



Cumbria Family Support

Work/Life Balance & Flexible Working Policy & Procedures

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POLICY

Our policy is to follow both the spirit and the letter of the law on the right to request flexible working, as well as taking all steps possible to aid work /life balance for staff whilst continuing to deliver effective and excellent services.

Employees who have a better work-life balance often have a greater sense of responsibility, ownership and control of their working life. Effective service provision can be enhanced by employees being able to work in more flexible ways to better balance home and work life. There are a range of different working arrangements which can also enhance the efficiency of service delivery.

Staff should feel confident any request will be considered fairly. You will not be treated differently because you have asked for flexible working arrangements.

Purpose and Scope

The demand for flexible working has grown as staff look for a better balance between work and home life. At Cumbria Family Support, we want to align our business needs with the way our staff team work and service users /clients' needs.

We have implemented technology to make work styles more accessible as a result of Covid-19 this includes:

- Ensuring all staff have a laptop and remote access (via SharePoint and/or web based systems) to all resources they need electronically.
- All staff have either a mobile phone, or access to call facilities via their laptop or tablet.
- Family Support Practitioners and Support Workers all have a tablet to facilitate improved mobile working.

Having a good work-life balance will benefit the organisation and its employees in the following ways¹:

- Enable employees to carry out their role and duties as efficiently and effectively as possible whilst having a good balance between home and work life.
- Support and ensure continuity of service delivery.
- A more efficient and productive organisation.
- A more motivated workforce.
- Better retention of valuable employees.
- A wider pool of applicants can be attracted for vacancies.
- Reduced levels of absence, sickness and stress.
- Working hours that best suit the organisation, its employees and its customers.
- Support career development aspirations and remove barriers to promotion, particularly for those with caring responsibilities.

¹ For example, see ["Human Relations" research 2009, Kelliher and Anderson.](#)

This policy explains how we will respond to requests to vary hours, pattern or place of work. It applies to all staff, regardless of whether you work full or part-time or have a temporary contract of employment.

Principles

A key principle of the Work Life Balance Policy is that any changes to working patterns must allow the service to be delivered effectively and be cost effective. As a Charity we must ensure that the service we deliver is protected.

It is acknowledged that some service areas (e.g. Contact Centres) are required to work set working patterns and therefore time management is key to managing a good work life balance. Although Cumbria Family Support (CFS) is committed to providing the widest possible range of flexible working opportunities, arrangements can only be agreed if the provision and quality of services can meet organisational demands. Therefore the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the organisation.

At CFS we also recognise that a flexible approach to day to day operations can be achieved without necessitating a formal (whether through the statutory or non-statutory route) change to staff working arrangements. This is covered by the following principles that staff must observe:

- (i) There must be strict adherence to CFS' Confidentiality, Information Security, Health and Safety, and Lone Working policies. This includes the provision that prior to any informal home working periods you have completed a work base assessment within the last 12 months (or as a result of significant changes to your home working location) and if anything problematic is highlighted therein there is a discussion with your line manager about how this is being addressed now there is access to office working.
- (ii) Outlook calendars must be kept up to date including noting if the staff member is working from home (WFH as a header for the day) can be used. If this is not in the calendar it will be assumed that out with other appointments the staff member is working from a CFS office base.
- (iii) Staff are permitted to undertake a range of duties from home (paperwork/ computer work/virtual meetings and phone calls), if in doing so they are saving time travelling to and from other appointments, or they would only be travelling to an office base solely to undertake those duties.
- (iv) Meetings with other professionals or service users should not be undertaken from home. The only exception is between CFS staff where this is more time efficient than both travelling to an office base, and is mutually agreed by those staff members.
- (v) Any travel claims must be made from the office base you are allocated to, where said travel exceeds the distance you would normally travel between the home and office each day.
- (vi) Staff should still ensure they have a presence in person in meetings when they are invited to attend e.g. TAF's, Team Meetings etc. If attendance in person is problematic, it is occasionally acceptable to join virtually, but anything beyond this as an occasional situation should be discussed with your line manager.
- (vii) Staff should also ensure they do not become isolated from the CFS team and should consider, even if there is not specific reason to be in the office, to work from their

nominated office for a part of each week, ideally when others from the team, or partner organisations will be around.

Employees Rights; Statutory and Non-Statutory Requests

You have a statutory right to request to work flexibly if you have been employed with us for at least 26 weeks.

You can also request flexible working at any time if the change is a reasonable adjustment to reduce or remove the effects of disability. You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

In addition, as CFS is committed to establishing the best work/life balance achievable, we have extended this policy to incorporate not only formal statutory requests by staff entitled to make said requests but any staff, at any time via the non-statutory request route.

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 following flexible working options are typical examples. There may be alternatives or a combination of options which could be suitable (fuller descriptions can be found at Appendix 1):

- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexitime
- Home-working
- Job-sharing
- Part-time working
- Term-time working

Handling Requests in a Fair Way

We may receive more than one request from different employees and it may or may not be possible to accept all requests. If we agree to a request for flexible working arrangements this does not mean that we can also agree to a similar change for another employee. Each case will be considered on its merits looking at the business case in the order they have been received. We may need to take others' contractual terms into account, and we may ask you if there is any room for compromise before coming to a decision.

Making a flexible working request is a statutory right and you should not be treated less favourably at work because you make a request. If you believe you have been treated unfairly because you have made a flexible working request, you are encouraged to raise such concerns via the grievance procedure.

The Effect on your Contract of Employment

Any change in your hours or pattern of work will normally be a permanent change to your contractual terms and conditions. This means that you will not automatically be able to revert back to the previous working pattern (unless otherwise agreed). So, for example, if your new flexible working pattern involves working reduced hours, you will not automatically be able to revert to working full time hours.

