

Flexible Working Policy

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1.0 This policy sets out the eligibility and requirements for flexible working.

PHSO aims to provide a responsive and professional service to all of our customers which is accessible, flexible and prompt in dealing with their contacts with us. In order to achieve this PHSO needs to be accessible to our customers; to answer the telephone; and to respond to enquiries as soon as they are received. While meeting our business needs is paramount, we recognise that people who work for us need to balance their lives between their work and other commitments. Flexible working can be a useful tool to help get the balance right and so can benefit both PHSO and our employees.

This policy applies to all PHSO employees, including those on secondment from other organisations, who have been employed continuously for 26 weeks as at the date of their application.

Temporary, agency workers who have worked within PHSO for more than 26 weeks may also make an application under this policy.

This policy is not contractual and may be amended by PHSO at any time and may be adapted where necessary or appropriate in the particular circumstances of a case. Eg changes to legislation and in line with 3 year review process. Any changes will be notified.

2.0 Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy sets out the organisation we want to be. We aim to foster a culture of diversity and inclusion. To develop and nurture our workforce to excel, making the most of their unique backgrounds and experiences. To operate with integrity, respect and empathy for colleagues, and people and organisations we work with.

Flexible Working

3.0 Contractual Flexible Working

3.1 Working non-standard hours

The standard full-time working week is 36 hours over 5 days, Monday to Friday. Employees (including senior staff) may apply to vary the standard working pattern. Examples of non-standard hours include:

- **Part-time working** - this may involve working fewer hours each day or fewer days each week, or both. The nature of PHSO's business means that for most roles the general rule is that employees will be required to work at least 18 hours a week over three days per week.
- **Job-sharing** - two employees work in the same job and share the duties, with different working patterns. This is usually dependent on the employee finding an appropriate job-share partner, if one

partner leaves or moves to another position, and a replacement cannot be found or start within 12 working weeks, the job sharing arrangement may have to cease.

- **Compressed hours** - the contractual hours are worked over a reduced number of days, for example 36 hours over a 4 day week.
- **Term-time working** - the employee works during the school term only, taking unpaid leave during holiday periods. This is only suitable for a very small number of posts due to the difficulties of covering the work.
- **Annualised hours** - the employee is contracted to work an agreed number of hours per year, to be worked in a flexible pattern, as agreed.

3.2 Contractual Home Based Working

PHSO currently has a small number of employees who are contractually home based. Under this policy it is open to employees to make an application for flexible working. However, when making such an application due regard must be paid to the impact of this on the business needs of PHSO; other PHSO employees and the individual themselves. PHSO places significant value on the informal learning and sharing which takes place within an office environment and the support, both work and personal, which teams provide to each other. In considering applications for contractual home based working the Assistant Director, Deciding Manager, will need to ensure that this is not eroded due to high levels of home based working.

Employees who apply for home based working must complete a home based self-assessment and meet the required health and safety and security standards.

Please see table below for eligibility for contractual home based working.

3.3 Partial Retirement

Employees who are members of the Principal Civil Service Pension scheme have a reserved right to draw on those benefits from age 60 if in Classic, Classic Plus and Premium, and age 65 if members of Nuvos. Employees who are members of a Partnership pension scheme are entitled to draw a pension from the age they elected when they joined the scheme.

Once an employee reaches the age at which they can draw their accrued benefits one of the following options can be chosen:

- resign and start drawing their pension;
- continue working and defer drawing their pension; or

- request to continue working at reduced hours (or a lower grade) and draw their accrued pension benefits - this is known as Partial Retirement

An employee can only take Partial Retirement if it has been agreed following a formal application under the Flexible Working Policy. Working reduced hours is necessary to ensure there can be no issues around salary “abatement”. This could occur if the total amount of new income with revised salary and pension is greater than the salary that was received before Partial Retirement began. For further information on abatement, see the booklet “What is abatement?” available from the PCSPS website, <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/>

4.0 Non-Contractual Flexible Working

4.1 Flexible Working Hours (flexi-time)

The flexi-time system allows employees to vary their hours of work, within certain parameters, to help them balance work and other commitments.

Employees may vary their hours of work on a day-to-day basis within certain parameters and are required to complete a timesheet on a daily basis recording actual hours worked. Full time colleagues must work the core hours of 10.00 - 12.00 and 14.00 - 16.00, unless agreed otherwise with their line manager.

Most PHSO employees (other than those who work fixed hours, senior staff, and those who have had the facility revoked for capability or disciplinary reasons) are automatically eligible to participate in the FWH system. Detailed information on the flexi time scheme can be found in the Leave and Working Hours policy and procedure.

4.2 Ad hoc Home based working

Working at home occasionally can be beneficial in achieving a balance between work and home life, for example attending a school assembly or a medical appointment that could not be scheduled at the beginning or end of the day. Therefore, ad hoc home based working is available to all employees where they may need some flexibility, from time to time in their working week.

Ad hoc home working is not contractual, it is not intended to be a permanent arrangement nor is it intended, or expected, that there would be any regular patterns for ad hoc working for example, every Friday, twice a week etc.

Eligibility for Contractual Homeworking & Ad Hoc Homeworking

Ad hoc homeworking will continue to be authorised at the line manager's discretion throughout this period using the current procedure.

Area	Yes/No	Criteria
Intake	No	Due to the telephone requirements of the roles in this area, all work is deemed to be office based.
Shared Service Centre	No	Due to the role requirements and in order to facilitate ad hoc administrative support, contractual home working is not possible.
Review & Feedback	Yes	Contractual home working is allowed though no more than three days per week to facilitate case discussions and line manager oversight.
Caseworker		Contractual home working is allowed though no more than one day per week to facilitate case discussions and line manager oversight.
Senior Caseworker	Yes	Contractual home working is allowed though no more than three days per week to facilitate case discussions and line manager oversight.
Policy & Service Quality	Yes	Contractual home working is allowed though no more than three days per week to facilitate work discussions and line manager oversight.
Clinical Advise	Yes	Contractual home working is allowed and arrangements to be agreed with line managers.
Strategy & Operations	Yes	S&O will consider all requests in all roles for contractual and ad hoc homeworking. However, due to the nature of work and requirement for the roles to be office based, we will do this for a relative small number of days.
		All contractual arrangements will continue and ad hoc homeworking and contractual requests will be decided via line manager discretion based upon business requirements.
Corporate Services		All homeworking requests will be considered on a case by case basis, based upon business need.
		However, as all areas within Corporate Services are support functions to the rest of the organisations, roles are expected to be largely office based.
Legal & Professional Services		Existing contractual arrangements will continue and ad hoc homeworking requests will be decided via line manager discretion based upon business requirements.

Policy information

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Related policies and guidance: Flexible Working Procedure

Version control

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31/03/19	1.0	Final	Assistant HRD
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Date	Owner of review
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