

Glasgow Life

Flexible Working Policy

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1. Introduction

Glasgow Life recognise that employees are their greatest asset, and it is through them that Services are delivered and continually improved.

Glasgow Life believe that their Flexible Working Policy (previously known as Work life Balance WLB) enables them to have reasonable influence and flexibility over when, how and where they work, allowing a diverse workforce to combine their working life with their social, health, family, caring and other responsibilities. It also promotes gender equality across Glasgow Life and allows them to support those employees experiencing gender-based violence who can often be targeted in the workplace. Recruit and retain skilled, competent, and engaged employees from diverse communities. Deliver efficient, effective services to the people of Glasgow.

Glasgow Life flexible working policy allows employees to request to work flexibly from a range of core options. It also allows managers to consider how implementing flexible working can have business benefits in improving service delivery.

This policy outlines a framework of Glasgow Life core flexible working options and takes employees through the process if they are considering requesting to work flexibly. It details the steps that both employees and the manager need to follow and what to expect.

It also covers the process that the manager will follow if they're thinking about implementing flexible working within their service, section, or team.

2. What is flexible working?

Flexible working is any working pattern that's adapted to suit the needs of both the employee and the employer. It can take many different forms that cover the way working hours are organised during the day, week, or year. It can describe the place of work, for example at home or the kind of hours worked, such as part-time.

3. Who can apply?

All employees have a statutory right to apply for flexible working from the first day of their employment, no matter their role or grade. A statutory request is defined as a request for a change to an employee's terms and conditions relating to their hours, times, or place of work.

Employees can make two statutory applications for flexible working within any 12-month period however employees may have only one "live" request at any one time.

Employees can apply on their own, or as part of a group. In some cases, it may be that it's only practical if introduced for a group of employees.

Whether applying on an individual basis or as part of a group, employees cannot make more than two applications in the past 12 months.

4. Recruitment Requests

Glasgow Life actively promote flexible working within their job advertisements (please refer to the Recruitment Toolkit) and will accept applications which request to be considered for vacancies on a flexible working basis.

Internal employees who have an existing flexible working arrangement in place will need to reapply when securing a new role, it is not automatically transferred.

5. Example reasons for flexible working requests

Glasgow Life accept applications from all their employees whatever the reason including: -

- Parental responsibilities.
- Caring responsibilities.
- To support an employee experiencing gender-based violence.
- Disability.
- Further education, religious observance or interests, other responsibilities outside the workplace or to ease into retirement.

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Glasgow Life have explained these in more detail below:

5.1 Parental responsibilities

Employees can make a request if:

- They are the mother, father, adopter, guardian, special guardian, foster parent or private foster carer of the child or a person who has been granted a residence order in respect of a child.
- They are married to or the partner or civil partner of the child's mother, father, adopter, guardian, special guardian, foster parent, or private foster carer or of a person who has been granted a residence order in respect of a child.

5.2 Caring responsibility

Employees can submit a request if they care, or expect to be caring, for either:

- A spouse, partner, civil partner or relative; or
- Someone who lives at their address.

A 'relative' is a mother, father, guardian, special guardian, parent-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, uncle, aunt, or grandparent.

Step-relatives, adoptive relationships and half-blood relatives are also included.

5.3 Supporting employees experiencing gender-based violence

Those experiencing gender-based violence like domestic violence or stalking, are often targeted at work with the perpetrator relying on knowing the victim's work patterns. Flexible working can help victims by allowing them to change hours, work pattern or even location for safety reasons.

5.4 Disability

Flexible working gives employees a way which enables them to best manage their condition.

When an employee seeks a reasonable adjustment for their disability the manager must consider this in line with Glasgow Life legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

6. Informal arrangements

There may be times where employees experience some difficulties in their personal life and the manager may consider some form of flexible working on a short-term, temporary basis to help the employee at this time. For example: -

- Victims of gender-based violence seeking support from outside agencies such as housing, counselling or advocacy support which are normally only available during office hours.
- Where employees rely on a family member to care for an elderly relative and this person suddenly falls ill, meaning they have to make other arrangements.

