



# Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony

## Sector Specific Resources

Sustaining and  
Enhancing Flexible  
Work Arrangements  
in the Food Services  
Sector

## Section 01:



# What are flexible work arrangements?

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are variations from the usual work arrangements. FWAs can be broadly classified under three categories: flexi-time, flexi-place, and flexi-load.



**Flexi-time arrangements** accord employees flexibility in their work hours and schedules. Examples include staggered start/end time, flexi-hours based on agreed number of working hours per week/month, flexible choice of shift hours/days, shift swapping, employees' choice of days off, compressed work schedule, time banking.



**Flexi-place arrangements** accord employees flexibility in their choice of work locations. Examples include working from home, clients' offices or satellite offices, and can be conducted on a situational or regular basis.

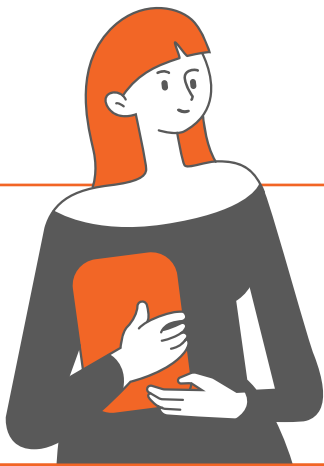


**Flexi-load arrangements** accord employees flexibility in their work load. Examples include part-time work, job sharing, phasing in or out full-time work, and project-based work.

# Implementing FWAs in the food services sector

The food services sector comprises a diverse workforce involving a variety of roles, including but not limited to office-, manufacturing-, retail- and service-based occupations. As such, the implementation and adoption of FWAs can vary widely across different sub-sectors and roles. Companies would have to consider how different types of FWAs suit and support the needs of their workers in various roles.

Examples of FWAs that can be adopted for different types of roles are as follows:



As my work does not require me to be in the office all the time, I can discuss with my supervisor to telecommute on a regular basis, and stagger my start and end times to avoid travelling during the rush hours.



As my work is shift-based and the load may vary across days, my supervisor allows me to swap shifts with my colleagues as long as such adjustments do not impact business operations. I can also enjoy flexible hours and leave the workplace once I complete my work.



Although my work is shift-based and I have to be at the workplace, I can work out an arrangement with my supervisor for either part-time work or flexibility in my shift hours to accommodate my caregiving duties towards my elderly parents.

# Case study 1

## The Soup Spoon:



Sub-sector: Restaurants

Type of organisation: SME

Workforce Breakdown: 12% office-based, 70% service-based, 19% manufacturing-based

**At the Soup Spoon, we periodically engage employees to keep improving FWAs where possible, and adapt to the preferences of workers.**

Mr Andrew Chan, Founder, The Soup Spoon



The Soup Spoon manages 274 employees across 30 restaurant outlets, and also have 51 staff based in manufacturing. As their business is rapidly expanding, their manpower needs have also been continuously shifting and increasing. Given the shift in employees' mindsets and expectations in the new age of work, attracting and retaining new employees to join and remain in the food services sector is key to ensuring the continued success of their business.

As such, the Soup Spoon makes use of FWAs as a key strategy to recruit and retain employees. Given their diverse workforce profile, there is also significant variation in the types of FWAs preferred by employees and there

is a need to strike a balance in meeting employees' needs while considering what is feasible for the company.

For example, although staff in office-based roles are able to telecommute regularly and allowed to adopt flexible working hours, they found through their engagement sessions that younger employees would prefer to work in the office and have adapted to their preferences by allowing them flexibility to continue working in the office while adhering to safe management measures.

## Section 02:

# Business case for implementing FWAs

FWAs contribute to a supportive and conducive work environment which enables employees to better manage their work responsibilities and family or personal aspirations. This in turn enhances productivity and organisational performance.

### How the organisation benefits

- Talent attraction and retention
- Lower absenteeism and hiring costs
- Employee engagement
- Enhanced organisational performance

### How employees benefit

- Better time management
- Personal work-life effectiveness
- Increased satisfaction and motivation at work
- Increased productivity

The **Tripartite Standards on Flexible Work Arrangements and Work-Life Harmony** suggest best practices that could be implemented at your workplace to support FWAs and work-life harmony. Adopters of these Tripartite Standards are seen as an employer of choice and recognised as progressive employers! Apply now through the QR code below!



## Case study 2

### KFC & Pizza Hut:



Sub-sector: Restaurants

Type of organisation: MNC

Workforce Breakdown: 5% office-based, 95% service-based

Despite having most of their staff in front-of-the-house service-based roles, KFC and Pizza Hut have demonstrated that implementing FWAs is possible. The implementation of FWAs has enabled KFC and Pizza Hut to attract a wider range of employees with varying skillsets and talent.

