



What to Do If You Need a Change to Your Hours

Prepare a clear request and distinguish flexible working from reasonable adjustments.

For care workers in England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland has separate employment rules: contact the Labour Relations Agency. General information, not individual legal advice. Rights depend on employment status, contract and circumstances. No assessment or certificate.

What to do now

Write down the change you need: start and finish times, days, total hours or a temporary arrangement. Identify the proposed start date and whether you need a permanent change. Check the flexible-working policy. A clear request is easier to consider than a general statement that the rota is difficult.

What to ask

Ask whether an informal arrangement or statutory flexible-working request is appropriate. The right to request is not an automatic right to the exact arrangement. If disability is involved, explain that you also want reasonable adjustments considered; this is a separate issue from the flexible-working process.

What to record

Keep the request, date sent, meeting notes, alternatives discussed and written decision. If agreed, confirm hours, pay, start date, duration and any review or trial arrangements. Check whether changes affect benefits or other commitments before finalising them.

What to avoid

Do not start working the proposed pattern before agreement. Do not assume a trial automatically becomes permanent or that a permanent reduction is easy to reverse. Avoid disclosing more personal detail than necessary, but explain practical constraints the employer needs to understand.

Words you can adapt

I would like to discuss changing my working pattern from [current] to [proposed] from [date], on a [temporary/permanent] basis. Please confirm the appropriate request process. I am willing to discuss [alternatives/trial, if suitable] and would like any agreed terms confirmed in writing.

Where to get help

Use current Acas flexible-working guidance for statutory request requirements and timescales. Your union or an adviser can help if a request is refused or disability-related support is not considered. Ask for the reasons and available review route rather than assuming there is nothing further you can do.

Your next steps

- Specify the pattern and start date.
- Choose the request route.
- Discuss adjustments where relevant.
- Get agreed terms in writing.

Sources and further help

[Acas: Flexible working](#)

[Acas: Changes to employment contracts](#)

[Northern Ireland: Labour Relations Agency](#)

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