In such cases, the manager may agree to let employees work flexible hours. However, where the situation is longer term (3 months or more), employees could consider making a formal request.

7. Glasgow Life core flexible working options

Glasgow Life have several core flexible working options, which are summarised below, however if employees have a different option in mind, they should speak to their manager, who should consider it.

7.1 Annualised hours

Where the number of hours worked in a year is organised to meet service needs, taking account of seasonal factors.

7.2 Compressed working hours

Where employees work full-time contracted hours over fewer days.

7.3 Flexible working hours

Where working hours are arranged within a broad time span so that employees have flexibility around when they attend work.

7.4 Hybrid working

Where employees can spend some of their time working remotely (e.g. from home) and some in Glasgow Life office space/venues depending on the needs of the Service.

7.5 Job sharing

Where two employees equally share the duties of a post. Each employee is employed on a part-time basis but together they cover a full-time post.

7.6 Mobile working

Where employees work out with the office environment for part of the week, in one or more of Glasgow Life locations.

7.7 Reduced hours and part-time working

Where an employee work less hours than full time hours.

7.8 Shift working

Where employees work:

- Rotating shifts in immediate succession covering 24 hours.
- Alternating shifts covering a period of more than 11 hours.
- Other patterns which vary according to a pre-determined roster.

7.9 Term-time working

Where employees work on a full or part time basis during the education school terms.

8. Supporting arrangements

In addition to core flexible working options there are a number of other arrangements, these are:

8.1 Career Breaks

Glasgow Life recognise that during employees working life there may be times when personal commitments or aspirations can take priority over work. Career Break arrangements have been designed to

allow employees the opportunity to take an unpaid break from their employment. For more information on this read Glasgow Life [Career Break Arrangements](#).

8.2 Flexible Retirement

Flexible retirement allows members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to request access to their pension and lump sum while continuing to work on reduced hours in the same post or at a lower grade in another post.

Eligibility criteria apply, for more information read [Flexible Retirement](#).

8.3 Purchased annual leave

This scheme provides employees with the opportunity to supplement their existing annual leave entitlement by purchasing additional annual leave. For more information on this read Glasgow Life [Buying Annual Leave Scheme](#).

9. Pay and benefits

Flexible working can have many benefits. However, before making a formal request employees need to think about how it will affect their pay and benefits. This will depend on the option employees choose. Glasgow Life outlined some of the main considerations below:

9.1 Annual leave

An employees chosen option may affect how much annual leave they are entitled to and how it's calculated.

9.2 Maternity, maternity support and adoption payments

These payments are based on how much an employee earns. If an employee is considering reducing their hours, for example, their entitlement to these payments and how much they receive might be affected.

9.3 Pay and pensions

If an employee's proposal involves reducing their contracted hours to part-time working their earnings would be reduced in line with this. If the employee is in the pension scheme it would also affect how much money they receive when they retire. If an employee's new pattern involves working non-standard patterns or hours this wouldn't attract any non-core payments.

Employees can contact their manager and or the HR team for more information on how the option they are interested in would affect their pay and benefits.

Further information on the effect on pension benefits is available from the [Strathclyde Pension Fund](#).

10. How to apply

10.1 Individual requests

Employees should submit their request to the manager using the [Individual Application Form](#). This form details the information they are required to provide for all statutory requests. **The manager must not reject a request without consulting with the employee.**

There is a statutory two-month period for deciding requests including any appeal process.

Once an application has been made, it remains live until either: -

- A decision about the request is made.
- The request is withdrawn.
- The outcome is mutually agreed.
- The statutory two-month period for deciding requests ends.

In addition it will remain live during any appeal or mutually agreed extension to the statutory two-month period.

Employees are required to advise the manager the date they want their proposed new arrangement to start. Employees must make their request at least 8 weeks before this date, to give the manager time to consider the request within the two-month statutory period and make any necessary arrangements.

Unless agreeing to an employee's application in full the manager must consult with the employee. The manager will arrange to meet with the employee and their representative, if they have one, within 14 days of receiving an application. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or colleague at any stage. This meeting provides an opportunity to engage meaningfully with each other so that a fully informed, evidence-based decision can be made based on business needs suitable to the service.

At the meeting the employee and the manager will talk through:

- The application.
- Any potential benefits associated with the request.
- The manager explains the effect of the request on the needs of the Service and their colleagues.
- Any steps that would need to be taken to manage this.
- If appropriate, any compromises that the employee or the manager suggest.
- If a trial period could be undertaken to see how well it works in practice.
- The terms and conditions linked to the request.
- Any potential changes to pay and benefits linked to the request.

A written record of this should be kept to provide an accurate reflection of the discussions. All paperwork associated with Flexible Working Requests should be forwarded to GLPosition.Management@glasgowlife.org.uk.

10.2 Considering a request

The manager must handle the application in a reasonable manner taking into consideration their discussions with the employee. Further they must not discriminate in relation to any protected characteristic; as set out in the Equality Act 2010 which is disclosed during any discussions.

The manager will look at several factors before making their decision as noted in section 12 of this document.

The manager will also need to look at how the request would affect the working pattern and type of work performed by colleagues, and may arrange to discuss this with them, if necessary.

The manager may then want to meet with the employee again to talk about the outcome of this and how it affects their request. This will happen within 14 days of the first meeting.

10.3 Compromise

It may not always be possible to accommodate the original request. In such cases, all parties may have a compromise in mind, and should be prepared to discuss this during their meeting with the manager.

The manager could also take time after the meeting to think about the proposal and come back to the employee with a compromise for them to consider.

It's common for both parties to suggest and review proposals and this can be beneficial in helping to find a suitable option that works for all parties, whilst meeting the needs of the Service. All parties should always take time to consider any compromises carefully before making a decision.

10.4 The outcome

The manager will write to the employee within 14 days of their last meeting to let them know whether they're able to approve the application or agree a compromise. Template letter can be found on the HR information pages.

If the application or a compromise is agreed, the manager will confirm:

- The agreed arrangement.
- The start date of the arrangement. This will be based on the needs of the Service and take into account the date the employee would like it to start.
- The terms and conditions and any other relevant details.

11. Trial periods

It may be that the employee or the manager wants to try out the new arrangement for a set period of time. A trial period can be useful in giving both parties the opportunity to see how well the arrangement works in practice. A trial period is up to 3 months and will only be extended in exceptional circumstances by the manager.

In either case, the arrangement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the manager must meet with the employee before the end of the trial period to discuss how successful it's been.

If the manager doesn't think that the trial has been successful, they can decide to bring it to an end. They will follow the same process as for rejecting an application or compromise, which is outlined below.

12. Rejecting a request or ending a trial period

There may be times when it's not possible to accommodate flexible working. If the manager decides not to approve the request or any compromise the employee has suggested, or if they want to end a trial period, they will write to the employee explaining why. It's likely to be on one or more of these business grounds:

- Whether the request is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010 in terms of an employee's disability.
- The number of flexible working applications already in place or whether they have a number of other applications to consider around the same time.
- The burden of additional costs; for example, the proposal will cost more to introduce than is available in the budget.
- The effect on how Services are delivered.
- Detrimental effect on the ability to meet client demand; such as where the service user's needs can't be met if the proposal is in place.
- Inability to recruit additional staff; for example, job share, a recruitment freeze could mean that the other half of the post can't be filled so the proposal wouldn't be practical.
- Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff.
- The effect on how work is currently done.
- Impact on the Services ability to manage and supervise employees.
- Detrimental impact on quality of Service; for example, where agreeing a proposal could mean that certain Services aren't delivered as well.
- Detrimental impact on performance; the proposal could impact the performance of, for example, the employees' job, the team's output and or the Service.
- Insufficient work during the periods the employee proposes to work; the proposal may not be in line with the work peaks and troughs in the Service and so can't be implemented.
- Planned Service reform; future Service re-structure changes could mean the proposal can't be considered at the present time.

