

TOOL 1.11

Develop Human Resources Policies and Programs to Support a Gender-Inclusive Workforce

- » **GOAL:** Develop policies and programs that attract, support, and advance female employees
- » **TARGET UNIT:** Human Resources

To maintain a gender-inclusive workforce, you will need to identify and develop policies and associated guidance that can help to make your workplace more attractive to both women and men. While many companies have high-level policy frameworks outlining gender equality and diversity, more specific policies and implementation guidelines that clearly state how the company expects to support gender equality are important for attracting and retaining a gender-diverse workforce. Policies that can help attract and retain a more gender-diverse workplace can include, for example:

1. Equal pay for equal work (especially in countries where this is not legislated)
2. Policies to support balancing work and family life, including
 - a. Flexible work policies
 - b. Family leave policies
 - c. Support for pregnant employees
 - d. Support for nursing mothers
 - e. Guidance on employer-supported childcare
3. Sexual harassment and respectful workplace policies and codes of conduct (See **TOOL SUITE 4**)
4. PPE and physical workplace safety
5. Review of employee benefits programs

In addition to making an employer more desirable for potential employees and more accommodating to current employees, these policies can also make the workplace more attractive to returning employees. Maternity leave can represent a key juncture for employees, and supportive policies can help determine whether they choose to return to the workplace after maternity leave. A study in New Zealand estimated savings of \$75,000 for each employee returning to the workforce after maternity leave, highlighting how important it is for companies to have policies that support new families.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Office on Women's Health, [Business Case for Breastfeeding](#), 2014.

While these policies may reflect longstanding corporate values, it is important to have explicit and clear rules and guidelines that are communicated to and available for all staff in order to have clear expectations, rights, implementation, enforcement, and accountability.

Below is an overview of several key gender policies. Note that this is not a comprehensive list. Rather, the examples highlighted here serve to underscore important attributes of policy options to consider.

1. Policies to Support Equal Pay for Equal Work

In many countries around the world, equal pay for equal work is not yet legally mandated. Where there is no legal requirement for pay equity, companies can still demonstrate their own corporate commitments to equity by enshrining pay equity in their own policies through remuneration and/or gender policies. For more information on implementing pay equity, see [TOOL 1.6 \(Pay Gap Survey Guidance and Terms of Reference\)](#).

2. Policies to Support Work-Life Balance

Companies that have introduced policies and programs to support balancing work and family obligations report lower turnover, less absenteeism, and improved rates of return from maternity leave.⁶⁷ Policies that help employees balance their professional and family responsibilities can improve an employer's desirability and reduce attrition and turnover. Replacing salaried workers can cost employers as much as 50% to 60% of the worker's annual salary, rising even higher for more senior employees (replacing a top executive can cost around 213% of annual salary).⁶⁸ Policies to help employees balance competing demands in their lives over the course of their employment can therefore create substantial benefits both to employees as well as employers.

2a. Flexible Work Practices

Flexible work practices can take many forms, and policies can include a range of flexible work arrangements, such as:

- Flexible hours (may be based around set core business hours)
- Compressed work week
- Telework, where appropriate
- Annualized hours
- Shift-swapping
- School-term work schedules

⁶⁷ Sodexo, [Why You Should be Supporting Working Parents and How You Can Do It](#), cited June 2022.

⁶⁸ Alison Moodie, [Why Employers Efforts to Support Pregnant Employees can Backfire](#), The Guardian, 7 Nov 2016.

- Flexible route/assignment length for work that requires extended absences from home (shipping, some transport jobs, etc.):
 - Giving employees choice of route length
 - Accommodating ad hoc requests for short-term route changes for personal needs
 - Reviewing annual rotations to ensure employees do not miss special events in consecutive years
- Leave (with or without pay) for family or parental reasons

Flexible work policies allow employees to structure their time and/or location in a way that makes their work more compatible with family or care responsibilities. Since more care and family labor are undertaken by women globally, these policies can help companies increase their attraction and retention of women.

Flexible workplace policies should apply equally to male and female employees. Allowing and encouraging men to use flexible work policies can further improve gender equality by sharing the burden and career disruption. It also can incentivize companies to see family leave not as a downside to hiring women, but as a standard employee entitlement. Women and men should be equally encouraged and supported to take advantage of these policies. In evaluations of flexible work programs, companies should be sure to look at both male and female uptake.

