the new recruit is working at a reasonable level of productivity.

Improving staff retention rates must, therefore, generate cost savings, and these savings could be used to improve flexibilities, facilities and working conditions for all employees.



Who is family?

Access to flexible working arrangements should be available to all employees, both male and female, at all classification levels, for all aspects of family/personal life.

The Equal Opportunity Act 1994 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of Family Responsibility or Family Status, defined under the Act as:

In relation to a person, means -

- a) having responsibility for the care of another person, whether or not that person is a dependant, other than in the course of paid employment;
- b) the status of being a particular relative; or
- c) the status of being a relative of a particular person;

Relative: in relation to a person, means a person who is related to the first-mentioned person by blood, marriage, affinity or adoption and includes a person who is wholly or mainly dependant on, or is a member of the household of, the first-mentioned person.

Retention and Attraction Strategies proposed

The following 101 retention and attraction strategies are proposed specifically for the Western Australian Government Health Industry. Many of these may already be implemented in some areas. However, it is apparent that such practices are not accessible to all staff or applied in all areas, and further improvements can still be made.

These strategies cover a range of issues that can assist in changing work and management practices to assist employees balance their work and family/personal responsibilities, retain and attract staff, and create a better working environment for everyone.

Many of the strategies could be applied to a wide range of employees at all classification levels. Consideration also needs to be given to encouraging mature-age, management and senior staff to access these flexibilities.

Some of these strategies could be implemented immediately. Some may need to be incorporated into enterprise agreements. Others, such as those in the training and development area, may require further development.

This document is intended to complement the range of flexible work practices that are already provided in relevant industrial awards and agreements. Some of these provisions are incorporated into these strategies.

Retaining talent and attracting young people

With an ageing workforce, it is particularly important to be able to both retain existing employees and attract new employees, particularly young people.



For example, given the current ageing profile of nurses in the Government Health sector, it is important to have a range of attraction strategies to tempt young people to nursing as a career.

Therefore, a number of retention and attraction strategies to attract both men and women to nursing as a career have also been included. Some of these strategies can be used in other occupations where there is an ageing workforce, and current or potential labour or skill shortage.

Ten Most Essential “Work Life Balance” Retention and Attraction Strategies

Of the 101 “Work life Balance” retention and attraction strategies identified for the Government Health sector, the following have been identified as the ten most essential:

Ten Most Essential Work Life Balance Retention and Attraction Strategies

1. Flexible working hours - providing more flexible and consultative rostering arrangements and working hours to all employees, including shift workers.
2. Part time work - providing more part time jobs with less hours or fewer shifts, or job sharing arrangements to all employees.
3. Reasonable working hours - reducing excessively long working hours and double shifts.
4. Access to childcare - improving access to childcare with onsite childcare facilities and giving shift workers, who need access to childcare facilities, regular fixed shifts.
5. Flexible leave arrangements - providing greater flexibility in leave arrangements to suit employees’ personal circumstances, including leave for school holidays through purchased leave arrangements and extended leave without pay to provide full time care to family members.
6. Leave in single days - allowing employees to request and take leave in single days and accrued hours as time off in lieu of payment.
7. Job mobility - providing increased mobility for employees to transfer between wards, hospitals, work areas and health services to find more suitable working arrangements that will assist them to better balance their current work and family/personal responsibilities.
8. Safety and wellbeing - improving safety, wellbeing and respect for all employees in the workplace.
9. Telephone access - ensuring all employees are able to receive urgent telephone calls or messages from family members at work and have access to a telephone to remain contactable with their family during working hours.
10. Casual work - introducing pools of permanent flexible part time or casual employees, similar to NurseWest, in other occupations to cover leave and other absences.



101 Retention and attraction strategies

Finding a better balance between work and family, and work and life

Addressing work and family/personal responsibilities of all employees

1. Providing access to flexible work practices for all employees. Employees with family caring responsibilities may have a greater need to utilise flexible work practices. Such responsibilities include (but are not limited to) caring for preschool and school age children, teenagers, grandchildren, spouse or partner, ageing parents, grandparents or any other family or household members or relatives who are dependent and/or have an illness, injury or disability.
2. Providing access to improved work life balance arrangements to employees at all classification levels and all occupational groups. Senior employees and employees of particular occupational groups should not be unfairly disadvantaged or discriminated against because of their classification level or occupation. Equal Opportunity laws apply to all employees.
3. Mature age employees may also require access to flexible work practices to be able to continue to work as they take on caring responsibilities for their ageing parents, spouse or grandchildren if their own children are sick or injured, have a disability, or are not available or capable to look after their own children.
4. Some cultures such as indigenous and ethnic communities have significant expectations upon family members in relation to family responsibilities. It is important to recognise and facilitate the needs of employees with such cultural expectations in relation to their family responsibilities.

