

# Guidelines for staff



**Having a more flexible working pattern can bring about a lot of benefits for you, as well as for your employer.**

Good flexible working doesn't have to mean zero-hours contracts, irregular or anti-social shift patterns, or seasonal work that is all consuming for a short space of time.

Good flexible working is a way of working that matches your preferences with what's needed in a job role and by an employer.

**Flexibility works best when both sets of needs can be met**

**Organisation's  
needs**

**Individual's  
needs**



These guidelines have been put together to help you think about what sort of flexibility would work for you and discuss this with your manager. Your employer will have a flexible working policy and a specific process to make a formal application.

Here are the steps you should take when thinking about flexible working:

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### **1. Consider what sort of flexibility could work in your role**

This means looking at the different aspects of your job and when and where tasks could be done. Think about how much you interact with others, whether some of the work can be done at home, whether the technology is available to do this, and so on.

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### **2. Think about what your preferred working pattern would be**

Based on the above, what sort of pattern would help you achieve a better work-life balance? Think about what is essential and what would be a nice-to-have.

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### **3. Think through some of the detail about how you would make it work**

Your manager will be looking to see if you can still do your job to the same level, with no adverse impact on your performance or the rest of the team. Think about how you might need to adapt some aspects of how you work, e.g. keeping your diary up to date, ensuring cover for when you are not in.

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### **4. Arrange an informal discussion with your manager**

It's really helpful if you and your manager can talk about flexible working before you make a formal request. In many instances, your manager will be happy to support you and work out something without a formal process. That's good, but you may want to have a centrally held record of your arrangement, even if it's not a change in your contract.

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### **5. Ask for a trial period**

Prepare yourself for some changes in your working style. Make sure you check in with your manager that it's working for them and give feedback as to whether it's working for you.

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### **6. Finally, accept there are limits on flexibility and play the long game**

Certain roles may be much better suited to certain types of flexibility than others. Be reasonable about what is possible and think about what options might work for you now and in the future.

## How to design flexibility into a role

Complete this form to help think about the sort of flexibility possible in a role.

### 1. The purpose of the role

Aim of the role:

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Key responsibilities:

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How to show these have been done:

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### 2. What's involved in the role: key tasks

To understand how more flexibility can be introduced, it's helpful to consider the work in terms of

- **Where** tasks can be done
- **When** these can be done
- **What** the interactions are with others (e.g. clients, team, other colleagues)

**Key tasks:**

Tasks that can be done from home:

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Tasks that can be done at different times:

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Who do you communicate with, and how:

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### 3. Reasons for wanting greater flexibility

(e.g. to regularly care for someone, reduce or change commuting time, have more time to myself, work at times that suit me better, keep regular appointments, etc.)

Remember a reason is not required. But it can help in terms of thinking through what sort of flexibility would work best.

Write these here:

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#### 4. Consider what sort of flexibility might work

Based on the above, what sort of flexibility might be possible in the role? And what would match your individual needs best? Remember a combination might work, too.

Some examples

- Flexi hours
- Compressed week or fortnight
- Working from home (fixed or variable day)
- Annualised hours
- Part-time
- Job share

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#### 5. Implications

Changing a working pattern will have implications both for you and others you work with. It's worth thinking through what these are and what will need to be done differently.

Here are a few areas to get you started:

- Is any cover needed? Who else can make decisions?

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- Will communication be done differently?

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- How can you show your performance is still the same?

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- Is the technology available?

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- How is the team affected?

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- What needs to be done differently in terms of planning?

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#### 6. Talking

Line managers will have different attitudes, based on their experience and work pressures and priorities. It's important to:

- Lead with what sort of flexibility might be possible
- Explain how it would help with work-life balance
- Explain how it would work in practice

#### 7. Making a request

Your employer should have all the information about policy and procedure readily available.