



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Flexible Working Policy

Statutory

Reviewed Annually

Chair of the Trust Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Smith', is enclosed in a small rectangular box.

Date: July 2026

Date of next review: July 2027

Contents

- Introduction
- What flexible working is
- Types of flexible working
- Our approach to flexible working
- Eligibility
- Submitting a flexible working request
- Responding to a flexible working request
- Consultation meetings about flexible working
- Communicating a decision after consultation
- Right to appeal a decision
- Requesting a reasonable adjustment
- Trialing new working arrangements
- Varying an employee's contract
- Complaints and further information

Introduction

Rivermead Inclusive Trust encourages staff to consider flexible working arrangements. Rivermead Inclusive Trust recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, and reduce stress. Therefore, Rivermead Inclusive Trust wants to support its employees to achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities.

Rivermead Inclusive Trust is committed to agreeing any flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met.

It is Rivermead Inclusive Trust's policy to encourage open discussion with employees. If an employee thinks they may benefit from flexible working, they can either:

- contact their Head of School to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options
- submit a flexible working request, by following the steps in this policy

This policy does not form part of the employment contract and can be amended at any time.

What flexible working is

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

For example:

- annualised hours
 - compressed hours
 - hybrid working
 - job sharing
- 

- part-time working
- remote working
- staggered hours
- working from home

These examples are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request. However, Rivermead Inclusive Trust recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which are suitable to both Rivermead Inclusive Trust and the employee.

Types of flexible working

Annualised hours

Annualised hours means an employee's contractual working hours are calculated as the total number of hours to be worked over the year. The employee has some flexibility on when they work these hours over the year.

Usually, the hours will be divided into set rostered hours during busy periods, and unallocated hours during quieter periods. An employee can decide when to work their unallocated hours, subject to some limitations.

Payment will be in 12 equal instalments. However, arrangements may be permitted where the pay for the work actually done is in the period the payment relates to.

Compressed hours

Compressed hours means an employee works their usual full-time hours in fewer days by working longer blocks. There is no reduction in the employee's pay. For example, a 5-day week is compressed into 4 days, or a 10-day fortnight into 9 days.

Hybrid working

Hybrid working is a mixture of working remotely and in the employer's premises. Working remotely can include working from home or other agreed locations.

Employees are permitted to work remotely from agreed locations, as approved by the Head of School, such as their home, with the understanding that they must adhere to any specified limitations, including core in-office days, compliance with local regulations and maintaining communication and productivity standards.

Job sharing

Job sharing is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into 2 part-time roles. The 2 job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. Their skills and the hours each employee wishes to work must be compatible and meet the needs of the organisation.

Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each person works. Job sharing can be considered where the creation of a single part-time post is difficult, or where 2 individuals wish to work part-time.



Part-time working

Part-time working covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than typical full-time hours for the type of work in question. For example, an employee who works Monday to Wednesday.

All posts are available on a part-time basis, except where this is not practical.

Remote working

Remote working means working from anywhere other than the employer's premises. This can include working from home or any other agreed location.

Employees are permitted to work remotely from agreed locations, as approved by the Head of School, such as their home, with the understanding that they must adhere to any specified limitations, including core in-office days, compliance with local regulations and maintaining communication and productivity standards.

Rivermead Inclusive Trust can consider remote working as being an occasional agreed day, a mix of working remotely and in the workplace, or a full-time arrangement.

Staggered hours

Staggered hours means having a different start and finish time to other employees. For example, working from 7am to 4pm instead of 9am to 6pm.

Working from home

Working from home or homeworking is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the employer's premises. The organisation can consider homeworking being an occasional agreed day, a mix of working at home and in the workplace, or a full-time arrangement.

Our approach to flexible working

Rivermead Inclusive Trust is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns.

There are many different types of flexible working. While some might not be practical for every job, it is likely other types will work. Rivermead Inclusive Trust commits to look at what is possible.

Where a flexible working arrangement is requested, Rivermead Inclusive Trust will take into account a number of criteria. This includes:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- 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

Rivermead Inclusive Trust is committed to agreeing any flexible working arrangements, provided that the



needs and objectives of both Rivermead Inclusive Trust and the employee can be met.

Eligibility

All employees have a statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of employment.

Submitting a flexible working request

An employee is entitled to submit 2 statutory flexible working requests in a 12-month period.

An employee can only have one live request at a time. A request will stay live until any of the following happen:

- the organisation makes a decision
- the employee withdraws the request
- the employee and organisation agree an outcome
- it's been 2 months since the date of the request

All requests must be made in writing using the flexible working application form set out in Appendix 1.

Any request must include:

- the date of the request
- the changes that the employee is seeking
- the date the employee would like the proposed change to start
- whether this is a statutory or non-statutory request
- whether the employee has made any previous flexible working requests to the organisation
- the dates of any previous requests

If the request relates to a reasonable adjustment for a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the employee should make this clear in the request.

If a request does not contain all of the required information, the Head of School will advise the employee what else they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

Responding to a flexible working request

The Head of School will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements. They will look at the potential benefits and adverse effects to the employee and to the organisation in implementing the proposed changes.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in the order they are received. 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.



Where an employee's request needs further discussion, the Head of School will invite the employee to a consultation meeting. If a meeting is arranged, it will be held within 10 working days of Head of School receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and Head of School.

Where an employee's request can be approved in full without a consultation meeting, the organisation will confirm this in writing within 10 working days of receiving the request. This will include details of the new arrangements and an invitation to talk about the new arrangements. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Head of School.

The organisation will make a decision on all requests, including any appeal within a maximum of 2 months. This time limit may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Head of School.

Where a trial period is agreed, the parties may agree in writing to extend the statutory decision period to enable the trial arrangement to be fully assessed.

