

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

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POLICY SUMMARY
<p>This Policy sets out the arrangements for flexible working within the Trust. It sets out our approach to equality in flexible working and strongly encourages managers to consider allowing staff to work in new and innovative ways in order to retain them in the organisation. It supports our Recruitment and Retention Strategies and promotes a healthy work-life balance for staff.</p>
The Trust monitors the implementation of and compliance with this policy in the following ways;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Staff Survey Key Findings on Flexible Working • Flexible Working Requests HR Monitoring • Numbers of staff accessing these documents and the Flexible working guide.

Services	Applicable	Comments
Trustwide	✓	

The Director responsible for monitoring and reviewing this procedure is Executive Director of Corporate Governance

ESSEX PARTNERSHIP UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

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ESSEX PARTNERSHIP UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Assurance Statement

This Policy aims to ensure that the Trust has a systematic and planned approach to encouraging, promoting and supporting flexible working practices and demonstrates the Trust's commitment to being a "an employer of choice" whilst reinforcing our values 'open, compassionate, empowering'.

All staff are encouraged to consider working in ways that are flexible to suit their work-life balance – taking into account the context of service needs and safety of patients. The Trust is committed to the fair treatment of its employees, potential employees and the users of its services and will ensure requests for flexible working are fair and free from discrimination. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working and Job Sharing Arrangement procedures, the Retirement Procedure and their associated appendices.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Flexible Working is a working arrangement that differs from what is often thought of as 'normal' working arrangements.

1.2 Many people want or need to work hours that fit in with their domestic and other commitments and want greater choice over where, when and how they work.

1.3 This Policy will ensure that all applications are considered and treated equally and fairly – and in line with the range of legislation which covers flexible working including the Employment Act 2002 and the Work and Families Act 2006.

1.4 Employees can only make one application for flexible working in any given 12 month period. The Manager will consider how to accommodate the request whilst balancing the needs of the service.

1.5 New working arrangements can be trialled for a period of between 3 to 6 months in anticipation of a longer term permanent arrangement.

1.6 This policy and associated procedure are written in accordance with the Agenda for Change terms and conditions of service in particular section 34 – Flexible Working.

1.7 The Trust recognises that flexible working is a vital part of working life balance and that it has a demonstrable impact on our recruitment and retention strategies. All Managers are urged to consider it seriously and find solutions to potential barriers.

1.8 This Policy will ensure there are flexible working arrangements that are innovative and diverse, but which reflect both the needs of employees whilst continuing to meet the needs of the service.

1.9 It is a key element of workforce planning and can ensure that vital skills and experience are retained. There is a need to develop and introduce initiatives, which attract and retain high quality staff, enabling them to reach and use their full potential.

1.10 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working Procedure, Job Share Procedure and relevant appendices. The Trust has also developed a detailed guide to flexible working and staff are encouraged to share new and innovative ways of working for inclusion in the guide.

1.11 In line with the ACAS code of practice, all flexible working applications must be concluded within 3 months from the date of the application/request made to the Trust. This 3 month period must also include the conclusion of any appeal process.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This Policy and associated Procedures apply to all employees who have at least 26 weeks continuous service with the Trust. Reckonable or continuous NHS service is not applicable in the calculation of the 26 weeks.

2.2 All employees who meet the above criteria have the statutory right to be able to make an application to request flexible working once a year.

2.3 This Policy and Procedures provide guidelines on application and implementation of flexible working.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 This policy and associated procedures aim to provide staff and managers with guidance on all aspects of Flexible Working which values and supports staff.

3.2 The Trust is committed to the development of different working patterns, which enable a better work-life balance.

3.3 The Trust must ensure that all flexible working arrangements do not have a detrimental impact on quality or performance and the ability to meet patient needs.

3.4 Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union / professional association representative or work colleague at any meeting in the flexible working procedure.

3.5 Employees working flexibly must be provided with equal access to all other opportunities (e.g. Learning and Development) and should not be at any detriment because they are working flexibly.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Responsibility for co-ordinating the development, approval and distribution of this policy and its associated procedures rests with the Executive Director of Corporate Governance & Strategy.

4.2 The Line Manager has responsibility for considering each individual request, in an unbiased way whilst:

- balancing services needs
- taking into consideration other similar requests that have been granted or refused
- adhering to the Trust's Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights (CP24)
- following Flexible Working procedures
- Liaising with payroll to ensure appropriate payments are made.

4.3 The Human Resources department is responsible for providing advice and guidance to staff and managers in relation to this policy and its associated procedural guidelines.

4.4 All staff are responsible for applying for flexible working in line with the timescales and documentation outlined in the associated procedural guidelines and for following them at all stages thereafter.

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 The Human Resources Department monitors take up and will ensure that all requests are dealt with in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner.

5.2 Information about flexible working requests will be produced annually as part of the Equality & Diversity Report and will be shared with all relevant committees and published on our external facing website.

6.0 POLICY REFERENCE INFORMATION

6.1 The following legislation and guidance appertains to this policy:

- Equality Act 2010
- Working Time Directive 1998 Amended in April 2003
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Agenda for Change Handbook – Section 34
- Work and Families Act 2006
- Flexible Working Regulations 2014

7.0 REFERENCE TO OTHER TRUST POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

7.1 Where applicable, this Policy should be used in conjunction with:

- Training & Study Leave arrangements
- Employee Wellbeing and Sickness Absence
- Rostering Staff Clinical Guideline
- Leave
- Working Time Regulations
- Recruitment and Retention Policy
- Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights
- Dignity, Respect and Grievance

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