

Gaining the benefits of part-time working

A toolkit to encourage and support the provision and take up of good quality
part time work opportunities for senior women



toolkit

The quality part-time work toolkit

This toolkit has been developed with support from the Women and Equalities Unit and focuses on encouraging the provision and take up of more part time opportunities for senior women.

It is designed to act as a catalyst for productive part-time working arrangements for senior staff and should help employers, their staff and others with a professional interest such as facilitators, trainers and organisation development specialists. Because of the range of potential users it is intended to be used as a toolkit – dipping in to find something that works in your circumstances.

It contains information and activities to aid:

- Understanding and promoting the benefits of providing quality part time work
- Thinking about decisions to change working patterns
- Reviews organisational and management barriers to increased part time working opportunities
- Planning and implementing solutions that work

The Toolkit:

- Gives guidance and support on many aspects of senior part-time working:
 - The changing world of work
 - A strong economic and business case
 - Making the business case
 - A framework for success
 - The flexible manager
 - Flexibility leads to successful outcomes
 - Dealing with colleagues
 - If things get difficult
 - Managing performance
 - Best practice guidelines for managers setting objectives
 - Employee and career development
- A self evaluation questionnaire for people considering part-time working at senior levels and an associated planning guide
- Developing the culture. Working Dilemmas is a facilitation tool to help facilitators, leaders and trainers to run a workshop that explores individual and organisational attitudes to part-time and flexible working for senior women.

The changing world of work

Patterns of work are changing fast. Consumer demands for increased opening and contact hours, employee needs for flexibility to meet out of work commitments and the fast moving availability of technology to support new ways of working are changing the boundaries of traditional work.

Assumptions about how work is delivered and managed are changing as more people work flexible hours whether at the office, away from their normal base or from home. All of this should make part time working easier with benefits to both employer and employee. But, so often, these benefits are not being realised. Talented people are being denied the opportunity to work to their potential and employers are losing the benefit of employing those people most effectively. Commonly held views include:

- You can't work part time if you supervise or manage others
- Senior staff need to be available throughout the normal working week so that others can make contact with them
- Part time working is OK for women in more junior roles
- People working part time are less dedicated than others

Yet there is ample evidence to suggest otherwise. Flexible working patterns of various kinds, including part time working, are generally highly productive with reported benefits including:

- Improved output
- Lower sickness and other absence
- Better motivation and morale
- Improved recruitment and retention

Despite these benefits part time opportunities for women are heavily concentrated at lower levels in many organisations and for more senior jobs part time working is the exception rather than the rule. Frequently, senior staff wishing to reduce their working hours have to take on more junior roles.

This represents a loss of skills to the organisation as well as lower job satisfaction, a potential career block and further reduced earnings for the individual. At a time when talented people are in short supply the individual may well simply move on to another employer with a more flexible approach or become self employed. The employer's investment in their senior staff is wasted when they take on lower level work or in the worst case walk away.

There is no longer any magic in working 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 in a world where expectations of service are becoming 24 hours, 7 days per week. Against this background more imaginative working patterns can enhance recruitment and retention of staff and provide a foundation for more productive customer focused services.

So why isn't everyone doing it? Probably, because there are often genuine difficulties for both employer and employee in establishing working arrangements to suit the needs of both parties.

This toolkit is here to help

A strong economic and business case

“Women are crowded into a narrow range of lower-paying occupations, mainly those available part time, that do not make the best use of their skills. The Commission estimates that removing barriers to women working in occupations traditionally done by men, and increasing women’s participation in the labour market, could be worth between £15 billion and £23 billion or 1.3 to 2.0 per cent of GDP”.

Women and Work Commission report, Shaping a Fairer Future, February 2006

There is clearly a strong case at the national level where the financial benefits of providing better access to work opportunities for women can be profound. However this can only be delivered by organisations of all kinds understanding and recognising the benefits.

The business case for flexible working is strong with absenteeism almost always being reported as significantly reduced. If people are able to fit their work around their personal lives they are less likely to take time off and are more willing to make up for lost time. By giving employees more control of the time and place of work they feel they are being trusted to manage themselves and react positively as a result.

Employers are more able to attract and retain a productive workforce. The attractiveness of flexible working widens the market of potential employees and often helps to achieve diversity and disability aims. It should also improve the job satisfaction, morale and productivity of employees, to improve work-life balance and reduce reported levels of stress.

Where skills are in short supply jobs are usually difficult to fill. Offering part time opportunities attracts women returners and retains existing staff thus keeping important competencies and organisational knowledge inside the organisation.

Whilst for many organisations the availability of part time work is restricted to lower grades the potential benefits argue for its extension organisation wide with each case being assessed on its merits. The important thing is to make part-time working effective for employee and employer alike.

Making the business case

An employment strategy that works

Encouraging part time work for senior women can be an effective part of a strategy to enhance work and generate business benefits through new patterns of flexible working. Senior people with a positive experience of working flexibly are powerful role models for organisations seeking to implement flexible working arrangements.

Flexible working in its various forms has the potential to improve organisational outcomes whilst making work a more satisfying experience for staff. There is compelling evidence that both productivity and employee satisfaction can increase when staff have access to flexible working arrangements that allow them a degree of control over their working lives.

