A scheme to enable Bedford staff to adjust, by agreement, their work commitments to balance better with their domestic needs.
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FLEXIBLE WORKING - INTRODUCTION

At Bedford Hospital we understand that staff are critical to successful healthcare. Our philosophy is to provide excellent services with well trained and motivated staff responding to the healthcare needs of the community of Bedfordshire and surrounding areas.

The Trust has an objective to achieve continuous improvement in employment practices and to be a good employer, including the provision of employee friendly employment practices that recognise all the needs of our workforce.

If this objective is to become a reality then we must work hard and imaginatively to develop and introduce initiatives which attract, develop and retain high quality staff, enabling them to reach and use their full potential.

To facilitate that achievement we need to be responsive to the changing needs of our workforce now and in the future.

This Guide to Flexible Working is an innovative approach to working time and employment practices which enable staff to combine work more easily with the demands of a family and other personal interests and responsibilities. The Guide has been produced in response to feedback from the Staff Survey.

Achieving the best balance between home and work is not always easy, and family and outside commitments often mean that our highly skilled and competent employees are not able to continue with their careers. Not only does this mean the loss of a valuable colleague's contribution, but we also have to recruit and train new staff which is a considerable drain on resources. Of particular concern is the impact this has on our ability to provide the excellence in healthcare to which we are committed.

At Bedford Hospital we want to enable our staff to balance personal interests, family and work more effectively. We also believe that our ability to attract high calibre staff will be enhanced by the fact that we can offer terms and conditions of employment best suited to individual circumstances and priorities.

A scheme such as this requires a responsive and responsible approach from everyone. Our first and foremost aim must always be to meet our service needs and financial accountabilities.

In conjunction with our Special Leave Policy which provides for paid Carer Leave, Compassionate Leave, Adoption Leave and Paternity Leave, working flexibly allows us to better achieve the balance between both our work and personal goals whilst ensuring that services are not compromised.

These guidelines have been designed to provide details of the range of alternative working options available, showing the main points which need to be considered before any agreement to change existing contractual terms and conditions is reached.

There are many good examples of flexible working arrangements already in place within the hospital and these are detailed within Appendix I. The staff named are happy for you to contact them for further information.

Flexible working is about finding positive solutions to the way we live and work today.

Andrew Reed
Chief Executive
FLEXIBLE WORKING - PRINCIPLES

This Guide provides a framework for flexing individual working time arrangements. Exercise of the various options available is at the discretion of line managers and will always be governed by the needs of the service.

Managers and individual members of staff should bear in mind the following principles when considering a request for a non-standard or more flexible working arrangement.

- The Trust would wish to be as accommodating as practicable in responding to all such requests.
- Service delivery and quality standards, including health and safety and legislative requirements, must not be compromised.
- The appropriate manager should consult colleagues and staff who may be affected by the requested change before a decision is confirmed. A flexible work arrangement for one should not be to the detriment or inconvenience of other colleagues.
- Flexible working arrangements must be reciprocal and beneficial to both the individual and the hospital.
- Contractual changes to terms and conditions of service can only be agreed following careful consideration of the implications and proper understanding of the individual's circumstances.
- Pay and benefits need to be adjusted on a pro-rata basis to changes in the hours worked, and the effects of the proposed change fully explained and agreed with the individual.
- The application of flexible working should not result in the Trust incurring additional costs to due to replacement cover.

This guide is also part of the Improving Working Lives initiative. For further information on the various types of flexible working, together with standard checklists, please refer to the Improving Working Lives toolkit. Master copies are held with the Assistant Directors of HR or can be downloaded direct from the Internet www.doh.gov.uk/iwl/publications.htm
**FLEXIBLE WORKING – ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES**

There are many advantages to flexible working and these are listed below. However, there are also disadvantages which should be taken into consideration when submitting a request for flexible working.

### Advantages for the employer
- Likely to attract people to the NHS
- Reduces the need for overtime
- Can help with seasonal fluctuations ie. winter bed pressures
- Reduces absence levels
- Improves the organisation’s image
- Helps to retain staff who might leave
- Can alleviate recruitment difficulties
- Helps to cover a 24hr/365 days a year service
- Improves labour flexibility
- Reduces time off for childcare problems
- More availability of staff at peak times
- Reduces off duty problems – covering unpopular shifts
- Improves morale
- Recruit staff who would not otherwise take a post
- Possibility of extra shifts
- Can be greater sense of loyalty