Flexible working hours

Greater access to work reduced hours

5. Greater access to part-time work or job-sharing for staff at all classification levels, including supervisors, managers and mature-age employees, to balance work with family/personal responsibilities, increase the rate of return from parental leave or to delay retirement, and for a better work-life balance and quality of life.
6. Greater ability to work more or less hours as an employee's family situation changes, particularly on return from maternity leave, as children start school, during school holidays or if a family member is sick (eg. variations to part-time work, purchased leave, annualised hours, leave without pay).
7. Improve access for mature age workers to more flexible working arrangements and phased retirement strategies such as graduated part-time work, fewer shifts or shorter working hours to enable them to continue in employment.



More flexible working hour arrangements for non-shift workers

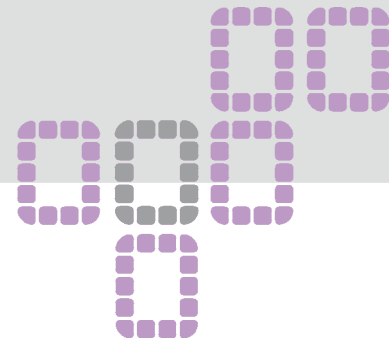
8. Improve access to more flexible working hours and flexible starting and finishing times for employees not working shift work.
9. Improve access to flexible working hours that will allow employees to take one day off each week, each fortnight or each month while still working the required aggregated number of hours.
10. Ability to accrue hours to take time off to attend to family or personal matters.
11. Consider school-friendly working hours where employees can work on a part-time basis between 9.00am and 2.30 or 3.00pm each day.

More flexible rostering and shift work arrangements

12. More flexible and consultative request-driven rostering arrangements, which take into account an employee's family/personal responsibilities and their ability to find suitable childcare or before and after-school care arrangements.
13. Roster preferences of permanent staff to be met before those of casual staff.
14. Increase ability for staff to exchange shifts to meet family/personal responsibilities and study commitments.
15. Scope for sharing shifts or job-sharing where two employees work half a shift each, or half of the full time number of shifts each.
16. Ability for employees to work part-time by reducing the number of shifts to be worked in a shift roster period.
17. Reduce requirement to work excessively long hours or double shifts.
18. Establish a pool of permanent part-time flexible employees or casual employees as relief workers, utilising employees who want more time off but still want some work, eg. Mature-age employees or employees with young children or other caring responsibilities.

Greater certainty in rostering arrangements

19. Improve access to fixed shifts or shifts on set days. This particularly useful for shift workers who need to book a regular childcare place or have family care available only on set days or between certain hours. Arrangements to be reviewed on a regular basis.
20. Improve access for shift workers to work preferred shifts or preferred days for reasons including health, family, childcare, studies or a better quality of life.



Greater flexibility with leave arrangements

21. Ability to request and take accrued time off or shifts off with prior notice. (This may reduce sick leave absences).
22. Access to single days of leave to attend to family matters or as personal “wellness” days.
23. Increase awareness of employees’ entitlement to carer’s leave and personal leave and an ability to access it without detriment or penalty.
24. Improve access to more flexible leave arrangements including purchased leave, leave without pay, school holiday leave (using annual leave, long service leave, purchased leave and leave without pay).
25. Increase access to extend long service leave by taking double the period of leave on half pay.
26. Offer regular work placements or short-term contracts during school holidays to assist in covering absences of employees with school children.
27. Allow greater access to (and promotion of) leave without pay following parental leave and annual leave, or if a family member is seriously ill or injured and in need of care (as an alternative to resignation).
28. Provide greater access to career breaks using 4/5 deferred leave arrangements (4 years worked at reduced salary with the fifth year taken as leave on reduced salary) for family reasons, study or travel.
29. Offer the ability to take accrued leave entitlements, leave without pay or purchased leave to undertake further studies, to broaden work experience or to travel.

Identifying staff needs

30. Conduct a confidential survey of employees to identify staff needs in balancing their work and family/ personal responsibilities, awareness of flexible work options, and the suitability of current working arrangements for them. Keep a record of survey results and use them to improve working arrangements. Review staff requirements on an annual basis and measure improvements in work life balance and successes.
31. Alternatively, develop a short survey or feedback form for staff asking:
 - a) what can we do to help you balance your work and family/personal responsibilities;
 - b) what working hours would assist you to better balance your work and family/personal needs; and
 - c) how can we better support you to return to work and/or remain at work.
32. Establish and promote a work life balance policy with “balancing work and life responsibilities” as a core value. Encourage all work areas to implement suitable flexible work arrangements for their employees, and review these on an annual basis.
33. Identify and address barriers to implementing and accessing work life balance work practices.



Increase job mobility

34. Increase ability for employees to transfer to, or work in different wards, work areas, hospitals or Health Services to:
 - a) be able to work preferred shifts or preferred working hours;
 - b) find a more suitable job for a better work life balance;
 - c) work at a site closer to home and family;
 - d) gain a wider range of knowledge, skills and experience; or
 - e) have a change, as an alternative to resigning and going elsewhere.
35. Promote job opportunities internally on a transfer basis before advertising to recruit new employees.
36. Encourage employees to consider, or to ask for, alternative job opportunities or a new work location within WA Health before resigning or retiring.
37. Improved access for mature-age workers to phased retirement strategies such as:
 - a) transferring to an alternative, less stressful and/or less onerous, job in the same or a different location (*with a commensurate reduction in pay if the new job is of a lower classification*);
 - b) accessing purchased leave arrangements to increase leave entitlements to provide more regular breaks from work;
 - c) transferring to an alternative job which allows for more flexible working hours or reduced working hours; or
 - d) reverting to part-time work as a transition to retirement.

Improved access to childcare and eldercare arrangements

38. Improve availability and access to more flexible on-site and off-site childcare facilities and vacation care programs, with occasional care provisions for shift workers.
39. Establish links with local community childcare facilities and vacation care programs for employees where on-site facilities are not viable, particularly in regional areas.
40. Allow shift workers to work fixed shifts or set days to secure suitable professional or family childcare arrangements. This could increase the return rate of employees from parental leave.
41. Allow employees to pay for childcare and vacation care programs by regular payroll deductions or through salary packaging or salary sacrificing arrangements (if available).
42. Introduce an in-house childcare liaison services co-ordinator to identify the availability of childcare, before and after-school care, and vacation care facilities and to assist employees to find a suitable place for their children. This service could be extended to assist employees to find suitable eldercare residential or day-care facilities within the community for elderly family members.



43. Improve access to information for employees about finding and selecting appropriate childcare facilities and vacation care programs for children, residential or day-care facilities and home care assistance for elderly family members, Government childcare benefits and other carer benefits and entitlements.

Promotion of best practice initiatives

44. Review existing flexible workplace initiatives in other areas of the Government and non-Government Health sectors and identify and promote best practice examples in the various newsletters and on the WA Health Family Friendly website for all areas of the Government Health sector to consider for implementation.
45. Annual *Work Life Balance Awards* could be given for innovative and flexible initiatives that are considered “best practice” or for significant improvements in flexible work practices across WA Health.
46. Conduct regular seminars on work life balance best practice initiatives, inviting guest speakers to speak on a variety of flexible work practices. This could build on the *Families that Work seminar series arranged by the State Health Advisory Committee on Family Friendly Initiatives* in 2004.
47. Promote WA Health as an employer who respects and cares for its employees, assisting them to balance their work and family/personal responsibilities by providing flexible working arrangements. Use these strategies as an attraction tool in advertising and recruitment, promotional material, career expos, in newsletters and on the Department of Health’s website. When advertising positions, offer flexible work options, such as part-time or job share where available.

Management responsibilities

48. Managers and supervisors could demonstrate their commitment to creating work life balance by:
 - a) modelling best practice work life balance initiatives “from the top”;
 - b) increasing their understanding of work life balance initiatives and benefits;
 - c) becoming more familiar with the range of flexible work arrangements and options that are available to employees;
 - d) identifying the needs of their employees to improve their work life balance;
 - e) seriously considering employees’ requests for greater flexibility;
 - f) implementing more flexible working arrangements to suit employees’ needs; and
 - g) promoting the benefits achieved in creating a work life balance among their peers.
49. New work life balance initiatives could be implemented on a trial basis, and if successful, on a more permanent basis, with regular reviews and improvements.
50. Decisions to refuse employees’ requests for more flexible or more suitable working arrangements to be open to review and scrutiny. Employees to be made aware that such decisions can be reviewed if considered unreasonable.



Rostering

51. Managers and supervisors to have a greater awareness of employees' family/personal situation and improve rostering arrangements accordingly, being more flexible and consultative.
52. Managers and supervisors to meet roster preferences of permanent staff before those of casual employees.

