

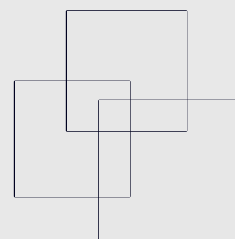


International
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Geneva

WISE +

Work Improvement in Small Enterprises

Action Manual





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WISE + Action Manual

Developed and piloted within the ILO/DANIDA project:
**Improving Job Quality in Africa through concerted efforts by Government,
Employers and Workers**

Conditions of Work and Employment Programme

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Work improvement in small enterprises (WISE) Action Manual

Geneva, International Labour Office, 2009

ISBN 978-92-2-122906-3 (print)

ISBN 978-92-2-122907-0 (web pdf)

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Foreword

Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (*WISE*) is an innovative approach to improving working conditions and productivity in small and medium-sized enterprises around the world. It is not simply a training package, but a process in which entrepreneurs and managers are empowered and supported to address working conditions issues through the identification, sharing and implementation of local and affordable good practices. In the long term, the improvements in working conditions achieved are sustained through the development of supportive networks of local entrepreneurs and trainers who continue to share ideas and practices, motivated by the measurable improvements in productivity that participants experience.

A series of training modules and guides, first published in 1988, form the heart of *WISE*. Until now, these have provided guidance on nine technical areas of working conditions, all of which address the physical organization of the workplace and work processes and simple ways to alter these, so as to improve safety and health and increase productivity. These manuals have been used, adapted and translated into more than ten countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, evidencing the flexibility and effectiveness of the *WISE* approach.

WISE-R (*More Work Improvement in Small Enterprises*) builds upon this success and is designed to meet the needs identified by *WISE* trainers and entrepreneurs around the world to expand the *WISE* package to include other key dimensions of working conditions. *WISE-R* consists of six new modules and training guides that address not only the physical work environment, but also the more complex day-to-day challenges that entrepreneurs face when handling employee recruitment, management and motivation.

WISE-R is a natural extension of the original *WISE* manuals. It reflects the global recognition that the employees of a business are not only often a significant investment, but that their performance holds the key to the success of the business. *WISE-R* reflects this reality and takes on the issues that are central both to workers' recruitment, retention and motivation, and to maximizing individual productivity in a safe and healthy way: wages, working time, maternity protection, work-family balance, management and motivation, and workplace relations.

As with *WISE*, the suggestions made in *WISE-R* are both practical and low-cost. The focus of these ideas is, in fact, to introduce simple working practices and measures that can make a huge difference to the motivation and the ability of employees to perform their job and, consequently, to the productivity of the business.

The concept of combining *WISE* and *WISE-R* into a *WISE+* package arose in the course of a six-month period of pilot testing carried out in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania in 2009. Following the development of the *WISE-R* modules, a decision was taken to pilot the *WISE* and *WISE-R* training modules in tandem. The implementation phase was carried out with the cooperation and participation of a range of local and national actors, including local entrepreneurs, employers' and workers' organizations, labour inspectorates, ministries of labour, training institutions and others. The feedback received following this exercise has suggested that combining *WISE* and *WISE-R* is an efficient and effective approach.

This *WISE+* binder brings together the *WISE Action Manual (1997)* with the new *WISE-R Training Manual* to create a complete *WISE+ Action Manual*. We have also created a second binder, which contains the *WISE* and new *WISE-R Trainers' Guides*. In the longer term, further work will need to be undertaken to fully integrate the *WISE* and *WISE-R* modules, and their respective guides. This *WISE+* package is thus presented as a prototype, which is ready to provide a solid starting point for future work. The ILO would welcome the feedback of entrepreneurs and practitioners who will use and adapt the methodology to the multiple realities of workplaces around the world.



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WISE-R
More
Work Improvement in Small Enterprises

Module 5

Family-friendly Measures

Developed and piloted within the ILO/DANIDA project:
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Employers and Workers**

Conditions of Work and Employment Programme

Introduction

What are “family responsibilities”?

“Family responsibilities” refer specifically to responsibilities in relation to sustaining and taking care of your family. They involve a number of unpaid activities, which are fundamental to a healthy society and workforce.

These unpaid services consist of providing care for infants and children (active and passive), the permanently ill or temporarily sick, as well as for older relatives and the disabled; and they can involve household maintenance, cleaning, washing, cooking, shopping; special events (e.g. funerals) and all volunteer work for community services.

Bear in mind two very important aspects that impact on the division of family responsibilities:

- There exist some *biologically determined differences* between women and men that are fixed. For example, only women can bear and breastfeed children (biological difference linked to **sex**).
- Other *socially and culturally determined differences* between the sexes are changeable and can vary over time, both within and between cultures and social groups. For example, both women and men can *rear children, take care of dependents and perform unpaid domestic activities and voluntary community work* (societal differences linked to **gender factors**).

Typically, women shoulder most family responsibilities. However, men can and should share family responsibilities. Both women and men at the workplace will welcome family-friendly measures that help them care for family dependents, while also allowing them to be productive and valued employees at work. Pregnancy and nursing are the only circumstances that require special measures only for women.

This module will help you:

1. To understand family responsibilities and their link with your business and productivity;
2. To address maternity-related workplace issues;
3. To formulate and implement practical family-friendly workplace measures.

Why family responsibilities are part of working conditions?

Both workers and employers need the financial resources that they gain from working to provide for their family members. At the same time, they must ensure that their family dependents are looked after during working hours.

Often family and work responsibilities can lead to considerable conflicts and stress for workers and their families, having negative consequences for business productivity and efficient workplaces. Some working conditions can prevent workers reconciling their work and family responsibilities, harming both business and family interests.

