

Flexible Working Policy

► WHO IS THIS FOR?



UNITED KINGDOM



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



ISLE OF MAN



GUERNSEY



JERSEY



TEAM MEMBERS



LINE MANAGERS

We aim to create a great place for our teams to work in, so we continually explore ways of maintaining a friendly, helpful, and professional working environment. This policy outlines what flexible working means, the options available for team members to request it and the rules and process that surround it.

It also describes who is accountable and responsible for the respective actions and is in line with legal requirements and those set out by Whitbread.

This policy does not form part of any team members contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

From: Human Resources

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► WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Under the UK Employment Rights Act 1996, team members have a statutory right to ask to work flexibly after 26 weeks' employment. This policy has been formed based on the ACAS code of practice for flexible working.

Failure to follow the policy will be deemed as a serious breach and may result in disciplinary action.

Flexible working is changing or varying a working pattern to suit the needs of an individual, team and business. The term is often used for team members to request flexible working. This is known as a 'formal request' and is used where a team member wants to make a permanent, contractual change to their working pattern. There is an eligibility criteria and a clear and specific process that the team member and their line manager must follow when making formal requests.

A team member can at any time discuss a preferred working pattern with their line manager on an informal basis. If the team member is not looking for the arrangement to be permanent, and/or is able to be flexible themselves they can discuss and agree these arrangements with their line manager - this is known as an 'informal request'.

The table below helps explain when an informal or formal request may be appropriate:

Informal Request	Formal Request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have preferences around your work pattern, but these are not fixed • You know these preferences are likely to change over the next 12 months • You would like them to be accommodated as much as possible but accept it may not always be practical • You do not want to change your contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You want to make a permanent change to your working pattern • You need this change to be something that is fixed • It is not something that is likely to change again in the next 12 months • You want to change your contract.

Some examples of types of flexible working are:

- Increasing, reducing, or changing normal working hours or days
- Reducing the number of days worked each week (this could still be keeping the same total number of hours)
- Working from a different location
- Working from home (where applicable)
- Altering term-time hours, days, or location
- A job share

More detail on the process and the types of flexible working can be found in the [WHAT MAKES IT WORK?](#) section.

Hybrid Working (Support Centre only - but not those who are field based or those required to work in a fixed location)

Compliments both informal and formal flexible working arrangements and supports those who have not previously had the opportunity to work flexibly but have since done so during the Coronavirus pandemic. A framework has been created based on feedback and ideas from team members as well as learnings from organisations trialling new work arrangements. Within the framework there is the opportunity to blend working three days in the office and two days remotely balanced across the working week and including either a Monday and/or Friday. Arrangements are agreed based on discussions between the team member and line manager before the expected return to the office.

Hybrid working will not suit all roles or team members and does not involve making any changes to contractual terms, but will be voluntary, considerate of individual needs and reviewed on a regular basis. [Find out more about Hybrid Working](#)

► WHEN DOES IT APPLY?

Informal Request	Formal Request
<p>There is no eligibility criteria to make an informal flexible working request or for Hybrid Working except for where there are role or location specific requirements as referred to in the WHO IS THIS FOR? section.</p>	<p>To make a formal flexible working request team members must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have worked for the company continuously for at least 26 weeks • Not have made another formal request in the last 12 months (counted from the date the last application was made) • Fill in and submit a Flexible Working – formal request application form to their line manager at least 8 weeks before they would like the change to take effect. <p>Refer to ► HOW DOES IT WORK? guidance for more on how to apply.</p>

► WHAT MAKES IT WORK?

Whether informal or formal, it is the responsibility of both the team member requesting the flexibility and of the line manager receiving the request to think about and balance the needs of the individual, the team and the business when considering any changes to working arrangements. Refer to **► HOW DOES IT WORK?** guidance for more on how the process works and what supporting documents are available.

Below is a table showing what actions must be followed by who and when.

TEAM MEMBERS

Responsible for:

- When making an **informal** request: providing as much notice as possible that they would like to make a change (e.g. a few days generally won't be enough time for it to be well thought through).
- When making a **formal** request: completing a Flexible Working – formal request application form and submitting it to their line manager a minimum of eight weeks before they would like the change to take effect.
- Spending some time thinking about how a request could work and continue to meet the needs of the team and the business.
- Going to the meeting prepared with ideas of the sorts of changes that might help achieve the desired outcome and that will also continue to support the needs of the team and business. A request may be treated as withdrawn if the team member fails to attend two meetings to discuss their request, without a reasonable explanation. In this case the line manager will confirm in writing that the request is treated as being withdrawn.
- When a **formal** request has not been granted, the team member has the option to appeal this within 14 days of receiving the decision. An appeal must be made in writing and set out in detail the reasons for doing so.
- Confirming in writing to the line manager, if the team member wishes to withdraw a **formal** request at any time before a decision is made.

LINE MANAGERS

Accountable for:

- Ensuring that all requests received from team members are considered carefully and thoughtfully balancing the needs of the team member, the wider team and the business.
- Setting aside specific time to discuss the request from the team member in detail as soon as possible.

Responsible for:

- Considering potential alternative working arrangements if applicable.
- Chairing the meeting prepared with ideas of the sorts of changes that might help achieve the desired outcome and that will also continue to support the needs of the team and business. A request may be treated as withdrawn if the team member fails to attend two meetings to discuss their request, without a reasonable explanation. In this case confirm in writing that the request is treated as being withdrawn.
- Confirming any change (and any trial period) in writing to the team member and storing a copy in the team member's personnel file.

Refer to the **▶ HOW DOES IT WORK?** guidance for more on the potential decisions from a **formal** request.

- If the team member appeals a **formal** request that has not been granted:
 - Ensuring an appeal meeting is set up as soon as possible to give the team member the opportunity to discuss their application and examine the reasons why it was unsuccessful.
 - If satisfied that there are genuine business reasons for turning down the request, encouraging the team member to consider whether there are any alternative patterns which might accommodate their needs.
 - Writing to the team member with the appeal outcome outlining whether the flexible working request has been granted or not. There is no further right of appeal after this point.

▶ HOW DOES IT WORK?

More information how this policy works and what further support is available can be found in the accompanying Guidance.

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- New section added on hybrid working and how it works with flexible working.
- Overall content revised to make the roles and responsibilities clearer.
- Process flow diagram added providing clearer overview of the flexible working formal request stages.
- Further examples on potential decisions upon receipt of a request added.
- Additional step added to informal requests to confirm in writing any change or trial period.

June 2014

- Removal of examples and definitions of caring responsibilities for a child or adult in line with legislation changes.
- Addition of 8 weeks' notice before any changes take effect.
- Removal of time frame for manager to meet and discuss request and for confirming in writing.
- Addition of 14 days' time frame for appeal if request is rejected.
- Addition of possibility that trial can be extended.

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