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Flexible job design: making flexible working the default

24th April 2024

This webinar is funded by the Department for Education, but the content should not be interpreted as Governmental policy.





Independent financial advice from a specialist in public service pensions should be sought by any individual considering changing their contracted hours of work.

Aims

- Introduce schools and MATs to the flexible job design process
- Detail how schools and MATs can get involved in the FWAMS programme

Hosted by

- **Antonia Spinks**
Pioneer
Educational Trust



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Reminder of
why flexible
working is a
priority now



Why flexible working is a priority now

Background

Definition

Flexible working is when employees vary their work in terms of the amount, timing or location of the work.

(Flexible Working and Performance: A Systematic Review of the Evidence for a Business Case, L. M. de Menezes & C. Kelliher, 2011)

Types of flexible working

This can be a whole range of arrangements from formal such as part-time working to informal such as occasional, ad-hoc flexibility or PPA taken from home.

Percentage of teachers working flexibly

In the Department for Education's Working Lives of Teachers Survey, 46% of teachers and leaders reported using some form of flexible working arrangement themselves, whether formal or informal.

(Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 2, IFF Research, 2024)

Reminder of why flexible working is a priority now

Key benefits

- retaining experienced staff
- recruiting from a broader pool of teachers
- promoting wellbeing
- improving work-life balance
- improving productivity and reducing absences
- promoting equality of opportunity and diversity

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Taking a strategic approach to flexible working



Taking a strategic approach to flexible working

Our flexible working journey

2019

- Staff engagement survey
- DfE support from Flexible Teacher Talent

2020

- Research and support from consultants
- Draft Flexible Working Strategy
- Full consultation with staff and unions
- Strategy launched and implemented

2021

- Ongoing focus on robust implementation and evaluation

Taking a strategic approach to flexible working

How we have embraced flexible working.

What has been the impact?

- 20+ members of staff have requested and been granted statutory flexible working requests
- On average 30-40 members of staff each year have requested and been granted flexible job design
- High levels of satisfaction on engagement survey against a national benchmark
- Internal survey shows staff who work flexibly report improved work/life balance and feeling valued
- We Are In Beta survey highlighted trust's work in study (number of senior leaders working flexibly and quality of recruitment processes)



Taking a strategic approach to flexible working

Principles underpinning Pioneer's strategic approach.

- Presumption that flexible working can work unless there is a genuine operational or business reason why it could not.
- Balance needs to be maintained – needs of pupils, the team and the school.
- Our aim to provide greater flexibility is separate from our drive to create a working environment that removes unnecessary workload (WorkWell).



Taking a strategic approach to flexible working

Principles underpinning Pioneer's strategic approach.

- Flexible progression for all
- Built on the principle of trust
- Provide transparency on the process and decision-making
- Fair and robust



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Flexible job design

What is it and how can
you make it work?



Flexible job design

Statutory flexible working requests AND flexible job design

Statutory flexible working requests

- **All employees have a statutory entitlement to make a formal flexible working request**
- **The law around this has changed**
 - Day 1 right
 - Must consult with the employee when request made before rejecting it
 - Must respond in two months (rather than three)
 - Two request in a 12-month period
 - No requirement for employee to explain the effect request will have or how impact may be dealt with
- **Permanent and legally binding change typically affecting individual's pay**

Flexible job design process

- **An informal request to flex where and / or when an individual works**
- **Annual process**
- **Temporary variation for an academic year that is binding on the employee and employer**

Key principle: if the change would result in someone 'covering' for that time, it is NOT a flexible job design.

(Flexible job design requests are given precedence over any informal or ad hoc requests made at the start of the academic year.)

Flexible job design

Strong communications

Role	Where			When				
	Working from home (anytime)	Working from home (school holidays)	Hybrid working (individuals have 'core hours' based in school and flexibility about working location at other times)	Compressed hours (f/t hours over fewer days)	Flexitime (individual chooses when to start and end work (within agreed limits) but works certain 'core hours', e.g. 9-3 daily)	Staggered hours (individual works certain no. hours over year but has some flex about when they work. Could be 'core hours' with remainder worked flexibly or when there's demand)	Staggered hours (individual has different start, finish and break times from others)	P6 teaching for KS5 to allow 'flex period' elsewhere
Headteacher								
Deputy Headteacher								
Assistant Headteacher								

Strong communications

[illegible]

Flexible job design

Timeframe

Autumn 1	Think through how you would like to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about your desired working pattern and ways you could work flexibly. Flexibility can cover where, when or how much time the work is done in.• Think about the implications of your request and how these might be overcome.
Autumn 2	Start the flexible working conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you would like your role to be considered under the flexible job design process, take the initiative and arrange an informal discussion with the Headteacher to start working together on flexible job design options.• Discuss your thinking with your line manager before meeting with the Headteacher.• With the Headteacher, consider the options available to make your desired working patterns work and be open to alternative options. The more flexible you can be in your flexible working job design, the more likely we are to be able to facilitate yours and others' requests.• Discuss your thoughts on the implications of the request and how these might be overcome. This does not need to be detailed but will support an open and honest discussion about the feasibility.
Spring 1	Put any flexible job design requests in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having had an open discussion with your Headteacher, put any requests to work flexibly under the flexible job design process into writing.• NOTE: Our flexible job design process sits alongside but is separate from employees' statutory entitlement to make a flexible working request at any time.
Spring 2	Options choices made	
Summer 1	Timetable built	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School leaders will seek creative solutions to achieve the best possible approach for both you and school.
Summer 2	Outcomes of flexible job design requests communicated	

Flexible job design

Strong communications

Autumn 1

- Live briefing at the start of each year

Autumn 2

- Protocol for Flexible Job Design conversation
 - Reminder of the process:
 - Questions to guide conversation:
 - What flexibility are you asking for and what flexibility can you offer?
 - Have you discussed with your line manager and what did you discuss?
 - What thoughts do you have about practicalities?
 - Reminder of timeframe
- OneNote to record discussions



Flexible job design

Strong communications

Spring 1

- Microsoft Form to collate requests in spring term

Summer 2

- Standardised email template to communicate outcomes (approved and not approved)



Flexible job design

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The Flexible Working in Multi Academy Trusts and Schools Programme



Support available to help with implementing flexible working

- Flexible Working in education website (www.flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk)
- Programme of webinars and online workshops
- Bespoke, free support from Flexible Working Ambassador MATs and Schools
- DfE guidance and resources <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flexible-working-resources-for-teachers-and-schools>
- Flexible working toolkit <https://www.flexibleworkingineducation.co.uk/dfe-toolkit>
- Trade unions can provide support with making a flexible working request
- If you are not currently teaching, you may be eligible for a [Return to Teaching Advisor](#).



Supporting you to find your next flexible teaching job

Teaching 
Vacancies



Department for Education



teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk

Support available to help with implementing flexible working

Future webinars

Communicating the benefits of flexible working to stakeholders working within a SEND school environment 09/05/2024 at 10:00

Applying and working as a job share
16/05/2024 at 10:00

Leading Flex for HR and School Business Managers 11/06/2024 at 11:00



Evaluation

Please respond to the questions that appear on your screen via the poll.

Once you have completed these, please respond to the below via the chat function:

Please provide any other areas, related to flexible working, that you or your school would find useful to know more about.



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Q&A

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