

The right to apply for flexible working

Purpose of the procedure

This provision forms part of St. Anne's overall Work-Life Balance strategy which aims to provide staff with the opportunity to balance the demands of work and personal life, to achieve fulfilment and well-being, whilst meeting the needs of the service. This procedure will enable all employees to request to work flexibly to accommodate commitments such as caring for children or adults. There is not an automatic right to work flexibly, as there will always be circumstances when St. Anne's is unable to accommodate the employee's desired work pattern. However, St. Anne's undertakes to seriously consider such requests and to discuss flexible working patterns which suit both employer and employee.

Scope of provisions

St. Anne's is willing to consider any reasonable requests from any of its employees who wish to work flexibly, providing the employee has at least three months' continuous service.

Only one application to work flexibly can be made during the course of a twelve month period unless there are exceptional circumstances to be taken into account. An accepted application will mean a permanent change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment.

In certain circumstances, employees may wish to apply for a different pattern of working for a temporary period. This will be agreed, subject to the manager being able to cover the remaining hours for the temporary period.

Forms of flexible working

This may mean a change in the hours or the times of work and/or to work from home. Applications for a change in working pattern will not always require a significant alteration. For example, a parent may simply wish to start work half an hour later to take their child to school and make up the time later in the day. In many worksites, such minor adjustments may be possible under existing flexitime or rotas.

Examples of flexible working include :

Flexi-time - Where employees have the freedom to work in any way they choose outside a set core of hours determined by the employer. Extra time worked can be accrued and taken at a later date in accordance with the flexi-time policy.

Compressed working hours - Employees can cover their total number of hours in fewer working days, e.g. a 10 day fortnight or four day week.

Reduction in working hours - A permanent or temporary arrangement to work a contractually reduced number of hours.

Job sharing - One full time job is split between two workers who agree the hours between them.

Time off in lieu (TOIL) - Workers take time off to compensate for extra hours worked.

Term-time working- A worker remains on a permanent contract but can take paid/unpaid leave during school holidays. As with all such requests, agreement will be subject to the needs of the service and that the holiday weeks can be covered appropriately.

Annual hours - Allows for working hours to be adjusted during busier periods, with an overall number of hours to be worked over the twelve month period.

Home working - Workers spend all or part of their week working from home, on a regular or ad-hoc basis. This requires the employee to have access to the internet and to have mobile phone facilities. Where home working is ad hoc and equipment not provided by St Anne's, the employee is responsible for carrying out a risk assessment of their home working space. The nature of the work to be carried out at home should be agreed by the manager and employee.

Sabbatical/career break - Employees may apply to take sabbatical or career break breaks of between 3 months' and 2 years' duration, for example to study or travel abroad. During this period, contractual benefits such as holiday and sickness entitlement will not accrue. St. Anne's will guarantee that the employee can return to work on the same grade and in the same capacity but cannot guarantee a return to work at the same work-site. Continuous service will be recognised for the purposes of redundancy or termination of employment.

How to apply

To initiate the process employees must make a considered application to their line manager in writing using the attached form. It is important that careful consideration is given to which working pattern will be suitable, any financial implications it might have in cases where the desired working pattern will involve a drop in salary and any effects it will have on St. Anne's business and how these might be accommodated. Employees should be aware that they may only make one application to work flexibly in any twelve month period.

The proposal should be in writing and should include :

- Reason for the proposed change (e.g. refer to legislation if applicable and whether an application has been made within the last year).
- Description of current working pattern (days/hours/times worked).
- Description of working pattern requested (days/hours/time to be worked)
- Date of proposed change
- The effect on St. Anne's and colleagues.
- How you think the effect on St. Anne's and colleagues can be dealt with

What will happen next

The line manager will carefully consider the request and will arrange to meet with the employee within 28 days. This will provide St. Anne's and the employee with the opportunity to explore the desired work pattern in depth and to discuss how best it might be accommodated. It will also provide an opportunity to consider other alternative working patterns should there be problems in accommodating the desired work pattern outlined in the employee's application. Employees can bring a colleague or Trade Union representative to the meeting if they so wish.

The manager will consider and discuss service, job and budget considerations, including :

- The ability to meet service requirements
- The effect on St. Anne's
- How the change can be accommodated
- Continuity to service users
- Any additional costs
- Impact on colleagues in the immediate team
- Ability to recruit to any balance of hours which may result
- Impact on quality or performance
- Ensuring effective management, communication and supervision arrangements
- Previous requests for similar adjustments
- Impact on other flexible working arrangements

Within 14 days after the date of the meeting, the line manager will write to the employee to either agree to a new work pattern and a start date; or to provide a clear business ground as to why the application cannot be accepted and the reasons why the ground(s) applies in the circumstances. If St. Anne's wants to take further action before notifying the employee with their final decision, this will be communicated and the reason for the delay will be explained.

Right of appeal

Employees have the right to appeal St. Anne's decision within 14 days of it being notified, through a further discussion with their manager in the first instance. The appeal process is specially designed to be in keeping with the overall aim of the right of encouraging both parties to reach a satisfactory outcome at the workplace.

If employees are still unhappy with the decision they should refer to the St. Anne's Grievance Procedure and another manager not previously involved in the case will review the decision.

FLEXIBLE WORKING APPLICATION FORM

Note to Staff:

Please use this form to make an application to work flexibly.

You should be aware that the process surrounding your application could take up to 10 weeks – you should therefore ensure that you submit your application to your line manager well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help your line manager to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all questions, as otherwise your application may not be valid. When completing sections 3 & 4 think about what effect your change in working patterns will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues. Once you have completed the form you should immediately forward it to your line manager (you should also keep a copy). Your manager will then have 28 days after the day the application is received in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If the request is granted this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

You may find it helpful before submitting your request to work flexibly to consider the options available to you. You may wish to discuss this with your manager and/or Human Resources.

1 Personal Details	
NAME	
MANAGER	
WORK SITE	
JOB TITLE	
DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT	

2 I confirm that I have not made a request to work flexibly during the past 12 months

2a Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

2b Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/ Hours/times worked). If applying for home-working, please describe the work you would intend to carry out at home and how frequently.

(you may continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

2c I would like this working pattern to commence from (date):



3 Impact of the new working pattern
 I think this change in my working pattern will affect my role and colleagues as follows:

4 Accommodating the new working pattern
 I think the effect on my role and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:

Name:	Date:
Signed:	

.....

Acknowledgement of Request:

Dear

I confirm that I received your request to change your working pattern on

I shall be arranging a meeting to discuss your application within 28 days.

Signed:

Job Title: