

Flexible Work Policy

DOC is committed to providing a flexible work environment that enables employees to balance personal and professional priorities.

WHEN YOU NEED TO USE THIS POLICY

We use this policy to ensure that flexible work is managed in a fair and consistent way across DOC. Flexible work benefits everyone. It enables us to attract and retain diverse talent, increase productivity, and improve employee wellbeing.

WHO NEEDS TO USE THIS

This Policy applies to permanent, fixed term, and casual employees.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Implementing this Policy will ensure that flexible work is:

- Universal - available (in some form) to everyone.
- Supported - by leaders, policies, systems, and processes.
- Accepted - as productive and legitimate.
- Managed - in line with legislative requirements.
- Balanced - managers and employees take equal responsibility for the success of flexible work.

TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORK

Flexible work is a change to your hours, days or location of work. There are two types of flexible work.

- **Informal:** irregular and temporary. No change to employment terms and conditions.
- **Formal:** regular and ongoing. Requires written approval and changes to employment terms and conditions.

Remote work is a separate type of flexible work. This is when you work from home for all of your contracted hours. It is part of your employment agreement/contract.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Our approach

- DOC is committed to being a high-performance organisation and sees flexible work arrangements as central to this.
- Conversations about flexible work need to align with [our values and behaviours](#)
- If there is any inconsistency between this policy and the collective, the collective prevails.

Making requests

- All employees can request informal or formal flexible working arrangements.
- Flexible work requests can be made at any time.
- There are no limits on how many times a flexible work request can be made.
- Requests must meet the needs of the individual, the team, and DOC, recognising that changes require give and take on both sides.

Responding to requests

- DOC will consider all requests in good faith and seek to support the request where possible.
- Given the diverse range of roles and functions across DOC, some types flexible work may not be possible for some roles.
- When approving requests, managers need to demonstrate that business needs can be met and outcomes can still be delivered.
- A manager's decision to approve or decline the request should be free from discrimination, and it should not be influenced by the purpose or reason for the request.
- Part 6AA of the [Employment Relations Act 2000](#) outlines the requirements of employers when handling flexible work requests, including the specific grounds for refusing a request.

Working from home

- When employees are working from home, DOC has the same duty of care towards them as when they are in the workplace, as per the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#).
- Employees are responsible for ensuring their work environment at home poses no risk to their health, safety and wellbeing.

Item 1

WHO CAN APPROVE THIS

Managers can approve flexible work requests apart from work from home requests for three or more days per week, or remote work.

Chief People Officer can approve work from home requests for three or more days per week, and remote work.

Working from another DOC office requires formal approval by the site manager at that office.

IMPORTANT SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The intranet – ([Flexible work](#)) has everything you need to know about the process and supporting guidance for employees and managers.

Contact People and Culture HRSupport@doc.govt.nz if you have questions about this policy.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

This Policy should be read in conjunction with DOC's:

- [Use of DOC Technology SOP \(DOC-2182996\)](#)
- [Cyber safety working from home and in the office](#)

Additional information that supports this Policy can be found here:

- [Flexible working | Employment New Zealand](#)
- [Guidance: Flexible Working \(Work from Home\) - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)

Flexible Work Arrangements Policy

About this document

Disclaimer	For Department of Conservation (DOC) internal use only
Document Coordinator	Sally Thomas, Organisational Development Manager
Document Owner	Ginny Baddeley, Director, Organisational Development
Approved for use by	Karen Jones, Deputy Director-General, People and Engagement Date: 27/09/2019 Approval memo (doc-6084322)
Effective date	27 September 2019
Last reviewed	27 September 2019
Classification	UNCLASSIFIED
docCM ID	doc-5962157

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



New Zealand Government

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1. Background

1.1 Purpose

The Flexible Work Arrangements Policy sets out the Department's objectives, principles and definitions of flexible work. The purpose of this document is to provide managers and staff with clear and transparent policy statements that take into account the diversity of people, responsibilities and functions across the organisation.

1.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all permanent, fixed term and casual DOC employees.

1.3 Goals

Implementing this policy will ensure that flexible work becomes:

- Universal - flexible work (in some form) is available to everyone.
- Supported - by leaders, policy, systems and processes.
- Consistent and transparent - requiring conversations between managers and staff members.
- Accepted - flexible working is seen as legitimate and productive.
- Balanced - managers and staff each take responsibility for the success of flexible work.

