



people policies

Flexible Working Policy Employee Guide





Contents

Policy	3
Purpose of the policy	3
Employee’s responsibilities	3
Manager’s responsibilities	3
Trade union representative’s role	3
Process – for making a flexible working request for an employee	4
First steps/informal process	4
If your manager agrees the request or agrees with some modification	5
If your manager rejects your request.....	5
Appeals	5
Flexible working flowchart	6
Additional guidance and support	7
Additional guidance	7
Associated policies	7
Letters and forms	7

Policy

Purpose of the policy

The council is committed to helping all its employees achieve a balance between their working life and other priorities such as parental and caring responsibilities, leisure activities, charity work and other interests.

This policy aims to enable good practice in work-life balance by supporting employees who want to work more flexibly. It sets out the council's approach to flexible working and the process to follow to request it.

All employees have a statutory right to ask for flexible working which includes career breaks, part-time working, term-time working and job-sharing, and for their request to be considered. Further details on the types of flexible work practices can be found in the Flexible Working Guidance document.

Employee's responsibilities

- To carefully consider the impact of your request on service delivery and colleagues and provide a carefully thought out application.
- To fully engage with the process and attend meetings when invited.
- To be prepared to be flexible yourself to reach an agreement with your manager about your flexible working arrangement.

Manager's responsibilities

- To consider all requests for flexible working arrangements properly in accordance with the procedure, including adhering to the time limits.
- To provide you with appropriate support and information during the course of the flexible working request.
- To only refuse a request where there is a recognised business reason and to explain to you why it applies.
- The manager is responsible for the application of this policy in their work area.

Trade union representative's role

- To work with the manager and employee to facilitate a quick and satisfactory resolution to the employee's request.
- To support the member requesting flexible working and advise them as appropriate.
- If the employee is not in a recognised trade union, this role may be carried out by another colleague.

Process

– for making a flexible working request for an employee

First steps/informal process

- 1 A new working pattern may be permanent or temporary. If you agree to a permanent change, be aware that you will have no automatic right to revert to your former hours of work. You may want to suggest a temporary change to your work pattern to enable you and your manager to decide if it is workable for both of you. If temporary it should be for an agreed time of at least 3 months and not exceed 18 months.
- 2 You must put your request in writing to your manager and it is a statutory requirement that your letter must contain all of the following:
 - The date of your application.
 - The change to working conditions you are seeking and when you would like the change to come into effect.
 - What effect, if any, you think the requested change will have on your manager and your team and how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with.
 - A statement from you that this is a statutory request. You must also disclose if you have made a previous application for flexible working and when that was, as you can only make one statutory application in any 12 month period.
- 3 If you are making a renewed application the following options are available:
 - You can return to your previous working arrangement.
 - You can apply to make the arrangement permanent. This would mean you lose your right to automatically return to your substantive hours but you can apply to change the arrangement in the future. You could also request additional hours, subject to availability, once you are in a position to do more hours.
 - You can apply for a substantially different flexible working arrangement (for example a 20% difference in hours).
- 4 Your manager should hold a meeting with you to discuss your request as soon as possible and always within 28 days of receiving your request. At this meeting you can be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague and it is your responsibility to arrange this. It may be necessary for your manager to discuss your request with other colleagues who could be affected by your proposal and/or other teams if there might be an impact on them.
- 5 You should receive a decision from your manager within 14 days of your meeting unless you both agree to a different timescale. Their decision will be to either:
 - Agree to the request
 - Agree to your request with some modification
 - Reject the request.

If your manager agrees the request or agrees with some modification

If your manager agrees to your request, or if you both agree to a modification to your request, they must write to you within 14 days to confirm the agreed changes to your contract and the start date. Their letter should confirm:

- The flexible working arrangement agreed to.
- The date it will take effect.
- If the change is temporary, in which case it must include an end date.
- Agreed date(s) for reviewing the arrangement agreed with your manager.
- Any other relevant details.

A copy of the letter will be sent to HR Employee Life Cycle to be placed on your personal file.

If your manager rejects your request

Your manager can reject your proposal for one of the following specific reasons:

- The change would incur extra costs which will damage the business.
- The business won't be able to meet customer demand.
- The work can't be re-organised among other staff.
- The manager is unable to recruit someone to cover the workload.
- Flexible working will have a negative effect on quality and performance.
- There will be a lack of work to do during your proposed working times.
- The business is planning changes to the workforce.

Within 14 days of meeting with you your manager must write to you setting out their reasons for rejecting your request. Their letter, which must be dated, should include:

- The business ground(s) for refusing the application.
- A sufficient explanation as to why the business ground(s) for refusal apply in the circumstances.
- Details of the right to appeal.

Appeals

You have 5 days from the receipt of the outcome letter to lodge an appeal. Appeals under this policy are heard by a joint appeals panel. Full details can be found in the **Appeals policy**.



Additional guidance and support

This policy provides you with an overview of the purpose of the policy and the roles and responsibilities of those for whom it is intended. It also provides guidance in the Process section on the application of the policy. There are other documents which provide more detail and helpful guidance that should be read in conjunction with the policy and these are listed below.

Additional guidance

Appeal Process Flexible Working
Examples of Flexible Working
Flexible working requests
Flexitime Scheme
Making Reasonable Adjustments

Letters and forms

Flexible Working and Parental Leave Application/ Request Form also used for Job Share Applications
Flexible Working Appeal Form

Associated policies

Appeals policy
Flexitime Scheme
Part Time Working / Job Share policy



Author and owner: **Human Resources**

Contact: hr.advicecentre@bristol.gov.uk
0117 35 21400

Date adopted: 3 November 2014

The audience of this document is made aware that a physical copy may not be the latest available version. The latest version, which supersedes all previous versions, is available on The Source.

Those to whom this policy applies are responsible for familiarising themselves periodically with the latest version and for complying with policy requirements at all times.

History of most recent policy changes – must be completed

Version	Date	Change
V1.02	30 September 2021	Fixed broken links
V.1.01	6 May 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One application in any 12 month period• Appeal has to be lodged within 5 days
V.1.00	24 July 2014	Re-formatted policy

