Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
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Reference No: TP 25/09

Title:	**Work Life Balance Flexible Working Policies and Arrangements**		
Policy Author(s)	[redacted] Senior Human Resources Manager [redacted]@belfasttrust.hscni.net		
Responsible Director:	[redacted] Director of Human Resources		
Policy Type: (tick as appropriate)	*Directorate Specific ☐	Clinical Trust Wide ☐	Non Clinical Trust Wide ☒
If policy type is confirmed as ***Directorate Specific** please list the name and date of the local Committee/Group that policy was **approved**			
Date:			

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Links to other policies	BHSCT Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy TP 03/08 (2018)		

Date	Version	Policy Author	Comments
19/12/2008	1	[redacted]	Final BHSCT
09/06/2010	2		Final BHSCT
25/02/2011	3		Amendment following legislative changes
20/06/2011	4		Review of Employment Break Policy and Term Time Policy
21/05/2012	5		Review of Flexible Retirement Policy
18/09/2013	6		Review following introduction of HRPTS
17/11/2014	7		Review of notice periods
15/11/2017	8		Amendment following legislative changes. Review of Employment Break Policy and Term Time Policy.
08/10/2020	9		Amendment following legislative changes. Review of Employment Break Policy, Flexible Retirement Policy and Term Time Policy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION / SUMMARY OF POLICY

1.1 Background

As part of its Improving Working Lives programme the Trust has developed a range of flexible working arrangements for which all staff, who meet the appropriate eligibility criteria, can apply. The policies reflect the requirements set out under the Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions of Service.

1.2 Purpose

To provide staff with a range of flexible working arrangements to enable them to balance both home and work commitments and improve their working lives. The Trust is committed to promoting equality and to attracting and retaining highly skilled and experienced staff and these policies will assist it in meeting this objective

1.3 Objectives

- To retain skills and experience and to attract staff from a wider recruitment pool.
- To facilitate staff who wish to continue working at the same time as meeting other commitments.
- To create new job opportunities in the Trust.
- To provide an opportunity for Employees to return to employment with the Trust on a flexible basis.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The Policies apply to all staff who meet the eligibility criteria.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of Staff, Managers and Human Resources staff and are outlined in the Policies.

4.0 CONSULTATION

These policies have been subject to consultation with the NI Equality Commission, Staff side and Staff/Managers

5.0 POLICY STATEMENT/IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Key Policy Statement(s)

The Belfast Trust is committed to Equality of Opportunity for all of its staff, and to attracting and retaining highly skilled and experienced staff. As part of that commitment the Trust recognizes that the provision of Flexible Working

Arrangements can enable staff to balance both work and home commitments and improve their working lives.

1. The Policies outline the legislative context and responsibilities under the Employment order 2002.
2. It sets out the process and provides advice and guidance and on how to apply for a flexible working arrangement.
3. The Trust has a range of Flexible Working Arrangements in place and each policy should be read on an individual basis.

5.2 Dissemination

These policies should be disseminated throughout the Belfast Trust as they are open and available to all staff.

5.3 Resources

Details of the policies will be available via information and awareness sessions and Mandatory Equality training.

5.4 Exceptions

There are no exceptions as the policies are open to all staff within the Belfast Trust who meet the eligibility criteria.

6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

All work life balance policies are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis.

7.0 EVIDENCE BASE/REFERENCES

The policies comply with legislative requirements and good practice

8.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Improving Working Lives - Work Life Balance - Flexible Working Policies and Arrangements information pack

9.0 NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

Nursing and/or Midwifery students on pre-registration education programmes, approved under relevant 2018/2019 NMC education standards, must be given the opportunity to have experience of and become proficient in **Work Life Balance Flexible Working Policies and Arrangements** where required by the student's programme. This experience must be under the appropriate supervision of a registered nurse, registered midwife or registered health and social care professional who is adequately experienced in this skill and who will be accountable for determining the required level of direct or indirect supervision and responsible for signing/countersigning documentation.

Direct and indirect supervision

- Direct supervision means that the supervising registered nurse, registered midwife or registered health and social care professional is actually present and works alongside the student when they are undertaking a delegated role or activity.
- Indirect supervision occurs when the registered nurse, registered midwife or registered health and social care professional does not directly observe the student undertaking a delegated role or activity. (NIPEC, 2020)

This policy has been developed in accordance with the above statement.

Wording within this section must not be removed.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust has legal responsibilities in terms of equality (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998), disability discrimination and human rights to undertake a screening exercise to ascertain if the policy has potential impact and if it must be subject to a full impact assessment. The process is the responsibility of the Policy Author. The template to be complete by the Policy Author and guidance are available on the Trust Intranet or via this **link**.

All policies (apart from those regionally adopted) must complete the template and submit with a copy of the policy to the Equality & Planning Team via the generic email address equalityscreenings@belfasttrust.hscni.net

The outcome of the equality screening for the policy is:

Major impact ☐
Minor impact ☐
No impact ☒

Wording within this section must not be removed

11.0 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

New activities involving collecting and using personal data can result in privacy risks. In line with requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 the Trust considers the impact on the privacy of individuals and ways to militate against any risks. A screening exercise must be carried out by the Policy Author to ascertain if the policy must be subject to a full assessment. Guidance is available on the Trust Intranet or via this **link**.

If a full impact assessment is required, the Policy Author must carry out the process. They can contact colleagues in the Information Governance Department for advice on Tel: 028 950 46576

Completed Data Protection Impact Assessment forms must be returned to the Equality & Planning Team via the generic email address equalityscreenings@belfasttrust.hscni.net

The outcome of the Data Protection Impact Assessment screening for the policy is:

Not necessary – no personal data involved ☒
A full data protection impact assessment is required ☐
A full data protection impact assessment is not required ☐

Wording within this section must not be removed.

12.0 RURAL NEEDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust has a legal responsibility to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, and when designing and delivering public services. A screening exercise should be carried out by the Policy Author to ascertain if the policy must be subject to a full assessment. Guidance is available on the Trust Intranet or via this link.

If a full assessment is required the Policy Author must complete the shortened rural needs assessment template on the Trust Intranet. Each Directorate has a Rural Needs Champion who can provide support/assistance.

Completed Rural Impact Assessment forms must be returned to the Equality & Planning Team via the generic email address equalityscreenings@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Wording within this section must not be removed.

13.0 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT ASSESSMENT

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) (DDA), all staff/ service providers have a duty to make Reasonable Adjustments to any barrier a person with a disability faces when accessing or using goods, facilities and services, in order to remove or reduce such barriers. E.g. physical access, communicating with people who have a disability, producing information such as leaflets or letters in accessible alternative formats. E.g. easy read, braille, or audio or being flexible regarding appointments. This is a non-delegable duty.

The policy has been developed in accordance with the Trust's legal duty to consider the need to make reasonable adjustments under the DDA.

Wording within this section must not be removed.

SIGNATORIES
(Policy – Guidance should be signed off by the author of the policy and the identified responsible director).

[redacted]

08/10/2020

_____ **Date:** _____

[redacted]
HR Director

[redacted]

13/10/2020

_____ **Date:** _____

[redacted]
Chief Executive

Contents	**Page**
Work Life Balance Flexible Working Cover Sheet	8
Information Pack	9-14
Application Form-Flexible Working	15-16
Sample Letters	17 – 21
Guidelines for Managers and Staff	23-28
Policies	
Compressed Working Policy	29 – 32
Employment Break Policy	33-41
Flexi Time Policy	42-42
Home Working/Teleworking Policy	53-71
Job Sharing Policy	72-76
Part-Time Working	77-80
Term Time Working	71-86

NB: The Flexible Retirement Policy is now a stand-alone Policy available on the Improving Working Lives section of the HUB

Appendix 1

IMPROVING WORKING LIVES

WORK LIFE BALANCE

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICIES
AND ARRANGEMENTS

INFORMATION PACK

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Belfast Trust is committed to Equality of Opportunity for all of its staff, and to attracting and retaining highly skilled and experienced staff. As part of that commitment the Trust recognizes that the provision of Flexible Working Arrangements can enable staff to balance both work and home commitments and improve their working lives.

As part of its Improving Working Lives programme the Trust has developed a range of flexible working arrangements for which all staff, who meet the appropriate eligibility criteria, can apply. The policies reflect the requirements set out under the Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions of Service and will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis and as required to take account of legislative or terms and conditions requirements.

2.0 WHAT IS FLEXIBLE WORKING?

The Trust has a range of Flexible Working Arrangements in place to enable staff to balance their home and work commitments. These are:-

- Job Sharing
- Employment Break
- Part-Time Working
- Term-Time Working
- Flexi-Time Scheme
- Compressed Working
- Homeworking

In addition the Trust has a number of special leave arrangements to facilitate staff. These take account of statutory provisions:

- Carer's Leave
- Unpaid Leave
- Parental Leave
- Maternity/Paternity Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Trade union Leave
- Marriage/Civil Partnership Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- Jury Service

Further information on these arrangements is available in the Trust's Special Leave Information Pack.

3.0 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The purpose of the Trust's Work Life Balance Flexible Working Policy and Arrangements is to enable staff to achieve a balance between their working and personal commitments and so improve their working lives. The objectives of the policy are:

- To retain skills and experience within the Trust and attract staff from a wider recruitment pool
- To facilitate staff who wish to continue working at the same time as meeting other commitments
- To create new job opportunities in the Trust
- To provide an opportunity for Employees to return to employment with the Trust on a flexible basis
- Flexible Working applications should not be used as a means to opt out of a rota or working pattern that has been implemented by management. Further guidance can be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team.

4.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

The Trust believes that all jobs should be considered for flexible working unless there is a clear demonstrable operational reason why this is not practical and that all staff who meet the eligibility criteria can apply for flexible working. Each case will be considered on its individual merits taking into account the needs of the service.

5.0 GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS AND STAFF ON FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Guidelines have been developed to assist staff and Managers to enable them to address the key considerations and issues associated with flexible working applications and these are set out in this pack.

6.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative framework which governs the provision of work life balance schemes is:

- Employment (NI) Order 2002
- Flexible Working Regulations 2003
- Flexible Working Regulations (NI) 2010
- Sex discrimination (NI) Order 1986 (as amended)
- Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998

- Work and Families Act (NI)2015
- Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978
- Agency Workers Regulations (NI) 2011

This list is not exhaustive.

7.0 REGULATIONS REGARDING THE STATUTORY RIGHT TO REQUEST TO WORK FLEXIBLY

In accordance with the Work and Families Act (NI) 2015 **all** employees have a statutory right to ask their employer for a change to their contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly. The statutory right is a 'right to request' and not a "right to be granted" flexible working.

8.0 AGENCY WORKERS REGULATIONS (NI) 2011

In accordance with the Agency Workers Regulations (NI), following the completion of a 12 week qualifying period an agency worker i.e. someone who has an employment contract or relationship with an agency but are placed with the Trust to carry out work, will be entitled to apply to work flexibly.

9.0 HOW TO APPLY FOR A FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENT

This section details how **all** applications for flexible working should be made. There is no restriction on the number of applications that an Employee can make under these arrangements in any given period.

9.1 All Employees who wish to participate in a flexible working arrangement must apply on line through Employee Self Service using the following steps:

Step1: Click "Life and Work Events" to access the Application Form;
Step 2: In the section "Additional Services" click "Flexible Working Requests"

Follow the instructions to complete your request.

An Employee who is on maternity leave or sick leave should complete the Application Form attached as Appendix 1 and submit to their line manager.

9.2 Application forms should be submitted either manually or electronically as appropriate to your Line Manager and will require the counter approval of the appropriate Head of Department.

9.3 A meeting within 28 days of the receipt of an application will be necessary to explore the desired work arrangement and how it can be accommodated. Alternative suitable arrangements should be explored if there are problems in accommodating the original request. Staff have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union or staff representative in line with the Trust procedures.

