

ALBYN GROUP FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION AND POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 A key aim of Albyn Group is to build the mission, values, and vision of the organisation into our policy and decision making on a daily basis. With that in mind, we aim to follow our guiding principles that apply to all policies.
- 1.2 Albyn Group believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, enrich employee wellbeing, and improve performance and productivity. Accordingly, Albyn wants to support you to achieve a good balance between work and your other priorities.
- 1.3 This policy sets out our approach to flexible working requests under the statutory procedure.
- 1.4 The policy is for guidance only and does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time. It outlines the rights employees are given by law but is intended to be a summary only and not a complete statement of your rights.
- 1.5 It is Albyn Group's practice to encourage open communication with employees. An employee who thinks they may benefit from flexible working is encouraged to engage with their line manager to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees employed by Albyn Group, regardless of length of service. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of this policy are to:
 - Make employees aware of their right to request flexible working;
 - Inform employees of their rights and responsibilities in relation to requesting flexible working;
 - Provide managers with an understanding of their role in the flexible working application process and their responsibilities towards employees.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of management to consider requests in accordance with this policy and any associated guidance documents and respond to the employee within the prescribed timescales outlined in the principles below.
- 4.2 Employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the process outlined in this policy and provide as much information as possible to ensure that their request can be fully considered.

5. ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working.
- 5.2 Under the statutory procedure, you can make two requests in any 12-month period.
- 5.3 If you have submitted a flexible working request, you must wait until that one has been considered and any appeal has been dealt with, before submitting another.

6. OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU: BEING CARING

- 6.1 At Albyn we are passionate about creating an inclusive culture that supports a good work-life balance. We care about your health and wellbeing and want to invest in an environment where everyone can thrive.
- 6.2 We are committed to agreeing flexible working arrangements, where the needs and objectives of our customers, the organisation and the employee can be met.
- 6.3 You will see individuals at all levels in the organisation working flexibly. We advertise roles as having flexible working options where possible.
- 6.4 We are committed to ensuring that all line managers have received training so that they are able to give full consideration to flexible working where appropriate

7. TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

- 7.1 We will consider requests for any type of flexible working with an open mind. Examples of flexible working include:
 - I. **Part-time working:** to reduce or vary your working hours, e.g., a request to work fewer hours per week.
 - II. **Flexible hours:** to reduce or vary the times you are required to work, e.g., a request to work on different days, or to start earlier or later in the day.
 - III. **Compressed hours:** to work your full contractual hours over fewer days, e.g., a request to work a four-day working week or nine-day fortnight.
 - IV. **Homeworking:** to work from home instead of at your usual workplace or at another of our business locations, for some or all your working time.

8. MAKING A FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

- 8.1 Individuals who are considering making a flexible working request are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager as soon as possible.
- 8.2 The process, inclusive of appeal, will normally be completed within two months of the flexible working request being made. The procedure is as follows:

Stage One – Request for Flexible Working

- 8.3 All flexible working requests must be made in writing by completing our Flexible Working Request (FWR) form, which is available via the intranet. This should be submitted to your line manager.
- 8.4 Any request made under this policy must include:
- I. the date of the request;
 - II. the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions of employment;
 - III. the date on which you would like the change to come into effect;
 - IV. a statement that this is a statutory request;
 - V. If you have made a previous application for flexible working; and
 - VI. If you have made a previous request, when you made that application
- 8.5 It is helpful if your request gives us as much information and detail as possible. If your request does not contain all the required information, you will be asked to resubmit it with the necessary additional information.
- 8.6 Any request that is incomplete or contains errors will not be automatically rejected.
- 8.7 If you are making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g., as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the flexible working request details.
- 8.8 To ensure that you include all the required information when making your flexible working request you must complete our Flexible Working Request form.
- 8.9 If we receive flexible working requests from a number of different employees, we will consider them on their individual merits and in the order that we receive them.
- 8.10 Once you submit your flexible working request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible. However, all requests will be dealt with within two months, from receipt of the request to notification of any appeal decision.
- 8.11 The timescales within this policy may be extended where this is mutually agreed.

Stage Two - Consideration of the Flexible working request

- 8.12 On receipt of the request your line manager will consider the details and arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. The meeting will be held within fifteen working days of receiving your flexible working request. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay.
- 8.13 You may, if you wish, be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow colleague or trade union representative.
- 8.14 The consultation meeting is an opportunity for you to explain how the proposed working arrangements would benefit you and for us to consider and discuss any alternative flexible working options that may be available and suitable for you and the organisation.
- 8.15 At the consultation meeting, we encourage you to be as open as possible about your needs so that we are able to engage in a constructive discussion about what is feasible.
- 8.16 After the meeting, your line manager will consider your proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up:
- The potential benefits to both you and the organisation; and
 - Any adverse impact of implementing the changes.
- 8.17 Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis - agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working patterns.

Stage Three – Communication of decision

- 8.18 Where a consultation meeting has taken place your line manager will inform you, in writing, as soon as possible after the meeting, subject to any extension of time you may have agreed between you, of their decision and why.

Where your request is granted

- 8.19 Your request may be granted in full or in part. For example:
- We may propose a modified version of your request.
 - Your request may be granted on a temporary basis; or
 - We may decide that we cannot accept your request immediately, in which case you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period before we reach a final decision on your request.
- 8.20 If we accept your request, or accept it with modifications, a further meeting may be arranged to discuss how and when the changes might best be implemented.
- 8.21 Any changes to your terms and conditions of employment, whether permanent or temporary, will be put in writing and sent to you as an amendment to your contract of employment.

8.22 You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter to confirm your agreement.

Reasons for rejecting a request

8.23 While we are committed to encouraging flexible working patterns, we need to remain realistic and recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles. In some cases, it may not be possible for us to accommodate a request because of:

- I. the burden of additional costs;
- II. detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- III. inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- IV. inability to recruit additional staff;
- V. detrimental impact on quality;
- VI. detrimental impact on performance;
- VII. insufficient work for the periods you propose to work and/or
- VIII. planned structural changes to the business.

8.24 We will not reject your request for any other reason.

8.25 If we are unable to agree your request, we will write to inform you which of the above business reasons applies in your case and explain why.

8.26 We will also set out the appeal procedure.

9. APPEALS PROCEDURE

9.1 You have the right to appeal if your request for flexible working is rejected or only agreed in part.

9.2 Your appeal should be sent in writing to the HR department within five working days of receiving our decision. Your letter should set out the grounds on which you are appealing.

9.3 An appeal meeting will be held within 10 working days of you lodging your appeal - where possible with a manager who did not make the original decision.

9.4 You may, if you wish, ask a fellow colleague or a trade union representative to attend the appeal meeting with you.

9.5 Following the appeal meeting, the relevant manager will inform you in writing, as soon as possible after the meeting, subject to any extension of time you may have agreed between you, of the outcome.

9.6 There is no further right of appeal.

10. TREATING YOUR APPLICATION AS WITHDRAWN

- 10.1 You may withdraw your request at any point before we give our final decision on it, or our final decision after an appeal, by informing the HR department in writing.
- 10.2 Alternatively, we may both agree to dispose of your request without the need for us to make a formal decision on it.
- 10.3 In either case, we will write to you to confirm the relevant details.
- 10.4 You will be asked to sign and return a copy of that letter to the HR department to confirm that your request has been disposed of as stated.
- 10.5 If you fail to attend, without good reason, both the first and second meeting to discuss your application, or both the first and second meeting to discuss your appeal, we will treat your application as withdrawn.
- 10.6 We will write to you informing you we have done so and explaining why.
- 10.7 If you disagree, you may write to us, within five working days of receiving our letter, to explain why and we will reconsider the position.

11. DATA PROTECTION

- 11.1 When managing your flexible working request, we process personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.
- 11.2 Data collected from the point at which we receive a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the request for flexible working.
- 11.3 Further details of how employee personal data is processed may be found in the Employee Privacy Notice.

12. EQUALITIES

- 12.1 This policy will be implemented in accordance with the Group Equality & Human Rights Policy.

13. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 13.1 Law relating to this Policy:
 - Employment Rights Act 1996
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023
 - Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023
- 13.2 This policy has been written in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice on handling flexible working requests.

Appendix 1

PROCESS MAP - FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS (The procedure at a glance)

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

