

Work-Life Balance Policy

Name	Work-Life Balance Policy
Summary	These policies have been developed to provide staff with a range of flexible working options and leave arrangements to help them to balance their lifestyle whilst maintaining and promoting the best possible service to our patients and service users within a 24 hours a day, 365 days a year service.
Associated Documents	
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CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Introduction	5
2 Scope	5
3. Strategic Framework/Organisational Culture	5
4. Legal Framework & NHS Terms & Conditions of Service	6
5. Roles and Responsibilities	6
6. Benefits for Golden Jubilee Foundation	7
7. Flexible Working Arrangements	8
8. Special Leave	9
9. Parental Policies	10
10. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation	11

Appendices:

[Appendix 1: Procedure for Managing Flexible Working Requests](#)

[Appendix 2: NHSGJ Flexible Working Policy](#)

[Appendix 3: NHSGJ Job-share Policy](#)

[Appendix 4: NHSGJ Reduced Working Year Policy](#)

[Appendix 5: NHSGJ Career Break Policy](#)

[Appendix 6: NHSGJ Annualised Hours Policy](#)

[Appendix 7: NHSGJ Homeworking Policy](#)

[Appendix 8: NHSGJ Retirement Policy](#)

[Appendix 9: NHSGJ Special Leave Policy](#)

[Appendix 10: NHSGJ Maternity Leave Policy](#)

[Appendix 11: NHSGJ Maternity Support \(Paternity\) Leave Policy](#)

[Appendix 12: NHSGJ Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)

[Appendix 13: NHSGJ Parental Leave Policy](#)

[Appendix 14: NHSGJ Breastfeeding Policy](#)

[Appendix 15: NHSGJ Adoption Leave and Fostering Policy](#)

[Appendix 16: NHSGJ Childcare Guidance](#)

NHS Golden Jubilee Values Statement

What we do or deliver in our roles within the NHS Golden Jubilee (NHSGJ) is important, but the way we behave is equally important to our patients, customers, visitors and colleagues. We know this from feedback we get from patients and customers, for example in “thank you” letters and the complaints we receive.

Recognising this, NHSGJ has worked with a range of staff, patient representatives and managers to discuss and promote our shared values which help us all to deliver the highest quality care and service across the organisation. These values are closely linked to our responsibilities around Equality.



- V**aluing dignity and respect
- A** can do attitude
- L**eading commitment to quality
- U**nderstanding our responsibilities
- E**ffectively working together

Our policies are intended to support the delivery of these values which support employee experience.

1. Introduction

Throughout their career, employees will face differing demands on their time and energies at home as well as at work. 'Work-Life Balance' may be defined most simply as enabling staff to have sufficient control and autonomy over where, when and how they work to fulfil their responsibilities both inside and outside paid work.

These policies have been developed to provide staff with a range of flexible working options and leave arrangements to help them to balance their lifestyle whilst maintaining and promoting the best possible service to our patients and service users within a 24 hours a day, 365 days a year service.

It is designed to promote fairness and consistency in the treatment of all employees, and to clarify the rights and responsibilities of managers, employees and trade unions/professional organisations in respect of employees who seek to access the provisions set out within these policies.

2. Scope

'Work-life balance' is a concept that applies to all staff members and not simply those who have family or caring responsibilities. Except where there are specific qualifying conditions which are required in order to access particular provisions within this document, this PIN Policy applies to all directly employed staff.

Staff should be treated fairly and consistently, with equality of access to the range of flexible working options and leave arrangements set out within these policies, in line with the provisions of the NHS Golden Jubilee (NHSGJ) Embracing Equality, Diversity and Human Rights policy.

3. Strategic Framework/Organisational Culture

Successful service delivery depends upon the workforce within NHSGJ and it is understood that staff are at their best when they are able to strike a balance between life inside and outside work.

As exemplar employers, NHSGJ recognises the need to attract and retain the best staff and that a commitment to helping staff to achieve a 'work-life balance' will assist staff to work more happily and productively, as well as widen the potential pool of talent available to the service.

However, it is equally recognised that achieving work-life balance within an organisation demands willingness on the part of staff, managers, clinical leaders, and trade union/professional organisation representatives to explore how practices to support the work-life balance can support the organisation as a whole to achieve its objectives. This will challenge all partners to create a fundamental cultural change at all levels.