Some key points related to family responsibilities are:

- They affect both women and men.
- Women tend to bear most responsibility for domestic tasks and care of dependents due to inequality at home and at work and gender stereotypes.
- Family responsibilities depend on the actual caring responsibilities of carers, not just legal status (married, divorced etc.).
- They involve a lot of domestic unpaid activities and can be very time-consuming.
- They may involve caring for young people and/or caring for elders.
- They can also involve single people (aunts, uncles, sons, daughters, siblings, adoptive/foster parents, widows, lone parents etc.) not just couples.

A number of societal changes and conditions influence work-life balance greatly:

- Women have increased their participation in paid work;
- Family members are less available to help parents with family responsibilities (migrations, increased need for income, older siblings' school attendance);
- Lack of public health and social care services;
- Impact of HIV/AIDS on families and/or carers - increased illness and care needs of family members, number of orphans, and funerals.

Have you or your workers ever experienced one of those circumstances?

In relation to family life, while men and women can share most responsibilities, women have the special role of maternity. This can represent an extra physical and psychological challenge for women during pregnancy and the post-natal period, which can be an increased source of work-family conflict.

Remember

Work-related problems may be linked to work-family issues.

Why family-friendly measures are good for your business

Employers can help reduce the negative effects of work-family issues through family-friendly measures that support stable and productive relationships, both at work *and* in family life.

While the government holds the main responsibility for setting the enabling legal and policy framework, much can be also done at the enterprise level, through collective bargaining agreements and/or management practices, to make conditions of work more compatible with family responsibilities.

Implementing family-friendly measures is a business strategy with a dual agenda of creating a win-win situation, achieving both organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

Positive work-family measures can lead to economic benefits because they:

- improve working relationships, morale and job satisfaction, reduce absenteeism and labour turnover;
- make it easier for employers to attract and retain talented and experienced workers;
- promote equal employment opportunities, reduce inequalities and prevent economic and social exclusion;
- reduce losses to individual employees and their families, improving their social and economic wellbeing and workplace conditions;
- are an important social measure, which contribute to increased growth and prosperity;
- improve the image and corporate social responsibility of the company.

What are workplace family-friendly measures in small and medium enterprises (SMEs)?

Family-friendly workplace measures are actions or procedures that help workers reconcile their work and family responsibilities. They refer to arrangements in work organization, systems and processes targeted at achieving work and family balance for the staff in their daily work.

Implementing a set of family-friendly measures may be very different for large firms and work settings than for small and medium enterprises, which may have different needs and resources.

SMEs are often organized around a family and managerial decisions can be implemented directly (being more informal and less bureaucratic). However, in many cases, the work and family pressure on employees in a smaller organization can often be higher than in a larger one, since the smaller number of employees may limit the opportunities for flexibility and imply high dependence on each person's contribution.

Limited financial and staff resources mean that the methods of achieving family-friendly workplace measures might require innovative and low-cost solutions, which, though small and relatively simple, can make a big difference.

Such arrangements can cover a range of options, including:

- **work organization and working hours arrangements**, such as flexible working hours and organization, part-time work, job-sharing, work from home;
- **statutory and non-statutory leave** for reasons such as family emergencies, paternity leave, illness or care for family members;
- **maternity protection arrangements**, such as maternity leave with pay, employment protection and non-discrimination, health protection and breastfeeding facilities;
- **Workplace care facilities and arrangements for family responsibilities**, such as workplace nurseries; partnerships for community-based social care services for elderly, sick and disable people; after-school spaces; subsidies for childcare; practical workplace support and information for employees taking care of a family member.

This Module reviews these family-friendly workplace measures and explains how to implement them at low or no-cost. The Module is divided into the following sections:

1. Make working time work for everyone;
2. Family-friendly leave arrangements;
3. Maternity protection at the workplace;
4. Help with care arrangements.

5.1

Make Working Time Work for Everyone

As the manager of the enterprise, it is very easy for the time you spend at the workplace to get longer and longer, and the time you dedicate to your family to get shorter. When this happens, your performance at work may go down as your fatigue and stress increase. Many workers, who have little control over their working hours or shifts, face the same problem.

The results of this can be sickness, absences, lateness and, consequently, lower productivity. But good management of working time can greatly reduce such problems.



This entrepreneur is tired and still working late at night.

The advantages for your business

When your employees are unable to cope with their work and home responsibilities, this increases the pressure on you, and so has a double effect on your business. Taking positive control of working time costs nothing and can substantially improve productivity because it:

- Reduces stress levels;
- Reduces fatigue;
- Increases attendance and concentration;
- Reduces accidents;
- Improves morale and loyalty.

Changing such things as the length of the working day or the start time of a shift can have a strong impact on your ability to recruit and retain workers.



This manager is reprimanding an employee who arrived late, and does not know that the worker's child is in hospital.

What you can do

Checkpoint 37: Consult your workers on their family responsibilities and the difficulties they might have balancing these with workplace demands.



Lunch time can be the ideal time for employers to sit with workers and learn about the work-family challenges they face.

1. Consult your workers:

Clashes between work and home responsibilities are often caused by a lack of flexibility at work and at home.

The challenge of successfully implementing workplace family-friendly policies is to meet the needs of your business whilst meeting those of your workers. Consulting your workers is key to identifying potential work-family conflicts as a basis for effective problem solving.

Understanding the problems faced by workers with family responsibilities, as well as the extent to which they affect your business objectives, helps you identify the most appropriate work-family measures.

During the consultation process, it is important to involve both men and women from different sections of the workforce, different age groups and diverse family and community backgrounds. This ensures that people's diverse needs and interests are taken into account. It also prevents the measures from being perceived as imposed or as "special perks", since a better work-life balance can benefit everyone.

Special consideration should also be given to the impact of HIV/AIDS and the other serious health problems on communities and the businesses in the areas of high prevalence.

2. **Avoid long daily or weekly working hours:**

Long hours do not equal higher productivity. In fact, the opposite can be the case. If you are spending 12 hours a day at work (not to mention travel time), it is likely that fatigue will make you inefficient, moody and prone to accidents. You are also very unlikely to have much time or energy for your family.