### Disadvantages for the employer
- May not fit in with the needs of the ward/department
- Increased administration and management costs
- Complexity of shift rotas and scheduling holidays
- Discontent if favouritism shown
- Long term planning difficulties
- Difficult to cover short term problems eg. annual leave, compassionate leave
- Set hours, therefore limited resources
- Reduced seamless working
- 2 people could cause communication/commitment/training conflict
- Need ‘more’ people
- Limited hours – how to keep updated

### Advantages for the individual
- Helps to achieve a better work-life balance
- Plan around personal and/or family life
- Ability to maintain professional skills without the need to retrain
- Ability to avoid stressful commute times and find a car parking space
- Employment benefits of contracted employee (compared to bank employee)
- Part of a team
- Regular salary
- Access to training and development
- Stability and security
- Holiday break
- Health issues (less stressed if regular work hours)

### Disadvantages for the individual
- Lack of career progression
- Feelings of insecurity
- Less opportunity for training and development
- Less opportunity for increased hours OR constantly called on to work extra hours
- Lack of communication
- Feeling left out of teams
- Prefer to work for bank
- Continuity of care if need to leave because hours are completed
- Attending statutory training days can be difficult
- Face resentment from other staff
- H&S issue if leaving premises at unsocial hours
FLEXIBLE WORKING – GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Staff – If you would like to apply for flexible working:

1. **Consider** the practical implications of your request and how your department/section would cope with these. Do you want to alter your working hours by reducing or changing the pattern of your work?

2. **In Writing** put your request in writing to your immediate line manager, with as much detail about your requirements as possible, and keep a copy (see Appendix II for proforma). This form requests information on how the proposal meets the needs of the service and how, if necessary, work is to be reallocated.

3. **Meeting** arrange a meeting to discuss your request with your manager, allowing a reasonable time for the request to be considered. Your manager may need more than one meeting with you, depending on the nature of your request. The content of the meeting should also include a discussion about the contractual issues: hours, minimum unpaid breaks where an employee works in excess of 6 continuous hours (in line with Working Time Regulations), health & safety issues, training requirements, changes to annual leave entitlement and any other term & condition affected following the proposed change. Advice can be sought from HR on x2290 or x2815.

Where the change involves a reduction in total hours worked and therefore pay, and the member of staff contributes to the NHS Pension Scheme, there will be a reduction in pension benefit. For more information, consult the HR Pensions Advisor on x2540.

4. **Flexibility** it may be that your section might be able to meet your request in part, but not in full. How flexible can you be – might there be alternative ways to meet your needs?

5. **Timescale** upon agreeing a request the manager must confirm in writing the outcome within 21 days of the meeting and sign the request form to give authorisation. Any special requirements upon the employee, for example, attendance at work outside the revised hours to attend training sessions/meetings etc. should be discussed and confirmed in writing.

6. **Trial periods** in some circumstances the manager and/or employee may have reservations about the potential success of a new arrangement. In these circumstances, the manager may agree a trial period of up to three months to assess the impact of the arrangement. There should be a midway review to discuss whether the arrangement should continue to the end of the pilot, be adjusted in some way, or is likely to cease at the end of the pilot.

7. **Documentation** should be placed in the employee’s personal file. It is the manager’s responsibility to ensure a SR2 form is completed and that a copy of the Flexible Working Request Form is forwarded to HR for monitoring purposes. Please note that once the change is agreed, this is an amendment to the contract of employment and there is no automatic entitlement to revert to the original hours of work/working pattern.

8. If your manager has refused your request, the reasons for this should be explained in the formal response given to you.
9. You may take your request to the next level of manager in your department, if:

- You do not get a formal response (in writing) from your manager within a reasonable or agreed timeframe
- You believe the refusal or outcome of your request is unreasonable.

You should arrange to do this within 7 days from receiving the formal response from your manager, and may choose to be accompanied by your representative.

10. Remember your manager must consider the needs of the service and the department as a whole, and may not always be able to accommodate your request, although s/he will do all that is reasonable to do so.

This procedure has been developed using good practice and meets the requirements within the Part-time Work Regulations 1999 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

**Managers – If a member of your team approaches you for flexible working:**

Managers introducing this formal process for requesting a change in working hours/pattern, should consider the impact on the entire team/department to ensure that equity of opportunity to new working arrangements is provided.

For checklist, please refer to **MANAGEMENT OF FLEXIBLE WORKING - Guidance for Managers**

The following pages detail some of the flexible working options which might be considered.
# STAGGERED WORKING HOURS

## DEFINITION

Allows normal working hours to be varied to suit an individual’s needs, whilst working the full time contracted hours for the post over the week. For example, working from 10am – 6pm rather than from 9am – 5pm.

