

Flexible Working Requests Policy

May 2024



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Revision history

Version	Date	Updated by	Approved by	Amendment details
1.0	July 2014	[former employee]	[former employee]	Updated to take account of new legislation (from July 2014) and reformatted.
1.1	October 2020	Sarah Pugh, Head of People	Sarah Pugh, Head of People	Rebranded and reformatted. Minor amendments/additions to wording in line with best practice and legislation.
2.0	March 2022	Charlotte Woodward	Sarah Pugh, Head of People	Rebranded and reformatted.
3.0	June 2023	Sarah Pugh, Head of People		Policy simplification and added scope; incomplete forms will be automatically rejected; requests can be approved without a meeting; role title for appeals; and data protection.
3.1	May 2024	Sarah Pugh, Head of People	Charlotte Woodward and Sue Clarke	<p>Trial periods explained; reasonable adjustments process; and updates to reflect 6 April 2024 legislation changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • right to make a request from day one of employment • decisions to be made within two months of receiving a request • ability to submit 2 applications in any 12-month period



Introduction

We (the Company) believe that flexible working can increase motivation, promote work-life balance, enrich employee wellbeing, and improve performance and productivity.

This policy sets out our approach to flexible working requests under the statutory (legal) procedure.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and can be amended at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to UK employees employed by the Company. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for the Company.

Whilst this policy refers to UK-specific legislation, we are committed to ensuring compliance with any equivalent legislation in all jurisdictions where we operate.

Our commitment to you

We are passionate about creating an [inclusive](#) culture that supports a good work-life balance. We care about your [health and wellbeing](#) and want to invest in an environment where everyone can thrive. You will see individuals at all levels in the Company working flexibly.

Disability - requesting a reasonable adjustment

We are committed to reducing and removing disadvantages for disabled employees.

If you need to change where, how, or when you work because of a disability, you can request a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. If you request a reasonable adjustment, you **do not** need to also make a flexible working request.

To request a reasonable adjustment, send your request by email to your manager and a member of the People team and include:

- that you are making a request for a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010
- the adjustment you are requesting

Your manager and a member of the People team will discuss your request with you within ten (10) working days of receiving the request. The outcome will be confirmed in writing within ten (10) working days of the discussion, including any agreed reasonable adjustments. These time limits may be extended by mutual agreement.



Eligibility

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from day one of employment.

Types of flexible working requests

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when you work. We will consider requests for any type of flexible working with an open mind.

Examples of flexible working include:

- changing your place of work;
- reducing or increasing the number of hours that you work;
- changing your working pattern e.g., the days you work; changing your start and finish times; term time only;
- compressing your working hours into fewer days (for example moving to a nine-day fortnight).

Making a request for flexible working

You are entitled to submit two statutory flexible working requests in a 12-month period. If you have submitted a flexible working request, you must wait until that one has been considered and any appeal has been dealt with, before submitting another.

You can only have one live request at a time. A request will stay live until any of the following happen:

- we make a decision
- you withdraw the request
- we mutually agree an outcome
- it has been two (2) months since the date of the request

Application

All requests must be made, in writing, by completing a Flexible Working Request [application form](#). This should then be emailed to your manager and a member of the People team.

Any request made under this policy **must** include:

- the date of the request;
- the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions of employment (your contract);
- the date you would like the change(s) to come into effect;

- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- whether or not you have made a previous application for flexible working
 - if you have made a previous request, when you made that application.

Where a request for flexible working does not contain all the required information, you will be asked to resubmit your request with the necessary additional information.

Timescales

Once you submit your flexible working request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible. However, all requests will be dealt within (2) two months, from receipt of the request to notification of any appeal decision.

Where mutually agreed, the timescales may be extended and should be confirmed in writing (this includes email).

If you fail to attend a meeting to discuss your flexible working request, including any [appeal](#), and then fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, we will consider your application withdrawn.

Meeting to discuss your flexible working request

Your manager, and a member of the People team where appropriate, will arrange a meeting to discuss your flexible working request and will usually be held within ten (10) working days of receiving your request. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay.

The meeting is an opportunity to make sure all the relevant information is understood before a decision is made. It is usually helpful to discuss, for example, the potential benefits or other impacts of accepting or rejecting the request, and any practical considerations involved in implementing the request. We ask you to be as open as possible about your needs so that we can engage in a constructive discussion about what is feasible.

Exception – full agreement without a meeting

Where a request can be agreed to in full without further discussion, as set out in your application, a meeting will not be necessary.

Considering your request

After the meeting, your manager, and the member of the People team if applicable, will consider your proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up:

- the potential benefits to both you and the Company; and
- any adverse impact of implementing the changes.



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 patterns.

Notifying you of the decision

Your manager, and the member of the People team if applicable, will inform you in writing, usually within ten (10) working days after the meeting, of their decision.

Your request may be agreed to in full or in part. For example:

- we may propose a modified or alternative version of your request;
- your request may be granted on a temporary basis; or
- you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

Flexible working requests that are agreed to

If your request is agreed to in **full**, you and your manager should discuss how and when the changes will take effect.

Where your request can only be accepted in **part**, your manager, and a member of the People team if appropriate, will discuss any potential modifications to your original request, or alternative options, for example, that may be suitable for both sides.

Any changes to your terms and conditions of employment, whether permanent or temporary, will be put in writing and sent to you as an amendment to your contract of employment within one (1) month of the change being agreed.

Trialling new working arrangements

Usually, a trial period will be agreed to assess the suitability and practicality of the flexible working arrangement for you and the business.

A trial period will allow enough time to implement and get used to the new arrangement before making any decisions on its viability.

We will put any trial arrangements in writing to you. This will include the start and end dates of the trial period, your new working pattern and make clear that it is only a temporary change to your terms and conditions. We may reduce or extend the trial period where necessary, with your agreement.

We will reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require you to revert to your previous working arrangement.

Flexible working requests that are rejected

While we are committed to encouraging flexible working patterns, we need to remain realistic. If we refuse the request, you will be given the decision in writing within ten (10) working days of the meeting.



Appeals

You may appeal if your request for flexible working is rejected or only agreed in part.

Your appeal should be sent via email to the Head of People (or Chief People Officer if the Head of People is unavailable or has been involved in the request process), within five (5) working days of receiving the decision. Your appeal should set out the grounds on which you are appealing.

An appeal meeting will be held within five (5) working days of you lodging your appeal.

Following the appeal meeting, the relevant member of the People team will inform you of the outcome of your appeal, in writing, usually within five (5) working days. The outcome of the appeal is final.

Being accompanied

You may be accompanied at a meeting or appeal meeting by a colleague or a trade union official/representative ('companion').

If you wish to bring a companion, please tell the manager responsible for the meeting who this will be at least two (2) working days ahead of the meeting so that we can ensure any specific needs are met.

Data protection

When managing your flexible working request, we process personal data collected in accordance with our [Employee Privacy Notice](#). Data collected from the point at which we receive a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing your request for flexible working.

