



JOB SHARE POLICY

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NHS 24

JOB SHARE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

NHS 24 is committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of flexible, employee friendly working practices for all employees. By implementing this job sharing policy NHS 24 aims to create an environment which will allow all employees to utilise their skills and talents and experience and thereby allow it to both recruit and retain a well motivated and committed workforce.

Job sharing represents an opportunity for employees to work fewer hours, while maintaining their career opportunities and personal development. Job sharing offers the opportunity for individuals to tailor the time they spend at work and at home, thereby enhancing the work/life balance.

2. DEFINITION

Job sharing is a form of employment in which the duties and responsibilities of a post, which would normally be held by one person, are shared. The salary and benefits of the post are divided between the job sharers in proportion to the number of hours they work. Each job sharer must, over time, fulfil the whole range of duties within the post.

- 2.1 Job sharing should not be confused with 'job splitting', which occurs when the work of one post is split into two separate part-time posts, with separate tasks and little or no shared responsibilities.
- 2.2 A high level of co-operation and communication between job sharers is essential, and for this reason, job sharing may include provision for overlap time between the two partners to facilitate communication and maintain continuity in the work.

3. SCOPE

The job-sharing scheme is open to all NHS 24 employees, whether permanent or fixed term, as well as secondees, regardless of grade, length of service or hours worked. It is also open to prospective employees. Job sharers do not need to state their reasons for wishing to job share. It does not apply to agency workers or contractors, who should contact their own employer if making a request to job share.

4. JOB SHARE PROCESS

4.1 Existing Employees

Employees should submit requests to job share in writing to their manager. A written response should be given within 10 working days, following consultation with the HR Department.

4.2 If the request is rejected, the reasons for refusal must be stated. A decision to reject job share for an existing post can be appealed against by the post holder through the Grievance Procedure. As the manager will be involved in the decision to refuse the job share request, it may be appropriate to commence grievance proceedings at Stage 2 of the procedure.

4.3 If the request is provisionally approved, recruitment can begin. Full approval can only be granted once a suitable job share partner is found, and employees should note that this process may take several months. The employee must continue to work their contracted hours until full approval is obtained, and a suitable start date for the job share arrangement has been agreed.

4.4 Recruitment Process

a) The post will be advertised as a vacancy for a job share partner.

b) Applicants should receive appropriate details plus a copy of the Job Share Policy, and

c) Short listed applicants will be made aware of the interview arrangements for job sharers. Normally, the existing job share partner will be offered the opportunity to meet candidates informally, although they will not participate in the formal interview process. The prospective job share partner may be given the opportunity to feedback to the interview panel. The panel will have the responsibility of deciding to what degree these views should impact on the final recruitment decision.

4.5 If after interview no suitable job share partner is found the post should be re-advertised. If the post is vacant after two consecutive advertisements have been placed the following procedure shall apply:

a) If job share arrangements cannot be made, managers should give sympathetic consideration to alternatives. For example redeployment or other arrangements for flexible working, which may meet the employee's needs. Alternative options must be of a commensurate grade and status.

b) Alternatively, the employee should be informed that a new application for a job share might be considered at a future date. The second application cannot be made until six months have passed since the date of the refusal. In the meantime, they will continue to work their contracted hours.

4.6 **Replacing Job Sharers**

As job sharers are separate employees, one partner leaving should not effect the other sharer's employment. If one partner does leave the following procedure should be adopted:

a) The remaining sharer should be offered the options of full-time working or altering their working hours, days or pattern of work before the post is advertised.

b) Where the remaining partner does not wish to work full-time, the vacant hours will be advertised as a job share.

c) If no sharer can be found in a period of not less than four months and after at least two advertisements, alternatives should be considered. The role may be changed to a part time position and the existing sharer may be required to work the same hours on a part-time basis. Alternatively, the sharer may be transferred to an alternative but commensurate post with equivalent hours.

4.7 **Recruitment of all vacant positions**

Vacant positions should be advertised as both open to full-time and job share candidates, unless it can be positively demonstrated that this is inappropriate. (As front line roles are already advertised offering flexible hours, "job share" will not normally be included in adverts for front line positions.)

a) Candidates will be asked to indicate on their application whether they wish to job share. Two candidates may submit a joint application or candidates may be matched during the recruitment process.

b) Applicants should receive relevant recruitment information plus a copy of the Job Share Policy. Short listed candidates will be made aware of the interview procedures for job sharers.

5. **SELECTION**

5.1 **Interview Procedures**

The interview procedure should be the same as for all selection interviews, but should include specific questions to assess the feasibility of the proposed job share arrangements.

5.2 All applicants, including joint applicants, will be assessed on an individual basis to ensure they can undertake the full duties of the role. Following their final assessment the interview panel may make any of the following decisions:

a) To appoint an applicant full-time (if a full-time post is on offer).

b) To appoint two job share partners who have submitted a joint application.

c) To appoint one half of a joint job share along with another individual job share applicant.

d) To appoint one half of a joint job share application and advertise for the other half.

6. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

6.1 Job Share Agreement

The job share agreement will need to be negotiated between the manager and the job share partners. This agreement will be in writing and will form part of the contract of employment. The general spirit and intention of the scheme is that all terms and conditions of service should be applicable to job sharers on a pro rata basis.

6.2 When negotiating the job share agreement, in particular the division of duties and sharing of responsibilities, the primary aim is to determine the best method to ensure service delivery and compatibility with the job share partners' needs.

6.3 The agreement will need to include the following:

- Hours of work
- Working arrangements can be divided in a number of ways, for example split days, split weeks, alternate days or alternate weeks, depending on the nature of the job.
- The procedure to be followed when one job share partner leaves

6.4 Factors to consider when determining hours of work include:

- Does the job need to be covered every day and within set times?
- A fair distribution of shifts must be allocated pro rata to the hours worked
- Is the creation of an overlap within agreed working hours desirable?
- Is there sufficient office space/desk space for both partners to work together?
- Will they both need to attend certain meetings?
- How do the job sharers domestic arrangements affect the hours they work?
- Handover or overlap arrangements

6.5 Overlap time provides job sharers with the opportunity to pass on information and update each other. Where a high degree of managerial activity is involved, a structured overlap period may be needed.

6.6 Communication

In addition to overlap periods, other methods of maintaining strong communication links should be established, for example diaries, a bring forward file, e-mail and written notes of all meetings. It is recommended that consideration be given to sharing an email account, which may enhance efficient working.

6.7 Public Holidays

Arrangements for sharing Public Holidays will be agreed between the job sharers and their line manager to ensure that a pro rata division is maintained.

6.8 Individual Performance Review

Each partner should be assessed separately and similarly for the assessment of performance. The objectives set for the job share partners may include an objective to ensure the success of the job share partnership.

6.9 **Supervision**

Each partner will be responsible to their manager.

6.10 **General Terms and Conditions of Employment**

Each job sharer will have an individual contract of employment. All pay and other benefits will be pro rata to the hours worked. The job title will be that given to the full time post and the job description will be the same as the full time post.

Benefits depending on length of service, including incremental points, sick pay, long service leave and maternity entitlements, will be attributed individually.

6.11 **Grade**

The grade will apply equally to both job share partners. Any grading review will apply to the whole post.

6.12 **Annual Leave**

Annual leave will be applied on a pro rata basis. The job share partners may take it at the same time or at different times subject to the manager's agreement.

6.13 **Training**

Training opportunities should be made available to both job share partners dependent on their individual needs. When training takes place on a day on which one of the job sharers would not normally work, time off in lieu should be offered. If appropriate, job sharers may attend training sessions together.

6.14 **Sick Leave**

Job sharers will be entitled to occupational sick pay on a pro rata basis in accordance with the appropriate NHS Terms and Conditions of Service and their length of service.

6.15 **Cover for Absences**

There will be no requirement on a job sharer to cover for a partner's short-term absences due to sickness or leave. If the individual agrees to work additional hours for this purpose, then any additional hours worked above those specified in the individual's personal contract will be paid at the appropriate rate or time off in lieu will be offered. These arrangements should be agreed before any additional hours are undertaken.

6.16 **Additional Hours Payments**

Payment for additional hours working will be determined in accordance with the appropriate NHS Terms and Conditions.

6.17 Pensions

If an existing full-time employee changes to a job share post this may have an effect on their pension, although they remain entitled to continue membership of the scheme. Advice should be sought from SPPA in the first instance.

6.18 Promotion

Job sharers will be considered for advertised vacancies on equal terms with any other applicants.

6.19 Lease cars and mileage allowances

Individual job sharers who are eligible can apply for a car under the organisation's leasing scheme.

6.20 Other Terms and Conditions

All other terms and conditions of employment will apply equally to job sharers as they would to other employees, be they full or part-time.

7. REFUSING A JOB SHARE

The only circumstances in which a post may be identified as unsuitable for a job share arrangement is where the manager can give a substantial reason for the need to avoid such an arrangement, which can be supported by specific examples from the job. The most important point is to look at each individual case on its merits without making assumptions about what is or is not possible. The individual(s) concerned may be able to suggest a way to overcome perceived difficulties. Managers should contact the HR Department for further guidance in this area before making a final decision.

7.1 Where the duties of the post are such that the manager considers part-time working a satisfactory alternative, which would not create any operational difficulties, then this may be suggested to the employee(s).

7.2 Employees are under no obligation to enter into a job share arrangement to suit the needs of other employees. Such an arrangement must be entirely voluntary.

8. JOB SHARE REGISTER

A Job Share Register will be maintained by the HR Department. This will provide information on existing and potential employees who wish to apply for a job share.

8.1 In the event of an application for job share being rejected for an operational or recruitment reason the applicant's name will be kept on the register. The purpose of the register will be to match those applicants who have been previously refused/unsuccessful. Those who 'register' will be asked to specify the type of work they are interested in and the patterns of work they would prefer.

9. REVIEW

9.1 This policy will be reviewed in Partnership on a two-yearly basis.

10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

10.1 The Policy will be impact-assessed and monitored for its effects in terms of equality and diversity.