Working Hours may be Staggered on a permanent or temporary basis, throughout the week or just on one or two days of the week.

Staggered Working Hours is not part-time working, and the full-time contracted hours for the post must be worked over the week.

## POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED

- Agreement with the line manager must be sought in advance and actual timings need to be defined to ensure that service needs are met in full.
- Allows for greater coverage of the working day by the department, and provides flexibility for the individual.
- Minimum break times must be taken during the working day according to Trust policy.
- Staggered Hours cannot apply to staff who are rostered, but only to those who work a “standard” week, and who are not required to handover to an oncoming shift.
- Are there any particular health & safety or security issues which need to be considered when working outside of the ‘normal hours’?

## IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

Pay and benefits are not affected on the basis that the full-time hours for the job are worked over five days or less.

## QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could a Staggered Working Hours arrangement include weekend work?</td>
<td>Yes, if your existing work pattern includes weekend work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could a Staggered Working Hours arrangement allow for longer but fewer</td>
<td>Yes, as long as there is no compromise to service standards or any adverse impact on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shifts eg. 12 hour shifts?</td>
<td>rest of the team. One ward already has staff who work 12 hour shifts (allowing for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>minimum unpaid breaks as per Working Time Regulations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my full time hours are 36 a week, could I work them over 4 days?</td>
<td>Yes, you would need to work nine hours daily, excluding breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could I reduce my daily hours by working through my breaks?</td>
<td>No, a meal/rest breaks must be provided for during your attendance hours, of the following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>minimum duration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily working hours:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 4 hours  nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 to 8 hours  45 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 and up to 12 hours  60 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could I work a 9 day fortnight?</td>
<td>This arrangement would need to be discussed with your manager. This should be possible if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>there is no compromise to service standards or any adverse impact on the rest of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>team. Seek advice from HR for further information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I work Staggered Hours if I work part time?</td>
<td>If you are part time it may be possible to arrange for your hours to be worked outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the ‘normal’ working hours for the department (see Part Time Working)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For examples of Staggered Working Hours within Bedford Hospital, see Case studies in Appendix I.
PART TIME WORKING

DEFINITION

Contracted to work less than the full time hours for the post on a permanent basis.

POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED

Before an agreement with an employee can be finalised, the following points need to be considered and agreed:

- How many working hours a week are required for the post?
- If part time working is agreed how will the remainder of the hours/work be covered?
- How should the hours be worked? (Each day and week)
- What happens if additional hours are required? Is payment made or is time off in lieu given?
- Are there any special overlaps required between the part time postholder and others?
- Could a job share arrangement be organised? (See Job Share Arrangements)

IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

Salary and all pay related benefits are reduced pro-rata to the full time entitlement, eg.

- Salary increases
- Pension
- Annual leave
- Sick pay and maternity pay
- Redundancy pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If I work part time can I vary the hours I work each week?</strong></td>
<td>It may be possible to vary your weekly hours providing you work your contracted hours within the period of one month. This would be with the agreement of your manager and according to the needs of the service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What happens if I work additional hours over and above my contracted hours?</strong></td>
<td>The hours worked each week will be added for a monthly total. If you have worked more than your contracted hours then an adjustment will be made to offset these from the next months allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will you calculate payment for additional hours?</strong></td>
<td>If you are in a post which qualifies for overtime payment, then all additional hours must be agreed in advance with your manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can I agree to work only on certain ‘fixed’ days each week?</strong></td>
<td>Payment for agreed additional hours is at the standard hourly rate until you have worked the full time hours for the post within the month. Hours worked in excess of this will be at overtime rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If I work part time can my hours be worked outside the ‘normal’ working hours?</strong></td>
<td>Yes, as long as there is no compromise to service standards or any adverse impact on the rest of the team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For examples of Part Time Working within Bedford Hospital, see Case studies in Appendix I.
**TEMPORARY REDUCED WORKING HOURS**

**DEFINITION**

An arrangement which enables employees to work reduced hours for a specified period of time to deal with “special circumstances”. This could include a personal or family emergency, or to undertake a particular course of training or development.

An employee would be able to reduce his/her working hours for up to a period of one year (minimum one month). Salary would be reduced pro-rata to the whole time salary.

An employee could thus reduce their hours by a daily amount of time or by a weekly amount i.e. could work short days or a short week.

**POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED**

- Could service needs be covered without unreasonable additional cost?
- What is the impact on the rest of the team?
- Arrangements must be agreed in writing between employee and manager before changes to working hours are implemented.
- Flexibility should be shown in the event of a crisis over which the employee has little or no control.

**IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS**

Salary and all pay related benefits are reduced pro-rata to the full-time entitlement, eg:

- Annual leave
- Sick Pay and Maternity Pay
- Pension
- Redundancy Pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What can be termed a personal or family emergency?</td>
<td>A situation arising outside of work which places particular stress or difficulty on you, and in which you need to take part to resolve the situation or lend support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the maximum period of one year be extended?</td>
<td>An extension is possible by agreement with your line manager. This would normally be in exceptional circumstances (eg. a long term illness of a family member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could this affect my annual leave?</td>
<td>Leave is calculated as pro-rata to the whole time allowance. For example, if full year entitlement is 22 days for a 36 hour week (over 5 days) and you reduce to 18 hours (over 3 days), your entitlement would be 13 days. $3 \times 22 \text{ days} = 13 \frac{3}{5}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I agree to work only on certain ‘fixed’ days of the week?</td>
<td>Yes, if there is no compromise to service standards or any adverse impact on the rest of the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I reduce my hours, am I able to work outside the “normal” hours for the department?</td>
<td>Yes, but consideration would need to be given to the same issues as someone opting for Staggering Working Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I reduced my hours would there be any affect on my pension?</td>
<td>Yes, it would have an effect on how your length of service in the scheme is calculated. eg, if you reduced your hours to half time for one year, then it would only count as six months ‘reckonable service’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JOB SHARE

DEFINITION

Two (or more) people undertaking one role on a shared basis. This arrangement has the constraint that if one party to the job share leaves the employment of the second party is affected. It is a particular form of part-time working in which the individuals agree to work together to cover a full-time post in a seamless manner. It is useful in opening up posts for part-time employment where this would otherwise be impractical, such as where a post is unique or at a senior level.

POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED

The following points should be considered to establish whether a role is suitable for job share consideration:

- Can the duties and responsibilities be clearly defined and measured for each person?
- If the role requires a broad range of skills, would two (or more) people provide those skills between them?
- Would the role benefit from longer than the normal full-time working hours per week?
- Accountabilities for each “job-sharer” will need to be clearly defined.
- What happens if one partner leaves the shared role:
  - Seek a replacement
  - If unable to find a replacement the role should be offered on a full-time or increased hours to remaining “job-sharer(s)”. 
  - If this is not acceptable to remaining “job-sharer(s)” then replace with full time employee.

IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

Salary and all pay related benefits are reduced pro-rata to the full-time entitlement. eg:

- Salary increases
- Pension
- Redundancy Pay
- Annual leave
- Sick and Maternity Pay

See Job Share Policy for further information. For examples of Job Share within Bedford Hospital, see Case studies in Appendix I.
## ANNUAL HOURS

### DEFINITION

A contract in which the hours of work are spread evenly through the year, with fewer hours worked or time off at certain times. For example during off peak periods when service delivery is less busy.

### POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED

Before an agreement with an employee can be finalised, the following points need to be considered and agreed:

- Does the role show a peak and trough pattern, which would lend itself to annual hours working without an adverse affect on service needs?
- Can the service accommodate or adapt to lengthy periods of absence, eg. During school holidays? What maximum period of absence could the service tolerate?
- How would the working pattern be arranged – eg. Number of hours per week/month, days to be worked etc.
- How will pay be administered? Options might include:
  - Employ through the bank and pay salary weekly.
  - Salary is paid over 12 equal monthly instalments with a recovery clause for any overpayment if individual leaves before completing the contracted hours for the period.
- Will the Trust need to recruit another person to cover the job during the remainder of the year? If so, could cover be provided by temporary or trainee staff?

### IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

If you do not work the full time hours for the post, salary and all pay related benefits are reduced pro-rata to the full-time entitlement, eg.

