

Human Resources

Flexible Working Policy

July 2019

Scope of policy

1. This policy applies to all employees working in:
 - Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
 - Core Defra
 - Rural Payments Agency (RPA)
 - Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
 - Senior Civil Servants (SCS)
2. Any employee may request to work flexibly. In making requests individuals are asked to consider business needs and give thought to how their request may be reasonably managed. Managers should consider all requests and by working with the individual, make every effort to accommodate a pattern of work that meets both their needs and the overall needs of the business for effective delivery.

Principles

3. We recognise the benefits of being a truly flexible employer to help improve work-life balance, support health and wellbeing and support a diverse workforce. The following are a few of the benefits of flexible working:
 - it supports the individual's work preferences, resulting in better motivated employees who want to stay in the job. Research shows that flexible workers are more productive and committed to their employers
 - remote and home working, where this is possible, will help support our accommodation strategy by reducing permanent office space
 - building a diverse team offers more innovation and often a greater range of cover either in terms of days, location or hours
4. We fully support the government's vision to see all employers make flexible working a reality, and the Civil Service's commitment to becoming the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020; flexible working has an important role to play in achieving these ambitions.
5. Everyone has the statutory right to request flexible working (known as 'making a statutory application') but we want to go further by asking everyone to play their part in

having conversations from the outset on how they work together and deliver for the business, in the best way, taking account of people's work/life balance. Additional information about this statutory right can be found on the Gov.uk website.

6. There may be roles and situations where business need, systems or process are such that the ability to work flexibly is limited. Managers and individuals should make it a priority to consider all forms of flexibility that could apply and encourage creative ways of working.
7. Managers should always start from the position of supporting a request unless there is a compelling business reason not to. It is important that both the individual and manager consider the impact on business delivery.
8. We will offer a range of options for working flexibly (more details on this in the section below).
9. Any arrangements should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the business, the team and the individual. As a minimum a review should take place after the first six months and then annually. It may on occasion be necessary to amend arrangements. .
10. No-one should be disadvantaged for working flexibly.

Options and approach for working flexibly

11. Individual organisations within Defra Group have a variety of flexible working options some of which are listed below. You should consult your organisation's intranet for details and guidance on the process specific to you.
12. You and your manager should explore available options and how they may suit you and the job that you do. This may mean that some options are not suitable (for example if your job has specific hours, requires you to be in the office, or undertake fieldwork) however, that doesn't stop you both seeing if when, how or where you work could be adjusted to provide more flexibility. Some of the options include:

When you work

- vary your start and finish times
- work part-time hours
- work compressed hours
- vary the hours or days on which you work

How you work:

- job share with a colleague

Where you work:

- work from home or another office
13. Please be aware that you should not be looking after dependants while working. However you can discuss with your manager alternative working patterns.
 14. Flexible working arrangements can be agreed on either an informal or formal basis. Informal requests are appropriate where the arrangement does not require a contractual change and there is no impact on, or change required, to pay, pension or annual leave entitlement. Individuals and managers should however be mindful of the [potential tax implications](#) of creating a secondary work place.
 15. You and your manager should regularly review your arrangement to ensure it continues to meet both your needs and those of the business. You may be asked to reconsider your working pattern but this should be discussed with your line manager as part of your regular dialogue.
 16. If you have an urgent reason to adapt your hours, then you may wish to consider a short-term arrangement.