



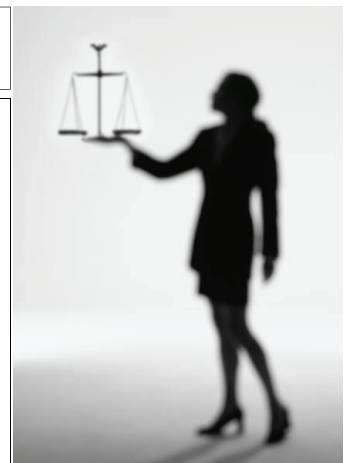
# SkillSheet

## Benefits of Flexible Working

Flexible working can be defined as any change to working hours that are outside the traditional 9 to 5 Monday to Friday practice. There are many types of flexible working and these are outlined below. It is important to think laterally on flexible working and think of ways things could be done and not immediately jump to "no". The table details some of the main benefits of flexible working to both the employer and the employee.

Some of the most common are detailed on this SkillSheet, but get creative! There are many ways to slice up time!

Benefits to the organisation	Benefits to the Employee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced attrition</li> <li>• Reduced absenteeism</li> <li>• Reduced costs</li> <li>• Increase in staff loyalty</li> <li>• Improved productivity</li> <li>• Improved morale and motivation</li> <li>• Improved customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Increased outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased job satisfaction</li> <li>• Increased flexibility</li> <li>• More time for family and other interests</li> <li>• Increased trust</li> <li>• Improved working relationships</li> <li>• Reduced stress</li> <li>• Improved time management</li> <li>• Increased engagement</li> </ul>



### What is Home Working?

Home working is also often considered alongside tele-working and home based working. These arrangements are becoming more common as advances in technology have made it possible to carry out a large

## Working From Home

number of skilled tasks from home as part of an integrated workforce. Arrangements can vary from staff occasionally working at home or staff having a normal place of work which is split between home and office (tele-working) or staff based entirely from home (home-based).

### When does home working work best

Home working can work well for employees that are experienced in their work; self-sufficient; self-disciplined and proactive in solving problems. Individuals

who need close supervision or training (like new employees) may struggle with home working on more than an occasional basis. Parents with pre-school children may also find it difficult to work from home sometimes, unless childcare provision is in place. Tasks should be capable of being measured as output or deliverables. Jobs that have a high degree of face-to-face interaction with others – customers, employees, suppliers etc may be unsuitable for home working on a full-time basis but may

be suitable for home working for part of the working week or on an occasional basis.

### Considering the change to home working

The key issues for discussion and agreement are:

- Reviewing the job content
- Communication & sense of belonging
- Providing work, evaluating and reviewing performance
- Resources & security
- Health & Safety
- Implications for Terms & Conditions



## Full time schemes - Flexi-Time, Annualised, Compressed Hours etc.

### What is flexitime?

Flexitime allows staff to vary their actual working hours outside certain core times each day. Usually this means staff can vary their start and finish times to suit domestic responsibilities, travel arrangements or for work reasons. Staff can build up a debit or credit of hours worked within each period.

Variations on flexitime include:

- Staggered hours – where staff within a team work slightly different start, finish and break times
- Time off in lieu – staff agree informally with managers to take time off at a mutually convenient date to make up for extra hours worked
- Shift swapping – staff agree shift changes

among themselves and with approval from managers.

### What is an annual hours arrangement?

Annual hours give the business and employees extra flexibility to vary patterns of work across each year, according to service need and individual preference. The total number of hours to be worked in the full year is agreed at the outset. Exactly when these hours are worked each week or month, becomes a matter for agreement between managers and individuals. Annual hours schemes typically comprise a number of basic rostered hours and, in some cases, a number of unrostered reserved hours that can be used to cover additional operational requirements.

Annual hours schemes make no distinction between full time and reduced hours working – the number of hours contracted to be worked simply reduces accordingly.

Schemes must take account of Working Time regulations governing weekly working time and rest breaks. A scheme may be considered discriminatory if it makes it more difficult for parents to make childcare arrangements, or for a disabled employee to participate.

