

Flexible Working Policy

Approved by Cornerstone Trustees 29th March 2021

Review Due in 2024

If anything in this policy contradicts an employment contract between Cornerstone Church Grays and an employed individual, the employment contract takes precedence..

1. Overview

1.1 This policy explains how to make a flexible working request to the Church. It explains what flexible working means and how it can be used to help employees achieve a balance between work and home life, and also help trustees to organise work around church needs.

1.2 This policy does not form part of your employment contract and we may update it any time.

1.3 This policy applies to employees with at least 26 weeks' service only.

1.4 We encourage you to have an informal discussion with the trustee responsible for employment about flexible working before submitting a formal request.

2 What is flexible working?

2.1 Flexible working might involve reducing or varying your hours, the days that you work, or changing the location of where you work. There are lots of options, including:

- part-time working;
- term-time working;
- annualised hours;
- compressed hours;
- flexitime;
- homeworking; and
- job-sharing.

3 Business needs

3.1 We recognise the benefits of flexible working and will genuinely and seriously consider all flexible working requests in a reasonable manner. However, we will need to balance the request against its effect on the business, the needs of the Church, and the impact on other staff.

4 Eligibility

4.1 Any employee with at least 26 weeks' service with the Church can make a request for flexible working by law.

4.2 An employee may make one flexible working request in a 12-month period (unless it relates to a request to consider reasonable adjustments on account of disability under the Equality Act 2010.)

5 How to submit a flexible working request

5.1 To submit a request, send a letter or email to the trustee responsible for employment. The request must:



- state that it is a flexible working request and be dated;
- include the changes that you want and their proposed start date;
- explain the effect you think the changes would have on the Church and how that could be dealt with; and
- include the dates of any previous flexible working requests.

6 Meeting

6.1 We may invite you to a meeting, usually within 28 days, to discuss the flexible working request. It is your responsibility to make every effort to attend the meeting but, if you cannot, we will normally reschedule it, provided we are satisfied with your explanation for why you cannot attend. We reserve the right to make our decision without you being present, and we will in any case only reschedule the meeting once, unless there are very good reasons to justify a second rescheduling. If you fail to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, we will assume you have withdrawn your application.

6.2 We may also grant your request without a meeting.

7 Your right to be accompanied

7.1 You may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative at any meeting called under this policy.

7.2 If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not prevent them from attending, but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work would cause operational problems.

7.3 Your colleague or union representative can, if you'd like them to, explain the key points of your case at the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meetings. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you, or try to prevent us asking questions or outlining our points.

8 Responding to a request

8.1 We will deal with flexible working requests reasonably.

8.2 We will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, weighing up the benefits to you (and to the business) against any adverse impact that granting your request would have on the business or other staff.

8.3 Each request will be considered on its own merits. Agreeing to one request does not mean we will reach the same conclusion again, nor does it create a right for any other employee. There may be situations where having granted flexible working to one employee means that others' requests for similar flexible working cannot be granted.

8.4 We will respond to your request in writing as soon as reasonably possible. We usually aim to respond within two weeks of the meeting.

8.5 We may grant your request in full, in part, or refuse it. We may also propose changes to your request for you to consider. Your request may be granted on a permanent or temporary basis, and you may be asked to complete a trial period before we confirm whether we agree to the changes.

8.6 If we reject your request, it will normally be for one of the following business reasons:

- The burden of additional costs;
- An inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff or recruit additional staff;
- A detrimental impact on quality, performance or on our ability to meet customer demand;
- Insufficient work for the periods you proposed to work; or



- Where we intend to reorganise or change the business and consider the flexible working changes may not fit with our plans.

8.7 We will write to you with our decision and the reason for rejection, or details of the new working arrangements. Any permanent changes agreed will involve a permanent change to your contract of employment (i.e. you have no right to revert back to your original contract). You should sign and return a copy of this letter to the trustee responsible for employment.

8.8 We might ask that any change to your contract be for an initial trial period of three months. At the end of the trial period, if we do not think it is working, we may need to return to the contractual position before the variation happened.

9 Appealing our decision

9.1 You may appeal within a week of our decision. Your appeal should be dated and sent in writing to the person identified as the appeal officer in the decision letter. You must explain exactly why you are appealing.

9.2 We will invite you to an appeal meeting. Wherever possible, the appeal meeting will not be led by the trustee who held the meeting at which we decided what action to take. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague, in line with the process outlined in paragraph 7 above. Appeals will normally be determined before the end of the 'decision period' (three months from when you sent your initial request) wherever possible. An extension to the 'decision period' may need to be agreed with you, if necessary.

9.3 Our final decision will be sent to you in writing. We try to do this within two weeks of the appeal hearing. You do not have any further right to appeal.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this policy please contact our charity trustees at
trustees@cornerstonegrays.org

This policy is based on a policy provided by Ashfield HR Limited to the Anglican Mission in England.

Cornerstone Church Grays is a registered charity
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