Changes to your working pattern may affect other terms and conditions of employment. For example, reducing your hours of work will mean that your pay and leave will be pro-rated. Your pension may also be affected.

We will write to confirm any changes to your terms and conditions. If you have queries about how a proposed change to your pattern of work might affect your terms and conditions please speak to your line manager.

PROCEDURE

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Appendix 1: Work Life Balance – Flexible Working Options

Part Time working - Part Time working is when an employee works less hours per week than a standard full time contract.

Compressed hours - Compressed hours give employees the opportunity to request an increase or decrease to the total number of hours they work on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. For example, working full time, but over a “9 day fortnight” or “4 day week”.

Flexitime* - Flexitime allows employees a degree of choice with when they work their contracted hours. With prior agreement by their manager, staff can vary their start and finish times within set parameters.

Term Time working - Term time working is when an employee works for an agreed number of weeks per year (e.g. 38 weeks during term time and 2 weeks during school closure periods). The employee receives a pro rata salary (including pro rata leave provision), but this is paid throughout the year in 12 equal monthly instalments.

Annualised hours - Annualised hours are where the weekly hours are tailored around the peaks and troughs of the service requirements over a year. For example, services that are affected by weather, the financial year, tourism or project demands etc. may benefit from annualised hours. Employees receive a salary based on their annual contracted hours and this is paid throughout the year in 12 equal monthly instalments.

Job Sharing - Job sharing or work sharing is an employment arrangement where typically two people are employed on a part-time basis to perform a job normally fulfilled by one person working full-time. Contracts are not linked to either employee in the job share agreement; they are separate part-time contracts.

Agile Working - Agile working can either be internal (working from a variety of CFS premises) or external (working from non-CFS premises i.e. field working).

Home Working - Home working means employees can carry out all or part of their work at home and this is classified as their formal base. However, they are still required to attend meetings, supervisions etc. in CFS premises.

Career breaks - A career break is designed to provide employees with the opportunity to take an extended unpaid break of between 3 and 12 months.

*Flexi time does not come under flexible working arrangements. Flexible working is a recognised legal term used in employment law for statutory contractual changes that employees may request. The procedures associated with flexi time is covered at Appendix 5.

Appendix 2: Flexible Working Requests

Current UK employment legislation gives all employees the right to request to work flexibly after 26 weeks employment and places a duty on employers to consider the request seriously.

Under the Work Life Balance Procedure, Cumbria Family Support operates an enhanced provision which allows all employees to make a request to work flexibly.

What can an employee request? Under this procedure, employees may make a flexible working request to change their working pattern, including:

- The number of hours they are required to work
- The times they are required to work
- The place they are required to work
- A combination of the above
- Whether this is a temporary or a permanent change

Where a change to the working pattern is agreed, it forms a variation to the contract for the period of time stipulated and may change the employee's designated work style.

Process

Detailed below is how a flexible working request should be made and the process by which this will be managed by the Cumbria Family Support.

The Chief Officer can seek support and advice from the Trustees at any point for advice or support on any aspects of this application process.

An employee wishing to make a flexible working request, including statutory and non-statutory requests, must complete a flexible working application form and return it to their line manager. All requests MUST be in writing and verbal requests will not be accepted.

Employees should consider a number of matters prior to making their application. These are outlined in the section headed Considerations for Employees.

Managers should hold a meeting to discuss the request within 28 days of the application being received. Staff can be accompanied at this meeting by a colleague. The meeting should take place at a time and location which is convenient to the employee and the manager. If the manager or employee cannot make the initial date then another meeting should be arranged. If an employee fails to attend more than one meeting without reasonable explanation the manager can deem the application to be withdrawn. The manager should consider any reasons given for failing to attend both meetings before making a decision to close the application and must notify the employee of their decision.

Within 5 days of the meeting, the line manager must inform the employee, in writing, of their decision, providing a short explanation as to the reason(s) for the decision taken. Managers must

also follow the home working guidance if the application received includes an element of homeworking.

Decisions on whether or not an employee's request can be granted will be made on business grounds, rather than on personal circumstances. Each allocation will be considered on the basis of the particular work involved, the suitability of the working environment and any impact the change could have on individual, team or CFS' performance.

Where a request for changes to working hours and/or working pattern has been approved the manager must complete the relevant forms and store them in the staff members personnel folder, ensuring the Business Manager has is aware and can reflect any relevant leave entitlements and payroll information.

Applications for flexible working can only be refused where there is a clear business reason and must be for one or more of the following grounds:

- a. The burden of additional costs
- b. A detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- c. An inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- d. An inability to recruit additional staff
- e. A detrimental impact on quality and/or performance
- f. An insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- g. Planned structural changes

The employee must state at the time of the request whether the change will be a temporary or permanent one. If temporary the employee must specify the time period during which they would like the flexible pattern to apply.

Considerations for Employees

Before submitting an application, employees should consider:

- That the process can take up to 12 weeks.
- That in some circumstances, a trial period may be necessary to ascertain if the arrangement can put in place for a longer term.
- That only one Flexible Working application can be made in any 12 month period.
- Which working pattern will help best to care for the child or adult (if applicable).
- What the financial implications of working from home might be – e.g. potential reduction in commuting cost vs. increase in household bills.
- What the impact could be on pension – e.g. a reduction in accrued reckonable service if reducing hours.
- Home working arrangements will be subject to a home working assessment and a home working agreement as outlined in the Home Working guidance.

Considerations for Managers

CFS is committed to providing the widest possible range of flexible working opportunities and will endeavour to look favourably on flexible working applications. However the decision to accept a flexible working arrangement must only be made following consideration of the impact of the proposal on the team, existing management practices and the service. Applications for flexible working can be refused for reasons outlined above (page 9).

The law requires that all statutory requests (excluding additional annual leave and career breaks), including any appeals, must be considered and decided on within a period of three months from first receipt, unless you agree to extend this period with the employee.

Trial Periods

All flexible working arrangements, with the exception of a reduction in working hours, can be granted on a trial basis. Managers and employees should discuss this prior to the arrangement taking place and agree the details of any trial period. The trial must be monitored on a regular basis and actively managed. Some areas for consideration are outlined below:

- Consider/establish expectations for the new working arrangement:
- Availability – how do colleagues know where and when the employee is working
- Expectations for contact/updates
- Protocols for operational emergencies
- Expectations around working hours and ensuring these are not excessively high/low.
- Reporting/troubleshooting health and safety issues/ risks
- Reporting /troubleshooting information security risks
- Arrangements for managing by results rather than presence
- Clear reporting structures are in place and known amongst the team
- Individual has clear direction and remit with specific and measurable objectives.
- Introduction of work plans that monitor progress on a weekly/monthly basis
- Plans for regular and timely updates from management/ employee/ team
- Protocols for escalating issues & agreeing reasonable and manageable deadlines
- Structured and regular 1-2-1s using telephone/ video conferencing/ face to face meetings
- What protocols are needed amongst the team/individual for new working practices- e.g.
- Working electronically and sharing information
- Working confidentially
- Phone protocols
- Availability
- Arrangements for maintaining regular communication links with the team/management
- 1-2-1's and team meetings established
- Virtual team working arrangements
- Scheduled time for management/ employee availability
- Scheduled time for peer group support/ training and idea sharing

Trial periods will normally be in place for a maximum of 6 weeks. In exceptional circumstances the trial period can last longer and in these cases.

The start and end date of the trial period will be clearly documented and communicated to the employee by the line manager.

The line manager should hold a review meeting 3 weeks after the new flexible working arrangement is in place to assess how the arrangement is working. The Manager or employee can arrange earlier or more frequent review meetings if required.

At the end of the trial period the line manager will hold another meeting with the employee to review how the flexible working arrangement is progressing and decide whether or not the arrangement can be made permanent. They should confirm the outcome to the employee in writing.

If the trial period is unsuccessful from either end, the arrangement can be amended appropriately by mutual agreement, or terminated at any point, by the line manager or employee.

If following the trial period, the line manager refuses or amends the flexible working arrangement they must provide one or more of the reasons outlined at page 9 above as grounds for their decision.

Health and Safety

The manager should ensure that the appropriate health and safety procedures are applied before a flexible working arrangement takes place. The appropriate procedures to be used will depend on the flexible working arrangement being proposed.

Working Time Regulations

It is important that the number of hours being undertaken is managed effectively and in line with [Working Time Directive guidelines](#), and employees do not work excessively large or low hours on a regular basis. Having the facility to work at home or in different locations can sometimes tempt employees to work over and above their required number of hours. Managers must ensure that all staff work within the provisions set out within the working time regulations and the CFS's flexi time scheme.

Appeals

There is no right of appeal for employees who have made a non-statutory flexible working request.

Those employees who have made a statutory flexible working request have 14 days after the date they were notified of the refusal / decision, to appeal. Their appeal must be made in writing to the manager who refused the request and must be dated and set out the grounds of the appeal.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the manager must arrange for the appeal to be heard. The appeal should normally be heard by a more senior manager than the manager who considered the original request, or where the manager is the Chief Officer, a Trustee.

Once the appeal is received, the appeal manager/Trustee should arrange to hold a meeting with the employee within 14 days, to discuss the appeal. As with the meeting to discuss the application, both the employee and the appeal deciding manager can be accompanied, and the same rules apply regarding non-attendance at this meeting. The manager who dealt with the original application may be asked to attend, to outline why the request was rejected.

The appeal manager/Trustee must notify the employee of their decision within 5 days of the appeal hearing. If the appeal is refused, the appeal manager must inform the employee, in writing, of the grounds for the refusal, explaining why these apply.

There is no further right to appeal.

Time Limits

There may be circumstances in which time limits need to be extended (e.g. to allow more time for a working pattern to be explored). Both the employee and the manager concerned must agree any extension to the time limits, and the employee should be provided with written confirmation of the agreed extension, which specifies why the extension is required and the date on which it will end.

In circumstances when the manager who would normally consider your application is absent due to annual leave / sick leave, the time limits are automatically extended. The 28 day period in which to arrange a meeting will start on the day when they return, or 28 days after the application is made, whichever is sooner. If their absence is longer than this, another appropriate manager or Trustee will consider the application.

Flexible Working Application Form

To be completed by the employee

Full Name:

Address:

Post Title:

Location:

Line Manager (to whom application should be submitted)

Date of Appointment to Cumbria Family Support:

Eligibility: (Employees must confirm if they are making a statutory or non-statutory application for flexible working.)

I am making a statutory request for flexible working.

I confirm that I have worked continuously for the last 26 weeks, and that I have not made a statutory request to work flexibly during the past 12 months

OR

I am making a non-statutory request under the procedure and I understand that this is not covered by the legislation.

My current working pattern is (days/hours/times worked):

I would like to request the following working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

I would like the working pattern to commence from:

I would like this arrangement to be permanent/temporary.(delete as appropriate)

If temporary please specify time period for this change to apply:

Impact of the new working pattern. I think this change in my working pattern will affect my employer and colleagues as follows:

Accommodating the new working pattern. I think the effect on my employer and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:

Employee's signature:

Date:

To be completed by the line manager

Line Manager's Recommendation

Accept /Postpone / Decline (Delete as necessary) *

Line Manager Name..... Line Manager's signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 3: Homeworking

Home working means employees can carry out part or all of their work at home (this is different to working from home on occasion). However, they are still required to attend meetings, supervisions etc. in CFS premises. In some circumstances, the employee's home may become their contractual place of work (with the relevant assessments and control measures i.e. risk assessments).