1.4 Guiding Principles

The key principles that underpin the flexible work arrangements policy include:

- DOC is committed to becoming flexible by default by 2020, with the aim that all positions can be worked flexibly, unless there is a strong business reason why they can't be.
- DOC will consider all requests for flexible working in alignment with the intent of the policy and attempt to support employees' requests to work flexibly where possible.
- DOC is committed to being a high performing organisation and sees flexible working as central to this.
- Flexible work options enable DOC to attract and retain a more diverse workforce.
- DOC acknowledges that due to the wide range of roles and responsibilities within the organisation, not all forms of flexible work will be available to all roles.
- Flexible working arrangements are always initiated by the employee not the employer.

1.5 Mandate

The mandate for flexible working is established by the Public Sector 'Flexible by Default by 2020' initiative and supported by the provision for flexible working arrangements under the [Employment Relations Act 2000 \(Part 6AA\)](#).

1.6 Definitions

1.6.1 Different types of flexible work

Flexible work is when an individual chooses to alter the timing and/or location of their work in relation to:

- A change in hours of work.
- A change in days of work.
- A change in place of work.

At DOC, flexible work arrangements must be made in agreement with a manager and balance the organisational, team and personal needs to best suit all of those involved. Given the diverse range of roles, responsibilities and functions across DOC, not all forms of flexible working will be available to all roles.

1.6.2 Informal flexible work arrangements

Informal flexible work arrangements are changes to a work pattern or location which:

- Are irregular in nature and;
- Are for short periods of time (less than one month's duration) and;
- Do not require a change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment and;
- Require written approval from a manager.

1.6.3 Formal flexible work arrangements

Formal flexible work arrangements:

- Are regular in nature;
- Involve an ongoing change to the pattern of working;
- Require written approval from a manager; and
- Require a variation to the terms and conditions of employment and possible systems and payroll changes.

2. Policy Statements

DOC is committed to providing work arrangements and environments that support whanaungatanga and are responsive to employees' needs to balance their personal priorities with their professional commitments.

All employees can request flexible working arrangements on a formal or informal basis, for any purpose or reason. The manager's decision to approve or decline the request should be free of discrimination and should not be influenced by the purpose or reason for the request.

Flexible work requests can be made at any stage of the employee life cycle, including during recruitment, and there are no limits as to how many times a request can be made.

There are specific business reasons stated in the employment legislation as to why a flexible work request is not able to be accommodated. DOC is committed to reasonably considering and balancing the needs of individuals, teams, managers and the organisation.

DOC has the same duty of care for employees who work from home as in the workplace, as per the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#). Employees have a responsibility to ensure their work environment at home poses no risk to their security or health, safety and wellbeing.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Description of responsibility
Director-General	<p>Actively role model and champion flexible working at DOC.</p> <p>Endorse this policy.</p> <p>Ensure that DOC meets its obligations under the legislation and this policy.</p>
Deputy Director-General	<p>Actively role model and champion flexible working at DOC.</p> <p>Initiate leader-led conversations with Directors, Managers and whole teams to set clear expectations and share key messages about flexible working.</p> <p>Support Directors and Managers to implement and embed flexible working practices by providing the necessary systems, processes and equipment.</p> <p>Embed this policy within their Business Group.</p> <p>Ensure their Business Group complies with the standard operating procedures (SOP) relevant to this policy.</p>
Deputy Director-General Organisation Support	<p>Approving authority for requests to work from home for three or more days per week.</p>
Directors / Managers	<p>Actively role model and champion flexible working at DOC.</p> <p>Initiate leader-led conversations with managers and whole teams to set clear expectations and share key messages about flexible working.</p> <p>Support managers to implement and embed flexible working practices by providing the necessary systems, processes and equipment.</p> <p>Consider how flexible work arrangements can be implemented in their Business Unit in a transparent and consistent way.</p> <p>Assess, approve or decline flexible work arrangement requests in accordance with this policy.</p>

	<p>Seek approval from the Deputy Director-General Organisation Support for requests to work from home for three or more days per week.</p> <p>Negotiate alternative options with staff regarding flexible work arrangements where necessary.</p> <p>Where possible resolve any disputes regarding declined requests or issues arising from approved requests.</p> <p>Embed this policy within their Business Unit.</p> <p>Ensure their Business Unit complies with SOP relevant to this policy.</p> <p>Adhere to the SOP to implement flexible work arrangements, including health and safety requirements if working from home.</p> <p>Report any non-compliance with this policy to their manager.</p>
Human Resources (HR)/ Organisational Development (OD) Teams	<p>HR - Provide guidance regarding this policy to Deputy Directors'- General, Directors and Managers.</p> <p>HR - Advise on flexible work arrangement documentation.</p> <p>HR - advise on employment obligations and legal requirements.</p> <p>OD - evaluate, review and improve this policy and ensure its relevance.</p>
All Staff	<p>Consider and factor in the impact of their flexible working arrangement on business outcomes, key stakeholders, the wider team and Manager.</p> <p>Adhere to the policy and SOP.</p> <p>Actively monitor and review how the flexible arrangement is working and initiate conversations with the manager to discuss any impacts on them, their team or ability to achieve performance outcomes.</p> <p>If working from home – ensure there is a work area that provides a safe, productive and secure work environment.</p>

