

SecureCare

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

SecureCare (the “Company”) are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance. We recognise that, in addition to helping balance work and personal lives, flexible working can raise staff morale, reduce absenteeism and improve our use and retention of staff.

This Flexible Working Policy gives eligible employees an opportunity to formally request a change to their working pattern and all employees an opportunity to do so informally. We do our best to facilitate requests unless they cannot be accommodated for business or operational reasons.

No-one who makes a request for flexible working will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career development opportunities as a result.

Scope and Purpose of the Policy

This policy applies to all employees. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

Employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous service who have caring responsibilities for certain children and adults have a statutory right to request flexible working. That right is recognised by the formal right to request procedure in this policy. The criteria for deciding who is eligible to follow the formal procedure is set out below.

Employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the formal procedure, but who want to make either permanent or temporary changes to their working arrangements, may make an informal request to the Office Manager, who will consider the request according to the Company and operational requirements.

Employees whose requests for flexible working are accepted under the formal procedure will have permanent changes made to their contracts of employment to reflect their new working arrangements. If they do not want changes to be permanent, they can follow the informal procedure instead.

Any employee interested in flexible working is advised to request an informal meeting with the Office Manager to discuss their eligibility, the different options and the effect of their proposed work pattern on colleagues and service delivery before submitting a formal or informal request.

Forms of Flexible Working

Flexible working can incorporate a number of changes to working arrangements:

- reduction or variation of working hours
- reduction of the number of days worked each week

Eligibility for the Formal Right to Request Procedure

Requests under the formal procedure can only be made by employees who meet the criteria set. To be eligible to make a request under the formal procedure, you must:

- be an employee
- have worked for us continuously for 26 weeks at the date your request is made
- have caring responsibilities
- not have made a formal request to work flexibly during the last 12 months (each 12-month period runs from the date when the most recent application was made)

Employees who want to work flexibly to care for a child must:

- be making the request in respect of a child who is under 17, or, if the child is disabled, under 18;
- be responsible for bringing up the child and be making the request to enable them to care for the child; and either:
- be the mother, father, adopter, guardian, special guardian, foster parent or private foster carer of the child; or
- be married to, or the partner of, the child's mother, father, adopter, guardian, special guardian, foster parent or private foster carer. In this context "partner" means a person who is not a relative but, whether of different sex or the same sex, who lives with the child and the mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent in an enduring family relationship; or
- have a residence order that is in force in their favour in respect of the child.

Employees who want to work flexibly to care for an adult who needs care must be (or expect to be) the person who cares for that adult, and be:

- married to, or the partner or civil partner of, the adult; or
- a relative of the adult; or
- neither of the above, but living at the same address as the adult

Making a Formal Flexible Working Request

You will need to submit a written application if you would like your flexible working request to be considered under the formal procedure, which needs to be submitted to Robert Stevenson. Your request should:

- state the reason for your request, whether to care for a child or adult
- give details of the demands of your caring responsibilities
- provide as much information as you can about your current and desired working pattern, including working days, hours and start and finish times, and give the date from which you want your desired working pattern to start
- address the effect the changes to your working pattern will have on the work that you do, that of your colleagues and on service delivery. If you have any suggestions about dealing with any potentially negative effects, please include these in your written application
- provide information to confirm that you meet the eligibility criteria of this policy
- state whether you have made a previous formal request for flexible working and, if so, when; and
- ideally be submitted at least two months before you wish the changes you are requesting to take effect

A Company Director might be able to agree your proposal without the need for a meeting (which is the next stage of the formal procedure). If that is the case, she will write to you, confirming the decision and explaining the permanent changes that will be made to your contract of employment.

If your proposal cannot be accommodated, discussion between you and the Office Manager may result in an alternative working pattern that can assist you.

Formal Procedure: Meeting

Where necessary, we will arrange to meet with you within 28 days of your application being submitted. You may bring a colleague (who may be a trade union representative) to the meeting as a companion if you wish. Your companion will be entitled to speak during the meeting and confer privately with you but may not answer questions on your behalf.

The meeting will be used to consider the working arrangements you have requested. You will be able to explain how the arrangements will accommodate your caring responsibilities. You will also be able to discuss what impact your proposed working arrangements will have on your work and that of your colleagues. If the arrangements you have requested cannot be accommodated, discussion at the meeting also provides an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.

We may suggest starting new working arrangements under an initial trial period to ensure that they meet your needs and those of the Company.

Formal Procedure: Decision

Following the meeting, we will notify you of the decision in writing within 14 days.

If your request is accepted, or where we propose an alternative to the arrangements you requested, we will write to you with details of the new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to your contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on your personnel file to confirm the variation to your terms of employment.

You should be aware that changes to your terms of employment will be permanent and that you will not be able to make another formal request until 12 months after the date of your original application.

If we need more time to make a decision, we will ask for your agreement to delay the decision for up to a further 14 days. A request for an extension is likely to benefit you. For example, we may need more time to investigate how your request can be accommodated.

There will be circumstances where, due to business and operational requirements, we are unable to agree to a request. In these circumstances, we will write to you:

- giving the Company's reason(s) for turning down your application
- explaining why the Company reasons apply in your case
- setting out the appeal procedure

The eight business reasons for which we may reject your request are:

- the burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work
- planned changes

Formal Procedure: Appeal

If your request is rejected, you have the right to appeal. Your appeal must:

- be in writing and dated
- set out the grounds on which you are appealing
- be sent within 14 days of the date on which you received the written rejection of your request

We will arrange for a meeting to take place within 14 days of receipt of your appeal. The meeting will be held at a convenient time for all those attending and, as at the meeting that considered your request, you may be accompanied by a colleague.

You will be informed in writing of our decision within 14 days of the date of the appeal meeting.

If your appeal is upheld, you will be advised of your new working arrangements, details of any trial period, an explanation of changes to your contract of employment and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter. This will be placed on your personnel file to confirm the variation to your terms of employment. You should be aware that changes to your terms of employment will be permanent and you will not be able to make another formal request until 12 months after the date of your original application.

If your appeal is rejected, the written decision will give the Company's reason(s) for the decision and explain why the reason(s) apply in your case. You will not be able to make another formal request until 12 months after the date of your original application.

Breaches of the Formal Procedure

There will be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete a stage of the procedure within the expected time limits. Where an extension of time is agreed with you, we will write to you confirming the extension and the date on which it will end.

If you withdraw a formal request for flexible working, you will not be eligible to make another formal request for 12 months from the date of your original request. In certain circumstances, a request made under the formal procedure will be treated as withdrawn. This will occur if:

- you fail to attend two meetings under the formal procedure without reasonable cause
- you unreasonably refuse to provide information we require to consider your request

In such circumstances, we will write to you confirming that the request has been treated as withdrawn.

This Policy will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. The management team endorses these Policies and is fully committed to their implementation.

This Flexible Working Policy has been approved & authorised by:

Signature:

Signed by: ROBERT STEVENSON
Position: DIRECTOR

Date:

Review date: