

# Flexible working from an employer perspective

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## What is flexible working?

- ▶ Flexible working is the name given to any type of working pattern which is different from your existing one.
- ▶ Flexible working arrangements may include:
  - Shift working
  - Staggered hours, these allow you to start and finish your days at different times.
  - Time off in lieu
  - Annualised hours. Annualised hours work best when there is a rise and fall in workload during the year.
  - Term-time work

# What is flexible working?

- Changing from full-time to part-time work
- Changing the part-time hours that you work, for example, from weekends to week days
- Changing working hours to fit in with, for example, school hours, college hours or care arrangements
- Compressed hours. That is, working your usual hours in fewer days
- Flexitime, which allows you to fit your working hours around agreed core times
- Home working for part or all of the time
- Job sharing
- Self-rostering. You put forward the times you would like to work. Once staff levels and skills are worked out, the shift pattern is drawn up matching your preferences

# Asking for flexible working

- ▶ There are two ways to ask for flexible working: (Expected changes are in red - This legislation is currently waiting for Royal Assent. In addition, there may be other legislative changes to be introduced).
  - a statutory request
  - a non-statutory request
- ▶ **Statutory request**
  - This is a request which is made under the law on flexible working. This means that there is a process set out in law, which you and your employer need to follow when you are negotiating your flexible working request.
  - ▶ Under the statutory process:
    - you need to make your request in writing
    - you can only make one request in any 12-month period (This will increase to two requests in any 12-month period, but no date yet)
    - your employer must consider the request seriously, (and will be required to consult) and complete the whole process (including dealing with any appeal) within three months (This will change to two months).
    - only certain employees are entitled to make a statutory request.

# Non-statutory request

- ▶ If you are not entitled to make a statutory request for flexible working, you can make a non-statutory one
- ▶ This is one which is not made under the law on flexible working
- ▶ There is therefore no set procedure for making a request
- ▶ However, it is advisable to make your request in writing so that it is clear what you have asked for.
- Your employer may also have their own scheme with its own rules which may be more generous than the statutory scheme. For example, it may be open to all employees regardless of how long they have worked for your employer.
- ▶ Even if you can make a statutory request, you may wish to make a non-statutory request instead if, for example, the change you're asking for is minor or temporary.



# Who is entitled to make a statutory request for flexible working arrangements?

- ▶ To have the statutory right to ask for flexible working arrangements, you must:
  - Be an employee; and
  - Have worked for your employer continuously for 26 weeks at the date on which you make your application; and
  - Not be in one of the groups of employees who aren't entitled to ask for flexible working.
- ▶ If you do not meet the criteria for making a statutory request, you could still make a non-statutory request, or make one under your employer's scheme if there is one.

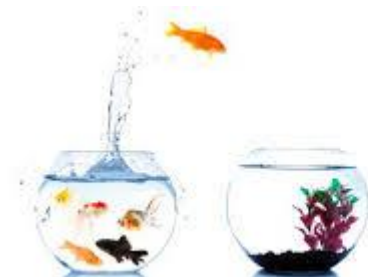
# Who is not entitled to make a statutory request for flexible working?

- ▶ Even if you meet the entitlement conditions, you don't have the statutory right to ask for flexible working if you:
  - Are an agency worker. However, agency workers who are returning from parental leave do have the right to make a flexible working request
  - Have asked for flexible working within the previous twelve months, whether your request was agreed to or not
  - Are an employee shareholder, unless you have returned from parental leave in the last 14 days
- ▶ However, if you are in one of these groups and cannot make a statutory request, you could still make a non-statutory request.



## Is the change permanent?

- ▶ If your employer agrees to your flexible working request, it will mean a permanent change to your contract.
- ▶ However, you can both agree a trial period to make sure that the new arrangements work.
- ▶ If you don't want to make a permanent change to your contract, you may be able to negotiate a temporary change with your employer.



*It's time  
for a  
CHANGE*



# Flexible working - planning what changes to ask for

- ▶ **Before you ask for flexible working, there are a number of things you should consider. These include thinking about your organisation's approach to flexible working, how flexible your current job could be. You also need to think about what financial implications a change to your existing working pattern will have.**
- ✓ Show you are organised and good at planning ahead
- ✓ Get the support of your colleagues and consider their needs too
- ✓ Be willing to be flexible about your arrangements sometimes
- ✓ Have a positive approach and be willing to suggest alternative solutions if problems arise
- ✓ Find a supportive line manager

# What are your existing working arrangements?

- ▶ What does your employer offer already? What are your existing working arrangements and what changes do they allow?
  
- ▶ The following questions may help you think about your current arrangements:
  - What do you do?
  - What is your current working pattern?
  - What hours do you work at the moment? (Are these regular?)
  - What kind of flexibility do you have now?
  - Where do you work?
  - Are you part of a team?
  - Does your work involve covering certain areas, i.e. nurse clinic, ops, etc?
  - Are your current arrangements putting you at a disadvantage because of your age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation?

# How do you prefer to work?

- ▶ Not all types of flexible working suit everyone
  - Do you work better at certain times of the day?
  - Do you enjoy working on your own?
  - Can you do your work away from your workplace?
  - Are there set tasks that you can do more efficiently out of the workplace, free from interruptions?
  - Are you self-motivating and able to work to deadlines on your own?
  - Do you need a team to bounce ideas off for stimulus?
  - Do you like to keep work and home completely separate i.e. weekends?
  - Do you get tired with longer hours or nights?
  - If you reduce your hours, will you end up doing a full-time job on a part-time salary?



# What would you like your working arrangements to be?

- What would be your ideal option right now?
- Do you want to work fewer hours with less pay, or keep the same hours and pay, but work more flexibly to fit in with other commitments?
- Would a little flexibility make all the difference, for example, flexible start and finish times or occasional home working?
- Would a temporary change in hours help?
- Would having fixed hours instead of unpredictable hours or rotating shifts help?
- Is a permanent reduction in hours your only option?
- What about taking a short career break or a sabbatical?
- What might stop you going forward with this?



# What back-up arrangements do you have?

- ▶ How flexible can you be with your proposed new working arrangements?
  - Will you need to think about back-up arrangements, such as childcare, or can you be totally flexible about when you can work?
  - Are your back-up arrangements flexible enough to deal with occasional work demands outside your normal routine?
  - Do your back-up arrangements reflect your working hours and the flexibility needed in your role?
  - How would you deal with emergencies?
  - What support do you have at home?
  - If you are asking for flexible working because of caring responsibilities, is there anyone who can share those responsibilities with you? Can they ask for flexible working too?



# How will flexible working affect your finances?

- ▶ Changing your working pattern may also have an impact on your finances, benefits, career and family life
- ▶ **Less money** - You need to think about how you would cope with less money to ensure that whatever change you choose won't make things worse elsewhere in your life
- ▶ **Do you need to be able to earn a certain amount of money?**
- ▶ **Do you need to be able to work a certain number of hours?**  
For example, to be eligible for Working Tax Credit, you have to work a certain number of hours each week.
- ▶ **Future financial implications**  
You also need to consider any future financial implications of the change in working patterns. For example, occupational pension.

# Can you afford not to do anything?

- ▶ What if the situation doesn't change?
- ▶ What are the advantages of keeping the same working pattern you have now?
- ▶ For example, can you develop your career, or increase your income?
- ▶ What are the disadvantages of keeping the same working pattern?
- ▶ For example, will trying to juggle your work and home responsibilities affect your health or wellbeing?





# Talking to colleagues



- ▶ Talk to your colleagues to see how a change in your working pattern may affect them
- ▶ You should do this before you contact your employer so that you can try to overcome any potential problems in advance
- ▶ If you win their support, this will strengthen your case
- ▶ Some of them may have had a request to work flexibly allowed or refused in the past and their experience may be useful for you in planning your request

# Think from all angles

## ► Before applying



- Think from all angles and perspectives
- How you changing hours can benefit the practice / team
- If you don't work a shift / time / night / weekend who will?

