

# Flexible Working Policy

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## Overview

External research tells us that there are many business benefits associated with flexible working. In addition to attracting and retaining great people both now and in the future, fostering an environment where flexible working is encouraged supports improved individual and business performance and leads to greater levels of job satisfaction and health and wellbeing (CIPD, 2019). This supports our aspiration to be an employer of choice, where mutual flexibility creates commitment and engagement.

We believe colleagues are our most valuable asset and appreciate that the UK workforce is becoming increasingly diverse. To attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce, we have developed a policy which aims to positively support colleagues who may have carer or parental responsibilities, as well as those with interests and aspirations that impact their time.

We recognise the importance of offering flexible working arrangements that enable colleagues to balance their working life with other priorities, including caring or parental responsibilities, life-long learning, charity work, leisure activities and other interests, whilst still meeting the demands of the business.

Flexible working can increase staff motivation, build better relationships, increase the rate of colleague retention, reduce absence, attract new talent, promote work-life balance and support colleague mental health, and in doing so improve efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness.

## Who does it apply to?

This policy aims to encourage colleagues to consider flexible working arrangements. This applies to all colleagues from day one of employment.

All colleagues who apply will be considered for flexible working. Each application will be carefully considered, looking at the benefits of the requested changes in working conditions for the colleague and the business.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended from time to time to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

## What do I need to know or do?

This policy is supported by informal arrangements, introduced to enhance our approach to working flexibly. These include informal flexi hours and flexi home working. We encourage you to explore these guidance documents prior to submitting a formal flexible working application, as these may be more suitable to your requirements.

Formal flexible working may include the following options:

- Flexible shift working
- Changes to your contracted hours, e.g. going from full-time to part-time hours
- Changes to your working pattern, e.g. changing your days off
- A permanent change to your work location
- Term-time working
- Job-sharing

We are committed to providing the widest possible range of working patterns for our colleagues. We recognise that the full range of flexible working options may not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the business. We understand that there may be alternatives, and that the desired working pattern could be unique to you and may involve a combination of options.

Where an instance of flexible working is proposed, we will need to consider several criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- The cost of the proposed arrangement
- The effect of the proposed arrangement on other colleagues
- The structure of the department and colleague resources
- The level of supervision that you require
- Other issues specific to your department
- An analysis of the tasks specific to the role, including their frequency and duration
- An analysis of the workload of the role
- Whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- Health and safety issues

## Eligibility

The Employment Rights Act 1996 (updated April 2024)) gives every colleague the right to request flexible working from day one of employment.

Although it is recognised that not all the flexible working patterns considered will be suitable for all colleagues, there should be no unnecessary barriers. Colleagues in all areas and levels of the business will be considered for flexible working regardless of their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, or religion or belief, or whether they have a disability, their level of seniority, their current working pattern, or whether they are employed on a permanent or fixed-term basis.

However, there is no automatic right for colleagues to change to any of the flexible working patterns - each application will be considered based on the work involved and any detrimental effect the change could have on individual, team, or business performance.

To be eligible to apply for formal flexible working, an individual must:

- Be employed by Greencore
- Not be an agency worker
- Not have made more than 2 requests for flexible working during the past 12 months

## How does it work?

### Making a Request

You should submit a request to your line manager, in writing (either by completing the flexible working application form, by email or letter) and must include the following information:

- The date of your application
- The change to working conditions you would like to be considered
- When you would like the change to come into effect, this should be 12-14 weeks from the application date, giving reasonable time to consider the proposed change and implement it
- If the request is in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability
- A statement that this is a statutory request and details of any previous applications that you have made for flexible working

### Meeting Arrangements

Within 28 days of the request, or as soon as possible thereafter, a formal meeting will be arranged between you and your manager to discuss the request in depth and explore alternative solutions if it is considered that there may be problems with the original request.

You may be accompanied at this meeting if you wish. This could be a work colleague or a member of a recognised Trade Union. It is your responsibility to ensure that your chosen companion is available to attend the meeting. You may confer with our companion during the meeting, and the companion may address the meeting but may not answer questions on our behalf or behave in such a way as to prevent you from stating your case or preventing any other person from contributing.

A meeting is not required if Greencore agrees to the terms of the application and agrees within 28 days of receiving the application.

### Meeting Outcome

Within 14 days of the meeting, we will give you notice of the decision in writing. This notification will either:

- Accept your request and establish a start date and any other actions
- Confirm a compromise agreed at the meeting or
- Invite you to a meeting for further discussion regarding your flexible working request

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for a colleague and/or the business, a 3-month trial period may be agreed. This is to fully evaluate whether the arrangements are working for both the colleague and the business prior to the request being approved on a permanent basis.

### Accepting a Request

If your request is accepted, we will ensure that the HR team is advised and that any changes to your pay are made (for example, where you may have reduced your working hours).

Once the change has been implemented, the new working pattern will be a permanent change to the terms and conditions of employment, unless it is applicable for a limited time as defined in writing at the outside.

If a reduction in hours is agreed, your salary and holiday entitlement/public holidays will be pro-rated in line with our new working pattern.

If your circumstances change, there is no statutory entitlement for a return to the terms and conditions of employment as they were before the flexible working request and subsequent change.

### Rejecting a Request

If further discussion is required, your manager and a member of HR will meet with you to consult with you further on your request.

If your request is rejected following this meeting, then the letter you receive will specify on which of the statutory grounds (listed below) refusal was decided; give sufficient explanation as to why those grounds apply and specify the appeal procedure.

The grounds for rejecting an application may include:

- The burden of additional costs
- An inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- An inability to recruit additional staff
- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- Insufficient work for the periods the colleague proposes to work
- A planned structural change to the business

### Right of appeal

Whilst there is no statutory right to appeal a flexible working decision, Greencore follows a best practice model and is therefore offering you a right to appeal. The process for this is as follows:

Within 14 days of the decision, you may lodge an appeal which must be in writing and state the grounds for the appeal.

Within 14 days of the letter of appeal we will hold a formal meeting with you to discuss the appeal. You may be accompanied at this meeting as outline above.

Within 14 days of the appeal meeting, we will give you notice of our decision in writing which will be to:

- Uphold the appeal, specify the agreed variation and start date or
- Dismiss the appeal, state the grounds for the decision and contain sufficient explanation of the refusal.

We can agree to extend any of the time limits. We will record this agreement in writing, specifying the period to which the extension relates and the date on which the extension is to end. We will provide a copy of this record.

This will be the final stage of the process, there is no further right to appeal the process. Only two flexible working requests can be made in any twelve-month period. This includes where an application has been rejected.

**Right to withdraw**

If a colleague fails to attend either a flexible working meeting, an appeal meeting or any rearranged meetings without good reason, we will consider the request withdrawn.

We will confirm this decision in writing.

**How are records kept?**

Notes should be taken during any formal process using the flexible working form. Notes and any other documentation should be kept securely on the colleague’s personal HR file and shared with the colleague during the process.

All associated documentation will be treated as confidential and kept in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, which state that any personal data kept should be necessary, fairly and lawfully processed, relevant, accurate and secure.

**How will I be supported?**

We will consider all requests for flexible working and support our colleagues with their circumstances where possible. If you have concerns or would like help considering your options, you can speak with your manager or local HR team.

You may also access support from our employee assistance programme (EAP) provided by GroceryAid. Details of these are available on our intranet and site notice boards.

**How will the policy be monitored?**

We will monitor this policy annually to review its effectiveness and we will update it accordance with legislative changes.

Issue	Issue Date	Author	Revision Notes
1	2018	Policy Harmonisation Project	New policy
2	Sep 2020	Rachel Marland	Whistleblowing contact update
3	Apr 2024	Policy Review Team	Updated to reflect change to legislation

**Related documents I may need to know?**

- Family Friendly Policy
- Carers Policy