4. Related Documents

- [Flexible Work Arrangements Standard Operating Procedure](#) (DOC-6000632)

5. Document History

Date	Details	Document ID and version	Amended by
01/09/2019	First version of document published	doc-5962157	
22/10/2024	Simplified Roles and Responsibilities section and added Deputy Director-General Organisation Support as approving authority for new requests to work from home for three or more days per week.	doc-5962157	

6. Documents Replaced

- [Working from Home Policy](#) (olddm-811324)

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MEMO

DATE: 14/02/2025

TO: Mike Tully, Deputy Director-General Organisation Support

THROUGH: Karyn Thompson, Chief People Officer

FROM: Haley Rowe-Manson, Senior Organisational Development Advisor
Laura Hewson, Senior Organisational Development Advisor

SUBJECT: Flexible work approving authorities for work from home and remote work requests

Purpose

This memo seeks to simplify our approval processes for working from home (WFH) 3 or more days per week, and remote work requests (working entirely from home).

Context

Reviewing our flexible work policy and approach

The Public Service Commission (PSC) released their new Flexible Work (Working from Home) Guidance in December 2024. Following this, we started a review of our flexible work policy, guidance, and process to ensure alignment. While our current approach aligns, we have used this review to also:

- simplify our policy, guidance, and approval processes
- address any gaps in relation to Working from Home (WFH). E.g. new information on psychological health and safety, enhancing guidance on information/physical security, defining remote work and how this differs from WFH, and
- embed our values and behaviours in how we manage flexible work requests.

Appendix 1 includes additional context.

Current approval delegations

Working from Home

Managers can approve WFH requests for two or less days per week. The Deputy Director-General (DD-G) Organisation Support must approve requests for three or more days per week.

Remote work

Remote work is when someone WFH for all their contracted hours. It is part of their employment contract/agreement and generally comes up during the recruitment process, when attracting talent for hard-to-fill roles.

Based on existing delegations, it is assumed that new remote work requests also require DD-G Organisation Support approval.

Criteria for declining a request

There are specific grounds under the Employment Relations Act (ERA) for declining a flexible work request. These grounds are below and apply to both WFH and remote work requests:

- 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.
- Burden of additional costs.
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.

Opportunity to simplify approval processes

The same ERA decision-making criteria needs to apply when making decisions about WFH and remote work, regardless of the level of seniority of the approver. We therefore recommend removing the DD-G Organisation Support approval step and delegating this to managers. This will:

1. Speed up the flexible work request process and provide a better user experience.
2. Cut down over-complication and multiple sign-off points.
3. Promote DOC's value Empower and its behaviour 'find the simplest way'.

Controls to ensure requests are managed appropriately

If approval to simplify our approvals process is agreed, the following controls will be put in place:

- Our refreshed Flexible Work Policy will set the expectation that people work in the office for at least three days per week.
- Any new WFH arrangements of 3 days or remote work must be approved or declined by referring to the ERA decision criteria above.
- Decisions on remote work for hard-to-fill roles will be made in partnership with the Recruitment Manager.
- A record of new remote work requests, approved during the recruitment process, will be held by the Recruitment Manager.
- Formal WFH arrangements will continue to be recorded in writing.
- The next WFH data collection survey is due in May 2025. If the results show a significant difference from our November 2024 results, then approval delegations will be revisited.

Recommendation

- A. **Approve** removing the DD-G Organisation Support as an approval step in our flexible work process and delegating authority to managers.

Appendix 1 – Additional context

PSC guidance

The new PSC guidance doesn't stipulate a set number of days working in the office, versus at home.

How other public service agencies are approaching WFH requests

Research shows that WFH approvals processes vary from organisation to organisation.

- Few agencies specify a set number of days that people are expected to work in the office. If they do, it is generally three days per week.
- Some agencies have increased approving authorities for WFH requests.
- Other agencies' people leaders are authorised to approve WFH requests.

DOC's WFH data collection results

Results from the November 2024 PSC WFH data collection exercise are provided below. For those that WFH, the majority is for two days per week. This shows that our current expectation of no more than two days WFH, is effective.

