Balance
in the workplace

JOB CONTROL

centacare FNQ

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Balance in the Workplace is designed to equip organisations in the health and community services sectors with practical tools and resources to mitigate **psychosocial hazards** and create safer, healthier work environments. These freely available documents, which can be used in digital formats or printed as needed, aim to address challenges such as **workload management**, **work-life balance**, and mental health monitoring.

The mission of this initiative is to foster workplaces where health and wellbeing workers feel **safe** and **supported**, enabling them to provide effective care to those who depend on their services. By adopting these resources, organisations can actively promote a culture of care, **resilience**, and **sustainability** within their teams.

Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032

Jobs Queensland

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OVERVIEW

This resource provides organisations with actionable strategies to address the psychosocial hazard of low job control, as identified in the Code of Practice and WHS Regulation. Ensuring workers have greater autonomy and participation in decision-making processes can significantly improve mental well-being, engagement, and productivity.

Legislation and Code Reference

Low job control is explicitly identified as a psychosocial hazard in the Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards atWork Code of Practice andWHS Regulation. Employers are required to implement measures that:

- Provide workers with autonomy to manage aspects of their work.
- Encourage worker participation in decisions affecting their tasks and schedules.
- Address barriers to effective decision-making and task management.

Why Job Control Matters

Low job control is a recognised psychosocial hazard under the *Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022*. When workers have little influence over how or when they perform tasks, this can lead to psychological harm such as chronic stress, burnout, and disengagement.

In the health and community services sector, job control directly impacts staff well-being due to:

- High emotional labour demands
- Irregular or inflexible scheduling
- Limited input into workload management

Centacare FNQ's internal psychosocial surveys confirm that many staff desire greater autonomy, decision-making involvement, and recognition of their expertise. Addressing job control is therefore both a compliance obligation and a well-being imperative.

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Key Actions to Promote Job Control

1. Allow Workers Autonomy in Decision-Making

Flexible Scheduling:
- Empower employees to adjust their schedules to better balance workloads and personal responsibilities.
- Introduce tools such as shared calendars to facilitate visibility and coordination.

Task Prioritisation:

- Enable workers to decide the order in which they complete tasks, provided dead lines are met.
- Train employees to use prioritisation frameworks, such as the Eisenhower Matrix, to manage their workload effectively.

Resource Allocation:

- Allow employees to request specific tools,resources, or training they believe are essential for completing their tasks efficiently

2. Encourage Feedback on Workflow Improvements

Regular Feedback Mechanisms:

- Schedule periodic feedback sessions (e.g., monthly or quarterly) where employees can suggest workflow adjustments or improvements.
- Use anonymous surveys or suggestion boxes for those who may prefer privacy.

Employee-Led Committees:

- Create committees that focus on improving workflow processes. Ensure representation across departments to capture diverse perspectives.

Transparent Feedback Implementation:

- Communicate changes made based on employee feedback to reinforce their value in decision-making processes.

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Practical Resources

1. Flexible Task and Scheduling Protocol

AIM:
The aim of this protocol is to give employees greater control over their work schedules, allowing them to balance personal responsibilities with workplace demands. This flexibility improves job satisfaction, productivity, and work-life balance while ensuring organisational deadlines are met.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Set clear expectations for deadlines and availability.
2. Allow employees to adjust work hours within agreed limits.
3. Use shared calendars to coordinate team schedules.
4. Train staff to prioritise tasks using simple frameworks (e.g., urgent vs. non-urgent).
5. Provide a process for requesting flexible arrangements.
6. Regularly review the system's effectiveness through feedback and performance checks

POLICY ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Rotating Task Preferences	Allows employees to rotate between preferred tasks to increase engagement and skill diversity
Customised Work Schedules	Provides flexible start and end times to help employees balance personal and pro fessional priorities

2. Competency and Skills Development Plans

AIM:
The aim of the Competency and Skills Development Plans is to help employees enhance their skills and capabilities to perform their roles effectively. This resource ensures that workers have access to training and development opportunities, leading to increased job satisfaction, better performance, and career growth.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Identify the skills and competencies required for each role.
2. Work with employees to create individual development plans based on their career goals and role requirements.
3. Offer relevant training, workshops, or mentorship programs.
4. Set clear milestones and timelines for skill development.
5. Regularly review progress through performance evaluations and adjust plans as needed.

PROGRAM	DETAILS
Upskilling and Training Programs	Formal and informal learning opportunities to improve role confidence and decision making skills.
Job Enrichment Workshops	Focus on expanding responsibilities to enhance engagement and influence within the workplace.

