

Flexible Working Policy

1. Overview

1.1 This policy explains how to make a flexible working request to the Company. It explains what flexible working means and how it can be used to help employees to achieve a balance between their work and home life and also help managers to organise work around business and customer needs.

1.2 This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend this policy any time.

1.3 This policy applies to employees with at least 26 weeks' service only.

1.4 We encourage you to have an informal discussion with your line manager about flexible working before submitting a formal request.

2 What is flexible working?

2.1 Flexible working might involve reducing or varying your hours, the days that you work, or changing the location of where you work. Options are varied and can include:-

- Part-time working;
- Term-time working;
- Annualised hours;
- Compressed hours;
- Flexitime;
- Home-working; and
- Job-sharing.

3 Business needs

3.1 We recognise the benefits of flexible working and will genuinely and seriously consider all flexible working requests in a reasonable manner. However, we will need to balance the request against its effect on the business, the needs of the Company and the impact on other staff.

4 Eligibility

4.1 Any employee with at least 26 weeks' service with the Company can make a request for flexible working by law.

4.2 An eligible employee may submit one flexible working request in a 12-month period (unless it relates to a request to consider reasonable adjustments on account of disability under the Equality Act 2010.)

5 How to submit a flexible working request

5.1 All flexible working requests must be submitted to the HR Manager, stating:

- that it is a flexible working request and be dated;
- the changes that you want and the proposed start date for them;
- the effect you think the change would have on the Company and how that could be dealt with; and
- the dates of any previous flexible working applications.

6 Meeting

6.1 We may invite you to a meeting, usually within 28 days, to discuss the flexible working request. It is your responsibility to make every effort to attend the meeting but, if you cannot, we will normally reschedule it, provided we are satisfied with your explanation for why you cannot attend. We reserve the right to make our decision without you being present, and we will in any case only reschedule the meeting once, unless there are very good reasons to justify a second rescheduling. If you fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, we will assume you have withdrawn your application.

6.2 We may also grant your request without a meeting.

7 Your right to be accompanied

7.1 You are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague at any meeting called under this policy.

7.2 If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not prevent them from attending, but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work causes operational problems.

7.3 Your colleague can, if this is your preference, explain the key points of your case to the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meetings. They must not however, answer questions put directly to you, or try to prevent the Company asking questions or outlining its points.

8 Responding to a request

8.1 We will deal with flexible working requests reasonably and in less than three months from the date of your initial request, to informing you of our final decision (including any appeal), unless we have agreed a longer period with you.

8.2 We will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, weighing up the benefits to you (and to the business) against any adverse impact that granting your request would have on the business or other staff.

8.3 Each request will be considered on its own merits. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create a right for any other employee.

8.4 We will respond to your request in writing as soon as reasonably possible. We usually aim to respond within two weeks of the meeting.

8.5 We may grant your request in full or in part, or refuse it. We may also propose changes to your request for you to consider. Your request may be granted on a permanent or temporary basis, and you may be asked to complete a trial period, before we confirm whether we agree to the changes.

8.6 If we reject your request, it will normally be for one of the following business reasons:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff or recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality, performance or on our ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods you proposed to work; or
- where we intend to reorganise or change the business, and consider the flexible working changes may not fit with our plans.

8.7 You will be sent a letter with the Company's decision and the reason for rejection or details of the new working arrangements. Any permanent changes agreed will involve a permanent change to your contract of employment and you have no right to revert back to your original contract. You should sign and return a copy of this letter to HR.

8.8 We might ask that any change to your contract be for an initial trial period of three months. At the end of the trial period, if we do not think it is working, we may need to return to the previous contractual position before the variation happened.

9 Appeal

9.1 You may appeal the Company's decision within a week of the decision. Your appeal should be sent in writing to the person stated in the decision letter and dated. In your response to that letter, you must explain exactly why you are appealing.

9.2 We will invite you to an appeal meeting. Wherever possible, the appeal meeting will not be led by the manager who held the meeting at which we decided what action to take. You may be accompanied by a work colleague, in line with the process outlined in paragraph 7 above. Appeals will normally be determined before the expiry of the 'decision period' (i.e. 3 months) wherever possible.

9.3 The Company's final decision will be sent to you in writing. We try to do this within two weeks of the appeal hearing. You do not have any further right to appeal.

January 2018, to be reviewed next January 2020.