

# FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS POLICY

(Covering all employees)

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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 The City of Edinburgh Council recognises the need to move to more modern ways of working, taking advantage of technological developments to introduce more flexibility to how work is organised and therefore, more responsive service delivery. This increased flexibility has the potential to provide greater opportunities to support those employees seeking to integrate their home and work life more successfully.
- 1.2 The Policy sets out the Council's approach to the statutory right to request flexible working arrangements. The core aims of the Policy are as follows:
- (a) To support flexibility for employees to achieve work-life balance.
  - (b) To ensure that requests for alternative working arrangements are considered on a consistent basis.
  - (c) To promote more socially inclusive working arrangements.
  - (d) To improve recruitment and retention.
  - (e) To help promote environmental considerations.
  - (f) To facilitate improved service delivery through more imaginative and innovative approaches to working arrangements.
- 1.3 There are number of Flexible Work Options available and a summary of each Flexible Work Option and the main contractual implications are set out in the [Flexible Work Options Toolkit](#). The statutory requirement to allow staff to request flexible working arrangements have been incorporated into the Policy.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1 The Flexible Work Options Policy applies to all Council employees (including teaching staff) seeking a change to their existing working arrangements. The Council, at its discretion, may also approve Flexible Work Options at the recruitment stage.
- 2.2 The Policy will be voluntary and an employee will need to make a request for alternative working arrangements. Where appropriate, managers also may invite individuals or groups of employees to submit requests for Flexible Work Options outlined in the Policy.

## **3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 The general principles of this Policy are:-

- (a) The Policy will apply to all employees (or potential employees) and will provide an opportunity to request an alteration to their working arrangements in line with the [Flexible Work Options Toolkit](#). There is no contractual right for employees to have their request approved.
- (b) Any request will be on a voluntary basis, initiated by the employee, and will require no reason to be given in support of the request. The request can be for a temporary or permanent change.
- (c) The manager's decision must be based on [business reasons](#), even if the employee has provided a different reason for their request.
- (d) Some alternative working arrangements will result in the terms and conditions of the contract of employment being adjusted accordingly. Such adjustments will be pro-rated to an equivalent full-time employee working the standard working week (e.g. pro-rata pay/annual leave). This will not change the employee's contract in any other way.
- (e) Normally, an employee will only be able to submit one request for alternative working arrangements (either successful or unsuccessful) within any twelve-month period beginning with the date on which the previous application was made.
- (f) The Flexible Work Options Policy will be applied in conjunction with existing Council policies and procedures including the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity and relevant Health and Safety procedures and standards.
- (g) An approved Flexible Work Option will only apply to the post held at the time of the request and will cease if the employee takes up a different post.

#### **4. PROCESS**

- 4.1 Requests for alternative working arrangements must be submitted in accordance with the process outlined in the Toolkit.
- 4.2 The employee is responsible for setting out how they see their role and duties being fulfilled under the proposed alternative working arrangement.
- 4.3 The manager will be responsible for deciding whether a request for alternative working arrangements can be supported, taking into account such factors as the employee's role and the operational needs of the service.
- 4.4 The manager will be responsible for deciding whether the alternative working arrangement requested can be agreed on a temporary or permanent basis. If a permanent change cannot be supported, the manager will consider if the request can be supported on a temporary basis. Alternatively, a request for a temporary change may only be supported on a permanent basis.

## **5 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 5.1 The Council may review approved flexible working arrangements in light of changing operational service needs and/or when the continuation of the working arrangement is detrimental to service delivery. Following consultation with the employee and reasonable notice, the Council reserves the right, to end the existing arrangement and explore other alternative working arrangements. The manager and the employee will work jointly to reach an acceptable solution.
- 5.2 Directors of service areas will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the Policy within their Department. The Director of Corporate Governance will co-ordinate Council-wide monitoring information to evaluate the effectiveness of the Policy and generate any necessary review.
- 5.3 The Policy is not a local collective agreement and the Council reserves the right to review, amend or end the Policy in light of experience and changing circumstances.