Various surveys have shown that staff often value flexibility more than a pay rise. New graduates are more likely to join an organisation that encourages flexible arrangements than one that doesn't.

Organisations with a reputation for flexible working tend to enjoy easier recruitment, better staff retention and lower levels of absence. Flexible working patterns play a key role in the ability to attract and retain the best employees.

Many organisations find that they need to position themselves as the employer of choice in their locality in order to compete for staff in a crowded market place.

Financial evaluation

The checklist below provides some suggested factors to take into account in developing the financial business case for more quality part time opportunities for senior women.

- The value of the experience lost when a person moves to a lower grade job
- Lost (or at least deferred) investment in the person's development which will not be used in a lower grade job
- Advertising, recruitment and selection costs
- Induction and familiarisation
- Training costs
- Cost of lower productivity by a replacement employee during first period of employment

Jane is senior finance manager who works 3 full a days a week. She arranges to work extra days at year end and takes them off later in the year. She is happy to work like this to meet departmental needs and her personal needs too. She believes she concentrates on work more as she is focused on what she needs to do in the shorter time she is present. Meetings are arranged to suit her work days but she is flexible about this where necessary. Some duties were reallocated to more junior staff resulting in the work being performed at lower cost. Improved delegation led to a more highly motivated team.

A framework for success

We have identified, from interviews with senior part time workers and our own work on flexible practices with many organisations, factors that appear to be particularly important in aiding the implementation of successful part time working practices. At the core is the organisation culture – the ways of doing things – that influences the behaviour of everyone in the organisation. The other 7 factors are the ones most often mentioned by people working successfully in part-time arrangements, whether as participant or line manager. Together with the culture they form a powerful framework for success.

Success requires

1. Supportive, flexible and competent line manager
2. Flexible attitude from the part time worker
3. Supportive colleagues and peers
4. Good communication
5. Performance management which focuses on output not attendance
6. Good work planning where workload is fairly balanced to meet organisational needs
7. Clarity about the role, responsibilities and organisation of work

Leading to

- Conducive organisational culture

Consider how your organisation matches up to these factors:

Consider the areas you wish to develop:

What actions do you need to take?

The flexible manager

More flexible patterns of work require a more flexible approach to management. Command and control gives way to involvement and coordination. When people are out of sight for more of the time trust is crucial. Whether you are a part time manager or the manager of part time staff the same applies. You need to create an environment in which people feel trusted and enabled to get on with their work.

The flexible manager:

- Coordinates and monitors rather than controls
- Shares information to enable people to give of their best
- Is willing to let go and trust people
- Is accessible, either face to face, or by virtual means
- Delegates by involving people in the process, agreeing clear goals and boundaries
- Allows staff to make decisions for themselves
- Is honest, so encouraging trust and openness
- Provides the resources and freedom to operate to enable people to do their job

Personal reflection and planning

Take a moment to reflect on each of these points. How do you think you rate as a manager?

Is there anything you want to change?

Create an action plan:

Flexibility leads to successful outcomes

Part time working for senior women will almost always need a bespoke solution. It is very unlikely that the expectations of the individual and her line manager about part time working will coincide at the outset. Starting from fixed assumptions like “part time working is my right” or “part time working isn’t possible in a managerial role” can too easily set up an adversarial relationship.

The successful examples of quality part time work for senior women we looked at had all evolved through discussion and negotiation. They all involved a sensible degree of give and take.

Gaining clarity about the following questions can help in the search for common ground.

The role

- Look closely at the job – is there anything about it that really prevents it being done part-time?
- Is there anything that needs to change to make it possible to do part-time?

Individual perspective

- What working arrangement are you trying to achieve?
- How much latitude do you have to vary it?
- How well do your skills match what you are trying to achieve?

Manager perspective

- What is acceptable in this organisation?
- What freedom to negotiate do you have?
- Who else in the organisation do you have to persuade before a change of working arrangements can be implemented?

Jo is manager of a large GP practice. She was responsible for two main areas of work, operational management of the practice and financial management. She wanted to move to part time working as part of a job share arrangement. Jo’s strength was as a line manager. A job share partner with strength in financial management was recruited. A success story for the individuals who got the part time roles they wanted and for the practice who gained an enhanced mix of skills.

Team and colleague perspective

- Do you know the views of others
- Do you need to consult team members and colleagues

Risk

- Think about the consequences of part time working. What’s the worst that can happen?
- What’s the best?

Dealing with colleagues

Colleagues and peers play an important role in the success of part time working arrangements. They have the ability to make it easy or difficult, as demonstrated by the following typical quotes:

“My colleagues are brilliant. They know when I am at work and plan around it”

or

“I’m facing resentment from people who say “I have to work full-time, so why shouldn’t you””

It’s hard to legislate for how others feel, but other people are often a critical factor in making a success of part time working. Because of this you may need to find ways of taking them along with you.

