



[REDACTED]

**Defence Business Services  
Secretariat**  
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Lancashire FY5 3WP

Ref: FOI2022/12651

[DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk)

[REDACTED]

8<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 6 June 2022 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), requesting the following information about those who were full-time and reduced hours to part-time:

*In addition, I would like to ask, under Freedom of Information Act, for answers to the following questions:-*

- 1. How many Full Time and Part Time staff are currently employed within DBS?*
- 2. How many requests have there been, over the last 3 years, in DBS for Part Time working?*
- 3. How many requests, over the last 3 years, for Part Time working in DBS have been successful?*
- 4. How many requests, over the last 3 years, for Part Time working in DBS have been unsuccessful?*
- 5. How many successful requests, in the last 3 years, for Part Time working have been a request involving employees returning from Maternity leave?*
- 6. How many unsuccessful requests have there been, in the last 3 years, for Part Time working involving employees returning from Maternity leave? What were the reasons given?*
- 7. How many successful requests for Part Time working, in the last 3 years, have involved employees returning from Maternity Leave of C2 grade or above and in a high-profile project?*
- 8. How many unsuccessful requests for Part Time working, in the last 3 years, have there been involving employees who are returning from Maternity Leave to a post of C2 grade or above in a high-profile project? What were the reasons given?*

On the 30 October 2022 you clarified

*"I would like data for those who were full-time and reduced hours to part-time. This is the question I am asking in general and for those returning after Maternity Leave"*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A search for the information has [REDACTED] now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm some of the information you have requested is held. However, I have to advise you that we would not be able to answer your questions without exceeding the appropriate limit.

Section 12 of the FOI Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it.

To locate, retrieve and exact the information required for your request would mean contacting five hundred and forty-one line managers to ascertain if, in line with the MOD flexible working policy, any individuals submitted a request to change their working pattern to part-time, informally or formally. This would take in excess of 125 hours at a cost of £3,125.00, thus exceeding the cost limit.

However, under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), the department may be able to provide some information in the scope of your request if you were to refine your request by limiting it to questions 1, 3 and 5. It would also assist me if you could also clarify the period of time after which an individual returned to work before submitting a request to change their hours that you are interested in. If you wish to refine your request, I would be happy to look at it again.

Additionally, you may be interested to know that a request to work part time is decided by an individual's Line Manager, it is normally discussed informally before the formal request is submitted. If the individual is not content with the outcome of the request the normal grievance process is followed. Updating a new working schedule once agreed is also the Line Manager's responsibility. Policy guidance on how a change of hours is implemented can be found at Annex A.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Defence Business Services Secretariat

[REDACTED]

## **MOD FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS POLICY**

### Procedure

#### Flow chart overview of procedure

#### **Informal flexible working arrangement request flowchart**



#### Informal flexible working arrangement request flowchart description

Employee considers working flexibly, reads the policy and guidance then decides to make an informal request, and discusses their intention to change their work schedule with their manager. The employee then submits their request in writing for the manager's approval.

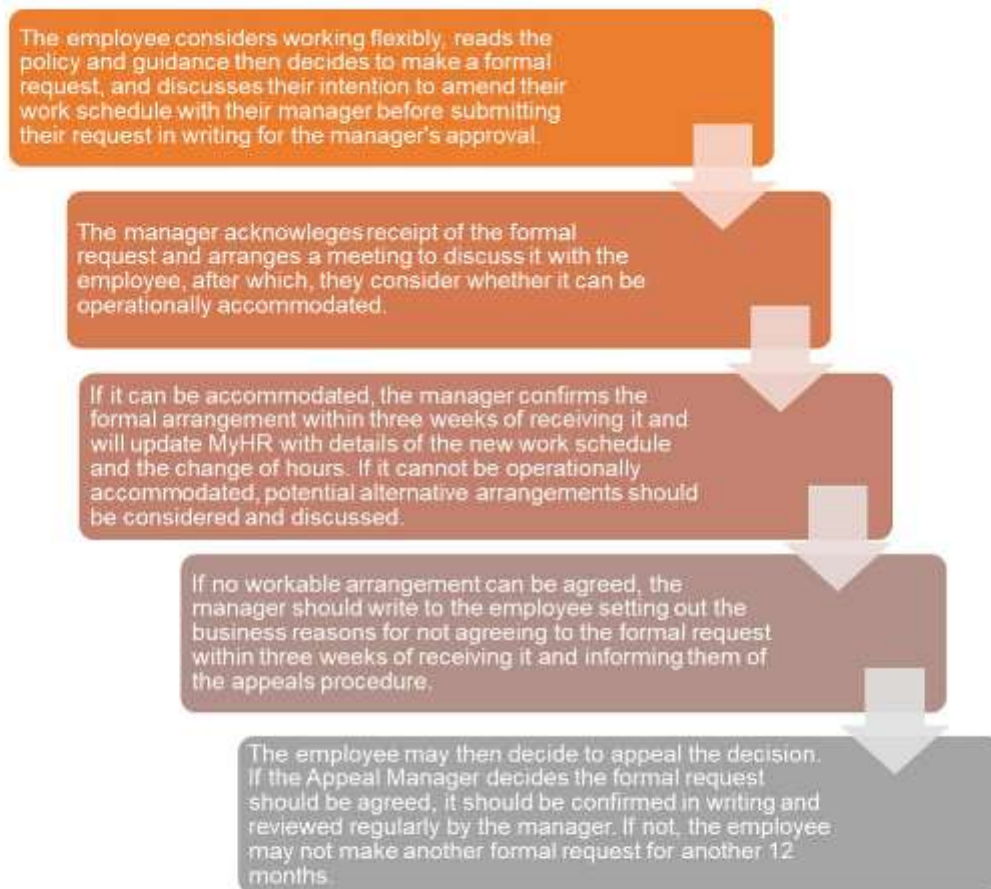
The manager acknowledges receipt of the informal request and arranges a meeting to discuss it with the employee, after which, they consider whether it can be operationally accommodated.

If the informal request can be approved, the manager confirms the arrangement notifying the employee within three weeks of receiving it, and will update MyHR with the new work schedule and the change of hours. The schedule will be regularly reviewed. If it cannot be operationally accommodated, the manager and employee should discuss any potential alternative arrangements.



Whilst there is no right of appeal for informal requests, there is no limit on the number of informal requests that can be submitted by an employee within a year.

### Formal flexible working arrangement request flowchart



Formal flexible working arrangement request flow chart description: The employee considers working flexibly, reads the policy and guidance then decides to make a formal request, and discusses their intention to amend their work schedule with their manager before submitting their request in writing for the manager's approval. The manager acknowledges receipt of the formal request and arranges a meeting to discuss it with the employee, after which, they consider whether it can be operationally accommodated. If it can be accommodated, the manager confirms the formal arrangement within three weeks of receiving it and will update MyHR with details of the new work schedule and the change of hours. If it cannot be operationally accommodated, potential alternative arrangements should be considered and discussed. If no workable arrangement can be agreed, the manager should write to the employee setting out the business reasons for not agreeing to the formal request within three weeks of receiving it and informing them of the appeals procedure. The employee may then decide to appeal the decision. If the Appeal Manager decides the formal request should be agreed, it should be confirmed in writing and reviewed regularly by the manager. If not, the employee may not make another formal request for another 12 months.

The above is a screenshot taken from the MOD Civilian Human Resources People Portal taken on 6 December 2022.

<https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/IntranetCivilianHRPeoplePortal/SitePages/MOD-Main-flexible-working-landing-page.aspx>