9.4 Once the Line Manager has made a decision, the Employee will be notified in writing by their Line Manager of the outcome within 14 days of the meeting to discuss the request. It might not always be possible to give a final answer within the timescale and this should be fully explained to the Employee and an extended time period agreed. If the request cannot be facilitated, the Employee will be advised in writing as to the reason(s). It may not always be possible to grant the request due to the needs of the service and each application will be considered on the merits of the individual case. The guidance for Managers section of this pack provides useful advice in relation to the granting of requests and sets out the requirements under the statutory provisions. If the request is not granted, the Manager should advise the Employee of their right of appeal.

9.5 If the request is granted, the date of commencement of any new Working Arrangement and also the working pattern adopted will be decided and agreed by the Employee and the Line Manager. Consideration should be given to both the individual circumstances and the needs of the service in making these decisions.

9.6 If an employee is on sick/maternity leave, it is the responsibility of the Line Manager to forward a paper copy of the Employee's flexible working application form, whether approved or not to the Improving Working Lives section of the HR Department.

9.7 **In all instances the Line Manager should forward a Contractual Change Form via HRPTS for processing to ensure that appropriate changes are made to the Employee's salary and any related terms and conditions to avoid an overpayment.**

10.0 APPEAL

If the Employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may appeal against the decision in writing setting out the grounds for the appeal to the Improving Working Lives Section, within fourteen working days. A meeting to consider the appeal must be held within fourteen days of receipt of the appeal request. In such circumstances the appeal panel will be heard as a Stage 2 Grievance.

11.0 PAY AND SUPERANNUATION

Entitlement to continue in the HSC Pension Scheme remains unchanged; however, any reduction in salary will impact on pension benefits. It is therefore the Employee's responsibility to consult with Payroll Shared Services Centre to obtain information regarding the reduction in income and with HSC Pensions, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street Londonderry, telephone 028 7131 9111, regarding the pension implications.

Individual Employees should also check the potential impact on national insurance, contractual redundancy, maternity and sickness entitlements with the Pay & Conditions Team in Human Resources or the Payroll Shared Services Centre. Individual Employees will be responsible for contacting the

Department of Health and Social Security to determine any possible benefit entitlements and the impact in relation to NI contributions.

12.0 ANNUAL LEAVE

Employees on flexible working accrue annual leave and statutory leave on a pro-rata basis where applicable in line with HSC Terms and Conditions of Service.

13.0 PROMOTION

Employees will be free to apply for promotional posts in the usual manner whilst participating in a flexible working arrangement. However, the promotional post would have to be accepted on the terms specified at the time of offer. Employees will not have the automatic right to work to the former flexible working arrangement in the new post. It is the responsibility of the Employee to advise their Line Manager of the need to receive information on job vacancies that may arise during their period of absence and they should notify their Line Manager of their forwarding address.

14.0 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

14.1 Staff participating in a flexible working arrangement will have their learning and development needs assessed and delivered in the same manner as for other staff.

14.2 Part-time Employees will be entitled to receive time in lieu or be paid at the normal rate of pay for extra hours incurred through attendance at training events, considered necessary by the Belfast Trust and where such training cannot be made available during normal working hours.

15.0 DURATION / REVIEW OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

15.1 Flexible Working arrangements may be reviewed if service needs prevail or if staffing needs arise. Arrangements for duration/review are set out in each individual policy. Please take note of the information contained within each policy.

15.2 Where the Flexible Working arrangement is for a specified period only, any request to work beyond the specified end date must be made by submitting a new application.

15.3 In the event that the arrangement is not working satisfactorily or is being misused then the Manager has the right to suspend or withdraw the arrangement on a temporary or permanent basis. The Manager must liaise with the Improving Working Lives team in the Human Resources Department before taking this action.

15.4 In the unlikely/rare event, e.g. civil unrest or disturbance the Manager will have the right to temporarily cease the flexible arrangement, in the interest of staff

safety, e.g. health visiting and home visits. It is envisaged that this will be very infrequent, but nevertheless is necessary for staff safety.

16.0 TERMINATION OF A FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENT

16.1 If the Employee wishes to terminate a Flexible Working arrangement, to revert to the former pattern of working or a new pattern of working, the Head of Department/Line Manager must be notified in writing giving, at least three months notice.

16.2 There is no guarantee that an Employee will return to their former pattern of working. The Head of Department/Line Manager will however attempt to accommodate the Employee taking into consideration the needs of the service.

17.0 ADHERENCE TO POLICY

Throughout the duration of the flexible working arrangement both the Employee and the Manager must adhere to the terms and conditions of that particular policy.

18.0 CONDUCT

Employees availing of flexible working arrangements are subject to all the Trust's Policies, Procedures and Protocols regarding conduct and behaviour.

19.0 MONITORING

Applications for flexible working arrangements will be recorded and monitored quarterly throughout the year by the Improving Working Lives section of the Human Resources department. This information will be analysed and used to review and revise policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure their continuing effectiveness.

20.0 REVIEW OF THE FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the Flexible Working Arrangements Policies, a review will be undertaken at regular intervals.

21.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

This booklet sets out the Flexible Working arrangements available within the Belfast Trust. Any further information regarding Flexible Working may be obtained from: Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone 9504 8554 or 9504 8913

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, e.g. Plain English, Braille, Disc, Audio Cassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

Application Form

If you are sick leave or maternity leave, please complete the details below.

Staff Number Employee Name Job Title and Band Directorate Location Contracted Hours Daytime Telephone Number

The purpose of this form is to allow you to make a request for flexible working arrangements in accordance with Equality Legislation and Trust policy and practice. Please complete all sections of the form ensuring that you include any additional information to support your request within the Employee Comments section.

YOUR REQUEST

Proposed start date: Proposed end date:

Type of Work Life Balance Request

Compressed Working Hours	
Employment Break	
Flexi-Time Scheme	
Flexible Retirement	
Homeworking	
Job Share	
Term Time Working	
Voluntary Reduced Hours	

Proposed Working Pattern

Additional Information

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

<u> PLEASE PASS THIS FORM TO YOUR LINE MANAGER</u>**

To be completed by your Senior Manager/Head of Department

NB: You must meet with the Employee within 28 days of receipt of request to discuss this, unless otherwise agreed with the Employee, and respond to them within 14

days following this meeting. Please forward a copy of the Flexible Working application form, whether approved or not to the Improving Working Lives section. Please also forward a staff amendment form if applicable to the aforementioned and this in turn will be forwarded to the Employment Relations section for processing. Please refer to the Work-Life Balance Improving Working Lives Arrangements Information Pack & Managers Guidance.

I do / do not* support this application (*please delete as appropriate)

If the request is not being approved please detail below the reasons for refusal. It should be noted that in relation to any application from staff with statutory rights then applications can only be refused where there is a clear business case as set out in the Guidance for Managers and Staff.

Burden of extra costs to the business	
Inability to meet patient/client demand	
Inability to organise work within available staffing	
Inability to Detrimental effect on performance	
Detrimental effect on quality	
Inability to find extra staff	
Insufficient work during the period the Employee proposes to work	
Planned structural changes	

SIGNATURE : _____Print Name:_____

DESIGNATION : _____

DEPARTMENT/LOCATION: _____

DATE: _____

*** This application cannot be processed by Payroll without a staff amendment form. Please ensure staff amendment forms are completed by the Manager and returned with all applications.**

Following the introduction of HRPTS applications must be made and processed electronically.

Appendix 1



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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Sample Letter 1 – arranging a meeting to discuss request

Enter name, grade, staff number, base address

Date _____

Dear_____

I refer to your application for (insert type of Flexible Working applied for) which I received on (date received) and I am writing to inform you that a meeting has been arranged to discuss your request.

The meeting will be held on (insert date) at (insert time) at (insert location). Staff have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union or staff representative in line with the Trust procedures.

Following the meeting you will be informed in writing of the decision as to whether or not your application has been approved within 14 days.

Yours sincerely

Manager's signature

Sample letter 2 – informing staff that their application for Flexible Working has been approved.

Enter name, grade, staff number, base address

Date _____

Dear_____

I refer to your application for (Type of Flexible Working) and to our subsequent meeting held on (insert date of meeting). I am pleased to advise you that your request has been granted and will take effect from (insert effective date).

Your new working arrangements are outlined as follows:

Notification has been forwarded to the Human Resources Department along with a Contractual Change Form to ensure that appropriate changes are made to your salary and any related terms and conditions.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me on (insert contact number).

Yours sincerely

Manager's signature

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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Sample letter 3 – informing staff that their application for Flexible Working has been approved (Term Time).

Enter name, grade, staff number, base address

Date _____

Dear_____

I refer to your application for Term Time Working and to our subsequent meeting held on (insert date of meeting). I am pleased to advise you that your request has been granted and will take effect from (insert effective date).
Your new working arrangements are outlined as follows:

In line with the Belfast Trust Policy, Term Time arrangements cannot exceed one calendar year in duration. The end date therefore for this application is (insert date). If you wish to avail of the Term Time scheme next year you must submit a new application.

Notification has been forwarded to the Human Resources Department along with a Contractual Change Form to ensure that appropriate changes are made to your salary and any related terms and conditions.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me on (insert contact number).

Yours sincerely

Manager's Signature

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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Sample letter 4 – informing staff that their application for Flexible Working has been approved (Employment Break).

Enter name, grade, staff number, base address

Date _____

Dear_____

I refer to your application for an Employment Break and to our subsequent meeting held on (insert date of meeting). I am pleased to advise you that your request has been granted and will take effect from (insert effective date) until (insert end date).

Notification has been forwarded to the Human Resources Department along with a Contractual Change Form to ensure that appropriate changes are made to your salary and any related terms and conditions.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your service to date and look forward to hearing from you, and to your return to duty.

Yours sincerely

Manager's Signature



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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Sample letter 5 – informing staff that their application for Flexible Working has been rejected.

Enter name, grade, staff number, base address

Date _____

Dear_____

I refer to your application for (Type of Flexible Working) and to our subsequent meeting held on (insert date of meeting). I wish to advise that unfortunately it is not possible to grant you (Insert type of flexible working) for the following reasons (insert reasons).

You have the right to appeal against the decision in writing setting out the grounds for the appeal to the Improving Working Lives Section, Human Resources, Musgrave Park Hospital within fourteen working days. A meeting to consider the appeal must be held within fourteen days of receipt of the appeal request. Please be aware that the appeal panel will be set at stage 2.

Yours sincerely

Manager's Signature

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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WORKLIFE BALANCE

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS AND STAFF
ON
FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS AND STAFF ON FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

1. Introduction

The Belfast Trust is committed to Equality of Opportunity for all of its staff. As part of that commitment the Trust recognises that the provision of Flexible Working Arrangements can enable staff to balance both their home and work commitments and improve their working lives. Flexible Working Arrangements apply equally to all staff who meet the appropriate eligibility criteria. The Trust is committed to ensuring under its Harassment Policy that any staff applying for or availing of Flexible Working Arrangements are protected from harassment and victimisation.

2. Guidance for Managers

2.1 Managers must be seen to be fair and consistent to all staff and always apply the principles of equality legislation and best practice. They will need to understand how Flexible Working can benefit both the individual and the organisation and be clear about the options available as well as ensuring the needs of the service are met.

Staff may wish to seek Flexible Working Arrangements on either a temporary or permanent basis as detailed in the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Information pack and associated policies and the applications may be for a range of reasons so managers need to be open minded and consistent.

