

Social Services in the Establishment

The roles and responsibilities of workers' and managements representatives:



What are social services?

Social services can be broadly understood as welfare services provided to workers by the employer which are not directly related to work tasks or processes.

Typically, these services include but are not limited to the provision of accommodation and related facilities (including sanitary and laundry facilities); canteens and food and beverage, on-site medical services, social and entertainment activities, access to IT applications and other means of communication, and administrative, banking and savings services. It is increasingly recognised that providing quality and accessible social services to workers ultimately contributes to a successful business operation. This is particularly important in the case of migrant workers who far from their family, support networks, and home governments.



Why address social services for workers in joint committees?

As end-users of social services, workers are in an excellent position to comment on and suggest improvements as to the type of social services available, the circumstances in which they are delivered, and who can access services.

While ultimately dependent on the workplace and context, joint committees may seek to achieve all or some of the following objectives with respect to social services for workers:

- Assessing the availability and quality of current social services.
- Ensure equality of opportunity for all workers in their access to social services and that the specific needs of individuals are accounted for.
- Ensure that there are plans for how to engage all employees, and that these are implemented.
- Coordinate with labour inspectors or auditors in cases where concerns are raised during inspection.
- Share and disseminate information to workers about available social services or newly implemented or revised services to ensure that everyone is aware of opportunities.
- Contribute to policies, procedures and processes related to social services.



To ensure that social services items are effectively addressed by the joint committee, it is important to consider **the composition of the committee and its members**. For example, if there are individuals with previous experience of social services, encourage them to get involved in the committee, and if that expertise is lacking, training for committee members should be considered. Social services are experienced differently by different employees. This is why the committee should reflect the **gender, departmental, geographic and nationality composition of the workplace**.



Qatari Law No. (14) of 2004:

Joint committees shall study and discuss all work-related matters in the company, in particular, the improvements of social services (Article 126).

Specifically, through joint committees, workers can tell you more about..



The quality of food and beverage provided and whether it is satisfactory in terms of nutritional value and variation; if it takes into account religious and cultural diets; if the canteen is kept in a clean and healthy state.



Their general housing situation and whether they get enough quality sleep; state of overcrowding and population density; appearance of accommodation and needed repairs; suggestions for additional facilities such as laundry machines, more storage space or improved ventilation/AC; state of sanitary facilities and accessibility.



Utilisation of recreational and entertainment opportunities and ideas for new social programmes and activities; satisfactory diversity of television channels according to workers' different ethnic and cultural background; suggestions for other recreational facilities such as libraries, table tennis and gym equipment or educational activities; and provision of dedicated places for religious observance.



If there is sufficient availability of IT facilities in order for workers to communicate with friends and families back home; general access to basic administrative, banking and savings services to make remittances and other transactions smoother.

Preparing for a joint committee meeting on social services

Areas for consideration

Management representatives

Worker representatives

Existing social services, policies and procedures



- Are the current social services satisfactory and how do we know?
- Are all areas related to social services covered by policies and operating procedures?
- If not, how can the committee support the development of these documents?

- Are existing policies and procedures inclusive of all workers?
- What are possible methods for discussing these procedures with workers to ensure that they reflect their needs?

Needs and objectives



- What is the available budget to support the improvement of social services?
- What is the best way to prioritise between the provision of different social services?

- Are there social services, or wider organization- al processes not directly related to work, that could be improved?
- How can concerns raised by workers be turned into suggestions for improvements or new services?

Access



- Is there buy-in from executives in the company to support development of social services?
- How can management ensure that all workers know how and are able to access social services?

- Can recommendations be made to increase the awareness of employees to the services available to them?
- Are there barriers to participate in or access social services for certain groups of workers?

Reviewing and monitoring effectiveness



- What current procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of social services?
- How often are evaluations conducted?
- What is the best way to feedback results from evaluations to the joint committee, and to others?
- What additional information may be necessary to improve understanding of the issues?

- Have you discussed recent initiatives related to social services with workers?
- Do workers perceive that the social services are improving, worsening, or staying the same?
- Is there scope for worker representatives to assist in inspections of social services? If not, could training be requested?