

Date Approved	Effective date	Date of next review	Policy owner	Policy lead
22/11/2019	01/12/2019	01/11/2021	Director of Human Resources	Head of HR Business Partnering

## Flexible Working Policy

We pride ourselves on being a flexible place to work – going beyond what the statutory requirements of us are. When we have work life balance, we do our best work and we're all more fun to be around. Our agile working principles give us a great basis for this. But if you need working arrangements that are protected, with an agreement in place, this policy outlines how you can make a request for that. It could also give you some ideas about different flexible options to consider.

### Here are the key facts:

- Flexible working describes a permanent contractual change to your working pattern and is different to agile working. (Please see our Agile Working Policy for more information).
- If you would like to make sure a certain working pattern (for example, days, hours, location) is always in place you need to make a flexible working request.
- All requests will be dealt with within a period of three months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal.

### 1) The different types of flexible working

- a) A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours that the employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some work from the employee's home.
- b) Common types of flexible working include:
  - Reduced working days (i.e. working less than 5 days per week)
  - Reduced working hours (i.e. working less than 7.5 hours per day)
  - Varied working location (i.e. outside of agile working guidance)
  - Job sharing (i.e. sharing your role & responsibilities with someone else)
  - Compressed hours
  - A combination of the above (e.g. working 6 hours per day, 4 days per week with an agreed day working from home)

### 2) Making a flexible working request

- a) We extend the right to request flexible working beyond its statutory limits, so employees have the right to make a flexible working request from the start of their employment (rather than after 26 weeks continuous service).

- b) Employees are entitled to make a flexible working request once every 12 months.
- c) When making a flexible working request employees should consider our Flexible Working Request Guidance, and then complete the Flexible Working Application Form.
- a) The completed form should then be sent to their line manager and HR Advisors
- b) Although all employees have the right to apply for flexible working, in line with government legislation, applications may be rejected if there are genuine business reasons for doing so, this reason must be from the following list:
  - the burden of additional costs
  - an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
  - an inability to recruit additional staff
  - a detrimental impact on quality
  - a detrimental impact on performance
  - detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
  - insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
  - a planned structural change to the business
- c) Line managers will work with HR to consider requests, taking into account its feasibility and charity needs. 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.
- d) If the line manager and HR agree that the request is feasible it will be approved. Should there be the need for more information, the employee will meet with HR and their line manager to discuss in more detail. This meeting can provide an opportunity to see what changes the employee is asking for and reasons for the change, although the employee may not wish to say why it also allows any compromise to be explored.

### **3) Outcome of flexible working request**

- a) A written outcome will be provided to the employee within 28 days of submission or, where a meeting or more information is required, within 14 days from the meeting or submission of information.
- b) If an employee's request is accepted, the line manager will submit a HR request on the People Platform detailing the start date, new working days and hours. Employees will receive a contract amendment outlining their new amendment in due course.
- c) If an employee's request cannot be accommodated, they will receive a written explanation for the decision. Before any rejection, the possibility of an alternative arrangement will be explored.

### **4) The Trial Period**

- a) All flexible working agreements will be subject to a three-month trial period. During this time the line manager and employee should discuss its progress and any concerns.

- b) The line manager is responsible for carrying out a review at three months from the date the arrangement becomes live. If the trial period is successful, the arrangement will be considered permanent and there would be no automatic right to revert to the previous working pattern.
- c) Should the line manager have any concerns around the arrangement, the trial may be extended for up to three months. A final decision or proposed alternative arrangement would be made at the end of the extension.
- d) The trial period may be ended with two weeks' notice if the arrangement is considered to be detrimental to the team, department or outputs.

## **5) Flexible working limitations at Teach First**

- a) We comply with working time limits and make sure that employees do not exceed reasonable working hours. We committed to ensuring that working patterns do not compromise employee health or wellbeing. Therefore:
  - Employees working extra hours on a particular day will not be allowed to work more than 10 hours during the day.
  - Employees cannot work for more than 6 hours without taking a break and must take a minimum of 30 minutes for lunch.
  - Employees should ensure that they take a rest period of 11 consecutive hours in each 24-hour period (12 hours for those aged under 18).
- a) In addition, we won't consider a compression of hours that is more than an extra hour per day. As such we will allow a full-time employee to work: 37.5 hours per week compressed into 4.5 days per week; or 75 hours per fortnight compressed into 9 days per fortnight. Under such arrangements the half-day/day of absence should be agreed with the employee's manager according to the requirements of the employee's role, and will be a fixed day, typically one on which the employee is likely to be less busy and there is sufficient cover within the department.
- b) Compressed hours tend to be more suitable for roles which are paid on an hourly basis and where there is a standard and measurable output per day/week.

## **6) Problems with a flexible working request**

- a) If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, they should contact their HR Advisor.
- b) If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.
- c) There is no statutory right to appeal the outcome of a flexible working request. However, we do offer an appeal process for any employee who is unsatisfied with the handling of their request.
- d) Employees wishing to appeal the process should write to the Director of Human Resources within five working days of receiving their outcome. A manager and member of HR not involved in the original request would be appointed to hear the appeal. An outcome would be provided no later than four weeks of receipt of the appeal.