

# How to make a flexible working request

**Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 there is a statutory right for any eligible employee to request flexible working, for any reason.**

‘Flexible working’ is used as a catch-all term for many types of non-traditional working arrangements. It allows flexibility on how long, where, when and at what times employees work. It can include:

Working pattern (for example, part-time, flexitime or compressed hours)

Working location (such as working from home)

Working arrangement (for example, job share)

## Be prepared

Provided you have worked for your employer for 26 weeks continuously at the date the application is made you can make a formal flexible working request. This is known as ‘making a statutory application’. Think about what type of flexible working arrangement would work best for you and why. Being prepared will help you in your application and any meeting you may have with your manager to discuss.

Find your organisation’s policy on how to make a request, this might be a standalone policy or incorporated into other documents and should include information on how to make a request and how it will be considered (including timescales in which this is done and if there is a process for appeals). Not all organisations have a formal policy in place, however there are lots of resources to help guide you through this process.

Acas have a wealth of knowledge, guidance and helpline: [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

If your requested change is a small or temporary one you may be able to agree this informally with your manager without making a formal request. If you don’t meet the eligibility criteria it may be worth making a request as some employers will still consider it.

Requesting flexible working from a new employer can be daunting, especially during interview or appointment stage. It is worth knowing that more jobs are being advertised as flexible, it is predicted that 70% of workplaces will be flexible by 2020, as employers are keen to attract the best talent. We know that millennials value a work-life balance, with 92% identifying flexible working as their top priority when job hunting.

When entering into discussion about flexible working at this stage it's important to be clear about what kind of flexibility you require, demonstrate that you understand the business impact and explore any compromises, such as a trial or review period.

## Submit a request

The legislation requires employees to make their flexible working request in writing. You must set out:

The date of the application, the change to working conditions you are seeking and when you would like the change to come into effect.

What effect you think the requested change would have on your employer and how, in your opinion, might any effect be dealt with.

That this is a statutory request and if you have made a previous application for flexible working the date of that application.

## Meet to discuss

Like any other workplace issue it is a good idea to meet with your manager to discuss your application. In some cases this may not be needed, but in others it still may be useful to discuss the request and see how the proposed arrangement will work for you both.

## The decision

Requests and any appeals must be considered and decided upon within three months of the receipt of the request. If your employer agrees to the request, they should write to you with a statement of the agreed changes and a start date for the new arrangement. They must also change the terms and conditions in your employee contract.

If your employer disagrees, they must write to you giving the business reasons for the refusal.

Employers must have a sound business reason for rejecting any request (see [www.gov.uk/flexible-working](http://www.gov.uk/flexible-working) for further information). Employees no longer have a statutory right to an appeal but your employer may still have an appeals process to demonstrate that they deal with requests in a reasonable manner.

## Start working flexibly

If your request to work flexibly has been agreed then you will begin working to your new arrangement from the date stated in your initial application or the date agreed at approval. It can be helpful to keep discussing your flexible working arrangement in the early stages, this can help to address any issues that may have arisen and ensure the best possible outcomes for both you and your employer.

For more information on making a flexible working request please see: [www.gov.uk/flexible-working](http://www.gov.uk/flexible-working)