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3. Risk Assessment Tool for Job Control

AIM:
The aim of the Risk Assessment Tool for Job Control is to identify areas where employees have low control over their tasks or decision-making, which could lead to stress or reduced productivity. This tool helps organisations assess and address risks to improve job satisfaction, autonomy, and overall mental well-being.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Distribute the assessment tool to employees to gather feed back on their level of job control.
2. Collect and analyse responses to identify areas with low autonomy or high stress.
3. Work with managers to develop strategies that address identified risks (e.g., increasing decision-making power or adjusting workloads).
4. Implement changes and monitor their effectiveness over time.
5. Regularly update the assessment to ensure ongoing improvements in job control.

Risk Identified	Current Controls	Proposed Controls	Responsible Person	Deadline
Lack of task prioritisation control	Standardised schedules	Flexible task prioritisation	Manager	DD/MM/YYYY
Limited scheduling flexibility	Fixed working hours	Introduction of flexible shifts	HR	DD/MM/YYYY

4. Leadership and Managerial Training

AIM:
The aim of Leadership and Managerial Training is to equip leaders and supervisors with the skills needed to support employee autonomy, job control, and well-being. This training helps managers create a more empowering work environment, improve communication, and reduce psychosocial risks.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Identify key leadership competencies related to job control and employee support.
2. Provide training on effective delegation, feedback, and decision-making processes.
3. Encourage managers to involve employees in workflow improvements and scheduling decisions.
4. Implement coaching or mentoring programs to enhance leadership skills. Regularly assess the effectiveness of training through employee feedback and performance outcomes.

TRAINING FOCUS	OBJECTIVE
Trauma-Informed Supervision	Help managers recognise psychosocial hazards and delegate effectively while building trust.
Empathy and Communication Coaching	Equip leaders to actively listen and incorporate team feedback into decisions.

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5. Workload Management Systems

AIM:
The aim of the Workload Management Systems is to help organisations distribute tasks fairly and efficiently, ensuring employees are not overwhelmed while maintaining productivity. This system helps monitor workloads, balance responsibilities, and reduce stress caused by excessive job demands.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Assess current workloads across teams to identify imbalances.
2. Implement a system to track tasks, deadlines, and progress (e.g., project management software).
3. Set clear expectations for task prioritisation and deadlines.
4. Regularly review workloads with employees to adjust assignments as needed.
5. Use feedback to improve the system and ensure workloads remain manageable.

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
Collaborative Tools (e.g., Trello)	Enables visibility and input into task assignments, fostering employee engagement.
Dynamic Task Allocation	Adjusts workloads based on employee strengths and current capacity.

6. Employee-Led Committees

AIM:

The aim of Employee-Led Committees is to empower staff to take an active role in decision-making and workplace improvements. These committees provide a platform for employees to share ideas, address concerns, and collaborate on solutions, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Establish committees with representatives from various departments or teams.
2. Define clear objectives and roles for committee members.
3. Schedule regular meetings to discuss workflow improvements, job control, and employee feedback.
4. Encourage open communication and participation from all team members.
5. Implement suggestions where feasible and provide feedback on the outcomes of committee recommendations.

COMMITTEE	PURPOSE
Task Advisory Boards	Enables visibility and input into task assignments, fostering employee engagement.
Change Ambassadors	Lead peer-driven initiatives to improve practices and foster a sense of ownership.

7. Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

AIM:
The aim of Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms is to track job control, workload distribution, and overall employee well-being effectively. These mechanisms help identify emerging issues early and ensure that feedback is used to make meaningful improvements in the workplace.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Set up monitoring systems (e.g., regular surveys, performance tracking tools) to collect data on job control and workload.
2. Establish clear reporting channels for employees to share concerns or suggest improvements anonymously if needed.
3. Analyse data regularly to detect trends or areas of concern.
4. Share findings with management and employees to maintain transparency.
5. Implement changes based on the data and monitor the effectiveness of those changes over time.

MECHANISM	PURPOSE
Anonymous Feedback Portals	Allows employees to voice concerns about restrictive policies safely
Job Control Metrics Dashboard	Tracks improvements in autonomy-related metrics and highlights areas for growth.

8. Supportive Culture Initiatives

AIM:

The aim of Supportive Culture Initiatives is to create a positive, inclusive, and respect-ful workplace environment where employees feel valued, supported, and motivated. These initiatives help foster teamwork, improve morale, and reduce the impact of psychosocial hazards.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Develop programs that promote collaboration, respect, and recognition (e.g., em ployee appreciation events, team-building activities).
2. Encourage open communication by providing safe spaces for employees to dis cuss concerns.
3. Offer resources for mental health support, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) or access to counselling.
4. Train leaders to model supportive behaviours and promote inclusivity.
5. Regularly review cultural initiatives based on staff feedback and adjust programs to meet evolving needs.

INITIATIVE	OBJECTIVE
Recognition Programs	Highlight and reward innovative workflow suggestions from employees.
Peer Mentorship Networks	Pair less experienced employees with mentors to improve decision–making confidence.

