



Department for
Business & Trade

How we will make it easier for employees to ask for flexible working

Booklet and survey



Easy read booklet

Who we are



Department for
Business & Trade

We are the **Department
for Business and Trade.**



We support businesses and are
in charge of **trade** in the UK.



Trade is when people or countries
buy products and services from
each other.



We help businesses to treat
their employees fairly.

What this booklet tells you



Businesses need to think about what employees need to do their job.



Some employees need **flexible working**.



Flexible working is a change to where someone works, when they work or how many hours they work.



This booklet tells you how we will make it easier for employees to ask for flexible working.

About our survey



Most of this booklet is a survey. In our survey we ask you questions about flexible working.



It is important that you read pages 5 to 7 before you start our survey.



These pages tell you about

- flexible working
- recent changes to flexible working
- changes we will make.



You have until **30 April 2026** at 11:59 pm to answer our survey.

Flexible working



Flexible working can help employees to work in a way that is right for them.



It can give them a good balance between their work and the rest of their life.



To ask for flexible working, employees must make a **flexible working request**.



A **flexible working request** is when an employee officially asks for flexible working.

Recent changes to flexible working



In 2024, some changes were made to how employees and employers make and deal with flexible working requests.



Since 2024, employees

- can make a flexible working request from the first day they start their job.
- can make 2 requests in 12 months.



Since 2024, employers

- must make a decision about flexible working requests within 2 months.
- must talk to their employees before they say no to a flexible working request.



Changes we will make



We want it to be easy and fair for employees and employers to talk about flexible working requests.



That is why we will make 2 changes.

Change 1



Before an employer says no to a flexible working request, they must have a meeting with their employee.



In this meeting they must talk about their employee's request and if they can agree to any other options for flexible working.

Change 2



Employers must say yes to all flexible working requests they think are **feasible**.



Feasible means something is possible to do.



These changes are part of the government's plan called **Make Work Pay**.



Make Work Pay is a plan to protect employees and make sure they are treated fairly at work.

How to fill in our survey



You can fill in our survey with a pen or on a computer.



If you fill in our survey with a pen, send it to this address

**Flexible Working Policy Team,
Employment Rights Directorate
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London
SW1A 2DY**



If you fill in our survey on a computer, email it to this address

flexibleworking@businessandtrade.gov.uk

How we use your information



Your information is anything you tell us in our survey.



We may

- send your information to other people, like the government.
- use **AI** to help us look at your information.



AI stands for artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is when technology, like computers, are programmed to do things that normally need a human brain.



Please tell us if you do not want us to do this with your information.

Questions about you

Who are you?

Please tick **1** box



- An employee
- An academic or someone answering for an academic or research organisation
- An employer
- A legal representative
- A business representative
- A trade union or staff association
- A charity or interest group
- Someone else. Tell us in this box.



If you are an employee, how many employees work at your organisation?
Please tick **1** box



- 1 to 9 employees
- 10 to 49 employees
- 50 to 249 employees
- More than 250 employees
- I do not know
- I am not an employee

Where is your organisation?
Please tick **1** box



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> North East England | <input type="checkbox"/> London |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North West England | <input type="checkbox"/> South East England |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yorkshire and The Humber | <input type="checkbox"/> South West England |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East Midlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Wales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> West Midlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Scotland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East of England | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Ireland |

What kind of work do you do?

Please tick **1** box



Accommodation and food service

For example, you work in a place like a hotel, resort, café or restaurant

Activities of households

For example, you work in a house cleaning, cooking, gardening or looking after children

Administration and support service

For example, you work in an office doing tasks on a computer

Arts, entertainment and recreation

For example, you work in TV, radio, film or theatre

Agriculture, forestry and fishing

For example, you work on farm, boat or you help look after wildlife

Construction

For example, you help build houses or other buildings

There are more choices on the next page

Education

For example, you work in a school, college or university

Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning

For example, you make sure people have energy in their homes

Finance and insurance

For example, you work in a bank, or you help people look after their money

Health services and social work

For example, you help people stay safe or you look after people when they are unwell

Information and communication

For example, you work in a library, or you write news stories or other things people read

Manufacturing

For example, you build products

Mining and quarrying

For example, you dig up rocks, sand or other materials used for building

There are more choices on the next page

Production

For example, you make things like TV shows, films and music

Professional, scientific and technical activities

For example, you work in a science lab, or your job is to test things

Public administration and defence

For example, you work for a local council or the government

Real estate

For example, you sell or rent houses

Services

For example, you give people a service like cutting hair or delivering post

Transport or storage

For example, you work in an airport, or you drive a bus or train

Water supply or waste management

For example, you make sure people have water in their homes

Sales

For example, you work in a shop, or you sell products

I do a different kind of job

Questions about flexible working



We told you about flexible working on [page 5](#).

In the last 3 years, have you thought about making a flexible working request?