To provide flexibility in work arrangements, employees have the option to take on part-time employment. The company redesigned their part-time roles such that part-time employees would undergo a shorter and more targeted on-the-job training

by work section and eventually take on a smaller scope of work as compared to a full-time employees. Over time, part-time employees could undergo cross-training in other job areas, based on their areas of interest and business needs.

This enables KFC and Pizza Hut to optimise the deployment of their flexible workforce and also allows part-time employees to pick up more skills. Equipped with a broad range of skills developed over time, such part-time employees would also have the option to convert to full-time employment should they prefer to do so.



**Ms Irene Tay, IHRP-SP and Head of HR at KFC & Pizza Hut, also highlighted the importance of having each restaurant work closely together with the scheduling team. This ensures effective leveraging of their flexible workforce such that every restaurant would have the required manpower with suitable skills at any point in time.**

## Section 03:

# Sector-specific challenges faced and overcome in adopting flexible work arrangements

Implementing FWAs is not without challenges but it is also not as difficult as you would imagine.

How can I properly equip my employees with the necessary IT solutions to enable them to work flexibly?

My employees have to be physically at the factory to work, how can I accommodate their need for flexible work arrangements?

Will it be unfair to the cashier if I allow the accountant to work from home?



## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

---

**It is challenging to ensure that FWAs implemented meet the needs of my diverse workforce.**

---

**Most of my workforce is in service-based roles, and it is difficult to ensure that there is sufficient manpower with matching skillsets during every shift.**



## SOLUTIONS ADOPTED

---

Regularly engage employees to determine what their work-life needs are. Discuss with employees the FWAs that would meet both their work-life needs and the business needs.

Consider piloting the identified FWA for a shorter period of time to assess the effectiveness, if necessary, before committing to a longer duration.

---

Redesign jobs and provide targeted training based on a smaller scope of work compared to that of full-time workers to allow part-timers to be well-equipped quickly to perform as effectively.

Companies can also leverage technology to enable effective manpower deployment, such as automatic shift scheduling and swapping.

---

**I am from an SME, and implementing FWAs will entail additional costs which further reduces my thin revenue margin.**

---

Although there may be adjustments to work processes required and possibly costs associated with implementing FWAs (e.g. technology investment to support telecommuting) in the short-term, it is useful to look beyond and consider how FWAs can benefit the business and improve productivity in the long-term.

Successful implementation will enable businesses to reduce costs (e.g. through higher productivity) and increase supply to local talent (e.g. tapping non-traditional workers who can only work part-time due to family responsibilities). There are also resources such as the Productivity Solutions Grant and SMEs Go Digital which can help to mitigate the initial cost of implementing FWAs.

---

**My business has a number of core operating functions that require workers to be present at the workplace during specific times. This may present a challenge to implementing FWAs.**

---

Engage employees to determine the scope of what is possible in terms of FWAs while ensuring business objectives and operational needs can be met.

For example, although telecommuting may not be possible, workers may be allowed to adopt flexible hours outside of core operating hours.

Companies may also allow employees to choose their preferred off days or when to fulfil their required number of work hours for the week/month as long as such flexible schedules can still meet the companies' overall manpower demands.