Dealing with the resentment of others

- First look to yourself. Are you doing anything that could lead people to resent you, or your working arrangements?
- Don’t take their resentment and jealousy personally. It is their problem not yours.
- Communicate clearly with your colleagues about your working arrangements
- Make sure that handovers of tasks work well.
- Feel positive that you have been able to arrange work hours that suit you

If things get difficult - Finding positive solutions

Positive problem solving requires a careful balance. On the one hand it is important not to leap at the first solution that presents itself with no thought or evaluation. On the other hand there is the risk of making choices much more difficult than they need be by creating too many possibilities. This worksheet can help by providing a straightforward structure:

1 What is the problem?
2 What are the issues for you?
3 What do you want to be able to do?
4 What will help?
5 What will hinder?
6 Where can you get help?
7 Create an action plan

Managing performance

Effective management of performance is critical for part-time and flexible workers. Attendance hours at work cease to be a useful measure. Rather it is outputs, not time that are important. Agreeing clearly what has to be achieved and by when, followed by meaningful monitoring is the key to success.

Part time workers often have difficulties because their stakeholders frequently have expectations based on full time work hours. Setting and communicating clear expectations to staff, customers, managers and colleagues is extremely important in this context.

Clear objectives make all the difference

The Cheshire Cat told Alice in Wonderland that if you do not know where you are going, then it is very difficult to know when you have got there. This is the very essence of the need to set objectives and targets at work. It is generally true to say that performance in any job is likely to be less than fully effective if the job holder is not clear about what is expected of them and what constitutes successful performance. It also means that it will be difficult to communicate expectations to others.

Clear objectives help individuals to decide on their priorities at work, clarify their role in the organisation, to make an effective contribution and to improve their performance. The process brings great benefits including:

- the avoidance of misunderstandings
- reduction in gaps and overlaps between jobs
- improved delegation
- increased commitment from all employees
- greater motivation built on clear expectations
- opportunity to develop and expand jobs
- team spirit based on everyone knowing where they are going
- reduction of stress through knowing where you stand
- better communication
- performance is measured by results not personality

Best practice guidelines for managers setting objectives

- Invite participation
- Explain objectives clearly - when agreeing objectives, think about the person you are talking to and make sure you communicate with them in a manner and at a pace which is appropriate.
- Encourage staff to seek clarification - check on their understanding and give them opportunities to ask questions.
- Update objectives regularly - review objectives as often as appropriate in the light of changes to individual and team workloads and organisational priorities.
- Check that objectives have been achieved - as part of the objective-setting process, agree the date when you will review with your staff whether the objectives have been achieved.
- Provide feedback - both formally and informally which includes constructive suggestions and encouragement for improving future performance.

Kay works part-time as head of a PR team which she manages by setting clear objectives, developing team members to be competent and letting them get on with it. She trusts them to do a good job. The team support each other and she encourages them to keep informed about what each other are doing. She makes herself available to her team for informal chats, and also spends at least an hour a month with each member for discussion on their performance. She manages by output achieved not time served.

Employee and career development

Employee appraisal and development takes on a new significance for part-time workers. Reduced contact time limits opportunities for feedback and attendance at development events as well as for many day-to-day interactions. The opportunities for a manager to give praise or guidance spontaneously may be reduced but employees still need regular feedback on their performance.

Part time staff can easily feel that they are being left out of development opportunities and challenges. There is a real risk that talented people will feel disenfranchised and demotivated.

Traditional approaches to development may not always be appropriate and flexible approaches to work need to be accompanied by flexible approaches to development and performance management.

Consider

- Establishing a regular (monthly or fortnightly) face to face review as a key management discipline as well as being part of the normal performance review cycle.
- Not being constrained by a 9 to 5 mentality when running training programmes.
- Shorter programmes run on different days of the week so that they are more widely available to part timers.
- Structure employee development activities to compensate for the lower level of exposure to colleagues than a full-time person.
- Mentoring, coaching, computer based learning and short learning events as effective substitutes for longer formal courses.
- Encourage 'buddy' arrangements for people in similar situations informal support to share experiences and create solutions
- Self directed learning, 360 degree feedback

WORKING DILEMMAS

We have identified, from interviews with senior part time workers and our own work on flexible practices with many organisations, factors that appear to be particularly important in aiding the implementation of successful part time working practices. At the core is the organisation culture – the ways of doing things – that influences the behaviour of everyone in the organisation. The other 7 factors are the ones most often mentioned by people working successfully in part-time arrangements, whether as participant or line manager. Together with the culture they form a powerful framework for success.

Success requires

- Supportive, flexible and competent line manager
- Flexible attitude from the part time worker
- Supportive colleagues and peers
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- Clarity about the role, responsibilities and organisation of work

all of which support a

- Conducive organisational culture

We have developed Working Dilemmas as a way to explore, understand and act on these factors that influence successful part-time working.

WORKING DILEMMAS

Working Dilemmas is a facilitator led activity designed to stimulate discussion about the way things are done in the organisation. It provides a rapid and non-threatening means to collect data about the culture and practices of an organisation focusing on issues surrounding part time working for senior women. It can be conducted by any experienced facilitator.

Discussion is stimulated through the use of 12 statements (Working Dilemmas) each of which describes a situation or dilemma to be resolved. There are 3 possible solutions to each of these dilemmas. The statements can be printed onto cards and are formatted to print 4 per page onto A4 card.

The Working Dilemmas are designed to relate to the success factors described above and each card has been written with a view to stimulating discussion about the factors leading to increased insight and providing data to aid action planning.

