

Work Life Balance

Creating a culture of flexibility

1. Introduction

At University Hospitals Sussex we recognise that a positive worklife balance benefits everyone.

Through the 'Our People' strategic theme there is a focus on the importance of supporting staff to deliver high quality services, with the recognition that if staff are able to achieve a positive work-life balance it will result in improving health and wellbeing, staff satisfaction, inclusion and productivity.

This Trust will benefit through improved retention of skills and experience, productivity and morale, leading to staff being able to provide better patient care.

The purpose of this policy is to inform and provide the necessary information to employees of the options and the application process with regard to flexible working patterns.

Alongside this policy, there is also a managing flexible working guidance document that is available on the Trust's Intranet.

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 staff can request flexibility from day one of their employment.

3. Responsibilities

All staff are asked to inform their manager as soon as is practical of their requirement to apply for work life balance options, giving at least three months' notice wherever possible.

UHSussex 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 characteristics.

In managing flexible working requests, the following principles will always apply:

UHSussex managers should not unreasonably refuse flexible working requests. Managers are asked to consider creatively about how they can accommodate the request. If it is not possible to accommodate a request in full or part then clear, written operational reasons as to why this is not practicable will be provided within the procedure.

4. 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 staff can work flexibly and below are examples of how this can be done;

- 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.
- Home working - where all or part of your role is undertaken from home, 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.

5. Procedure

5.1 Informal approach

Wherever possible, staff are encouraged to have an informal discussion with their line manager prior to making a formal request. In such circumstances a meeting should be held between the employee and manager to hold initial discussions to ensure the proposal is the best solution for both the service and the employee. If an informal request can be granted then this will be confirmed in writing and if required a staff changes form completed.

5.2 Formal approach

If at the informal stage a further discussion is required, the staff member is to 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.

5.3 Meeting

After receipt of a request for flexible working, the manager will meet with the staff member. 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 staff will be entitled to be accompanied by a recognised Trade Union/Staff Side representative or work colleague.

5.4 Outcome of meeting

• Flexible working agreed

If the request has been agreed, a flexible working application acceptance form is sent to the staff member, confirming the new working arrangements and start date.

When a flexible working request is agreed then it becomes a change to the staff members contract of employment therefore flexible working arrangements should be discussed regularly by both manager and staff member. This is to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of both the staff member and service.

• 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 approve 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

5.5 Appeal

Staff who wish to appeal the decision to refuse their flexible working request can do so within 14 days of receipt of the outcome letter.

Staff have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a recognised trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

Staff should receive the outcome of the appeal meeting in writing within 14 calendar days of the meeting.

6. Monitoring, Compliance and Effectiveness of Implementation

The implementation and compliance of the worklife balance policy will be monitored on a regular basis with the outcomes reported to the UHSx [partnership forum].

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