% of workforce who WFH for X number of days	DOC's results	Public Service average
0	58%	46.3%
1	9%	10.6%
2	23%	22.2%
3	3%	6.9%
4	1%	1.6%
5	1%	1.4%

% of workforce who WFH on certain days of week	DOC's results	Public Service average
Monday	15%	18.4%
Tuesday	14%	16.1%
Wednesday	14%	15.5%
Thursday	15%	17.2%
Friday	19%	23%

Ma (

From: [Karyn Thompson](#)
To: [Kate Greenall](#); [Laura Hewson](#); [Haley Rowe-Manson](#)
Subject: RE: Flexible Work Policy Approvals
Date: Thursday, 20 February 2025 3:49:05 pm
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

Kia ora, Mike has met us halfway. He's happy to push the delegation for approving requests for three or more days per week down to me.

Ngā mihi

Karyn Thompson ([she/her](#))

Chief People Officer
Organisation Support

Department of Conservation, Te Papa Atawhai

[s9\(2\)\(a\)](#) | karthompson@doc.govt.nz

PA: Georgie Fraser: georgiefraser@doc.govt.nz

[s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

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Note: I support flexible working and may be sending you this message away from the office or outside normal working hours. Please know I do not expect you to respond outside your working hours.



From: Kate Greenall <kgreenall@doc.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 20 February 2025 2:16 pm

To: Karyn Thompson <karthompson@doc.govt.nz>; Laura Hewson <lhewson@doc.govt.nz>; Haley Rowe-Manson <hmanson@doc.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: Flexible Work Policy Approvals

Thanks so much Karyn - that's super appreciated!

From: Karyn Thompson <karthompson@doc.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 20 February 2025 2:14 pm

To: Laura Hewson <lhewson@doc.govt.nz>; Haley Rowe-Manson <hmanson@doc.govt.nz>; Kate Greenall <kgreenall@doc.govt.nz>

Subject: FW: Flexible Work Policy Approvals

Kia ora, catching up with Mike at 2:30pm, during my MOR, to discuss this.

Ngā mihi

Karyn Thompson ([she/her](#))

Chief People Officer
Organisation Support

Department of Conservation, Te Papa Atawhai

s9(2)(a) | karthompson@doc.govt.nz

PA: Georgie Fraser: georgiefraser@doc.govt.nz

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From: Mike Tully <mtully@doc.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, 18 February 2025 7:34 am

To: Karyn Thompson <karthompson@doc.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: Flexible Work Policy Approvals

Thanks – lets chat thanks

From: Karyn Thompson <karthompson@doc.govt.nz>

Sent: Friday, 14 February 2025 4:39 pm

To: Mike Tully <mtully@doc.govt.nz>

Cc: Haley Rowe-Manson <hmanson@doc.govt.nz>; Laura Hewson <lhewson@doc.govt.nz>

Subject: Flexible Work Policy Approvals

Kia ora Mike,

As part of our flexible work review, the team have identified an opportunity to simplify the approval process. Specifically, removal of the DD-G Organisation Support approval authority. The attached memo provides context and controls to support this recommendation, which I have endorsed.

Please let us know if you'd like to chat with us about the memo and recommendation before making a decision.

Ngā mihi

Karyn Thompson ([she/her](#))

Chief People Officer
Organisation Support

Department of Conservation, Te Papa Atawhai

s9(2)(a) | karthompson@doc.govt.nz

PA: Georgie Fraser: georgiefraser@doc.govt.nz

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Flexible Work Policy

Item 5

Policy

DOC is committed to providing a flexible work environment that enables employees to balance personal and professional priorities.

PURPOSE

This Policy aims to ensure that flexible work is managed in a fair and consistent way across DOC. Flexible work benefits everyone. It enables us to attract and retain diverse talent, increase productivity, and improve employee wellbeing.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to permanent, fixed term, and casual employees.

OBJECTIVES

Implementing this Policy will ensure that flexible work is:

- Universal - available (in some form) to everyone.
- Supported - by leaders, policies, systems, and processes.
- Accepted - as productive and legitimate.
- Managed - in line with legislative requirements.
- Balanced - managers and employees take equal responsibility for the success of flexible work.

TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORK

Flexible work is a change to your hours, days or location of work. There are two types of flexible work.

- **Informal:** irregular and temporary. No change to employment terms and conditions.
- **Formal:** regular and ongoing. Requires written approval and changes to employment terms and conditions.