This entrepreneur and manager are monitoring the hours that individuals have worked.

Checkpoint 38: Arrange working hours with workers' family responsibilities in mind.

3. **Design working time arrangements to be family-friendly:**

There is not one 'right' way to do this, because it depends on your staff and your business. When you decide on your working time arrangements, you should keep in mind the difference they can make to your productivity and to your workers' daily lives.

Be also aware of any national or local laws on the maximum number of weekly working hours and rest. They will help you to decide what working hours are reasonable.



This father's work schedule makes it possible for him to pick up his child from school after work.

4. Some more tips:

- Changing from rotating to fixed shifts offers workers more predictable schedules, which may fit much better with family routines;
- Offer shorter working hours or flexi-time arrangements (where workers have a set number of hours to work, but have some choice when to work them);
- Schedule meetings within normal working hours;
- Allow workers to have some control over their working hours, e.g. doctors visits, administrative formalities, etc.;
- Agree with carers what they can do if normal care arrangements breakdown, such as bringing children to work or working from home.

Checkpoint 39: Consider work sharing and job rotation, to allow workers to fill in for each other when someone is absent.

If you give workers a chance to learn more tasks and to take more responsibility, you will be increasing their skills and you will be able to rely on them to handle things when you or other workers need to take time away from the workplace. This can be useful for covering work when workers go on leave and when unexpected family emergencies require a worker to be absent on short notice.

To promote cooperation: Regularly consult with your workers about the working hours and shifts that would help them to meet their family and work responsibilities.

**For more training and practical tips
you can refer to the WISE-R module
on working time (Module 3)**

5.2

Family-Friendly Leave Arrangements

Everyone, including you, needs a break from work, whether for a holiday or for special reasons that arise now and again. Leave arrangements, according or in addition to leave entitlements provided in the labour legislation, influence the ability of workers to be absent for a short period to deal with a family emergency or to take a more prolonged leave for caring responsibilities.

The main leave arrangements of importance to workers with family responsibilities include:

- annual leave;
- sick leave;
- short emergency or care leave (for unexpected family problems or planned care needs);
- maternity, paternity, and parental leave.

Some of these leave arrangements (such as sick and emergency leave) will arise on short or no notice. However, most leave can be planned for so that you can maintain productivity and meet your business deadlines.

The advantages for your business

Trained and productive workers are a valuable asset in any business, so you should do your best to keep them. Providing paid leave is an attraction for experienced workers and it also improves performance because it provides workers with an opportunity to rest and rebuild energy so that they can continue to be productive at work.

More details on leave policies

1 Annual Leave

Annual leave is the period during which workers take time away from their work, while continuing to receive an income and to be entitled to their labour rights. Workers can take a specified number of working days or weeks of leave, with the aim of allowing them the opportunity for extended rest and recreation. Annual leave is available in addition to public holidays, sick leave, weekly rest, maternity and parental leave, etc.

Annual leave applies to all workers, irrespective of their family responsibilities. Allowing the employee concerned to have an influence on the timing of when annual leave is to be taken is important to enable him or her to plan the leave together with family needs, such as school holidays.

2 Sick Leave

Sick leave usually arises without notice, but being clear about how absences need to be reported and when a doctors' note is necessary will help with both management of workers and planning.

3 Short Emergency Leave

When daily routines are well organized, workers should have less need to be absent for family emergencies. Nevertheless, there are various types of unavoidable events which mean that workers need short-term absences. These events can include the sickness of a child or an elderly dependent, a doctor's appointment, a spouse's accident, the death of a relative, meetings with teachers or administrative formalities.

Lack of support for family responsibilities may constrain some workers to resort to absenteeism (use of unplanned annual leave, call in sick or taking leave without pay) to cope with those emergencies. Unplanned absences may be less necessary when a solution is available.

Sometimes provision for short emergency leave (some with wide definitions of emergency and others for specific events, such as bereavement) exist in the legislation, or more commonly in collective bargaining agreements or enterprise policies.

4 Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is the mothers' period of rest in relation to childbirth, which is a crucial means of protecting the health of the mother and her child. Please refer to section 4 below, *"Maternity Protection at the Workplace"*, for more information on maternity leave.

5 Paternity leave

Paternity leave is leave for the father around the time of birth of the baby and is a key leave arrangement to promote equal sharing of family responsibilities between women and men.

Paternity leave is becoming more and more common in national law and in enterprise practice, particularly in collective bargaining agreements, reflecting the increasing importance attached to the presence of the father around the time of childbirth. Among the countries for which there is information on national provisions for paternity leave, the duration ranges from one day to three months and it is usually paid.



This father is pleased to have some time off to spend with his new baby.

6 Parental Leave

Parental leave refers to a planned longer-term leave available to either parent to allow them to take care of an infant or young child over a period of time usually following the maternity or paternity leave period. As provided in the ILO Recommendation on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No. 165), both the mother and the father should have a right to take parental leave.

What you can do

Checkpoint 40: Inform your workers about all of the types of leave that you provide.

1. *Have clear leave policies:*

These should explain to all workers their rights to take leave, the number of weeks they can take, how it should be booked, the notice required, and the pay that workers will receive. Having clear leave policies in place will help you and your workers to plan ahead for the benefit of the business.



These workers are able to check the enterprise leave policy, which is placed on the wall.

Checkpoint 41: Plan ahead for leave, so you avoid stoppages or interruptions that may cause loss of productivity.

2. *Plan ahead:*

Most leaves can generally be planned ahead of time. Make sure you have a leave calendar that is available for everyone so that absences can be planned as a team.

Planning ahead for all events and absences will keep your enterprise working smoothly. If, for example, a maternity leave is needed, good planning could include a pregnant worker showing others how to do her job before she takes leave. Planning ahead will help you to maintain production and reduce costs from sickness or unplanned absences.