Companies also should take note of any legislative guidelines for flexible work. For instance, in Australia, the Fair Work Act 2009 requires companies to allow requests for flexible work arrangements for employees with children under school age who provide care for a family member (as per the 2010 Carer Recognition Act), who have a disability and/or dependents under the age of 18 with a disability, or who care for a family member experiencing intimate partner violence.⁶⁹

Flexible work should be used as a business arrangement to support qualified employees and make it easier for them to juggle multiple roles. Of course, flexible work arrangements will depend on the nature of the job. For instance, telework is clearly not feasible for all types of employment (for instance, meter readers in the power and water sectors, transport drivers, road construction, etc.), but employers could consider other types of flexible work, such as job sharing and rotations⁷⁰. Employers can maintain discretion over granting of flex time, but requests should be seriously considered because doing so can help improve job satisfaction and retain staff. It is of critical importance that guidelines for requesting and granting flexible work arrangements are clear and transparent, with well-defined criteria.

⁶⁹ Tara Diamond, "The Rise of Flexible Work in the Resource Industry," Carlton Victoria: AusIMM, 2016.

⁷⁰ The ILO defines job-sharing as "a voluntary arrangement whereby two persons take joint responsibility for one full-time job and divide the time they spend on it according to specific arrangements made with the employer. A common form of job-sharing is to split one full-time job into two part-time jobs." International Labour Organization, "Work-sharing and job-sharing."

In addition to using such policies to spell out provisions for granting flexible work, they can also be deployed as a way to help employees transition back to full-time work following maternity/paternity leave or sick leave.

2b. Family Leave Policies

Paid family leave policies are another opportunity for companies to support employees, as well as improve the attraction and retention of women. Most countries (the United States, Papua New Guinea, and a number of island nations being the main exceptions) require paid leave for new mothers, funded either by companies or a combination of government and company funding. Such policies often include a mix of dedicated leave for mothers to have the baby and recover from birth as well as parental leave available to either parent for childcare during the first few months. A [study by the U.S. Center for Economic and Policy Research](#) found either a positive or non-negative effect of parental leave programs on profitability and performance, productivity, turnover, and employee morale for nearly 100% of respondent businesses.⁷¹

Even where parental leave regulations are more conservative or focused primarily on the mother, or where they are unpaid, companies can use their own policies to go beyond legal mandates by providing paid leave for both parents. Doing so not only improves the opportunity for gender equality by encouraging both women and men to take time off to share parental responsibilities, but can also support gender equity in the workforce. Allowing both women and men to take time off around the birth of a child can reduce hiring biases against women and the extent to which taking maternity leave slows down women's career progression.

Companies should review their own policies to ensure that they are equally available to women and men, as well as consider any incentives or disincentives to taking parental leave. These can include, for instance, considering how positions are filled during parental leave, how employees are evaluated or disadvantaged for time off in their career progression, and options available to employees when they return from family leave.

Parental leave policies should include:

- Length of paid leave for new mothers and fathers, and options for any additional unpaid leave
- Notice period: Timeframe for notifying employers of intent to take leave, responsibilities in informing employers, and steps for managers to take to accommodate pregnant employees and parental leave

⁷¹ Sodexo, [Why You Should be Supporting Working Parents and How You Can Do It.](#)

- Measures employers must take to find alternative job placements for pregnant/breastfeeding staff: This will depend on physical risk/health risk profile of the pregnant employee's job.
- Starting point of leave: For example, at birth or prior to birth?
- Notice requirements to extend parental leave
- Protocol for communication/engagement during the leave period
- Timeline for discussing return to work
- Job coverage protocols: This includes assurances that staff can return to the same position and contingency planning when staff cannot return to the same position.
- Protocol for adoption of children and staff eligibility for parental leave⁷²

Employees also have a responsibility to learn about their options and rights when requesting parental leave. Consider periodic activities and events aimed at raising awareness.

How to Encourage the Uptake of Flexible Work and Parental Leave Policies

This involves effort on multiple fronts:

- Set the tone at the top. Managers should lead the way and demonstrate behavior that supports the uptake of flexible work policies. They should be trained in flexible work policies, including understanding the benefits of these programs to staff and to business units, and there should be oversight across units to ensure that programs are being implemented equitably.
- Develop informational campaigns about flexible work programs, targeting both women and men.
- Review performance evaluation criteria to ensure that employees who take flexible leave arrangements are not disadvantaged for promotions—for instance, by focusing performance reviews on outcomes rather than on hours worked.

