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1. PURPOSE

The Company recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, and reduce stress. The Company wants to support its employees achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests. Therefore, this policy sets out what to do if you wish to request a change to your working hours or place of work.

For small changes to your working pattern, we might be able to agree something informally, in which case you won't need to make a formal flexible working request under this policy.

2. BACKGROUND

The right to request flexible working was introduced into UK law in 2003 in order to assist the parents of young children to combine work with their parental responsibilities. It was further extended to employees with caring responsibilities and for those employees with children under the age of 17. With effect from 2014, the right to request flexible working was extended to all employees with a required period of service irrespective of their caring responsibilities.

The Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 comes into effect on 6th April 2024 and gives all employees the statutory right to make a flexible working application from the first day of their employment.

Essentially, the law gives eligible employees the right to ask their employer for a change in their working hours or place of work. Employers are compelled to deal with requests in a "reasonable manner".

3. SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

This policy applies to all Lodge Service employees . Requests for flexible working can be made from the first day of your employment, with up to two request being allowed in a 12-month period (an employee is entitled to additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement, for example the Equality Act 2010 right to request reasonable adjustments).

You can only have one active request at a time – a request is active until a decision has been made, an outcome has been mutually agreed, the request has been withdrawn or the statutory time frame has elapsed. A request continues to be live during any appeal or any extension to the procedure that you agree with the company.

This policy explains how to make requests, and how the requests will be considered and resolved.

3.1. WHAT IS FLEXIBLE WORKING?

Flexible working refers to any type of working arrangement that allows for flexibility in terms of hours, location, and schedule.

At Lodge Service, we offer a range of roles that may be suitable for different types of flexible working, depending on the specific needs of the position.

Examples of flexible working include

- change their hours and times of work
- work during term time only
- increase their holiday entitlement
- change their place of work for all or part of the week. This may include working from home
- work part-time working
- start a job share

3.2. THE NEEDS OF THE COMPANY

We are committed to offering a range of appropriate working patterns. However we recognise that not all flexible working options will be realistic or appropriate for all roles.

On receipt of a flexible working request, we will consider a range of factors, including (but not limited to):

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- the impact of the proposed arrangement on the ability to meet the contractual requirements of our clients
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

4. FLEXIBLE WORKING APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1. SUBMITTING A REQUEST

All requests must be made in writing, by completing and sending an application to your line manager as well as HRAdmin@lodgeservice.com with the required information.

Any request made must include:

- the date of the application
- the changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions
- the date from when the employee would like the proposed change to come into effect
- whether this is a statutory or non-statutory request,
- whether a previous application for flexible working has been made
- the dates of any previous applications

If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

If an application does not contain all of the required information a member of the HR department will contact you to request the additional information required to consider the request.

4.2. FORMAL MEETING

The Company will review the information you provide, and will usually invite you to a formal meeting to discuss the request. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union Official if you wish.

This meeting is the opportunity to explore the proposed working arrangements in more depth, to discuss how it might be accommodated, and to discuss the benefits. It is also the opportunity to consider alternative working patterns, should any concerns arise in accommodating the request as originally outlined.

If a meeting is arranged it will be held within [28 days] of the organisation receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement between yourself and HR. You will be given at least 48 hours notice of the meeting, and may contact HR to re-arrange if the time is unsuitable – however, if you fail to attend a meeting and then fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, the application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

We will carefully assess of the effect of the requested change on the business and on you, including the potential benefits and impacts for both parties of accepting or rejecting it.

Where a request can be approved as stated in the employee's written application, a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. The employee will be informed of the organisation's agreement to the request by a confirmation letter as outlined in the section 'Responding to a flexible working request' within 2 months of the

organisation receiving the request. This time limit may be extended if necessary, with the agreement of both yourself and HR.

4.3. RESPONDING TO THE FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

You will be informed in writing of the organisation's decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 2 months from the submission of your request.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

After the assessment of the request, HR will write to you to confirm the decision. The request may be granted in full, in part, refused, or we may propose a modified version of the request. The request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. If the request is agreed, you will receive a confirmation letter which will include details of the new arrangements. If you wish to discuss the new arrangements further, or have any concerns on receipt of the letter, you should contact HR within 10 working days.

Flexible working requests will be considered in the order they are received. Each request will be given fair consideration and will be judged on its merits at the time.

4.4. REASONS FOR REFUSING A REQUEST

If a request cannot be granted, we will write to you to confirm the reason(s), which will be one or more of the following:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- Detrimental effect on quality or performance
- Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Insufficiency of work during periods that the request covers
- Planned structural changes

4.5. TRIALING THE NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENT

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practical for either yourself or the Company, we may suggest a trial period. If a trial period is arranged, we will allow sufficient time for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

4.6. VARYING YOUR CONTRACT

Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, a variation will need to be made to your contract of employment. A change of contract letter will be sent to you within 28 days of the change being agreed.

Where a trial period has been agreed, we will provide the you with a letter that details the new working pattern and clarify that it is only a temporary variation to the terms of your contract. This will include the start and end dates of

the trial period (although we may reduce or extend the trial period where necessary, with your agreement). The Company reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to revert you to your previous working arrangement if the changes were not sustainable.

4.7. RIGHT TO APPEAL THE DECISION

You have the right to appeal the decision if your request is refused, or if it is only agreed in part.

You may submit an appeal within 10 working days of being notified of a decision on your application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which you are appealing. An appeal meeting will be scheduled within 10 working days, and within another 10 days you will be informed of the outcome to your appeal and explanation of the decision made. These time limits may be extended with the agreement between yourself and HR.

5. WITHDRAWAL OF AN APPLICATION

If you decide that the request is no longer necessary, and you wish to withdraw your application, you should notify HR and your line manager in writing as soon as possible. As explained in section 4.2 'Formal Meeting', if you do not attend the scheduled meetings or attempt to re-arrange the meetings, your application may be considered to be withdrawn also.