

Title of Document	Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
Name of Department	People Team

What type of document is this?	Policy	
Which Helping Hands POL/SOP/W.I does this document relate to?		Reference number of POL/SOP/W.I

Which Operational Priority/Priorities does this document link to?	Governance Framework	Superior Client Care	People, Performance & Culture	Business Growth

Custodian of document	Chief People Officer	Committee/Group responsible for this document	Policy Committee
Approval date and committee chairperson signature	25.03.25	When is its next scheduled review?	25.03.28

Who does it apply to?	All Helping Hands staff					
	Does it apply to bank workers?	Yes	Does it apply to agency staff?	No	Does it apply to third party contractors?	No

Purpose of the Policy	Helping Hands is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of our employees. This policy aims to provide opportunities for flexibility on hours, giving employees greater control over their work life balance, providing them personal accountability and improving resilience.
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Chief People Officer	Is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy and ensuring that the policy is communicated across the company through the Senior Management Team(s)
Helping Hands Managers	Is responsible for implementing and embedding this policy within all teams across the company
Helping Hands Employees	Is responsible for adhering to this policy as directed by line managers

1. Introduction

We believe that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, enrich employee wellbeing and improve performance and productivity.

This policy sets out our approach to flexible working requests under the statutory procedure.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

This policy applies to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

2. Eligibility

All employees, irrespective of service, have the right to request flexible working. Under the statutory procedure, they can make two requests in every 12-month period. If an employee has submitted a flexible working request, they must wait until that one has been considered and any appeal has been dealt with, before submitting another.

3. Types of flexible working

Flexible working can incorporate a number of possible changes to working arrangements, such as:

- Reduction or variation of working hours
- Reduction or variation of the days worked; and/or
- Working from a different location (for example, from home).

4. Making a flexible working request

All requests must be made in writing completing the [form for submitting a flexible working request](#), which is available on Collaborate and should be submitted to the line manager.

Any request made under this policy must include:

- The date of the request.
- The changes that they are seeking to the terms and conditions of employment.
- The date on which the employee would like the change to come into effect.
- A statement that this is a statutory request.
- If and when they have made a previous application for flexible working; and
- If they have made a previous request, when you made that application.

If a request does not contain all the required information, the employee will be asked to resubmit it with the necessary additional information. Any request that is incomplete or contains errors will not be automatically rejected.

5. Timescales

Once you submit your flexible working request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible. However, all requests will be dealt with within two months, from receipt of the request to notification of any appeal decision.

The timescales within this policy may be extended where this is mutually agreed.

6. Flexible working meetings

The employee line manager will arrange a flexible working meeting to discuss a flexible working request, with support from The People Team as required.

An employee may, if they wish, ask a fellow worker or a trade union official to attend the meeting with them.

The meeting is an opportunity for the employee to explain how the proposed working arrangements would benefit them and for them to consider and discuss any alternative flexible working options that may be available and suitable for the employee and the organisation.

At the flexible working meeting, we urge employees to be as open as possible about their needs so that we are able to engage in a constructive discussion about what is feasible.

7. Potential Outcome of Flexible Working Meeting

There are four different potential outcomes that may be provided:

1. Accepting the terms of the request in full.
2. Providing an alternative proposal
3. Proposing a trial period before reviewing the trial and ascertaining whether this can be provided on a permanent basis.
4. Declining the request for one of the 8 business reasons

8. Considering a request

After the meeting, your line manager will consider your proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to both the employee and the organisation; and any adverse impact of implementing the changes.

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 patterns.

Any decision will be confirmed in writing within seven calendar days of the meeting, which will also include a right to appeal.

Unless otherwise agreed (and subject to any agreed trial period) changes to your terms of employment will be permanent.

9. Varying an employee's contract

Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, a variation letter will be issued to the employee as a change to their contract of employment.

If the employee has any questions or concerns about the variation letter which forms part of the contract of employment, they should contact their line manager to discuss the matter further.

Where a trial period has been arranged Helping Hands will provide the employee with a document that details their new working pattern and makes clear that it is only a temporary variation to the terms of the employee's contract. The employee will be informed in writing of the start and end dates of the trial period, although Helping Hands may reduce or lengthen the trial period where necessary with the agreement of the employee.

