



Department of Psychology
& Speech Pathology

Interpersonal and Organisational Development Research Group

IOD Occasional Papers: Number 4/99

**Community, Work and family Audit
v.1.1 Employing Organisations**

*Carolyn Kagan, Sue Lewis, Patricia Heaton and
Iain McLean*



Published by: IOD Research Group

Copyright (c) 2001 IOD Research Group

All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced by any means, or transmitted, or translated into a machine language without the written permission of the IOD Research Group, unless under the terms of the Copyright Licensing Agreement, or for use in Education, or for dissemination within an organisation in which cases the work must be reproduced in its entirety with acknowledgement of the IOD Research Group as its source.

IOD Occasional Papers 4/99

Published occasionally by the IOD Research Group

For information contact the publishers at the address below

ISSN 1359-9089

ISBN 1-900139-95-2

Printed by the Manchester Metropolitan University

IOD Research Group

MISSION:

To undertake research and consultancy which informs policy, enhances the effectiveness of organisations, and enhances the lives of vulnerable people by asking meaningful questions, encouraging the participation of those involved in the research and disseminating the findings to all those with a stake in the research

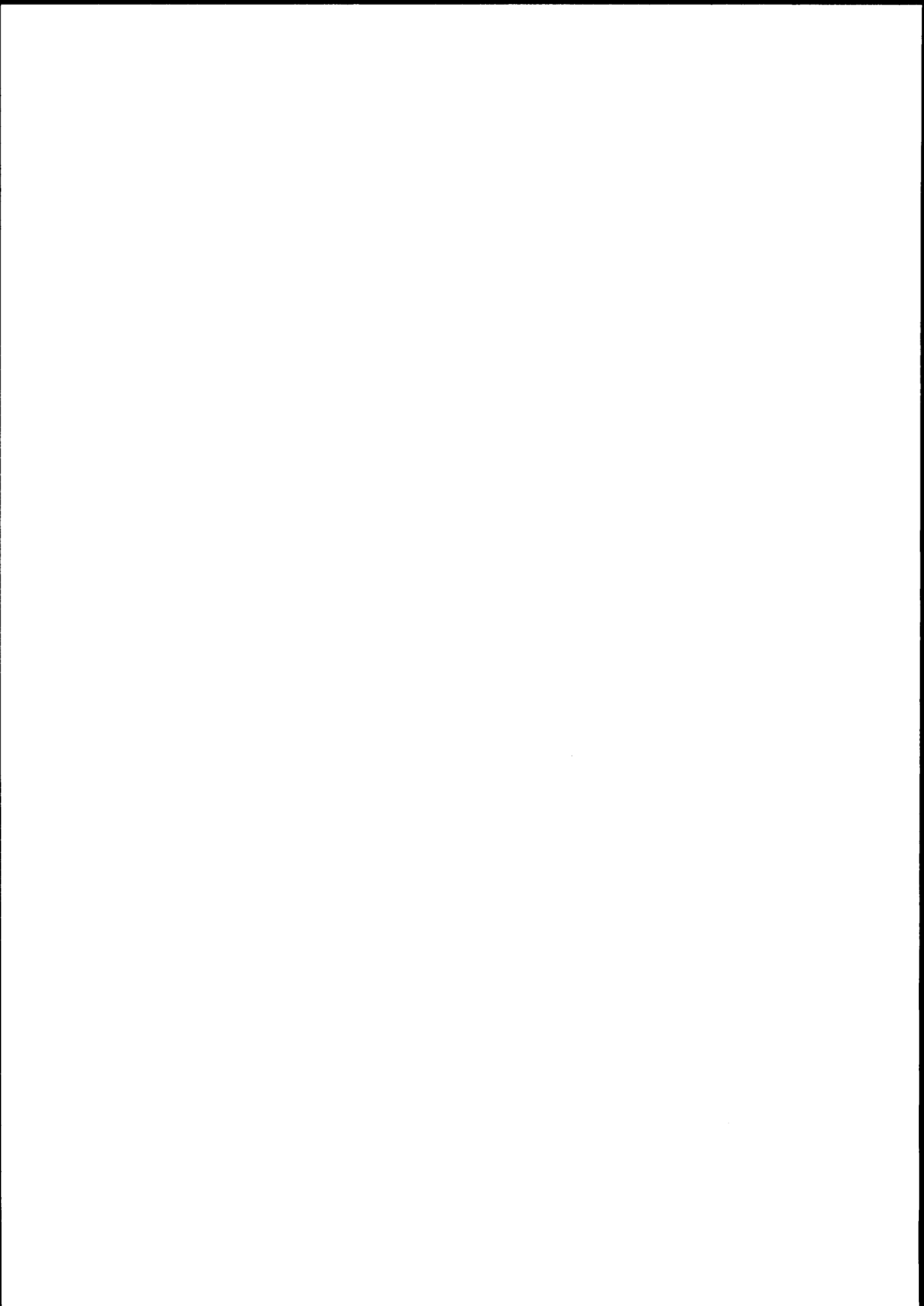
Interpersonal & Organisational Development Research Group
Department of Psychology & Speech Pathology
The Manchester Metropolitan University
Elizabeth Gaskell Campus
Hathersage Road
Manchester
M13 0JA

