

## **Beyond Induction**

Your induction package will ensure that your new employees receive the best possible start to their career with you. To ensure that staff continue to thrive, it's vital that your supervision and development procedures are in place.

A structured supervision and appraisal system can help employees feel recognised for their achievements and supported to gain further skills and experiences.

Please refer to our [Supervision Toolkit](#) and [Appendix including sample documents](#)

## **Career progression**

So your team is happily settled in. They've been through a comprehensive induction, and are thriving in their target-driven roles. But where are they going personally and professionally?

It's important to consider the career progression of all your staff - from voluntary staff, through to experienced practitioners, deputy managers and Early Years Teachers.

Each will have their own needs and levels of motivation for working and progression, which may change, depending on personal circumstances. By ensuring that you complete regular supervision and Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) appraisals, you should be best placed to act and plan for these changes.

Consider your own setting. Do you operate extended services such as breakfast clubs or after school activities? Think about how you can develop your staff's playwork skills or how they can extend their knowledge of older children and work with childminders, youth workers and schools.

## **Family friendly, flexible working and work-life balance**

Employing staff to work within the early learning and childcare sector with regards to employment practices is no different to any other business. You'll need to consider the needs of your workforce in managing your business. Think about the need for maternity provision and planning, as well as the caring responsibilities of your staff - particularly those with children or elderly relatives.

### **What is work-life balance?**

Work-life balance is about adjusting working patterns to fit in with lifestyle, responsibilities and aspirations.

The law no longer allows you to disregard flexible working patterns. And there are advantages to adopting a flexible work-life balance policy - you'll have a happier, more motivated, productive workforce which creates happier customers - and you can even see a reduction in overheads and absenteeism.

## The law on flexible working

Any employee can request flexible working arrangements but employees with young or disabled children (under six and 18 respectively), and carers of adults, have a specific right to request flexible working.

This law is designed to help the employer and employee find a mutually-agreeable solution. Eligible employees can request a change in hours, times or location of work. A set procedure must be followed in dealing with the application and there are a number of key points to note. For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>

## Elements of flexible working

A **flexi-time** policy enables staff to vary their start, finish and break times each day. When flexible conditions are offered it is recognised that employees are more likely to stay late or arrive early when there is a need required by their company, especially when they know they can claim the time back at a later date.

**Staggered hours** allow employees to have different start, finish and break times. This may enable you to cover longer opening hours. It also offers employees more flexibility, as long as you consult with them first.

**Time off in lieu** enables employees to take time off, in agreement with managers, in exchange for extra hours worked.

**Annualised hours** can allow for extra work during busy periods. An employee contracted on annual hours will work a particular number of hours over a year. You would normally agree the number of rostered hours per week, with the remainder being used to cover additional work as required by your setting.

**Part year working** offers everyone a wide range of flexibility:

**Term time only** makes it possible for permanent employees to take unpaid leave during school holidays. Salary can be paid in equal weekly or monthly instalments throughout the whole year. You may wish to consider this in a combination arrangement with working from home.

**Working from home** may not be possible to offer to all employees within the childcare sector due to the nature of the work. However, it may be useful for employees when they are required to write up reports, develop individual plans or develop and write training plans. **Note:** working from home is not a substitute for childcare, employees must ensure domestic arrangements are made in the same way as other employees.

**Job share** usually involves two part-time employees sharing the duties of a post. Jobsharers divide pay, holiday and other benefits. By introducing job-sharing your company may benefit from a wider range of skills and expertise, and you'll ensure continuity of cover and skills if one person leaves.

**Compressed working hours** allows employees to work their total number of hours over fewer days. For example, you could work full time over four days instead of five, or work nine days a fortnight instead of ten. Some businesses recognise that longer opening hours and more flexible shifts mean employees and service users have more choice.

**Shift swapping** enables staff to negotiate their working times and shifts amongst themselves, whilst keeping the needs of the business or service in mind.

**Self rostering** involves working out the number of staff and type of skills needed each day, then letting employees put forward the times and shifts they would prefer to work. Shift patterns are then compiled; matching staff preferences to agreed staffing levels and requirements for the setting, as closely as possible.

**Breaks from work** are often due to maternity leave or parental and paternity leave. But some employers are also starting to consider unpaid career breaks and sabbaticals.

**Flexible benefits and cafeteria benefits** include providing information on childcare, funding and time off for learning, pension or insurance contributions, laundry services, use of staff facilities, medical and dental care. Cafeteria benefits mean that an individual can pick and choose from those benefits that best suit their needs.

**Before you change any policy, you should consult your staff and any trade unions at all stages.**

## **Creating family-friendly policies**

Creating the right culture in your organisation can help to create a highly motivated team. Here are some of the issues to consider:

**Guilt:** some employees feel guilty about taking up family-friendly policies because they might appear less committed than colleagues with no caring responsibilities. Ensure your whole team is aware of the commercial benefits of being family-friendly.

**Emergency flexibility:** employees with care responsibilities feel most vulnerable when care arrangements break down at short notice. Carers need practical support in managing unanticipated domestic care. This requires understanding on the part of managers and co-workers.

**Paid or unpaid special leave:** many employees with caring responsibilities are able to resolve short-term care problems if given the flexibility to reorganise their working time. Employees require simple arrangements recognising domestic care arrangements as legitimate, which do not force them to take 'sick days' to reconcile caring responsibilities.

Among the family-friendly practices listed above you may want to consider the following:

- Childcare allowances
- Paid family, 'special' or carer leave
- Paid paternity leave
- Enhanced maternity leave & benefits

- Phased return from maternity leave
- Voluntary reduced working hours
- Unpaid leave during school holidays
- Family access to learning resources
- Childcare voucher schemes
- Guaranteed leave for employees with families during cultural and religious festivals
- Home-working and tele-working arrangements