Helping Hands will reserve the right, at the end of the agreed trial period Helping Hands may require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement. If this is required, the employee has

the right to appeal the decision in writing to the People Team (hrhub@helpinghands.co.uk) within 7 days.

10. Grounds for refusing a request

There will be circumstances where, due to business and operational requirements, we are unable to agree to a request. In these circumstances, the Line Manager will inform the employees of this in writing:

- a. explaining the business reason(s) for turning down the application; and
- b. setting out the appeal procedure.

The eight business reasons for which we may reject a request are:

- The burden of additional costs.
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff.
- Inability to recruit additional staff.
- Detrimental impact on quality.
- Detrimental impact on performance.
- Insufficiency of work during the periods that are proposed to work; and
- Planned changes.

11. Right to appeal

If an employee feels that we have not fairly considered their submissions under our Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, they can request an appeal of the original decision. The employee should appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the named manager in their outcome letter within seven calendar days of the date of the outcome letter.

In the appeal submission the employee should clearly set out their full grounds detailing any new evidence or inconsistency in our considerations.

We will give at least 48 hours written notice of the date, time, and place of the appeal meeting.

In any event, written notification of the outcome of the appeal meeting will be sent to the employee within seven calendar days after the meeting being held, or as soon as a decision has been reached, together with an explanation of the appeal decision taken.

If a employee feels that we have not fairly considered their submissions under our disciplinary policy and procedure, they can request an appeal of the original decision. The employee should appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the named manager in their outcome letter within seven calendar days of the date of the outcome letter.

In the appeal submission the employee should clearly set out your full grounds detailing any new evidence or inconsistency in our procedures. The right to appeal is not on the basis of an outcome being 'unfair' and employees must outline (and provide) evidence the original chairperson has not considered, or been aware of, which would have impacted on the original outcome.

We will give at least 48 hours written notice of the date, time, and place of the appeal hearing.

The appointed appeal chair will be a more senior manager who has not dealt with the original matter. A company representative will accompany the chairperson to take minutes of the hearing.

If the employee raises any new matters in their appeal, we may need to adjourn to carry out further investigation. If any new information becomes known, we will provide the employee with a summary including, where appropriate, copies of additional relevant documents and witness statements. The employee will have a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the appeal hearing, and they or their companion may comment on any new evidence arising during the appeal before any decision is taken.

Following the adjournment, the chairperson may issue their decision, however, if they are unable to reach an immediate decision, they are entitled to deliberate prior to issuing their decision.

In any event, written notification of the outcome of the hearing will be sent to the employee within seven calendar days of the hearing, or as soon as a decision has been reached, together with an explanation of the appeal decision taken.

Following the appeal meeting we may:

- confirm the original decision
- revoke the original decision; or
- substitute a different sanction.

There will be no further right of appeal.

12. Treating an application as withdrawn

If an employee fails to attend, without good reason, both the first and second meeting to discuss their application, or both the first and second meeting to discuss their appeal, we will treat the application as withdrawn.

13. Data protection

When managing a flexible working request, we process personal data collected in accordance with our **data protection policy**. Data collected from the point at which we receive a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for flexible working.

TRAINING

Is training required?	No
Details of training	N/A

COMPLIANCE

How is compliance with the POL going to be monitored	Monitoring and potential review of the policy will be guided by Employment Law and Company changes.
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

	Positive / Negative / N/A	Comments
Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another on the basis of their:		
• age?	N/A	
• disability?	N/A	
• gender reassignment?	N/A	
• pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)?	N/A	
• race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)?	N/A	
• marriage or civil partnership?	N/A	
• religion or belief?	N/A	
• sex?	N/A	
• sexual orientation?	N/A	
If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative:		
• Can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
• What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact?	N/A	
• Can the impact be reduced by taking different action?	N/A	
• Is there an impact on staff, client or someone else's privacy?	N/A	<i>If yes, privacy impact assessment required</i>

What was the previous version number of this document?	03	
Changes since previous version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed format to reflect company Policy Format. • Reworded the introduction in line with Helping Hands values. • Amended section 5 'Timescales' - wording is more succinct 	
Who was involved in developing/reviewing /amending the POL?	People Services Director	
How confidential is this document?	Restricted	Can be shared freely within Helping Hands but NOT outside

References	
Associated Documents	HHH-F042 Flexible Working Request Form