Consultation meetings about flexible working

If the employee is invited to a consultation meeting, the Head of School will discuss:

- the request
- how the proposed working arrangements might work
- the proposed start date for the flexible working arrangements
- any adjustments required to the contract of employment
- how it could be of benefit to both the employee and organisation

The employee will be given advance notice of the time, date and location of the meeting. If the initial date is problematic, then one further date will be offered. This meeting will be in person or a video call, or a telephone call if neither of those are possible.

At the meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative.

If the employee fails to attend a meeting and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their request will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Communicating a decision after consultation

After a consultation meeting, the request may be granted in full, in part or refused.

The organisation may:

- propose an alternative option
- grant the request on a temporary basis
- ask the employee to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period

If a working arrangement is agreed, the employee will be sent a confirmation letter within 10 working days of the consultation meeting. This will include details of the new arrangements including any new working pattern, the agreed date any new arrangements will come into effect and any adjustments to the contract of employment.



If the organisation refuses the request, the employee will be given the decision in writing within 10 working days of the consultation meeting setting out the reasons for the decision based on the following business reason(s), as permitted under the Employment Rights Act 1996:

- The burden of additional costs
- An inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- An inability to recruit additional staff
- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- Insufficient work available during the periods you have requested
- Planned structural changes to the business

Right to appeal a decision

An employee may have the right to appeal the decision if their request is refused or is only agreed in part.

The employee may submit an appeal within 5 working days of being notified of a decision on their request. This should be done in writing and clearly state the reasons for their appeal.

The appeal will be heard within 5 working days from the receipt of appeal. The employee will then be informed of the outcome of their appeal within 5 working days of an appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the Head of School.

At the appeal meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

Requesting a reasonable adjustment

Rivermead Inclusive Trust is committed to reducing and removing disadvantages for disabled employees.

If an employee needs to change where, how or when they work because of their disability, they can request a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. If an employee requests a reasonable adjustment, they do not need to also make a flexible working request.

To request a reasonable adjustment, send your request by email or letter to the HR department (Karen Watkins, HR Manager) and include:

- that you are making a request for a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010
- the adjustment you are requesting

The HR Manager will discuss your request with you within **10 days** of the organisation receiving the request. The outcome will be confirmed in writing within **5 days** of the discussion, including any agreed reasonable adjustments. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and **HR Manager**.

Trialing new working arrangements

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practical for an employee or the organisation, a trial period may be agreed.



A trial period will allow enough time to implement and get used to the new arrangement before making any decisions on its viability.

The organisation will confirm the trial arrangement in writing. This will include details of the temporary working pattern and make clear that the arrangement is a temporary variation to the employee's normal terms and conditions pending a final decision.

The employee will be informed in writing of the start and end dates of the trial period. The organisation may reduce or extend the length of the trial period where necessary, with the employee's agreement.

Where a trial period is agreed and it is not reasonably possible to reach a final decision within the statutory two-month decision period, the employee and the organisation may agree in writing to extend the decision period to allow the trial to be completed and properly assessed. Any agreed extension will specify the revised date by which a final decision will be communicated.

The organisation reserves the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement where the proposed arrangement is not considered viable. In this situation, the organisation will give the employee **four** weeks' notice.

Varying an employee's contract

Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, any variation to the employee's terms and conditions will be put in writing. Written confirmation of the changes will be sent to the employee within one month of the change being agreed.

If the employee has any questions or concerns, they should contact the HR department using the following email address: kwatkin@r-i-t.org.

Complaints and further information

An employee should raise any concerns with the HR department if they:

- are not satisfied with any stage of the flexible working request process
- feel they have been treated unfairly because they have made a flexible working request

If informal discussions do not resolve the matter to an employee's satisfaction, they should raise a grievance under the organisation's grievance procedure.

For further information an employee should contact the HR department.



APPENDIX 1

FLEXIBLE WORKING APPLICATION

Personal details: Name	
Job title	
Head of School	

Note to employee

Rivermead Inclusive Trust is keen to offer flexible working to all its employees where it is practicable to do so. Some employees have a statutory right to apply to work flexibly and the criteria under this right is listed below. Either way if you wish to make a request you must use this form and submit it to the Head of School.

Please note that it may take a few weeks to consider a request before it can be implemented and possibly longer where difficulties arise. You should therefore ensure that you submit your application to your Head of School well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help your Head of School to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be valid. When completing the form, you are asked to think about what effect your change in working pattern will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your Head of School, by e-mail if you wish and your Head of School will then have 10 working days in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If your proposal is granted, this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

Head of School: Where the Right to Apply is applicable, consider the following:

This is a formal application made under the legal right to apply for flexible working and the duty on employers to consider applications seriously. You now have 10 days after the day you received this application in which to either agree to the request or arrange a meeting with your employee to discuss their request. Please confirm receipt of this application – email is sufficient.

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under my right provided in law.

By law (Employment Rights Act 1996), anyone with the [legal status of employee](#) has the statutory (legal) right to request flexible working.

Signed Date

If you are unable to meet the criteria then you do not qualify to make a request to work flexibly in law. This does not mean that your request may not be considered as the school is keen to offer flexible working to its employees where it is practicable to do so. Please complete this form and submit to your head of school who will consider your request

The Head of School has the discretion to hear more than one application per year from the same employee if there has been a significant change in that individual's personal circumstances that necessitates a further application

Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked)

**Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked)
(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)**

I would like this working pattern to commence from: Date:

IMPACT OF THE NEW WORKING PATTERN

I think this change in my working pattern will affect the school and colleagues as follows:

ACCOMODATING THE NEW WORKING PATTERN

I think the effect on the school and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:

This space is provided for you to make any additional comments.

Date of request

Once complete please forward to your Head of School