4. Legal Framework & NHS Terms & Conditions of Service

Current employment legislation sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in relation to the following areas as applicable to these policies:

- Rights of Part-time Workers Flexible Working Requests
- Time off for Dependents
- Time off for Public Duties
- Rights of reservists
- Maternity Leave & Pay
- Adoption Leave & Pay
- Maternity Support (Paternity) Leave & Pay
- Parental Leave

The legislation covering these areas is in some cases particularly complex and regularly subject to change. It would not be prudent therefore to detail all current applicable legislation.

This policy should be read alongside the NHSGJ *Embracing Equality, Diversity and Human Rights policy*, which sets out the Boards' obligations in relation to the Equality Act 2010.

With specific regard to flexible working arrangements, employers should also be mindful of their responsibilities under the Working Time Regulations 1998.

These policies are an addendum to the Terms and Conditions of Service. It is an annex to the Agenda for Change Handbook but equally applies to other members of staff within NHSScotland.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

- To recognise that with rights come responsibilities to act reasonably;
- To make use of the provisions of these policies fairly and reasonably; and
- To be prepared to agree solutions and working arrangements that take account not only of their own needs, but also of the needs of colleagues and the service.

Employers (through Line Managers)

- To ensure fairness and consistency in the application of the provisions set out within these policies;

- To give genuine consideration to all applications made under the provisions set out within their policies and to ensure that no application is unreasonably refused;
- To ensure that they understand their role and responsibilities under the policies, and that they seek further information and guidance where required; and
- To support work to promote the provisions set out within the policies.

Trade Union/Professional Organisation Representatives and their local representatives

- To work in partnership with NHSGJ to develop a local policy which meets or exceeds the provisions set out within this policy;
- To support work to promote the provisions set out within NHSGJ's local policy; and
- To support employees and NHSGJ in ensuring fairness and consistency in the application of the provisions set out within NHSGJ's local policy.

6. Benefits for NHSGJ

As well as the benefits for the organisation and their staff outlined below, an organisational culture that promotes work-life balance is also directly benefited in the following ways:

Recruitment

NHSGJ needs to take account of the changing expectations of the workforce and the wider labour market. Trends show that employees and potential recruits will be more likely to choose to work in organisations that can match their own expectations. Arrangements to support the work-life balance encourage recruitment from a more diverse range of applicants.

Retention

Evidence indicates that staff are more likely to stay with an organisation where arrangements to support the work-life balance are available. Organisations that recognise the needs of staff will reduce wastage of skills, ability and experience as people will remain within the workforce. Work-life balance policies allow employers to reduce turnover rates, which may in turn result in savings on recruitment, training and induction costs. For example, arrangements to support the work-life balance are one of the main reasons women choose to return to work after maternity leave.

Quality and effectiveness

Increasing the ability to balance work and life responsibilities has been shown to increase quality of life. In turn, this can lead to increased motivation, greater job satisfaction, improved job performance, increased productivity levels, staff engagement and ultimately improved service delivery.

Increased organisational ability to meet service demands

Arrangements to support the work-life balance, particularly regarding flexible working, increase the ability, through effective workforce planning, to match staff availability with service demand.

Reduced absenteeism

Evidence suggests that arrangements to support the work-life balance are likely to lead to a reduction in absenteeism as staff have the flexibility to adjust their working environment to meet

their personal responsibilities. This results in a more productive workforce with lower absenteeism costs, which serves to improve the quality of services.

Health at work

Work-life balance policies are a key contributor to the reduction of stress at work and the improved wellbeing of staff.

Equality and inclusion

Work-life balance policies are available to all staff to meet their individual needs and responsibilities, as their circumstances change throughout their working life, thus promoting equality across the workforce.

Staff satisfaction

Work-life balance policies provide an opportunity to combine paid work with other activities, allowing for more effective management of work-life responsibilities, leading to a more varied and balanced lifestyle.

7. Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible working encompasses a range of options as listed below:

Part-Time Working

Where an employee is contracted to work less than full-time hours.

Refer to the Appendix 2: NHSGJ Flexible Working policy

Job Sharing

A form of part-time working where two or more people share the responsibility for a job between them in a structured manner.

Refer to the Appendix 3: NHSGJ Job Share policy

Career Breaks

A means of enabling people to take an unpaid break from work where the contract of employment does not terminate.

Refer to the Appendix 5: NHSGJ Career Break policy

Reduced Working Year

Where an employee's contract of employment remains in place, but they take paid/unpaid leave during fixed periods of the year, such as during school holidays.