Tel: 0161 247 2563/2556/2595

Fax: 0161 247 6364

Email: C.Kagan@mmu.ac.uk

S.Lewis@mmu.ac.uk



**Community, Work and Family Audit
v.1.1 Employing Organisation**

Carolyn Kagan, Suzan Lewis, Patricia Heaton and Iain McLean

Interpersonal and Organisational Development Research Group, Manchester
Metropolitan University

The development of two early versions of this audit was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Subsequent versions have been supported by Manchester Metropolitan University, Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology.



Contents

Introduction	2
Guidelines for Use	2
Drawing Conclusions, Defining Actions	3
The Community, Work and Family Audit	
The nature of the workforce	4
Organisational policies	8
Organisational practices	12
Organisational culture	16
External content	20

Introduction

The Community, Work and Family Audit is an assessment tool design to obtain understanding of an organisation's orientation towards the needs of its employees or consumers. It has been developed from early versions based on research and evaluations carried out by the Interpersonal and Organisational Development (IOD) Research Group at Manchester Metropolitan University Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology (Kagan, Lewis and Heaton, 1997; Lewis, Kagan and Heaton, 1998; Kagan and Lewis, 1999).

Derived from qualitative research, it is not a rating scale which produces a score but a device for addressing the organisation-specific opportunities for improvement and existing strengths for consolidation or propagation. Part of the audit process is to initiate the problem solving of how improvements may be approached. This version addresses how the particular responsibilities of parents, in particular the parents of children with disabilities, can be respected by their employers. It questions the organisation on its awareness of issues affecting its workforce, the wider community setting of the organisation and its policies, practices and culture. The aim is to facilitate a resolution in areas of conflict between loyalties to family and work. The benefits to the employee of a flexible employer may include a reduction in stress and guilt, whereas the more socially responsible employer should benefit from a stable and efficient workforce. This audit reflects the concerns of its namesake journal, *Community, Work and Family*, also produced by the IOD¹.

Guidelines for Use

The Audit is arranged into five main questions about the knowledge the employing organisation has about its workforce, and how the employer and employees interact. These questions are generally broken down into their component issues, consecutively numbered and listed down the left-hand page. The sequence of follow up questions from each 'Issue' run from left to right on the right-hand page. The response for each question should be written in the space allocated, where specific yes/no or numerical responses are required this is indicated. Follow up questions are arranged under the heading 'Awareness—► Solution' to suggest the process of obtaining knowledge for the purpose of developing the organisation's accommodation of its employees' needs, not to suggest that the final question holds the solution to that particular issue.

This format is interspersed with tables *and* tick-lists which run down the left and right hand pages. The auditor thus proceeds through the audit, taking the questions in order. Whilst the experienced auditor will move around the audit depending on the relevance of the responses elicited and the flow of the conversation, the awareness raising value of leading the organisation representative through the five distinct sections should be maintained.