### What is compressed time working?

Compressed hours provide the business and the employee with the ability to work contracted hours in a shorter period - e.g. 9 -day fortnights, 28 -day months. Employees may wish to create flexibility in their week, month or quarter by compressing

hours in order to take time out when required for life needs. For example, an employee who wishes to support an elderly parent through a medical treatment may wish to have a week off every two months. The week (37 hours) is then distributed over the rest of the two months making longer days of work for the employee.

It is essential to ensure that where employees are compressing hours that their (and other employee's) health and safety is not compromised.



## Reduced hours schemes - Part-time, job share, term time, etc.

### What are the various forms of reduced hours working?

**Part-time working** The European Directive on Part Time Work defines it as "less than the normal hours of work of a comparable full-time worker".

**Job sharing** Usually means two people voluntarily sharing the duties and responsibilities of one full-time job, and sharing the pay, holidays and other benefits accordingly.



### What is Job Sharing?

Job sharing benefits staff that want to work part-time in a post that would normally be considered a single full-time appointment. The first essential is a clear job description – for the whole position. This may indicate that other part-time options could be considered, and it

will enable detailed discussion of the shared role.

There are two kinds of job share:

**Shared responsibility** is where two employees share the responsibilities and tasks of the full-time job. The partners are interchangeable, with either member of the team able to pick up where the other left off. This is best suited to ongoing work rather than project based.

**Divided responsibility** is where two employees divide the tasks and responsibilities

of one full-time position. This arrangement is useful where different projects or client groups require distinct inputs or sets of skills.

Other factors to consider are:

- Does the job need to be covered every day and within set times?
- Are there peaks and troughs in the work that need to be covered fairly?
- Is an overlap desirable?
- What hand-over and overlap arrangements are needed?
- Will they both need to



## Reduced hours continued

attend certain meetings?

- Is there enough space for both to work together at some times?

**Term time working** is essentially an agreement to allow an employee extended unpaid "holiday" to coincide with school holidays. It can apply to full-time and part-time staff, trading time off for a reduction in income but retaining a permanent contract.

**Temporary reduction in working hours** Working hours can also be voluntarily reduced for a specified period, usually to enable employees to manage other personal or caring commitments or for business reasons. Pay is reduced proportionately.

### What are the advantages of these work patterns?

Reduced hours patterns enable people to continue to work when they are unable to fulfil the demands of full-time work because of caring and/or other responsibilities. Reduced hours can also attract people who are qualified and able to work but are simply not able or keen to work full-time.

- continuity of input will be valuable and who

may subsequently resume full-time work

- The opportunity to view overall team activity as a set of processes and tasks – rather than a group of full-time job descriptions – and manage these more efficiently and sensitively.

The advantages for staff are:

- Being able to work and earn when they might otherwise be unable to
- Keeping their skills up to date
- Continuity of involvement with the team
- Increased motivation and satisfaction
- Achieving a different balance between work and other aspects of life.

### Where will the different patterns work best?

- **Part-time** is much the most prevalent form of reduced

working hours. It can range from a few hours a week to a little less than full-time working. Although employers face no legal obligation to allow an employee to switch from full-time to part-time working, it may be considered unlawful discrimination if a woman is not allowed to return on reduced hours after maternity leave. It is also now an established practice to allow employees to work part-time in the (6) months prior to retirement. It may also be considered for those employees moving on to long-term sickness leave.

- **Job share** best suits complex posts where the individual skills, knowledge and professional style of the jobholder are central to how the job is done. Job sharers do not have to mirror each other, but need to be professionally compatible. A job share position needs to be carefully managed in terms of handover periods and ability to cover customer needs.

- **Term-time working** is obviously most relevant for parents of schoolchildren, but requires that the calendar of team activity – or the composition of the team itself – allows for these extended periods of unpaid leave without disrupting service.

- **A temporary reduction of hours** is best used to regularise the situation where a member of staff expects to be able to work less than full time, for a period, because of personal circumstances.



For more information about flexible working ideas, policies and ways to implement flexibility, contact:

The Worklife Company on 01672 811170