The manager will explain what this means to the employee, their right to appeal against this decision. Details of the appeals process are noted in section 14 of this document.

13. Group applications

If employees are applying as part of a group, the manager will largely follow the same process as for individual requests, with the following exceptions:

- Employees need to submit their request through the relevant Trade Union or person they've nominated to represent the group, detailing the applicants' names using the [Group Application Form](#).
- The manager may ask the group or representative to attend a number of meetings to discuss the request, which can be either formal or informal. Informal meetings can be useful for sharing information and ideas; and may help to speed up the process.
- Where the application is approved, the manager will letter the relevant parties confirming the terms and conditions. It will also detail the collective agreement being entered into, including any review mechanisms or arrangements to end the agreement.

14. Appeals process

There may be times when the employees don't agree with the manager's decision. If so, they can appeal against it. Employees can appeal where:

- The application to work flexibly hasn't been approved.
- A compromise can't be agreed on.
- The manager wants to end the arrangement after a trial period.
- If the arrangement is reviewed by the manager after agreement and a decision is taken to discontinue this.

Before starting the formal appeal process, employees or the manager have the option to meet informally to try to resolve any outstanding issues. If this doesn't work, then lodging an appeal will start the formal process.

14.1 Lodging an appeal

An employee should put their appeal, in writing, which must detail the reasons why they don't agree with the manager's decision, to the Head of Service or appointed person in order for the appeal to progress. The employee should do this within 14 days of receiving the written decision from their manager.

14.2 Appeal hearing

The Head of Service or appointed person will arrange to meet with the employee and their trade union representative (or the relevant Trade Union and applicants in the case of group applications) within 14 days to review the decision made and discuss:

- Why the employee is appealing.
- The reason why the manager didn't approve the request or ended the arrangement.

A representative from HR will attend the appeal to support the Head of Service or appointed person.

The manager will also attend the meeting so both parties will have the opportunity to put their case forward. The manager will explain the reasons behind their decision, and the employee will be given an opportunity to explain why they have appealed and how they feel the matter could be resolved.

The Head of Service or appointed person hearing the appeal will ask both sides questions to help them consider the case. They will then adjourn the meeting to review the information presented and come to a decision.

The employee and the manager will receive a letter confirming this decision within 14 days of the appeal being heard. The decision will be one of the following:

- To uphold the appeal and agree the application or compromise.
- To reinstate a trial period.
- To reject the application or compromise.

Where the application or compromise is agreed, the manager will put the new working arrangements in place, under the terms set out at the appeal. This could be for a trial period.

If the appeal is rejected, the employee will be told the reasons why. The employee will have no further right to appeal. A template letter can be found on the HR information pages.

15. Timescales

The **timescales** detailed in this document are **indicative only**. All meetings should be held (including the issuing of letters) without reasonable delay taking into account the statutory two-month period for deciding requests, this includes any appeal.

The statutory two months period can however be extended if the employee (or their nominated representative) and manager mutually agree to this. If an extension is agreed this should be confirmed in writing to the employee. A template letter can be found on the HR information pages.

16. Withdrawing requests

When arranging any meetings to discuss flexible working requests the manager and in case of appeals the Head of Service or appointed person will provide reasonable opportunity for the employee to attend. If without good cause the employee fails to attend both a meeting and any subsequent re-arranged meeting the manager, Head of Service or appointed person may consider that the request has been withdrawn. Where the manager, Head of Service or appointed person consider that a request has been withdrawn this will be confirmed in writing to the employee. A template letter can be found on the HR information pages.

17. Reviewing arrangements

The manager can review an employee's arrangement at any point after it has been introduced for the following reasons:

- If it can be shown that continuing with the arrangement presents a conflict of interest.
- The performance of the contract of employment is seriously affected or limited.
- Service Provision is affected.

