



# Guide to Job Sharing

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## Introduction

1. The Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer that positively promotes all forms of flexible working, including job sharing.

## What is job sharing

2. Job sharing is a form of flexible working which enables two employees to voluntarily share the responsibilities and duties of one full time job. Pay, benefits and leave entitlement for job sharing are allocated on a pro rata basis (divided approximately by hours worked).
3. It is normally possible to share any job. It is usually done by dividing the total number of hours that need to be worked in a number of ways, and with both partners doing the same type of work (although not necessarily the same amount of work, depending on the number of hours worked by each job sharing partner). For example:
  - one partner can work Mon-Wed am and the other Wed pm-Friday, or
  - one partner works mornings and the other partner works afternoons each day, or
  - they work alternate weeks
  - ensuring the appropriate overlap for handover.
4. Job sharing arrangements should not be confused with job splitting, which is where a role is divided by identifying the different elements of the job and allocating separate duties to each individual e.g. by capability, activity and/or projects.

## Benefits of job sharing

5. There are many potential benefits to job sharing including:
  - better quality of and/or increased work outputs due to the input of a wider range of skills, experience and creativity of two people rather than one
  - creating learning opportunities where partners have different strengths and work experience and they can coach each other
  - access to a wider range of roles for job sharers than simply working part time.



## Filling a post on a job sharing basis

### Advertising

6. Job sharing posts are advertised in line with usual departmental vacancy filling procedures.
7. The vast majority of posts should be considered as suitable for job share. Where a vacancy manager considers that the role would not suit a job sharing arrangement, they must explain this in a business case, which they should submit to the relevant senior manager for approval. The decision from the senior manager must be obtained prior to advertising.

### Application, sift and interviews

#### Applications

8. It is recommended that employees who want to apply for job sharing posts, but currently do not have a job share partner, find a partner before applying so they can apply together. When applying as job sharing partners the employees must agree in advance how they will job share e.g. how to split working hours or the communication/handover process, so that this can be explained to the vacancy manager at the interview stage.
9. Job sharing applicants should complete separate application forms, CVs, statements of suitability and covering letters as stated in the vacancy advert. However, applicants should make it clear that they are applying as job sharers and give the name of their partner. Where it is not possible to find a job share partner before applying, candidates should contact the vacancy manager to check if there is any flexibility around applying for a post without a job share partner.
10. This should be done in writing (normally by email) by contacting either the named person in the vacancy advert or the vacancy manager, who will be responsible for passing this information to sift and interview panel members.

#### Sift

11. The sift panel should consider the job sharing partners' evidence separately against the criteria set in the vacancy advert. If both partners achieve a score which puts them 'above the line' set for invitation to interview, they should be invited to progress further as set out below. If only one partner achieves a score which puts them above the line for interview then that partner may decide to continue to the interview stage alone, or withdraw their application.
12. If the selection is conducted only by considering written applications, the job sharing partners should be considered and scored individually to ensure that they are both above the line. They should be then considered and scored as a partnership, against full time candidates.



## Interview

13. The process for interviewing candidates applying as a job sharing partnership (existing or new) should reflect the basis on which they have applied. The process should also provide the vacancy manager/panel with a sense of the team working skills in the job sharing partnership in order to judge the strengths and weaknesses they bring as a pair, as this is the basis on which they have applied.
14. If the interview includes a presentation job sharing partners should be invited to give a joint presentation. To allow them both to participate, extra time should be allowed for the presentation. For example, if the presentation normally lasts five minutes, not less than ten minutes should be given. The presentation should normally be followed by a competency based interview.
15. Depending on the role, some competencies and skills could be tested by joint questions, e.g. leadership for management/leadership roles, or programme/project management for project delivery work.
16. Following this, the job sharing partners should be interviewed separately on the remaining competencies. As a result of having answered one competency together, the time frame for assessing the remaining competencies could be reduced. For example, if other candidates are interviewed for 45 minutes, job sharing partners should be given approximately 35 minutes for the rest of the interview.
17. If candidates are not required to give a presentation, the interview will start from the point of the joint question onwards.

## Job Offer

18. If both job sharing partners perform well at interview and they are first and second on the merit list, they should be offered the role on a job sharing basis.
19. If one partner is the best on the merit list and the other is lower down but still above the line, the panel has the discretion to offer the role to them, provided that their combined score puts them at the top of the merit list as a job share partnership, as this is the basis on which they have applied. It is recommended that before any job offer is made, job sharing partners have a short, informal meeting with the vacancy manager to discuss any practical issues around job sharing.
20. If one partner performs well at interview and is the most meritorious candidate but the other partner does not e.g. they are 'below the line', then the job cannot be offered to them as an existing job sharing partnership. The top performing partner should be offered the job as follows:
  - The job is offered and accepted on a full time basis.
  - If the candidate declines the full time role, or the role cannot be offered as part time for business reasons, the role will then be offered to the next best candidate(s) on the merit list.



- For existing civil servants i.e. only in internal CS recruitment stages, there may be further flexibility in offering the job on a temporary part time basis. If the internal candidate accepts the job on this basis, the vacancy manager should then support them in finding a new partner (either by matching with another applicant or by re-advertising the remaining unfilled portion of the job as a part time position). This option will only be offered where business needs permit.

The above option is only available to internal candidates in internal CS recruitment stages, due to the requirement to appoint external candidates on merit on the basis of fair and open competition in line with the Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles.

### **Applications from current employees to change their working pattern to job share**

21. If an existing employee wants to reduce the number of hours they work and asks to do this through job sharing, rather than other forms of flexible working, they should first discuss this with their line manager. It may be possible to find a job sharing partner within their department, and if so, it will be the employee's responsibility to do so. The employee should then follow the usual departmental processes for applications for flexible working.

### **Arrangements when one job sharing partner leaves**

22. Partnerships can end when one partner wants to change their working pattern or leaves the job for any other reason. Line managers should clearly define and agree with both partners from the start, in writing, what procedure will be adopted if one job sharing partner leaves; particularly what will happen if a new partner cannot be found. Managers should refrain from putting any pressure on the remaining job sharing partner to work more hours than their contract provides, whether temporarily or permanently.

23. New arrangements may include:

- Offering the job to the remaining job sharing partner on a full time basis.
- If they cannot or do not want to work full time, and the job can temporarily be done part time, asking them continue to undertake the role part time, with support from other team members, whilst advertising the remaining part of the job as job share.
- If it is not possible to do the job part time, even for a short period, managers may consider offering it as a job share to another member of the team as a development opportunity and/or temporary promotion.

If none of the above arrangements work or are impractical to implement, managers should seek advice from HR.



## Successful job sharing: essentials for job sharers

24. Job sharing can be very rewarding but requires flexibility, trust and good teamwork.
25. Having clear expectations and good communication is the key to successful job sharing. This includes agreeing how written communications will be done, regular and timely handovers and what happens where there are disagreements.
26. When agreeing job sharing arrangements, it is important to have some overlap of hours, to maximise continuity and consistency and minimise disruption for other team members. Having a handover day or hours may result in the total hours worked by the job sharing partners as more than one full time equivalent (FTE), but the benefit to the business will justify any additional financial cost.
27. Managing staff is one of the most sensitive and complex areas for job sharers. However, this has numerous advantages for employees, including access to a wider range of skills and expertise and more objective decision making.
28. Occasionally, where job sharing partners share line management responsibilities, this can result in a lack of clarity for the team's 'vision'. It is important that job sharing line managers take the time to develop a shared vision for their team or unit, and plan how this will be communicated and monitored.
29. Some job sharing partners split the formal line management responsibilities for their staff, even if both partners work closely with all team members on a day to day basis. Although one person is formally the line manager and writes the final end of year performance report, both line managers will contribute to the report.
30. In some partnerships, line management is entirely shared, with specific tasks alternating between the two managers who keep each other up to date.
31. It is important to ensure that the working arrangements are clearly explained to team members and that there are procedures in place when one partner leaves so that the job sharing arrangements can continue to work effectively in the future.
32. Current and prospective job sharers can find more helpful tips at the [Cross Government Job Sharing Web Pages](#).

## Managing job sharers: essentials for managers

33. For successful job sharing there must be a genuine commitment from both managers and job sharing partners to make the arrangements work. Agreeing clear job share arrangements from the outset is essential; so is communication and trust between the job sharing partners and the line manager.



34. Employees working in a job sharing arrangement must have objectives and competencies that reflect a balance between shared tasks and individual contributions, so that each partner knows what is expected of them. This will depend on the nature of the job and how the partnership is set up.
35. At the beginning of the year, line managers and job sharing partners should discuss and agree objectives and how the assessment process will work.
36. Where job sharing partners have joint objectives, they should provide evidence of what they did and how they contributed to the outcomes. Performance reports for each partner should be separate and confidential.
37. Development plans will be different for each individual, as job sharing partners may have different levels of experience, skills or motivation.
38. Departments should refer to their own performance management policy for guidance on the validation / moderation process **[DN: departments to insert link to Performance Management Policy]**. Job sharing partners' performance would normally be validated / moderated individually in the same way as all other employees' performance, unless agreed otherwise with their line manager at the beginning of the performance reporting year.
39. In line with reviewing all other forms of flexible working, it is recommended that job sharing arrangements are reviewed regularly at the end of the performance reporting year.
40. Line managers of job sharers can find more helpful tips at the [Cross Government Job Sharing Web Pages](#).

## Additional resources

41. The cross-government Job Share initiative resulted in a LinkedIn Network, where employee can meet potential job sharers to share ideas. To join, follow the link in the [Cross Government Job Sharing Web Pages](#).



## Appendix A - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. Can job sharing be operated in tandem with other forms of flexible working?

Yes. Job sharing enables two part time staff to cover a full time role over a working week and to work in jobs that are not suited to part time working. However, subject to business requirements and line manager's agreement, job sharing partners may be able to take advantage of other flexible working options, for example home working, in line with departmental guidance on flexible working.

### 2. How does job sharing differ from part time work?

Part time posts are usually regarded as self contained roles whereas job sharing requires an element of liaison between the partners and is based on the formal commitment between partners to jointly fulfil the job aims and objectives.

### 3. Can I ask my job sharing team members to cover each others' annual and sick leave periods?

The expectation is that the two job sharing partners will have discussed their leave plans with each other prior to applying for time off to ensure that their work is covered (either between themselves or other team members). A line manager can ask a job sharing partner to work more hours to help cover sick leave, but they are not obliged to do so.

### 4. Do I need to issue a specific job sharing contract for job sharers joining my team?

No, there are no job sharing contracts as such. Job sharing contracts are in effect, part time contracts under which two individuals are engaged to perform parts of the same job. However, each of the job sharing partners must be treated as an individual in respect of their contractual rights, responsibilities, obligations and conduct.

As with all other contracts, shared services are responsible for issuing all contracts, including those to job sharing employees. Some information relating to the specific job sharing arrangements agreed will need to be included in the contract. Additional information, particularly what will happen when one partner leaves the post, should be recorded in a flexible working agreement.





## 5. Can job sharing partners be eligible for promotion?

Job sharing employees may apply for promotion on an individual basis or as a job sharing partnership. However, if only one partner is offered the job on promotion, this could lead to the job sharing partnership ending.

## 6. What happens if an external candidate applies for a post on a job share basis?

External candidates may be able to find a job sharing partner using their own contacts or various external networks. External candidates should contact the vacancy manager to check if there is any flexibility around applying for a post without a job share partner. Vacancy managers should make decisions on a case by case basis and depending on their business needs. Where external candidates are offered job share roles, it is important to ensure that decisions comply with the requirements in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and Civil Service Commission's [Recruitment Principles](#) that appointments to the CS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

This means that 'matching' or re-advertising the job to fill the second half of the job sharing partnership will not be possible, as this will not comply with the Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles.