

Appendix B

Proposed key changes to Working Flexibly Policy and Procedure

- **Right to request flexible working from day one of employment** – Given the uncertainty of personal circumstances, it is proposed employees will have the right to request flexible working from day one of employment rather than be required to wait 26 weeks as is the current legal position. This of course does not mean automatic approval but allows consideration.
- **Management discretion to allow more than one flexible working application in 12 months** – In addition to the above, it is proposed to have added flexibility for management to consider more than one flexible working request within 12 months if the service wishes to consider it.
- **Flexi-time replaced by Time off in Lieu (TOIL)** – it is proposed to move away from employee led flexi-time accrual, which is not what the current scheme allows but appears to have evolved in a small number of teams. Key service stakeholders tell us it is not driven by operational demands but by employees, therefore it will potentially be reducing our resource levels. Working flexibly should be a universal offer and the flexi-time scheme is only utilised by 10% of the workforce. It also focuses on core hours which we have entirely moved away from during the pandemic. If there is a need to ask employees if they can work extra hours, they will of course be able to have payment or Time off in Lieu (TOIL) for doing so, which does not require us to have a flexi-time scheme to facilitate. Ideally TOIL would be taken within a month of accruing it but services have the option to be flexible with that so they can manage absence levels.
- **Home working requests consolidated into Working Flexibly policy** – It is proposed to incorporate home working requests into the Working Flexibly Policy and remove the current limitations, which are that employees needed to meet certain requirements to be eligible to submit an application i.e. long term absence, maternity/adoption/shared parental leave or disability. Therefore, this has been removed to make requests available to all staff.
- **Career break removal / increase of sabbatical duration** – The revised policy incorporates related policies/guides, and having reviewed them, it is proposed to remove the career break scheme as this is outdated and not widely used. The main reason for this is that employees must resign and do not receive any former benefits of being a council employee should they be re-employed. In its place, it is proposed to extend the option for our employees to request a sabbatical. This means extending the length of the sabbatical from up to 6 months to up to 12 months and allowing employees with one-year service to request a sabbatical rather than the current five years' service.