

**REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING:  
GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS**

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**STAFF SIDE SIGNATURE .....**

**DATE.....**

**MANAGEMENTSIDESIGNATURE.....**

**DATE.....**

# **REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING**

## **GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is difficult to provide prescriptive guidance to cover all circumstances as there are many flexible working options and an even greater range of individual personal circumstances and departmental needs. However this guidance seeks to clarify how a request for flexible working, whether by an individual or group of staff, should be handled and tries to outline best practice.

#### **1. Staff Applying For Flexible Working**

- The Trust has a number of policies or initiatives covering many of the flexible working options. These include full time, part time, annualised hours, fixed term contracts, as and when required (for example bank, agency or locum work), working term time, school hours, weekends or permanent nights only, twelve hour shifts or any other flexible shift arrangement, job share and flexitime. Check on the Trust's homepage or contact Personnel to read them as this will be helpful in your request. However don't be deterred from asking for a flexible working option that is not covered by a particular policy.
- Think about your request. How realistic do you think it is, what flexibility can you offer and are there alternative ways to meet your needs? It may be that the department can meet your request in part and an agreed compromise can be reached.
- Approach your manager to discuss the matter. If for some reason you do not feel able to do this you can seek advice from your Trade Union representative or Human Resources.

#### **2 Managers Considering Requests**

- Familiarise yourself with the relevant policies.
- Discuss their initial request keeping an open mind. Explore options and alternatives.
- Where appropriate, agree who you need to talk to in order to progress the matter. This might include other members of staff who might be affected (and have a right to be consulted), your manager or the Human Resources Department.
- Agree a date to meet again.

- When a decision is made always confirm the outcome in writing.
- Each request should be judged on its merits and circumstances. However some broad principles apply:
  - Can the request be reasonably accommodated?
  - What are the service implications?
  - What are the peaks and troughs of workload for the department and could flexibility balance staffing levels and workload more efficiently?
  - Who else is affected including individuals and teams outside the department?
  - Will flexibility help attract, retain or allow staff to extend their careers?
  - Will it build a more diverse range of skills within the team?
  - Will it help reduce absence rates?
  - What is the recruitment position in the department?
  - What other flexible arrangements are already in place?
  - Are there any other flexible options that would be more appropriate to meet both the departments and individuals needs?

Whilst it is expected that the Trust will have a positive attitude towards requests for flexible working and will fully consider any requests there may be circumstances where a request cannot be granted. This might include:

- 1) Where the cost of accommodating the request exceeds 10% of the employees salary (whether a one off capital cost or ongoing cost).
- 2) Inability to meet patient care or customer demand.
- 3) Inability to organise the work within the available staff.
- 4) Detrimental impact on quality or performance.
- 5) Inability to recruit additional staff.

The reasons given for a refusal should be made in writing and should objectively satisfy some or all of the criteria given above having considered all the circumstances of the request.

### **3 Right Of Appeal**

You can appeal to the next level of management if you fail to get a formal response from your manager or you feel that the reasons they have given you for refusing the request are not fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

Mike Green  
Human Resources Manager

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