2c. Guidance on Supporting Pregnant Employees

Research shows that pregnant women and mothers face biases and discrimination. They are often stereotyped as 'warm but incompetent' and are frequently passed over for opportunities and promotions, forced to take leave, or even dismissed.⁷³ **TOOL 1.17** gives guidance on how to address bias against women in the workforce, but this tool provides suggestions on how employers can proactively support pregnant employees to continue working effectively during their pregnancy.

⁷² Australian Human Rights Commission, Tool 4: Parental Leave Checklist for Employers, Canberra: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015.

⁷³ Judy Clair, Kristen Jones, Eden King, and Beth K. Humberd, "[The Right and Wrong Ways to Help Pregnant Workers,](#)" Harvard Business Review, 2016.

A note on providing support for pregnant employees: there are many ingrained societal biases around pregnant women, which can impact both employers and employees. Employers may be concerned that pregnant employees may not want to work on particularly challenging assignments, while pregnant women may be concerned about their ability to handle pregnancy or motherhood and the demands of the workplace. Employers which make assumptions—even well-meaning ones—about what pregnant employees want or need can inadvertently undermine women and create more insecurity, which has been linked to women’s workforce attrition. While trying to provide accommodation and support for pregnant employees, employers should be aware of the potential for signaling lack of confidence in pregnant employees.⁷⁴ For instance, when employers assume a pregnant employee would not want to be staffed to a particularly challenging project or travel, etc., this can undermine employees and even contribute to failure to return from maternity leave.⁷⁵

To navigate this situation, employers should focus on providing practical help and creating a widely understand framework of options and benefits that employees can determine for themselves if and how to take advantage of them. Specific offers of support are most useful and constructive when they are provided in response to requests, negotiated with the employer, and support the employee’s autonomy.⁷⁶ Examples of such specific types of support include flexibility to attend doctors’ appointments or even to rest during the workday. Employees should be consulted on the type of support they need, how to ask for additional support, and how to best empower themselves to speak up if they need to change something about their work environment.

Suggestions for how employers can support pregnant employees include:

- **Communication:** Make sure employees are informed of all maternal health and childcare benefits, support structures for pregnant employees and new parents (resource people in HR, employee resource groups, etc.), flexible schedule options, leave options, performance management options, etc. related to pregnancy and parenthood.
- **Consider Workplace Health Visit:** Especially for remote workplaces, consider having an OB-GYN visit the workplace to provide independent advice on everything from prenatal care to testing and safe medications.⁷⁷ In urban areas, ensure that employees understand entitlements with regards to leave for medical visits. Clarify what this covers (for instance, only doctor’s appointments, or are visits to acupuncturists, lactation consultants, pre/post-natal massage covered? What is the difference in coverage for the pre- and post-natal periods?)

⁷⁴ [Harvard Business Review](#), 2016.

⁷⁵ Alison Moodie, [“Why Employers’ Efforts to Support Pregnant Employees can Backfire.”](#) The Guardian, 7 Nov 2016.

⁷⁶ [Harvard Business Review](#), 2016.

⁷⁷ Carole Khalifé, [How to Support your Pregnant Employees](#), LinkedIn 2016.

- **Support system:** Create staff meetups for pregnant employees and new parents.
- **Naps:** Consider creating a rest room where women might be able to get rest as needed, and discuss how to create flexibility to allow napping.
- **Provide flexibility and specific logistical support:** For instance, clearly communicate about working hours flexibility to attend doctor's appointments, take rest during the day, etc.
- **Proactively check in on performance management:** Managers should take the opportunity to check in with staff to set performance management goals and ensure staff are empowered to speak up if or when they require support. Arrange for a performance management check-in immediately prior to parental leave, and come up with a flexible structure for re-entry.

2d. Guidance on Accommodation for Breastfeeding and Pumping Mothers

Supporting return to work for nursing mothers not only helps them transition back into the workplace, but can also be good for businesses. Support for breastfeeding mothers increases employee retention, reduces employee absenteeism, and lowers health care and insurance costs. While breastfeeding support is typically only required for the first six months to one year (some employees may choose to breastfeed longer), support during this time can be impactful for employees, families, and companies over a much longer term (see Box 1F).

