

Flexible Working Policy

1. Aims of the policy

1.1. Employees have a statutory right to request a change in working pattern and North Halifax Partnership commit to being a flexible and fair employer, recognising all staff have commitments outside work.

1.2. This policy is intended to:

- Outline the procedure employees must follow when requesting a change in working pattern.
- Outline who is eligible to request a change.
- Be clear on the timescales that the organisation has in place to respond to a request.
- To provide an appeals process.

2. The statutory right

2.1. All employees have a statutory right to request to work flexibly and to have their flexible working application dealt with in a reasonable manner.

2.2. You are able to make two flexible working requests in a twelve month period. However, if you have submitted a flexible working request, you must wait until that one has been considered and any appeal has been dealt with, before submitting another.

3. Flexible working generally

3.1. You may wish to apply for flexible working to accommodate caring arrangements, charity work, external study or any other purpose. All eligible employees can apply for flexible working regardless of their seniority, current working pattern or whether they are employed on a permanent or fixed-term basis.

3.2. You can apply to vary the number of hours you work, the times you work or your usual place of work. However, employees may wish to consider if applying for an internal vacancy could be a way in which their working hours, days or location could be changed. See 'Types of Flexible working – Appendix 1.

3.3. Whilst the organisation is committed to being flexible on working patterns for its employees, the requirements of the business are paramount, and it may not be appropriate or possible for flexible working arrangements to apply to all jobs across all areas of the business.

4. The flexible working application procedure

4.1. Any request should be made in writing to your Manager, setting out:

1. the date of your request;
2. the flexible (or alternative) working arrangement you are requesting;
3. the date on which you would like the change to come into effect;
4. a statement that this is a statutory request;
5. if you have made a previous request, when you made that application. (**all in the Flexible working request form)

4.2. If your request does not contain all the required information, you will be asked to resubmit it with the necessary additional information. Any request that is incomplete or contains errors will not be automatically rejected.

5. Timescales for the flexible working application procedure

5.1. Once you submit your flexible working request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible. However, all requests will be dealt with within two months, from receipt of the request to notification of any appeal decision.

5.2. The timescales within this policy may be extended where this is mutually agreed.

6. Consultation meeting

6.1. If necessary, your Manager may arrange a consultation meeting with you to discuss the changes you have requested.

6.2. The consultation meeting will be held within 10 working of receiving your request. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay. You may be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

6.3. The consultation meeting is an opportunity for you to explain how the proposed working arrangements would benefit you and for us to consider and discuss any alternative flexible working options that may be available and suitable for you and the organisation.

6.4. At the consultation meeting, we urge you to be as open as possible about your needs so that we can engage in a constructive discussion about what is feasible.

6.5. Your request will be considered, and your Manager will make a business assessment on whether and, if so, how it could be accommodated. It is likely your request will be discussed with the relevant senior management team to consider if it can be accommodated. Your Manager will consider your proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up:

- the potential benefits to both you and the organisation; and
- any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

6.6. You will be notified of the outcome of your request in writing within 28 days of receiving the request.

6.7. Each request for flexible working will be dealt with individually, considering the likely effects the changes will have on the organisation. This means that if one colleagues' request is agreed, this does not set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted the same or a similar change to their work pattern. For example, having approved one flexible working request, this may mean that the business context has changed, and this may be considered when considering a second request from another employee against the above business grounds.

7. Agreed requests.

7.1. Your request may be granted in full or in part. For example:

- we may propose a modified version of your request.
- your request may be granted on a temporary basis; or
- you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

7.2. If your request is accepted, this will be confirmed in writing. This written confirmation will provide a start date of the new working pattern and confirm the variation in your contract of employment.

7.3. Where your request is accepted, unless otherwise agreed, it constitutes a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment. This means you do not have the right to revert to your previous pattern of working at a future date.

7.4. However, depending on the circumstances of the case, you may be asked if you are willing to agree to a temporary change to your terms and

conditions of employment for a specified period only. In that case, you would then revert back to your previous pattern of working after the specified period comes to an end.

8. Declined requests

8.1. If your request is refused, your Manager will explain the grounds for refusal in writing and confirm the internal appeal procedure.

8.2. You may appeal against a refusal of your flexible working request within five working days of the decision. Appeals must be made in writing and state the grounds for your appeal. The Chief Executive Officer will hear your appeal. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for a Board member to hear the appeal. The organisation reserves the right to convene an appeal panel of between 1-3 Board members. Members of an appeal panel should not have been involved in the original decision.

8.3. An appeal meeting will be set up with you to discuss your grounds for appeal. You may be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. The appeal panel will confirm the outcome of your appeal within 5 working days of the appeal meeting.

9. Grounds for declining your request

9.1. The grounds on which your flexible working application may be refused will be on one or more of the following business grounds:

- the burden of additional costs
- the detrimental effect it would have on the organisation's ability to meet customer/client demand
- the inability to re-organise work amongst existing staff
- the inability to recruit additional staff
- the detrimental impact it would have on quality
- the detrimental impact it would have on performance
- the insufficiency of work available during the period when you propose to work
- any planned structural changes.

9.2. In refusing an application, the written response will provide details relating to why the particular ground applies in the circumstances.

10. NHP may withdraw your request.

10.1. If you fail to attend the meeting to discuss your application or you fail to attend, without good reason, your appeal meeting. NHP will withdraw your application.

Appendix 1 – Types of flexible working

Types of flexible working could include:

1. Job Sharing: A job split between two people.
2. Working from home (or other location): Performing duties from home, or other location. Our Remote Working Policy
3. Part-time, or reduced hours: Working fewer hours than full time employees.
4. Compressed hours: Working full time hours in a shorter time frame. NHP has manager's guidance notes in place for dealing with requests for compressed hours.
5. Annualised hours: An agreed number of hours to be worked in a calendar year, usually to recognise seasonal requirements for the employee to work longer hours.
6. Phased retirement: Gradually reducing hours to a planned retirement date.