



DEVELOPING GOOD
MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

A HEFCE Initiative

NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

– TAKEN FROM THE FEO PROJECT REPORT, 2003

1. **Use a business case approach to identify the benefits for the organisation of implementing a flexible working policy.**
 - Define clearly all the direct and indirect benefits for employees, customers and the organisation
 - Identify any potential costs such as the design, administration and training associated with the scheme
 - Be realistic about the limitations of any scheme

2. **Use this business case to convince senior managers within the organisation to adopt this approach**
 - Identify champions to promote the scheme
 - Develop a training programme on both cultural and practical issues for managers.

3. **Review current flexible working practices within the organisation**
 - Identify formal and informal practices within the organisation
 - Understand which groups of staff are eligible to use these practices
 - Identify any areas of good practice or resistance to flexibility
 - Review the training provided for managers and, if appropriate, include training on flexible working

4. Carry out an audit to establish what flexibility employees require and to establish what flexibility would help the organisation to meet customer needs

- Involve as many employees as possible including managers at all levels
- Communicate effectively so that people understand the reasons for asking and take care not to raise expectations too high

5. Design a programme of options to suit both the organisation and employee needs

- Involve employee representatives when designing and implementing the scheme
- Have a clear policy on how the scheme will work and who it will apply to
- Emphasise that flexibility is a privilege and not a right
- Simplify the application form and process as far as possible and include guidelines on how much employees need to write in support of their request for flexible working
- Where possible include examples, either from other organisations or an anonymised copy of an application form already completed
- Provide guidelines for managers to help them assess applications for flexible working and to make informed decisions
- Keep the scheme flexible so that managers and employees can use it effectively to meet the specific needs within their team
- Provide information on the details of how each option will operate in practice
- Ensure that information is available to staff on the implications of any option chosen (this is particularly important in the case of reduced hours, which will impact upon both current income and future pension entitlement)

6. Define performance indicators to measure the success of the scheme e.g. staff turnover and absence levels

- Ensure that these measures are simple and easily measured
- Set up processes to ensure they are measured regularly

7. Pilot the scheme with key groups before extending across the organisation

- Choose groups that are positive towards the idea and will support the scheme in principle
- Identify managers who are prepared to make the scheme work successfully
- Choose a big enough sample to give meaningful results but not so large that it becomes unwieldy to evaluate

8. Evaluate the success/failure of the pilot scheme

- Collect data via questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and performance measures as appropriate
- Analyse the data to highlight key issues and evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme
- Involve all groups in the evaluation of the scheme including participants, non-participants and managers
- Maintain the confidentiality of individuals to ensure the integrity of the scheme
- Use the feedback obtained from the employees and managers to make any alterations to required to the policy
- Involve managers and employee representatives when finalising the overall scheme for the organisation

9. Communicate the new, organisation-wide scheme as widely as possible

- Make sure managers are clear and confident about the scheme
- Provide appropriate training for managers and ensure appropriate support is available throughout the duration of the scheme
- Publicise the scheme as widely as possible and ensure that all staff are aware of how it will operate in practice
- Give people an opportunity to ask questions or raise issues

10. Monitor and review

- Establish regular, clear communication channels (possibly in the form of team or departmental meetings) to ensure that staff feel supported and any issues or problems that have arisen can be aired and tackled at an early stage
- Review team/department performance of the scheme every 3 – 6 months at the outset of the scheme
- Identify any issues at an early stage and address them
- Review the performance of the overall scheme on an annual basis
- Use the scheme as a selling point when advertising/recruiting for new staff