

Flexibility Protocol

Introduction

The ability to flexibly deploy staff within Leeds City Council is essential to meeting changing organisational needs without adding to financial pressures. It is also a valuable tool in broadening employee skills and managing workload peaks.

In order to achieve this there is a need for:

- Recognition of the need to change the way we deliver services – with the result that staff need to be flexible about their role, location and working patterns
- Staff to demonstrate a ‘can do’ and ‘will do’ approach to ‘do what’s needed’ rather than ‘how it’s been done previously’

Considerations

We recognise that due to personal circumstances, some staff will be able to work more flexibly than others. However, it is requirement of all Leeds City Council staff to do what they can to maximise their personal flexibility under these arrangements. Similarly, managers will take account of individual circumstances when considering how to resource services through flexible arrangements, and will work to the following arrangements wherever possible:

- **Role:** Movement to a different role at the same grade will be where there are clear transferable skills set. For short-term moves (e.g. to provide temporary cover) staff will be consulted about the cover arrangements as early as possible, recognising that due to the nature of the cover required, it may not be possible to give advanced notice. Where this is extended, or is anticipated from the outset to not be a short-term arrangement, the line manager will try and give as much notice as possible of the change.
- **Location:** If travel to the new location incurs significant additional cost or travelling time to the employee, this will be taken into consideration and the manager will work with the employee to identify possible solutions/alternatives. The travel and subsistence policy would apply for business travel, and the ‘excess travel’ policy will continue to apply for permanent moves.
- **Working patterns** –under normal arrangements, working different patterns (e.g. weekends, shifts etc.) may result in variations in pay each week. Where the working pattern is contractual, the employee will be formally consulted about the changes.

Communication of Transfer

Any change under these arrangements will be discussed as far as possible in advance with the employee, to understand any personal circumstances which reduce the employee’s ability to be flexible. Consideration will be given to ensure the employee does not suffer significant detriment as a result of being asked to work flexibly to meet service needs.

Where the above is not feasible due to pressing service needs, the matter will be referred to a head of service.

Identification of Opportunities

There are a wide variety of circumstances in which the possibility of flexible deployment, whether permanent/temporary, part-time or full-time, can arise. Examples include :-

- A project or pieces of work requiring skills, experience or knowledge not available within a section.
- Where staffing levels vary and re-allocation of staff is needed to address workloads across different services/activities
- A need to cover absences, such as sickness or maternity leave.

In each of these or comparable circumstances, flexible deployment should be seen as a cost effective viable alternative to:

- Agency staff
- External consultants
- Recruitment of new employees (whether on a temporary or permanent basis from outside the organisation).

What it means in practice

- Generic flexible job descriptions based on transferable skills to enable deployment to priority service areas
- Line management arrangements may vary without a 'restructure'
 - May work across different teams / services /directorates / with different external partners, whether formally in informally, temporarily or longer term
 - May work as part of a multi-disciplinary team with line management outside of the 'traditional' boundaries
 - Supervisor may change but every employee will know who their supervisor/manager is at any point in time
- Internal moves will not be implemented as a 'restructure' but in line with this flexibility protocol
- Managers to take responsibility to engage with staff to make sure they understand the reason for the move, the likely duration, identification of any training and development needs along with giving consideration to any personal concerns raised.