Flexible Working Arrangements

You have a right to request a change to the terms of your working arrangement. This might include a change to the total number of hours, the hours you work, the location of your work, how you take your breaks or changing your shift pattern or working from home.

Some of the PACE teamwork in shifts which means it is most common to arrange your working pattern with your manager/centre staff.

This process is for when you want to make a change to your working arrangement rather than making a short-term change.

If your request is accepted this will usually mean a permanent change to your contact and you do not have a legal right to return to your original agreement. However, if the new arrangement is found not to work, we may have to change back to the original agreement or offer an alternative. You should also be aware that changes might affect your ability to attend meetings, events or trainings.

Agreeing and implementing a change will take minimum of 6-8 weeks.

By law you are limited to two requests within a 12-month period. We might be able to accommodate additional requests, please speak with your manager.

Flexible working principles

We want all the PACE team to work hours which best suits you, however, we might not be able to accept requests if it affects our ability to deliver our services.

If flexible working requests are made we will respond according to these principles:

- Everyone who requests flexible working will be treated fairly and the same process is available to everyone. However, we cannot promise the same outcome to everyone.
- Any changes cannot affect our ability to deliver our services or have a negative effect on other PACE staff.
- Requests can only be approved if there is work available for you to do.
- Managers will consider job performance when evaluating a request for flexible working. Information relating to job performance will be gathered through supervisions.

Requesting flexible working

Before you make your request we recommending talking informally and getting advice from your manager, colleagues and/or Human Resources. Also please think through your situation:

- What is the work/life issue you are currently facing?

- Why is your present working arrangement unsatisfactory
- When do you need extra time? How much extra time?
- What impact would any change have on your salary and benefits?
- What effect will the change have on others and our ability to deliver services.

We recommend that you reach an agreement with your manager about the changes before you make your formal request. You can then send a flexible working request form.

How a request should be made

Under the formal flexible working regime, a request for flexible working must be sent to your manager in writing and must:

- State that it is a flexible working request
- Be dated
- Set out the change that you want and when you want it to take effect
- State whether you have previously made any flexible working requests to us and, if so, when
- State whether you have previously made any requests for a predictable working pattern to us and, if so, when
- You can only have one live request at any one time. Once a request has been made, it remains live until any of the following occur:
- A decision about the request is made by us [(and any appeal is concluded)]
- The request is withdrawn
- An outcome is mutually agreed
- The statutory two-month period for deciding requests ends without an agreed extension

After you have made the request

1. Your manager/Human Resources will send you written acknowledgment. Your manager will invite you to a meeting to discuss your request. We aim to have this meeting within 5 working days of you having made your request.

2. Following the meeting they will prepare notes and share their recommendation with Human Resources within 5 working days of the meeting. It would be usual for a request to be agreed if the manager was not supportive. To support your request, they will need to be convinced that:
    a. You both agree on how this change will affect your working responsibilities
    b. Your requested work pattern is compatible with work requirements
    c. Colleagues will be content with your requested work pattern and the are no issues which can't be addressed in relation to team dynamics.

3. Your request will then be reviewed by the management team. They might approve the request, suggest a trial change (likely for three months), or turn down your

request.

4. If your request is straightforward and can be approved, they will send you their response in writing, this is called a decision notice. It will outline the change, give start and review dates. If required, they may send a new contract.

5. If your request is complex and/or they are not able to approve your request, they will invite you to a meeting. You can bring a colleague with you. This meeting will give you the chance to explore your request in detail and /or discuss alternative options.

6. After this meeting the appropriate people will consider the options and will send you a decision notice. It will outline the change, give start and review dates (after 1 and 3 months). If required, they may send a new contract. See review meeting form.

7. If your request is rejected, they will include a sufficient reason for the decision and explain the appeals process.

PACE aims to provide a decision notice within 28 days of the date you submitted your request. If your manager and/or the person or people who need to consider your request are unavailable (on holiday or sick leave) when you make your request the process might be delayed by a short time.

Agreeing a request

If we accept your flexible working request, then your new work pattern will form a variation to your contract of employment and will be permanent unless otherwise agreed. We will confirm your new terms in writing.

We will review your new working pattern with you at regular intervals following the approval of your request to make sure that it is working as expected and meeting the needs and expectations of both you and the business.

Rejecting a request

We will try to accommodate flexible working requests where possible. If we cannot accept your request, we will explain why in writing and will rely on one or more of the following reasons:

- It will cost PACE too much.
- We cannot reorganise the work among other staff.
- We cannot recruit more staff.
- There will be a negative effect on quality.
- There will be a negative effect on our ability to meet customer demand.
- There will be a negative effect on performance.
- There's not enough work for you to do when you've requested to work.

- There are planned changes (for example, if we intend to reorganise) and we don't think the request will fit with these plans.

If we reject your request, you have the option to appeal our decision.

Trial periods

The legal framework surrounding flexible working does not include any right to agree to the request on a 'trial period' basis. However, it may sometimes be useful for both you and us to 'try out' the new working arrangements before a permanent change is made to your contract of employment. In these circumstances, we may seek to agree a trial period with you. We will not impose a trial period on you. If you reject the offer of a trial period, we will have to agree or reject your flexible working request straight away. If you agree to a trial period, then we will set out this agreement in writing. The letter may also include reference to an extension of the two-month time limit for dealing with flexible working requests (as this period would otherwise continue to run during the trial).

At the end of any agreed trial period, we will make a final decision on your flexible working request and will communicate this in writing. If we decide to reject your request, then you will have the option to appeal this decision.

Appeals

If you think the decision was wrong or unfair you can appeal the decision by sending an appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees in writing. Appeals need to be sent within 14 days of receiving your decision notice. Your appeal letter must explain the basis for your appeal e.g. there is new information that might affect the decision, that you feel the process was unfair. Please also include what you would ideally like to happen next.

The Chair will invite you to a meeting within 28 days of receiving your appeal. You can bring a colleague with you.

Monitoring the process

All paperwork relating to your request, whether it is approved or rejected, will be saved in your personnel file. If your request is approved Human Resources will update your records on the HR system.

The Chair will review requests to ensure a consistent and fair approach is being followed.