

# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE



## FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY, PROCESS and GUIDANCE

**ANNEX 3**

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**APPROVED AT .....** **MEETING, ON .....** **DATE.....**

# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE



## FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

### 1 Policy

- 1.1 The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) aims to help staff achieve a better balance between work and the rest of their lives and recognises that by so doing high levels of employee satisfaction and performance will be achieved and thereby services improved.
- 1.2 Flexible working solutions are not permanent variations to the contract of employment. They are temporary agreements which can be revoked with reasonable notice if team dynamics change, performance or service needs change such that the manager decides that an agreement is no longer able to operate.
- 1.3 There may be a variety of reasons which lead an employee to request a 'flexible working agreement'. Historically reasons were usually around care for children or relatives. However employees seek flexible working agreements for a variety of reasons including preparation for retirement, to pursue hobbies, to travel, to have career breaks. The reason for requesting an agreement is not important but the operational ability to make the agreement work is critical.
- 1.4 All flexible working solutions should enable improvements to performance and service delivery. They will be assessed by the extent to which they contribute to meeting these objectives:
  - To improve the quality of life and well being of all staff by helping to build a culture of flexibility and creativity
  - To improve the morale of staff with consequential improvements to attendance and employee satisfaction/commitment
  - To help the Authority become an 'employer of choice' with a record of attracting, recruiting and retaining quality staff
  - To provide support and guidance for managers and staff in working together to identify workable flexible working solutions
  - To identify the financial costs, savings or more effective use of resources of any different approaches to the way we work
  - To ensure that this flexible working initiative is integrated with our work on best value and equality
  - To ensure that flexible working solutions reflect our values in the way we work and how we value our people
  - To encourage flexible working solutions which improve service delivery e.g. by extended/ flexible service hours.

1.5 There are a number of flexible working solutions available (with details on how each operates in the guidance notes associated with this policy). New initiatives may be added over time. Current solutions include

- Home working (occasional, regular, permanent)
- Flexible working hours (between 7am and 19.45pm with core hours, or no core hours)
- Compressed hours
  - i) Nine day fortnights
  - ii) Annualised hours
  - iii) Term Time Working
- Reduced Hours
  - i) V-time (Voluntary reduction in contractual hours and pay)
  - ii) Job share
  - iii) Unique hours (including part time)
- Additional Leave arrangements – paid and unpaid, e.g. for study, for travel

## 2 Scope

2.1 The Flexible Working Policy applies to all established PDNPA employees.

## 3 Process

3.1 A manager and an employee will meet to initially discuss a flexible working proposal. The proposal will then be considered by a team meeting, which can be facilitated by Human Resources & Performance. The meeting will consider the request in light of the individual needs, the team needs (affect on other agreements in place and support required) and the service delivery/ organisation needs.

3.2 A number of principles will be taken into account when considering flexible working proposals. These principles are:

### ***Shared Responsibility and Joint Problem Solving in Teams***

Staff and managers have a shared responsibility for identifying flexible working solutions. Working together and joint problem solving in teams is fundamental to creating a win/win solution for everyone.

### ***Innovation and Open Minds***

Staff and managers are encouraged to think creatively about flexible working solutions. Open-minded discussions can lead to releasing creativity.

### ***Local Decision Making***

Flexible working solutions should usually be generated, reviewed and managed within teams. The final decision however rests with the Head of Service, in consultation with the Head of Human Resources & Performance, who will ensure that solutions contribute to the objectives and principles in this policy.

### **Activity and Time Management**

Teams and individuals will have in place appropriate methods of recording and monitoring activities/outputs and time worked to support their flexible working solutions.

### **Equality of Access**

All staff will have equal access to exploring flexible working solutions. In practice, this means that a range of different solutions is likely to apply, as the same solution will not work for every post in every situation.

### **Service Delivery**

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate individual needs and whilst all legal obligations will be met, there is no absolute right on the part of any employee to a particular flexible working solution. The needs of the Authority in its service delivery are paramount.

### **Voluntary**

Take up of flexible working solutions is entirely voluntary. Where a team has agreed to reach a consensus on a final solution, this may involve compromise, after consultation and discussion with all concerned.

### **Trials and review**

Every solution will be subject to a 3-month trial period. There will be annual reviews (and review when teams change) in order to evaluate benefits/detrimental effects and contribution to achieving flexible working outcomes. The line manager may also review arrangements at any time if service delivery is affected.

### **Consultation and involvement**

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated periodically. This will be done directly where possible and/or via UNISON and Staff Committee representatives.

Senior managers and Members will also be consulted through our normal consultation processes and, in particular, will be involved in making decisions on corporate positions relating to new flexible working initiatives.

### **Integration**

This policy and all associated guidelines will be integrated, as appropriate, with other policies and practices (e.g. Equality in Employment, Joint Performance & Achievement Review (JPAR), Learning & Development, job design etc), as resources and opportunities arise.

### **Communications**

Information about the flexible working solutions at the Authority will be readily available to prospective staff and all employed staff and in an accessible format. Staff, managers and Members will be kept up to date about developments in or changes to this policy or to specific guidelines.

## **4 Equality & Diversity**

- 4.1 Flexible working options must be managed fairly and are free from discrimination. When developing a flexible working agreement those involved should manage the tensions that can arise between working to ensure work-life balance for all and

meeting the specific flexible working needs of the organisation and individual members of staff.

## **5. Manager responsibilities**

- 5.1 To ensure HR&P are informed of all issues/cases and seek advice from HR&P as required.
- 5.2 To ensure notes are taken of a flexible working meetings and maintain confidentiality of information
- 5.3 To decide the outcome of a request for an agreement and confirm it in writing and to ensure that all agreements are published in the designated place for monitoring purposes.
- 5.4 To take equality and diversity issues and corporate values into account in decision making.
- 5.5 To establish appropriate output and time recording processes and manage any performance or service issues arising from agreements.
- 5.6 To decide if an agreement is no longer able to operate. To then consider all possible alternatives before giving reasonable notice to end an agreement.

## **6. Employee responsibilities**

- 6.1 To support colleagues in their flexible working solutions to the mutual benefits of the team and service delivery. To maintain confidentiality of information. To communicate constructively in team meetings held to consider flexible working requests, to keep an open mind and consider all options and implications.
- 6.2 To accept that solutions are not permanent variations to contracts but temporary agreements that can be reviewed and changed/ ceased by the manager with reasonable notice.
- 6.3 To complete time sheets and any requested output recording documents in a timely way.

## **7. HR&P responsibilities**

- 7.1 To give advice and guidance to managers and staff on how the policy works and the different solutions available.
- 7.2 To facilitate team meetings held to consider flexible working, on request and maintain confidentiality of information.
- 7.3 To facilitate flexible working review meetings.

- 7.4 To confirm agreements in writing and their impact on terms and conditions and maintain employment records.
- 7.5 To monitor cases and provide management information.
- 7.6 To review this policy in line with drivers resulting from change in legislation, through feedback as a Learning Organisation or developments in best practice.

### **Relevant Legislation and Key PDNPA Policies**

Equality Act 2006  
Employment Act 2002  
Data Protection Act 1998  
Work and Families Act 2006  
Age Discrimination Act 2006  
Employment Rights Order 2006  
Employment Relations Act 2004  
Disability Discrimination Act 2005  
Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992  
PDNPA Comprehensive Equality Policy (particularly Equality in Employment)  
PDNPA Joint Performance and Achievement Review process  
PDNPA employment policies including the PDNPA Appeals Policy  
PDNPA Values  
PDNPA travel and subsistence Policy  
PDNPA e policy

# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE



## FLEXIBLE WORKING PROCESS

