

Introduction

This policy sets out the Company's approach to flexible working arrangements. We recognise that flexible working can provide benefits to both employees and the Company, and aims to support staff where possible to manage the balance between work and home life.

It is the Company' policy to encourage open discussion with employees. An employee that thinks they may benefit from flexible working is encouraged to contact their line manager to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options.

Scope

This policy applies to any employee with at least 26 weeks of employment with ABCA Systems Ltd and have not submitted another request in the preceding 12-month period.

Employees and management need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

Where a flexible working arrangement is proposed the Company will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

Types of flexible working

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request but the Company recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which may be suitable:

- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexitime
- Home-working
- Job-sharing
- Overtime
- Part-time working

Temporary working arrangements

Occasionally, employees may need to request a temporary change to their working arrangements for a short period, for example to enable them to deal with a temporary or urgent situation.

In these circumstances staff should approach their line manager informally in the first instance, outlining their request and the likely duration. Line managers should respond to these requests as quickly as possible, applying the principles of this policy.

Normally temporary arrangements will be for periods of no longer than three months. Requests to repeatedly extend a temporary arrangement will not normally be agreed.

At the end of any temporary changes, the employee will revert to their normal working pattern.

Process

All requests must be made in by completing the HR_AB96 Flexible Working Request Form which can be found on the staff intranet. The form should then be submitted to your line manager.

If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

Upon receiving the request, the line manager will review, with HR if required, and if it can be approved straight away and if so a meeting may not be required.

Where further information is required usually a meeting will be arranged with the employee to:

- discuss the request
- find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- how it could be of benefit to both the employee and organisation
- consider alternative working arrangements

If a meeting is arranged, it will be held within 28 days of receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Company.

The flexible working request will then be considered, looking at the potential benefits and adverse effects to the employee and to the Company in implementing the proposed 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 employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable. The request may be agreed in full, in part or refused.

Other possible outcomes before the above may include, a modified version of the request being proposed, the granting on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

If the request is agreed, then the employee will be sent a confirmation letter which will include details of the new arrangements.

Trial periods

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee, and/or the Company, a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged the Company will allow sufficient time for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

The trial period will normally last between one and three months. The length of the trial period will be agreed in advance.

Appeal

The employee has the right to appeal the decision if their request is refused or is only agreed in part.

The employee may appeal within 14 days of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing. The appeal will be heard within as soon as reasonably practicable and the employee will then be informed of the outcome to their appeal.