The following points should be considered:

- Staff choosing to avail of a flexible working arrangement should be treated equally to all other employees.
- Very few jobs cannot be undertaken in a different way, it may just require more lateral thinking.
- Managers need to recognise that working in a less traditional manner may require a higher degree of organisational skills.
- Whilst the needs of the service are paramount, remember that flexibility can pay dividends in terms of staff commitment, loyalty, morale and reduced absenteeism. Research has shown that where there are good relations between employee and employer, staff can and will respond through improved quality and productivity. However, this depends greatly on elements of fairness of treatment, trust and the availability and application of Trust Policies.

2.2 Legislative Framework

The legislative framework which governs the provision of work life balance schemes is:

- Employment (NI) Order 2002
- Flexible Working Regulations 2003
- Flexible Working Regulations (NI) 2010
- Sex discrimination (NI) Order 1986 (as amended)
- Section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Work and Families (NI) Order 2006
- Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Agency Workers Regulations (NI) 2011

This list is not exhaustive.

2.3 Regulations Regarding the Statutory Right to Request to Work Flexibly

In accordance with the Work and Families Act (NI) 2015 and regulations made under it, **all** employees have a statutory right to ask their employer for a change to their contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly. The statutory right is a 'right to request' and not a "right to be granted" flexible working.

2.4 Key Considerations when responding to a Request for Flexible Working Arrangements

- What type of arrangement is the individual seeking?
- Why is the arrangement being sought? Remember some of the reasons for an Employee requesting flexible working may relate to a sensitive or confidential situation and the Manager should respect this.
- Is the request for a temporary or permanent arrangement?
- Can this be accommodated/will it meet the needs of the service?
- How will the gap in time between part-time hours and full-time hours be met?
- What happens if the same flexible working arrangement is requested by a number of individuals within a department/section? Could you, as the Manager, decide and agree with the Employees to rotate/share this arrangement? Remember to involve your staff, very often they can, individually or collectively, come up with practical solutions and a compromise can be made.
- How will CPD and Professional Registration responsibilities be met?

Guidance for Staff

2.5 In making an application for flexible working Employees need to carefully consider how they will ensure that they can fulfil the duties and responsibilities of their job role and how they will organise their work to meet such requirements. Employees should be prepared to be flexible and consider a trial period of the proposed working arrangement if appropriate. Employees should also consider the impact of their proposed working arrangement on the rest of their team and be aware that they may have to be prepared to compromise in relation to alternative working patterns or the start date, particularly if they work in a small Department.

2.6 **Key Considerations for Staff**

- Which type of arrangement would I like to apply for?
- Would this be on a temporary or permanent basis?
- If temporary how long for?
- How will my new way of working affect my pay, terms and conditions and superannuation?
- How will my new way of working affect my workload?
- How will I meet my CPD and Professional Registration requirements?

3 Considerations for Managers and Staff in Relation to Specific Policies

Job Sharing

- Can the duties and responsibilities be clearly defined and measured for each person?
- If the role requires a broad range of skills, would two people provide those skills between them?
- How will the hours for each partner be grouped? There are many variations such as:
  A. one week on, one week off;
  B. split each week with one partner working Monday, Tuesday and half day Wednesday and one partner working half day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday;
  C. split each day, with one working every morning and one working every afternoon.
- How will each partner communicate with the other to ensure a smooth transition in work?
- Two people sharing one job will affect managerial responsibilities.

Employment Break

- Can cover be provided during the employment break? Applications from Employees in scarcity grades will require careful consideration and release may depend on suitable replacements being available.
- Mechanisms will have to be put in place to ensure that the Manager and Employee keep in contact.
- How will CPD and Professional Registration responsibilities be met?

Term Time Working

- Which option is the most appropriate – 10 or 11 month or traditional term time
- Does the role lend itself to term-time work without an adverse effect on the needs of the service?
- Can the Trust accommodate or adapt to lengthy periods of absence, e.g. school holidays?
- How would cover be provided during the period of absence?
- If Term-Time Working is not an option, could other options be considered, for example, reduction in hours, or time off throughout the year rather than one block. The Trust operates Summer Schemes and this may assist employees who require time off during the summer months.
- What impact will this arrangement have on the other Employees within the department/section?

Part-Time Working on a Permanent Basis

- Will the Employee's request meet the needs of the service?
- How many hours per week does the Employee want to work?
- What will the working arrangement be? How should the hours be grouped? Each day, three days per week, etc.
- Does the agreement require flexibility in terms of days worked or is the requirement predictable for the longer term?
- What impact will this have on other members of the department?
- How will the gap of hours be filled or the workload managed? Will another part-time member of staff need to be employed to cover the gap/workload?
- Does the Employee understand the implications of the reduction in salary and have they been provided with the necessary support to consider the long term implication on pension and annual leave etc.

Part-Time Working on a Temporary Basis

- The issues to consider for this arrangement will be the same as the issues for part-time working on a permanent basis. However, the Employee and their Line Manager should discuss and agree the defined period of the arrangement.

- Staff wishing to work under this arrangement should discuss the arrangement with Superannuation Branch to ascertain the arrangements which may be implemented in relation to making contributions to cover the temporary reduction in hours.

Flexi-Time Scheme

- Could a Flexi-Time Scheme be accommodated in the department taking into account the needs of the service?
- Managers should make arrangements as to how the recording of Flexi-Time is to be monitored and authorised within the department.
- What are the requirements of the department in terms of office cover and how will such duties be shared on an equitable basis?

Compressed Working

- Is it viable for a member of staff to work compressed hours within the department bearing in mind the needs of the service?
- Does the department operate a Flexi-Time Scheme? If so how will the needs of the service be met with both compressed working and flexi-time operational in the same department?
- What impact will this have on other members of the department?

Home Working

- Is Home Working suitable for this particular post? How much of the job can be done away from the base office?
- A full health and safety risk assessment must be carried out to determine what equipment will be provided to enable an Employee to homework.
- Will remote working suit the needs of the Employee and the Employer?
- How will management and supervision be undertaken?

4 Refusal of an Application

If the application is not viable the reasons for the refusal must be clear and fully explained to the Employee. The Manager can only refuse an application where there is a clear "business reason". These are specified and can only be for the following reasons:

- Burden of extra costs to the business
- Inability to meet patient/client demand
- Inability to organise work within available staffing
- Detrimental effect on performance
- Detrimental effect on quality
- Inability to find extra staff
- Insufficiency of work during the period the Employee proposes to work

- Planned structural changes

Conclusion

Flexible working arrangements are becoming more popular and necessary as patterns of work in many organisations. These arrangements are a way in which an organisation can assist its staff in balancing work and home commitments and the provision of such arrangements can benefit both the Employee and the Trust.
In a competitive job market these flexible working arrangements can help both to attract and retain the skills and expertise of staff and so benefit patient and client care.

These guidelines highlight areas which Managers and Staff need to consider when applying for and responding to requests for flexible working arrangements. Every request will be different and needs to be considered on its individual merits.

Further advice on flexible working arrangements is available by contacting, the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockmans Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB.

The Improving Working Lives Team can be contacted on telephone 9504 9615 9615

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, eg. Plain English, Braille, Disc, Audio Cassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

COMPRESSED WORKING POLICY

COMPRESSED WORKING POLICY

1.Introduction

The Trust recognises the importance of attracting and retaining highly skilled and experienced staff. To assist in achieving this aim, the Trust has introduced Compressed Working to help staff balance their work and home commitments.

1. What is Compressed Working

Compressed working is an agreed alternative shift or work pattern whereby staff can work the same number of hours but over fewer days or work a different pattern of hours. The standard working week is five days but compressed working will mean that a member of staff can continue to work their contracted hours but over less days.

2. Eligibility

All employees may apply to have their working hours compressed

3. Applications for Compressed Working

All applications should be made in line with the procedures set out in the information pack or Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements and the specific guidance notes set out therein for managers and staff.

Applications will be facilitated whenever possible and will be considered on the merits of the individual case.
The employee should complete the Trust's Flexible Working Application Form under the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure and forward this to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

The Line Manager will consider the applications in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. In the event that the application is not approved, the Line Manager will provide the employee with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance Procedure.

4. The Introduction of Compressed Working

4.1 It is acknowledged that compressed working may not be suitable for particular types of post and that it may be difficult to manage in some departments in the Trust. Compressed working should be arranged in such a way that hours are carried out when staff are required to be in the department and it should be explained to staff that they are expected to continue to work within the normal opening and closing hours of the department. Consequently in some

departments where flexi time is available there will be no advantage to working compressed hours.

4.2 Compressed working can be introduced on an individual or collective basis

4.3 In order to assess the suitability of this type of flexible working, it is recommended that each scheme be introduced initially as a pilot. Staff should be advised that the scheme will run for a trial period of 6 months, to assess whether or not compressed working can be introduced as a viable flexible working option.

Close monitoring should take place regularly throughout the trial period and consideration should be given to the following issues when a pilot is being developed.

- Numbers, Grades and types of staff taking part
- Impact on Service Delivery and Quality
- Impact on Employee performance, other staff and general morale
- Incidents/Accidents
- Absence Rates
- Supervised working arrangements

4.4 At the end of a pilot it will be the responsibility of the manager to initiate an evaluation. If it is decided that the compressed working is to be introduced, it is expected that it will need to be tailored specifically to the service needs in each department and again this should be outlined to staff.

5. Adherence to Policy

Each member of staff must be aware and comply with all Trust Policies in particular must be conversant with all Health and Safety policies, Lone Worker policy and Working Time Regulations compliance in relation to their compressed hours working arrangement.

6. Review / Termination of Compressed Working

Compressed working should continue to be reviewed and like other flexible working arrangements, may not always be granted on a permanent basis. Where service needs or staffing issues arise, temporary compressed working arrangements may have to be reconsidered and managers should ensure that staff are given at least 1 month's notice if compressed working cannot continue.
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7. Promotion

Employees are free to apply for promotional posts in the usual manner whilst working compressed hours. However, they will not have the automatic right to

continue with this pattern of working if it is not deemed suitable in the promotional post.

8. Training and Development

Staff participating in a Compressed Working arrangement should have their training and development needs assessed and delivered in the same manner as for full-time staff.

9. Review of the Compressed Working

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy reviews will be undertaken at regular intervals.

10. General Information

Any further information regarding Compressed Working may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone 028 961 59615.

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Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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EMPLOYMENT BREAK POLICY

EMPLOYMENT BREAK POLICY

1.0 Introduction

An Employment Break is leave without pay for a specified period of time. It may be considered for primary reasons such as:

- Employees taking prime responsibility for dependents
- Employees adopting children
- Employees wishing to pursue further relevant education/professional development
- Other reasons will be considered on the merits of each application

The above is not an exhaustive list.

An employment break will not be allowed for the purpose of taking up alternative paid employment with another employer. Employment overseas may be permitted if it could broaden experience, however this should not be the primary reason for the application. Individuals may wish to supplement their income however through undertaking work such as:

- Agency
- Temporary
- Bank
- Holiday Relief

In such cases, written authority from the Trust is necessary.

2.0 Objectives

The objectives of the Employment Break Scheme are:

- To give staff the opportunity to leave their employment for a period of time, whilst enabling them to return at a later time
- To retain skills and expertise within the Trust
- To provide new job opportunities in the Trust

3.0 Eligibility

Staff must have one year's service with the Belfast Trust to apply for an employment break.

4.0 Application for an Employment Break

All applications should be made in line with the procedures set out in the Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements Pack. Arrangements and the specific guidance notes set out therein for managers and staff.

Applications will be facilitated whenever possible and will be considered on the merits of the individual case. However, it may not be possible to grant release in every case because of the needs of the Trust. Applications from employees in hard to fill grades will require careful consideration and release may depend on suitable replacements being available.

The employee should complete the Trust's Flexible Working Application Form under the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure and forward this to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

The Line Manager will consider the applications in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. In the event that the application is not approved, the Line Manager will provide the employee with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance Procedure.

The date on which an employment break begins will be a management decision taking into consideration the circumstances of the application and the likely time period in filling the vacancy. The Trust will seek to balance both the needs of the service and the individual's requirements in taking this decision.

5.0 Duration and Number of Employment Breaks

5.1 Special leave without pay for an employment break may be granted for a period of not less than three months and for any period in excess of three months up to a maximum of 5 years.

5.2 An employment break may be extended for a period of time suitable to both employee and manager provided that the total period does not exceed 5 years in all.

5.3 On return to work following an employment break, one additional employment break may be granted subject to the total maximum of 5 years, provided the period of service between the employment breaks is not less than the initial employment break (including any extensions i.e. a total of 2 employment breaks with a cumulative total of 5 years).

6.0 During Employment Breaks

6.1 During an employment break the employee will be expected to adhere to the terms of the Employment Break Policy and the contractual requirements concerning conduct and terms and conditions of service. Any breach of same may result in disciplinary action being considered.

6.2 During the employment break an employee is subject to all normal regulations in relation to the fundamental expressed or implied conditions of the contract of employment. A member of staff on an employment break must comply with the conditions of the scheme as set out in this agreement.

6.3 It is the responsibility of the individual staff member to ensure that while they have been on an Employment Break that they have followed the requirements of their profession with regard to registration and revalidation (where appropriate) and to ensure that they are registered on their return. Information on the requirements of registration / revalidation is available on the relevant profession website.
(Please also refer to the Trust's Registration and Verification Policy).

6.4 In accordance with their Contract of Employment and Professional Codes of Conduct it is the responsibility of the individual staff member to ensure they are registered at the date of their return. If registration has lapsed the employee's return date should be deferred until such time as the individual can furnish the Line Manager with evidence of registration. The individual will not receive any pay during this period until the evidence of registration and revalidation (where appropriate) has been received by the line Manager.

6.5 It will be the responsibility of the employee to inform the Line Manager and the Employment Relations Section of the Human Resources Department of any change in his/her circumstances, e.g. change of address.

7.0 HSC Pension Scheme

7.1 Employees who joined the HSC Superannuation Scheme on or before 31 March 2008 will be members of the 1995 Section of the Scheme unless they opted to transfer to the 2008 Scheme. An employee who undertakes an employment break must return to employment within 5 years in order to retain active membership of their original Pension Scheme or to retain the Final Salary link for 1995/2015 Transitional Scheme members. In some cases however it may not be possible to identify a suitable post and as a result the employment break may last longer than 5 years. Fully protected members should be aware that any break in membership of 5 years and over will result in an employee having to rejoin the 2015 Section of the HSC Pension Scheme rather than remain a member of the 1995 Section of the Scheme.

7.2 Changes to the HSC Pension Scheme now allow employees on an Employment Break to remain pensionable for a period of up to 24 months providing they continue to pay contributions to the scheme. If a member does not continue to pay contributions to maintain their Scheme membership during the period of absence, then the member is no longer in active scheme membership until they return to work and re-join the scheme. This rule is particularly important for members who may apply for consideration for Ill Health Retirement during an Employment Break. For further information please contact HSC Pensions on 028 7131 9111.

If you wish to continue contributing into the HSC Pension Scheme, it is your responsibility to make the necessary arrangements by contacting Pay and Conditions, Human Resources on 028 9615 9615 who will forward you a Pension Contribution Quotation Form. After completion of this form you should e-mail it to PSC HRProcess.ssc@hscni.net for contribution figures. Where practicable, this should be 3 months prior to the start date of the authorised leave. Please refer to the Flowchart contained within Appendix 1 of the Employment Break Policy.

- During the first six months of an Employment Break, the employee will be treated as any other active member of the scheme and the employee and employer contributions will be paid continuously throughout the six month period as usual.

- An employee who had paid contributions continuously during the first six months of their Employment Break can continue to remain pensionable for a further period of up to 18 months. The employee will however be responsible for both the employee and employer pension contributions during this period.

- It is your responsibility to cancel the payment arrangement when you no longer wish to pay contributions OR you return to work following your authorised leave/employment break. This can be done by simply not making a payment and the arrangement ceases. You do not need to inform anyone.

- **You are responsible for re-joining the HSC Pension Scheme when you return from an Employment Break. You must re-apply, you will not automatically be placed back into the HSC Pension Scheme.**

- Arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate and payment made on returning to the scheme.

For further information please contact HSC Pensions on 028 7131 9111 or there is a fact sheet available on the HSC Pensions website http://www.hscpensions.hscni.net/download/Employer-Factsheet-Authorised-Leave-Career-Breaks.pdf

8.0 Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order 1979

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order 1979 applicants to posts within the Health and Personal Social Services must disclose to their employer **any** criminal convictions, including cautions, which they have or have ever had on their record. For the purposes of the above Order criminal convictions are never considered spent. Any employee who fails to disclose a conviction may be dismissed from employment.

In addition you are required to **immediately** notify your Head of Department if you are subject to an investigation by the Police, cautioned or are convicted of a criminal offence whilst on an Employment Break in the employment of the Trust. Failure to do so will constitute a disciplinary offence.

Your Head of Department will then consider how relevant the caution, investigation or criminal offence is to your duties at work and whether disciplinary action is required.

9.0 Terms & Conditions of Employment

Any outstanding arrangements such as lump sum payments in connection with car allowances, car loans, leasing of official vehicles, excess rent allowances etc., will need to be resolved by the employee before agreement can be given to a request for an employment break.

10.0 Continuity of Service

10.1 Periods of service before and after an employment break shall be treated as continuous for conditions of service purposes including statutory provisions as detailed in Employment Legislation. The break itself will not count for continuous service purposes. Neither will it count as reckonable service, e.g. incremental credit. However, any periods of refresher/updating with the Belfast Trust will count as reckonable service.

A period of absence on an employment break will not count for Superannuation purposes and employees are advised to consult either the Salaries and Wages Department or Superannuation Branch to establish the effect of the break on their Superannuable position.

It is the responsibility of individual employees on an employment break to contact the Department of Health and Social Services through their local Social Security Office and Inland Revenue to determine whether they are entitled to any benefits and to check the position with regard to National Insurance contributions.

10.2 Should an employee become pregnant whilst on an employment break, they may be entitled to maternity leave with pay, if they fulfill the eligibility criteria for maternity leave and pay as contained in the Agenda for Change Handbook. Further information is available from the Employment Relations Section of the Human Resources Department.

11.0 Access NI Checks

If the post the employee is returning to is a regulated activity post and requires an enhanced (with barred list) Access NI check the process will need to be carried out 6 weeks prior to their return. Failure to do so will result in the commencement being deferred. It is a criminal offence to allow individuals to engage in a regulated activity where they have been "barred" from such work by the Disclosure and Barring Service. An AccessNI check will reveal whether an individual is barred.

Before requiring a returning employee to apply for an AccessNI check they should be asked if they have been "barred" from working with children and/or adults in the intervening period since their previous employment, as it is also a criminal offence for an individual to apply to work in regulated activity if they are not allowed to do so.

12.0 Return to Work

12.1 An employee is entitled to return to the same job as far (as reasonably practicable) provided they return to work within one year.

12.2 It should be noted that following any approved application for leave of duration of one year or more that no guarantee can be given that the employee will return to either their substantive post or within the same Service Directorate. However they may return to as similar a job as possible at the equivalent salary level, reflecting increases awarded during the break.

12.3 Employees who wish to return early from an employment break should contact their Line Manager and explain the circumstances relating to their request. While an early return cannot be guaranteed, requests will be considered sympathetically especially if there have been unforeseen changes in the circumstances which prompted the request for the break.

12.4 In reaching the decision on availability and suitability of a post, the following factors will be taken into account: -

- There must normally be a vacancy at as similar a job as possible within a reasonable timescale.

- If returning to a different post the person must meet the normal recruitment and selection criteria for the post.
- The person must have met the updating criteria established with his/her Line Manager at the beginning of the employment break.

12.5 If prior to the commencement of an employment break an employee was working in a part-time/job sharing arrangement, every effort will be made to allow the employee to return on that basis. However, there is no guarantee that this will always be possible and in these circumstances employees may be offered a full-time post.

12.6 Employees on an employment break must contact their Line Manager and the Pay and Conditions team of the Human Resources Department two months before they are due to return if the break is less than a year, and six months before they are due to return if the break is more than a year to: -

- Confirm that they intend to return on the due date
- Apply for an extension of the Employment Break
- Indicate that they wish to resign

12.7 Employees who take employment breaks of more than one year duration must contact their Line Manager at the end of each twelve month period to confirm their intention to return to their employment.

12.8 Employees returning from an employment break following a period of travelling abroad must contact Occupational Health to determine fitness to return to work.

The Trust will take account of the duration of the break, the countries visited and whether or not the staff work in a clinical setting in enforcing this requirement.

12.9 Employees who are unable to resume duty on the due date because of illness will be required to produce supporting medical documentation.

12.10 Where a woman wishes to take an employment break immediately following a period of Maternity Leave there should be no need for her to return to work for three months in order to avoid having to repay occupational maternity pay. If, however, she resigns during the course of an employment break or fails to return at the end, she will have to repay occupational maternity pay.

13.0 Promotion

Employees will be free to apply for promotion during the employment break. However, they would have to accept the promotion at the time of offer and take up duties when required.

14.0 Review of Employment Break Policy

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy, reviews will be undertaken at regular intervals.

15.0 General Information

Any further information regarding the Employment Break Scheme may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone 028 961 59615.

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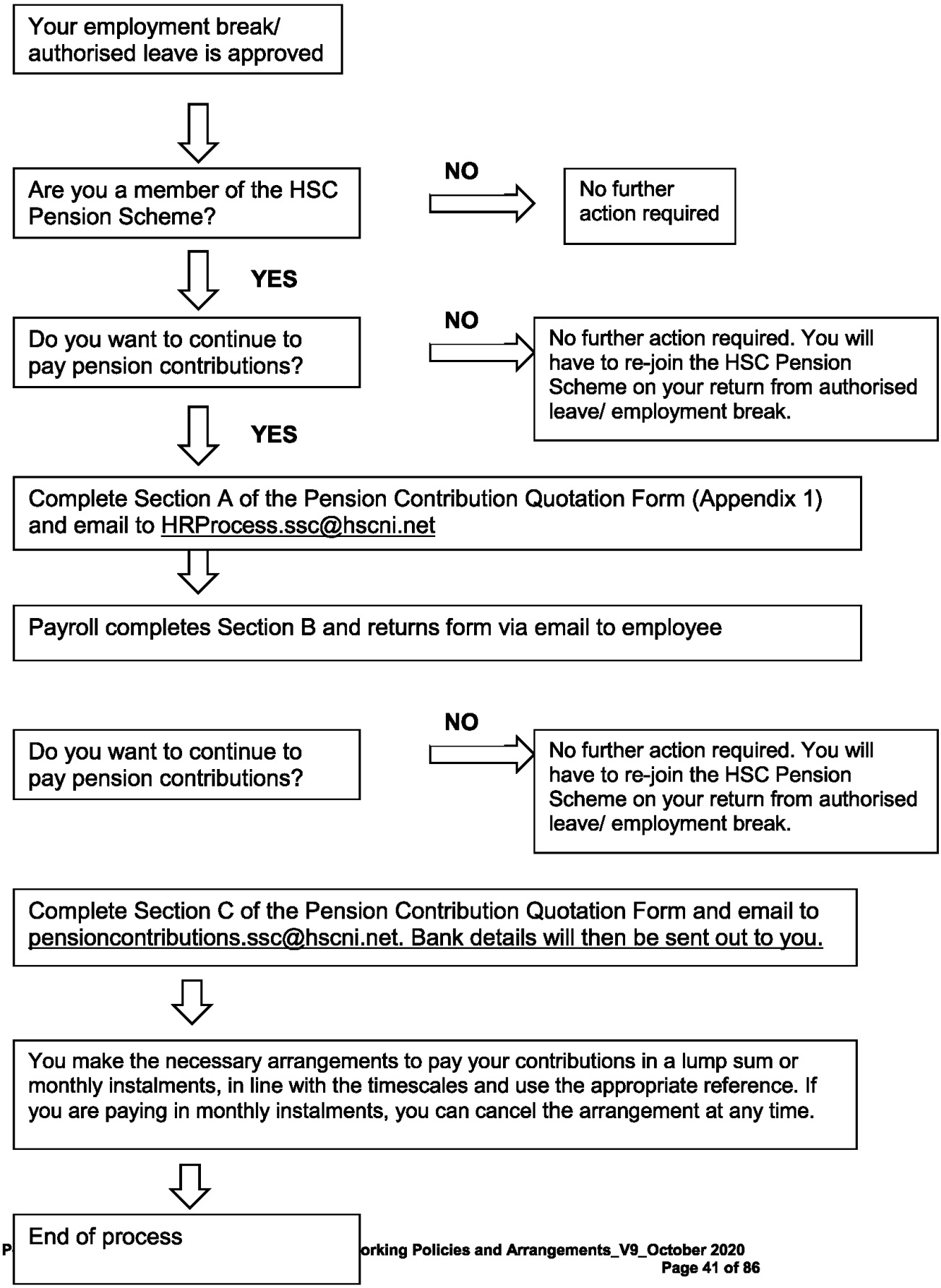
APPENDIX 1

PAYMENT OF PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS DURING AUTHORISED LEAVE/ EMPLOYMENT BREAK



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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FLEXI TIME POLICY

FLEXI-TIME POLICY

The Belfast Trust recognises the importance of attracting and retaining highly skilled and experienced staff. To assist in achieving this aim, the Trust has developed a Flexi Time scheme to further enhance the provisions currently within the Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements.

In order to maintain the highest possible level of services, departments will have periods of time each day where it is essential that staff are present for duty e.g. "Core Periods". Outside such 'core' hours, however, it may be possible for staff to vary their arrival and departure times, or to extend their lunch breaks beyond their normal allocation. This must take account of service needs and be agreed with the Line Manager.

In addition, staff will be able to build up extra hours which can be taken off at mutually convenient times, but it does not entitle you to a regular pattern of working as the needs of the service are paramount. Flexi-Time will, where practicable, be available to both full-time and part-time staff, as well as to staff working within a job-share arrangement.

Objectives

The objectives of Flexi-Time are:

- To further develop the Belfast Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements and the promotion of work/life balance.
- To improve the retention of staff who desire to work in a flexible working environment.
- To greatly improve the efficiency of employees as they are more likely to continue working to complete a specific task knowing the time is "banked".
- To assist in the reduction or elimination of punctuality issues as the Employee is allowed a flexible start to the day, time-keeping issues are often reduced.
- To assist in reducing absenteeism as the improved flexibility can often lead to a reduction in absenteeism as flexible starting and finishing times allow for changes in personal circumstances to be accommodated.

1. Eligibility

Flexi-Time is available to all staff, subject to feasibility of such an arrangement.

2. Key Principles of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme

In the operation of Flexi-Time it is important to ensure that high standards of service are maintained in all areas. Any staff member's degree of participation in the scheme must relate to the requirements of their post and be approved by their Line Manager.
Core-time limits and amount of credit and debit allowed are defined in this policy.

Employee's Responsibilities

- Staff must be present for duty during their identified 'core' hours unless permission for absence has previously been sought from management. Core hours for each area will be agreed with the Line Manager taking account of the fact that adequate staff presence must be maintained in all offices, wards and other service areas.
- Attendance sheets must be completed on a daily basis.
- Staff working as a team must agree their methods of operating Flexi-Time in advance with their team and Line Manager to ensure that adequate cover is provided at all times. It does not mean a regular pattern of working for any particular staff member.
- Any individual or group of staff who abuse the provision of the scheme will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and may have the right to participate in the scheme withdrawn, either temporarily or indefinitely.

Manager's Responsibilities

- Managers should consider any requests for flexible working including flexi-time and ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the needs of staff and the needs of the service they provide.
- Managers must ensure that sufficient work is provided for those members of staff who start early or finish late.
- Attendance sheets should be checked at least once per month.

Where service needs make the introduction of a complete Flexi-Time scheme unfeasible in any location, it may be possible to set up an amended scheme for selected grades or groups of staff. Any amended scheme should also be recorded in a similar way to that outlined below.

3. Applications for Flexi-Time

All applications should be made in line with the procedures set out in the information pack or Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements and the specific guidance notes set out therein for managers and staff.

Applications will be facilitated whenever possible and will be considered on the merits of the individual case. However, it may not be possible to grant Flexi-Time in every case because of the needs of the Trust.
The employee should complete the Trust's Flexible Working Application Form under the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure and forward this to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

The Line Manager will consider the applications in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. In the event that the application is not approved, the Line Manager will provide the employee with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance Procedure. In relation to the process to be followed please refer to paragraph 8 of the Flexible Working Policies and Arrangements Information Pack.

4. Hours of Attendance

Working hours will be divided into flexible and core time working bands. All staff, not on authorised absence, must be present during their agreed core time. Staff may vary their working hours within the flexible time band providing this is agreed in advance with line management.

An example of a working pattern is given below but this is not prescriptive. Other patterns may be agreed locally if appropriate.

Arrival	Flexible	08.00 – 10.00
	Core	**10.00 – 12.00**
Lunch	Flexible	12.00 – 14.00*
Departure	**Core**	**14.00 – 16.00**
	Flexible	16.00 – 18.00

* At least 30 minutes lunch break **must** be taken by staff entitled to meal breaks.

5. Accounting Period

- Flexi-Time totals should be recorded over a monthly accounting period for the purposes of calculating debit and credit of attendance.

- 'Standard working hours' are the number of hours an individual is contracted to work for any given day.

6. Leave of Absence

- Statutory holidays, leave and sickness absence will be credited with the individual staff member's standard working day.

- As in the case of annual leave, the taking of Flexi-Leave will require the prior approval of the appropriate manager. . A maximum of one day per month can be taken off, however in exceptional circumstances 1 ½ days can be taken if this is agreed with the line manager in advance.

- For other absences credit time will be allowed only where this has been previously agreed with line management. Traffic delays must be seen as a normal hazard.

- Whenever possible appointments with doctors, dentists etc should be arranged outside core time. In all non-emergency cases, managers must

be consulted before the making of such appointments to ensure that adequate staffing levels can be maintained during the period of absence.

7. Credit and Debit Carry-Over

- A maximum **credit of 8 hours pro rata (if part time)** may be carried over between subsequent accounting periods. In exceptional circumstances 12 hours pro rata may be carried over if this is agreed with the Line Manager. Any hours credited in excess of the agreed maximum will be forfeited. This should not be a regular arrangement to supplement annual leave and any credit should be used over the relevant accounting period.

- A maximum **deficit of 4 hours** may be carried over between subsequent accounting periods. - (Where unavoidable circumstances prevent staff from reducing their deficit to this maximum, managers will assess each case on its merits, and may allow the excess debit to be carried over. Managers may recommend that the excess debit be deducted from the staff member's annual leave entitlement or be treated as special unpaid leave).

- Excess credit / deficit should be redressed as soon as possible so as to return the flexi total to within the regular limits.

8. Overtime

- Overtime working will continue to be recorded separately, and will be paid for in accordance with existing arrangements. During periods of overtime working, the accounting period and other provisions of this scheme may be re-arranged by agreement.

- A member of staff's overtime working on any day will not begin until she/he is credited with standard working hours for that day.

- Members of staff working overtime will be expected to ensure that they have not accumulated more than 4 hours debit at the end of an accounting period, as the excess may be offset against overtime hours. This must be confirmed by your Line Manager.

9. Termination

In the event that a flexi time arrangement becomes untenable from a Management or Service requirement perspective, full consultation will take place with the individuals concerned to review or terminate the arrangement. The Trust must give adequate notice of 3 months if Flexi Time cannot continue. The Head of Department/Line Manager will however attempt to accommodate the employees taking into consideration the needs of the service.

10. Recording of Attendance

- Each member of staff working Flexi-Time must complete an Attendance Record (Example provided in Appendix A) for each accounting period.

- Each member of staff will be personally responsible for recording daily, their time of arrival and departure (including meal breaks) and totaling the record (see Appendix A). These attendance records will be kept in an accessible position so that managers have an easy means of assessing the overall position when required.

- Times should be recorded, and calculations made to the nearest 5 minutes.

- Attendance records must be retained for at least 6 months in line with HPSS Records Disposal and Retention Schedule.

- Members of staff who opt to continue on set working hours, or for whom, after consultation with their manager, it is agreed that the operation of Flexi-Time would not fit in with the requirements of their post, need not complete an attendance record.

- Where a member of staff is travelling directly from their home to an assignment (without calling at their office), their starting time shall be deemed to be the later of the following:
  - the time they leave home (where their home is closer to the assignment than their office is) OR;
  - the time they pass the office if it is on their route. If the office does not lie on their route, they will have a notional starting time calculated by references to the time they left home, and adding to that time the time normally taken on their home-to-office journey.

- Finishing time will be similarly calculated.

- Where staff are entitled to meal breaks, they are required to take a break lasting a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours, which must be taken within the break period specified for their working hours / shift pattern.

11. Adherence to the Policy

Each member of staff must be aware and conversant with all Health & Safety Policies along with the Lone Worker Policy

12. Monitoring of the Scheme

i. At the end of each accounting period, each manager will collect and examine for accuracy the attendance record forms that have been completed by their staff and sign off if satisfied with their accuracy.

ii. Managers should review the operation of the scheme annually to ensure that access to the scheme is fair and meets the needs of the service provided.

13. Review of the Flexi Time Policy

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy, a review will be undertaken at regular intervals.

14. General Information

Any further information regarding the Flexi Time Policy may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone 028 961 59615.

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Appendix A

FLEXI-TIME ATTENDANCE RECORD

NAME : _____ **DIRECTORATE : _____**

Month :_____ **Balance carried forward : _____**

Day / Date	Start Time	Finish Time	Meal Break	Hours Worked	Standard Hours	Variance	Balance Carried Forward

Balance carried forward to next month : _____

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

This policy was reviewed in 2018 and is now a stand-alone policy available on the hub:

Contact Details

HSC Pension Service
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP

Telephone : 028 7131 9111

Pay and Conditions
Human Resources
5th Floor: McKinney House
Musgrave Park Hospital
Stockman's Lane
Belfast
BT9 7JB

Telephone : 028 9615 9615

Improving Working Lives
Human Resources
4th Floor McKinney House
Musgrave Park Hospital
Stockman's Lane
Belfast BT9 7JB

Telephone: 0289615 9615



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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HOMEWORKING / TELEWORKING POLICY

HOMEWORKING / Remote Working POLICY
THIS POLICY IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE (October 2020)

Introduction

The Belfast Trust recognises the importance of attracting and retaining highly skilled and experienced staff. To assist in achieving this aim, the Trust has developed a Homeworking / Teleworking Policy to further enhance the provisions currently within the Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements. This is in addition to occasional ad hoc situations where an Employee and Manager may agree that a particular piece of work may be completed at home. This would usually be for a specific number of hours and on an irregular basis, and the provisions contained within this policy would not apply. Nor do the provisions of this policy apply to clinical staff who may use computers whilst on-call negating the need to be physically present on Trust premises, for example, reading of X-rays.

Homeworking or Teleworking is a form of organising and/or performing work using information technology in the context of an employment contract, where work which could also be performed at the Employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises.

The benefits of Homeworking / Teleworking are:

- Modernises the way work is organized;
- Potential for increased quality and quantity of work eg. by allowing more time to be spent on key tasks without the level of distraction that may be found eg. in the normal office environment;
- Improved recruitment of staff from a wider work pool and retention of existing staff;
- Potential reduction in absenteeism;
- Better use of trust accommodation and facilities eg. allowing opportunities for use of desk shares;
- Can support environment and transport strategies by reducing home to work travel and therefore traffic congestion;
- Potential reduction of overheads eg. travel and accommodation costs;
- Extended hours of availability;
- Complies with AFC Handbook section 34 "Flexible Working Arrangements";

Appropriately used home working can have the following benefits for staff:

- Greater choice for Employees in how and where they work, leading to increased satisfaction and motivation;
- Greater flexibility for balancing work and domestic commitments;
- Greater work satisfaction from having quality dedicated time to spend on key tasks or projects

1. Objectives

The objectives of the Homeworking / Teleworking Policy are:

- To retain skills and experience within the Trust.
- To further develop the Belfast Trusts Employee friendly working opportunities and the promotion of work/life balance.

2. Eligibility

All Employees who have satisfactorily completed their probationary period at the date of application.

3. Application to Participate in a Homeworking / Teleworking Arrangement

Applications will be facilitated whenever possible and will be considered on the merits of the individual case. However, it may not be possible to grant release in every case because of the needs of the Trust.

The Employee should complete the Trust's flexible working application form under the Trust's flexible working arrangements procedure and forward this to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

The Line Manager will consider the application in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. In the event that the application is not approved, the Line Manager will provide the Employee with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance procedure.

4. Principles

The Trust recognises that many posts are not suitable for Homeworking / Teleworking, there are valid reasons as to why this is the case. The decision to approve a homeworking/teleworking arrangement remains with the Trust as the needs of the service remain paramount.

A Staff Checklist is available in Appendix 1 to assist staff in making decisions about whether homeworking/teleworking is an appropriate option for them.

A Managers Checklist is attached as Appendix 2 outlining the Manager / Service Directorate responsibilities when considering homeworking/teleworking applications.

Homeworking/Teleworking should not be used to address childcare responsibilities / eldercare responsibilities eg. where an Employee wishes to have direct childcare responsibilities/eldercare responsibilities during working hours.

Employees who have an arrangement for homeworking will be required to attend the workplace for appropriate meetings, supervision, training etc.

All Trust policies and procedures continue to apply in respect of all work conducted on behalf of the Trust whilst on a homeworking/teleworking arrangement. Any breaches will be dealt with under the Trusts Disciplinary Procedures.

Normal rules governing the management and reporting of sickness absence will apply for homeworking/teleworking arrangement.

Following a full Health & Safety Risk Assessment which will form part of the approval process the Trust will determine what equipment it will provide to enable the Employee to homework/telework. The Trust will maintain the equipment and the Employee will be expected to bring the equipment to work premises for maintenance.

Staff should collect stationary and other consumables required for business use from the Trust using the usual office requisitioning procedures.

5. Consideration of Homeworking / Teleworking Arrangements

5.1 Only requests to work from home on a **regular** basis for either all or part of the working week or working day and which replace the existing work pattern can be considered under this policy.

5.2 Where an Employee expresses an interest in homeworking/teleworking both the job function and the Employee will be assessed by the Line Manager for suitability. The Employee must initially complete a Flexible Working Arrangement Application Form, which includes proposals as to how the arrangement might operate successfully in terms of carrying out the job. In so doing the Employee should consider the points as set out in Appendix One and the Manager consider the points contained in Appendix Two.

5.3 A Health and Safety Risk Assessment must be undertaken by the Employee and by the Trust and be deemed satisfactory before the decision can be made to agree/not agree to the homeworking/teleworking arrangement. (Refer to Appendix 3 and Appendix 4)

6. Legal and Associated Issues

Before the decision to homework/telework can be confirmed, staff must ensure and provide evidence of the following:

- No planning restrictions or restrictive covenants are contravened;
- Confirm that insurance cover is not rendered invalid;
- A health & Safety Risk Assessment has been undertaken by the Employee and by the Trust and deemed satisfactory (refer to Appendix 3 & Appendix 4);

- Confirm that there are no Inland Revenue issues.

Staff are strongly advised to seek professional advice on the above and possible costs of working from home. Any expenditure incurred in so doing will be paid by the Employee. It should be noted that if a request is made as a reasonable adjustment under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 then the Trust may incur these costs as a reasonable adjustment element.

7. Duration of Homeworking / Teleworking

It is not intended that homeworking/teleworking be considered a permanent arrangement. Neither is it intended to be a full-time arrangement, rather, it is envisaged that, where appropriate in order to meet their contractual responsibilities, staff may have the option to work part of the working week or working day at home, on an occasional or more regular basis.

8. Promotion

Homeworkers will be free to compete for promotional posts in the same way as other Employees. However, should they be successful they will have no automatic right to Homeworking.

9. Adherence to Policy

Throughout the duration of a Homeworking/Teleworking Scheme, both the Employees and the Manager must adhere to the terms of this Policy.

10. Data Protection / Encryption

The Trust's ICT Security Policy must be adhered to at all times with regard to data security and encryption

11. Removable Media

If official data has to be stored on removable media the following rules should be applied:

- Official data of any sort should not be stored on devices other than those provided by the Trust for that specific purpose (in other words, the use of personally-owned removable media is explicitly prohibited);
- If official data of a sensitive or personal nature needs to be stored on removable media of any sort this should not be removed from official premises and only the minimum amount of data should be transferred to the removable media, including laptops, that is necessary for the business purpose;

- Removable media should be kept secure in the office and should not be left lying around on desks or in unlocked cabinets;
- If removable media are used for storing non-sensitive data great care should still be taken over the carrying, storage and disposal of them.

12. Push Email Devices (ie. Blackberry type devices)

Users of email devices, which by default store email messages for 30 Days, are encouraged to use the "Delete Prior" function to regularly remove messages received before a specified date. Removing messages in this way affects only the email device and does not delete the messages from the Outlook Inbox. Please refer to separate ICT Security Policy.

13. Termination

At six monthly intervals, or more frequently if deemed necessary, the Manager and Employee will review the homeworking/teleworking agreement to ensure that it continues to operate satisfactorily.

The Trust reserves the right to amend this policy at any time and to also request that an Employee returns to working within the Trust's premises. This may be as a result of changes in service delivery, as well as unsatisfactory performance. Such a move would not occur without full discussion with the Employee and all reasonable steps will be taken to give a minimum of three months notice of any change to working practices.

Following any termination of homeworking/teleworking, the Trust will require all office furniture, equipment etc purchased or expensed by the Trust to be returned.

14. Review of Homeworking / Teleworking Policy

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the policy a review will be undertaken at regular intervals.

15. Training and Development

Staff participating in a homeworking/teleworking arrangement should have their training and development needs assessed and delivered in the same manner as for all other staff, in accordance with the Trust's Personal Contribution Framework.

16. General Information

Any further information regarding the Homeworking / Teleworking arrangement may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast, BT9 7JB. Telephone 961 59615.

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, eg. Plain English, Braille, Disc, Audio Cassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

Flowchart for applying for Homeworking / Teleworking

Employee completes Flexible Working Application form from the Work-Life Balance Information Pack and submits to Line Manager for consideration

Full Health and Safety Risk Assessment to be carried out by Employee (Appendix 3)



Is the application approved?

YES



Action Plan to be completed by Line Manager

Risk Assessment to be completed by Line Manager (Appendix 4)



Action Plan to be completed by Line Manager



Date for review of arrangement to be agreed

NO



Manager will provide a written response detailing reason and will advise of right to invoke Grievance Procedure

Appendix 1

Staff Check List

Staff checklist which must be considered in deciding is homeworking / teleworking right for me?

What personal qualities should I have for working on my own?

- Self motivation – reasonably self starting with no high personal need for the continuing presence of co-workers. Able to work effectively without the benefits of group dynamics and office team working
- Ability to work without close supervision
- Good time management skills. May lead worker to work excessive hours unchecked by the cycle of the normal working day.
- Flexibility, resilience and self-reliance. May result in sense of isolation/loneliness
- Good communication skills – including skills of communicating across electronic networks
- Ability to cope with conflicting demands of home and work life, eg. may leave the worker vulnerable to assumptions that they are "on call" for family members, able to do household chores, care for children etc whatever the effect on their work
- May make children resentful if parents prioritize work and shut themselves away too much.

Stops the home from being a haven from work-related stress. Remote working, if not properly managed, can raise concerns about isolation and stress. It is neither acceptable nor compatible with the Trusts health and safety responsibilities, to expect Teleworkers to be available at all hours. Staff must not work themselves to exhaustion simply because they are always able to access an office computer remotely, or because they have an office phone at home.

Will remote working suit my circumstances?

How much of my job can really be done away from the base office?

- Do I need access to files that are still on paper
- Do I need access to equipment or systems that can only be used on site?
- Do I expect frequent deliveries
- Do chunks of my work mainly need quiet concentration or do I need to bounce ideas round colleagues all the time

Can my home be a workplace?

- Do I have sufficient working space and storage space
- Can I make space available that is "only for work"
- What is the opportunity cost of using this space
- Does it deprive me of a spare room or workshop
- Will it conflict with a partners workspace requirements

- Will I disturb the activities of others in the household? Will they disturb me? Can I find a way of making it clear to others when I am working?

Additional information to be taken into account:

You should seek professional advice on the following uses and possible costs of working from home

Planning Issues
Restrictive covenants
Freehold covenants
Leasehold covenants
Business rates
Capital Gains Tax
Income Tax

Appendix 2

Managing Homeworking / Teleworking Management Checklist

A checklist of questions which the Manager must consider in assessment of homeworking / teleworking request :-

1. **Job Function**
   What jobs or elements of jobs can be teleworked :

   - As a rule all jobs that do not involve physical production, constant face to face Patient / Client contact or expensive specialist equipment can be teleworked. The tasks/jobs which have been most widely adopted to teleworking are those that involved mental rather than physical effort, those where work can most easily be measured, those that do not require extensive "hands on" oversight by Managers or constant intellectual/physical support of other team members.

   What are the key issues around managing Teleworkers?

2. **Monitoring performance and productivity**
   Move to management by results, setting agreed and achievable targets for staff. Develop a relationship based on trust and agreed deliverables.

   Provide feedback on performance

3. **Maintaining communication and feedback**
   Agree arrangements for day to day contact with staff. Consider regular times for telephone/email/video conferencing contact.

   Teleworkers have the same rights as office based staff to be kept informed with information and news.

4. **Respect for out of hours privacy**
   Staff that are using their homes for working have a right to privacy out-of-hours and to be able to separate their working and home lives. Agree times when staff can and cannot be contacted on work issues. A separate work telephone line, which can be switched to record messages, can help in this.

   Any home visits eg. for health and safety inspections should be arranged at times acceptable to the Teleworker.

5. **Training and development**
   Training needs should be identified in the Employee's Personal Development Plan and reviewed as part of the Personal Contribution Framework. The main

skills and training required for teleworking are those needed for the generality of Trusts work in base offices. These include:

- Job related skills specific to the particular requirements of the job.

Generic skills, including competence in IT and the use of new communication methods (for example – Keyboard skills, use of modems, electronic mail, on-line discussion, effective use of web sites and use of software required for the work), report-writing and general telephone communication skills.

Familiarity with the general structure and culture of the organisation and with co-workers.

Familiarity with procedures including health and safety, data protection and how to get help and supplies.

Self-management skills, including training time in time management.

Ability to make judgments on whether to homework/telework.