BOX 1F | A Family-Focused Approach to Lactation Support

While many companies implement lactation support programs targeting female employees, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power recognized that decisions around breastfeeding involve the whole family: breastfeeding is time and labor intensive for mothers, and health benefits for breastfed babies translate into benefits for the whole family. Although 80% of its workforce is male, the LA DWP initiated a lactation support program for mothers, fathers, and partners, which led to a dramatic reduction in turnover and absenteeism for both male and female workers. As a result of the program, 83% of employees were more positive about their employer and 67% felt that it contributed to their intention to stay with the department as a long-term employer. (Cohen R, Lange L & Slusser W. 2002; [A description of a male-focused breastfeeding promotion corporate lactation program](#). *Journal of Human Lactation*, 18(1), 61–65.)

Reducing Absenteeism: Breastmilk-fed babies are sick less frequently than formula-fed babies, which means fewer missed workdays for parents of breastmilk-fed babies. In a study of breastfed and formula-fed babies, the incidence of one-day absences for mothers to care for sick infants was more than twice as high for mothers with formula-fed babies.⁷⁸ In a two-year study by U.S. insurer Cigna, mothers' participation in workplace lactation support programs was correlated with \$60,000 in savings in employee absenteeism.⁷⁹

Reducing Healthcare Costs: Correlated with reduced illnesses among breastfed babies, breastfed babies require fewer doctor visits. In countries with employer-paid healthcare, this means fewer insurance claims placed through employers. The same Cigna workplace lactation program cited above led to an annual savings of \$240,000 in healthcare costs over two years.⁸⁰

Reduced Turnover: Companies which support employees who choose to continue breastfeeding and pumping support employee retention, saving significant costs associated with employee turnover. For instance, U.S. firm Mutual of Omaha saw a retention rate 24% above the national average for returning mothers due to its lactation support program.⁸¹

Employers can support nursing mothers through several key initiatives:

1. Appropriate facilities: Where employees do not have private offices, companies should provide private secure spaces for mothers to express milk. This can be a small single-person room or a room with curtains or partitions to allow multiple women privacy to express milk. Rooms should be lockable, have accessible electrical outlets for each user and a small refrigerator for milk storage, and ideally a sink for washing bottles and pumps. Many companies choose to supply hospital-grade pumps, which can be used onsite and can make pumping faster and more efficient, reducing the time needed. Employees should not be asked to express milk in bathrooms, utility closets, or other non-sanitary and non-lockable places. Breast milk is food, and women should not be asked to pump in places that would not be sanitary for food preparation. As a rule of thumb, expressing milk should also be assumed to require as much privacy as would be provided for using the restroom. Pumping rooms should be locked, but women using pumping facilities should be provided with keys or keycode access. Depending on the needs of the workforce—if employees use multiple worksites, for instance—keycode access can provide employees easy access to multiple pumping rooms.

⁷⁸ Rona Cohen, Marsha B. Mrtek, and Robert G. Mrtek, [Comparison of Maternal Absenteeism and Infant Illness Rates Among Breast-feeding and Formula-feeding Women in Two Corporations](#). *American Journal of Health Promotion*: November/December 1995, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 148-153.

⁷⁹ Office on Women's Health, [Business Case for Breastfeeding](#), 2014.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

- 2. Flexible scheduling:** Lactating mothers typically need to pump every two to four hours; with efficient pumps, pumping may take between 15 and 30 minutes per session. All managers should be given sensitivity training on the flexibility needs of pumping mothers, and employees should be allowed flexibility in their schedules for pumping, with the understanding that this time may come out of lunches or other breaks, or employees may be expected to come early or stay late.

In addition to scheduling during the day, HR, managers, and employees should work together to ensure that lactating mothers are returning to work in roles that can accommodate breastfeeding. This should include ensuring that breastfeeding mothers are not in contact with any chemicals, radiation, or other safety risks. Furthermore, HR and managers should consult with employees on whether any job-specific accommodations need to be made—for instance, for women public transport drivers, plan routes and breaks that will enable women to access pumping facilities as needed.⁸²

- 3. Training for managers:** HR and all managers should be provided with training on breastfeeding and the needs of breastfeeding mothers so that they can work with returning employees to plan effectively. When managers understand the needs of breastfeeding mothers—both in terms of the day-to-day time-management requirements, as well the fact that breastfeeding is typically a temporary accommodation—this can help managers and employees work together to find solutions that work for everyone.
- 4. Clear communication and planning:** When employees are discussing their maternity leave and plans for returning to work, plans for breastfeeding should be a part of the conversation to help managers plan with employees how to accommodate scheduling and flexibility requirements.
- 5. Support:** Consider creating a support and advocacy network for lactating employees to create opportunities for support and discussion within the workforce. Employers can also provide information to pregnant employees and partners, providing information on the benefits of breastfeeding and informing them of support offered. As noted in Box 1F, offering this support to male and female employees can create benefits for families as well as employers.

