#### 4.3 Work/Life balance policy

###### Introduction

The organisation recognises the benefits of promoting a work-life balance, and that we can be effective and deliver a good service, whilst also being flexible in the way we manage our work.

Work-life balance is important to all staff and we will support and encourage them to achieve this whilst taking account of the service and colleagues’ needs. We will ensure that staff are not unfairly disadvantaged as a result of any reasonable action they may take under this policy.

###### The role of managers

Managers should help develop a culture that recognises the benefits of flexibility and alternative work patterns whilst focusing on work targets and service delivery.

Managers should regularly review their team’s staffing needs, and be open and positive about how work targets and service delivery can be achieved. They should ensure that staff have a reasonable workload and receive appropriate support, training and development.

They should discourage staff from regularly working long hours and encourage staff to take proper lunch breaks away from their desks.

Requests of alternative work patterns should be balanced with the requirement to deliver work targets, provide a service and avoid unreasonable consequences for other colleagues.

Managers can ensure their own work-life balance is reasonable, and thereby provide a role model for their team.

###### All staff

The organisation recognises that everyone may need to review the balance between their work and their private life at times, and decide whether it is reasonable and acceptable.

When exploring possible alternative work patterns, staff should make sure that any proposals are realistic. The organisation must take into account the needs of work targets, service delivery requirements and unreasonable impact on other members of staff when considering any requests. The organisation must consider all request.

###### Alternative and flexible working patterns

Subject to the requirements of work targets, service delivery and unreasonable impact on other members of staff, the organisation is prepared to consider the following options:

* Standard full-time working
* Part-time working
* Flexible working hours
* Time off taken in lieu (TOIL)
* Home working
* Job sharing

Any changes to work patterns will be permanent changes and will be a variation of your contract once agreed in writing by both parties.

On occasion, a trial period for a specified length of time may be offered in order to assess the impact on work targets, service delivery and on work colleagues. At the end of the trial period, the request will be reviewed at a request meeting (as below) with the employee and a formal decision in writing will be provided as to whether a permanent change can be granted or not.

On occasion, the change to the work pattern may be for a limited, specified period e.g. to enable staff to take up a course of part-time study. In these cases staff will revert to their former work pattern at the end of the agreed period.

###### How to make a request for flexible working

You may want to first discuss the issue informally with your line manager who may be able to readily meet your request or suggest a suitable alternative.

Employees with at least 6 months’ service may make formal requests to change their working pattern. Employees cannot make more than one request within a period of 12 months.

The application must be in writing to your line manager. It should:

* State that you are requesting a change to your terms and conditions of employment or working arrangements
* Specify the change requested and the proposed date it will start
* Explain the effect if any it will have on the organisation’s work and how you think this might be dealt with.

###### The request meeting

The employee will be invited to a meeting with their line manager within 28 days to discuss the request. Employees can be accompanied either by a work colleague or trade union representative at the meeting.

The employee will receive a written decision on your request within 14 days of the meeting. Refusal will only be for one of the following reasons:

* Burden of additional costs.
* Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand, service delivery or work targets.
* Inability to reorganise work among existing staff.
* Inability to recruit additional staff.
* Detrimental impact on quality.
* Detrimental impact on performance.
* Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work.
* Planned structural changes.

###### The appeal meeting

Employees have a right of appeal against the decision to a more senior manager or, if there is no senior manager, to the Chair of Board of Trustees [or Management Committee].

Employees who wish to appeal must put their reason in writing and send it to either the more senior manager or Chair (as appropriate) within 14 days of the decision.

The employee will be invited to an appeal meeting with the manager/Chair within 28 days. Employees can be accompanied either by a work colleague or trade union representative at the meeting.

The employee will normally receive a written decision on your appeal within 14 days of the meeting.