Those managing Homeworkers/Teleworkers need to develop skills and competencies to cope with the key issues described above.

6. Health and Safety

A health and safety risk assessment must be undertaken by the individual Employee and also by a suitably qualified person from the Trust to consider the suitability of an Employee homeworking / teleworking.

Any equipment provided for the purposes of homeworking will meet health and safety standards

Standards will be maintained and reviewed on a regular basis.

7. Confidentiality

Employees should be reminded of confidentiality under their contract of employment and their responsibility for security of confidential information.

8. Data Protection / Freedom of Information

Employees must comply and management must be satisfied. There must be no breaches in respect of this legislation re homeworking/teleworking.

9. Terms and conditions

Normal terms and conditions apply as per Contract of Employment

10. Equipment

Following a full Health and Safety risk assessment the Trust will determine what equipment / infrastructure the Trust will provide to enable the Employee to homework/telework.

Depending on the level of access and functionality required, the employee's Service Directorate will be expected to pay for all the capital and revenue costs of the connection. This will include equipment such as PCs/Laptops, USB memory keys and installation of any networking connections. Ongoing revenue costs are likely to include support and maintenance, broadband costs if appropriate and other consumable costs. This list is indicative only and each connection may have to be assessed individually.

11. Additional costs

Additional costs associated with homeworking/teleworking such as extra heating and lighting costs. There are also costs that will be avoided such as commuting costs on days when working from home. The Trust considers that these are broadly balancing costs and benefits and it will not offer allowances to cover heating and lighting etc.

Appendix 3

Confidential
Step 1 Risk Assessment of the Proposed Homeworking Environment

Purpose : To establish if further action is required to provide a suitable and safe homeworking environment

(To be completed by the Homeworker and discussed with Line Manager)

Employee Name : _____

Department : _____

Base : _____

Date of Assessment : _____

No	Questions	Please provide relevant details
1	Length of time working in this role: (ie. months/years)	
2	Brief description of the proposed type of work undertaken at home (please include equipment to be used, any manual handling etc.)	
3	Details of proposed working hours under the homeworking arrangement (start/finish times)	
4	Details of other adults and children at home during proposed working hours	
5	Please describe the proposed location for your homeworking environment : you should include the following: * size of room * position of room within your home * numbers/position of available electrical sockets * type of ventilation * type of lighting, type/adequacy of heating * any security features (ie. blinds, lockable door/cabinet) * escape route * position of radiators in relation to (actual/required) cables and furniture * flooring * trailing cables (attach a "room layout" drawing if appropriate)	
6	Please describe any existing equipment/furniture (eg. desk size, stability lockable drawers, chair etc.) that you propose to use for furniture	

No	Questions	Please provide relevant details
7	What additional equipment/furniture do you envisage that you will require to work from home (including display screen equipment)	
8a	On what date was your (office based) display screen equipment risk assessed/reviewed	
8b	Date of last eye sight/eye screening test	
9	Please describe the adjustable mechanisms (eg seat height, seat depth, backrest angle) and condition of chair that you intend to use at home	
10	Will your proposed work area be secure and free from interruptions? Please explain	
11a	How many smoke detectors do you have	
11b	Where are they positioned	
11c	How often do you test them	
12	Are there any potential hazards within your home environment? eg. the likelihood of pets chewing through cables or jumping onto or damaging equipment; children pulling cables; issues associated with lone working etc?	
13	What first aid provision do you have	
14	If applicable, are you familiar with the Trusts policy and procedural arrangements relating to New and Expectant Mothers and in what circumstance you are required to advise your Manager	
15	Are you familiar with the requirements of the Trusts Policy and Procedural arrangements relating to lone workers?	
16	Are there any other factors that you feel should be brought to the attention of your Line Manager	

Signature of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Line Manager: _____ Date: _____

Step 2: Action Plan (to be completed by Line Manager)

Name of Homeworker : _____

Issues requiring action as identified during the initial (step 1) assessment	Remedial action required/agreed	Action by (whom)	Timescale	Date action completed

NOTE: Review if any changes occur to your homeworking environment or yearly

Signature of Line Manager : _____

Date : _____

Signature of Homeworker : _____

Date : _____

Date/s initial assessment discussed with proposed Homeworker : _____

Appendix 4

Step 3 Risk Assessment of the proposed Homeworking Environment

Purpose: To establish if the homeworking environment has been set up correctly and appropriate training has been received to ensure that health & safety requirements are met

(To be completed by the Line Manager (in conjunction with the DSE Risk Assessor) prior to commencement of homeworking)

Name of staff: _____

Department: _____

Base: _____ Line Manager: _____

Date initial assessment (ie. step I) completed: _____

Brief description of the type of work undertaken at home: _____
_____
_____
_____

Details of working hours/days worked from home:

_____

_____
_____

		YES	NO please explain
1	Has the agreed action plan agreed with the Line Manager, following the initial assessment (ie. step I) by the proposed Homeworker, been fully implemented?		
2	Is the workstation positioned to avoid the use of extension leads?		
3	Is the workstation positioned to avoid the use of adaptors?		
4	Is the heating, lighting and ventilation in the work area adequate?		
5	Is the room or work area free from tripping hazards?		
6	Is the environment suitable for the home working activity		
7	Is there sufficient circulation space in the area?		
8	Is the furniture in use suitable for the homeworking activity		
9	Is there a means of securing/protecting information & equipment		
10a	Can the chair in use be adjusted as follows: * Seat height * back rest – height & angle		
10b	* does it provide adequate support to the lower back		
10c	* does it have a 5 star base for stability		

11	Have arrangements been made for the maintenance (and PAT testing) of all Trust equipment		

12	Are there any moving and handling tasks that require further assessment		
13a	Does the member of staff need any training eg. in relation to equipment, software etc?		
13b	Does the member of staff need any training regarding the ergonomic layout of their display screen equipment workstation		
14	Is the member of staff aware of the following		
*	The importance of correct posture and adjusting the workstation accordingly		
*	Recommended breaks from DSE work		
*	Recommended products for cleaning computer equipment		
*	Reporting accidents/incident and near misses associated with the work activity		
*	Undertaking “user checks” on equipment		
*	Disposing/recycling of waste/confidential paper, cartridge etc (return to Trust)		

*	Safely replacing printer cartridge and working with other relevant substances (refer to Departments COSHH Assessments)		
*	Reporting any changes to home, health etc		
*	Correct positioning when using a laptop		
15	In relation to the display screen equipment workstation:		
15a	Has the workstation been positioned to avoid glare and reflection on the screen		
15b	Is the screen at the correct height and position in relation to the user		
15c	Are the forearms roughly horizontal and the wrists straight whilst using the keyboard		
15d	Is there space in front of the keyboard to rest the wrists when not actively keying		
15e	Are the feet resting comfortably on the floor If no is a foot rest required		
15f	Are the characters on the monitor easy to read Has the brightness and contrast been properly adjusted		
15g	Are frequently used items within easy reach		
15h	Is the mouse positioned close to an at about the same level as the keyboard		
16	Details of any other issues not included in the initial assessment		

Signature of Staff Member : _____ Date : _____

Signature of Line Manager : _____ Date : _____

Date/s initial assessment discussed with proposed Homeworker : _____

Step 4: Action Plan (to be completed by the Line Manager)

Name of Homeworker: _____

Issues requiring action as identified during the initial (step 1) assessment	Remedial action required/agreed	Action by (whom)	Timescale	Date action completed

NOTE: Review if any changes occur to your homeworking environment or yearly

Signature of Line Manager : _____

Date : _____

Signature of Homeworker : _____

Date : _____

Date/s initial assessment discussed with proposed Homeworker : _____

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JOB SHARING POLICY

JOB SHARING POLICY

Job Sharing provides a flexible way of working for staff who choose not to work full time. It involves two people who share the duties and responsibilities of a full time post on a daily or weekly basis. The salary and terms and conditions of service are allocated on a pro rata basis to the hours worked.

1. Objectives

The objectives of the Job Sharing Policy are:

- To retain skills and experience within the Trust.
- To further develop the Belfast Trusts flexible working arrangements and the promotion of work/life balance.

2. Eligibility

All employees are eligible to apply for a Job Share Arrangement.

3. Application to Participate in a Job Share Arrangement

All applications should be made in line with the procedures set out in the information pack on Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements and the specific guidance notes set out therein for Managers and staff. Applications will be facilitated whenever possible and will be considered on the merits of the individual case. However, it may not be possible to approve requests in every case because of the needs of the Trust.

The employee should complete the Trust's Flexible Working Application Form under the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure and forward this to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

Joint applications for posts which have been identified as open to job share arrangements will be considered as a single application and will be judged on their collective merit.

The line Manager will consider the applications in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. In the event that the application is not approved, the Line Manager will provide the employee with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance Procedure.

4. Job Share Agreement

A job share agreement should be made between the partners in conjunction with their line manager and this should be in writing with both parties and the

Manager as signatories. The job share agreement should cover the following points:

- The split of hours between the partners;
- The working pattern of both partners – this could be working alternate weeks, half or split weeks, morning/afternoon split or any other suitable alternative;
- The arrangements for handover periods;
- The allocation of duties and distribution of work and responsibilities;
- The arrangements for Performance Management and supervision requirements;
- Arrangements for annual leave.

5. Terms and Conditions of Employment

Each job sharer will be issued with an individual Contract of Employment and a Job Description which clearly defines the duties and responsibilities of the post.

Where a post has been converted from full time to job share at the request of the existing post holder then an amendment to the contract of employment will be issued. Employment rights such as continuity of employment and employment protection will be unaffected.

Terms and Conditions of Employment will be applied on a pro-rata basis subject to individual eligibility. This will include:

- salary / wage
- statutory holidays
- annual / study leave
- Sick/Maternity Pay

The job sharers will be paid the appropriate pay band for the post calculated pro rata to the actual hours worked. The banding of a job share post will apply to both job sharers in the arrangement. Any review of banding will consider the whole of the post not the duties of an individual employed in part of the post.

Statutory holidays will be shared between job sharers on a pro rata basis to be agreed between the job sharers and their Line Manager.

Where a job sharer accepts the offer of a job share post in a location different from their current post he/she will not be entitled to payment of excess travelling expenses.

An employee who makes an application and is successful for a job share position through the normal recruitment process will be subject to the completion of a six month probationary period.

Job sharers, as individual employees, will be subject to the Trust's Policies and Procedures relating to conduct, behavior and performance/capability.

Both managers and job sharers have a responsibility to ensure that an appropriate number of common hours are worked to exchange information and update each other on work issues.

6. Overtime

When job sharers work beyond their contractual hours but not outside the normal full-time hours of the post, they may take time off in lieu or be paid for the additional hours at plain time rate subject to agreement with line managers.

In the event that the hours worked exceed the normal full-time hours for the post, overtime rates will be paid in accordance with Terms and Conditions of Service unless time off in lieu is taken.

7. Duration of Job Sharing

In the event of one job sharer ceasing to continue in the job sharing arrangement the full time hours should be offered to the remaining job sharer. If the remaining job sharer is not interested in fulfilling the work on a full time basis then the vacant part of the job share will be advertised in accordance with the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Procedure. In the event that the post cannot be filled it may be necessary to redeploy the remaining job sharer to a suitable alternative post in the Trust or discuss alternative arrangements and advertise the original post as full time. Any such arrangements will be done in full consultation with the job sharer and full consideration of service needs.

8. Cover for Sharers

Where one job sharer is unable to work for a reason such as illness or maternity leave the partner may be offered the opportunity to cover the hours, on a full or part time basis, of the absent job sharer in the first instance. If the partner is unable or unwilling to cover those hours, management may seek to cover the post by employing a temporary person to share the post.

