



FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

JRH Support (the Company) believes that its staff members are its most valuable asset and is committed to attracting and retaining the very best and utilising all the talent and experience available within the community. It also appreciates that the UK workforce is becoming increasingly diverse and includes a high percentage of parents and individuals with other caring responsibilities, as well as those whose interests and aspirations impact on their time. It therefore appreciates that the standard Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm working week is, in many cases, incompatible with increasing demand for a better work-life balance.

JRH Support recognises the importance of helping its employees balance their work and home life by offering flexible working arrangements that enable them to balance their working life with other priorities. In turn it recognises that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with the demands of the business.

This policy statement aims to set out the ways in which flexible working can increase staff motivation, build better relationships between JRH Support and its employees, increase the rate of retention of staff, reduce absence, attract new talent, promote work-life balance, and reduce employee stress, and in doing so improve the Company's efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. It provides a description of the issues involved, taking into account the possible benefits of each kind of flexible working to both employees and the Company, but also raising possible drawbacks and areas of potential concern.

The policy statement considers the following options, but JRH Support recognises that there may be alternatives, and that the working pattern that may suit any particular individual could be a unique one involving a combination of options:

- Job-sharing
- Part-time working
- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexitime
- Term-time working
- Swapping hours
- Voluntary-reduced working time
- Working from home
- Career breaks
- Flexible shift working

THE BUSINESS NEED

Although the Company is committed to providing the widest possible range of working patterns for its workforce, both management and employees need to be

realistic and to recognise that the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the business.

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

- The cost of the proposed arrangement
- The effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- The level of supervision that the post-holder requires
- The structure of the person's area of work and staff resources
- Other issues specific to the individual's area of work
- An analysis of the tasks specific to the role, including their frequency and duration
- An analysis of the workload of the role

ELIGIBILITY

Although it is recognised that not all of the flexible working patterns considered will be suitable for all sections of the Company's workforce, there should be no arbitrary barriers. Employees in all areas and levels of the Company will be considered for flexible working regardless of their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, or religion or belief, or whether they have a disability, their level of seniority, their current working pattern, or whether they are employed on a permanent or fixed-term basis. However, there is no automatic right for employees to change to any of the flexible working patterns - each application will be considered on the basis of the particular work involved and any detrimental effect the change could have on individual, team or business performance.

RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING

Employees can make flexible working requests from day one of their employment and can make 2 requests in any 12-month period.

While it is the Company's policy to be flexible on working patterns for all its employees, in order to ensure that it is complying with its legal obligations concerning the right to request flexible working, there may be situations where precedence has to be given to those who are eligible for this right.

THE APPLICATION

An application must:

- Be made in writing and state that it is such an application
- State whether a previous application has been made under this procedure and if so, when
- Specify the change applied for and the date on which it is proposed the change should become effective
- Be dated

The application must also state whether the variation requested is made in pursuance of a reasonable adjustment under the disability discrimination provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH AN APPLICATION

Discussion with employee

A discussion regarding the application will be held with the employee following receipt of the application unless the employer notifies the employee in writing of agreement to the variation. Employers are required to consult with the employee as a means of exploring the available options before rejecting a flexible working request.

The time and place of the discussion will be convenient to both employer and employee, but the employer must respond to requests within 2 months.

Notice of decision

Once a decision has been made by the Company following the discussion, the employee will be notified of the outcome. Where the employer's decision is to agree to the application, the notice will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which the variation is to take effect.

Where the decision is to refuse the application, the notice will state which of the specified grounds for refusal are considered to apply, with an explanation of why those grounds apply in relation to the application and set out the appeal procedure.

Right of appeal

An employee may appeal against the Company's decision to refuse an application. The notice of appeal must be in writing, setting out the grounds for appeal and be dated.

The Company will discuss the appeal with the employee once the grounds for appeal are received, unless the employer gives the employee written notification that the original decision has been overturned and specifies the variation which has now been agreed and the date on which it will take effect. If an appeal meeting is held, the time and place must be convenient to both employer and employee.

After the appeal meeting has been held, the employer will give the employee written, dated, notice of the decision on the appeal. Where the employer upholds the appeal the notice will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which it is to take effect. Where the employer dismisses the appeal the notice will state the grounds for the decision and contain a sufficient explanation as to why those grounds apply.

Acceptance of variation

Where the Company accepts the employee's application, a permanent variation of the employee's contract will result, unless the Company agrees otherwise. This means that once a change has been made, there is no right for the employee to revert back to their previous terms and conditions. However, further applications for variations may be made provided they do not exceed 2 applications in total in any 12 month period.

Timescale

An application for flexible working will be concluded within 3 months of the date of the application.

Accompaniment

At any meetings held to discuss the application, including any appeal meetings, the employee can be accompanied by a colleague of their choice.

WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION BY EMPLOYEE

The Company will treat an application as withdrawn under the statutory provisions where the employee:

- Has notified the employer, orally or in writing, that the application is withdrawn.
- Without reasonable cause, fails to attend a meeting or appeal meeting more than once; or
- Without reasonable cause, refused to provide the employer with information the employer requires in order to assess whether a contract variation should be agreed to.

The Company will confirm the withdrawal of the application to the employee in writing unless the employee has already provided written notice of the withdrawal.

Paul Battershall
General Manager