

Requesting flexible working

Advice sheet

For members seeking to change their hours, location, or pattern of work.

Key rights

- **Day one right:** From April 2024, all employees in the UK have the right to request flexible working from their first day of employment, removing the previous 26-week qualifying period
- **Request limit:** You can make two formal requests in any 12-month period.
- **Employer obligations:** Your employer must consult with you before rejecting a request and must issue a decision within two months.

Steps for BDA members

1. **Draft a formal request:** Put your request in writing. Specify the change you want (e.g., compressed hours, part-time, or remote work) and the date you wish it to start.
2. **Focus on the service:** While you no longer have to explain how the change will affect the employer, it is often helpful to suggest how your dietetic duties (clinics, admin, or patient contact) will be maintained.
3. **Union support:** If your request is refused without a valid business reason (as defined by the Employment Rights Act), contact the BDA Trade Union. They can help you appeal the decision or attend a consultation meeting with you.

This template is designed for British Dietetic Association (BDA) members

It reflects the updated UK legislation (April 2024) which makes flexible working a "day-one" right.

Before sending this, check if your employer (e.g., an NHS Trust) has their own specific "Flexible Working Application Form." If they do not, you can use the template below.

Template: Statutory request for flexible working

To: [Line Manager's Name / HR Department]
From: [Your Name]
Date: [Date]

Subject: Statutory Flexible Working Request

Dear [Name of Manager],

I am writing to formally request to change my working pattern under the statutory right to request flexible working. [Optional: I am making this request to help me manage my work-life balance / caring responsibilities / health].

My Current Working Pattern:

I currently work [Current hours, e.g., 37.5 hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm].

The Change I Am Requesting:

I would like my new working pattern to be: [Describe your request clearly, e.g.]

- *Example A:* A reduction in hours to 30 hours per week.
- *Example B:* Compressed hours (working my full-time hours over 4 days instead of 5).
- *Example C:* A change in start/finish times to [Time] to [Time].
- *Example D:* Working from home on [Specific Days] for admin and non-clinical duties.

Proposed Start Date:

I would like this change to take effect from [Date – give your employer at least 2–3 months' notice if possible].

Impact on the Service (Optional but Recommended):

Note: You are no longer legally required to explain the effect on the employer, but as a Dietitian, showing you have considered clinical safety and service delivery can help your case.

I have considered how this change might affect the dietetic service and my colleagues. I believe my duties can be managed as follows:

- [e.g., "I will ensure all my clinical outpatient slots are moved to Tuesday–Thursday."]
- [e.g., "I will use my remote working day to complete high-intensity admin, such as writing up patient notes and attending MDT meetings via MS Teams."]

Previous Applications:

I [have / have not] made a previous formal flexible working request in the last 12 months. [If you have, state the date of that request].

I look forward to discussing this request with you at a consultation meeting. I am aware that under current legislation, a decision must be made within two months of this request.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Job Title]

BDA Member Number: [Insert Number]

Top tips for BDA members

1. The "trial period": If your manager is hesitant, suggest a trial period (e.g., 3 months). This allows both you and the department to see if the new pattern works for the clinical caseload.
2. NHS staff: If you work for the NHS, your rights are often *better* than the legal minimum. Check the NHS Terms and Conditions Handbook (Section 33), which encourages a "yes by default" approach to flexible working.
3. Union representation: You have the right to be accompanied to a consultation meeting. If your request is initially refused, contact your BDA Local Representative or the BDA Trade Union team for support with an appeal.
4. Keep a copy: Always keep a dated copy of your letter and any email trail for your records.