Dilemmas can therefore be selected so that particular factors can be explored. The table below shows the success factors and a selection of dilemmas that relate strongly to them.

Success factor	Working Dilemma Number
Supportive, flexible and competent line manager	1,2,3,4,6
Flexible attitude from the part time worker	1,3,6,12
Supportive colleagues and peers	1,2,6,7,12
Good communication	3,5,8,12
Performance management which focuses on output not attendance	4,5,8,9
Good work planning where workload is fairly balanced to meet organisational needs	3,4,6,8,9
Clarity about the role, responsibilities and organisation of work	3,4,6,8,11,12
Conducive organisational culture	all

Notes for facilitators

- 3-choice works best with a group size of 6 to 10.
- Session length should be 45 to 90 minutes.
- Participants are required to choose the solution that makes most sense to them and then explain their rationale to their colleagues. A group discussion follows with the aim of reaching a consensus as to the most likely choice of solution for the organisation, together with the rationale for it.
- The facilitator's role is to manage the process, encourage discussion and focus on the key issues.
- Discussion points or suggested prompts are provided for each statement to aid the facilitator in getting the best benefit from the discussion.

Participant briefing

The facilitator should cover the following points in briefing the players:

- 3-choice is a card game designed to stimulate discussion about the way things are done in the organisation.
- Each card consists of a typical situation or statement relating to the organisation and 3 different responses.
- Participants take it in turns to take a card, read out the statement on it and the related choices. They should then make their own decision and justify it to their colleagues. Discussion then takes place until there is general agreement about a solution or the facilitator calls a halt.
- Everything that happens during the activity is confidential, so participants should give their own opinions honestly, within the context of the way things are done in the organisation.

- Notes will be taken but will not identify any individual contribution. They will be used to help create a clear understanding of points that might help or hinder the implementation of new ways of working.

WORKING DILEMMA I

Your agreed part time hours are 9-3, four days a week, Monday to Thursday.

Your manager wants to have a team meeting about a new project on Friday.

He has arranged meetings on Fridays before and you have not gone but you have always felt you missed out and as a result of not being there were given the tedious project work.

This is an interesting project which would offer you lots of opportunities for development in a growth area of the business.

What would you do?

- A. Rearrange your working week so you are working that Friday
- B. Ask your manager to rearrange the meeting
- C. Work your normal days and come in on Friday as well for a couple of hours

Facilitator discussion points

Would your decision alter if you:

1. had a specific reason for taking Fridays off?
2. your manager organises Friday meetings regularly?
3. you felt it was being done deliberately?

What does this action on the part of your manager say about:

- The culture of the organisation?
- Your working relationship with your manager?
- Your working relationship with your colleagues?
- How your development is supported by the organisation?
- Communication about new business development in your organisation?
- Attitudes to part time workers being involved in decisions about projects?
- Willingness to make alterations to working practices to accommodate differences?
- Contacting part time workers when they are not in the office?
- Your flexibility?

WORKING DILEMMA 2

Just recently there have been a number of staff changes which have altered the behaviour of the team. The previous team members had been together since before you changed from working full time to part time.

There have been a few comments around the office such as “what’s day time TV like then?” and “alright for some, skiving at home for half the week”. Initially you took them as office banter but they have become more frequent and more pointed – “some of us are committed to our careers and not just playing at it”. It is mainly started by two of the team, though others join in or laugh with them.

What would you do?

- A. Grin and bear it as you do want to attract attention to your part time hours
- B. Complain to your manager
- C. Next time they start, tell them you do not find their comments funny and ask them to stop

Facilitator discussion points

Would your decision alter if:

1. The staff making the comments are senior to you?
2. The staff making the comments are junior to you?
3. You know the organisation will not tolerate bullying and harassment?

What does your response to this situation say about:

- The culture of the organisation?
- Your working relationship with your manager?
- Your working relationship with your colleagues?
- The value of respecting all staff within your organisation?
- Acceptable behaviour towards colleagues especially in terms of humour?

WORKING DILEMMA 3

You work half the week Monday to Wednesday midday. If you are not there routine problems can be handled by someone else. One of your contacts frequently phones the office with questions they claim are urgent on days you are not working. You have politely told them you do not work that day and that other staff can only deal with the routine questions

Recently they have put so much pressure on your colleagues that they have called you on your non-working days and asked you to deal with the matter urgently. You do not have access to all the records and reference materials when away from the office so could not give a full answer anyway.

What would you do?

- A. Tell your colleagues not to call you as you cannot help the customer properly anyway
- B. Tell your manager this is happening and ask her to take the calls
- C. Tell the customer that if they do not stop doing this, you will put in a formal complaint against them

Facilitator discussion points

Would your decision alter if:

1. The customer was very important to your organisation?
2. You had access to all the information for answering the questions at home?
3. If on your non working days you had another job?
4. If on your non working days you had sole charge of a dependant?
5. Your job could be redesigned so that a colleague who works full time could deal more effectively with this customer?

What does your response to this situation say about:

- The culture of the organisation?
- The level of support you receive from with your manager?
- Your organisation's attitude to customer service and complaints?
- The value placed on respecting all staff within your organisation?
- The robustness of your team?
- The willingness of the organisation to review job design to meet individual working needs?
- Contacting staff outside of their contracted hours?

