Managing Part Time Working Requests

Employees with 26 weeks or more continuous employment will be able to request a change to their working hours.

Employees often believe that they have automatic right to reduce or alter their hours, and that Employers are obliged to grant their wishes, especially if other colleagues have successfully made similar requests.

This is not the case, the Employee only has the right to request a change to their hours.

However, in addressing that request, Employers need to follow a procedure which:

- Ensures that the request is responded to within a reasonable time scale.
- Facilitates a meeting with the Employee to discuss in detail whether or not the request is workable. At that meeting the Employee is entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or Union Representative.
- In the event that the Employer cannot accommodate the request, the Employee is given a detailed explanation for the decision, based on details such as damaging effects upon production, customer service, quality of work, or inability to find another worker to cover the reduced hours.
- Offers the Employee the right to Appeal.

It is envisaged that the most common requests are likely to come from:

1. Older workers who may wish to reduce their hours.
2. Workers with disabilities who want to keep working but accommodate health problems.

Employers are not obliged to accept the request, but must give it serious consideration, fully investigate it and inform the Employee of the outcome within three months of the request being made.

This would include inviting the Employee to a meeting to discuss their request, writing to them to inform them of the outcome, and giving them an opportunity to appeal if they wish to do so.
If the Employer wishes to turn down the request down, they can do so, but the decision must be based on one or more of the following:

1. Unacceptable costs to the business,
2. Inability to share the Employee’s work among other staff,
3. Inability to recruit other staff to fill the hours the Employee doesn’t want to work,
4. Detrimental effects upon the quality of the Company’s output,
5. Detrimental effects upon customer service,
6. Detrimental effects upon performance,
7. Insufficient work for the Employee to do during the hours they want to work.

Employers should also consider potential discrimination if they want to turn down the Employees request, such as Employees who want to reduce hours due to health problems, or change hours to accommodate religious commitments.

**PROFILE**

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