



GUIDELINE	
Flexible Work Arrangements	
Scope (Staff):	All permanent and fixed term employees
Scope (Area):	Child and Adolescent Health Service

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Aim

This guideline is a practical reference tool for employees and managers to use in considering and implementing flexible work arrangements.

The guideline is designed to;

- improve the awareness and understanding of the different types of flexible work arrangements available within the Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS);
- provide employees with the tools which will encourage them to discuss their specific needs and individual requirements with their line manager; and
- provide managers with the tools to adequately and fairly assess flexible work applications and successfully implement flexible work arrangements.

Background

CAHS supports and encourages a work-life balance for its employees. Work-life balance is having the ability to manage work commitments with personal interests and goals as well as family, community and cultural responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements can enable employees to achieve a work-life balance, thereby optimising their contribution to the health service.

The information within this guideline is intended as a general information resource for CAHS employees and should be read in conjunction with the [CAHS Flexible Work Policy](#).

Definitions

Flexible work: includes any alternative and/or flexible arrangements to work, within the context of the relevant industrial instrument, that support the employee whilst ensuring that service needs continue to be met.

Job share: type of flexible work arrangement which is voluntary and involves sharing or dividing the duties and responsibilities of a full time position among two or more employees on an agreed basis.

Phased retirement: a phased retirement arrangement includes one or more flexible work arrangements to assist mature age employees who are nearing retirement.

Mature age employees: employed people aged 45-64 years¹.

Working from home: a formal work arrangement in which an employee works from home at time periods agreed with the employer.

Key Points

- Flexible work arrangements are to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and approved in accordance with the [CAHS Authorisation Schedule](#).
- Access to flexible work arrangements varies for different positions and categories of employees and needs to be considered within the context of the relevant industrial instrument.
- Employees returning to work from parental leave may return on a part time or job share basis or on another modified basis in accordance with the relevant [industrial instrument](#).

Benefits

- Benefits of flexible working arrangements to **employees** may include:
 - better work-life balance and therefore increased satisfaction at work and outside of work;
 - greater ability to meet family, community or cultural commitments;
 - improved social support and connectedness;
 - maintenance of skills;
 - employment for those whom full time work would be difficult;
 - the social and financial benefits of ongoing employment; and
 - Improved employee satisfaction and reduced stress.
- Benefits to the **health service** may include:
 - improved patient outcomes;
 - improved continuity of care;
 - improved attraction and retention of skilled and valued employees;

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics – Mature Age Workers
<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/D4CD96E96875500DCA256F7200833041>

- increased morale and employee engagement;
- reduced absenteeism;
- improved productivity;
- improved employee satisfaction and reduced stress; and
- enhanced protection against unlawful discrimination.

Barriers

- There are a number of barriers to implementing flexible work arrangements for both employees and managers to be aware of including:
 - lack of awareness of the flexible work arrangements available;
 - lack of support and inability to access flexible work arrangements;
 - potential cost implications;
 - impact on operational requirements;
 - stigma attached to those accessing flexible working arrangements; and
 - lack of understanding of the benefits of flexible work arrangements to employees and the wider organisation.²

Options for Flexible Work Arrangements

- CAHS has a number of flexible work arrangements available to employees, subject to service needs, operational obligations and the requirements of the individual, manager and the broader team.
- The following section outlines some of these arrangements in more detail including tools and resources for implementation.
 - In addition, the table in [Appendix A](#) provides a summary of the options available.
 - Refer to the relevant [industrial instrument](#) for additional information on these options as well as other leave entitlements.

Job share

- Job share arrangements can encompass a number of possibilities but usually involve:
 - a) a full time position divided between employees but each is responsible for **separate** duties of the position;
 - b) a full time position divided between employees with **shared** responsibility for **all** the duties of the position; or
 - c) a combination of the above.

Management of job sharing

- Each job share arrangement is different, necessitating its own design.

² <https://www.wgea.gov.au/lead/strategic-approach-flexibility>

- Where possible, job sharers should be consulted regarding the job design. Factors to consider include:
 - the workload being commensurate with the number of hours worked;
 - the work performed being commensurate with the classification level of the job; and
 - the job offers varied tasks to ensure skill maintenance and development.
- Job sharers and managers should develop adequate communication and coordination processes so the outcomes of the role can be achieved.
- An agreement should include a plan of action for when either of the job sharers takes leave, leaves the position or health service, or wishes to revert to full time.
- An example of a [Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement](#) is available on HealthPoint. This can be adapted for a job share arrangement.
- The job share arrangement must be implemented and managed in accordance with establishment requirements.

Phased retirement

- Phased retirement is a strategy that may deliver a number of benefits to CAHS and its' mature age employees including:
 - assisting mature age employees in making the transition from employment to retirement while also assisting the organisation to better manage knowledge and skill transfer;
 - contributing to improved retention of mature aged employees with skills and knowledge over a longer term; and
 - facilitating succession planning by moving to another suitable position or undertaking the mentorship of a more junior employee.
- A mature age employee may request a phased retirement arrangement for a number of reasons including:
 - combining work with family and caring responsibilities;
 - reducing the mental or physical demands of working full time;
 - delaying retirement and remaining in meaningful work for longer; and
 - achieving a desired work life balance leading up to retirement.