9. Promotion

Job Sharers will be free to compete for promotional posts in the same way as other employees on an individual basis. However, should they be successful they will have no automatic right to job share. If the job sharers apply to a post where the advert specifies "Job Share applicants will be considered", then both job sharers can be considered as a joint application.

10. Adherence to Policy

Throughout the duration of a Job Sharing Scheme, both the employee and the manager must adhere to the terms of this Policy.

11. Review of Job Sharing Policy

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy, a review of the policy will be undertaken on a three yearly basis.

12. Training and Development

Staff participating in a Job Share arrangement should have their training and development needs assessed and delivered in the same manner as all other staff, in line with the Trust's Personal Contribution Framework.

13. General Information

Any further information regarding the Job Sharing Scheme may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone 028961 59615.

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, eg. Plain English, Braille, Disc, Audio Cassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.



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PART-TIME WORKING

PART TIME WORKING SCHEME

Part Time Working allows staff to reduce their full-time working hours and remuneration to less than their normal working week. This arrangement can be on a temporary or permanent basis, and will be subject to review as set out in paragraph 7. The work pattern and duration is agreed between employer and employee and may be half days, shorter days or a reduced number of full days. Salary, annual leave and statutory leave will be reduced on a pro rata basis.

For further information and an application form for Flexible Working Arrangements, please refer to the Work Life Balance, Flexible Working Arrangements Information Pack.

1. Objectives

The objectives of Part Time Working are:

- To retain skills and experience within the Trust.
- To facilitate staff who wish to continue working at the same time as meeting other personal commitments.
- To further develop the Belfast Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements and the promotion of work/life balance.

2. Eligibility

All Employees are eligible to apply for a Part-Time Working arrangement.

3. Application to participate in Part Time Working

Applications to participate in Part Time Working scheme can be made in one of two ways:

Application to participate in a Part Time position that has been advertised by the Trust; any such applications will be conducted under the Trust's Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

Application by a post-holder to have the post considered for part time by completing the Flexible Working Application form under the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure and forwarding to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

The line manager will consider the application in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. The application should set out the proposed working arrangements, patterns of working etc. In the event that it is not approved, the line manager will provide the member of staff with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance procedure.

4. Part Time Working on a Temporary Basis

4.1 Employees can request to work part time hours on either a permanent or temporary basis.

4.2 If more than one employee in a department requests part time working, then the line manager could agree a rotation or sharing of this arrangement. An employee can request a temporary reduction in working hours in the same manner as requesting a permanent reduction in hours.

4.3 A temporary reduction in hours, up to a maximum of 50%, can be granted for a specific period between 1 and 12 months, depending on the individual's circumstance, with the right to return to full time hours at the end of the agreed specified period. The time off may be taken either on a regular basis or by reducing the working day/week for a block of time in the year.

4.4 As with a permanent reduction in hours those interested in working part time hours for a temporary period must discuss this issue with their line manager. The employee and the line manager must decide and agree how the part time hours will be worked each week and how long this arrangement will last. The needs of the service must be taken into account in reaching this decision.

5. Pay and Superannuation

5.1 Entitlement to continue the Health and Personal Social Services Superannuation Scheme remains unchanged. However staff should be aware that a reduction in salary will impact on superannuation benefits.

5.2 It is the responsibility of an employee wishing to pursue Part Time working to consult Superannuation Branch, Waterside House, Londonderry, Telephone 02871319000 regarding the superannuation implications. Superannuation Branch will also advise on additional voluntary contributions.

6. Overtime / Additional Hours

When part time staff work beyond their contractual hours but not outside the normal full time hours of the post, they may take time off in lieu or be paid for the additional hours at normal rate subject to agreement with the line manager.

7. Review / termination of Part Time Working

7.1 If a temporary part time working arrangement is granted, this arrangement may be reviewed, at the discretion of the line manager, on a monthly basis.

7.2 Where service needs or staffing issues arise, temporary part time working may have to be reconsidered and managers should ensure that staff are given at least 1 month's notice if the arrangement cannot continue.

8. Promotion

Part Time staff will be free to compete for promotional posts in the same way as other Employees. However, should they be successful they will have no automatic right for their part time working arrangements to continue.

9. Adherence to Policy

Throughout the duration of a Part Time Working Scheme, both the employee and the manager must adhere to the terms of this policy.

10. Training and Development

Staff participating in a Part Time Working arrangement should have their training And development needs assessed and delivered in the same manner as for all other staff in line with the Trust's Personal Contribution Framework. The single overtime rate will apply for any Training and Development undertaken outside of the standard hours. Overtime will apply unless time off in lieu is taken in agreement with the employee's line manager.

11. Review of Part Time Working Policy

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy, a review will be undertaken at regular intervals.

12. General Information

Any further information regarding Part Time Working may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone 028961 59615.

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, eg. Plain English, Braille, Disc, Audio Cassette and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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TERM TIME POLICY

TERM TIME SCHEME

1. Introduction

Term Time Working allows staff to remain on a permanent contract but gives them the right to unpaid leave of absence during the year. This is likely to be in order to take care of their children during school holidays but is not limited to this and all requests will be considered. As this leave is planned well in advance, the employee will continue to receive a regular wage each month/week, though at a reduced rate in line with their reduced hours. Annual leave will also be reduced on a pro rata basis.

The Term Time Policy intends to offer as much flexibility as possible. The maximum option available is working 9 months out of 12 months (39 weeks out of 52 weeks) which equates to 13 weeks leave. The minimum option available is working 11 months out of 12 months which equates to 4 weeks leave during the year. This leave can be taken at a time which is mutually agreeable between the manager and employee taking into account the needs of the service. These weeks are not limited to the main/peak holiday periods such as Easter, Christmas and the summer period.

It should be noted Term Time Working is only granted for one year and a new application is required for any future requests.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Term Time Working Policy are:

- To facilitate staff who wish to continue working at the same time as meeting other personal commitments during their children's main/peak school holidays.

- To retain skills and experience within the Trust.

3. Eligibility

All employees are eligible to apply for a Term Time Working Arrangement.

In the event that the number of applications for term-time exceed the number of term-time arrangements that can be granted then consideration will be given to ways in which the Department/Directorate might facilitate requests taking into account the merits of the individual case. The Manager will consider in partnership with Trade Union colleagues a reasonable and fair approach.

4. Application to Participate in a Term Time Working Arrangement.

All applications should be made in line with the procedures set out in the information pack or Work Life Balance Flexible Working Arrangements and the specific guidance notes set out therein for managers and staff.
Completed applications should be sent to the Improving Working Lives Section of the Human Resources Department as soon as an application is made and no later 28 February of each year in order that the necessary arrangements can be made with Salaries and Wages in time for the new salary to become effective from 1 April.

Applications will be facilitated whenever possible and in consideration of the needs of the service (please refer to paragraph 3 eligibility).

The Employee should complete the Trust's flexible working application form under the Trust's Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure and forward this to his/her Line Manager for consideration.

The Line Manager will consider the applications in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service. In the event that the application is not approved, the Line Manager will provide the employee with a written reason and advise of the right to invoke the Grievance Procedure.

5. Terms and Conditions

5.1 Throughout the duration of the Term Time Working arrangement both the employee and the manager must adhere to the terms and conditions of this Policy.

5.2 Staff accessing this scheme will be required to agree a variation to their existing contract for a period of one full year. Accordingly the employees' salary will be paid over 52 weeks and the salary will be reduced by the number of weeks the employee takes as unpaid leave. Sick leave, maternity leave etc will be calculated on the reduced salary.

5.3 In the event of a period of sickness occurring during the agreed period of leave, the period of leave cannot be deferred to a later date.

5.4 Where appropriate, in line with section 13.9 of the NHS Agenda for Change Handbook, managers should process enhancements only for the annual leave component of the agreed term time. The weeks that are not identified as annual leave are classed as unpaid leave and no enhancement should be submitted for payment during those weeks.

5.5 Entitlement to continue in the Health and Personal Social Services Superannuation Scheme remains unchanged. However, staff should be aware that the reduction in service will impact on superannuation benefits. It is

therefore the responsibility of an employee wishing to pursue a Term Time Working arrangement to consult with the Salaries and Wages Department to obtain information regarding the reduction in income and with the Superannuation Branch, Waterside House, Londonderry, telephone 028 7131 9000, regarding the superannuation implications. Superannuation Branch will also advise on additional voluntary contributions.

5.6 Staff on Term Time Working accrue annual leave and statutory leave on a pro-rata basis to the period of time that they work over the 12 month period. (Please see appendix A).

5.6 Employees on Term Time Working should use the majority of their annual leave against the time they are not working and this will reduce the impact on their salary. However, a reasonable amount of annual leave should be retained for use during working time. Individual arrangements should be discussed and agreed with your line manager. Please refer to Appendix A.

6. Duration / Review of Term Time Working Arrangements

6.1 A Term-Time Working Arrangement cannot exceed one calendar year in duration.

6.2 Employees must submit a new application for the next year if they wish to avail of the term time scheme.

6.3 If Employees in a section or department request more Term Time Working than the manager can facilitate, then the line manager could agree a rotation or sharing of this arrangement.

7. Promotion

Employees will be free to apply for promotional posts in the usual manner whilst participating in Term Time Working. However, they would have to accept the promotional post at the time of offer and take-up duties when required. They will not have the automatic right to return to their Term Time Working arrangement in the new post. This can be discussed with the line manager however and all requests can be considered.

8. Training and Development

Staff participating in a Term Time Working arrangement should have their training and development needs assessed and delivered in the same manner as for all other staff in line with the Trust's Personal Contributions Framework.

9. Keeping in Contact

9.1 It will be the responsibility of the line manager to keep the employee informed of any developments, job opportunities, refresher/training courses and to agree appropriate updating arrangements (if necessary) with the employee in line with the Trust's Personal Contributions Framework.

9.2 It will be the responsibility of the employee to inform the line manager and the Human Resources Department of any change in his/her circumstances, e.g. change of address, and also for the employee to adhere to requirements of their professional regulatory body

10. Adherence to Policy

Throughout the duration of a Term Time Working Arrangement, both the employee and the manager must adhere to the terms of this policy.

11. Termination of a Term Time Working Arrangement

If approval has been granted within a department and unforeseen difficulties arise, advice may be sought by Human Resources regarding termination of the Term Time arrangement.

12. Review of the Term Time Working Policy

To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of this policy reviews will be undertaken at regular intervals.

13. General Information

Any further information regarding Term Time Working may be obtained from the Improving Working Lives Team, Human Resources Department, 4th Floor McKinney House, Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast BT9 7JB. Telephone. 028961 59615.

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Annual Leave hours / 52 weeks X weeks to be paid =
Stat hours / 52 weeks X weeks to be paid =
Term Time Option (weeks) + Annual Leave to be used while on Term Time
Annual Leave + Stat Days - Annual Leave to be paid on Term Time = total / hours worked = weeks

TERM TIME OPTION	**ANNUAL LEAVE PAID FOR WHILE ON TERM TIME**	**PAID BY SALARIES**	**UNDER 5 YEARS SERVICE A/L & STAT**	**OVER 5 YEARS SERVICE A/L & STAT**	**OVER 10 YEARS SERVICE A/L & STAT**
13 wk option	plus 4 weeks =	43 weeks over 52 weeks	2.11 weeks	2.45 weeks	3.11 weeks
11 wk option	plus 4 weeks =	45 weeks over 52 weeks	2.40 weeks	2.75 weeks	3.44 weeks
9 wk option	plus 3 weeks =	46 weeks over 52 weeks	3.55 weeks	3.90 weeks	4.61 weeks
7 wk option	plus 3 weeks =	48 weeks over 52 weeks	3.83 weeks	4.20 weeks	4.94 weeks
4 wk option	N/A	48 weeks over 52 weeks	6.83 weeks	7.19 weeks	7.94 weeks