3. ***Give workers as much free choice as possible*** about when they take their leave so that they can match it to family needs e.g. for school holidays and care of family members.
4. ***Keep a clear record of leave taken*** so that you can always know how much leave workers have left to take and you can take this into account in your production planning.
5. ***Be flexible to help workers cope with family emergencies:***

Try to accommodate parents with family responsibilities by providing additional leave days to cope with these emergencies and needs. Accepting that some sick leave can be used officially for such emergencies or planned events can also make a difference.

6. Provide pay during leave:

Pay is always important to workers. During sickness, and during maternity and paternity leave, this is especially important. Very few can afford to take time off if they are not paid and, usually, a sickness or a birth can involve a lot of expenses. On the other hand, if the leave is not taken, the consequences for the worker and business can be substantial.

If sick workers do not take time off, they can pass illnesses on to other workers, and can end up with long term health problems resulting in repeated absences. Absences relating to the birth of a child are also essential. If mothers do not take maternity leave, their health and the health of their children can suffer, resulting in increased absences due to sickness and poor health.

If a social insurance system is in place, maternity and paternity leave will cost you nothing and it will help keep your employees healthy and able to return to work for you after their leave. In some countries, however, the law demands that employers pay workers during maternity and other leaves. Where no public safety net or maternity payment law exists, you will need to make a choice about what help you offer, bearing in mind the financial resources of the business.

The business arguments for paid leave:**Paid leave is a good investment because:**

- The worker is likely to stay with your enterprise for many years;
- If the worker comes back to work early because of financial pressures, he/she may end up being absent later because he/she will not have taken the rest needed to properly recover;
- A rested, healthy worker will perform work more consistently and make fewer mistakes. Working when tired or unfit can cause mistakes or accidents due to poor concentration;
- You will save recruitment and training costs if your staff turnover is low;
- The worker has no other income.

Maternity Protection at the Workplace

Any life experience or event that affects you or your workers can also affect your business and its productivity. Maternity is a very significant event in the life of any woman and her family.

Maternity protection involves a combination of measures, designed to provide working women with protection from discrimination, harm or loss arising from pregnancy and maternity at work. Workplace maternity protection measures include:

- **Maternity leave:** Maternity leave is a paid leave of absence from work for maternity-related reasons. It is taken by a woman in the period around childbirth to protect her health and that of the child.
- **Employment protection and non-discrimination (the right to return):** This guarantees pregnant and nursing mothers that they will not lose their job because of their pregnancy and maternity and they will return to the same or equivalent position paid at the same rate after their maternity leave.
- **Health protection for the mother and her child, before and after birth:** This involves making sure that the workplace and the work practices are safe, so that a pregnant worker and her child are not injured or hurt.
- **Arrangements for breastfeeding:** This involves making simple arrangements so that mothers can continue to breastfeed when they return to work. Breastfeeding is vital to the health of the mother and child.

The following sections include more practical details on the implementation of those maternity protection components at the workplace.

The advantages for your business

1. **A good investment:** Experience shows that pregnant workers who have decent working conditions continue to be fully productive members of the workforce during their pregnancy and afterwards.
2. Generally speaking, it takes less management time and effort to manage maternity in the workplace well, compared to replacing workers who have to leave because of lack of protection.



This pregnant worker is able to carry on working without any problems.

3 Managing workplace maternity protection well can:

- enable women to work productively without disruption. Pregnant workers feel reassured, enabling them to concentrate fully on their job.
- reduce costs and help attract and retain experienced staff. Having long-serving and healthy workers is key to business growth;
- enhance the reputation of your enterprise, ensure business continuity, productivity and quality of services and products.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

Part I: Some maternity basics you should know

Part II: Maternity leave and employment security

Part III: Health protection

Part IV: Arrangements for breastfeeding

PART 1: Some maternity basics you should know

Maternity is the period that covers the essential stages in human reproduction from conception to birth and up to the end of breastfeeding. Ensuring the health of mothers during this time is not only important to them and to your business, but also to the wider society and the future generations.

Pregnancy is not an illness and working during pregnancy is not, in itself, a risk, except immediately before or after the birth. Many women continue to work late into their pregnancies without any problems, remain highly productive, and return to work afterwards to resume normal duties.

Throughout the pregnancy a woman's body provides the space, nutrition and the life support needed to develop a child from one cell to a whole living and breathing individual. At the most basic level, the food a pregnant woman eats and the water she drinks must be enough for her own body and for the development of her baby. In fact, all her experiences, such as the air she breathes or the stress she feels, can have an effect on her future child.



A pregnant woman is eating and drinking for two people – herself and her baby.

The following is a short description of the changes that a woman experiences during pregnancy.

Stage 1: Early pregnancy (the first 3 months)



Strong smells make this pregnant woman feel sick.

A few months into a pregnancy, it is usually possible to see that a woman is pregnant because her shape changes. But this is not the only change that you need to be aware of. The chemicals and hormones inside the woman's body also have to adjust to provide the baby with a healthy environment. Together, these changes can affect pregnant workers in many ways:

- discomfort and nausea;
- sensitivity to smells;
- tiredness and the need for more rest breaks;
- the need to drink (and go to the toilet) more frequently.

As a general rule, the risk of miscarriage is greatest in the early months of pregnancy, so a healthy diet, plenty of sleep, gentle exercise, plenty of drinking water and early health checks are important in this critical stage.

Stage 2: Mid- to late pregnancy (4 – 8 months)

As the baby develops further, the mother's ligaments soften so that her body is ready for the birth. This makes a pregnant worker more prone to injuries caused by lifting or handling heavy things.