Retention and staff turnover

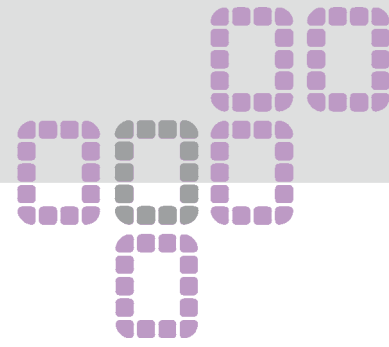
53. Managers and supervisors to take greater responsibility in retaining staff, and be held accountable for staff turn-over in their work area.
54. Managers and supervisors to try to facilitate the needs of employees to discourage them from resigning to work elsewhere where they can get greater flexibilities.
55. Managers and supervisors to canvas alternative working options with staff who are resigning to see whether there are any other working arrangements that could be considered as a means of retaining them.
56. Pre-exit interviews to be conducted by managers and supervisors before employees leave work, and forwarded to Human Resources for analysis.
57. Pre-exit interviews to be analysed and quarterly or biannual reports prepared for Corporate Executive and line managers.

Code of Conduct

58. Management and other health professionals to show greater respect for the work effort and input of staff.
59. Management to review the Code of Conduct to ensure it provides for all employees to show respect towards all other employees, including junior employees and less qualified employees, and a process or mechanisms for reporting breaches of the Code.
60. Management to ensure the Code of Conduct is promoted and implemented in all areas of WA Health.

Training, development and support for managers

61. Training, development, support and information services to be provided to managers and supervisors to assist them in regard to:
 - a) understanding the importance of providing flexible work arrangements for work life balance and the benefits these can bring to the workplace;
 - b) their responsibilities to consider and try to facilitate the needs of employees with family responsibilities and other commitments outside of work; and
 - c) how to implement and manage flexible rostering and working arrangements in the workplace.
62. Managers and supervisors to participate in further training and development to enhance their management and leadership skills in a modern and more flexible workplace.



Providing a safe work environment for all employees

63. Improve safety at night for night shift workers with:
 - a) improved access to safe, secure and well-lit parking; and
 - b) after-hours lockdown with access by swipe card only (may reduce theft).
64. Improve access to distress/duress alarms for staff working night shifts and in vulnerable (moderate to high risk) areas.
65. Increase access to security officers for staff at night and staff dealing with difficult, violent and abusive patients or members of the public.
66. Promote Worksafe standards (see Worksafe website www.safetyline.wa.gov.au) and the responsibility upon managers for providing a safe working environment for employees in terms of:
 - shiftwork safety;
 - extended working hours;
 - the effects of stress at work;
 - bullying in the workplace;
 - violence in the workplace (including abuse);
 - direct or indirect discrimination (www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au).
67. Improve management practices to provide greater protection for staff against:
 - a) bullying from co-workers and other professionals; and
 - b) abuse from members of the public and other staff.
68. Promote the laws against discrimination (both direct and indirect) under all grounds including pregnancy, gender, age, family status and family responsibilities.
69. Improve mechanisms for staff to be able to lodge complaints and report bullying, abuse and discrimination regardless of the status of the offender, and have it investigated and dealt with.

Improved staff support and facilities

70. Ensure all employees are able to receive telephone calls or messages from family members at work, have suitable contact arrangements to receive messages and access to a telephone to remain contactable with their family during working hours, particularly for emergencies or to relieve anxiety about care arrangements etc.
71. Schedule meetings, training and planning sessions taking into account employees' requirements to drop off and pick up children from day care or school, and those balancing their working hours with those of their spouse or partner and the needs of their children and family.
72. Provide assistance to employees, such as a work life balance advocate, to help employees negotiate and achieve greater access to flexible work arrangements and a better work life balance.



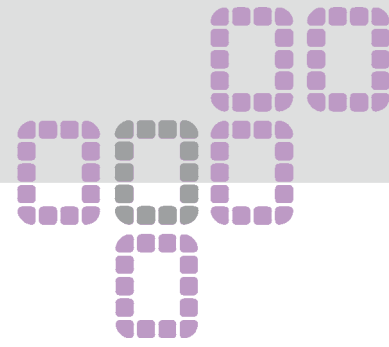
73. Provide organised opportunities for families and children to visit the workplace to see where the employee works.
74. Establish a clean and private breastfeeding room or “Mothers’ Room” in the workplace and provide access to two 30-minute lactation breaks in each 8-hour work day to enable employees to continue to breastfeed their babies or express milk when they return to work from parental leave.
75. Establish a “Care Room” in the workplace to assist employees when normal care arrangements have broken down or are not available due to a minor illness of the dependent or pupil free days. Appropriate activities should be available in the room to occupy the family member to enable the employee to continue to work productively.
76. Parent and carer support mechanisms could be established to assist new parents, carers and parents in general cope with problems with children or other family members. For example, informal parent or carer lunchtime discussion groups, access to professional counsellors (internal or external).
77. Lunchtime presentations could be organised with guest speakers to talk about career planning, work life balance issues, flexible working practices, or a specific family issue, such as single parenting, grand-parenting, and coping with difficult children, teenagers, drugs, ageing parents and children with disabilities etc.
78. Relevant parenting programs run by the Department or other professionals, such as the Department’s Positive Parenting Program, could be conducted in-house on an ‘as needs’ basis for interested employees who are parents, grandparents or carers to assist them in dealing with child behaviour problems.
79. Provide access to literature and other resources on the benefits and options for employees and employers in creating a work life balance environment to all staff, supervisors and managers.
80. Improve in-house support mechanisms such as counselling and de-briefings for staff following critical incidences to minimise post-traumatic stress syndrome and to assist staff in learning how to react more efficiently and effectively in stressful and emergency situations.