Each section is peppered with themed comments of employees with disabled children from previous work/family research by the IOD. These highlight the issues raised in the Audit and their importance to the lives of individual employees and their families, and serve to point out to the employer the difficulties the employer may experience through ignoring the needs of its workforce. As well as being used for strategic planning, the Audit is also suitable for staff development. Wider recognition and support throughout the organisation for change will increase the chances of its success.

¹ For more information about the journal, please contact the IOD.

Drawing Conclusions, Defining Actions

On the basis of the information obtained by the Audit, an opinion can be formed of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the organisation's orientation towards the needs of its employees who are the parents of children with disabilities. As mentioned above, the ordering of the questions should begin the process of organisational development. The responses to questions which ask who is already or could be made responsible for certain areas will indicate how to broaden the discussion on improving policy, practice and their monitoring. A follow up audit to assess the effects of the decided actions is recommended.

The authors are always interested in refining the *Community, Work and Family Audit* and welcome feedback from those using it. Constructive advice based on experiences of practical use will be drawn upon when developing future editions.

References

Kagan C. and Lewis, S. (1999) *Evaluating Organizational Family-friendly Audits*, *IOD Occasional Papers: 3/99*. Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University. ISBN 1-900139-90-1.

Lewis, S., Kagan, C. and Heaton, P. (1998) 'Caring to work', *Croner Reference Book for Employers*, 7, Dec/Jan, pp. 13-17.

Kagan C., Lewis, S. and Heaton, P. (1997) *Organizational Audits for the Development of Family Friendly Employment Practices*, *IOD Occasional Papers: 4/97*. Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University. ISBN 1-900139-50-2.

the nature of the workforce

Issue

Q 1

What do you know about your employees' work and family commitments?

1

How many of your employees are parents of children at home?

Some employees will be working below their potential. The organisation is also likely to be missing out on a pool of talent which is excluded from the workplace because of difficulties reconciling work and caring.

2

How many of your employees have responsibility for a:

child with a disability/special needs _____
spouse/relative who needs care _____
or have a disability themselves? _____

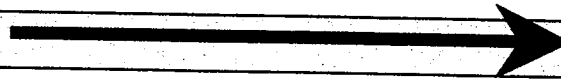
Our research shows that these difficulties can be overcome if both workers and organisations are flexible.

3

What are their particular needs in terms of combining these responsibilities with working?

the nature of the workforce

Awareness



Solution

<p>How easy is it for employees to disclose the fact that they have school-age children?</p>	<p>What would it take to make it easier for employees to disclose this?</p>	<p>What are the channels through which employees might disclose this?</p>	<p>Do employees use these channels, and if not, why not?</p>
<p>How easy is it for employees to disclose the fact that they care for someone, or have a disability?</p>	<p>What would it take to make it easier for employees to disclose this?</p>	<p>What are the channels through which employees might disclose this?</p>	<p>Do employees use these channels, and if not, why not?</p>
<p>How easy is it for employees with such responsibilities to discuss their work/family requirements at work?</p>	<p>What would it take for employees to be able to discuss their work/family requirements at work?</p>	<p>What mechanisms are there for employees to let you know about any changes in their work/family situation?</p>	<p>Do employees use these mechanisms, and if not, why not?</p>

the nature of the workforce

Issue

4

Are all the skills and potential of all your employees being used?

"In fact you were going to apply for a job last year and you decided against it because ... you would have had to tell them that you have a disabled child and you would have to have time off ... so she said it's just not worth it."

Father - talking to the mother about why she did not apply for a better job.

5

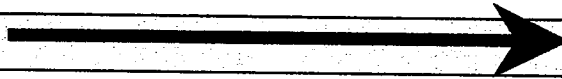
Are all the skills and potential of employees who are carers being used?

6

What would improve things?

the nature of the workforce

Awareness



Solution

<p>How do you identify and assess the skills and potential of your employees?</p>	<p>Who would do this?</p>	<p>How and when would that be evaluated?</p>	
<p>What would it take to ensure that employees with such responsibilities are fulfilling their potential?</p>	<p>What do you do to ensure these skills are being utilised?</p>	<p>Who would do this?</p>	<p>How and when would that be evaluated?</p>
<p>What do your employees, who are carers, etc, think would improve things?</p>	<p>What would it take to find out what these employees think would help?</p>	<p>What mechanisms are there to encourage employees to come up with ideas so that their work might be more effective?</p>	<p>Do employees use these mechanisms, and if not, why not?</p>

organisational policies

Q 2

What do you know about your company's work/family policies and their implementation?