Remote work is a separate type of flexible work. This is when you work from home for all of your contracted hours. It is part of your employment agreement/contract.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Our approach

- DOC is committed to being a high-performance organisation and sees flexible work arrangements as central to this.
- Conversations about flexible work need to align with [our values and behaviours](#)
- If there is any inconsistency between this policy and the collective, the collective prevails.

Making requests

- All employees can request informal or formal flexible working arrangements.
- Flexible work requests can be made at any time.
- There are no limits on how many times a flexible work request can be made.
- Requests must meet the needs of the individual, the team, and DOC, recognising that changes require give and take on both sides.

Responding to requests

- DOC will consider all requests in good faith and seek to support the request where possible.
- Given the diverse range of roles and functions across DOC, some types of flexible work may not be possible for some roles.
- When approving requests, managers need to demonstrate that business needs can be met and outcomes can still be delivered.
- A manager's decision to approve or decline the request should be free from discrimination, and it should not be influenced by the purpose or reason for the request.
- Part 6AA of the [Employment Relations Act 2000](#) outlines the requirements of employers when handling flexible work requests, including the specific grounds for refusing a request.

Working from home

- When employees are working from home, DOC has the same duty of care towards them as when they are in the workplace, as per the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#).
- Employees are responsible for ensuring their work environment at home poses no risk to their health, safety and wellbeing.

DECISION MAKERS

Managers can approve flexible work requests apart from work from home requests for three or more days per week, or remote work.

Chief People Officer can approve work from home requests for three or more days per week, and remote work.

Working from another DOC office requires formal approval by the site manager at that office.

GUIDANCE

The intranet – ([Flexible work](#)) has everything you need to know about the process and supporting guidance for employees and managers.

Contact People and Culture HRSupport@doc.govt.nz if you have questions about this policy.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with DOC's:

- [Use of DOC Technology SOP \(DOC-2182996\)](#)
- [Cyber safety working from home and in the office](#)

Additional information that supports this Policy can be found here:

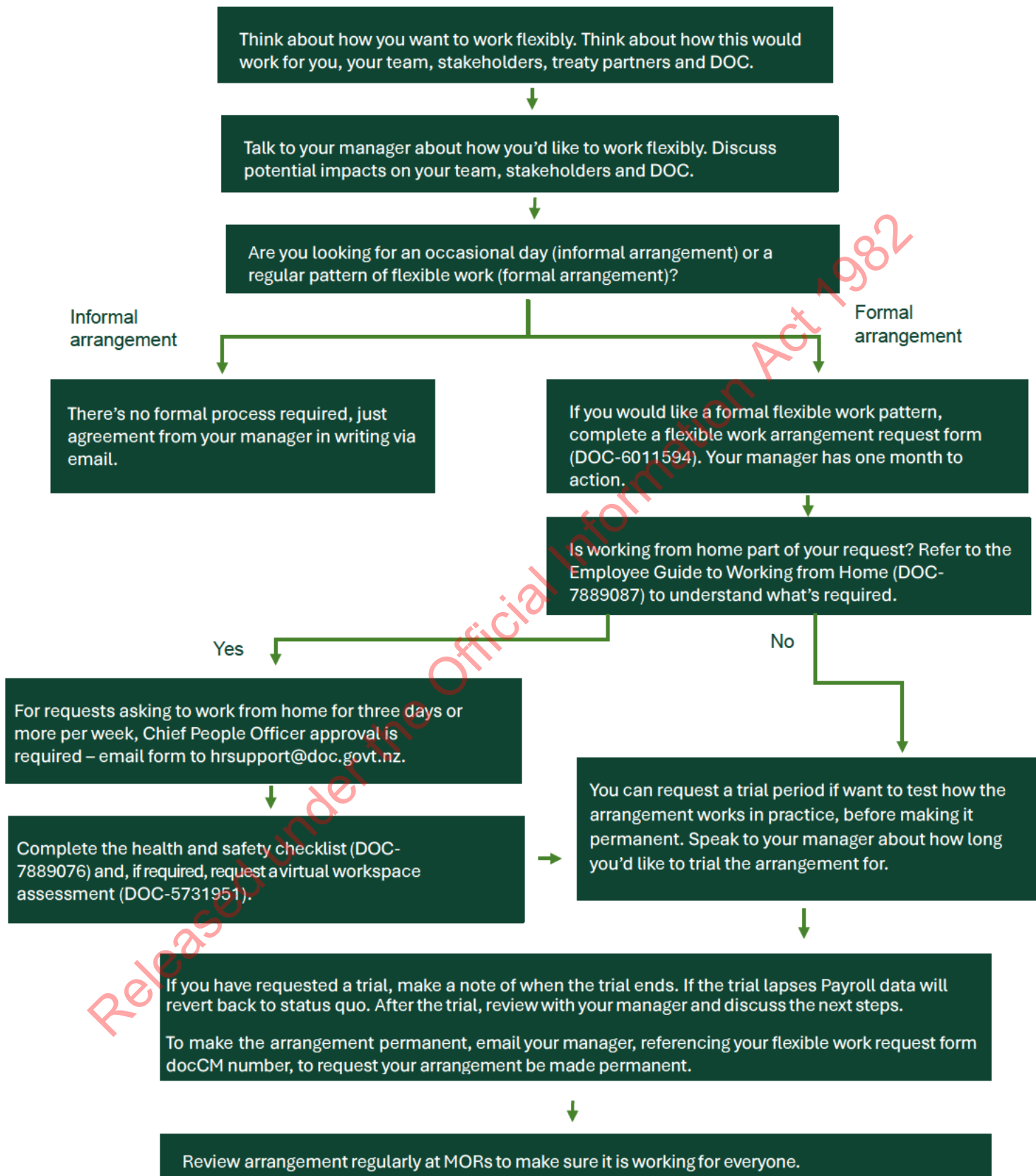
- [Flexible working | Employment New Zealand](#)
- [Guidance: Flexible Working \(Work from Home\) - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#)