Improved staff facilities

81. Improve access to onsite parking for staff, and more equitable parking fee discounts across occupational groups.
82. Provide time saving facilities and services for employees in workplaces, such as dry cleaning pickup and drop off, access to ready-made healthy takeaway meals at the end of shifts, on-site ATM’s, banking facilities and post boxes.

Caring for employees

83. Ensure employees are able to take a full break at the proper time.
84. Provide access to healthy refreshments for staff in staff rooms.
85. Provide support and/or access to health programs, such as flu vaccinations, health screening.



86. Provide health and wellness programs such as gym facilities, lunchtime exercise classes, health checks, counselling services, social activities, networking opportunities, and massages to minimize workplace stress and the effects of shiftwork.

Further training and development

87. Provide funding or subsidies for professional development and increase training and development opportunities for all employees, including country employees, to improve their efficiency, productivity and career opportunities.
88. Provide occupational specific refresher courses for employees who have been out of the workplace, workforce or the profession for an extended period.
89. Provide employees with clear and simple information about their rights, entitlements, options and obligations for “Work life Balance” working arrangements.
90. Ensure all employees are better informed about:
 - a) the range of flexible work practices that are available to them;
 - b) their rights and entitlements to carer’s leave and other leave and flexible working hours arrangements;
 - c) how to apply for more flexible working arrangements; and
 - d) the approved grievance procedures, if their needs are not being met.

Attraction and Retention Strategies for Nurses and other health professionals

Given the current ageing profile of nurses in WA Health, it is important to have a range of strategies to attract and retain nurses, and how to attract people, particularly young people, to nursing as a career.

The following attraction and retention strategies may assist. Some of these strategies could also be used in other Health professional occupations with an ageing profile and current or potential labour or skill shortages.

91. Conduct promotional campaigns on “nursing as a career” for school leavers:
 - a) making a difference in the lives of people in need;
 - b) flexible working and leave arrangements;
 - c) plenty of job opportunities around Australia and overseas.
92. Market nursing as a career option for men.
93. Promote the value of nursing as a career - “nurses do “make a difference”.



94. Promote flexible work practices in the nursing occupation:
 - a) Flexible working and leave arrangements for nurses;
 - b) Part-time work opportunities across all classification levels to assist employees balance work and family responsibilities;
 - c) Purchased leave arrangements for parents for school holidays;
 - d) Ability to take 12 months leave without pay for family, travel or study;
 - e) Career breaks of up to 5 years (taken as leave without pay); and
 - f) Deferred salary scheme - work for 4 years at a reduced salary and have the 5th year off work as paid leave for family, study or travel.
95. Offer nursing scholarships to school leavers and other health employees seeking a new career or a career change.
96. Consider offering job and training packages (similar to the Army campaign and hospital trained nurses).
97. Work with training institutions to ensure the curriculum addresses working conditions in hospitals such as 24/7 operations and shift work requirements.
98. Provide new nurses with access to flexible working arrangements and at least some of their shift preferences.
99. Offer more part-time and vacation job opportunities within the hospital to trainee nurses, eg. as nursing assistants or orderlies, after university hours, night shifts, weekends, during university breaks (as an alternative to trainee nurses having part-time jobs in the hospitality industry). This will increase their understanding of the nursing and health profession, and of hospital life. Job opportunities could be promoted at the training institution. Preference to be given to these applicants over other applicants with no health training or experience.
100. Establish a central point for recruiting nurses and other health professionals to WA Health, particularly for applicants from the country, interstate and overseas.
101. Conduct rural and regional promotional campaigns for nursing and other health professions as a career where there is a shortage, to recruit rural applicants to work in their own region.