Refer to the Appendix 4: NHSGJ Reduced Working Year policy

Flexi-Time

A system by which employees can choose when they work, subject to achieving a required total number of hours over an agreed daily, weekly or monthly reference period. Such a system may involve a core period of the day when employees are expected to be at work and may also involve the facility for employees to carry over a debit or credit of hours between such reference periods.

Refer to the Appendix 2: NHSGJ Flexible Working policy

Self-Rostering

An arrangement whereby members of a team are allowed to be self-sufficient by scheduling their own shifts, whilst maintaining agreed service levels.

Refer to the Appendix 2: NHSGJ Flexible Working policy

Compressed Working Hours

Where employees compress normal working hours into fewer working days.

Refer to the Appendix 2: NHSGJ Flexible Working policy

Annualised hours

Where contracted hours are calculated over the period of a whole year. They may consist of both fixed and unallocated shifts, ensuring that core times are filled and remaining times are flexible. The unallocated shifts can then be used by the manager for unexpected surges in demand at reasonably short notice.

Refer to the Appendix 6: NHSGJ Annualised Hours policy

Home working

Where a staff member fulfils their contractual obligations working from home for all or part of their hours.

Refer to the Appendix 7: NHSGJ Home Working policy

Phased retirement

An arrangement where an employee can gradually reduce their working hours as they near an agreed retirement date, enabling them to balance their work and personal life and prepare for full retirement.

Refer to the Appendix 8: NHSGJ Flexible Working policy

Voluntary reduced working hours

The provision for employees to request a reduction in their contracted hours for a defined temporary period of time.

Refer to the Appendix 2: NHSGJ Flexible Working policy

8. Special Leave

NHS conditions of service provide for staff entitlement to compassionate leave and special leave, and NHS employers must ensure that they have a policy in place in order to address a range of staff needs. The model policy at Appendix I group these responsibilities to encompass:

- Provision to allow a carer to meet their responsibilities for a relative, partner or dependant;
- Arrangements for time off when there is for example a serious illness or death of a close relative or dependant;
- Arrangements for time off for essential civic and public duties (including reservist duty; and
- Arrangements for time off to deal with domestic or unforeseen crises.

Refer to the Appendix 9: NHSGJ Special Leave policy

9. Parental Policies

Maternity and Breastfeeding

Detailing provisions for pregnant employees and the new birthing parent returning to work, and covers maternity leave and pay, antenatal and postnatal care, health and safety considerations and provisions for new birthing parent wishing to breastfeed.

Refer to the Appendix 10: NHSGJ Maternity Leave policy/ Appendix 14 NHSGJ Breastfeeding policy

Adoption and Fostering

Detailing provisions for employees who are intending to adopt or who have been matched with a child for adoption, and who will be the primary carer for that child, and covers adoption leave and pay and time off in relation to appointments during the adoption process. It also covers provisions for employees who are intending to or who are fostering children.

Refer to the Appendix 15: NHSGJ Adoption and Fostering Leave policy

Maternity Support (for example Paternity)

Detailing provisions for employees who will have parental responsibility for a newly born child (or a child newly placed for adoption), but where they are not the primary carer (i.e. where it is their partner who is entitled to maternity or adoption leave). It covers provisions for maternity support (paternity) leave and pay, and time off in relation to antenatal appointments (or appointments during the adoption process).

Refer to the Appendix 11: NHSGJ Maternity Support (Paternity) Leave policy

Shared Parental Leave

The Shared Parental Leave (SPL) scheme allows parents to share between them what would otherwise have been statutory maternity leave and pay. Although the first two weeks of maternity leave remain reserved to the birthing parent, the following 50 weeks can be taken by either the birthing parent or the father (or the birthing parent's spouse, partner or civil partner), subject to various notification and eligibility requirements.

Refer to the Appendix 12: NHSGJ Shared Parental Leave policy

Parental Leave

Parental leave is expressly for the purpose of allowing parents to spend quality time with their children and assist in balancing this with work commitments, thus improving their participation in the workplace.

Refer to the Appendix 13: NHSGJ Parental Leave policy

Childcare Guidance

Offers information on childcare provision or support.

Refer to the Appendix 16: NHSGJ Childcare Guidance

10 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy and procedure has been assessed for relevance and screened for equality impact, to identify and mitigate, where possible, any potential for the policy and procedure to have differential impact on employees having regard to their differences, such as ethnicity, gender, trans identity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, literacy or belief.

This policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated every three years by the Partnership Forum or equivalent, taking into consideration legislative changes and developments in good practice to ensure it meets the needs of all employees.