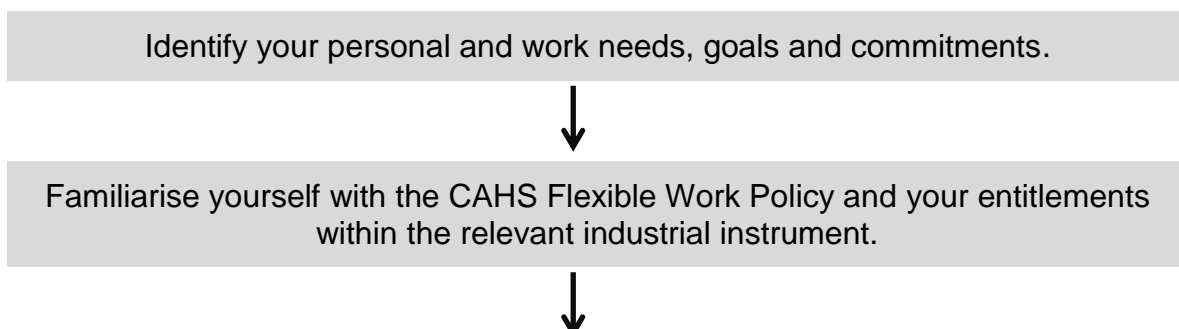
Working from home

- Typically, appropriate tasks for working from home are those that can be completed without face-to-face contact and undertaken with minimal supervision.
- Arrangements must comply with applicable:
 - HSS technical and software requirements; and
 - Please contact [CAHS ICT](#) for more information.

- Health Service Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) requirements ensuring the employee is able to safely carry out their work in their home.
 - Refer to the [OSH Requirements for Working from Home](#) checklist.
- Privacy and confidentiality requirements.
- Working from home does not provide for the employee's primary place of work to be the employee's home.
- Generally, the applicant is responsible for the establishment, equipment and any other costs associated with the working from home arrangement.
- Telecommuting agreements are required to include;
 - start and finish date;
 - communication requirements;
 - an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the employee under the arrangement;
 - clearly defined objectives and performance indicators;
 - an agreement to review the arrangements every six months (or earlier if the circumstances change for either the employee or employer); and
 - an agreed written notice period for either the employee or employer to withdraw from the working from home agreement.
- Adhoc or occasional telecommuting arrangements do not constitute a formal telecommuting arrangement and generally do not require a [Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement](#).
- An example of a [Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement](#) is provided on HealthPoint. This can be adapted for a Working from Home Agreement.
 - The checklist for [OSH Requirements for Working from Home](#) must also be completed by a CAHS OSH approved contractor and attached to the Working from Home Agreement.

Information for Employees

- Flexible work arrangements are available subject to a mutual agreement between an employee and their manager.
- The following outlines the process for employees to assist in requesting a flexible work arrangement:



Consider what type of arrangement you wish to negotiate with your manager.



Seek independent financial advice if required.



Prepare to discuss your proposal with your manager including putting your proposal in writing or by using one of the sample templates provided in the appendix of this document.

Information for Managers

- Before assessing and responding to a flexible work application, managers should be informed about the options for flexible work arrangements and the entitlements within the relevant industrial instruments.

Assessing a flexible work application

Step 1 Understand the nature and reasons for the flexible work request including the employee's personal circumstances; whether the request is for a short term or long term arrangement; and whether there are direct cost implications or identifiable risks.



Step 2 Assess the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position and what options exist for the work unit to accommodate the request with minimal impact on the team. Consider workload management in the context of current and projected workforce needs.



Step 3 Consider how the request can be practically implemented (considering OSH and technical/software requirements if applicable) and discuss this with the employee.



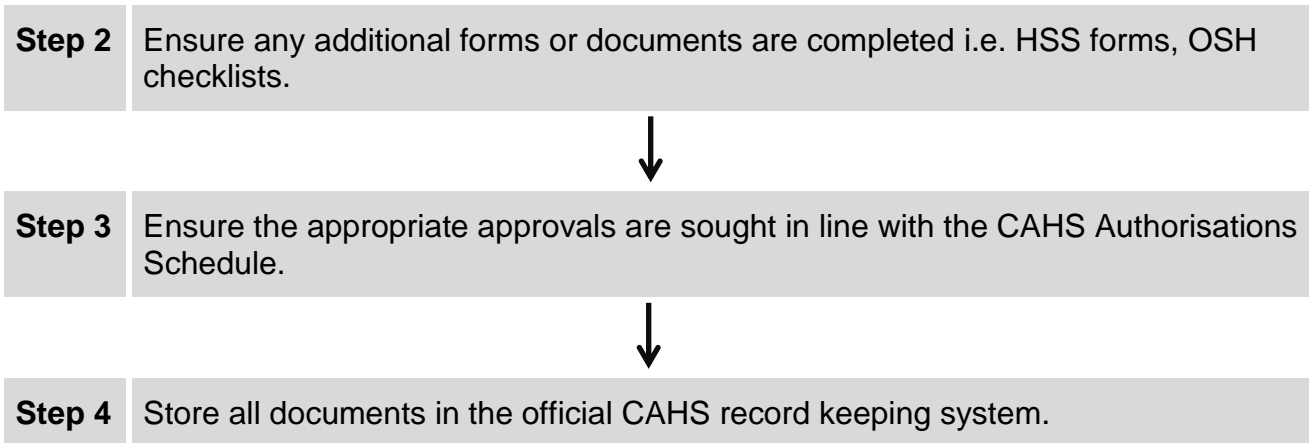
Step 4 Make a transparent and fair decision that is capable of review ensuring justification for the decision is provided. Seek advice from Human Resources if required.