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Flexible Work Request Process



Purpose

The purpose of this Guidance is to support agencies to align their flexible working (work from home) policies to Government's expectations to ensure performance.

This Guidance is issued under Section 95(a) of the Public Service Act 2020 by the Public Service Commissioner. It should be read in conjunction with the 2024 Government Workforce Policy Statement.

This Guidance replaces the Hybrid Working Guidance 2022 and the Flexible-By-Default Guidance 2020. Workplaces now have a better understanding of the benefits and risks of flexible working arrangements and have foundational policies and approaches in place. This Guidance clarifies that all flexible work arrangements must be agreed and managed to support a high-performance culture.

Existing policies and approaches should be updated where necessary, to align with this Guidance. However, where any agency has agreed to any express terms in its employment agreements, these will apply to the extent of any inconsistency. Further, this Guidance should be read together with any legislative requirements, including the Flexible Working provisions set out in the Part 6AA Employment Relations Act.

This Guidance focuses on working from home, but agencies may consider and agree other forms of flexible working, such as part-time hours and flexible start and finish times.

This Guidance applies to Departments and Departmental Agencies, Interdepartmental Executive Boards and Interdepartmental Ventures. Crown Entities and non-Public Service departments are encouraged to consider this Guidance.

Aligning to Government Expectations

Government expectations

On 23 September 2024, the Government set out its expectations for the Public Service on working from home. The Government's expectations are:

- 1. Working from home arrangements in the Public Service are not an entitlement and should be by explicit agreement between an employee and their employer.**

Chief Executives and managers should ensure that where any arrangements are made, they are subject to consistent monitoring and oversight.

- 2. Working from home arrangements should only be agreed to where they will not compromise the performance of employees, their teams or their agencies.**

This requires agencies to adequately weigh the benefits of employees being physically present for work, the cumulative impact of widespread working from home arrangements, and to consider performance in its widest sense: including potential impacts on learning and development, productivity, team culture and engagement.

3. Agencies should actively monitor the prevalence and impact of working from home arrangements and be able to regularly report to the Public Service Commission about the number and nature of the agreements they have in place, including having a clear understanding of the impact these agreements will have on particular days of the week.

What agencies need to do now

The Government expectations do not mean public servants cannot work from home or that public servants must work in the office on a set number of days each week. Nor do they change existing arrangements that have been explicitly agreed with employees or which are rights and obligations prescribed by law.

Alignment with this Guidance will look different for each agency, and this is expected and supported. At a minimum though, agencies should:

- Review existing flexible work and work from home policies to ensure they align with the Government's expectations and the agency's legal obligations¹.
- Ensure all individual work from home arrangements:
 - Align with the agency's policies,
 - Are expressly agreed with the employer, and
 - Are recorded in accordance with the agency's policy.
- Ensure managers regularly review all work from home arrangements and assess their ongoing suitability and impact on the team's and organisation's performance in its widest sense (including impacts on learning and development, productivity, team culture and engagement).
- Give effect to the expectation of monitoring and oversight - both at an individual level (by managing clear performance expectations as part of a high-performance culture) and at the agency level (by having visibility of all work from home arrangements).
- Be able to report on the number of employees regularly working from home and on what days of the week.
- Regularly report their work from home data to the Public Service Commission from time to time.

