

# Flexible working

## A guide for staff

Flexible working is about adapting working patterns to meet individual needs and meeting the needs of our nurseries at the same time. Being able to work flexibly is increasingly seen as a necessary for a good work-life balance and it has been proven to improve health and wellbeing.

## THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT

You may need a certain working pattern, or to change how you work, for a variety of reasons. This could be due to childcare needs, looking after your own health, studying – the list goes on. It may be a long-term need or preference, or it might be temporary. Thinking through what you need, can help you work out what flexibility might work for you.

### HOW MUCH:

**Part time:** a reduction in workload and working hours. This could include fewer or shorter shifts.

**Job share:** in which (typically) two people share the responsibilities of a role usually carried out by one person.

## TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

The first step is to get clear on the different kinds of flexible working that are available and to explore what flexibility can be built into your role. Here are some of the most common forms of flexible working:

### WHERE:

- Remote working: working from home, other offices or nurseries. Although it is not possible to work remotely all of the time, there may be activities in your role which could be carried out remotely, for example planning, report writing or study/training.

### WHEN:

- Compressed hours: working extra hours on certain days to work fewer days each week, fortnight or month
- Staggered hours: the working day starts and ends at a different, agreed time
- Flexi time: varying start, finish or lunch breaks within agreed limits
- Annualised hours: working a set number of hours or days per year, at fixed times e.g. term-time only

## WHAT FLEXIBILITY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

### “I’d like to change my working pattern because ...”

There could be a range of answers, for example “...I’m finding the long days really tiring” “...I need to spend more time with my own children” “...my partner is unwell and I need to be looking after them more than before” “I need to focus more on studying for my qualifications”.

This can help you think through different options which could include:

- working your full-time hours in fewer days
- reducing your hours but being available at different times OR requesting fixed hours of work
- asking for a fixed early (or late) shift.

Remember different options might be available for you!

### FORMAL OR INFORMAL?



An informal arrangement is an agreement between you and your line manager and requires no change in your contract. This works well if you need a temporary adjustment to when you work. It may also include swapping shifts with colleagues.

A formal flexible working arrangement needs to follow specific steps, be documented and sometimes includes a change in your contract. Examples include part time work or working all your hours in fewer days and having a day off.

## STEPS YOU SHOULD TAKE:

- 1 Work out what you need and give some thought as to which different options might work for you
- 2 Having explored how the different kinds of flexible working might work for you, it's time to think about how you could make them work in practice.

Flexibility works best when it works both ways. So it's important to think through what your nursery needs from your role, as well as what you need. The best, most sustainable flexible working options are those in which both sets of needs are met.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What changes would you need to make to your workload to make this pattern work?
- How would this impact the children in your care?
- What would be the effect on your team, room and wider colleagues?



## NEW FLEXIBLE WORKING LEGISLATION IS COMING IN 2024

The legislation around flexible working is changing to support workers in when and where they work. This means you can:

- request a flexible working arrangement regardless of how long you've been working with the organisation
- make up to 2 formal requests in a 12-month period

Your employer needs to respond to your request within two months.

There will no longer be a requirement for you to explain what the effect might be on your employer and how it can be dealt with.

More information can be found [here](#).