WORKING DILEMMA 4

You joined the company a couple of months ago, working part time. You have compared your workload with your full time colleagues' and it does not seem to be significantly less. You often work longer than your contracted hours and are taking work home with you almost every week. You have mentioned in team meetings that you feel you are overloaded but nothing has happened.

What would you do?

- A. Ask to work full time
- B. Leave work unfinished when you go home as you feel you are being taken advantage of
- C. Raise the issue of work loading at your next team meeting

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of action be different if:

1. You had done the job full time previously so knew precisely what work load was appropriate?
2. Your colleagues are also stressed by the workload?
3. Your colleagues seem to manage their workload in a reasonable manner?
4. You had mentioned your concerns to your manager who had been sympathetic but taken no action?

What does this situation indicate about:

- How work is allocated and managed?
- Performance management processes: how are workloads and targets set?
- The approach of the organisation to workload and stress?
- How comfortable it is to raise issues of overwork in the organisation?

WORKING DILEMMA 5

You are a manager of a team of various technical and professional staff and you work reduced hours. You are often out of the office on business.

One of your staff works 20 hours a week and their job also takes them out of the office. As a consequence they do not often overlap with you in the office. You are concerned about both the quality and quantity of the work they do. You have made very effort to be clear about your expectations in terms and quality and output.

What would you do?

- A. Insist that they are in at the same time as you for at least one day every week
- B. Communicate again the work standards and delivery expectations for the whole team
- C. Review the job with a view to making their work more office based so that you can monitor them more easily

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of action be different if:

1. They were totally office based?
2. Standards of performance were not clear?
3. You were in the office more frequently?
4. You had given coaching and training your self to this person

What does this situation indicate about:

- The way the organisation values output versus attendance
- How staff are developed and competence assessed
- How part time workers are viewed by the organisation – as a problem
- How performance management and monitoring
- Communication with teams and individual staff
- The belief that managing staff needs to be an ongoing frequent activity

WORKING DILEMMA 6

You are a senior manager reporting to a Board Director. You work mornings only: leaving at 1 p.m. Your Director has just told you she needs an accurate, detailed report for the board meeting tomorrow. It will take several hours to complete – probably the rest of the day.

She apologises but says she cannot rely on anyone else to do it correctly. You recognise that producing the report on time is critical to the credibility of the department.

What would you do?

- A. Rearrange your responsibilities for the afternoon so you can do the report yourself
- B. Call your best staff into your office and delegate sections of the report so that the report can be completed by the time you go
- C. Tell her you cannot do the report as you are about to leave and she will have to ask someone else

Facilitator discussion points

Would your response to this request be different if:

- 1) Your director very rarely or often puts you in this position?
- 2) It was your directors' fault that they had not read the proposal earlier?
- 3) Your assessment of the impact of the proposal was not of the same magnitude as your Director's?
- 4) You trust the competence of your staff?
- 5) You have access to ITC systems that enable you to work on the report remotely so that you can proof read the final version at the end of the day at a time convenient for you?
- 6) The reason you work part time was a personal health issue or child or elderly care or that you did not need to earn a full time salary?
- 7) The director had not complimented you on your competence and implied that she trusts you?

What does this situation say about?

- The organisations approach to forward planning – acceptance of short time deadlines?
- The acceptability of walking away from important work when you are a senior manager?
- The way jobs are designed to match the available working hours and skills required by each aspect of the job?
- The organisation's view of the commitment expected from senior managers - whether they work part time or not?

WORKING DILEMMA 7

You manage a team in which some staff work part time hours. You need to develop them to help meet growing business demands. Most of the programmes offered by your training department last for one or two days.

You have offered these to your staff and some, but not all, have agreed to attend all day and manage their hours accordingly. You have asked the training officer if there are any alternatives and they have said that there are no plans to change the day-long programmes.

What would you do?

- A. Find short courses or e-based learning available externally and send your staff on them using budgets within your control
- B. Complain to the Training Manager
- C. Ask the staff what they can do to resolve this situation?

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of action be different if:

1. If it was your own value system that was driving your desire to develop your staff and not business needs?
2. You did not have any budget to pay for the external training resources?
3. You knew that some staff have personal responsibilities that prevent them from attending training out of their working hours?

What implications does this situation have for:

- Training and development of part time staff?
- Promotion prospects of part time staff?
- Diversity and access to employment?
- The acceptance of part time working throughout the whole organisation?
- Policies and procedures that are incompatible to part time working?

WORKING DILEMMA 8

You manage a function that provides support to front line staff. You work reduced hours. Your deputy, who works full time, has been working on a large project to re-engineer the front line processes. You asked him to keep you informed of progress and highlight any issues that have implications to your department. You intended to have regular updating meetings but your busy schedule meant that most of these did not happen.

The system is about to go live and you have suddenly realised that to work effectively with the new system your staff will need training in and access to new technology. There has no been planning for this and there is very limited time to organise a solution.

What would you do now?

- A. Discipline the deputy and tell him to get on and sort it out
- B. Ask if the implementation can be delayed
- C. Call a team meeting and develop a solution with all the team members

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of action be different if:

1. The system was not a front line system i.e. was about back office work?
2. Your deputy had made similar mistakes in the past?
3. Your deputy was usually reliable and you felt you had not managed him well?
4. You felt guilty about dropping your deputy in above his head without support?

