

Work Life Balance

Creating a culture of flexibility

1. Introduction

At University Hospitals Sussex we recognise that a positive work life balance benefits everyone and we encourage flexible working.

The Trust encourages flexible working across all job roles from day one, benefitting from improved retention of skills and experience, increased productivity and morale, and leading to staff being able to provide better patient care.

The purpose of this policy aims to support the application of flexible working across UHSussex to ensure a consistent approach for managing the worklife balance of staff.

Flexible Working Guidance is available on the Trust's Intranet to support this Policy.

2. Eligibility

Every UHSussex staff member who is substantively employed by the Trust will have the right to request to work flexibly. There is no qualifying period and you can request flexibility from day one and during employment when your circumstances may change.

Principles

UHSussex is committed to helping everyone achieve a healthy worklife balance and to encourage all staff to have flexibility in their roles.

As we strive to provide continuous, excellent care for our patients it is important that the needs of our service and availability of our workforce are matched.

At UHSussex all requests for flexible working will be considered and we will not unreasonably refuse flexible working requests. Managers will take time to fully consider the different ways in which the request can be accommodated.

If it is not possible to accommodate a request in full or in part due to the needs of the role, then clear, written operational reasons as to why this is not practicable will be provided within the procedure.

UHSussex has a due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity. In doing so, managers will ensure that all staff making a request for any type of flexible working are treated fairly and equitably, as individuals, recognising that we are all unique and will not unlawfully discriminate against any individual on the grounds of a protected characteristic protected by the Equality Act (2010).

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3. Types of flexible working

Flexible working relates to the arrangements in place regarding the time, location and pattern of work for all members of staff. There are various ways in which you can work flexibly and below are examples of how this can be done but not limited to;

- Part-time working - where working hours are less than your standard full-time hours.
- Voluntary reduction in working time - working fewer hours for an agreed period.
- Term-time working - concentrating your work hours within school term times to provide time off to look after children during school holidays.
- Job sharing - you and one or more people share responsibility for your current role.
- Compressed hours - Working full time hours over fewer days
- Annualised hours - working your contracted hours flexibly throughout the year without

affecting your regular salary payment.

- Offsite/remote working - where all or part of your role is undertaken from home or another site, either on a contractual or occasional ad hoc basis.
- Flexible retirement - depending on the pension scheme of the individual.
- Different shift patterns/flexible rostering/flexi-time - eg: using periods of work of differing lengths within an agreed overall period; choosing start and finish time around fixed core hours.

4. Procedure

4.1 Informal approach

Flexible working options can be informal or formal.

You are asked to inform your manager as soon as is practical of your request to apply for flexible working options, giving at least three months' notice wherever possible.

Managers also have a responsibility to discuss flexible working opportunities through team meetings, appraisals and 1:1 meetings.

You are encouraged to have an informal discussion with your manager prior to making a request for flexible working. In such circumstances, a meeting will be arranged to hold initial discussions to ensure the proposal is the best solution for both the service and for you. If an informal request can be granted then this will be confirmed in writing and if required a staff changes form completed.

4.2 Formal approach

If at the informal stage a further discussion is required, you should complete an application form stating the following;

- The reason for the change and whether the change is requested on a temporary or permanent basis
- The nature of the change and the date you would the change is to be introduced.

4.3 Meeting

After receipt of a request for flexible working, the manager will arrange to meet with you. The formal meeting will be arranged within 14 calendar days of receiving the application and will provide an opportunity to discuss the desired work pattern in depth and to consider how best it might be accommodated. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to consider other working patterns or a trial period, should accommodating the desired work pattern in the application prove difficult.

During the meeting you will be entitled to be accompanied by a recognised Trade Union/Staff Side representative, workplace colleague or UHSussex staff network representative should you wish.

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4.3 Outcome of meeting

- **Flexible working agreed**

If the request has been agreed, your manager will send you a flexible working application acceptance form, confirming the new working arrangements and start date.

When a flexible working request is agreed then it becomes a change to your contract of employment. Flexible working arrangements should be discussed regularly by both you and your manager. This is to ensure that the arrangements continue to meet the needs of both the service and you.

- **Flexible working declined**

All requests should be considered carefully and all working arrangements should be identified to meet both the needs of the individual and the service. Where it has not been possible to accommodate the request, the decision will be confirmed in writing, detailing the organisational reason for declining the request, within 14 calendar days.

If your request has been refused, the letter will give the reason(s) and tell you how you can appeal.

4.5 Appeal

Should you wish to appeal the decision, you should do so within 7 calendar days of receipt of the outcome in writing. Your appeal will be heard in accordance with UHSussex appeals guidance.

You have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a recognised trade union representative, workplace colleague or UHSussex staff network representative.

You should receive the outcome of the appeal meeting in writing within 10 working days of the meeting.

5. Monitoring, Compliance and Effectiveness of Implementation

The implementation and compliance of the work life balance policy will be monitored on a regular basis. This will ensure that balancing work and personal life operate fairly and transparently and do not advantage any group of staff over another.

Applications and outcomes will be recorded and monitored through the UHSussex Partnership forum. The data analysed will be used to review and revise policies and procedures to ensure their continuing effectiveness and equity of access.

Where there is a legislative change impacting on the policy then it will be amended accordingly.