



Flexible Working Policy

Purpose:	All colleagues have the right to request flexible working. This policy explains what flexible working is, how colleagues can request it, and the process which the company will follow upon receipt of a request.
Scope:	<p>This policy applies to all colleagues at the Headlam group of Companies, and all subsidiaries.</p> <p>This procedure is non contractual and can be amended or updated from time to time.</p>
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Introduction

At Headlam, we believe that flexible working can increase motivation amongst colleagues, promote work-life balance, reduce stress and improve performance and productivity. We also understand the importance of helping colleagues balance their work life with priorities at home such as parental and caring responsibilities, life-long learning, charity work, leisure activities and other interests. In turn we recognise that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with the demands of the business. That is why we are committed to granting requests for flexible working whenever it is reasonably practicable for us to do so.

What is flexible working?

Flexible working is a variation made to colleagues' terms and conditions of employment or general working patterns. It can involve, but it not limited to:

- Reduced working hours
- Job sharing
- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexible undefined hours
- Shift swapping
- Home working

Flexible working can be temporary or permanent.

Making a flexible working request

All colleagues who are employed by the company can make a formal written request for flexible working. Colleagues should send their requests directly to their line manager via email or letter. Requests must include:

- The date of the application
- The change which the colleague is seeking to their terms and conditions of employment or general working pattern
- The date on which the colleague would like the change to come into effect
- Whether or not the colleague has previously made an application(s) for flexible working and the date on which it/they were made

If the flexible working request is being made by a disabled colleague as a measure to support them, they should state this in their request.

Attached to this policy is a template which colleagues may find useful when making their requests, but it is not mandatory.

Flexible working meeting

Line managers will deal with flexible working requests as quickly as possible after receiving them, adhering to the timescales specified within this policy.

The line manager will usually arrange a meeting with the colleague to deal with their request. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the colleague and the company. In rare circumstances it may be possible for line managers to approve a request without further discussion and therefore a meeting will not be necessary.

Colleagues are entitled to be accompanied to this meeting by a fellow colleague or a Trade Union Representative.

Outcome of a flexible working request

After the meeting, the line manager will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the colleague and the company against any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis: agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another colleague to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The company will endeavour to grant as many requests as possible either in full or in part: for example, the company may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the colleague may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. Unless otherwise agreed, the changes will be permanent and the colleague will have no automatic right to revert to their previous working pattern at a later date.

It may be necessary to reject a request, if this is the case, the line manager will consult with the colleague to discuss this for one or more of the prescribed reasons below:

- The burden of additional costs
- An inability to reorganise work among existing colleagues
- An inability to recruit additional staff
- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Insufficient work for the periods the colleague proposes to work
- Incompatibility with planned structural change to the business

The line manager must not reject a request for any other reason and must consult to discuss this reason with the colleague.

The line manager's decision will be confirmed in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than the deadline set out below. If the request is rejected or only partially granted, the colleague will have the right of appeal.

Appeal

If a colleague is dissatisfied with the way in which their flexible working request was handled, or if they consider their line manager's decision to be wrong or unjust, they should appeal within 14 days of receiving their decision in writing. Details of how to appeal will be contained within the outcome letter.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the company will allocate a suitable independent manager to hear it. That manager will write to the colleague inviting them to attend an appeal hearing, and notifying them of their right to be accompanied by a colleague or a Trade Union Representative.

Following the appeal hearing, the manager will conduct any investigations which are necessary before issuing their decision to the colleague in writing. This decision will be final and there will be no further right of appeal.

Timescales

The company will ensure all requests are dealt with within three months from receipt of the request to finalising the appeal (should there be one). Within that two months we endeavour to do the following:

- Hold the flexible working meeting within 14 days of receipt of the request
- Confirm the decision in writing no more than 14 days after the flexible working meeting
- Hold an appeal hearing within 14 days of receipt of receiving notice of appeal
- Confirm the appeal decision to the colleague within 14 days of holding the appeal hearing

These timescales can be extended if there is a genuine business need, and if both the colleague and the line manager are in agreement. For example, the line manager and the colleague may agree to extend the time limit to give the colleague a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

Restrictions

The company is only obliged to formally consider two flexible working request per colleague in any 12-month period. However, exceptions will be made for disabled colleagues who are requesting flexible working as part of a conversation about reasonable adjustments which will support them in the workplace.

End of Policy