2e. Guidance on Employer-Supported Childcare

For many families, access and costs of childcare, balanced against the demands of benefits of a job outside the home, can be critical factors in whether potential employees

⁸² Maternity Action. Accommodating breastfeeding on return to work. Cited January 2022. See [Maternity Action's website](#) for many resources on supporting pregnant and nursing mothers and new parents.

are able to join the workforce. According to one research study, 23% of employees—including three times more women than men—have said that childcare challenges have led them to consider leaving their jobs.⁸³

The IFC has developed extensive guidance on the benefits of employer-supported childcare for employers as well as employees, including case studies and detailed guidance for employers. (For more information, please see the full report [A Guide for Employer Supported Childcare](#)). The report highlights that providing childcare for employees' children can lead to improved employee retention, productivity, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty. Employee-supported childcare can make an employer more attractive and in particular help increase women's participation in the workforce.⁸⁴

“Many businesses find that increased profitability from family-friendly workplace benefits—such as daycare services, fee subsidies, breastfeeding support, and paid parental leave—makes them worthwhile investments.”

—IFC Guide for Employer Supported Childcare, 17

Employers that want to offer childcare options for employees have numerous types of arrangements to consider. Childcare could include subsidies for parents to secure their own childcare, making arrangements with existing private childcare, organizing an employer-supported daycare, providing support during school holiday periods (such as children's camps), etc. The choice of childcare should be based on the needs of employees in the company's particular situation. Some countries may have legal mandates for employers to provide childcare, which should underpin any company decisions about the type of care to offer.

Employers that want to provide childcare, in accordance with or going beyond legal requirements, should follow the following steps⁸⁵:

1. Identify and state the objective of the childcare program. Understanding a company's objectives (to attract applicants, including more female applicants; to increase retention of female employees after parental leave, etc.) will help companies develop indicators to measure success of the program and make any necessary adjustments.

⁸³ Joanne Sammer, [Support for New Parents can Keep Employees Onboard](#), Society for Human Resource Management, 2019.

⁸⁴ IFC, [A Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare](#), IFC, 2019, 15.

⁸⁵ IFC, [A Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare](#), IFC, 2019, 26.

2. Understand the legal requirements in your company's context.
3. Assess what sort of childcare is desired, and feasible, in your company's context. This will include exploration of employee needs and interest, as well as understanding what services are locally available. Companies may consider doing key-informant interviews with community members, especially if one objective is to become a more desirable employer for potential female employees.
4. Develop a program proposal, including identifying costs as well as key indicators to measure success of the program. These indicators should be related to the goals of implementing the program, such as increasing rates of application by female employees (and the number of female employees who accept positions with your company), as well as retention rates of parents (disaggregated by sex).
5. Implement the childcare program, and measure and track success.

3. Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment Policies

Sexual harassment and gender-based violence can be issues in many workplaces, and particularly in male-dominated infrastructure sectors. Infrastructure sectors can require work in remote locations, travel, and/or work at early and late hours, all of which can contribute to concerns or perceptions of the potential for gender-based violence.

Strong sexual harassment and gender-based violence policies and training that address the behavior of employees on- and off-site are important prerequisites for establishing a corporate culture that does not tolerate sexual harassment or gender-based violence. They also contribute to a supportive and empowered environment in which women and men can work effectively together.

Given the importance of this topic, **TOOL SUITE 4** is entirely focused on policies, activities, and interventions to address sexual harassment and gender-based violence-related issues. It features draft model policies on sexual harassment and gender-based violence, an outline of the types of services that companies should consider establishing, and a draft code of conduct for on- and off-site employee behavior.

4. Guidance on PPE and Physical Workplace Safety

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a critical investment for many infrastructure sectors. It can include (but is not limited to) foot, hand, eye, respiratory, thermal, full-body, vibration, and hearing protection. However, PPE is often designed for men or made 'unisex'—this can include large design features such as one-piece overalls down to details about how items are cut and sized.

