

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our Commitment

We want to help you work flexibly if you wish to do so. Flexibility that works for you, the Company and our customers.

We will, if we possibly can, say yes to both informal and formal flexible working requests as long as the requests don't adversely impact on our ability to meet business needs.

Flexibility requires give and take, trust and good communication from everyone for it to work effectively.

This policy covers both informal and formal flexible working arrangements. It outlines the options for agreeing informal flexible working and the procedure for employees who wish to formally request to work flexibly.

Informal flexible working allows you to agree with your manager to work flexibly without changing your terms and conditions of employment.

You can request a formal variation to your terms and conditions of employment to allow you to work flexibly if you have been continuously employed for a period of not less than 26 weeks.

If you have any questions about how the policy operates, you should contact the HR Team on hr@agbarr.co.uk.

Examples of informal and formal flexible working:

Informal flexible working:	Formal flexible working:
Come in later occasionally Leave earlier occasionally Split your day between the office and working from home Working from home occasionally	Change of hours Part-time working Job sharing

1.2 Informal Flexible Working

Informal flexible working is working in a flexible manner that does not alter your terms and conditions of employment. These arrangements can be one off, temporary or ad hoc in nature.

There is no statutory right to request informal flexibility. Informal arrangements should be agreed between you and your manager. HR don't have to be involved but are available for help and support if required.

1.3 Requesting informal flexible working

(i) You should discuss any informal flexible working applications with your line manager. Our aim is to support all applications, if we possibly can, but this will be driven by ensuring business needs are met. You must always be able to deliver on your objectives, fulfil the requirements of your role and meet the needs of your team. How much flexibility can be accommodated will differ from role to role, from team to team, and be dependent upon individual circumstances at the time of the application.

(ii) Due to the nature of the work involved, some roles may not be suitable for working from home but could be eligible for other forms of flexibility.

(iii) All informal arrangements are subject to ongoing review and can be stopped or altered at any time if business needs dictate or the requirements of your role and the needs of your team are not being met.

(iv) Working from home is covered in the accompanying guidelines 'Occasional working from home'.

2. FORMAL FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

It is the policy of the Company to give positive consideration to formal flexible working requests from all employees. Upon receipt of a request, we will review an employee's working pattern to determine whether it is possible to implement different arrangements taking into account business needs.

A request for *formal* flexible working can be a request to –

- (i) alter the number of hours of worked
- (ii) alter the times they are worked
- (iii) request to work from home in part or in full

2.1. PROCEDURE FOR FORMAL REQUESTS

2.1.1. Eligibility

To be eligible to make a request for flexible working, a person must satisfy the following conditions. He or she must:

- be an employee
- have worked for the organisation continuously for at least 26 weeks as at the date the application is made
- not have made an application to work flexibly during the previous 12 months

2.2 Making a request

2.2.1. You should initially have an informal discussion with your line manager about your intention to submit a formal application and talk through the possible options with them. Whatever the outcome of the discussion, your formal application must be submitted to HR and HR will ensure that both you and your manager/line partner are supported in reaching a decision and that the formal process is followed correctly.

2.2.2 Only one application may normally be made in any 12 month period. You should consider your application carefully, which may request a variation in respect of the hours you work, the times when you are required to work and/or the place where you work.

2.2.3 We will give serious consideration to every application received. An application will only be refused where it is considered that one or more of the following grounds (justifiable grounds to refuse) applies:

- burden of additional costs;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet business needs;
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- inability to recruit additional staff;
- detrimental impact on quality;
- detrimental impact on performance;
- insufficient work during the times the employee proposes to work;
- planned structural changes; and
- such other grounds that may be introduced by future statutory provisions.

2.2.4 An application for flexible working must be in writing to the employee's line manager and include the following information.

- (i) The date of the application, the change to working conditions the employee is seeking and when they would like this change to come into effect.
- (ii) The effect, if any, the employee thinks the requested change will have on their role and the Company and how, in their opinion, any such effect might be dealt with.
- (iii) A statement that it is a statutory request, and if and when the employee has made a previous application for flexible working.
- (iv) The application should be signed and dated.

3. NEXT STEPS

- If your line manager intends to approve your application, a meeting may not be required. Your line manager/HR will advise you of this as soon as possible after receiving your application and, in any event, within four weeks of your application being received.
- Alternatively, your line manager will arrange a meeting within four weeks of receipt of your application to discuss it. Where your line manager is of the view that there are grounds to refuse the application, possible alternatives will be considered.
- You have a right to be accompanied by a colleague at this meeting.
- If a meeting does take place we will provide written notice of the decision within 14 days of the date of the meeting.
- If your application is accepted, HR will write to you setting out the contract variation agreed, the date on which the variation takes effect and any other conditions relating to the variation. This will normally be subject to a trial period.
- If your application is refused, we will let you know, in writing, the specific reasons why. We will also set out the appeal procedure.
- Approved applications will normally be subject to a trial period by agreement prior to final approval. The trial period will confirm the practicality or otherwise of the application. We reserve the right to return you to your previous working arrangement at the end of this trial period where it is considered that the new arrangement is not practical for operational purposes.
- Successful completion of the trial period will result in a permanent change to your contract of employment and our confirmation of the same, you will have no legal right to revert to your previous working pattern, although we will consider an application to do so.

4. APPEALS

- If you wish to appeal you must do so in writing to your function head or divisional head, setting out the grounds for your appeal, within 14 days of the date of notification of the refusal of the application. A copy of your appeal should also be sent to HR. In the event that your manager or line partner is the function head or divisional head, your appeal should be submitted to your department head or the managing partner.
- A member of the HR department will arrange a meeting with you within 14 days of receipt of the appeal letter.
- You have a right to be accompanied by a colleague at this meeting.

- We will notify you of the decision in respect of your appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting. This notification will either (where the appeal is successful) specify the variation agreed (subject to the trial period), state the date on which it is to take effect and set out any other conditions relating to the variation; or, where the appeal is dismissed, the notice will state which of the Grounds apply and the reason(s) for this.
- A decision at this stage will be final.

5. TIMEFRAMES

There may be exceptional occasions where it is not possible to complete consideration of your application within the expected time scales. Where an extension of time is agreed with you, a member of the HR team will write to you confirming the extension and the date on which it will end.

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