Some organisations have flexible work/family policies, and policies to accommodate employees with, for example, particular health needs. But, some employees are either unaware of these or feel unable to make use of them. Men in particular are often reluctant to ask for time off.

"I've taken compassionate leave when T (son) had the operation to have his foot off. I was given compassionate leave then. They were very sympathetic towards me."

Interviewer, "Did you feel it was OK to ask for leave?"

"Oh, yes, absolutely, yes."

7

Do you have policies offering any of the following?

Flexitime: Core hours Y/N

Flexitime: Total flexibility Y/N

Flexible holiday/leave arrangements Y/N

Different or flexible venues, e.g., working from home Y/N

Job share Y/N

Shift swapping Y/N

Emergency leave (at no notice) Y/N

Additional leave (for family needs) Y/N

Access to a telephone at all times Y/N

Any others not listed here, please specify Y/N

.....

8

Who can make use of these policies?
Please tick appropriate sections in the table opposite.

9

In the last year, how many staff in each of these categories has made use of these policies?

Please put the number of male and females using a policy in the relevant section.

organisational policies

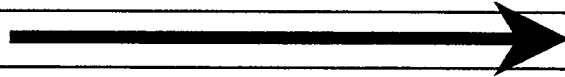
POLICY	STAFF GROUP														
	Senior manager			Middle manager			Supervisor			Office staff			Manual staff		
	✓	M	F	✓	M	F	✓	M	F	✓	M	F	✓	M	F
Flexitime															
Flexible holidays															
Flexible venues															
Job share															
Shift swapping															
Emergency leave															
Family leave															
Telephone access															
Other															

organisational policies

		Issue
<p>Flexible policies can themselves have disadvantages if they are not adaptable enough to meet changing needs.</p>	10	<p>If you do have them, do all employees know about these policies?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y/N</p>
<p>Some employers need to ensure that where flexible work policies exist they do not disadvantage those who use them when it comes to accessing training and career development opportunities.</p>	11	<p>If you do not have them, what would it take to implement these policies?</p>
<p>Some organisations do not appear to have any work/family policies. <i>"I get very frustrated at times because I feel I ought to move on in my career, but I can't go anywhere part-time"</i> A highly qualified mother who cannot progress as she needs to work part time.</p>	12	<p>What would it take to ensure that everyone who needs to take up these policies could do so?</p>
<p>Our research shows that information and communication are the keys to implementing effective work/family policies. If these are inadequate, inconsistent implementation is exercised through discretionary organisational practices.</p>	13	<p>Do work/family policies meet the needs of employees with care responsibilities?</p>
	14	<p>To what extent are the needs of such employees considered in the development and evaluation of all employment policies?</p>

organisational policies

Awareness



Solution

<p>Whose responsibility is it to know whether all employees are aware of these policies?</p>	<p>What mechanisms are there (or could there be) for disseminating, to all employees, information on these policies?</p>	
<p>What mechanisms are there for initiating and implementing policies for employees who are carers/have disabilities?</p>	<p>Who would do this?</p>	<p>How and when would this be evaluated?</p>
<p>Who is responsible for making sure that any one who needs them can make use of these policies?</p>	<p>Who does this person report their results to?</p>	<p>What is done with those results?</p>
<p>Who is responsible for discovering what the needs of employees, who are parents of disabled children, are? (In terms of employment policies?)</p>	<p>What would it take to ensure that the needs of these employees are being met?</p>	<p>What steps have you taken to ensure that the family friendly policies that you have are relevant to these employees?</p>
<p>What mechanisms are there for including the needs of these employees when developing, revising or evaluating employment policies?</p>	<p>What would it take to consider the needs of these employees in the development and evaluation of all policies?</p>	<p>Who would do this?</p>

organisational practices

Q 3

What do you know about the informal practices in your company and the impact this has on employees with disabilities/disabled children?

