

Flexible Working Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out how Open Awards will deal with requests from staff to work flexibly.

Policy

Open Awards has developed a flexible working policy to enable all staff to apply for flexible working.

It sets out a number of options where staff can apply to vary their normal working hours or reduce them.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

1 Introduction

Open Awards employees who have at least 26 weeks continuous employment with Open Awards are entitled to apply for a change to their contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly.

From 30 June 2014 all employees have the right to apply for flexible working as this is no longer restricted to parents or carers.

All applications by staff will be dealt with in a reasonable manner using the criteria provided in the ACAS guidance document.

This policy covers:

- flexible working patterns – a formal and structured change to your working hours;
- job share;
- reducing your working hours.

Ad hoc changes to your hours on a daily or weekly basis are covered under a separate document – Flexi Time System.

The working week

Open Awards has determined that the normal hours of work for each full time employee will be 35 per week.

The office hours are:

Monday – Thursday	09.00 – 17.00
Friday	09.00 – 16.00

2 Process for Requesting Flexible Working

Employees must submit a request in writing to your line manager to change or vary your work pattern. This should set out:

- The date of the application, the change to working conditions being requested and when the change is to come into effect.
- What effect you think the requested change would have on the organisation and how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- If you have made a previous application for flexible working provide the date of that application.

Please use the Flexible Working Application Form which details the information the application must contain.

Only one application can be made in any 12 month period although we will have regard for any exceptional changes in circumstances that lead to any subsequent requests.

Your Line Manager will discuss your request with you within 7 days of receipt, you may be accompanied at this discussion by a work colleague if you wish.

If your Line Manager agrees to the request formal approval will be sought from the Senior Management Team. Line Manager will notify employee of the decision within 28 days of the date of application. Notification will be in writing and will confirm:

- request for variation has been accepted and the date on which it will take effect, plus any other action agreed. This may lead to a new contract being issued within 28 days of agreement of change; or the letter detailing agreed changes being appended to existing contract.
- request has been rejected giving clear business reasons why and how these apply to the application. Details of the appeal procedure will be provided.
- Any compromise agreed e.g. temporary agreement.

3 Appeals Process for Refusal of Flexible Working Application

Each application for Flexible Working is considered on an individual basis. All applicants will receive a written response to their application. Where the response is a refusal to grant the application then the reasons for this will be set out in the written response.

Any appeal must be against the reasons for the refusal (see section 6 below).

Making an Appeal

All appeals should be made to the Chief Executive of Open Awards within 10 working days of receipt of the written refusal of the application. The appeal must be in writing, dated and clearly set out the grounds of appeal.

The appeal will then be heard either by another line manager not involved in considering the initial application or the Chief Executive. In the case of staff whose application was considered by the Chief Executive the appeal will be heard by a member or members of the Senior Management Team.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing within 10 working days of the date of the appeal. This decision will be final and no further appeal will be allowed.

4 Right to be Accompanied

Employees have the right to be accompanied to any of the above meetings by a work colleague, if they so wish. The work colleague may address the meeting but may not answer questions on behalf of the employee.

Open Awards will allow employees time off to accompany a colleague to any meetings detailed above.

5 Withdrawal of Application

Open Awards will treat any applications as withdrawn if an employee has:

- Advised the company of the withdrawal of the application.
- Failed to attend a meeting without reasonable cause on two occasions.
- Refused to provide Open Awards with any information required to assess the request for a variation.

6 Reasons for refusing an application

Applications for flexible working will only be refused if one or more of the following business reasons apply:

- The burden of additional costs is unacceptable to the organisation;
- An inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- Inability to recruit additional staff;
- It is considered the change will have a detrimental impact on quality;
- It is considered the change would have a detrimental effect on the business' ability to meet customers demand;
- Detrimental impact on performance;
- There is insufficient work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- Planned structural changes e.g. business to be reorganised or changed and it is considered the flexible working changes may not fit with these plans.

Job Share:

This lets two people share one job. All employees may apply to job share their full time job providing the job has not been formally excluded from job sharing. Any request for job share should be discussed with your manager initially. Your manager will provide you with the application form to apply for flexible working hours and will formally respond to your request in accordance with above procedures.

Voluntary Reduced working hours:

All employees may apply for this providing they are able to demonstrate their need under the flexible working arrangements. Any request to reduce your working hours should be discussed with your manager initially. Your manager will provide you with the application form to apply for flexible working hours and will formally respond to your request in accordance with above procedures. Your pay and pension contributions will be reduced to reflect your new working hours. Any request to return to your former hours will depend upon whether there is an operational need for you to increase your hours.