**Checklist on managing flexible workers**

Flexible working can be extremely beneficial to a workforce, allowing employees to create a strong work/life balance that can assist with personal commitments such as caring responsibilities.

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working hours after they have completed 26 weeks of service. These types of requests can include a change to hours and days worked, or to work from home. Managers are encouraged to accept flexible working requests wherever possible, and only decline a request where there is a sound business reason for their refusal.

Flexible workers remain an integral part of the workforce even though they are undertaking amended working arrangements. There are, however, common concerns or areas of difficulty which can crop up when managing this group of workers. The below are steps that managers can consider when managing flexible workers:

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| [ ]  | Make sure that both management and the employee understand that this is a permanent change to the employee’s contract unless expressly agreed otherwise.  |
| [ ]  | If both parties agree that the change will be temporary pending evaluation, steps must be taken to ensure this evaluation takes place.  |
| [ ]  | Have a flexible working policy in place which outlines any special arrangements or procedures which are in place for management. Ensure the flexible working policy is communicated to all and provided to flexible working commencing alternative working arrangements.  |
| [ ]  | Have a meeting in advance of the commencement of flexible working arrangements to discuss and agree management matters such as communication, providing updates, attendance at meetings etc. |
| [ ]  | Ensure flexible workers are set clear, specific and realistic performance targets or objectives to allow their performance to be managed effectively.  |
| [ ]  | Have regular informal catch-ups with flexible workers to ensure they feel supported. This will also provide them with an appropriate forum to ask any questions or raise any concerns.  |
| [ ]  | Arrange formal performance reviews in advance. These should be carried out as normal, whether in person or via communication software.  |
| [ ]  | Take timely action to address any underperformance concerns. Consider whether further support or training is needed to ensure the flexible worker is provided with all the tools needed to meet their performance targets.  |
| [ ]  | Consider whether alternative arrangements are needed within the absence policy for flexible workers, such as providing an alternative contact to inform of sickness absence.  |
| [ ]  | Ensure flexible workers are receiving internal and organisational communications. Where these are provided outside of their working hours, have a process in place and allocate a ‘buddy’ to provide all communications.  |
| [ ]  | Remind flexible workers of the dangers of overwork and ensure managers are not requiring home workers to answer emails outside of their working hours.  |
| [ ]  | To avoid flexible workers missing out on training and development opportunities, ensure there is a process in place to assess their training needs, informally and during formal reviews.  |
| [ ]  | Where training is provided, ensure there is a process in place to provide training to those with alternative working arrangements, such as online sessions or video recordings.  |
| [ ]  | Ensure appropriate health and safety measures are in place for those with flexible working arrangements, including carrying out risk assessments and having a point of contact if there is a safety breach outside of normal working hours.  |
| [ ]  | Consider if handover arrangements are necessary so that people who work at different times can pass on valuable information to each other.  |
| [ ]  | It may be useful to publish a staff rota so that all employees are aware of their colleagues’ working arrangements.  |