

The company recognises that employees may be required to request flexible working times due to their circumstances. The company wants to support its employees achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, further learning and other interests. The company is committed to providing flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the company and the employee can be met.

An employee that feels they may need to move to flexible working is encouraged to contact their Manager to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options.

What is flexible working?

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request but the company recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which are suitable to both the company and the employee:

- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexitime
- Home-working
- Job-sharing
- Overtime / Extra time
- Part-time working
- Term-time working or Unpaid Holiday

Types of flexible working

- **Annualised hours** are where an employee's contractual working hours are calculated as the total number of hours to be worked over the year, allowing flexible working patterns to be worked throughout the year.
Usually the hours will be divided into rostered hours, which are set, and unallocated hours, when an employee can be called into work as demand dictates to cover unplanned work and employee absence. Payment will be in 12 equal instalments.
- **Compressed hours** are where an employee works their usual full-time hours in fewer days by working longer blocks meaning that there is no reduction in their pay. For example, a five-day week is compressed into four days, or a 10-day fortnight into nine days.
- **Flexitime** allows an employee to choose, within certain limits, when to begin and end work. An employee is required to work during a core time and must work an agreed number of hours.
- **Home-working** is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the employer's premises. The company can consider home-working being an occasional agreed day, a mix of home and office-based work each week or a full-time arrangement.
- **Job-sharing** is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into two part-time roles. The two job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. Their skills and the hours each employee want to work must be compatible, and meet the needs of the company. Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each works. Job sharing can be considered where the creation of a single part-time post is difficult, or where two individuals wish to work part-time. The suitability of posts for job-sharing will be stated in any internal or external advertisements
- **Overtime / Extra time** is when hours are worked in addition to the usual full-time hours. Overtime / Extra time can be agreed where the company would benefit from an employee working more hours. This is voluntary and an employee can refuse overtime if they wish.
- **Part-time working** covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than typical full-time hours for the type of work in question. For example, an employee who only works Monday to Wednesday. The company believes that only some posts will be available on a part-time basis, and only where

a critical examination by the company proves this to be practicable. If part-time working is allowed as a matter of course for the role required, then this will be stated in any internal or external advertisements

- **Term-time working** or Unpaid Holiday is where an employee reduces their hours or takes time off, for example, during any school holidays. Any weeks above their annual leave entitlement will be unpaid, and holiday entitlement will be based on the time worked i.e. employees might lose holiday time compared to if they had worked full time for the whole year. Salary is only paid for the time worked and receive no pay during the holidays apart from their entitlement to annual leave.

The needs of the company

The company is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However, employees and the company need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

Where a flexible working arrangement is proposed the company will need to take into account a number of criteria including but not limited to the following:

- The costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- The effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- The need for, and effect on, supervision
- The existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

Eligibility

Any employee with at least 26 weeks of employment service has a statutory right to request flexible working.

Submitting a flexible working request

An eligible employee is entitled to submit **one** flexible working request in a twelve-month period.

All requests must be made in writing at the earliest opportunity before the employee would like the flexible working to start. Any request made must include:

- The date of the application
- The changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions
- The date from when the employee would like the proposed change to come into effect
- What effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the company
- How, in their view, any such effect could be dealt with
- Whether this is a statutory or non-statutory request
- Whether a previous application for flexible working has been made
- The dates of any previous applications

If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

If an application does not contain all of the required information the company will explain to the employee what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

Meetings regarding flexible working

Upon receiving a written request for flexible working the company will seek to arrange a meeting with the employee to:

- Discuss the request

- Find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- How it could be of benefit to both the employee and company

If a meeting is arranged it will be held within 28 days of the company receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the company.

The employee will be given advance notice of the time, date and place of the meeting. If the initial date is problematic then one further date will be proposed. If a face to face meeting is difficult to arrange then, if agreed by the employee and the company, the meeting may be held over the telephone.

At the meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

If the employee fails to attend a meeting and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved as stated in the employee's written application a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. The employee will be informed of the company's agreement to the request by a confirmation letter within 28 days of the company receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the company.

Responding to a flexible working request

The company will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits, and adverse effects, to the employee and to the company in implementing the proposed changes.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the company's decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 days after the meeting.

The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The company may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. If the request is agreed then the employee will be sent a confirmation letter which will include details of the new arrangements. The employee should contact the company within 14 days if they wish to discuss the new arrangements further, or have any concerns.

Rejection of an application

The company will inform the employee if their request is refused.

The company can reject an application for any of the following reasons:

- Extra costs that will damage the business
- The work cannot be reorganised among other staff
- People cannot be recruited to cover the work
- Flexible working will affect quality and performance
- The business will not be able to meet customer demand
- There is a lack of work to do during the proposed working times
- The business is planning change to the workforce

Right to appeal decision

Employees do not have a statutory right to an appeal. However, the company does allow employees to appeal the decision. The employee may lodge an appeal within 14 days of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing. The appeal will be heard within 14 days. The employee will then be informed of the outcome to their appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the company.

Trialling new working arrangements

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee and/or the company a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged the company will allow sufficient time

for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

Varying an employee's contract

Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, a variation will need to be made to the employee's contract of employment. A new contract of employment will be given to the employee within 28 days of the change to the employee's working pattern being agreed.

If the employee has any questions or concerns about the new contract of employment, they should contact the company to discuss the matter further.

Where a trial period has been arranged the company will provide the employee with a document that details their new working pattern and makes clear that it is only a temporary variation to the terms of the employee's contract. The employee will be informed in writing of the start and end dates of the trial period, although the company may reduce or lengthen the trial period where necessary with the agreement of the employee. The company will reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement.

Complaints and further information

The company is strongly opposed to any form of victimisation of individuals who work, or request to work under flexible working arrangements.

If an employee feels that they have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with any stage of the flexible process, they should raise their concerns via the company [Grievance Procedure](#).

If the employee feels their grievance hasn't been handled correctly, they have the right to take the decision to an employment tribunal. An employee should take complaint to an employment tribunal if they feel the company:

- Did not handle the request in a reasonable manner
- Wrongly treated the employee's application as withdrawn
- Dismissed or treated an employee poorly because of their flexible working request
- Rejected an application based on incorrect facts.

An employee cannot complain to a tribunal only due to their flexible working request being rejected.

An employee should complain to the employment tribunal within 3 months of:

- Hearing the company's decision
- Hear their request was treated as withdrawn
- The company failed to respond to their request within the stated time.