

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance. We recognise that, in addition to helping balance work and personal lives, flexible working can raise staff morale, reduce absenteeism and improve our use and retention of staff.
- 1.2 This Flexible Working Policy gives eligible employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern in accordance with the statutory procedure for such requests. It also allows any employee to make such a request informally without following the statutory procedure. Managers are encouraged to facilitate requests unless they cannot be accommodated for business or operational reasons.
- 1.3 We will deal with flexible working requests in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable time. In any event, the time between making a request and notifying you of a final decision (including the outcome of any appeal) will be less than two months, unless we have agreed a longer period with you.
- 1.4 No one who makes a request for flexible working will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career development opportunities as a result.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary elements, such as any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all employees. It does not apply to workers, agency workers, consultants or contractors.

3. WHAT IS A FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST?

- 3.1 A flexible working request under this policy means a request to do any or all of the following:
 - a) reduce or vary your working hours,

- b) reduce or vary the days you work,
 - c) work from a different location (for example, from home).
- 3.2 These could include starting a job share, working annualised hours or term-time only, flexi-time or compressed hours.
- 3.3 Requests for a more predictable work pattern (by workers and employees whose work pattern lacks predictability) should not be made under this policy.
- 3.4 Where (by exception) any request for a more predictable work pattern is considered under this Flexible Working Policy, the request will count towards the maximum of two requests for both flexible working and predictable work pattern permitted in any 12 month period.

4. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?

- 4.1 While we ask all managers to take responsibility for making sure this procedure is complied with, its successful operation also depends on you. Please take the time to read and understand it and to go back to your manager with any questions you may have.

5. ELIGIBILITY

- 5.1 To be eligible to make a flexible working request, you must:
- a) be an employee,
 - b) have started working for us at the date your request is made,
 - c) not have made more than one previous flexible working request during the last 12 months (even if you later withdrew that request),
 - d) not currently have a flexible working or predictable work pattern request in progress with us
- 5.2 If you are not eligible to make a formal flexible working request but you would like us to consider changing your working hours or arrangements, please discuss this with your manager.

6. MAKING A FORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

- 6.1 Your flexible working request should be submitted to your manager in writing and dated. It should:
- a) state that it is a flexible working request,
 - b) explain the change being requested and propose a start date,
 - c) state whether you have made any previous flexible working requests and, if so, when.
- 6.2 The more information you can give us regarding the reason for your request, the more helpful this will be, especially if it relates, for example, to a reasonable adjustment or to allow you to care for a dependant or relative.

7. FORMAL PROCEDURE: MEETING

- 7.1 We will arrange a meeting at a convenient time and place as soon as reasonably possible. You may be accompanied at the meeting by a colleague of your choice. They will be entitled to speak on your behalf and confer privately with you, but may not answer questions on your behalf.
- 7.2 We may decide to grant your request in full without a meeting, in which case we will write to you with our decision.
- 7.3 If we arrange a meeting to discuss your application (including any appeal meeting as below) and you fail to attend both this and a rearranged meeting without a good reason, we will consider your request withdrawn. In such circumstances, we will write to you confirming that your request has been treated as withdrawn.
- 7.4 Also, if you unreasonably refuse to provide information we require to consider your request, we will consider your request withdrawn and write to you confirming that your request has been treated as withdrawn.
- 7.5 At the meeting, we will consider the details of your request and your reason(s) for asking. We will discuss the impact on our organisation and operations and what can be done, if anything, to manage that impact. If need be, we will also consider any alternative options.

8. FORMAL PROCEDURE: DECISION

- 8.1 We will inform you in writing of our decision as soon as reasonably possible after the meeting.
- 8.2 If your request is accepted, we will write to you with details of the new working arrangements and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter.
- 8.3 If we cannot immediately agree to your request, we may require you to undertake a trial period before reaching a final decision on your request.
- 8.4 Unless otherwise agreed, changes to your terms of employment will be permanent.
- 8.5 We may reject your request for one or more of the following business or operational reasons:
 - a) the burden of additional costs,
 - b) detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand,
 - c) inability to reorganise work among existing staff,
 - d) inability to recruit additional staff,
 - e) detrimental impact on quality,
 - f) detrimental impact on performance,
 - g) insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work, or

h) planned structural changes.

8.6 If we are unable to agree to your request, we will write to tell you which of those reasons applies in your case and why. We will also set out the appeal procedure.

9. FORMAL PROCEDURE: APPEAL

9.1 If your request is rejected, you have the right to appeal.

9.2 Your appeal must:

- a) be in writing and dated,
- b) set out the grounds on which you are appealing, and
- c) be sent to the person stated in our rejection letter within 14 days of the date of receiving that letter. (This includes a rejection following a trial period.)

9.3 We will hold a meeting with you to discuss your appeal as soon as reasonably possible. You may bring a colleague to the meeting.

9.4 Where possible, the appeal meeting will be conducted impartially by a more senior manager who has not been previously involved. However, in a small organisation such as ours, this will not always be possible. In any event, the appeal will be conducted as impartially as possible.

9.5 We will inform you in writing of our final decision as soon as reasonably possible after the appeal meeting, including our reasons. There is no further right of appeal.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

10.1 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.