Discretionary practices can determine how easy it is for parents to combine work with their caring commitments. Practices can block the intentions of formal policies.

"It causes problems, you see, if they ring her [mother] at work. It upsets her employer."

"You better not do that [ask for messages to be relayed to the mother], because if they did that they wouldn't employ you."

This was a highly qualified mother, employed in the public sector with well-intentioned employment policies, but little actual support given by her manager. She is now off work on long term sick leave and doubts she will work again, the father is also suffering depression.

Discretionary practices can make it possible for some parents to combine work and caring, but it makes the parents feel they are receiving favours, and if they are not formalised, there will be uneven access across the organisation.

Informal practices can make it possible for some parents to combine work and caring, but it makes the parents feel they are receiving favours, and if they are not formalised, there will be uneven access across the organisation.

Issue

How flexible is the organisation in terms of where and when work is carried out?

15

How is the workplace accommodating for domestic crises?

16

In what ways is work structured around local context, e.g., school holidays?

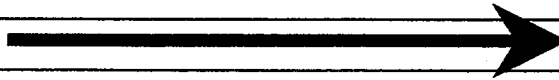
17

To what extent are the needs of parents of disabled children considered when monitoring all employment practices?

18

organisational practices

Awareness



Solution

<p>How many employees do their work at different times or venues from the rest of their colleagues?</p>	<p>What would it take to increase flexibility concerning where and when work is undertaken?</p>	<p>What are the mechanisms by which employees can negotiate a variation in working hours or venue?</p>	
<p>What channels are there to rapidly arrange for time off or to reorganise your hours or workplace?</p>	<p>What would it take to make the workplace more accommodating of domestic crises?</p>	<p>Can this be done at short notice?</p>	
<p>Do you know what the hours and holidays are at the local schools?</p>	<p>Do any of the children of your employees attend schools with different hours or holidays?</p>	<p>Do you know how many employees would be interested in reorganising their working hrs/day to fit in with school hrs and terms?</p>	<p>What would it take to find out who was interested in such reorganising?</p>
<p>What would it take to consider the needs of employees who are the parents of disabled children in the monitoring of all practices?</p>		<p>Do you know what the needs of working parents of disabled children are in relation to combining the responsibilities of working and caring?</p>	

organisational practices

"Yeah, yeah, they pay me. They are pretty good ... It's the foreman at work lets me go, you see. We are a small department, there's only five of us and the others cover while you are away, you see."

A father whose foreman and colleagues sometimes support his need for an occasional hour off at short notice. *Yeah, but they might not pay him for it. It depends on what mood his foreman's in as to whether he makes him clock off and clock on again ... or whether they just cover.*" (His wife's perception of the situation.)

Notwithstanding this, **our research highlights examples of enabling organisational practices.** These practices reflect organisational culture, which here directly influenced the employee's level of commitment to the organisation.

A school meals supervisor did all the stock control and other paper work while on extended sick leave caring for her terminally ill child. She received full pay for 6 months and then half for a further 6 months.

This was well *beyond* what her formal conditions of service allowed, but benefited both the employee (it gave her something else to think about) and her employers (they only had to employ someone to do the cooking).

"So I did it all at home ... Yeah, yeah, I was still doing all the work I should have done whilst I was there, except the cooking."

A father whose colleagues and employers support the need for additional leave:

"It would be a problem in the sense that ... it would mean we would be one short on that particular appliance, but generally speaking they would waive the rules on that."

Issue

19

What mechanisms are there for obtaining feedback on the effects of organisational practices on the parents of disabled children?

20

What would it take to monitor the effects of organisational practices on this group?

21

Do the structure of jobs allow flexibility on a day to day basis?

22

What would it take to structure all jobs to allow flexibility on a day to day basis?

23

How much flexibility is there, to build on basic entitlements, to meet specific needs in a public way?

24

What would it take to be flexible in this way?

