



ECCLESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

This policy aims to encourage staff to consider flexible working arrangements. The Parish Council (‘the Council’) recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, and reduce stress. Therefore, the Council wants 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. The Council is committed to agreeing to any flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the Council and the employee can be met.

What is flexible working?

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request, but the Council recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which are suitable to both the Council and the employee:

- Flexitime
- Homeworking
- Overtime

Types of flexible working

Flexitime

This allows an employee to choose, within certain limits, when to begin and end work. An employee is required to work during a core time and must work an agreed number of hours during the accounting period of a month. Their hours of attendance will be recorded and added up at the end of each accounting period. An employee can carry over an excess of up to 4 hours or a deficit of up to 4 hours from one accounting period to another. A deficit of hours should be made up in the following accounting period. Excess hours may be used to either reduce attendance outside of core hours or take additional leave (flexi-leave), subject to a maximum of 2 full days (pro-rata for part time staff) in any accounting period. Additional leave should be requested

and agreed with the Clerk (and the Chairman of Staffing where it relates to the Clerk in their absence) in the same way as annual leave.

Working from Home

This is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the employer's premises. The Council can consider homeworking being an occasional agreed day, a mix of home and office-based work each week or a full-time arrangement.

The policy recognises that, for the majority of employees, working from home will be on an occasional basis and with prior agreement with the Clerk or the Chairman of the Staffing Committee (where it relates to the Clerk or in their absence).

Employees working from home will benefit from the same rights as comparable workers based at the Council offices.

Health and safety for employees working at home applies in the same way as office-based employees, in so far as is reasonably practicable, such as they work in a safe manner and in accordance with health and safety and other relevant guidelines and policies. All employees working from home must complete and submit a 'Home Based Workers Risk Assessment' to the Clerk. This checklist should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are any changes to an employee's home working arrangements such as new equipment or changes to your home-office space.

Employees working from home must also complete and submit to the Clerk a Workstation Risk Assessment and ensure that it remains up to date. This should be completed at least annually.

Whilst the Council's insurance extends to home-based employees, including Council equipment supplied, employees must ensure that any agreement with their landlord or mortgage lender allows them to work from home, and that their house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by you working from home.

The Council will ensure an employee will have the equipment necessary to enable them to work from home. As a minimum, a laptop and access to the Council's shared drive will be provided.

Alternatively, the Council will agree with homeworkers a suitable sum to cover the use of their own equipment. The Council will also pay the employee for the costs associated with heating, lighting, etc. HMRC rules allow for some of these expenses to be paid tax-free (see HMRC guidance: www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking/whats-exempt).

The Council's laptop and any data whilst working from home must be protected from cyber-attacks and other threats in line with the Council's IT Policy.

The Council's Data Protection, privacy, personal and GDPR and other relevant guidelines and policies must be applied whilst working from home.

The Council reserves the right to visit an employee working at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

The Staffing Committee will consider the request to work from home on a regular basis – more than one day a week for a month or more.

Overtime

This is when hours are worked in addition to their usual hours. Overtime can be agreed where the Council would benefit from an employee working more hours. This is voluntary and an employee can refuse overtime if they wish. Overtime can be paid or time off in lieu can be taken with the approval of the Clerk. Requests for payment would be made to the Staffing Committee.

The needs of the Parish Council

The Council is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However, employees and management need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

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

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement.
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff.
- the need for, and effect on, supervision.
- the availability of staff resources.
- the workload of the role.
- health and safety issues.

Eligibility

Any employee with at least 26 weeks of employment service has a statutory right to request flexible working. However, the Council has taken the view that employees in all areas, and at any level, are entitled to submit a request for flexible working regardless of their length of service.

Submitting a flexible working request

All employees are entitled to submit a flexible working request.

All requests must be made to the Clerk, verbally or in writing, and the Clerk will submit it to the Staffing Committee for approval.

Responding to a flexible working request

The Staffing Committee will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits, and adverse affects, to the employee and to the Council in implementing the flexible working arrangements.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the Staffing Committee's decision as soon as possible after the meeting has been held to discuss the matter.

Complaints and further information

The Council is strongly opposed to any form of victimisation of individuals who work, or request to work under flexible working arrangements.

If an employee feels that they have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with any stage of the flexible working process, they should raise their concerns informally with the Clerk.

If informal discussions do not resolve the matter to an employee's satisfaction, they should raise a grievance under the Council's grievance procedure.

Approved by Council April 2023

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