*As a pregnant woman gets bigger, bending can be difficult and more dangerous.
Having a work station that avoids the need for bending can help a lot.*

When pregnant, the amount of blood in a woman's body increases. This means the heart of a pregnant woman has to work harder, especially when she is doing physically demanding work. As a result, the worker may experience:

- problems standing for long periods and dizziness;
- muscle aches and pains;
- loss of balance more easily;
- changes in breathing patterns that can result in inhaling more pollutants.

These changes are normal, but they make enormous demands on the woman. For instance, the daily energy requirements for simply maintaining the state of pregnancy (before doing anything else) are equivalent to two to three hours' arduous physical activity. Pre-natal medical visits are also very important at this stage.

Stage 3: Before and after the childbirth (9 months – 3 months after)

In the final weeks of pregnancy a future mother needs to rest more and have some time to prepare herself and her family for the new arrival.

Each couple divides family tasks differently, but it is often the case that women do most work in the house and with the children. At this point in the pregnancy, fathers or other relatives may need to take on responsibility for some of the tasks that they may normally not do, such as collecting children from school. This can be a problem if their hours of work are inflexible.

Giving birth makes enormous demands on the woman and sometimes it may involve risks or health complications for the mother and her newborn, such as: delivery by caesarean section, multiple births, premature birth and stillbirth. However, regular medical checks and attention can often help detect and prevent problems.



This new mother is taking a much needed rest, with her baby.

After delivery, the woman needs time and rest to heal and recover. At the same time, the baby needs attention from both parents and feeding. Recovery time helps prevent complications, such as infections, abnormal clotting or haemorrhage after birth. Some women may also suffer from fatigue, anaemia, diabetes or post-natal depression. Health protection, including post-natal visits and vaccinations, is also vital in the post-natal period.

Stage 4: Breastfeeding

This is the last stage of maternity but extremely important for the future health of both the mother and child. Please refer to section 3.3 below, “*Arrangements for breastfeeding*”, for more information on this component.

Remember

- Pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding are not illnesses, but affect people differently;
- They place extra demands on the woman;
- Harm can occur at any stage, including harm to men and women before conception, but workplace health protection can help avoid the risks;
- Medical attention and preventive health care play a vital part in maternity protection, especially if there are risks of complications;
- Healthy breastfeeding protects both mother and child.

Make workplace maternity protection a reality

This part provides practical information to implement workplace maternity protection in your SME. Employers should, of course, comply with their national legislation, but you can also go further. You can:

- improve and extend maternity protection provisions;
- take practical and zero-cost action in the workplace;
- adapt and replicate models of good practice;
- train managers and supervisors so that they understand, implement and support the measures on a day-to-day basis.

PART II: Maternity leave and employment security

Maternity leave is leave of absence from work for maternity-related reasons. It is not sickness or holiday leave. It is taken by a woman around childbirth to protect her health and that of the child. During this time her employment is protected and the woman has the right to return to her job or to a comparable post with no loss of pay or seniority on her return.

Maternity leave is so important for the health of the mother and child that almost all countries have laws to provide for it and set out how much pay the worker should be paid during her absence. It is important for you to know your country's requirements, your business needs, and your workers' needs to assess the amount of time you should provide for maternity leave.



This new mother is healthy and ready to get back to work after a period of maternity leave.

The ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) provides:

- a minimum period of 14 weeks maternity leave, including a compulsory period of 6 weeks leave following childbirth
- Income replacement during leave of at least two-thirds of earnings, preferably through social insurance benefits or payments from public funds during this time. This is intended to prevent the woman from being pressured to return to work as this could put her health or that of the child at risk.

What you can do

Checkpoint 42: Provide all workers with maternity and paternity leave, and the right to a similar job at the same pay when they return.

If maternity leave is not paid through social insurance or public funds in your country, and if the law does not require employers to provide pay during maternity leave, you could still think about alternatives, such as:

- voluntary payment of maternity leave benefits;
- helping the worker to save in advance;
- giving the worker a small advance on future pay with a long repayment period.

1. ***If workers think they will lose their job if they take leave, they are not likely to take it, even when it is essential.*** Nowadays, most new mothers want or need to return to their former job after leave, so that they can carry on meeting family expenses and, where possible, maintain their career path. This is good news for businesses.

Knowing that leave comes with the right to return will reassure workers and improve their loyalty and their feeling of being valued by the business.



This manager and worker are planning for the worker's return to work.

2. ***Allow pregnant workers to stay working as long as they feel able*** to before the birth, so long as the law allows this. Most are keen to keep earning and prefer to save their leave for after the birth.



This worker is healthy and able to carry on working late into her pregnancy.

However, you also need to be aware of national laws on this. Some laws, for example, require that women have a medical check-up to determine how long she can work before the birth.

3. **Remember men have babies too** (not physically of course) and should be given leave (paternity leave) to spend time with their new baby and support the mother as she recovers. Fathers may take some of this time at the birth and some later. This can also be planned for though, again, flexibility is very important.

Finding out when a worker is pregnant

If employees understand the need for advanced planning and have confidence that they will be treated fairly, they will report their pregnancy early. Never interrogate or intimidate employees to get this information.

4. **Build trust by being open about maternity protection and telling workers clearly:**

- you will be allowed to take some time off for medical checkups;
- during maternity leave, you will (or will not) receive pay or social insurance benefits (essential for financial planning);
- we will welcome you back after maternity leave into your present job or a similar one;
- you will be considered for promotion equally with other workers;
- you will be able to take breastfeeding breaks for a period (state the number of months) when you return to work.

5. **Discuss maternity protection planning periodically, as part of routine consultations with workers.** It is good practice to consult your workers or their representatives when considering any working conditions, including maternity protection. In fact, an individual worker's pregnancy may raise issues that need to be discussed with other workers. In a small business, one worker's pregnancy might have an effect on other workers. For example, other workers may have concerns that a worker's absence will affect their workload. Keeping other workers informed will reduce this possibility.



Most new mothers are happy to receive a visit from work colleagues and catch up on the latest news.

