**Flexible Working**

Flexible work can increase employee motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce stress, and improve performance and productivity. Once you have completed a minimum of 26 weeks of continuous service, you have the right to request flexible working and to consider your request seriously by us.

**Requests for Flexible Working**

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours you work, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from your home.

All requests must be made in writing by filling in the flexible working application form, which is available upon request from your line manager. Any request made under this policy must include the following:

* the date of your application;
* the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions;
* the date on which you would like the change of terms and conditions to come into effect;
* what effect you think the requested change would have on us;
* how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
* a statement that this is a statutory request;
* whether or not you have made a previous application for flexible working; and
* if you had made a previous request when you made that application.

We will not reject out of hand a request that does not contain the required information. Line managers should explain what additional or amended information they need you to provide and ask you to resubmit the request.

**Meeting to Discuss a Flexible Working Request**

Once we receive the request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but by the deadline below. Your line manager must arrange a meeting to deal with your request. Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved in the terms stated in your written application, a meeting will not be necessary.

You will be given the right to be accompanied by a work colleague at any flexible working meeting. The meeting should take place in a private meeting room to keep the discussion away from other employees. The meeting aims to learn more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could benefit you and us.

**The outcome of a Flexible Working Request**

After the meeting, we will carefully consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, weighing up the potential benefits to yourself and us 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 other employees to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

You will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as reasonably practicable after the meeting, but by the deadline below. The request may be granted in full or in part; for example, your Employer may propose a modified version of the request; the request may be granted temporarily, or you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. You will be given the right to appeal the decision if your request is not upheld or is upheld in part.

**Reasons for Turning Down a Flexible Working Request**

Your Employer will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reasons, which are:

* the burden of additional costs;
* an inability to reorganise work among existing employees;
* an inability to recruit additional employees;
* a detrimental impact on quality;
* a detrimental impact on performance;
* a detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand;
* insufficient work for the periods you propose to work; and
* a planned structural change to the business.

We must not reject a request for any other reason.

**Flexible Working Requests That Are Granted**

If your request is upheld, you and your line manager will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and conditions will be put in writing and sent to you as an amendment to your contract of employment as soon as is reasonably practicable.

**Timescales**

All requests will be dealt with within three months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal. We will hold the meeting within 28 days of receiving your request. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you can appeal within seven days of the notification. These time limits may be extended where we both agree. For example, your line manager and you may agree to extend the time limit to give you a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

**Problems with a Flexible Working Request**

If you are dissatisfied or need clarification at any stage throughout the process, you should contact HR. If you are dissatisfied with how your request has been handled, you should raise a grievance under the 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.