Implementing a flexible work arrangement

Step 1 Document the arrangement as applicable including;

- duration of the arrangement;
- any applicable trial period or review dates.





Denying a flexible work arrangement request

- If a formal request for flexible work is refused or modified, the manager is required to provide justification for the decision in the form of a written response.
- Requests may be reasonably refused on the grounds of operational requirements such as:
 - availability of suitable leave cover, if required
 - cost implications
 - impact on service requirements
 - impact on the work of other employees
 - the employee's existing leave liability
- Managers may complete a [Manager Response Form](#) – Flexible Work Arrangement Denied in providing their written response to the employee.

Related internal policies, procedures and guidelines

[Flexible Work](#) (CAHS Policy Manual)

[Leave Without Pay](#) (CAHS Policy Manual)

[Employee Breastfeeding](#) (CAHS Policy Manual)

[Corporate Records Management](#) (CAHS Policy Manual)


References

[Australian Bureau of Statistics – Mature Age Workers](#)

[Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#)

Useful resources (including related forms)	
CAHS Authorisations Schedule	
Agreements Library	
Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement (Sample template)	
OSH Requirements for Working from Home (CAHS Form)	
Manager Response Form – Flexible Work Arrangement Denied	
M6 Contract Variation Form	
Purchased leave application form	
Deferred salary scheme application form	

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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Appendix 1: Summary of Other Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangement	Additional Information
Part time	Available on a temporary or permanent basis. Completion of a M6 Contract Variation Form is required for changes to employment status (ie. FT to PT) and/or changes in contracted hours.
Compressed hours	Includes 9 day fortnight or 19 day month for full time employees. Refer to the relevant industrial instrument .
Flexible start and finish times	Including flexi time, ADO's and TOIL. Refer to the relevant industrial instrument .
Purchased leave	In addition to annual leave, an agreement whereby the employee can take a reduced salary spread over the 52 weeks of the year and receive purchased leave. Completion of a HSS Purchased Leave Application is required.
Deferred salary scheme	An employee is paid 80% of their base salary over a four year period with the unpaid component accrued over the four years and paid out in equal instalments during the fifth year. Completion of a HSS Deferred Salary Scheme Application is required.
Study leave	An employee may be granted time off with pay for study purposes. Refer to the relevant industrial instrument .
Annual leave/Long service leave entitlements	Leave entitlements can be used as part of a phased retirement arrangement or for cultural/ceremonial reasons. Refer to the relevant industrial instrument .
Leave Without Pay (LWOP)	LWOP may be granted to employees for a variety of reasons provided all other paid leave entitlements have been exhausted. Refer to the relevant industrial instrument and the CAHS Leave Without Pay Guideline.
Breastfeeding arrangements	The CAHS Employee Breastfeeding Policy provides for paid breaks negotiated between the employer and employee for the sole purpose of enabling an employee to express breast milk or breastfeed an infant or young child offsite or at the workplace.

Appendix 2 - Case Studies

Job share

Job sharing occurs within Department X with mutual agreement between the two employees filling the position, establishing work hours that suit both employees and the employer. There is a strong emphasis on communication between the employees and arranging mutual times where employees can meet if necessary. Employees reported enjoying the benefits of working closely with another individual within the same role and being exposed to different viewpoints and ways of working. The organisation reported the benefits from having two skill sets working within the role.

Phased retirement

Employee A is of retirement age and approached her manager about reducing her work days and changing from full time to part time. As part of the arrangement, Employee A works with a junior colleague as a mentor, helping to train and upskill them to take on the other aspects of his role. Employee A has used her additional days off during the week to undertake work in the community and volunteer in not-for-profit organisations. The arrangement has benefitted the employee, her team and the organisation.

Telecommuting

Employee B has recently moved to a new house on a property further away from his workplace. He is now commuting an additional hour and a half every day. Employee B recently had a conversation with his manager regarding the extra travelling and the negative impact this is having on his work/life balance. His manager suggested that he trial working from home two days a week. Both the employee and his manager have now reported an increase in productivity and motivation.