TEMPLATES AND TOOLS

1. Job Autonomy Agreement Template

AIM:

The aim of the Job Autonomy Agreement Template is to formalise agreements between employees and management regarding decision-making authority, task prioritisation, and flexible scheduling. This agreement empowers employees to have greater control over their work while ensuring alignment with organisational goals.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Customise the template to reflect the specific roles, responsibilities, and autonomy levels for each position.
2. Discuss the agreement with the employee, clarifying areas where they can exercise decision-making power.
3. Set clear expectations for task completion, deadlines, and reporting requirements.
4. Both employee and manager should sign the agreement to formalise the arrangement.
5. Review the agreement periodically to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

EMPLOYEE NAME	ROLE	AUTONOMOUS AREAS	MANAGER APPROVAL	REVIEW DATE

2. Workflow Feedback Form

1. I have sufficient control over my tasks.

○ STRONGLY DISAGREE   ○ DISAGREE   ○ NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE   ○ AGREE   ○ STRONGLY AGREE

2. I am encouraged to provide input on workflows.

○ STRONGLY DISAGREE   ○ DISAGREE   ○ NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE   ○ AGREE   ○ STRONGLY AGREE

3. I feel concerns will be addressed promptly.

○ STRONGLY DISAGREE   ○ DISAGREE   ○ NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE   ○ AGREE   ○ STRONGLY AGREE

4. The organisation allows me to do my job effectively

○ STRONGLY DISAGREE   ○ DISAGREE   ○ NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE   ○ AGREE   ○ STRONGLY AGREE

5. The working environment is a positive one

○ STRONGLY DISAGREE   ○ DISAGREE   ○ NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE   ○ AGREE   ○ STRONGLY AGREE

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS?

i would like to see more staff activities throughout the year.

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3. Employee Autonomy Tracker

AIM:
The aim of the Employee Autonomy Tracker is to monitor and measure the level of autonomy employees have over their tasks, schedules, and decision-making processes. This tool helps organisations ensure that workers maintain a healthy level of control over their work, contributing to job satisfaction and well-being.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Set up a tracking system (e.g., spreadsheet, software tool) to assess levels of autonomy across different roles.
2. Record data on decision-making authority, task prioritisation, and scheduling flexibility for each employee.
3. Review the data regularly to identify employees or teams with low levels of autonomy.
4. Work with managers to implement strategies that increase autonomy where needed.
5. Reassess periodically to ensure that improvements are maintained and adjust strategies as necessary.

TASK/RESPONSIBILITY	Employee Decision Areas	Manager Input Needed?	Deadline

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Case Study:

Implementing Job Control Measures

Scenario: (Hypothetical Example)

A medium-sized healthcare organisation identified that employees felt overwhelmed by rigid task assignments and schedules, leading to low engagement and higher absenteeism.

To address this, the organisation:

1.   Introduced flexible scheduling, allowing employees to set preferred shifts within operational constraints.
2.   Conducted regular team meetings where employees could propose workflow improvements.
3.   Implemented a system where staff could trade tasks with peers, subject to manager approval.

Outcome:

Within six months, the organisation reported a 25% reduction in absenteeism and a significant improvement in employee satisfaction scores.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Key Metrics:

To evaluate the impact of job control initiatives, organisations should track:

- Staff self-rated autonomy levels (via quarterly pulse surveys)
- Frequency of flexible scheduling requests granted
- Number of workflow improvement suggestions submitted and actioned
- Participation rate in employee-led committees
- Absenteeism and turnover rates, pre- and post-initiative
- Emotional exhaustion scores from regular psychosocial well-being surveys

Data should be disaggregated by role and department to identify where improvements are most needed.

Employee Satisfaction Surveys:

- Include specific questions on perceived autonomy and decision-making opportunities.

Feedback Implementation Rate:

- Track how many employee suggestions are reviewed and actioned.

Turnover and Absenteeism Rates:

- Monitor these metrics to assess the impact of autonomy initiatives.

Continuous Improvement:

- Revisit job control measures quarterly and update them based on employee feedback and operational needs.
- Provide ongoing training to managers on fostering autono my while maintaining accountability.

Conclusion

Addressing low job control is a critical step in managing psychosocial hazards and fostering a healthier, more engaged workforce. By empowering employees with decision-making autonomy and involving them in workflow improvements, organisations can enhance productivity, reduce workplace stress, and meet legislative obligations. Use the tools and strategies in this guide to create a more flexible and supportive work environment

Balance in the Workplace is an Employee Assistance Program developed by **Centacare FNQ**, a local organisation committed to delivering quality **Mental Health and Wellbeing Services** since 1981.

For more information about Balance in the Workplace and how it can support you or your team, please contact:

Daniel Gouge - Project Officer
Phone: 4044 0130
Email: daniel.gouge@centacarefnq.org
centacarefnq.org