- Salary increases
- Pension
- Annual leave
- Sick Pay and Maternity Pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is an Annual Hours arrangement only available for part-time workers?</strong></td>
<td>Most annualised hours contracts are for part time workers however it may be possible to work full time hours over a period of less than 12 months, but great care must be taken that your working pattern does not contravene the meal/rest breaks of the Working Time Regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If I have an Annual Hours Contract can I vary the hours I work each week?</strong></td>
<td>It may be possible to vary your weekly hours providing you work your contracted hours within the period of one month. This would be with the agreement of your manager and according to the needs of the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If I work additional hours, how is payment for these hours calculated?</strong></td>
<td>Hours worked are reconciled on a monthly basis to ensure that at year end you have worked the annual contracted hours. These will be paid at the standard hourly rate until you have worked the full-time hours for the post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Will any additional hours be paid as overtime?</strong></td>
<td>If you are in a post which qualifies for a premium payment - all overtime must be agreed in advance with your manager. Hours are reconciled on a monthly basis, and if you have worked more than your contracted hours and adjustment will be made to offset any additional hours worked against next months allocation. Alternatively payment may be made for additional hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you calculate any premium payment for additional hours?</strong></td>
<td>Payment for additional hours is at the standard hourly rate until you have worked the full-time annual hours for the post. Any hours worked in excess of this will be at the premium rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Will any of my entitlements be affected if I work Annual Hours?</strong></td>
<td>This depends on whether you are contracted to work the full-time hours for the post or not. If you are then you will receive full entitlements. If not, then you will receive them pro-rata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will annual leave be calculated?</strong></td>
<td>On the basis of an annual entitlement calculated in hours. Contact HR for further advice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For examples of Annualised Hours Working within Bedford Hospital, see Case studies in Appendix I.
PHASED RETURN TO WORK

Returning to ‘normal working’ after a prolonged absence for any reason can be difficult. This scheme is designed to facilitate a return to work and an early resumption of normal duties.

DEFINITION

Phased Return to Work after a period of extended leave eg. Maternity leave, career break or serious or prolonged illness. Normal hours of work are reduced initially on a temporary basis before return to work.

A phased Return to Work is for a period of up to 1 month by agreement with the manager.

POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED

After Maternity Leave

- A Phased Return to Work could commence before the end of the maternity leave period after the birth of a baby.

- Alternatively, a Phased Return to Work could commence after the end of the maternity leave period after the birth of a baby.

After Extended Leave

- A Phased Return to Work following an extended Employment Break might be appropriate to allow someone to adjust to their work regime and duties.

After Sickness Absence

- Doctors often recommend a gradual return to work after a serious illness and a long absence from work. A medical statement indicating “fit to return to work” and clearance from the Occupational Health Department must accompany any recommendation.

- In conjunction with the line manager, HR and the OH Department, a rehabilitation programme should be developed for the employee. This would involve prescribed working hours over an agreed period of time with the aim of bringing the employee back to their previous working hours, normally within one month.

IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

- **After Maternity Leave**
  Staff returning from maternity leave will receive pay and benefits pro-rata to the hours being worked.

- **After Extended Leave**
  For staff returning after a period of unpaid leave pay and benefits will be paid pro-rata to the hours being worked.

- **After Sickness Absence**
  If a Phased Return programme is formally agreed, remuneration will be discussed and agreed on a case by case basis. Return to work part-time may be offset by any outstanding sick pay entitlement, or where this has been exhausted, by annual leave to maintain full-time salary.

QUESTION

**How long is the set period for which I can have a Phased Return to Work?**

**Can I be forced to have a Phased Return to Work?**

**Must I use up my paid annual leave entitlement to make up my part-time earnings?**

**Answer**

- Normally up to 1 month with a review after this time. However, the exact period will be decided after discussion with your line manager, the OH Department and the Human Resources Department where staff are returning after illness

- No, this is by agreement only

- No, this is by agreement only
EMPLOYMENT BREAK

DEFINITION
An arrangement which enables employees to take a break in their careers for further education, travel or family care. The period of leave from work is unpaid, but the Contract of Employment is not terminated.

Recommended periods - minimum period is 3 months and the maximum is 5 years (periods of less than 3 months should be dealt with as temporary unpaid leave of absence).

IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

Service Accrual
The period of the break will count toward continuous employment for statutory purposes. Other provisions depending upon length of service, i.e. pensions, contractual redundancy payments, leave entitlements, etc., will be suspended for the period of the break.

Pay and Benefits:
All pay and benefits will be suspended from the start of the Employment Break and will be reactivated again on return to work eg:

- Salary and increments increases
- Pension (contributions may be made up retrospectively –see below)
- Annual leave
- Sick Pay Benefits
- Maternity Leave and Pay

POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED
Before an agreement can be finalised the following points should be fully considered and explained:

- There are three key elements of activity during the employment break period:
  o Communication with the hospital
  o A commitment by the employee to work for 2 weeks per year during the break
  o Continuing social contact with the department
- Staff must have a minimum of 12 months service with the Trust before they are eligible for consideration for an Employment Break.
- If the employee returns to work within one year, the same type of job will be available, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- If the break is longer than one year, the employee may return to as similar a job as possible, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- If the break is 12 months or under the employee will be able to return to work at the equivalent salary level on leaving, reflecting increases awarded during the break.
  Conditional on this is that the employee will commit to keep up to date during the break and to attend relevant induction courses organised by the Trust. The employee on return to work will provide evidence of CPD/Training.
- Training arrangements for re-introduction to work will be agreed before the break commences and will be reviewed during the employment break.
- Normally the notice period required before the return to work should be 3 months if the break is less than a year and 6 months if the break is more than a year.

QUESTION

In terms of job and benefits, what do the words 'substantially less advantageous' mean?

Who decided what activity qualifies for an Employment Break?

What happens if my department is restructured when I am away on my Employment Break?

Will an Employment Break affect my pension?

ANSWER

This is comparable to existing Trust guidelines, which specify that you would return to a job, which is generally at the same level as the one you left. We would consider:

- Your skills and experience
- Your physical capabilities
- Remuneration in the ‘old’ post
- Requirements of the new job

This decision rests with your line manager who may wish to discuss your request with HR

The Trust’s Security of Employment Policy would apply. You would be kept fully informed and invited to meetings etc. in the same way as staff who are at work

Staff who take unpaid absence of more than one year will have a corresponding break in their pension contributions

See Employment Break Policy for further information.
SPECIAL LEAVE

DEFINITION

Enables staff to take time off for specific family, personal or domestic needs, subject to their meeting any specific criteria.

TYPES OF SPECIAL LEAVE

Carer Leave
For family emergencies (eg. involving a child, close relative or dependent). Not intended for long term domestic or family needs.

Duration – up to 3 days paid leave per rolling year; unpaid leave or annual leave may also be agreed.

Eligibility – when the normal care arrangements for a dependent break down at short notice; to deal with an unexpected incident such as illness of a child at school; to arrange for the care of a sick/injured dependent.

Compassionate Leave - Bereavement

Duration – up to 3 days compassionate leave that may be increased to 5 days at the manager’s discretion.

Eligibility – in the event of the bereavement of a dependent or of a close relative.

Adoption Leave

Duration – depends on requirements of the formal adoption procedures and other variables (see Policy for full details)

Eligibility – 1 years NHS service

Parental Leave

For long term child care

Duration – 13 weeks unpaid for each child up to the age of 5. Pro rata for part time staff. This leave can be taken as a maximum of 4 weeks in any one year.

Eligibility – 1 years NHS service; in adoption, can be taken up to 5th anniversary of adoption or 18th birthday; for a disabled child, leave is up to 18th birthday.

Paternity Leave

Fathers/partners are eligible for leave following the birth or on adoption of a child.

Duration – 3 days paid

Eligibility – 1 years NHS service

IMPACT ON PAY AND BENEFITS

There is no impact on pay and benefits other than unpaid period of Parental Leave.

QUESTION

What is Carer Leave?

ANSWER

It is time off for urgent family or domestic reasons that prevent an individual from coming to work. For example, a breakdown in your care arrangements for dependants or emergencies relating to a close relative.

Each application will be assessed by the manager who will determine according to the circumstances how much leave may be granted and whether this should be paid or unpaid.

What if I need to stay at home because my child is sick, do I take sick leave?

No, ask your manager for Carer Leave, you can complete the application form retrospectively when you return to work.

Where is the application form for Carer Leave?

At the end of the Policy covering absence from work for domestic, personal or family reasons. It can is also known as the ‘Special Leave Policy’ and can be accessed on the intranet.

What is Compassionate Leave?

The Trust’s Equal Opportunities Policy states that all employees should be treated equitably and fairly. So provided you meet the eligibility criteria and produced the documentation required, the appropriate Special Leave would be applied.

Who will monitor Special Leave?

HR will monitor the overall Special Leave scheme, as all requests for leave under this policy will be copied to HR.

Your manager will also keep a record of leave under this policy and is likely to record this on your Absence Record Card or equivalent.
SELF ROSTERING

Self rostering work patterns provide staff the opportunity to state their preferred working patterns prior to a rota being drawn up formally. This ‘choice’ is within agreed parameters, while meeting the needs of the department. There are several examples of this type of working within the Trust, contact HR for details.

For further advice regarding self rostering, contact the Shared Governance Resource Management Forum who has conducted research into the implementation of self rostering within Bedford Hospital.

FLEXI-TIME

Flexi-time is a way of improving the hours worked by individuals by taking into account their personal circumstances while simultaneously continuing to provide a professional service delivery.

A department will have daily core hours when all staff must be in attendance; these may be different to the normal working hours of the department. Staff are then given a bandwidth of hours between which they can choose their start and end time on a daily basis. Staff may choose to record the hours they work, flexitime accrued and lieu time accrued on their own personal timesheet. There are some examples of this type of working within the Trust, contact HR for details.

