



LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
19 DECEMBER 2024 AT 10:30

Agenda Item No:

8

Report No:

E/871/24

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Presented by the Head of Human Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for the Flexible Working Policy. This policy has been updated to take account of legislative changes, best practice and the Authority's business objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

Members Recommend to Authority: (1) the Flexible Working Policy attached at Appendix A of this report.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The Authority has a register of policies that ensure the organisation works efficiently and consistently towards delivering its Business Strategy. These policies are reviewed to ensure they are relevant and up to date with legislation and best practice.
- 2 It should be noted that the Authority implements legislative changes from the date they are introduced and there may be a time lag between this and the relevant policies being updated.

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

- 3 A draft of the Flexible Working Policy is attached at Appendix A of this report for Members' consideration and recommendation to Authority.
- 4 Since the Covid-19 pandemic more employees are looking to work flexibly and the Authority values where practicable a flexible approach in the work environment and recognises the importance of supporting our employees in balancing their work and personal life, as well as helping to attract and retain talent.
- 5 The Authority recognises the benefits and positive impact of flexible working arrangements to:
 - improve health, wellbeing and work-life balance;

- reduce stress, creating a happier and more productive workforce;
 - create a more agile workforce which will in turn improve efficiency, outputs and successful delivery of our strategic objectives;
 - create a positive and inclusive working environment; and
 - reduce the need to travel, save on energy consumption and enable more effective workspace management.
- 6 We trust in our staff to deliver our services flexibly, meeting the changing needs of our business and customers and ensuring that we continue to deliver industry leading quality services.
- 7 This policy sets out the ways in which the Authority will strive to positively support all employees seeking to improve their work-life balance.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8 There are no environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10 The new policy will be communicated to all staff and the Authority will ensure that managers are adequately trained to implement the procedures in accordance with this policy.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 12 There are no risk management implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

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APPENDIX ATTACHED

Appendix A Flexible Working Policy

Flexible Working Policy

December 2024

Reference: [Version 1]



This document is controlled by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

Status: Draft

Current Version: v1.0

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Consultation:	SMT, Policy & Procedure Review Group
Approved	Approved by: Authority Approval Date: January 2025 Review Frequency: Every 5 years or earlier if there is a change in Government legislation Next Review: January 2030

Version History		
Version	Date	Description
1.0	April 2024	New legislation and code of practice reviewed
1.0	August 2024	Initial draft
1.0	November 2024	Circulated to policy and procedure review group
1.0	December 2024	Circulated to SMT

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1. Introduction

The Authority acknowledges that effective flexible working can lead to improved employee wellbeing, engagement and job satisfaction. As an employer, the Authority also recognises that enabling employees to satisfactorily balance their work and personal lives may have a positive impact on staff productivity, retention and delivery of strategic objectives.

This policy sets out the ways in which the Authority will strive to positively support **all** employees, whether they are working parents, carers or simply seeking an alternative working pattern to improve their own work-life balance.

Flexible working can vary in shape and form. Effective flexible working is dependent upon both the employee and employer working together to meet the mutual needs of the individual and the organisation.

Good communication, planning and trust are all key components to developing successful flexible working arrangements.

All flexible working requests will be treated positively and in a constructive manner.

At the same time, it is recognised that not all flexible working patterns will be able to be accommodated. Where a formal request cannot be agreed, the employee will receive written confirmation and, providing that the request is made under the statutory provisions, they will have the right to appeal the decision in line with the Authority's Appeals Procedure.

Managers should consult with Human Resources for information and support on flexible working.

This policy is supported by a Flexible Working Requests Procedure which provides in-depth guidance about the process for requesting and approving flexible working requests.

2. Policy Aims

The Authority continues to develop a working culture which is flexible about the ways in which work is delivered, whilst supporting employees to balance their work and home life.

Where individual requests for flexible working are made, that these are handled in a fair, reasonable and timely manner.

In the Authority's approach to flexible working, it is a diverse, inclusive, fair and flexible employer that attracts and retains diverse and high calibre talent, whilst also supporting the career progression of all staff during their employment.

3. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all employees. The section below (Statutory Provisions) sets out the statutory context for flexible working requests.

