

## Flexible Working Frequently Asked Questions 721-54790

**Q. How often can I make a request?**

- A. You can make a request to work flexibly every 12 months. However, if your circumstances change or the circumstances of the service change this situation may be reviewed.

**Q. Are there any time limits?**

- A. There are no longer time limits placed on when meetings should be held and when to respond to you, but the legislation does set out that the process, including an appeal, must be considered within three months of the receipt of the request.

If you do not attend a meeting to discuss the matter or a rearranged meeting, we may consider your request withdrawn.

**Q. Can my application be rejected?**

- A. Yes, an application can be rejected on business grounds.

These are:

- **The burden of additional costs**
  - It may be that additional staff will need to be recruited to cover a flexible working arrangement involving reduced hours if full time cover is required. This could entail recruitment costs as a result of advertisement or the use of employment agencies. In looking at cost we will also consider the cost of losing you if your request is rejected.
- **The inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff**
  - We will need to consider whether it is possible to reorganise work within a team or department to accommodate a flexible working request. Capacity of all staff should be considered. It may be that this matter will be discussed with the team before a final decision is reached.
- **An inability to recruit additional staff**
  - We will ask existing staff if they are prepared to take on additional work and also consider external recruitment.
- **A detrimental impact on quality**
  - We may consider that having a reduced workforce in your service may have a negative impact on the quality of work. If this ground is to be relied upon, we will consider whether training could rectify the problem.
- **A detrimental impact on performance**
  - This can mean performance of individuals, the team, or the organisation as a whole. Clearly which of these is relevant will depend on your role. It may be felt that the absence of you from the workplace will have a detrimental impact on the team if you are the manager, or it may be that if

a remote working request is made, that the role could not be performed remotely.

- **A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand**
  - Whether it is appropriate to rely on this business reason will depend very much on the department within where you work.
  - Insufficient work for the periods you propose to work
  - If you propose a change in work hours or times but there is deemed to be insufficient work in the hours proposed, this will be a business ground for refusing the request.
- **A planned structural change to the business**
  - An example would be a merger or department reorganisation or changes to working hours where we feel that the flexible work pattern would not fit with the new plans.

**Q. Can I appeal if my request is refused?**

A. There is no statutory obligation to allow an appeal. Where you feel the outcome is not fair or has not been properly considered you can raise a grievance through the Grievance and Concerns Policy.

**Q. How will my manager deal with multiple requests?**

A. We may face a scenario where a number of employees in one area make requests to work flexibly. We will deal with requests in the order in which they are received.

**Q. Can I be accompanied when I meet with my Line Manager to discuss my request?**

A. Yes, you can be accompanied by a work colleague or a recognised trade union representative.

**If you have any questions that you cannot find the answer to please contact the Human Resources Department.**