What implications does this situation have for:

- Arrangements for managing and coaching staff?
- Your arrangements for reviewing work progress and giving support to your staff?
- Identification of suitable projects for delegation?

WORKING DILEMMA 9

You are the senior manager, and struggle to monitor the outputs from staff who have wide range of working patterns. Some of the part time staff seem to produce much more than others. You also work reduced hours and feel that some staff may be taking advantage of that fact. You do not feel you can tackle the poorer performing staff based on your feelings alone.

There is little data on individual performance but reliable business measures show that overall your department is underperforming.

What would you do?

- A. Hold a departmental meeting to discuss monitoring work and instigate a project team to develop a procedure for monitoring individual performance
- B. Drop into the office unexpectedly to check up on staff
- C. Change your working hours to work full time so that you can be present at all times the staff are working

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of action change if:

1. You were unable to work full time because of personal circumstances?
2. An effective performance management system was in place?
3. Your department was performing well?

What does this situation highlight about:

- Beliefs about what constitutes staff management: in person is the only way you can manage?
- Culture of your organisation: the amount staff are trusted to get on with their job in your organisation?
- How delivery of work is measured against time spent at work in your organisation?
- Performance management and setting targets and standards?
- Whether part time work is seen as a right, a perk or a response to business need and whether it can be challenged once it has been implemented?

WORKING DILEMMA 10

You are a senior manager and would like to find a more flexible way of working which fits better with your private life. You are considering working reduced hours.

Think about your experience of working in your organisation and your impression of your manager's and colleagues' views on reduced hours working.

Which of the following statements best represents your observations?

- A. It's OK for senior managers to work reduced hours
- B. The more senior you are the more demands there are on you from the business and your staff and the harder it is to work part time
- C. You have to agree to it if the senior manager is a woman, but it causes a lot of problems and more work for everyone else.

Facilitator discussion points

Would your observations change if:

1. More men worked part time?
2. There were senior managers working successfully who could act as role models?
3. It was easier to recruit staff to fill the hours left over from the part time job?

What do these views highlight about:

- The real value placed on a part-time work?
- The beliefs about senior management?
- Whether part time work is seen as a right, a privilege or a reward?

WORKING DILEMMA I I

The Director of Communications role, reporting to you, is a job share. This has worked well as the two women have complementary skills and experience and work well together. In many ways their combined performance has exceeded what might be expected from a single individual.

One of the job sharers has resigned and no candidate has the right experience. A man in the communications team has asked to be considered for job share. He is very experienced in some, but not all, aspects of the role. You doubt his ability to make the job share partnership work.

How would you handle this situation?

- A. Tell the present job share holder that you need her to work full time or will have to make her redundant.
- B. See if you can shuffle the work around so that the job share works successfully
- C. Have a meeting with the man and ask him how he would ensure a good working relationship to deliver good service delivery.

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of the way forward change if:

1. The applicant for the job share was female?
2. If you were confident that the male team member could build the relationships necessary to make the arrangement work?
3. If the role was less senior?

What do your answers indicate about:

- The expectations on senior managers?
- Differences in perception of male and female 'acceptable' working patterns?
- Whether the risk to the business is considered or jobs are constructed to meet the need of individuals: effect on service delivery or women rights?
- Approach to handover between staff and expectations about sharing information?
- Standards for behaviour and communication between colleagues?

WORKING DILEMMA 12

You are an operations manager and have been asked to carry out an urgent, high profile review. You need a considerable amount of information from another department over which you have no control. The department manager (at the same level as you) works part time and has not been readily available to contribute to the review. Her staff will not do any of the necessary work for you without her direct instructions. She is not flexible in when she works and this is causing some delay to the project.

What would you do?

- A. Ask to have a meeting with her Director so that pressure is put on her to be more flexible in her working arrangements.
- B. Hire a consultant to do the work directly for you.
- C. Say you cannot complete the project in the time frame because you cannot get the information you need.

Facilitator discussion points

Would your choice of the way forward change if:

1. If the project was not for the Board?
2. If the head of the department worked in your department?
3. If she was junior or senior to you?
4. If her difficulty in delivering to your time frame was due to their excessive work load not because they worked part time?

What do your answers indicate about:

- Expectations on delivery within externally imposed time requirements within your organisation?
- The level of real commitment to part time working in your organisation?
- Where authority and power lie in your organisation?
- Expectations that senior staff should be contactable at any time, especially if they are part time?
- Sharing of information between colleagues?
- The culture: the extent staff are empowered and the importance of formal hierarchy?
- Willingness to alter working arrangements when business needs require?

IS PART TIME WORKING RIGHT FOR ME?

Can you work effectively part time?

This self assessment questionnaire has been designed to help you think through whether working part time will suit you in your present role and organisation. It will also help you to review how you can be effective when working part time. It is supported by a number of complementary tools which can be accessed via our web site www@wisework.co.uk. Our definition of part time is less than 30 hours a week.

You can use it as a self reflection tool or as the basis of a discussion with your manager, human resource officer, coach or other supportive person.