To promote cooperation: It is important that women on maternity leave are allowed to rest and have their time with their baby. However, some women are reassured about their future by being kept up to date. Encourage colleagues (rather than managers) to keep in touch with her informally and, near to her return date, you could send her a message to let her know that, if she wishes, you would be happy to talk to her about her future work schedule needs.



This manager is consulting with workers on how best to arrange work tasks whilst one worker is on maternity leave.

Do not tell workers any personal or confidential information about another worker, including maternity information.
It is for each worker to decide how much information to share with workplace colleagues.

6. ***To encourage information sharing, make it clear to workers that your door is always open to them.*** If a worker tells you that she is pregnant, advise her of the protections you provide and encourage her to keep you informed of her plans.
- Ask your workers to help in planning work reorganizations.
 - Give other workers the chance to extend their skills by temporarily replacing the pregnant worker or swapping jobs.



This pregnant worker is training a colleague to do her job in preparation for her maternity leave.

7. ***Learn from pregnant workers about their needs and what medical professionals are advising.***

PART III: Health protection

During pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding, there are certain things or actions at the workplace that may be hazardous for the health and safety of pregnant workers or their babies. Some of these will also be harmful for male workers, and can affect their fertility or their ability to father healthy babies.

Maternity protection does not mean you will automatically have to make changes to workplace practices or incur costs. Often, no changes are needed, but this depends on the industry, the job the worker does and the conditions she works in. But, as an employer, you can be held responsible for injuries to workers if they are caused by a workplace hazard. Acting to remove risks could save your business from expensive work interruptions.

The advantages for your business

Most risks that pregnant workers face can also be dangerous for other workers, e.g. working in extreme heat or at height. This means that any hazards that you are able to remove will improve the health and safety for all workers and so lower the number of accidents and stoppages.

Experience has shown that reorganizations made to improve conditions of work can directly improve process efficiency and motivation and can add to, rather than reduce, profits.

What you can do

Checkpoint 43: Carry out a risk assessment (including those relating to exposure to chemicals) and discuss it with your workers.

1. Identify workplace risks:

All workers face risks at work. These can be very obvious, such as the risk of injury from lifting and carrying heavy loads or the chance of ingesting pollution when working with chemicals.



Accidents can happen to anyone. However, the consequences can be more serious for pregnant workers.

Other hazards are more subtle, such as the effect of the timing, length and flexibility of work shifts and breaks. Of course, any worker can trip and be injured or become sick if they have no rest. However, for pregnant workers, the results can be more dangerous. For example, without frequent toilet breaks, a pregnant woman can develop a kidney infection.

Every workplace is different. This is why you or a manager needs to go around the workplace and do a risk assessment with the needs of pregnant workers in your mind.

Identify the action to be taken, which may include training on safe handling, the use of personal protection equipment, or a temporary transfer of an employee to another post.



This pregnant worker is being transferred to work away from these chemicals, as they represent a risk to her and her baby's health.

It is important that risks are monitored continuously and you do not wait until you know a worker is pregnant to think about this. A worker may not know she is pregnant for the first few months, which is the time when the growing baby is most vulnerable.

Involve the pregnant worker and/or her workplace representative in the risk assessment process. You can help each other to identify and understand the risks or problems and come up with solutions together.

To promote cooperation

When looking at the risks and solutions, involve workers (including the pregnant worker) and their representatives. They may have some good ideas and will be pleased to be consulted.

Checkpoint 44: Take action to remove identified risks.

1. Take action!

When you have completed the risk assessment, you may end up with a small list of workplace risks. Now you can act to remove these risks where possible or reorganize things, so that all of your workers, including those who are pregnant, can work safely. Many actions can be low-cost or even no-cost.

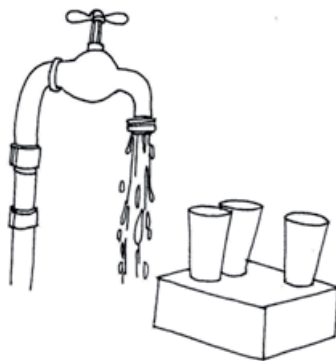
Remember that the needs of pregnant women change as the pregnancy progresses, so a flexible approach is essential.

Does your enterprise use chemicals?

If so, see the WISE Chapter on Control of Hazardous Substances. One recommendation is to get a **chemical safety data sheet** for each chemical that you use or produce. These sheets provide information about the chemical, such as how to use it properly, precautions to be taken, and potential hazards for workers of reproductive age. It is important to make sure that you and all your workers understand the data sheets and take action to remove/avoid the risks.

Exposure to toxicants before or during pregnancy can cause women to miscarry or give birth to premature, low-weight or disabled babies, as well as significantly increase the risk of neonatal mortality.

Checkpoint 45: Ensure ready access to safe drinking water and to clean toilets, at any time, without restrictions.



Checkpoint 46: Accommodate or reassign pregnant workers to tasks that do not require continuous standing, uncomfortable movements/postures, heavy physical effort or risk of slipping and falling.

Other basics steps include:

- Remove tripping hazards;
- Provide a chair or stool for sitting while working, or rotate jobs. Standing for long periods is not comfortable for anyone. For pregnant women it can cause swollen feet, make walking painful and increase the risk of slips, trips and injuries.
- Avoid shifts that have non regular patterns, long hours, or missed rest periods, as they increase the risk of malnutrition, dehydration, and exhaustion.

2. What if a risk is a part of the job and cannot be removed? Pregnant workers should not do heavy lifting (more than 10 kg). Where, for example, the process involves moving heavy weights from one part of the workplace to another, you should look for ways to reorganize work processes, tasks, or workers, so the pregnant worker does not face this risk.

- Introduce team working so that workers can share their work between them in a way that keeps everyone working and safe;
- Reposition storage areas so carrying distances are reduced;
- Other workers may be pleased to get the chance to take on a different task for a few months and, at the end of the period, you will have the benefit of a more flexible workforce.