25

What do you do to encourage good practice?

organisational practices

Awareness 

Solution

<p>What are the mechanisms for finding out what working parents of disabled children in your employment need?</p>	<p>Are these mechanisms used and do they work?</p>	
<p>Who has responsibility for monitoring the impact of organisational practices on parents of disabled children, and how could they do this?</p>	<p>What are the mechanisms for generating this information to inform future planning and implementation of organisational policy and practices?</p>	
<p>Why are jobs structured the way they are? (Hours, venue, duties)</p>	<p>Are these structures to do with tradition rather than getting tasks done?</p>	<p>Who decides how jobs are structured and if they are changed?</p>
<p>Could jobs be restructured so that core tasks or responsibilities are covered by more than one employee?</p>	<p>If not, why not?</p>	<p>Is there any way around those difficulties?</p>
<p>Is there sufficient flexibility for people to offload some of their responsibilities or tasks?</p>	<p>Do you look beyond the presenting problem, in a supportive, sensitive way to the underlying cause of the difficulty?</p>	<p>Do you consider a range of ways help may be possible? (Time off, leave, change of workplace, varying hrs/day, transport help.)</p>
<p>How could you find out what flexibility would help your employees/improve efficiency?</p>	<p>Who would find this out?</p>	<p>Who could act on that information, and how?</p>
<p>Are there any mechanisms by which the organisation can share any examples of good practice?</p>	<p>Are these mechanisms used, do they work?</p>	<p>How do you know that?</p>

organisational culture

27

Are people who work reduced hours or flexibly, valued equally to other workers by managers and colleagues?
Y/N

28

Please tick ✓	Characteristics you value in employees	Characteristics employees value in colleagues
	Good interpersonal skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reliability	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Works long hours to show commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 4
What do you know about the beliefs of your employees, managers and staff, on flexible working policies and practices and how this effects their implementation?

Beliefs and values, manifested in organisational practices and assumptions influence employees' feelings of entitlement to the information and flexibility they need to be effective in their jobs in the context of their commitments.

"If you want the job and you're enjoying it, you do the hours. I used to work a full night sometimes, when I was in computing, but that's before I had any commitments."

A mother who does a less demanding/skilled job because she feels she cannot commit herself to long hours, often at short notice, as she did in her former job.

29

Are there rigid views about where and when work should be done?

30

What are the managers' beliefs/views on where and when work should be done? Please tick ✓

Where	When
Anywhere <input type="checkbox"/>	Any time <input type="checkbox"/>
At office/shop/site <input type="checkbox"/>	During standard work hours <input type="checkbox"/>
By negotiation with manager <input type="checkbox"/>	Within (extended) time limits <input type="checkbox"/>
By negotiation with team/colleagues <input type="checkbox"/>	By negotiation with manager <input type="checkbox"/>
What would it take to ensure these assumptions are constantly revealed and examined?	By negotiation with team/colleagues <input type="checkbox"/>
	What mechanisms are there for monitoring these beliefs and their impact on employment practices?

31

organisational culture

31

How many employees have asked for help/disclosed a need for help in the last year?

32

Do people feel comfortable asking for help when they need it?

32

Who asked for help, and whom did they ask?
Please put number of male and female employees into each box.

SOURCE OF HELP (who they asked)	STAFF GROUP									
	Senior manager		Middle manager		Super-visor		Office staff		Manual staff	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Personnel dept										
Senior manager										
Middle/line manager										
Supervisor										

Organisational culture can influence the operation of particular policies and practices.

“When they actually told us that C was dying, and I told my supervisor, and it got around ... I felt like a leper when I went to work because nobody spoke to me. You know they just ignored us.”

The father of a terminally ill child who’s experience of disclosing his situation at work was less than ideal. The response to his revealing of his need for time off eventually led, with a ‘sick note’ from his GP, to his being given 3 months leave on statutory minimum sick pay. This was not enough to pay his mortgage and he returned to work.

organisational culture

Organisational policies, practices and cultures, in part, reflect the broader external context.

35

Issue

What would it take for parents of disabled children to feel able to ask for help when they need it?

Our research shows that cultural flexibility and openness to new, more flexible ways of working make it possible for parents to fulfil their potential at work.