In many industries, the traditional rule of thumb has been for women to wear smaller-sized men's PPE. Women are not just smaller versions of men, and their cuts and sizes differ from how men's clothing is cut. While of course women and men both come in an infinite variety of shapes and sizes, clothes are tailored differently for women and men, reflecting different average shapes, including differently shaped chests, higher waists, narrower shoulders, smaller necks, shorter arms, and narrower fingers for women.⁸⁶

When PPE does not fit properly, it can contribute to increased safety risks (too long sleeves can get caught, improperly fitting eyewear can allow debris to enter, ill-fitting boots can be a tripping hazard, etc.). Employees may feel discouraged from wearing it, further contributing to safety hazards. Women who have to wear one-piece overalls may find it challenging to go to the bathroom, potentially creating additional safety risks where they may feel exposed if they need to use the bathroom while wearing a one-piece overall. Some studies have also found that women employees with ill-fitting PPE are likely to use mitigation strategies such as thick wool undergarments which can actually increase the risk of certain infections.⁸⁷ This can be both a cause of absenteeism, as well as a health cost and potential liability issue for employers.

Not only does proper fit contribute to safety, but better fitting PPE is also more comfortable PPE, which can encourage staff to wear it. Studies show that appropriate PPE can increase women's job satisfaction and self-efficacy, with the implication that this could increase job retention.⁸⁸

Some specific guidance for selecting appropriate PPE for women:

1. For earplugs, consider disposable foam earplugs, as these are more likely to fit women
2. Ensure hardhats have chin straps to help keep them from falling off
3. Safety goggles should be checked for fit, as 'one-size' goggles often too large for women's faces
4. Purchase PPE specifically designed for women, in a range of sizes. This should include gloves and boots as well.⁸⁹
5. Avoid simply buying 'unisex' PPE, which is often too large for women. If companies do buy unisex PPE, at least buy several sizes to try to accommodate different body types.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Randal Fisher, [The Need for Unique Women's PPE](#), Safety and Health, 2020.

⁸⁷ Hogan Lovells, [Personal Protective Equipment for Women Miners](#), 2015.

⁸⁸ Relationship between Personal Protective Equipment, Self-Efficacy, and Job Satisfaction of Women in the Building Trades, October 2013, *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management* 139(10), DOI: [10.1061/\(ASCE\)CO.1943-7862.0000739](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)CO.1943-7862.0000739).

⁸⁹ Thomas Bukowski, [Women and PPE: Finding the Right Fit](#), 2014.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Some governments have actually included provisions in industry-specific regulations requiring companies to develop mandatory corporate codes of practice addressing provision of PPE specifically for women.⁹¹ For example, the South African government published guidelines for mining companies' code of practice (CoP) regarding the provision of PPE for women. The guidelines require companies to identify all potential health and safety risks, and then outline how all risks related to PPE will be addressed. Such guidelines should clarify the roles and responsibilities for ensuring that women have access to appropriate PPE:

1. **Employer:** The employer is responsible for ensuring access to sufficient quantities of PPE, training employees on how to properly use and care for PPE, ensuring that employees follow these instructions and have appropriate facilities to care for and transport PPE, and developing ways to monitor the condition and replacement schedule for PPE.
2. **Managers:** Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees are properly using and maintaining their PPE, and that proper information is being gathered on maintenance and care for PPE.
3. **Female employees:** Female employees are responsible for properly using, caring for, and maintaining PPE, and alerting supervisors of any issues or problems.
4. **Training:** The CoP should include guidelines on training employees on the use, care, and maintenance of PPE.⁹²

5. Review of Employee Benefits Programs

In addition to developing policies to specifically support women's engagement and gender equality, consider conducting a review of your employee benefit programs to ensure gender sensitivity. Such a review might include:

- **Health insurance policies:** To what extent are women's health care needs (including but not limited to birth control, prenatal care, and post-natal care) addressed? When family members and dependents are eligible for care, are care options equally available for women and men?
- **Pensions:** For instance, are pension plans structured in such a way that women are not at a disadvantage because they take career breaks for family obligations?
- **Employer-supported elderly care:** Are childcare and elderly care policies gender-sensitized? Do childcare policies provide equitable parental leave for male and female employees?

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Government of South Africa, [Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996: Guideline for a Mandatory Code of Practice on the Provision of Personal Protective Equipment for Women in the South African Mining Industry](#), 2015, 11-16