

FLEXIBLE WORKING

Section B – Non Contractual Policy

Flexible Working

The company recognises the importance of helping employees balance work and home life by offering flexible working arrangements.

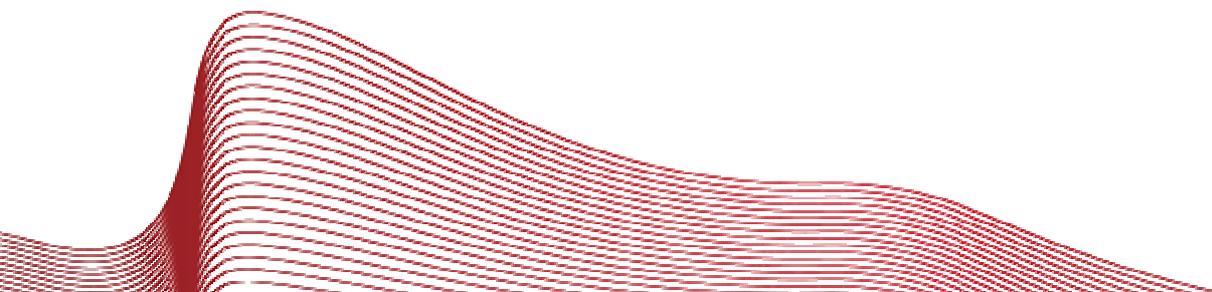
A request for flexible working could include

- working compressed hours;
- working part time or reduced hours;
- job sharing;
- working flexi time;
- working partially or fully from home;
- changing your hours;
- starting and finishing work outside of standard hours.

Eligibility

To qualify for the right to formally apply for flexible working, you must have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service with the company at the date on which the application is made.

Applicants are entitled to make one request for flexible working every 12 months.



Procedure

1. Request for flexible working

If you would like to apply for flexible working, you must make an application in writing to your HR Business Partner or your Line Manager. We suggest that you do this by completing the Flexible Working Application Form.

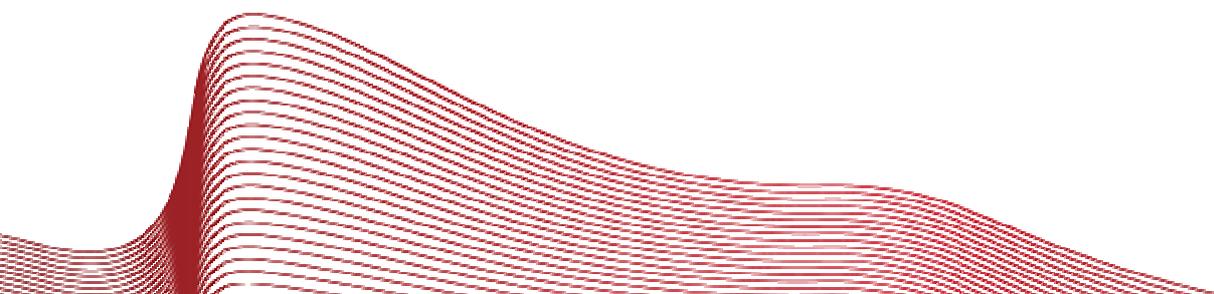
You are advised to consider your application well in advance of the proposed start date for your desired work pattern and complete all sections of the form. You must consider the impact of the requested change on the Company, your colleagues and how this may be dealt with. The full process can take up to three months and you should factor this in to the timing of your application.

It is extremely important that you ensure that your application contains all the relevant information in particular you should ensure you include as much detailed information about your flexible working proposal and why you think your proposal will work. Without this information it will be difficult for us to properly consider your application.

You should also prepare to be flexible; you may be asked as part of the process if there are any other working patterns that you would be willing to consider if your preferred pattern is not viable, or you may be asked to change the start date or have a trial period under the proposed way of working.

2. Meeting to discuss a flexible working request

Upon receipt of a valid flexible working application, your line manager (and in some cases a member of HR) will discuss it with you. The discussion will be held within 28 days of receipt of your application, unless this is not reasonably practical. This may include speaking on the telephone, email correspondence or arranging a meeting with you.



This provides an opportunity for both parties to understand each other's position, discuss the desired work pattern and consider how and if it can be accommodated. It also provides an opportunity for any alternative arrangements to be discussed, if appropriate.

You have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague. If you wish to be accompanied you should inform your line manager and the HR Representative (if applicable) before the meeting.

3. Outcome of flexible working request

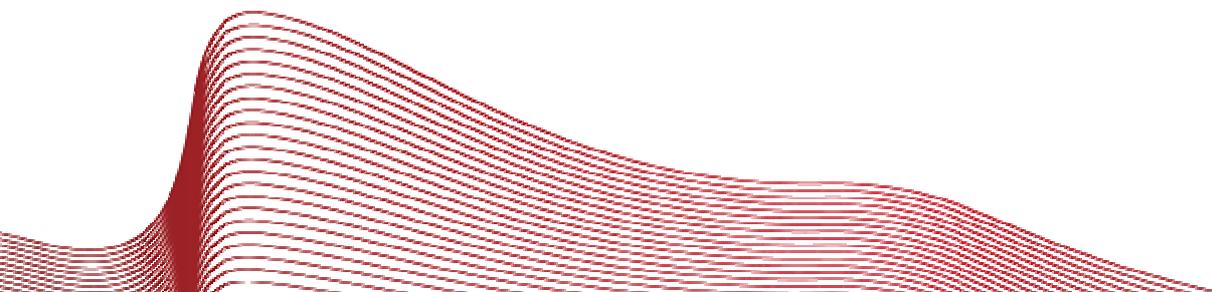
After the meeting, we will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the organisation against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis: agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to his/her working pattern.

