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## Flexible Working Policy

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[Practice Name] recognises that flexible working can support employee wellbeing, improve work-life balance, and contribute to the effective recruitment and retention of staff. The practice is committed to considering flexible working requests in a fair, consistent and transparent manner, while ensuring that high standards of patient care and service delivery are maintained.

This policy sets out the statutory right to request flexible working and explains how such requests will be managed within the practice.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the practice, regardless of role or length of service. It does not apply to self-employed contractors unless explicitly stated within contractual arrangements.

The practice acknowledges that, due to the nature of primary care services, not all flexible working arrangements will be feasible in all roles. However, all requests will be considered carefully on an individual basis.

### **Definition of Flexible Working**

Flexible working refers to any agreed change to an employee's normal working pattern. This may include changes to working hours, working times or place of work.

Examples of flexible working arrangements include part-time working, job sharing, compressed hours, staggered hours, annualised hours, term-time working, and hybrid or remote working where appropriate.

### **Statutory Right to Request Flexible Working**

Under current legislation, all employees have the right to request flexible working from the first day of employment. Employees may make up to two statutory flexible working requests within any 12-month period.

The practice will consider all requests in a reasonable manner and will provide a decision within the required statutory timeframe.

### **Submitting a Request**

Employees wishing to request flexible working must submit their request in writing to their line manager or the Practice Manager. The request should clearly set out the proposed working arrangement, the date from which it is intended to take effect, and any potential impact on the practice along with suggestions for how this might be managed.

The employee should also indicate whether they have made a previous request and, if so, when.

## **Consideration of Requests**

Upon receipt of a request, the practice will review the proposal carefully, taking into account both the needs of the employee and the operational requirements of the service.

A meeting will normally be arranged to discuss the request in more detail. This provides an opportunity to explore the proposed arrangement, consider alternatives where appropriate, and assess how the request may affect patient care, team functioning and workload distribution.

The practice may agree to the request in full, propose a modified arrangement, or, where necessary, refuse the request based on one or more of the statutory business reasons.

## **Decision-Making**

The practice will notify the employee of its decision in writing within the statutory timeframe. Where a request is approved, the change will normally constitute a permanent variation to the employee's contract of employment, unless otherwise agreed.

In some cases, the practice may agree to a trial period to assess the feasibility of the arrangement before confirming a permanent change.

## **Grounds for Refusal**

A request for flexible working may be refused where there is a legitimate business reason. These may include, but are not limited to, an inability to reorganise work among existing staff, a detrimental impact on quality or performance, insufficient work available during the proposed working times, or an inability to meet patient demand.

Any refusal will be explained clearly in writing, setting out the reasons for the decision.

## **Appeal Process**

Where a request is refused, the employee has the right to appeal the decision. Appeals should be submitted in writing within a reasonable timeframe, normally within 14 days of receiving the decision.

An appeal meeting will be arranged and, where possible, will be conducted by a manager not previously involved in the original decision. The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing and will be final.

### **Impact on Terms and Conditions**

Where a flexible working request is agreed, any changes to working hours, pay, or other terms and conditions will be confirmed in writing and will form part of the employee's contractual agreement.

Employees are encouraged to consider the potential impact of flexible working on salary, pension, and other benefits before submitting a request.

### **Equality and Fairness**

The practice is committed to ensuring that all flexible working requests are handled fairly and without discrimination. Particular consideration will be given where requests are linked to protected characteristics, including disability, pregnancy, or caring responsibilities.

The practice will make reasonable adjustments where required and will ensure that no employee is treated less favourably as a result of making or having made a flexible working request.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and reflects best practice within primary care.