



Flexible Working Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for managers and colleagues to explore options for flexible working and find mutually acceptable arrangements wherever possible.

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Relevant forms and letters:

- [Flexible Working Request Form](#)
- [Flexible Working Request Flowchart](#)
- [Letter templates](#)
- [Meeting guidance for managers](#)

Related policies:

- [Flexitime Policy](#)
- [New Ways of Working Protocol](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

South Kesteven District Council understand that flexible working can be beneficial to both employees and the organisation. The Council therefore aims to support its employees to achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests.

SKDC is committed to considering, and where possible, agreeing flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees across all sites of South Kesteven Council. All employees have the legal right to request flexible working – not just parents and carers.

Individuals have the opportunity to request flexible working from day one of employment. Flexible working opportunities are offered at all stages in a career, regardless of role, grade, or the reasons for wanting to work flexibly.

Employees are entitled to submit two flexible working requests in a twelve-month period, although may be entitled to additional requests if they relate to statutory entitlement e.g. the Equality Act right to request reasonable adjustments.

3.0 What is flexible working?

Flexible working can be any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works. Examples of this include part-time hours, term-time working, compressed hours and job shares.

4.0 Guiding principles

- SKDC recognises the positive impact of flexible working arrangements to:
 - improve efficiency and productivity;
 - improve the balance between life and work;
 - create a positive and inclusive environment;
- Individuals and their manager will work together to explore the flexible working options that are available and seek a practical arrangement which supports the individual as well maintaining safe, high quality, efficient services that are appropriately staffed.
- Individuals and their manager are encouraged to collaborate to think creatively about flexible working solutions, and trial different flexible working options to identify what works best.
- Flexibility involves compromise and mutual trust, with responsibility for identifying and maintaining a workable solution being shared by managers and staff.

- All colleagues have the right to request flexible working, however, it may not be possible to agree to a particular request due to business need. Flexibility is dependent upon the needs of the department.
- SKDC will ensure that decisions made in relation to flexible working requests, are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

5.0 Informal Flexible Working Requests

Flexibility exists on working hours across SKDC and the Council wishes to support and encourage such an approach where possible. Some arrangements, such as changes to start and finish times, can often be agreed locally without the requirement for a formal flexible working request. The first step of any flexible working request is therefore to see if it is appropriate to progress informally through a discussion between a colleague and their line manager.

If agreed, the manager should capture the outcome of the new working arrangements in writing and send a copy to HR. Some arrangements may require a variation to the employee's contract and a pay change form may need to be submitted.

Individuals still have the right to submit a formal application if they wish.

6.0 Formal Flexible Working Requests Process

Formal requests for flexible working can be made by completing the document '1. Flexible Working Application Form' and submitting it to the line manager.

The line manager should seek to arrange a meeting that will be held within 14 days of the manager receiving the request. This time limit may be reasonably extended with the agreement of both the employee and the line manager. By exception, it may be appropriate for another manager to hear the request rather than the line manager.

At the meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

Following the meeting, the employee will be informed in writing of the decision within 14 days. Again, this time limit may be reasonably extended with the agreement of both the employee and the line manager.

The request may be granted in full as a permanent or temporary change, or refused. The manager may also propose a modified version of the request (i.e. even if the request cannot be accommodated, there may be other options that can be explored with the employee and exploring this is strongly encouraged). The request may also involve a trial period which would include a mechanism for review between the individual and their line manager after a specified amount of time. At the end the review period, if the arrangement isn't working well, an individual may be moved back to their original working pattern.

The manager will write to the individual to confirm the outcome of the request. If a variation of contract is required, HR will provide this.

7.0 Considering Informal or Formal Flexible Working Requests

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The manager will review the proposed flexible working arrangements, considering the benefits and any potential adverse effects.

The manager will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reasons, which are:

- The costs of allowing the request would be too high;
- It wouldn't be possible to reorganise work performed by the employee among other staff;
- The employer can't recruit other staff to cover additional work;
- The quality of goods or services supplied by the employer would be affected;
- Allowing the request would affect the employer's ability to meet customer demand;
- Business or employee performance would be affected;
- There wouldn't be enough work for the employee to do during the hours they have asked to work; or
- There are planned changes to the business which wouldn't work if the request was allowed

8.0 Right to Appeal

Individuals have the right to appeal a decision if their request is refused or is agreed in part. To do this, employees can lodge an appeal within 5 days of being notified of a decision to HR (hr@southkesteven.gov.uk).

An appropriate Appeals Manager will be appointed, usually either the relevant Head of Service, Assistant Director or the Second Line Manager. The Appeals Manager will normally arrange a meeting which is held within 14 days from receipt of the appeal.

The employee will then be informed of the outcome to their appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Appeals Manager.

This is the final part of the process and there are no further rights to appeal.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
- This policy does not form part of contracts of employment.
- The Council reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.