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

Within the rules of the NHS Pension Scheme, there is a range of alternatives available to people as they approach retirement. Simply stopping work and starting to draw a pension is not the only option. It may be possible for you to reduce your hours prior to your retirement date without impacting your pension entitlement. It may be possible for you to continue to work for the Trust on a part time basis following your retirement date. Contact the HR Pensions Advisor on x2540 for further details.

There may be other flexible working arrangements such as working from home on set days, or fixed shift patterns, which may be appropriate. Please discuss individual requirements with your manager.
### APPENDIX I

### CASE STUDIES WITHIN BEDFORD HOSPITAL NHS TRUST

The following are examples of staff within the Trust who work a variety of flexible working arrangements. Many staff have chosen these patterns of working to suit their individual circumstances, some have chosen the pattern of working to suit the needs of the service, and in some cases for both the above reasons.

Please do not hesitate to contact the individuals concerned to find out more about how to implement similar flexible working arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Staggered Part Time Hours</strong></th>
<th>Sonya Carey, Finance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 8.30 am – 2.00 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 8.30 am – 1.00 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 8.30 am – 5.30 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours flexible to suit individual for childcare reasons. Review when eldest starts school (in 6 months). Chose days after speaking to clients, eg. required to be in work on Wednesdays. Clients pleased with flexibility e.g. work from home extra hours if necessary.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Term Time Work</strong></th>
<th>Bernice Chiswell, Dietitian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term time contract for 8 yrs (part-time). Flexible to do extra hours if required e.g. doing a 3 week project during school summer hols. Can use lower grade to cover when not available. Childcare during hols easier now that eldest is 15. Good example of retaining staff while children grow up.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Staggered Full Time Hours</strong></th>
<th>Kay Minshull, IT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kay starts approximately 6. 30am - 7.00am and leaves 3.30 - 4.00pm. This provides on-call cover from 6.30 - 9.00am. The helpdesk staff work 8.30-4.30 or 9.00–5.30 Service benefits: Helpdesk cover 8.00-5.30pm so A+E and wards can clear up issues. Improved customer care.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Staggered Full Time Hours</strong></th>
<th>Lesley Gillon, Gynae Outpatients.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works 8.15 am - 5.30pm with Friday afternoon off since no patient clinic on Friday afternoons = 37½ hours. Utilises time outside of clinic hours for administration. Works well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Staggered Full Time Hours**  
Mavis Voller – Medical Secretary.

Hours worked:  
MTW  7.00 am – 4.30 pm  
TF  7.30 am – 12.30 pm  = 37 hours  
Utilises time so available when consultant present (shared with Addenbrooke’s)  
2 years good working practice for both.  
Efficient service since GP letters out on time, saves chasing which creates even more work.  
Best way to get all the work done.  
Personal time during the week useful to visit elderly mum and grandchild.

---

**Term time**  
Virginia Grover, Howard Ward.

All annual leave taken during school holidays.  Gets on with everyone so helps.  
Cover with bank.  
Can only accommodate one person and difficult when other staff want time off during term time.  
Works 3 days/week.  
Small ward (19 beds)  
Long-term benefits outweigh any issues.  
If children sick during work time, used to take sick leave.  
Started to utilise carer leave, to be followed by unpaid if necessary.  
Generally works well.  Will be reviewed at appraisal.

---

**Staggered Full Time Hours**  
Jean Henry, Human Resources.

Works 37 hours in 4½ days. Jean achieves this by starting each morning at 8.15am and taking a 45 minute lunch break Mondays to Thursday (8 hours x 4 days = 32 hours), and on Friday she works until 1.30pm (+ 5 hours = 37 hours).

---

**Flexible Retirement**  
Roger Curnock.

Used to be fulltime Senior Chief Biomedical Scientist, and reduced to 25 hours over 3 days for a period of 18 months.  
Dropped clinical work, just did Business Manager.  
Now returning for on-call since staff shortages.

---

**Flexi-time**  
Gill Shinkwin, Nutrition and Dietetic Department.

Flexi-time operates within department. Guidelines agreed with HR.
**Part Time Hours**  
Carol Banerji, Pilgrim Ward.

Works 9.00 am – 3.00 pm x 4 days per week to enable her to undertake the school run. Utilises used annual leave for school holidays, together with parents covering childcare

Work well.

Advantages - Ward gets continuity.

Used to be on the bank for flexibility, permanent job better because of benefits:

- Can work with the same team
- Study leave applicable
- Sick pay applicable

Cover in ward undertaken by Lisa Wharton working weekends and 9.00 am – 3.00 pm one other day.