36

How legitimate is it for men as well as women to ask for help to manage work and caring?

"I was due back at 3 months [maternity leave] and she didn't have the operation until she was three and a half months and I talked to everyone at work, and my manager talked to a higher authority and they basically said I could take as much time as I needed, and then I said if necessary I could take unpaid leave, but they said, no, just take the time you need."

37

What would it take to legitimise men as well as women asking for the help they need?

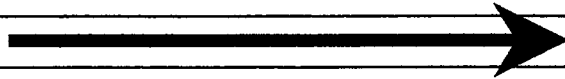
A mother who was able to negotiate her time off and continues to work full time, occasionally varying her hrs/days of work to fit in with her child's needs.

38

Are work and family assumed to be separate and unconnected?

organisational culture

Awareness



Solution

<p>Are men as comfortable as women in asking for help?</p>	<p>What are the mechanisms or channels for requesting or getting help?</p>	<p>When are these systems reviewed?</p>
<p>Do all individual managers or supervisors accept the legitimacy of men as well as women asking for help?</p>	<p>How is conformity across managers and supervisors monitored?</p>	<p>What happens to the results of monitoring?</p>
<p>What mechanisms are there for ensuring that all managers/ supervisors accept this as legitimate?</p>	<p>Is there any resistance to these mechanisms?</p>	<p>How is that resistance negotiated?</p>
<p>Is it expected that family responsibilities should be taken into account at work?</p>	<p>What would it take for links between work and family to be recognised throughout the organisation?</p>	

external content

Q 5

What do you know about what services are available in your (company) area to employees who are parents of disabled children?

Economic conditions, employment policies and practices, along with social policies, influence options open to parents for combining work and caring, and reaching their potential. Uncertainty and change cause parents to retreat into safe, but restricting work and family strategies, leading to difficulties in income maintenance.

“David works, full stop. That’s his priority, is putting food on the table, and I see to the family. It’s the only way we can do it, which is why I only work at weekends.”

This is a highly qualified and experienced nurse who now does casual work ‘on the nursing bank’.

Furthermore, **our research shows that support from the community cannot be assumed** and highlights the need for, and examples of, proactive organisational initiatives to ensure the necessary services.

“We decided that we weren’t leaving this area because the services for Elaine were quite good and the other places in employment for him [husband] ... didn’t actually provide many services at all.”

Issue

39

What is known within the organisation about local community services and provisions for working parents of disabled children (e.g., childcare, after school clubs, holiday periods, etc)?

40

What would it take to find out about available services for employees locally?

41

How do employees find out about available local services?

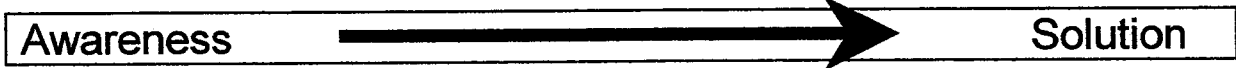
42

What would it take to assist working parents of disabled children to gain information about local services?

43

What initiatives have been taken by the organisation to advocate for better local services, develop provision in partnership with external agencies, or provide material support to innovative local initiatives?

external content



<p>Does your company/group/department/store have any information on the availability of local services for working parents of disabled children?</p>	<p>Who could be responsible for making this information available?</p>												
<p>Are any of these services available locally for disabled children?</p> <p>Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">After school care</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="border: none;">Nursery places</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Before school care</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="border: none;">Competent childminding</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Holiday playschemes</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">_____</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	After school care	_____	Nursery places	_____	Before school care	_____	Competent childminding	_____	Holiday playschemes	_____		
After school care	_____	Nursery places	_____										
Before school care	_____	Competent childminding	_____										
Holiday playschemes	_____												
<p>How many of your employees would use or already use these types of services?</p>	<p>How might you find this out?</p>												
<p>How could you make this information available to parents of disabled children in your employment (e.g., information retrieval service, childcare co-ordinator, etc)?</p>													
<p>How successful were they?</p>	<p>What would it take for the organisation to become more proactive in stimulating the development of adequate local services for its employees caring for disabled children?</p>												

notes

£7.00