¹ Public Service Act 2020 employment legislation (including but not limited to, the Employment Relations Act 2000 (Section 6AA flexible working), Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the Human Rights Act 1993 (reasonable accommodations)).

Additional considerations for Agencies

Consider whether activities are suited to working from home

When considering whether roles or activities can be performed from home, it might be helpful to consider:

- **Frequency:** Activities that are regularly repeated may need less in-person contact than activities that are infrequent.
- **Novelty/ambiguity:** Activities or tasks that are new or ambiguous may need more in-person contact than work that is familiar and undertaken often.
- **Individual/team experience:** Where the staff member or team is developing, they may need more face-to-face support than those who are fully proficient. The needs of the team at that time, and ongoing, should be considered.
- **Trust:** Activities that build trust and are important for relationships may need face-to-face contact.
- **Task interdependence:** The more that tasks require collaboration and the input of more than one staff member, the more face-to-face contact will be needed to complete the work efficiently and effectively.
- **Cumulative impact:** The cumulative impact of the number of people working remotely across a team and the whole agency may negatively impact on team culture, key stakeholder relationships, collaboration and development.

Set clear performance expectations and manage to them

Having a performance culture that supports people leaders to set and manage to expectations is critical. It requires additional consideration when putting in place flexible working arrangements. Managers get the best from teams when they make delivery and quality expectations clear and measure performance against these expectations. Team members, whether they work flexibly or not, do their best work when they manage their time, deliver to expectations and maintain good lines of communication with managers and colleagues. Subject to any special arrangements or accommodations that may have been agreed, managers should address performance issues in the same way for all employees, whatever flexible work arrangement has been agreed.

Be deliberate about ways of working

When working flexibly, it is especially important that managers, employees, and teams talk regularly about flexible arrangements, how they are working and how any challenges can be addressed.

When building good performance management practices, managers should:

- Agree and record agreed norms of behaviour within their team. For example, maintaining oversight of team members' location, how and when they can be reached, how regular and urgent communication will be maintained, and how/when arrangements will be reviewed.
- Ensure all employees, regardless of location, share in unexpected and urgent work, as well as long-term challenging projects.
- Hold regular team check-ins to maintain good team relationships.
- Constantly communicate about work deliverables, quality standards and timelines.

Manage health and safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 employers are primarily responsible for their workers' health and safety, while they are at work. That means that when employees ask to work from home, agencies must consider the risks their employees might be exposed to in that environment, the degree of harm those risks could cause, and how those risks can be mitigated. Examples of common risks of working from home include workstation setup, and isolation/loneliness.

Agencies should specifically consider the risks to the psychological health of hybrid workers and how this can be managed. Working physically alongside team members is an important way to stay connected. It helps social cohesion, inclusion, builds trust and helps create a common culture. Feelings of isolation can be harmful for mental health. Equally, hybrid working can support mental health by providing quiet space for concentrated individual work.

What is most important is that workers and employers are aware of the risks and have plans in place to manage risk and support wellbeing. When work is designed, organised, and managed well, it will reduce the likelihood of harm and will also enhance wellbeing.

Agencies can find more information about aspects of flexible working arrangements and mentally healthy work on these websites:

[Staying mentally healthy when working from home | WorkSafe](#)

[Supporting workers to work from home.](#)

[Resources | Government Health and Safety Lead](#)

Manage Protective Security Risks

Agencies must ensure that appropriate measures are in place to manage the protective security risks of workers/staff working from home.

Specific guidance to staff on IT security may be required, as well as on records management. This should include transporting and sorting hard copies of information created in the office, whether hardcopy information may be created at home, and how this information will be stored, incorporated into records management systems, or archived/destroyed as appropriate and any security clearance requirements of employees.

Flexible Working (Work from Home) Guidance



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission

For further information, including handling requirements for classified information, visit www.protectivesecurity.govt.nz.

Active monitoring and reporting

Any flexible working arrangements need regular monitoring to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the team and the agency, and that the impact on the team's and organisation's performance in its widest sense is known and managed.

From time to time the Public Service Commission may request flexible working data from departments and departmental agencies. The Commission may also collect information to understand agencies implementation of the guidance.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

From: [Karyn Thompson](#)
To: [Mike Tully](#)
Cc: [Haley Rowe-Manson](#); [Kate Greenall](#); [Laura Hewson](#)
Subject: FW: Seeking your approval on our refreshed Flexible Work Policy / Process
Date: Thursday, 13 March 2025 10:56:35 am
Attachments: [02 Flexible Work Arrangements Policy - Final for CPO approval.pptx](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[19. Flexible Work Request Process.docx](#)
[Flexible Working \(Work from Home\) Guidance .pdf](#)

Kia ora Mike, as you know, the OD team have been doing some great work updating our Flexible Work Arrangements Policy and Flexible Work Request Process (now both significantly simplified) following the publication of the PSC's new flexible WFH guidance in Dec 24 (attached).

