



Flexible Working Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of the Union's flexible working policy is to encourage and support employees to achieve a good work-life balance.
- 1.2 The Union recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation and performance, and reduce stress. Therefore the Union wants to support its employees achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests.
- 1.3 The Union is committed to agreeing any flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met.
- 1.4 It is the Union's policy to encourage open discussion with employees. An employee that thinks they may benefit from flexible working is encouraged to contact their line manager or the Finance & Resources Manager to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options available.
- 1.5 A request for flexible working could cover hours of work, times of work and place of work and may include requests for different patterns of work.
- 1.6 This policy describes the process for applying for flexible working and how managers should handle requests from staff for flexible working patterns.

2.0 Eligibility for the Scheme

- 2.1 Any employee with at least 26 weeks of employment service has a statutory right to request flexible working.
- 2.2 An eligible employee is entitled to submit one flexible working request in a 12 month period. An employee is entitled to additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement e.g. the Equality Act 2010 right to request reasonable adjustments.

3.0 Flexible Working Arrangements

- 3.1 Any request that an employee makes and is accepted represents a permanent change to the employee's contractual terms and conditions. The employee may not revert back to the previous working pattern.
- 3.2 Staff eligible to apply under this policy can request:
 - A change to the hours they work
 - A change to the times they are required to work
 - To work from home
- 3.3 The types of different working arrangements that could be requested include:

- Annualised hours - hours worked calculated over a year rather than a week
- Compressed hours - total agreed hours to be worked over a shorter time period i.e. five days reduced to four longer days
- Flexitime - already in place in a number of departments
- Homeworking, either on a full or part time basis
- Job -sharing
- Shift working
- Staggered hours i.e. staff starting and finishing at different times of the day.
- Term Time working - already in operation in some areas.

4.0 Applications for Flexible Working

4.1 All requests must be made in writing to the employee's line manager or the Finance & Resources Manager. Any request 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 organisation
- 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

4.2 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.

4.3 If an application does not contain all of the required information, the employee's line manager or the Finance & Resources Manager will explain to the employee what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

5.0 How we will respond to requests for flexible working

5.1 Having received the application, the line manager should, in the first instance, acknowledge receipt of the application in writing to the applicant.

5.2 The line manager must then consider the application and hold a meeting with the employee to discuss the application within 28 days of receiving the application. 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 their line manager, the meeting may be held over the telephone.

5.3 The employee may bring with them another colleague employed by the Union or Trade Union Representative.

5.4 During the meeting following should be discussed:

- Detail of the request
- find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- how it could be of benefit to both the employee and organisation

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Having discussed the application with the employee, the line manager should consult the Finance & Resources Manager to determine any financial or other implications for the Union and employee.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The Union 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.
- 5.9 The line manager must notify the employee of their decision within 14 days of the meeting. The line manager may need longer than 14 days to reach a decision. If this is the case, the line manager should obtain the written agreement of the employee for an extension of up to a maximum of 28 days.
- 5.10 If the decision is that the application be accepted, the notification must contain:
- The date of the notification
 - A description of the new working pattern
 - State the date that the change is effective from
 - Describe any trial periods that might have been agreed and review dates.
- 5.11 The employee should contact their line manager within 14 days if they wish to discuss the new arrangements further, or have any concerns.
- 5.12 A copy of the notification will be given to the Finance & Resources Manager who will ensure that any agreed changes are recorded so that contractual changes can be made and adjustments to pay be made, if required. The line manager must also consider who needs to be informed of the change in working arrangements and inform them accordingly.
- 5.13 If the decision is that the application is rejected, the notification must contain:
- The business reasons for the refusal of the application
 - An explanation for the refusal
 - Details of the applicant's right to appeal
 - The date of the notification

6.0 Reasons for Refusal

- 6.1 When the line manager receives an application, they will be considering it on the basis of business reasons.
- 6.2 If an application is refused, the reason must fall into one of the following categories:
- The burden of additional costs
 - Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
 - The inability to reorganise work among existing staff
 - The inability to recruit additional staff
 - Where it will have a detrimental impact on quality and performance
 - Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposed to work

- Planned structural changes

6.3 In refusing the application, the line manager must provide both the business reason and an explanation of why the business grounds apply which are accurate and relevant to the application. Any facts quoted in the explanation must be accurate.

7.0 The Appeal Process

7.1 The employee has the right to appeal within 14 days of the notification date of the refusal of the application. The employee must write to the Finance & Resources Manager requesting an appeal and detail the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

7.2 The Finance & Resources Manager will arrange for an alternative manager to hear the appeal. This can be a manager either of the same or senior grade.

7.3 The appeals manager must arrange for the appeal meeting to be convened within 14 days of receiving the application for appeal. The employee can be accompanied on the same basis as the first meeting.

7.4 The appeals manager must inform the employee of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 14 days of the appeal meeting.

7.5 If the decision is that the appeal is accepted, then the notification must contain:

- A description of the new working pattern
- State the date that the change is effective from
- Describe any trial periods that might have been agreed and review dates.
- The date of the notification

7.5 The appeals manager must inform the Finance & Resources Manager of the outcome of the appeal so that any contractual changes or pay adjustments can be made.

7.6 If the decision is that the appeal is rejected, the notification must contain:

- The reasons for the decision, appropriate to the employee's grounds of appeal
- An explanation for the refusal
- The date of the notification

7.7 This constitutes the final decision by the employer and is effectively the end of the formal procedure within the Union.

8.0 Further Help & Advice

8.1 Employees are able to access help, advice and support through the (Employee Assistance Programme) provider, Lifeworks. Details are available from the Finance & Resources Manager.

Approved by Board of Trustees: March 2017

Review Date: March 2020