This work team have temporarily changed the way they work, so that their pregnant colleague does not carry heavy loads and can sit whilst she is working.

To promote cooperation:

- Your workers are familiar with the workplace and may have some innovative, low cost, reorganization ideas;
- Cooperation between small businesses can save costs and boost profits. Use your network of WISE employers to make contact with other small business owners and learn how they have improved their workplaces.

PART IV: Arrangements for breastfeeding

When workers with new babies return to work they are likely to be breastfeeding. Supporting working mothers' breastfeeding makes sense because breastfed babies are healthier and are less prone to illnesses. To encourage and support your worker to breastfeed, let her know before maternity leave that when she returns to work, you will provide a clean and private place where she can feed her child or express and store her breast milk.

The advantages of breastfeeding for mother and baby

It is now widely understood that breastfeeding a baby is one of the most important things a mother can do to protect her child's short and long term health, because it:

- Passes on resistance to illnesses from the mother to the child;
- It provides the ideal nutritious diet the baby needs;
- It is hygienic, so the chance of waterborne disease is lower;
- It increases the speed of recovery of the mother;
- It reduces the risk of certain illnesses and diseases for the mother, such as anaemia, breast cancer and ovarian cancers.

Bottle feeding is an alternative, but it does not provide the same health benefits for the child or the mother. It is also a costly and often impractical option for parents who may not have easy access to clean water for sterilizing bottles or making up the powder, at work or at home.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding of babies until the age of 6 months, and continues breastfeeding with appropriate complementary foods for up to two years.

Breastfeeding and HIV

- Pregnant women living with HIV are at high risk of transmitting HIV to their infants during pregnancy, during birth or through breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding by a mother with HIV increases the risk of transmission to her baby by 5-20 %;
- In many places, though, it may not be possible or safe *not* to breastfeed, especially where water isn't clean;
- WHO advises: *"when replacement feeding is acceptable, feasible, affordable, sustainable and safe, avoidance of all breastfeeding by HIV-infected mothers is recommended. Otherwise, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended during the first six months of life".*

Checkpoint 47: In addition to normal breaks, allow at least one 1-hour break for breastfeeding mothers.

The advantages of breastfeeding for your business



Breastfeeding a baby gives it the best chance of having a healthy future.

The most obvious benefit of breastfeeding for your business will be the lower rate of sickness of both mothers and their babies. This will mean less unplanned leave on the part of mothers and fathers to look after a sick child. You can add to this, higher employee loyalty, motivation and productivity, and a boost to the public image of your business. This will help you to attract the best workers and new customers.

What you can do

Checkpoint 48: Provide a clean and quiet area for breastfeeding or expressing milk.

1. **Provide a breastfeeding area:** This does not need to be a fancy space. A weather-protected, screened area, with a chair, access to drinking water, and hand washing facilities, is better than nothing at all.



A simple (low-cost) breastfeeding area, such as this, provides privacy and basic comfort for breastfeeding mothers.

A simple breastfeeding programme

Mothers should have the choice to either bring their babies to work to feed (if it is safe) or express the milk and store it in a bottle for the infant's next feeding after they return home at the end of the day. Breast milk does not need to be refrigerated for the first few hours after being expressed.

All you need is:

- A clean and private room (not a bathroom or toilet) or a screened-off area;
- A table and a comfortable chair;
- Drinking and running water and soap for washing;
- Giving the worker some extra free time for breastfeeding;
- Managers and co-workers who understand the programme and support it.

Checkpoint 49: Help workers get information on mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

2. Provide information on HIV/AIDS: Workplace information to address the particular needs of HIV-positive women during pregnancy and breastfeeding (see WHO recommendations in the earlier “*Breastfeeding and HIV*” table) can help mitigate the impact of the epidemic for your business. In particular:

- a. targeted awareness-raising in the workplace and workplace policies can help extend information, education and counselling on HIV/AIDS and pregnancy, facilitate access to voluntary and confidential testing, provide information on infant feeding options for HIV positive women and prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. This will help you to prevent recurring sickness of the baby and absence of the mother from work.
- b. Help workers to get access to information on all health matters, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis from the local health clinic or maternity service.

3. Offer temporary flexible working time arrangements

New babies do not always eat, sleep or get sick, according to a timetable. So, flexibility in working time is important for parents, particularly for mothers who are breastfeeding. It can also help when making appointments for check-ups and immunizations.

Some employers give mothers the right to reduce their working hours for a period after maternity leave. For mothers who cannot afford this or who want to keep working full-time, or if this would not work for your business, you can help workers in other ways. For example, let nursing workers:

- arrive a little later (as needed, or with an agreed routine);
- leave one hour earlier or take an extra ‘breastfeeding break’ at an agreed time each day;
- save up some of their break time so they can leave early when needed.



This enterprise allows breastfeeding mums to start a little later in the morning, so they can feed their baby before going to work.

- 4. *Help workers to find childcare near to work if they wish, so they can quickly get to, and feed their child, during the working day or at the end of it.***

These simple arrangements can solve many stressful problems for workers and so improve concentration and performance.

5.4

Help with Care Arrangements

Meeting the care needs of family members can be a big challenge for workers, women and men alike.

Care demands of family members are particularly high when workers are responsible for children, elderly or sick relatives. The HIV/AIDS-epidemic in Africa raises a particular challenge. In some countries the infection rates is between 15-25 % of the population. This means in a family with 10 members, 1 to 3 of them will be (on average) infected by the virus.

The help you can give to deal with care needs will depend on the resources and premises you have, and the number of workers concerned.

Some employers provide support by supplying information and advice and permitting flexibility in working time and arrangements. Others directly provide childcare, or give financial help with care costs for children, sick relatives or other dependants. Whatever help you can give will increase your chances of keeping your best workers on board.