In terms of home working, employees should consider:

- Any legal/ insurance or tax implications of home working.
- Where the employee can demonstrate that they have incurred expense “wholly exclusively and necessarily” as a result of their employment, they may be able to claim tax allowance from HR Revenue and Customs and can contact them for advice.
- Is there a suitable area in your household where you can carry out working from home?
- Do you have a suitable broadband connection and / or mobile phone reception?
- Is the nature of the job such that you are able to work effectively from home?
- Could home working impact on any members of your household?
- How an employee can ensure confidentiality of electronic and paper based information within the home in order to be GDPR compliant.
- Costs of working from home- may not be apparent until the winter months.

This guidance provides advice on how to assess and introduce home working following a Flexible Working request that includes an element of home working.

Process

1. Any agreement to work from home on a regular basis will be subject to:
 - a. Receipt of a completed flexible working request and the completion of the process as outlined in the Work Life Balance Procedure,
 - b. The relevant home working assessment and checks relating to health and safety and information security,
 - c. A home working agreement ensuring that a signed document is provided to the Office Manager so that it can be held centrally on the employee's personal file.
 - d. Cumbria Family Support will provide all required equipment to support employee's in carrying out their role from home. Your manager must arrange for the appropriate equipment to be provided.
 - e. With the exception of trial periods:
The normal period of notice to terminate the Homeworking Agreement on either side is 4 weeks. However, an employee or manager must have valid reasons for ending the arrangement. In emergencies the arrangement will be reviewed and may be suspended or terminated with immediate effect. Additional notice can be provided by mutual consent and where operationally practical.
 - f. There is no right to appeal the withdrawal or amendment to a home working arrangement.

Home Working Checklist

The following home working checklist must be completed by the line manager in discussion with the employee prior to any home working arrangement being implemented.

Statement	Yes	No	Yes – with changes
The equipment required to allow home working to take place is available and can be provided by CFS without resulting in an unreasonable additional cost to the department. This will be determined on a case by case basis and line managers should contact the Chief Officer/ Trustees for advice if required.			
The employee has a suitable internet and telephone signal and connection to work effectively? Contact System IT if advice is required.			
A contingency plan is in place to enable the employee to carry out work effectively during short term and ad hoc occasions where home working from becomes difficult - e.g. where short term technical difficulties are experienced			
Line manager and employee do not foresee the arrangement impacting on team or individual performance/development and the employee has the behaviours, skills and knowledge to work independently in the role.			
There are no existing conduct or performance issues that would deem the new home working arrangement unsuitable.			
Health and Safety (Lone working policy and H&S policy) have been read, understood and can be applied in the home environment (inc DSE assessment and specific risk assessment for the home working environment)			
The employee has a safe and appropriate environment within the home where information can be securely stored.			
The employee is aware of their obligations in respect of information security and data protection, has read and understood the relevant guidance and completed the online training. Requirements may change on a case by case basis and line managers should contact Information Governance or Information Security as appropriate for advice if required.			
The employee is aware of their obligations to attend meetings and remain in regular and effective communication, even when home based?			
Where applicable, details of the trial period have been confirmed to the employee in writing?			
Employees are aware that childcare or caring for a dependent cannot be undertaken at home during working time and that alternative provisions must be in place.			
The employee has read, understood and signed the home working agreement.			
Signed Line Manager:		Date	
Signed Employee:		Date	

If, following the home working assessment, home working is deemed unsuitable and adjustments are not possible, the arrangement will not be feasible.

Template Home Working Agreement

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Post Code

Position:

Expression of Interest in Home Working

Further to your expression of interest in home working your request to work from home for XX hours on [working pattern], has been approved subject to the following conditions set out in this document.

Home working arrangements will take effect subject to the conditions set out in the Home Working Checklist.

- (1) *Trial Period (where applicable)*: The home working arrangements described above will be in place for a trial period of 3 months. The start date of this trial period will be arranged when conditions outlined in the checklist have been satisfied. The conditions must be satisfied as soon as possible, with the trial home working arrangement being put in place no longer than 3 months from the point of approval. The home working arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis during the trial period to ensure there is no detrimental impact on the service and that the arrangements are working for you. If the trial period is unsuccessful from either end, the arrangement can be amended appropriately by mutual agreement, or terminated at any point by your line manager or yourself. If your trial period is successful, this will be confirmed to you in writing. Following a successful trial period, the home working arrangement will become permanent, or if your contract is temporary, the arrangement will be put in place for the remainder of your contract. This will be the case unless informed otherwise.
- (2) *Time recording*: The normal flexi time scheme and any individual flexible working arrangements will continue to apply to this home working arrangement. The normal employee and employer responsibilities relating to the Working Time Regulations continue to apply to this home working arrangement.
- (3) *Conduct and Performance*: The same conduct and performance expectations are in place for employees that work from home, on the go or in an office environment. Any alleged misuse or abuse of the home working facility will be considered and dealt with in line with the disciplinary policy and poor performance will be managed in the normal way in line with the capability procedure. The home working arrangement may be terminated as a result of the management of conduct or performance under Cumbria Family Support's disciplinary or capability procedures.

- (4) *Expenses and household bills:* You are advised to contact your household insurance provider, mortgage lender or landlord, along with your broadband/internet provider and any other relevant party to inform them that you will be undertaking work from home before the arrangement begins. No reimbursement will be provided in cases where household providers stipulate additional charges for their services relating to home working. No reimbursement for household or installation bills will be provided with the exception of business related telephone calls as outlined below:
- All home working employees will be provided with a business mobile phone and you should use this as the primary telephone device when working from home. Should business calls be necessary from a private phone line, the cost of these calls will be reimbursed upon receipt of an expenses claim and itemised phone bill.
- (5) *Travel:* Normal arrangements apply. Your manager will advise you of your base for claiming expenses in accordance with the expenses policy.
- (6) *Meetings and Access:* For security purposes, you must not divulge your home address or personal telephone number to clients, customers or service users. Home workers must not use their own home for meetings (with the exception of meetings with CFS colleagues where mutual consent is in place). Access to your home may be required at agreed times, for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters. Visits may be for the purpose of resolving ICT issues, to assess any H&S risks, and retrieve CFS property. Initial health and safety risk assessments should be carried out in the normal way by the employee and therefore would not normally require household access.
- (7) *Leave, sickness, other absences and availability for work:* It is essential that you follow established procedures for booking leave, reporting sickness or injuries and agreeing other absences with your manager. While working at home, you should take account of the potentially conflicting demands of work and family and make every effort to work in an organised and discipline fashion. Normal reporting procedures should be adhered to if you are unavailable for work.
- (8) *Provision of Equipment:* Cumbria Family Support will provide the necessary equipment to facilitate a suitable and appropriate home office environment where it is practical to do so. If, due to the nature of the job, equipment is required that would be impractical in a home environment and/or come at a considerable cost, the home working arrangement may not be possible. This may apply to required equipment over and above the normal DSE requirements for workstations.
- (9) *Changing Circumstances:* Should any home working conditions change, which may impact on the quality of the working environment, you must inform your line manager as soon as possible. This applies but is not limited to the following circumstances:
- Workstation changes
 - Workplace hazards
 - Security breach/risk

- Internet/ telephone changes that are detrimental to the quality of information accessibility
- Major or substantial building works
- Property damage e.g. flood/weather damage
- Changed/additional occupancy within the home
- Change to any caring arrangements impacting on the home working environment.
- Any other changes that could impact on the quality of the working environment or deem the home unsuitable for work on a temporary or permanent basis.

Changes to the working environment could result in the need for an updated homeworking assessment, homeworking being withdrawn or a temporary change to your place of work (e.g. working from a CFS building).

If you are moving home you must advise your manager in writing as soon as possible. This will normally be at least 4 weeks before the date you move, however in exceptional circumstances less notice can be considered. If the new location is not acceptable to the Cumbria Family Support this arrangement may be terminated on the date you move into the new premises

(10) *Ending of home working arrangements:* There may be cases where the continuation of home working becomes inappropriate. Cumbria Family Support or the employee may in certain circumstances, for either personal or operational reasons, wish to end the current home working arrangement. Managers will discuss with you the reason(s) behind any decision to terminate home-based working. The normal period of notice to terminate the Homeworking Agreement on either side is 4 weeks. Additional notice can be provided by mutual consent and where operationally practical. In emergencies the arrangement will be reviewed and may be suspended or terminated with immediate effect. The home working arrangement may be terminated as a result of the management of conduct or performance under the Cumbria Family Support’s disciplinary or capability procedures.

(11) *Return of Cumbria Family Support Property:* Any equipment and / or furniture provided by the CFS and / or installed in your home remains the property of Cumbria Family Support and must be returned when your home working arrangement or employment is terminated. Your manager will arrange to collect any equipment at a mutually agreed time.

Chief Officer Agreement for and on behalf of Cumbria Family Support:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Declaration

I have read and understood the content of this document and I agree to a home working arrangement under the conditions set out above.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Employee Name: _____

Appendix 4: Career Break Scheme

Introduction

Cumbria Family Support recognises that there may be times when employees wish to take extended periods of time away from working in order to pursue other interests including but not limited to: spending time with family, pursuing further education, taking an extended holiday or participating in voluntary / community work. The benefits to an employee may be to enhance their career, develop useful skills, strengthen their confidence and avoid additional stress. For the organisation this option may help to retain valuable employees and retain their knowledge and experience. The break could help to introduce new competencies back into the workplace and demonstrates employee investment resulting in greater loyalty.

Purpose

A Career Break is an unpaid release of duties where the employee will not be required to resign and remains employed by the organisation. During the Career Break continuity of service will be maintained and employee will retain their statutory entitlements, but payment of salary and all additional contractual benefits will cease and the period of the Career Break will not count for reckonable pensionable service, unless the employee opts to pay their pension contributions within 30 days of returning to work.

A Career Break will be 3 months minimum and up to 12 months maximum in length. Once agreed, the length of the period can only be varied by mutual agreement. Employees will retain their statutory paid holiday entitlement during the Career Break, but will not be entitled to any additional leave contractually provided to them. Statutory holiday entitlement will be pro rata for part time / part year employees.

A Career Break is granted at the organisations discretion and is not an entitlement.

Scope

This scheme applies to all CFS employees with at least 3 years' continuous. Employees may apply for more than one Career Break during their employment however there must be a gap of 3 years between Career Breaks. Employees may make only one request in a 12-month period. If a request is rejected or withdrawn, a further application cannot be made within 12 months of the refused / withdrawn application. Employees are expected to demonstrate their commitment to return to work.

Principles

The Career Break Scheme is founded on the following principles:

- To support the organisation's aim in being the employer of choice by maintaining personal growth and development and attracting new employees.

- To provide managers and employees with clear guidelines so that the implications and terms and conditions for a Career Break are fully understood, thus providing consistency across the organisation.
- To assist individuals in achieving a different balance in their work and home life.
- To retain skills and knowledge within the organisation.
- Where operationally practicable a Career Break will be supported.
- Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this scheme on grounds of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, maternity, marital or civil partnership status, part-time status etc.
- Individuals will remain employed by Cumbria Family Support and will be included in any management of change or redundancy consultation process relating to their post.
- The organisation will not be liable for any financial loss incurred in anticipation of an application being approved, e.g. holiday deposits etc.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees will:-

- Provide a written application for a Career Break at least 3 months in advance of the date they would like the Career Break to start.
- Ensure they do not enter into any financial commitments which are dependent on approval of the Career Break prior to receiving a decision.
- Discuss the proposal with their line manager and properly assess the impact of a Career Break on their conditions of employment (e.g. pension, redundancy payment(s), contractual benefits etc.)
- Use any outstanding annual leave entitlement, flexi-time, Time off in Lieu accrued up until the start of the Career Break and will not be allowed to retain it to take on their return or to receive pay in lieu of annual leave. Annual leave in excess of statutory annual leave will not accrue during the Career Break.
- Take, within the agreed period of the Career Break or within their annual leave year, all statutory holiday entitlement which accrues during the Career Break.
- Return all property belonging to the organisation e.g. ID Badge, laptop, mobile telephone etc. prior to the start of the Career Break.
- Remain in contact with their line manager during the Career Break in a mutually agreed way
- Provide at least 8 weeks' written notice, to their line manager, of a request to return to work if earlier than the agreed date or of a request to extend the Career Break (subject to maximum length of 12 months).

Line Managers will:-

- Assess requests for Career Break – liaising with the Chief Officer (or if the manager is the Chief Officer, the Trustees), considering the operational feasibility of granting the break and submitting their recommendation to the Trustees in a timely fashion.
- Discuss the implications of a Career Break with individuals in relation to their pension, continuous service, potential redundancy calculation etc.
- Consider how to backfill the substantive post during the Career Break by either following the recruitment process with a secondment or fixed term contract, if applicable, or through re-distribution of work amongst the remaining team.

- Inform the Office Manager of the employee’s intention to go on a Career Break, when the employee will return and notify them of any extension or reduction agreed in the Career Break.
- Maintain contact with the employee during the Career Break, in a mutually agreed way
- If the employee wishes to extend or reduce their Career Break the line manager will assess this request and submit their recommendation to the Chief Officer (Officer (or if the manager is the Chief Officer, the Trustees) based on business needs, how the post will be covered and the reason relating to the request. They will ensure the individual is informed of the outcome in writing.

Chief Officer (or if the manager is the Chief Officer, the Trustees) will:-

- Consider the Line Manager’s recommendation and will have the authority to approve or decline a Career Break request, and any subsequent request to extend / reduce the Career Break.
- Communicate the decision in writing within 10 working days of submission of the application. Any requirement for an extension to this timescale must be discussed and agreed with the individual and the line manager.

Approval Process

Employees eligible to apply should submit their request to their line manager on the Career Break Application Form (at Appendix One) at least 3 months prior to the date they would like the Career Break to start. On receipt of a request, the line manager should arrange for a discussion will take place with the employee to establish the details of the request and to confirm the individual’s firm commitment to return to the organisation. It may be established at this point that alternative working arrangements are more suitable in some cases.

Once the line manager has assessed the application they will submit their recommendation for approval or refusal to the Chief Officer (or if the manager is the Chief Officer, the Trustees) for their consideration. This will include an indication of the costs involved (i.e. statutory annual leave and employers pension contributions).

The Manager will communicate their decision in writing within 10 working days of submission of the application.

Effect on Employee Terms and Conditions of Employment

Employees must ensure they fully consider the following implications for themselves of a Career Break, especially where there is a potential for loss in benefits (including pension), and the potential need to return to an alternative post. Individuals must seek relevant advice and guidance as appropriate prior to their submission of an application.

Terms and Conditions of Employment and Continuous Service	Employees are not required to resign (and are not dismissed) in order to take a Career Break. Employees remain employed by the organisation throughout the Career Break and will continue to accrue continuous service. Employees’ contracts of employment are
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preserved, subject to variation in relation to salary, allowances and contractual benefits.

Pay and Annual Leave

There is no entitlement to payment of salary, allowances, non-statutory leave, occupational sick pay or occupational maternity / paternity / adoptive pay during a Career Break. All annual leave, bank holiday entitlement, flexi / TOIL etc. accrued to date must be taken prior to commencement of the Career Break. Similarly, "debits" must be cleared. All statutory paid holiday accrued during the period of a Career Break must be taken during the Career Break or within the annual leave year (normal carry forward arrangements will apply). There will be no payment in lieu of leave accrued during the period of Career Break.

Tax and NI Contributions and Statutory Payments

Cumbria Family Support will not be liable for any tax or national insurance contributions during a Career Break. As a Career Break could affect the right to and payment of statutory payments such as Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity / Paternity / Adoptive Pay. It is recommended that contact should be made with the local Benefits Agency office for advice and guidance as necessary.

Pension Scheme

Membership of the Pension Scheme continues for the first 30 days of absence with full contributions payable at the rate that would have been paid had the employee been at work (both employee and employer contributions). After the first 30 days the time will not count as membership of the scheme unless the contributions are paid within 30 days of return to work. If the employee elects to pay their contributions the employer will also pay the missed contributions. The employee does not have to buy back the excess days whilst on unpaid leave but this period will then not count as reckonable pensionable service.

Employees on authorised leave of absence from the Pension Scheme will remain eligible for death-in-service benefits

CFS property

All property should be returned prior to the start of the Career Break, unless otherwise agreed with the Line Manager.

Work Restrictions	<p>The purpose of a Career Break is to allow employees time away from work to pursue personal interests such as travel, voluntary / community work, study or to spend more time with family etc. It is not to be used for work purposes and therefore employees are restricted from acting as a consultant / contractor or working as an employee / director for any other organisation or individual unless, in exceptional circumstances, they have the express written consent of the Chair of Trustees.</p> <p>In considering the request, the Chair will need to ensure that the work does not, in the view of the organisation, conflict with CFS's interest or in any way weaken public confidence in the conduct of the organisation.</p>
Salary Reviews	<p>Any cost of living increases / decreases and changes to the pay and grading structure that CFS implement during the Career Break will be applied accordingly once the employee returns to work.</p>
Sickness Absence	<p>There is no entitlement to payment of occupational sick pay during a Career Break. Where an employee experiences long term sickness absence during a Career Break (i.e. a certified medical condition in excess of or likely to be in excess of, 4 weeks) then the employee can choose to contact their manager and request to terminate their Career Break. If agreed, the employee would be treated as having returned to work and therefore become eligible for occupational sick pay. The remainder of the Career Break would be forfeited. They will not retain any entitlement to return to the Career Break without further application</p>
Occupational & Statutory Maternity Paternity / Adoptive Pay	<p>As the Career Break is unpaid, employees are not eligible for occupational maternity / paternity / adoptive pay (unless they return to work). Any entitlement to the relevant statutory maternity / paternity / adoptive pay will be dependent on earnings during the relevant reference periods and advice should be sought from the local Benefits Agency office as necessary.</p> <p>In the event of maternity / paternity / adoption individuals may request to return to work in order to become entitled to the relevant occupational pay. If agreed, the employee would be treated as having returned to work and therefore become eligible for the relevant occupational pay. The remainder of the Career Break would be forfeited. They will not retain any entitlement to return to the Career Break without further application.</p>

Management of Change Employees remain an employee of the Cumbria Family Support and will be included in any management of change or redundancy consultation process relating to their post. It is important therefore for employees to maintain contact with the organisation through their line manager.

Redundancy Payments In the event of redundancy, statutory redundancy would be calculated on all service (i.e. including the Career Break), except where service has been broken by alternative employment. Any enhanced redundancy provision would be calculated on the continuous service accumulated prior to a Career Break and, assuming a return to work, the continuous service accrued after the Career Break.

The calculation of "a week's pay" would be over the relevant reference period.

Returning to Work

It is expected that employees and their Manager will agree arrangements in order to maintain reasonable contact during the Career Break. This is in order to ensure that CFS is able to keep the employee informed of matters significant to their role and for the employee to advise the CFS of any changes in their circumstances which may impact on the Career Break or on contact arrangements.

Employees are required to provide at least 8 weeks' written notice, to their line manager, of their request to return to work at a different time from the original agreed date. Any such request will be considered sympathetically but in light of the relevant operational circumstances and, if relevant, the availability of a suitable post. Wherever possible an employee will return to a job at the same level as their job prior to their Career Break but this cannot always be guaranteed. In the event of a restructure where an employee's role is affected, they will be consulted in the same way as their colleagues.

On return to a job at the same level as prior to the Career Break the employee's salary will be reinstated at the same level prior to the period of unpaid leave and will reflect any pay awards that may have occurred. If an employee cannot return to a job at the same level as prior to the Career Break (e.g. through restructure) they will be subject to the normal arrangements as part of any restructure.

For the purpose of estimating occupational sick, maternity, paternity, adoptive pay or leave entitlement, the period of work before and after the break will be aggregated as continuous service (except where service has been broken in the event of alternative employment having been taken).

If redundancy occurs after the employee returns back to work the period of the career break will count for the purposes of statutory redundancy only. The period of Career Break will not count for any enhanced redundancy provision which will then be calculated on continuous service accrued

prior to and after the Career Break (except where service has been broken by alternative employment taken up during the Career Break at an organisation).

It is expected that the employee and the line manager will maintain contact during the period of the Career Break and that they will discuss necessary arrangements in advance of the expected return to work. However, in the event that the employee fails to return on the agreed date, and the line manager has made several attempts to contact them directly within the expected week of return and is unable to establish any reason for the non-return, the organisation will take this as notification that the employee no longer wishes to return and that they have terminated their services with Cumbria Family Support. Failure to return to work will be treated by the organisation as a resignation by the employee.

Where the employee tenders notice of resignation during their Career Break and has no intention of returning to work out their notice period, then the notice period will be without pay.

Career Break Application Form

To be completed by the Employee

Employee's Full Name:

Employee's Address:

Post title:

Location:

Line Manager:

Date of Appointment to CFS:

**Start date applied for the
Career Break:**

Expected Return Date:

**(min 3 months, max 12
months)**

**Reason(s) for the Career
Break**

Pension decision

To pay contributions / Not to pay pension contributions*

*Please delete as necessary

**If you want to pay your
pension contributions when
do you want to pay them**

Monthly / On return to work*

*Please delete as necessary

**Dates of previous Career
Break(s) (min 3 yrs previous)**

Employee's signature

Signed:

Date:

To be completed by the Line Manager

If accepted – how will the post be covered?

Keep in touch arrangements

Agreed date of return

Please provide full business justification if the application is to be recommended to be postponed or declined

Line Manager's Recommendation

Comments:

Potential Costs i.e. statutory leave and employer pension contributions:

Accept / Postpone / Decline**Please delete as necessary

Line Manager's signature

Signed:

Print Name:

Post:

Date:

**To be completed by the Chief Officer (or if CO is line Manager,
Chair of Trustees)**

Chief Officer / Chair

Comments:

Accepted / Postponed / Declined*

*Please delete as necessary

Signed:

Print Name:

Post:

Date:

Appendix 5: Flexi Time Scheme

The Flexi-Time Scheme allows for the flexible management of your working day and allows you to determine arrival and departure times (within the scheme criteria) and to accommodate personal commitments where required. It is meant to be a flexible approach, as opposed to other “flexible working agreements” such as Compressed, Annual, or Term time arrangements which are more static and are defined in Appendix 1.

Flexi-time allows employees to choose, within agreed limits, when to begin and end work each day, and may be planned to enable individuals to attend to domestic or other responsibilities.

The scheme is available across the organisation. The Flexi and Core Hours are determined as follows (Monday to Friday):

Start	Finish	Flexible/Core
7a.m.	10a.m.	Flexible
10a.m.	3p.m.	Core
3p.m.	10p.m.	Flexible

This means that whilst “normal working day” remains 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-4.30pm on Fridays, staff can work flexibly within the Flexi hours. You will be expected to be in work during the “core” This means, that once your working pattern is agreed it will be referenced on your Particulars of employment. You would then work your normal hours in a week across those days. Absence during core hours would be “flexi leave”, “Annual Leave” or “Toil”. All three types of leave are awarded or accrued differently but need to be approved in advance² with your manager. For Annual Leave and TOIL, see the Employee Handbook.

Employees must work their hours within an ‘accounting period’ which will be four weeks. Employees may request permission to use accrued flexi time in order to be absent from work. This enables employees to vary their start, finish and lunch times. Staff may carry over any excess or debit in the number of hours they are required to work to the next accounting period. The debit or credit must amount to no more than 15 hours/2 days pro rata.

The Flexi time scheme is different from TOIL/LIEU. This is detailed in CFS’s Employee handbook: “Time Off In Lieu There is no payment for any hours worked above your normal hours of work (i.e. “overtime” payments). Subject to a maximum of 15 hours (or equivalent 2 days - pro rata), hours worked above your normal hours may be taken as equivalent time off in lieu by arrangement with your line manager.”

Time off in Lieu (TOIL) is different from Flexi as it can only be accrued through additional hours worked as requested or approved in advance by a line manager or a set requirement to undertake additional hours of work. This would normally be in relation to a specific activity or piece of work.

² Less than one hour per day absence in core hours can be taken without management approval

Key Principles that apply:

- 1) Staff who, by the nature of their contract i.e. part-time hours, or those with working patterns where they are required to undertake duties at a particular time, may be unable to benefit fully from the scheme
- 2) It is not a contractual right and can be reviewed at any time, including on an annual basis or when staff leave/join CFS. It may be amended or withdrawn if there is a detrimental impact on the delivery of the service. If arrangements are changed these will be given in writing
- 3) It does not alter the existing definition of a working week, defined as 37 hours per week.
- 4) If you resign from CFS you are expected to clear any credit or debit flexi-time before leaving
- 5) Its success relies upon the trust between staff and managers and the individuals using the scheme

Process

- 1) Any request to take more than one hour of flexi-time (i.e. absence during the core hours) in any one day should be agreed by your line manager in advance. You are encouraged to approach your team informally to discuss your request and operational needs prior to consulting your manager. You should be mindful of busy of work.
- 2) A request may be refused if minimum staffing levels cannot be maintained as this may cause undue pressure on the remainder of the team.
- 3) Annual leave and then TOIL should always take priority over flexi-time
- 4) If you participate in the flexi scheme you must keep a clear and accurate record of hours worked, including lunch break on a Flexi time Sheet (you will be provided with a template sheet when you start and can be re-issued with one by the Business Manager if requested)
- 6) Flexi records can be reviewed by your line manager in any supervision, or for specific reasons in between supervision (your manager will always explain to you why they are asking to see your timesheet outside of supervision).
- 7) A record should be kept for up to 3 months.
- 7) Time taken for medical/dental appointments is covered in the Employee Handbook, section 5.
- 8) All staff should take *at least* a 20 minute lunch break if working more than 6 hours (this is unpaid time but should be taken). See [Rest breaks at work - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

An example of this working pattern for a full time staff member:

- Their Particulars of Employment confirms 37 hours, Monday to Friday.
- They therefore can work those hours generally across Monday to Friday, provided they are in work 10-3 each day, their remaining hours can be taken flexibly after 7 a.m. and before 10 p.m.
- For example one week they may choose to work the Monday to Thursday as 8.30 – 1.30 then 30min lunch, then 2-5.15pm. (Totals 33hrs). On the Friday they can then simply work the core hours of 10-12, and 1 to 3 (4hrs). This totals 37 hours for the week

The above scenario requires no permission from line manager.

Alternatively, they could work longer on the Friday (e.g. the full 7 hours). This means they have accrued 3 hours which they can then use some or all of the following week(s). For example, they know they have childcare duties the following week and will need to leave work at 3pm on a couple of days (or a hair appointment at 2.30 one day for example). Again, as they are using their accrued hours outside of core hours, (or no more than one hour in core hours) no advance permission is required.

If however they need to be absent during core hours on any day for more than an hour they will need to have this agreed in advance, e.g. they need to be absent from 1.30 p.m. onward one day due to a personal appointment, then this needs agreed in advance (see Process point 1 above).

The key factors for all of the above is (subject to any part-time or other formal arrangements in place stated in your particulars of employment);

- Be present in work as a minimum of 10--3 each working day, but ensure during that time you have at least a 20 minute break.
- Other hours worked must fall between 07:00 and 22:00.
- Permission for absence in core hours is needed unless it is for an hour or less in one day.
- You can accrue credit and debit of up to 15hrs/2 days pro rata to be used in the next four week accounting period.