---

**Although I have introduced FWAs in my company, not many employees are using it and the take-up rate is low.**

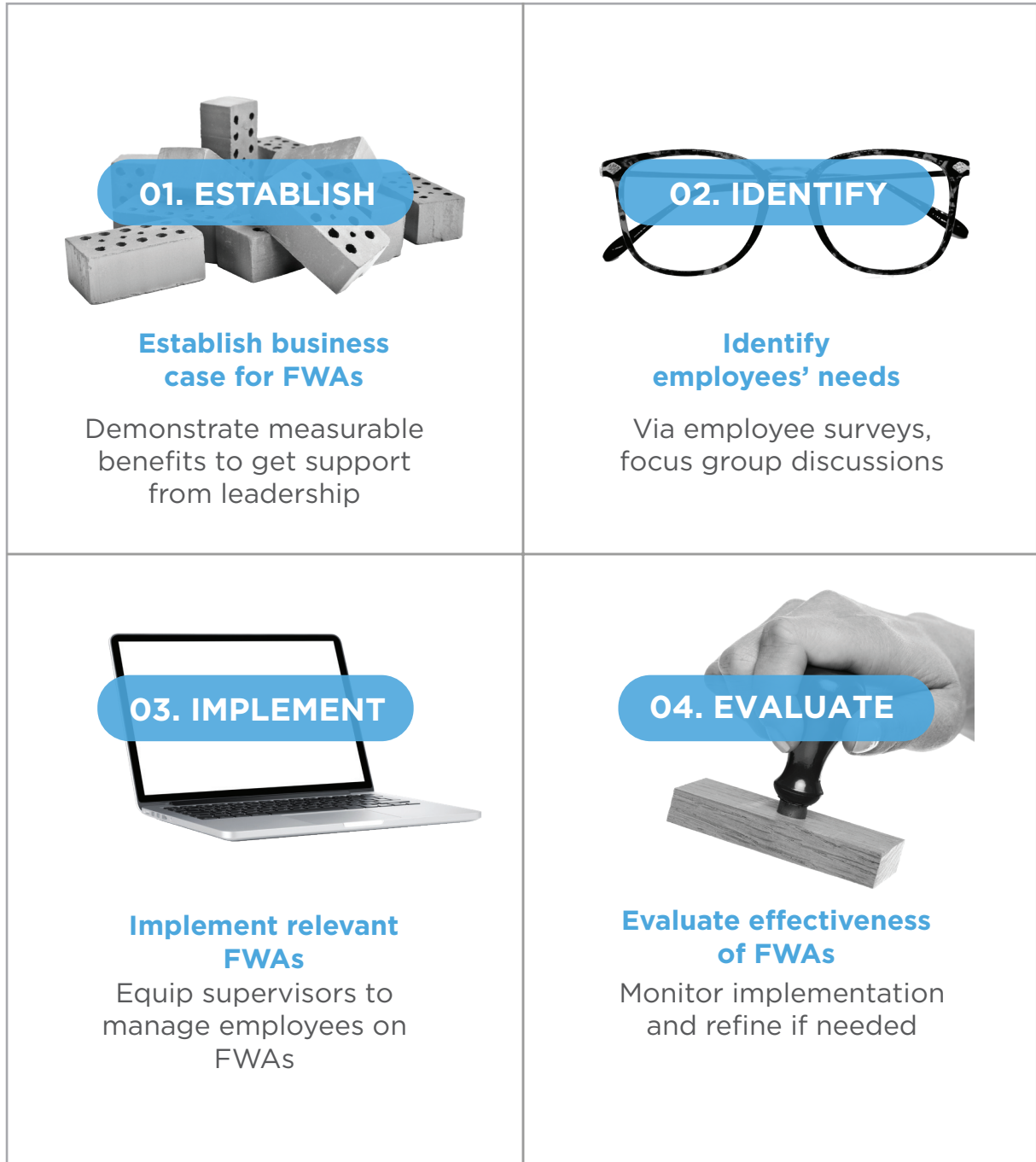
---

Engage employees to determine the reason(s) for the low utilisation of FWAs to effectively tackle the root cause, e.g. lack of awareness of FWAs offered, fear of FWA utilisation affecting career progression.

If employees are not aware of the FWAs offered, details on their implementation and how to apply could be shared in HR policies or in a place that is easily accessible to employees. More resources for HR on implementing FWAs can also be found in **Section 4** of this resource.

Supervisors could also be trained to manage employees on FWAs, e.g. how to negotiate on a mutually acceptable FWA, set expectations and clear measurable goals to track employees' work progress and conduct regular check-ins.

# A 4-Step Guide to Implementing FWAs



Download the guide on implementing a sustainable telecommuting arrangement [here](#).



## Case study 3

### Yeo's:



Sub-sector: Wholesale & Retail Trade

Type of organisation: MNC

Workforce breakdown: 35% office-based, 65% manufacturing-based

As a F&B manufacturing company, Yeo's has a large proportion of their employees in roles that require employees to be on-site and in shifts. Given the nature of their work, they were initially hesitant to implement FWAs.

However, after analysing the key drivers of productivity of their company, they realised there was scope to leverage FWAs to increase their business productivity, while allowing their workers to benefit from such flexibility on the job.



**One group of employees that benefitted from the innovative implementation of FWAs in Yeo's is their goods delivery drivers.**

As there are fluctuations in the volume of deliveries across the week, the company adopted an incentive-based plan where drivers are paid based on the number of deliveries completed. As long as the deliveries are completed, drivers do not have to stay till the end of their assigned shift and are able to enjoy flexible hours.



**Pre-FWA implementation:** Companies which are intending to implement FWAs, but are unsure of where or how to start



One-stop portal on FWAs and WLH resources



Tripartite Advisory on Flexible Work Arrangements



Tripartite Standards Clinic for FWAs and Work-Life Harmony



Telecommuting Guide

---

**During FWA implementation:** Companies which have decided to implement FWAs, and require resources to enable them to do so



Sample telecommuting policy



Tripartite Standard on Flexible Work Arrangements and Work-Life Harmony



HR implementation guide by Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony



SMEs Go Digital



Productivity Solutions Grant

---

Note: This resource was developed based on the Singapore Together Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony's (AfA on WLH) sector-specific Community of Practice on Sustaining and Enhancing FWAs in the Food Services Sector, which was co-hosted by MOM and IHRP and contributions from community stakeholders who are passionate about supporting flexible work arrangements and work-life harmony in Singapore.

Although this resource was developed based on insights from companies in the Food Services Sector, we hope this guide will also be of use to other sectors who may face similar challenges in implementing FWAs across various roles in their companies.

For more information on the AfA on WLH, refer to [bit.ly/afa-on-wlh](https://bit.ly/afa-on-wlh).

**Part of:**