Please tick **1** box



- Yes, I thought about it but did not make a request
- Yes, I thought about it and made a request
- No, I already do flexible working
- No, I do not need flexible working
- No, I did not know I could make a request, or I do not know how to
- I do not know

If you thought about making a flexible working request but you did not, why not?
Please tick **1** box



- I thought my employer would say no
- I thought it would badly affect my job
- I only wanted flexible working for a short while and I did not want my work contract to change
- I thought my employer would take too long to make a decision
- I did not want to ask because my employer said no to someone else's request
- I thought my request would have a bad effect on the people I work with
- I did not think my boss would support me
- I do not know
- Something else. Tell us in this box.



If you made a flexible working request, what happened?

Please tick **1** box



- My employer said yes
- My employer said no but we agreed I could try a different way of flexible working
- My employer said no

How has your decision to make or not make a flexible working request affected your life?

For example, tell us about how you feel at work or at home.

Write your answer in the box below



Questions about recent changes



We told you about recent changes to flexible working on [page 6](#).

Do you think these recent changes have made it easier to make a flexible working request?

Please tick **1** box



Yes

No

I do not know

Questions about the changes we will make



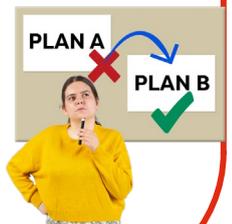
We told you about the changes we will make on **pages 7 to 8**.

Before an employer says no to a flexible working request, we think they should have a meeting with their employee.

We think they should talk about the request and if the employee can try a different way of flexible working.

Do you think the employer and employee should talk about this in the meeting ?

Please tick **1** box



Yes

No

I do not know

If you said no, what should the employer and employee talk about in the meeting?

Write your answer in the box below



We think this meeting should happen quite quickly.



It must happen within the 2 months the employer has to make their decision about the request.



We think the employee should be told about the meeting so they can feel ready for it.

When should the employer tell the employee about the meeting?

Please tick **1** box



- 1 day before
- 3 days before
- They should just give them a fair amount of time
- Whenever
- I do not know
- Something else. Tell us in this box.



Our ideas about rules for the meeting



We think there should be rules about how the meeting is done.

?



There should be rules about who is in the meeting with the employee.



This must be someone who can make decisions about flexible working.

Decision maker



This person is called the decision maker.



They must keep notes of what was said in this meeting.

Do you agree with these rules?

Please tick **1** box



Yes

No

I do not know

If you said no, what rules should we have about how this meeting is done?

Write your answer in the box below



In the meeting



In the meeting the decision maker and employee should talk about the request.



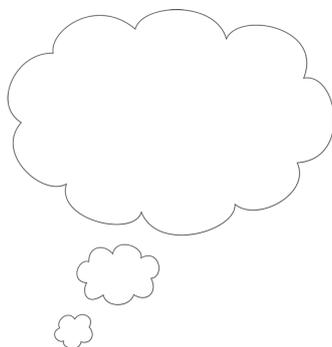
The decision maker should ask the employee if the request is a **reasonable adjustment**.



Reasonable adjustments are changes employers must make so disabled people can do their job.



The decision maker should explain why the request is not feasible.



They should think about how the request could be made feasible.



They should talk about if a **trial period** is possible.



A **trial period** is when you try something for a short, set amount of time to see how well it works.

What do you think should be talked about in the meeting?

Please tick as many boxes as you want



- If the request is a reasonable adjustment
- Why the request is not feasible
- How the request could be made feasible
- If the request could start at a different time
- If a trial period is possible
- Something else. Tell us in this box.



After the meeting



We think the decision maker should write down what was talked about in the meeting.



They should write down and explain what decisions were made.



They should write down and explain their decision about the flexible working request.

Do you agree?
Please tick **1** box



Yes

No

I do not know

Do you have any ideas about how employers should talk to employees about flexible working requests?

Write your answer in the box below



A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above.

Questions about support and information



Many people want more support and information about how to make flexible working requests.

What would you like extra information about?

Please tick as many boxes as you want



- How to make specific requests, like how to work from home
- How to make a request if you do a certain kind of job, like if you work in a café
- How to make a request if you work a certain way, like if you work different hours each week
- I do not need any extra information
- Something else. Tell us in this box.



How would you want to get this information?

Please tick as many boxes as you want



Case studies

As pictures or photos that show step by step what to do

Information in writing

Video clips

Webinars

I do not need any extra information

Something else. Tell us in this box.



A **case study** is an example of how something has been done.



A **webinar** is an online event where you can talk to people and see them on your computer or phone.

Where would you look for this information?

Please tick as many boxes as you want



- Social media like Instagram, TikTok or Facebook
- Friends, family or people I work with
- The **Gov.uk** website
- The **Acas** website
- A trade union
- A charity sector organisation
- Work policies**
- Somewhere else. Tell us in this box.



Work policies are rules employees must follow about how to behave at work.

How should we make it easier for employees to ask for flexible working?

Please tick as many boxes as you want



- Make sure organisations talk about flexible working and what they can offer employees when they first give them a job
- Make sure employees know they can always ask for flexible working
- Make sure employees know about the different requests they can make
- Make sure employers know about the different requests their employees can make
- Something else. Tell us in this box.



Thank you for answering our survey