# From the employer's perspective

The practice management team are faced with practical and operational decisions about staffing levels

- How many staff do I need?
- How many staff do I have?
- What skills are needed to provide effective care?
- What staff should be doing what?
- How do I ensure workload is equitably distributed?
- How many patients do we have to nurse, i.e. operations, in-patients?



# Flexible

Practice management have to think long term and for the whole practice

- If you allow the nurse 'nice shifts' how does that impact others?
- Is it fair to the rest of the team?
- Does it mean others have to pick up more unsocial hours?
- What about future proofing?

## Divide up positions - example

- ▶ 40 hours nurse – wanting to reduce to 20 hours
- ▶ 2 hours a day cleaning = 25% cleaning
- ▶ 2 hours reception - 1 hour lunch time and 1 hour between 6-7 = 25%
- ▶ Cleaner 1-2 hours a day & after hours reception, clean the waiting room
- ▶ Receptionist part time to cover lunch and later
- ▶ Saved money to spend on part time PCA to help - enabling nurse clinics



## Activity

Are the correct staff members doing the correct roles?

Skills Mix Matrix - to aide Practice Management with correct distribution of Skill Mix

Level	Discipline	Examples	VS	HRVN	RVN	SVN	PCA	NC	Clean
Clinical	General nursing	General grooming							
		Advanced grooming							
		General bathing							
		Prescription bathing							
		Physiotherapy passive							
		Physiotherapy active							
		Exercise patients							
		Monitoring of patients							
		Handling/ restraint							
Dispensary		Ordering of stock							
		Ordering of food							
		Ordering of drugs							
		Making prescriptions up							
		Double checking of prescriptions							
Core		Triage							
		First Aid							
Diagnostic imaging		Basic diagnostics ie run blood							
		Radiographs take							
		Radiographs process							
		Use CT scanner							
		Package samples							
		Take bloods							
		Skin scrapping							
		Ultrasound bladders for size							
		Aid drive endoscopy							
		Clean endoscopy							
Nutrition		General feeding							
		Calculate RER							
		Tube/ Entral nutrition							
		Parenteral nutrition							

VS = Veterinary surgeon

HRVN= Head RVN

RVN= Registered Veterinary Nurse

PCA= Patient care assistant (ANA or unqual nurse)

NC= Non clinical (ie reception)

Clean = Housekeepers/cleaners

Ask yourself on average who does the below task.  
Is your pattern very different then the first example?  
Could you alter who does what, to increase productivity?

Level	Discipline	Examples	VS	HRVN	RVN	SVN	PCA	NC	Clean
Clinical									
Infection control	Reception /waiting room floor								
	Consult floor								
	Consult room and stock								
	Consult table after each vet consult								
	Consult room	table legs, cupboard doors							
	Outside space								
	kennel room floor								
	Kennels								
	Corridor floor								
	Prep and theatre								
	Xray room floor								
	other clinical rooms floor								
	Toilets								
	Tea room/ office/non clinical								
	Walls in recept/consult room								
	Stairs								
	Windows inside recept/consult								
	Windows inside (clinical)								
	Windows inside (non clinical)								
	Windows outside								
	Clinical bins								
	Washing animal bedding								
	Instruments clean								
	Sterilise								
Client care	Reception phones								
	OOH phones								
	Reception desk								
	Sign up HPC								
	Insurance claim forms								
	Bad debt calls and letter								

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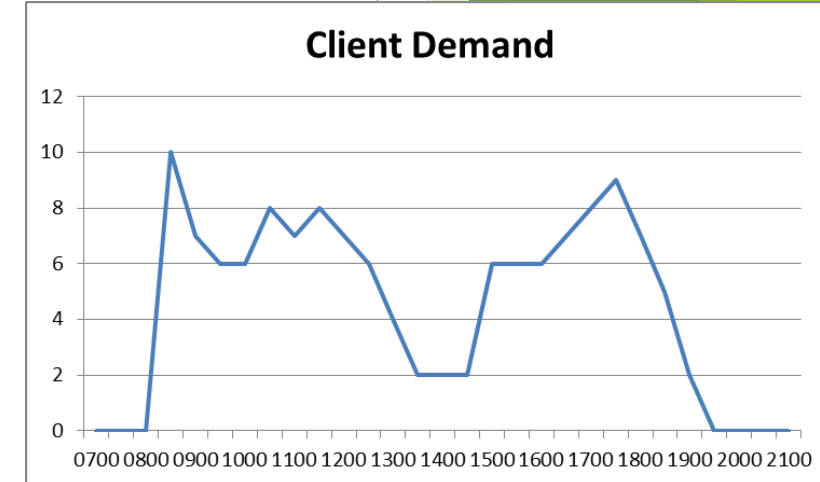
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An example of a heat map of the busiest parts of the day. Map out your own practice and decide if you have appropriate staff at the appropriate times.

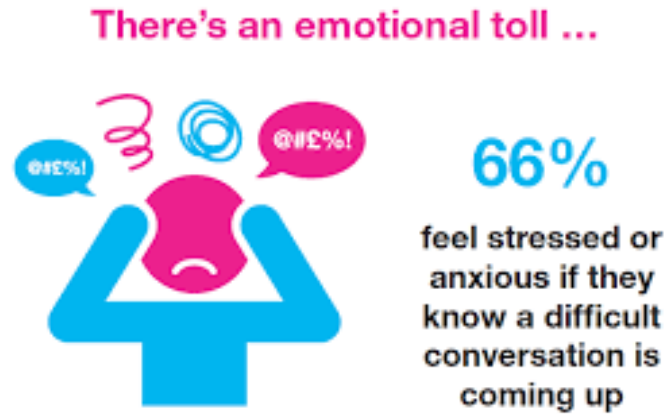
	Desk 1	Desk 2	Consult room 1	Consult room 2	Kennels	Ops	Cleaning
8					RVN		
9	Recept	Recept	vet	vet	RVN		
10	Recept	Recept	vet	vet	RVN	RVN	
11	Recept				RVN	RVN/VS	
12	Recept				RVN	RVN/VS	
1	Recept				RVN	RVN/VS	
2	Recept				RVN	RVN	
3	Recept				RVN		
4	Recept	Recept	Vet	Vet	RVN		
5	Recept	Recept	Vet	Vet	RVN		
6	Recept	Recept	Vet	Vet	RVN		
7	Recept	Recept	Vet	Vet	RVN		
8							
9							



**Activity-** Make your own heat map of the busiest times of the day, you can then ensure the correct level of staff are present.

# Having that difficult conversation

- ▶ Plan, plan, plan!
- ▶ Make a proposal – Be very clear
- ▶ Set a date and time
- ▶ Pros and cons
- ▶ Think ‘what about...’
- ▶ How does it effect the practice, other nurses, whole team, patient care?



# Negotiation is an important tool!

- ▶ **The aim of negotiation is to find a solution which works for everyone involved**
- ▶ **Even if your original request is not accepted, could you negotiate an alternative solution?**
- ▶ Negotiating can take a number of forms, from hard-nosed bargaining to friendly agreement.
- ▶ It is worth remembering, you will be continuing to work for your employer!

# Think before you decide! Whether a employee or employer...



- Making the wrong move can last years and is very difficult to change
- Reduced hours - one day off?
- Everyone else 24 hours?
- Only one on fixed days?
- Short days, i.e. 8am–4pm?
- No weekends? No nights?
- OK to have one leave at 4pm, if this is the busiest time?
- What happens if real critical cases?