Following the discussion, the Company will write to you to inform you of the outcome of your request. This will normally be done within 14 days, although it may sometimes be necessary to extend this period.

Reasons for turning down a flexible working request

Although we will try our best to accommodate your application for flexible working, this may not always be possible. In particular we may reject your application if:

- your application would have a cost burden on the business that we do not think it can justify.
- your application would have a negative impact on our ability to meet customer demands;
- we could not reorganize work amongst other employees;



- we would not be able to recruit additional employees
- your application would have a negative impact on the quality of services that we provide;
- your application would have a negative impact on company performance;
- there would not be sufficient work during the period that you propose to work; or
- your application would affect planned structural changes.

Dependent care while home working

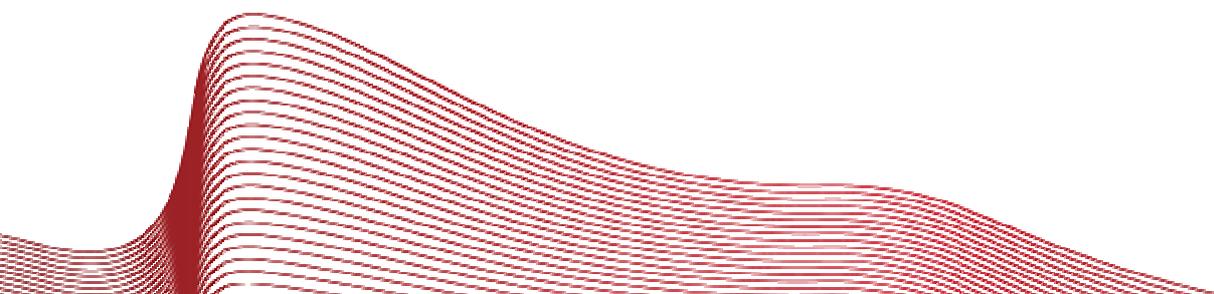
Whilst you may apply to work flexibly to accommodate dependent care responsibilities, it is not appropriate to combine home-based working with dependant care: home working should not be viewed as an alternative to paid dependent care. Employees who are home working should not have sole responsibility for a child or another dependant during hours when they are working.

Flexible Working Request that are granted

If your request is agreed, a trial period may be necessary to ensure that the new arrangement meets both parties' needs.

Any requests made and accepted under this statutory right will be a permanent change to your contractual terms and conditions of employment (unless otherwise agreed in writing). Please note there is no automatic right to revert back to your previous working pattern once a request has been agreed to in writing.

Any amendments to your terms and conditions of employment will be confirmed to you in writing.



Flexible Working Request that are NOT granted

Should your request be refused, the letter informing you of this decision will contain an explanation regarding why each/any of the above grounds apply in relation to your application.

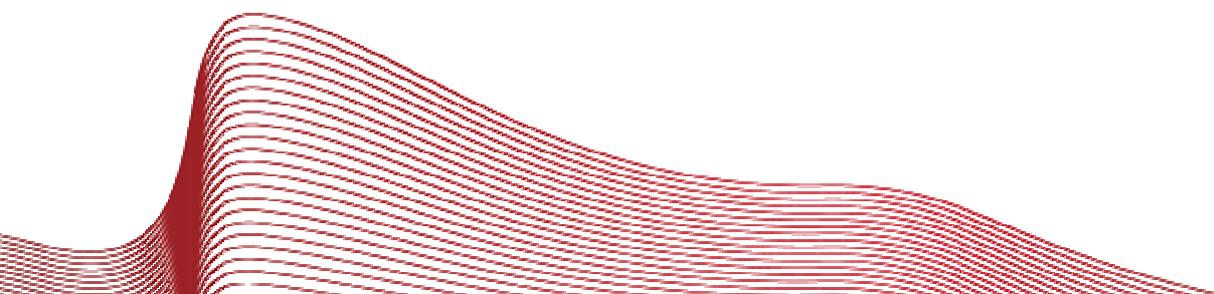
It may be that only part of the request is refused, but an alternative change to your working pattern can be agreed. If a compromise is agreed, then details of the agreed contract variation will be provided in the letter. If a compromise is suggested after the meeting has taken place, then it may be appropriate to reconvene the meeting to discuss the new proposed working pattern.

You are entitled to appeal against a decision to partially or wholly refuse your request for flexible working. This must be submitted in writing to the next level of management within 14 calendar days of receiving written confirmation of the original decision, stating your grounds for appeal.

Within 14 days of receipt of your appeal letter, the matter will be discussed with you by telephone, email correspondence or by arranging a meeting. The discussion will usually be with a more senior Company representative (and in some cases a member of HR). Where this is not possible, the nominated person will be a manager no less senior than the person who made the original decision.

A letter to confirm the outcome of the appeal will be sent within 14 days of the appeal hearing (unless this is not reasonably practical). This will be the final decision.

You again have the right to be accompanied at meetings by a work colleague. If you wish to be accompanied you should inform your line manager and the HR Representative (if applicable) before the meeting.



Problems with a flexible working request

If you are dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, you should contact the HR department. If you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been handled, you should raise a grievance under the organisation's grievance procedure.

If you fail to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, your application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.