When parents know that their children are safe and happy, like those above, they can concentrate better on their work.

What you should know

The care support needed by workers depends on the number, condition and age of the dependants and the available help with providing care. In many societies, most of the unpaid work of providing care rests on women; however, both men and women have care responsibilities and workplace supports will be appreciated by both men and women.

What you can do

1. **Help and encourage workers to share information and to come together to arrange care.** You could do this by calling a lunchtime meeting to discuss this and see how much interest there is.
2. **Consult all workers to find out their needs and preferences.** For instance, childcare that is close to work can be ideal for some workers, because they can then easily breastfeed or deal with problems that may arise. However, its advantages will depend on the circumstances of each worker and the distance and transportation between the place of work and the worker's home.

Checkpoint 50: Offer practical support to workers with family responsibilities.

3. **Make sure that, in cases of emergencies, workers know they can:**
 - leave work without risking their job;
 - communicate with family members during working hours (use a company telephone).



This office worker is reassured by being able to use a workplace telephone to keep in touch with a sick relative.

4. **Provide a place for children to wait.** Most parents do not finish work at the same time as their children finish school. If you have a small weather-protected space available, this could be used as a place for children awaiting a parent to sit and read or do homework.



This simply constructed waiting area gives children somewhere safe to wait until their parents finish work.

5. **Develop a list of reputable and affordable child care providers close to the workplace.**
6. **Help with transport:** Support transportation needs for workers in remote areas or where / when safe public transportation is not available (e.g. at night).
7. **Provide HIV/AIDS awareness raising programmes:** This could include opportunities for voluntary testing, and links with HIV/AIDS business associations (present in most African countries).
8. **Support unpaid domestic tasks,** by providing information and/or help with labour saving technology or services for cooking, cleaning, laundry.

Checkpoint 51: Create partnerships so you (and other small businesses) can help workers with care arrangements.



This enterprise has arranged for a local health centre to offer health checks to employees.

9. **Work in partnership:** If your business is small, you may not have the resources to tackle all issues. Establishing partnerships and forming networks with other enterprises, employers' and business organizations, NGOs and public bodies can be helpful.

Small businesses which are close to each other can sometimes join together to:

- make a childcare area in a rented hall or other safe and covered area;
- negotiate with a local childcare provider for their workers to get discounted places;
- advocate for community services for family facilities and home-care;
- provide HIV/AIDS awareness raising programmes together.

You can encourage two types of partnerships:

- **Business to business partnerships:**

This entails a partnership between 2 or more companies. It could involve only SMEs or involve an SME establishing a partnership with a bigger company where, for example, the bigger company could include the workers of the SME in their care arrangements.

Pooling experience, efforts and knowledge with other businesses, to produce imaginative, cost-saving solutions to common challenges can make a difference. As well as saving money, working together can be a way of building contacts and bonds between businesses and within the community.

- **Business links with public and charitable bodies:**

When thinking about maternity, family responsibilities and HIV/AIDS challenges, there are many organizations that can help you with support and ideas. Your local health clinic, NGO, or local government office is a good starting point for information. To get expert advice, practical guidance, or financial help, children's charities, chambers of commerce and industry as well as trade unions can also help.

You could work with a local health care clinic or community worker to:

- offer health screenings such as blood pressure checks for you and your employees;
- get help with your workplace risk assessments;
- display some informational posters on health, HIV/AIDS awareness and maternal health.



Business to business partnerships can help small businesses to provide the most attractive conditions and services for staff.

Checkpoints for WISE-R Module 5

Family-friendly Measures

- Checkpoint 37:** Consult your workers on their family responsibilities and the difficulties they might have balancing these with workplace demands.
- Checkpoint 38:** Arrange working hours with workers' family responsibilities in mind.
- Checkpoint 39:** Consider work sharing and job rotation to allow workers to fill in for each other when someone is absent.
- Checkpoint 40:** Inform your workers about all of the types of leave that you provide.
- Checkpoint 41:** Plan ahead for leave, so you avoid stoppages or interruptions that can cause a loss of productivity.
- Checkpoint 42:** Provide all workers with maternity and paternity leave, and the right to a similar job at the same pay when they return.
- Checkpoint 43:** Carry out a risk assessment (including exposure to chemicals) and discuss it with your workers.
- Checkpoint 44:** Take action to remove identified risks.
- Checkpoint 45:** Ensure ready access to safe drinking water and to clean toilets, at any time, without restrictions.
- Checkpoint 46:** Accommodate or reassign pregnant workers to tasks that do not require continuous standing, uncomfortable movements/postures, heavy physical effort or risk of slipping and falling.
- Checkpoint 47:** In addition to normal breaks, allow at least one 1-hour break for breastfeeding mothers.
- Checkpoint 48:** Provide a clean and quiet area for breastfeeding or expressing milk.
- Checkpoint 49:** Help workers get information on mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- Checkpoint 50:** Offer practical support to workers with family responsibilities.
- Checkpoint 51:** Create partnerships so you (and other small businesses) can help workers with care arrangements.

WISE-R Module 5: Family-friendly measures

Checkpoint 37: Consult your workers on their family responsibilities and the difficulties they might have balancing these with workplace demands.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
Checkpoint 38: Arrange working hours with workers' family responsibilities in mind.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
Checkpoint 39: Consider work sharing and job rotation to allow workers to fill in for each other when someone is absent.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
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Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		

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Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
Checkpoint 43: Carry out a risk assessment (including exposure to chemicals) and discuss it with your workers.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
Checkpoint 44: Take action to remove identified risks.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
Checkpoint 45: Ensure ready access to safe drinking water and to clean toilets, at any time, without restrictions.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		
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Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
If yes, what action?		

Checkpoint 47: In addition to normal breaks, allow at least one 1-hour break for breastfeeding mothers.		
Do you propose action?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority
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