

Flexible Working Policy

Statement and Purpose of the Policy

Serenta Homecare recognises that employees have commitments both in work and outside work and a positive work-life balance can improve staff motivation and performance and reduce stress. The Company is committed to meeting its obligations under the Flexible Working Regulations 2014 and the Equality Act 2010 and will give full consideration to requests for flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs of the service can be met.

Any employee who wants to discuss flexible working is encouraged to have an informal discussion about possible options with their supervisor or Line Manager in the first instance.

1. What is Flexible Working?

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when you work. The Company is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However, not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles. Further information on possible options is available on request from your Supervisor or Line Manager.

2. Service Needs

Where a flexible working arrangement is requested Serenta Homecare will need to take a number of factors into account, including (but not limited to) the following:

- The costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- The effect of the proposed arrangement on Clients and other employees
- The effect on supervision requirements
- The existing staffing structure
- The availability of 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

3. Procedure for Submitting a Flexible Working Request

3.1. Eligibility and Right to Request

Under the Flexible Working Regulations 2014 any employee with at least 26 weeks of continuous service with an employer has a statutory right to request flexible working. If you are eligible you are entitled to submit one flexible working request in a twelve-month period (you will be entitled to submit additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement e.g. the Equality Act 2010 right to request reasonable adjustments).

3.2. Written Request

Requests must be made in writing to your Line Manager. Any request made must include:

- The date of the application
- The changes that you are requesting
- The date when you would like the proposed change to come into effect
- What effect you think the requested change will have on the Company or service provision
- How, in your view, any such effect could be dealt with
- 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 you are making the request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, 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 your Line Manager will explain what additional or amended information, they need you to provide and may ask you to resubmit the request.

3.3. Meetings Regarding Flexible Working

Upon receiving a written request for flexible working your Line Manager will normally arrange a meeting with you to:

- Discuss the request
- Find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- Discuss how it could be of benefit to both you and the Company

If a meeting is arranged it will be held within 28 days of the Manager receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with agreement between you and your Line Manager.

You will be given advance notice of the time, date and place of the meeting. If a face to face meeting is difficult to arrange then, if agreed by you and your Manager, the discussion may take place on the telephone.

You may, if you wish, be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative at the meeting.

If you fail to attend the meeting or a rearranged meeting without good reason, your application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Where the request made in your written application can be approved without further discussion a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. You will receive written confirmation of the Company's agreement to your request within 28 days of your Manager receiving the request. This time limit may be extended with agreement between you and your Line Manager.

3.4. Responding to a Flexible Working Request

Your Line Manager will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits, and any adverse effects, for both you and the service in implementing the proposed 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 pattern.

You will be informed in writing of the Company's decision as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 days after the meeting.

The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The Company may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

If the request is agreed then you will be sent a confirmation letter, which will include details of the new arrangements. You should contact your line manager within 14 days if you wish to discuss the new arrangements further, or have any concerns.

4. Right to Appeal

You have the right to appeal the decision if your request is refused or is only agreed in part. You may lodge an appeal within 14 days of being notified of the decision on your application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which you are appealing. The appeal will be heard within 14 days. You will then be informed of the outcome of your appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with agreement between you and the relevant manager.

5. Trial Period for New Working Arrangements

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for you and the service needs, a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged the Company will allow sufficient time for you and your manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

6. Varying the Employment Contract

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

If you have any questions or concerns about the new contract of employment you should contact your Line Manager to discuss the matter further.

Where a trial period has been arranged the Company will provide you with a document that details your new working pattern and makes it clear that this is only a temporary variation to the terms of your contract. You will be informed in writing of the start and end dates of the trial period (although the Company may agree to reduce or lengthen the trial period where necessary). The Company reserves the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require you to revert to your previous working arrangement.

7. Fair Treatment

Individuals who work under flexible working arrangements will not be treated less favourably or victimised as a result of making a request to work flexibly.

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with any stage of the procedure for requesting flexible working arrangements, you should raise your concerns informally with your Line Manager in the first instance.

If informal discussions do not resolve the matter satisfactorily, you are entitled to raise a formal grievance under the Company's Grievance Procedure which is available from the Serenta Homecare office or on request from your Manager.

Document Control

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