



Flexible Working Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Cotswold District Council prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

We are committed to attracting and retaining the very best people and utilising all the talent and experience available. We recognise that our employees and potential employees have responsibilities, interests and aspirations outside of the world of work which impact on their time and appreciate that the standard Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 working week is no longer compatible with increasing demand for a better work-life balance.

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

Eligible Employees

All employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the statutory right to request flexible working. Under the statutory procedure, you can make one request in every 12-month period.

However, we recognise the importance of providing flexible working for all employees. Therefore, if you are not eligible to make a formal request for flexible working under the statutory procedure, you may submit an informal request and we will consider this on an informal basis.

Types of Flexible Working

Examples of flexible working include:

- hybrid working (sometimes referred to as "blended working"), which allows you to split your time between attending the workplace and working remotely
- reducing the number of hours that you are working
- changing your start and finish times
- compressing your working hours into fewer days (for example moving to a nine-day fortnight); and
- working flexitime.

Making a Request for Flexible Working

All requests must be made in writing by email or letter. This should be submitted to your line manager in the first instance.

Any request made under this policy must include:

- the date of the application

- the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions of employment
- the date on which you would like the terms and conditions to come into effect
- what effect you think the requested change may have on your organisation, your colleagues and the ability to deliver the service
- how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with
- a statement that this is a statutory request
- whether or not you have made a previous application for flexible working; and
- 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. Requests that are incomplete or contain errors will not be automatically rejected.

Timescales

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

The timescales within this policy may be extended where this is mutually agreed.

If you fail to attend a meeting to discuss your flexible working request, including an appeal meeting, and then fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, your application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Meeting to Discuss a Flexible Working Request

Your line manager will usually arrange a meeting to discuss your request. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about your proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both you and the organisation. Be prepared to suggest solutions which will help your case.

Your line manager should aim to hold the meeting to discuss your request within 28 days of receiving it.

You may, if you wish, ask a work colleague or a Trade Union representative to attend the meeting with you.

Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved in the terms set out in your written application, a meeting will not be necessary.

Right to Representation

At any formal meeting you have the right to be represented by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. However, consideration will be given to another person in exceptional circumstances.

Considering your Request

After the meeting, your line manager will consider your proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up:

- the potential benefits to both you and the organisation; 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 line manager should aim to notify you of the decision as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the meeting.

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

- we may propose a modified 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.

Reasons for Rejecting a Request

Your request for flexible working will be rejected only because of:

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- a 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.

Your request will not be rejected for any other reason.

Your Right to Appeal

You have the right to appeal if your request for flexible working is rejected or only agreed in part.

Your appeal should be sent in writing to the appropriate line manager or senior manager within 14 days of receiving our decision. Your letter should set out the grounds on which you are appealing. An appeal meeting will be held within 14 days of you lodging your appeal.

You may, if you wish, ask a work colleague or Trade Union representative to attend the appeal meeting with you.

You will be informed of the outcome of your appeal as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the appeal meeting.

Flexible Working Requests that are granted

If your request is upheld, you and your line manager should discuss how and when the changes will take effect.

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.

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