As time progresses we experience many changes in our working, social and home life. As this happens, different types of working arrangements become more, or less suitable for us. You should therefore make frequent reviews of your requirements to ensure that your current working pattern is still appropriate to your needs.

The questionnaire has a number of statements which you are asked to score depending how well you feel that statement represents you or your views.

The self assessment scale is:

- 1 I strongly disagree with this statement***
- 2 I disagree to some extent with this statement***
- 3 I neither agree nor disagree with this statement***
- 4 I agree to some extent with this statement***
- 5 I strongly agree with this statement***

There are no right answers. Please take time to think about how you work and what you want from your working environment. Be as honest as you can as this questionnaire is designed to help you think about how you can effectively work part time. The questionnaire should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Completion of this questionnaire does not mean that your request to work part time or change your hours of work will be accepted by your manager, human resource department or organisation.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree to Some Extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree to Some extent	Strongly Agree
1. I am clear about the personal benefits to me of working part time					
2. I am clear about the organisational benefits of working part time					
3. I think the targets for my role are appropriate for the hours I work					
4. I am clear about my personal objectives and the standards/targets required					
5. I am confident that I can monitor my work in terms of the achievement of the required standards/targets					
6. I have the support of my manager					
7. I have the support of my colleagues, including peers and staff					
8. My organisation is supportive of part time working					
9. I have access to all the ITC services I need to work effectively part time					
10. I feel confident in my ability to use the ITC I need to do my job					
11. I am able to identify my personal development aims and needs					
12. I am confident at identifying solutions to my development needs and know how to access them					
13. I have agreed how I will communicate with my manager					
14. I have agreed how I will communicate with my colleagues					
15. I have agreed how I will communicate with other stakeholders					
16. I have agreed how I will communicate with other contacts					
17. I am aware of the part time working policies and procedures					
18. I have taken steps to ensure I can remain aware of organisational policies and procedures relevant to my role					
19. I have agreed how work will be handed over to colleague(s)					
20. I have thought about how my working pattern will fit with organisational demands to attend team meetings, training, committee meetings, briefings					
21. I have made arrangements for emergency contact and agreed if or when and how such contact may be made					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree to Some Extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree to Some extent	Strongly Agree
22. I am able to effectively manage my time and effort to achieve my targets					
23. My manager trusts me to manage myself to deliver my work on time and to standard					
24. I feel confident in prioritising my work - spending more time on important activities and less on the trivial					
25. I feel comfortable working in teams					
26. I have discussed any identified impact with those affected by my change in working style					
27. I have agreed how any impact on others will be monitored and will be managed					
TOTALS					

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

1. Review your responses to the statements above.
2. Are you sure that your responses are honest and correct?
3. Look at the specific questions to which you have either answered disagreed strongly or to some extent or chose neither as your answer.
4. Is there a pattern to the statements or any similarity between them?
5. What do you think you need to do to ensure that you can agree with the statement?
6. Next look at the statements you agreed with.
7. Is there a pattern to these?
8. What can you do to build on these positive indicators?
9. Consider your final total, if you did not answer a question include a score of 3 for that questions to fit into the analysis below. A score of

100 -135 You will find part time working both effective and rewarding and have minor issues which you should be able to resolve

80 – 100 You may have some issues that need to be resolved but you should be able to work effectively in a part time manner

54 – 80 You may benefit from reconsidering or negotiating clearer arrangements for part time working

0 – 54 You have a number of challenges ahead of you which need to be resolved before you start working part time.

We have suggested a format for planning your actions in response to the results of this questionnaire. These actions could take the form of some of the following:

- Personal reflection
- Discussion with mentors ; coaches; close friends
- Discussion with your manager
- Discussion with Human Resource/Personnel staff
- Training in skills such as the use of the technology
- Team meetings to agree shared ways of working part time

Please note here the action you intend to do as a result of completing this questionnaire, or those issues you wish to discuss further with interested parties.

What I need to do?	By When?	What will measure success?	Who will I need to help?
Establish working arrangements: clear targets, boundaries, working practices			
Skills, ITC and facilities needs and any development requirements			
Personal issues e.g. work life balance			
Other			

Disclaimer

While all reasonable efforts and care have been taken in the production of this questionnaire, WiseWork Limited makes no warranties or guarantees regarding the information contained in this document or in the processes required for its completion and subsequent use.

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Specialists in the implementation and management of flexible working practices and work-life balance programmes

Dilemma Templates

Templates for the Working Dilemma cards follow. These are formatted to print four cards per A4 page.

WORKING DILEMMA 1

Your agreed part time hours are 9-3, four days a week, Monday to Thursday.

Your manager wants to have a team meeting about a new project on Friday.

He has arranged meetings on Fridays before and you have not gone but you have always felt you missed out and as a result of not being there were given the tedious project work.

This is an interesting project which would offer you lots of opportunities for development in a growth area of the business.

What would you do?

- D. Rearrange your working week so you are working that Friday
- E. Ask your manager to rearrange the meeting
- F. Work your normal days and come in on Friday as well for a couple of hours

WORKING DILEMMA 2

Just recently there have been a number of staff changes which have altered the behaviour of the team. The previous team members had been together since before you changed from working full time to part time.

