

Flexible Working Policy

Introduction

Elizabeth Finn Homes believes that our employees are our most valuable asset and understands that there are times when those with caring responsibilities, as well as those whose interests and aspirations impact on their time, may find our standard or established working hours are incompatible with their work/life balance.

We also recognise the importance of helping our employees to balance their work and home lives by offering flexible working arrangements. In turn, we recognise that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with the needs of the business and the service we provide to our residents.

Purpose

This policy aims to set out the flexible working options that may be available to our colleagues and outlines the process to be followed when a flexible working request is received.

This policy applies to flexible working requests received by the Elizabeth Finn Homes on or after 6th April 2024. Requests received before that date, which have not reached conclusion, will continue to be considered under our previous policy.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all colleagues employed by Elizabeth Finn Homes on a permanent contract of employment, either full or part time, including those on fixed term contracts. It does not currently apply to contractors, agency, or bank staff, but this would be reviewed in the light of any change in legislation in relation to temporary staff.

Types of Leave

The policy considers the following options as types of flexible working, but we recognise that there may be alternatives, and that the working pattern that may suit any particular individual could be a unique one involving a combination of options:

- job-sharing
- part-time working
- compressed hours
- working from home
- flexible shift working

Need of the Business

Although Elizabeth Finn Homes is committed to providing the widest possible range of working patterns for its workforce, both management and employees need to be realistic and recognise that the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the business.

Where an instance of flexible working is requested, we will take in to account a number of criteria including (but not limited to):

- the cost of the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on our service delivery
- the level of supervision that the post holder requires
- the structure of the department and staff resources
- other issues specific to the individual's department
- an analysis of the tasks specific to the role, including their frequency and duration
- an analysis of the workload of the role

Eligibility

Although we recognise that not all of the flexible working patterns considered will be suitable for all sections of our workforce, there should be no arbitrary barriers.

Employees in all areas and levels of the Company will be considered for flexible working regardless of their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, pregnancy, marital/civil partnership status, gender reassignment, or disability. However, there is no automatic right for employees to change to any of the flexible working patterns.

Each application will be considered on its own merits, save for where it is made as a reasonable adjustment under disability legislation, in which case it will be considered under the rules applying to our duty under those laws.

Right to request Flexible Working

Employees are entitled to make a statutory request for flexible working from the first day of their employment. They can make a maximum of two statutory flexible working requests during any 12-month period. A request cannot be made until any previous request has been concluded in full.

While it is the Elizabeth Finn's policy to be flexible on working patterns for all its employees, in order to ensure that we are complying with our legal obligations concerning the right to request flexible working, there may be situations where precedence has to be given to those who are eligible for this right.

The Application

In order to make a request for flexible working, employees are required to complete the Flexible Working Application Form which is available on the intranet.

For clarity, the application submitted must:

- be made in writing and state that it is such an application
- state whether you have made a previous application under this procedure and, if so, when
- specify the change applied for and the date on which it is proposed the change should take effect



- be dated.

The application must also state whether the employee is requesting the variation as a reasonable adjustment under the disability discrimination provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Timescale

Within 14 days of receipt of your flexible working application, the line manager will arrange a mutually convenient time and place to meet with an employee to discuss the request.

We will deal with and conclude the application for flexible working within 30 days of the date of the application, unless we both agree on an extension in which case, we will confirm this in writing.

Procedure for dealing with an application

Consultation on your application

As stated above, the line manager will arrange to meet with the employee within 14 days of receiving their application. The discussion will include exploration of alternative arrangements that may be acceptable to the employee if we are unable to agree to the exact variation requested.

Notice of decision

Once a decision has been reached, the employee will be advised of the outcome in writing. Prior to communicating their decision, the line manager should advise Human Resources of their decision and complete an HRIS form to reflect the agreed change.

Where our decision is to agree to the application, the notice will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which the variation is to take effect.

Where the decision is to refuse the application, the line manager should seek advice from Human Resources before doing so. The notice will state which of the specified grounds for refusal are considered to apply, with an explanation of why those grounds apply in relation to the application. The notice will also set out the appeal procedure.

Right of Appeal

An employee may appeal against the decision to refuse an application for flexible working. The notice of appeal must be in writing, setting out the grounds for appeal and be dated.

We will discuss the appeal with them once the grounds for appeal are received. If an appeal meeting is held, the hearing manager will arrange a mutually convenient time and place to meet.

After the appeal meeting has been held, we will provide written, dated notice of the decision on the appeal. Where we uphold the appeal, the notice will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which it is to take effect. Where our decision to reject the application remains, the notice will state the grounds for the decision and contain a sufficient explanation as to why those grounds apply.

Acceptance of Variation

Where we accept an application, it will initially result in a temporary variation to the terms and conditions of employment, unless otherwise agreed. A review period of 12 months will be applicable to all flexible working requests at which time we will meet with you to explore whether the existing arrangements meets both your needs and those of the business.

Once a change has been made, there is no right to revert back to your previous terms and conditions. Further requests will count towards the maximum amount of two permitted in any 12-month period.

Accompaniment

At any meetings held to discuss the application, including any appeal meetings, the employee can be accompanied by a colleague of their choice.

Withdrawal of application by employee

Elizabeth Finn Homes will treat an application as withdrawn under the statutory provisions where the employee:

- notify us, orally or in writing, that they are withdrawing the application

- without reasonable cause, fail to attend a meeting to discuss the application or an appeal meeting more than once.

Upon receipt of written confirm from an employee that they wish to withdraw their application, a written acknowledgement of that decision will be provided.

Review date	Next Review Date
March 2024	March 2027