

# Making flexible working the default – Government releases proposals

3 years ago



The government has revealed plans for its intention to introduce changes to the right to request flexible working legislation. This right currently supports all employees with 26 weeks continuous service to make applications to change their work location, working hours and/or working pattern.

The response states that the government will take forward the following measures:

- make the right to request flexible working a day one right
- introduce a new requirement for employees to consult with the employer when they intend to reject their flexible working request
- allow 2 statutory requests in any 12-month period (rather than the current one)
- require a decision period of 2 months in respect of a statutory flexible working request (rather than the current three)
- remove the existing requirement that the employee must explain what effect, if any, the change applied for would have on the employer and how that effect might be dealt with

The response also commits to:

- developing guidance to raise awareness and understanding of how to make and administer temporary requests for flexible working
- launching a call for evidence to better understand how informal flexible working operates in practice

It includes a summary of the responses received from individuals and stakeholders.

The proposed changes to the right to request flexible working received broad support across the range of

respondents, including individuals, businesses, charities, and trade unions.

The government recognises that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to work arrangements and has been clear that the legislation should remain a 'right to request', not a 'right to have'. The priority is to set the right conditions to allow employees and employers to explore the available options in their particular context.

We received 1,611 responses to this consultation. The majority of respondents were individuals: 1,342 in total (83%). In terms of responses from business we received:

- 56 from large businesses
- 25 from medium businesses
- 14 from small businesses
- 19 from micro businesses
- 30 from business representative organisations

The other main sub-groups were:

- charities or campaign groups
- academics, think tanks or advisory groups
- consultancies or professional bodies

[You can read the consultation paper here.](#)