I'm happy to approve these but just wanted to check whether you want to approve as DD-G too.

The PSC will repeat the Public Service Working from Home collection in May 2025, with that updated data intended to be published alongside reporting from the Public Service Census in mid-2025.

Ngā mihi

Karyn Thompson ([she/her](#))

Chief People Officer

Organisation Support

Department of Conservation, Te Papa Atawhai

[s9\(2\)\(a\)](#) | karthompson@doc.govt.nz

PA: Georgie Fraser: georgiefraser@doc.govt.nz

[s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

Conservation House | Whare Kaupapa Atawhai

18 - 32 Manners St | PO Box 10 420, Wellington 6143

www.doc.govt.nz

Note: I support flexible working and may be sending you this message away from the office or outside normal working hours. Please know I do not expect you to respond outside your working hours.



From: Haley Rowe-Manson <hmanson@doc.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 9:27 am

To: Karyn Thompson <karthompson@doc.govt.nz>; Georgie Fraser <gfraser@doc.govt.nz>

Cc: Laura Hewson <lhewson@doc.govt.nz>; Kate Greenall <kgreenall@doc.govt.nz>

Subject: Seeking your approval on our refreshed Flexible Work Policy / Process

Kia ora Karyn,

Final policy and process ready for your approval

Please find attached our refreshed Flexible Work Policy and process documents. These are now ready for your approval.

PSA feedback

The PSA had two specific requests, which have been reflected in the policy:

1. Addition of a policy statement "If there is any inconsistency between this policy and the collective, the collective

will prevail". This statement mitigates the risk of us no longer having "flexible-by-default" in our policy when it's in our collective employment agreements.

2. In relation to the 'Working from home' section in the policy, they asked us to remove "DOC expects employees to work from home for no more than two days per week". PSA's view is this expectation is contrary to the collective, and the intention to encourage people into the office is already covered by the two levels of approval.

Summary of key changes to support our refreshed policy

I know we took you through these on 26 February, but for completeness, we've captured them here too.

- The old SOP has been repackaged into new intranet content and manager/employee guidance.
- We've developed case studies of individuals who work flexibly, and managers who manage flexible teams – showcasing what good looks like at DOC.
- Created a new Employee Guide to Working from Home and updated our Health and Safety Checklist for Working from Home. These documents include specific updates to align with PSC expectations (psychological H&S, and information/physical security requirements).
- Simplified our Flexible Work Request Form and Approval/Decline Letters.

Next steps

Subject to your approval, Laura and I will get the intranet page updated with our new content, and work in partnership with Allie to update the organisation on the changes.

If you have any questions whatsoever, please don't hesitate to ask.

Best wishes,

Haley Rowe-Manson (she/her)

Senior Advisor, Organisational Development
Department of Conservation | Te Papa Atawhai

Ōtautahi Christchurch Regional Office

Grand Central Building, 161 Cashel Street | Private Bag 4715, Christchurch 8140

www.doc.govt.nz

I work a nine-day fortnight in the following way.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Office	Home	Office	Home	Office (every 2 nd week)



From: [Mike Tully](#)
To: [Karyn Thompson](#)
Cc: [Haley Rowe-Manson](#); [Kate Greenall](#); [Laura Hewson](#)
Subject: RE: Seeking your approval on our refreshed Flexible Work Policy / Process
Date: Thursday, 13 March 2025 11:59:39 am
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

Thanks Karyn and good work – like the flow diagrams and the picture of process – well done. Happy to support your approval

Cheers

Mike

From: Karyn Thompson <karthompson@doc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 13 March 2025 10:56 am
To: Mike Tully <mtully@doc.govt.nz>
Cc: Haley Rowe-Manson <hmanson@doc.govt.nz>; Kate Greenall <kgreenall@doc.govt.nz>; Laura Hewson <lhewson@doc.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Seeking your approval on our refreshed Flexible Work Policy / Process

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Ngā mihi

Karyn Thompson ([she/her](#))
Chief People Officer
Organisation Support

Department of Conservation, Te Papa Atawhai
[s9\(2\)\(a\)](#) | karthompson@doc.govt.nz

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