There have been a few comments around the office such as “what’s day time TV like then?” and “alright for some, skiving at home for half the week”. Initially you took them as office banter but they have become more frequent and more pointed – “some of us are committed to our careers and not just playing at it”. It is mainly started by two of the team, though others join in or laugh with them.

What would you do?

- D. Grin and bear it as you do want to attract attention to your part time hours
- E. Complain to your manager
- F. Next time they start, tell them you do not find their comments funny and ask them to stop

WORKING DILEMMA 3

You work half the week Monday to Wednesday midday. If you are not there routine problems can be handled by someone else. One of your contacts frequently phones the office with questions they claim are urgent on days you are not working. You have politely told them you do not work that day and that other staff can only deal with the routine questions

Recently they have put so much pressure on your colleagues that they have called you on your non-working days and asked you to deal with the matter urgently. You do not have access to all the records and reference materials when away from the office so could not give a full answer anyway.

What would you do?

- D. Tell your colleagues not to call you as you cannot help the customer properly anyway
- E. Tell your manager this is happening and ask her to take the calls
- F. Tell the customer that if they do not stop doing this, you will put in a formal complaint against them

WORKING DILEMMA 4

You joined the company a couple of months ago, working part time. You have compared your workload with your full time colleagues’ and it does not seem to be significantly less. You often work longer than your contracted hours and are taking work home with you almost every week. You have mentioned in team meetings that you feel you are overloaded but nothing has happened.

What would you do?

- D. Ask to work full time
- E. Leave work unfinished when you go home as you feel you are being taken advantage of
- F. Raise the issue of work loading at your next team meeting

WORKING DILEMMA 5

You are a manager of a team of various technical and professional staff and you work reduced hours. You are often out of the office on business.

One of your staff works 20 hours a week and their job also takes them out of the office. As a consequence they do not often overlap with you in the office. You are concerned about both the quality and quantity of the work they do. You have made very effort to be clear about your expectations in terms and quality and output.

What would you do?

- D. Insist that they are in at the same time as you for at least one day every week
- E. Communicate again the work standards and delivery expectations for the whole team
- F. Review the job with a view to making their work more office based so that you can monitor them more easily

WORKING DILEMMA 6

You are a senior manager reporting to a Board Director. You work mornings only: leaving at 1 p.m. Your Director has just told you she needs an accurate, detailed report for the board meeting tomorrow. It will take several hours to complete – probably the rest of the day.

She apologises but says she cannot rely on anyone else to do it correctly. You recognise that producing the report on time is critical to the credibility of the department.

What would you do?

- D. Rearrange your responsibilities for the afternoon so you can do the report yourself
- E. Call your best staff into your office and delegate sections of the report so that the report can be completed by the time you go
- F. Tell her you cannot do the report as you are about to leave and she will have to ask someone else

WORKING DILEMMA 7

You manage a team in which some staff work part time hours. You need to develop them to help meet growing business demands. Most of the programmes offered by your training department last for one or two days.

You have offered these to your staff and some, but not all, have agreed to attend all day and manage their hours accordingly. You have asked the training officer if there are any alternatives and they have said that there are no plans to change the day-long programmes.

What would you do?

- D. Find short courses or e-based learning available externally and send your staff on them using budgets within your control
- E. Complain to the Training Manager
- F. Ask the staff what they can do to resolve this situation?

WORKING DILEMMA 8

You manage a function that provides support to front line staff. You work reduced hours. Your deputy, who works full time, has been working on a large project to re-engineer the front line processes. You asked him to keep you informed of progress and highlight any issues that have implications to your department. You intended to have regular updating meetings but your busy schedule meant that most of these did not happen.

The system is about to go live and you have suddenly realised that to work effectively with the new system your staff will need training in and access to new technology. There has been no planning for this and there is very limited time to organise a solution.

What would you do now?

- D. Discipline the deputy and tell him to get on and sort it out
- E. Ask if the implementation can be delayed
- F. Call a team meeting and develop a solution with all the team members

WORKING DILEMMA 9

You are the senior manager, and struggle to monitor the outputs from staff who have wide range of working patterns. Some of the part time staff seem to produce much more than others. You also work reduced hours and feel that some staff may be taking advantage of that fact. You do not feel you can tackle the poorer performing staff based on your feelings alone.

There is little data on individual performance but reliable business measures show that overall your department is underperforming.

What would you do?

- D. Hold a departmental meeting to discuss monitoring work and instigate a project team to develop a procedure for monitoring individual performance
- E. Drop into the office unexpectedly to check up on staff
- F. Change your working hours to work full time so that you can be present at all times the staff are working

WORKING DILEMMA 10

You are a senior manager and would like to find a more flexible way of working which fits better with your private life. You are considering working reduced hours.

Think about your experience of working in your organisation and your impression of your manager's and colleagues' views on reduced hours working.

Which of the following statements best represents your observations?

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WORKING DILEMMA 11

The Director of Communications role, reporting to you, is a job share. This has worked well as the two women have complementary skills and experience and work well together. In many ways their combined performance has exceeded what might be expected from a single individual.

One of the job sharers has resigned and no candidate has the right experience. A man in the communications team has asked to be considered for job share. He is very experienced in some, but not all, aspects of the role. You doubt his ability to make the job share partnership work.

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