The needs of the business do change and it may be that the arrangement is no longer working. This could be as a result of changes to resources or Service delivery needs.

If the manager decides to end an employee's arrangement, they will receive written notification of this, giving 12 weeks' notice.

The manager will arrange to meet with the employee to discuss what their decision means for them and to look at changing the arrangement to either what it was before, or some other alternative.

18. Service led flexible working arrangements

Flexible working is not just about helping employees to balance their work and home life. Having modern, flexible working practices in place can also help Glasgow Life to deliver efficient, effective Services to the citizens of Glasgow.

It may be that the manager can improve service delivery by introducing flexible working within their service, section, or team. To do so, there are a number of steps they'll need to follow. These are outlined below.

18.1 Assessing the options

The manager will look at how Services are currently delivered and if this could be done differently. As part of this, they will invite employees to express their views.

They may also ask the employee and their colleagues to complete a work evaluation exercise to capture how their work is carried out, such as customer facing or pc facing, and the number of hours spend a week on these types of activities. The manager will brief all parties on how to do this and will use this information in helping them to assess what flexible working options may be appropriate.

19. Business case

Having identified a suitable option, the manager will assess the impact of this on the Service, section, or team. They'll look at the costs involved and what resources may be needed. They may then speak to the employee and their colleagues again to get their views on what they're proposing. It may mean big changes

to how and when employees work so the manager will communicate with all parties regularly to keep them involved and to update on progress.

Following this, the manager will put together a business case outlining their proposal and the benefits for everyone involved. They'll then seek senior management and/or board approval.

Having done this, the next stage will be to formally consult with employees on their proposals.

20. Consultation process

The manager will put their proposals in writing to employees and the relevant Trade Union(s). This will include the following details:

- Who it affects.
- The proposed arrangement.
- Why they want to introduce it.
- How it would work and how it would improve how Services are provided.
- The start date (employees will be given at least 12 weeks' notice to allow enough time to consider the proposal).
- How it would be implemented.

The manager will then arrange a meeting within 28 days of receipt of the consultation documents to discuss the proposal and the terms and conditions associated with it. It may be that further meetings are needed (formal or informal) to discuss the proposals or any suggested compromise.

21. Reaching an agreement

Once an agreement or compromise has been reached, the manager will write to the employee, their colleagues, and the relevant Trade Union to confirm:

- The start date;
- The terms and conditions which apply; and
- Any other relevant details.

In order to assess how well the arrangement works in practice, all parties may agree to introduce it on a trial basis.

22. Implementation

The manager will then make the necessary arrangements for implementation, such as:

- Putting the required resources in place, such as IT equipment and office furniture.
- Ensuring that the relevant Health & Safety checks are carried out.

23. Performance and development

The manager will also make the necessary arrangements to ensure that they're able to continue to manage the employee and the teams' performance, such as agreeing objectives and expected outcomes, using appropriate methods of communication so that everyone is kept up-to-date and informed.

Employees still have the same access to training and career development opportunities.

24. No agreement

Attempts will be made to ensure the proposal takes the views of all parties into account and where possible a compromise is reached. However, if agreement cannot be reached this stage in the request process will come to an end. The manager may then take further advice and the employee will be advised accordingly of any further steps.

25. Family Friendly Provision

Glasgow Life also have a range of family friendly policies in place to help support employees, these include generous maternity and adoption leave and pay provisions, parental leave, fostering leave, kinship care leave and time off to care for dependents.

26. Monitoring

Glasgow Life capture data on both management and employee-led requests for flexible working. Glasgow Life use this information to:

- Inform policy decisions on flexible working.
- Identify any barriers to the promotion and uptake to flexible working across Glasgow Life and inform solutions in response to this.
- Make sure Glasgow Life don't discriminate against specific groups.

27. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Employees may find it helpful to access the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) which is available 24 hours a day, any day of the year by phone, email or via the PAM Assisted Portal or App.

28. Further information

For further guidance on Flexible Working Arrangements please speak to the manager or HR Business Partner (HRBP).