Managers are also encouraged to consider flexible working opportunities during the recruitment process, including incorporating flexible working options into job design, and having discussions about flexible working possibilities with both internal and external candidates.

4. Statutory Provisions

This policy is written in accordance with the [Acas Code of Practice on requests for flexible working](#). Under The Children and Families Act (2014), and the subsequent Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023, **all** employees are able to apply for flexible working, which is defined as a permanent change to their terms and conditions.

From 6 April 2024, employees are able to request flexible working from their first day of employment.

An employee is entitled to submit two statutory flexible working requests in a 12 month period.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is considered unlawful discrimination to decline a flexible working request due to a protected characteristic (race, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity).

In line with its obligations under the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, the Authority will ensure that part-time workers do not receive less favourable access to flexible working or unfavourable treatment as a result of a flexible working request, unless it can be justified on wholly objective grounds.

5. Flexible Working at Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

The Authority endeavours to create a working culture which is positive about flexible working. Information about flexible working will be made available to new starters as part of their induction and regular discussions are encouraged throughout employment.

Flexible working arrangements may be formal or informal.

Where an employee wishes to request a permanent (i.e. ongoing) and contractual change to their working pattern, location and/or hours, they should submit a formal request under the Flexible Working Requests Procedure.

Alternatively, informal flexible working arrangements can be agreed locally between the line manager and employee. Informal arrangements do not constitute a contractual change to the employee's terms and conditions, and are typically agreed where a change is for a temporary period or is relatively minor.

A number of good examples of flexible working arrangements already exist in the Authority, both formal and informal. The Authority's introduction of informal hybrid working may mean that individual staff are working a flexible arrangement (e.g. part-time hours, compressed hours such as 9 day fortnight or 4 day week) alongside a hybrid approach in their team (i.e. a mix of in the office/site and remote or home working).

Managers are encouraged to be open to the prospect of employees working flexibly and all parties should be creative in thinking about ways in which flexibility can be achieved without a negative impact upon the work of the individual, the wider team or the organisation.

Managers should appreciate that employees can face challenging decisions about how best to balance their work with outside commitments.

6. Informal flexible working

Where an employee is not seeking to permanently alter their working arrangements, but a situation arises that requires a degree of flexibility, they should speak with their line manager about informal (temporary) arrangements. While informal flexible working may be agreed locally, line managers must always discuss the implications of an informal flexible working request with HR to ensure consistency and equity.

7. Formal Flexible Working

The Authority will consider all formal flexible working requests in a fair and consistent way. All employees who submit a formal request will have the opportunity of a meeting to discuss the implications of their request (with their line manager and HR) and to which the employee may be accompanied, except where their request is approved without the need for such a meeting.

Managers can only consider a request in the context of how readily it can be accommodated at that point in time and in the immediate future. As such, approved requests will not set a precedent that all similar future requests will also be accommodated.

Where it is not possible for a request to be approved, a business reason will be provided and the right to appeal will be offered (where the request being made is covered by the statutory provisions).

It is advisable that all formal flexible working arrangements should have a trial period built into the agreement, usually of up to six months. Once the arrangements have been confirmed, they will become a permanent change to the individual's terms and conditions of employment.

The Flexible Working Requests Procedure accompanies this policy and outlines the statutory requirements and process for considering such formal requests.

For employees looking at flexible retirement, please refer to the Authority's Retirement Policy and Procedure.

8. Responsibilities

Managers must ensure that all employees are able to readily access copies of this Policy, when the employee does not have access to the Authority's intranet.

The Senior Management Team are accountable for ensuring that this policy is implemented across the Authority, ensuring it is communicated and understood, translated into practice and enforcing its content

The Human Resources Team are responsible for implementing this policy across the Authority.

9. Legal Considerations

- ACAS Code of Practice on requests for flexible working
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- The Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023

10. Relevant Policy & Procedures

- Flexible Working Requests Procedure
- Appeals Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

11. Monitoring & Evaluation

The policy will be monitored and evaluated on effectiveness periodically.

This policy will be reviewed in light of any new legislation/regulation or every five years, whichever is the earlier.