---

**Job Share**  
Fiona Nicholson/Caroline Rutt, Outpatients

Fiona is shortly to go on Maternity Leave. When she returns (in 6-12 months time), her role will be job shared with Caroline at Grade G. Each will work 2½ days. Caroline will cover the role fulltime while Fiona is on Maternity Leave. Fiona is convinced the benefits of increase productivity by two people undertaking 1.0WTE role.

Within outpatients 2 members of staff will undertake a D grade role as a jobshare shortly.

2 senior receptionists used to work as a job share. When the G4 role was advertised, both candidates were suitable and it was difficult to choose between the two. As a solution Fiona suggested they undertook the role as a job share 2½ days at G4, the other 2½ days continue at their existing G2 clerical work. Fiona suggested a 3-month trial and it worked well.

---

**Term time working**  
xxxx Ward

A member of staff works 9-3-term time only. Cover with other staff, or bank as a last resort.

3xWTE off every week. Restricts annual leave.

Difficult to implement term time contracts as can only accommodate one person. Manager concerned if other staff also request term time working.

Not fully established so difficult to implement flexible working.

---

**Term time working**  
Yvette de Souza, Bevan library

Has two term time contracts ladies for 2 years (although one post is currently vacant). They are evening roles and term time contracts are appropriate since the library closes in the evening during the holidays and their shift are not required.

Has had difficulty recruiting to roles and the term time contracts provided a solution. Works well. Their salary is divided by 12 months. Each month a portion of their salary is deducted and paid during holidays.
Part time working
Bernie Harrison, Cancer Services Project Manager

Works 30 hours per week but on an uneven basis:
For 2 weeks, works 3 days per week = 27 hours
For 1 week, works 4 days per week = 36 hrs
Works well for personal circumstances and is fully flexible to meet service needs.

Part time working
Alan Dickinson, Litigation and Controls Assurance Manager

Works 30 hours per week.
Works 4 days per week, mainly Monday – Thursdays but is flexible in relation to Fridays to meet the needs of the service.

Annualised hours
Kim Turner, NHS Direct

Contracted to work 30 hours per week and paid as such. However, actually working 37.5 hours per week. This means that in order to work the required number of hours over the year, Kim only needs to be in work for 36 weeks of the year. The remainder of the year is time off, in the form of annual leave entitlement and accrued days off.

Kim chooses to take 12 weeks off as 1 episode, leaving 4 weeks to be spread through the remainder of the year. This is taken as available, taking into account annual leave bookings of colleagues. The 12 week period was taken during May, June and July for traveling. Kim was then working full-time over the Easter and Christmas/New Year period; peak activity times for NHS Direct. Salary was paid at 30 hours per week meaning that she was paid regularly throughout the extended leave period.

Advantages to Kim:
❖ Did not have to give up career in order to travel.
❖ Received regular income whilst abroad – assisted personal budgeting.
❖ No break in service.
❖ Felt supported and valued by the organisation.

Advantages to Organisation:
❖ Retention of experienced and refreshed employee.
❖ Opportunity for succession planning.
❖ Demonstrates commitment to consider alternative working patterns.
❖ Working hours focussed on times of peak demand.

Working from home
Dr Paul Lewthwaite, Consultant, Occupational Health

Contracted to work at Bedford hospital 3 days per week and Luton & Dunstable hospital for two days per week. Dr Lewthwaite is able to work from home for one session per month on policy and strategic issues relating to Occupational Health.
12 hour shifts
Vicky Smith, Russell Ward

3 staff on the ward work 12 hour shifts.
3 long days per week, usually 7.00 am – 7.30 pm (includes unpaid breaks) but shortly to start one other member of staff on 8.00 am – 8.30 pm and another 9.00 am – 9.30 pm.
To make up full time hours one day of 7.00 am – 1.00 pm per month (sometimes used for management day).
Arrangement works well and when 4 days off in a row allows for sufficient rest and recuperation.

Another member of staff works 30 hours by working 2 long days and 1 short day per week.
Night staff are set nights only, although one person rotates.
Overseas nurses fit into team really well.

Arrangement works well as a close united staff makes for a supportive environment.
People are prepared to help out and cover for emergencies, the continuity is better.
When working long shifts there’s no so much ‘scrabble’ to get things done. If meeting Social Services in the morning, utilise afternoon to catch up.

The benefits are for the individual as well as providing a better service.
There is better communication in the afternoon, including information from doctors rounds.
Sometimes the long days appear very long days, but the arrangement has benefited everyone.