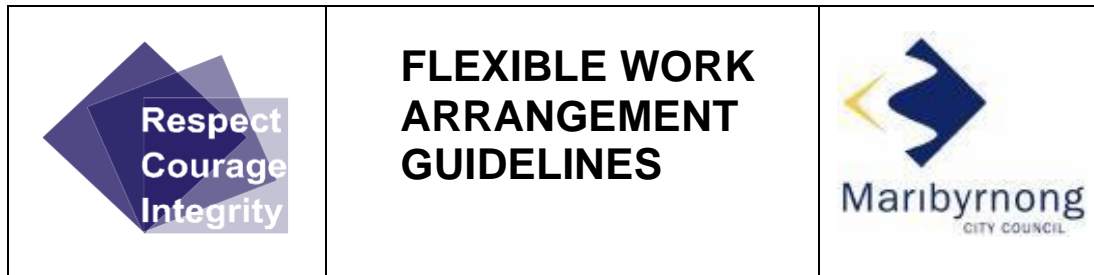


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Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- Provide general information to all employees regarding requesting, considering and implementing flexible work arrangements.
- Encourage flexible work arrangements to enable employees to combine their life, family and personal responsibilities with the requirements of their position.

Council's Leave Procedures, Working from Home Policy / Procedures, Job Sharing Policy / Procedures and Council's Enterprise Agreement all provide more specific details relating to various flexible work arrangements. These documents can be on Council's intranet at http://intranet/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=261&h=0 and http://intranet/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=259&h=0

What are flexible work arrangements?

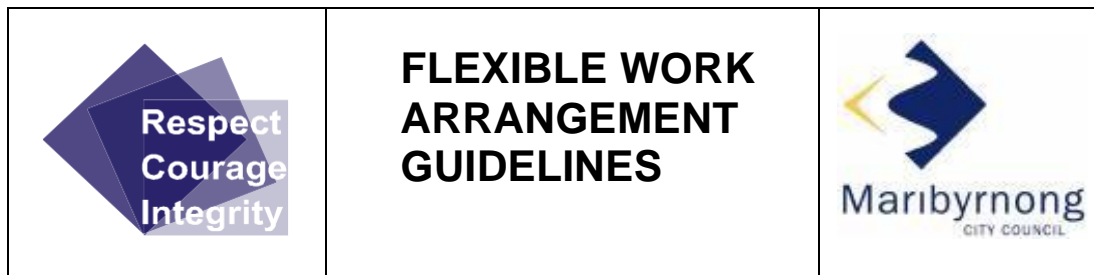
Flexible work arrangements refer to work practices and arrangements that allow for flexibility in the way employees undertake and complete their work e.g. changes to standard hours, patterns or location of work. They can be long or short term changes. Specific types of flexible work arrangements include one or a combination of the following:

When and how you work – changing hours or days

- Flexible start and finish times;
- Regular accrued day off for full time employees who are not classified as Senior Officers;
- Time in lieu and make up time arrangements;
- 50/52 or 48/52 purchased leave arrangements (e.g. ability to purchase two or four weeks leave without pay in addition to your own four weeks annual leave. Your remaining 48 weeks pay are then spread over 52 weeks resulting in a reduced rate of pay for the 52 week period.);
- Part time
- Job share
- Phased retirement program
- Flexible working doesn't mean everyone gets what they want all the time. It requires give and take, trust, ethics, cooperation and negotiation. The proposed change needs to be realistic and workable for everyone. However, well developed, cooperative teams will seek to find creative solutions to meet the needs of their work area.

Where you work – Ad Hoc working remotely

Eligible employees are able to work from home or other locations on specific projects in an ad hoc manner from time to time as work requirements demand. Limits are set by their Manager subject to any operational requirements.



It is recognised that due to the important customer service facing focus of most Council positions that not all staff will be able to work remotely.

All requests from staff to work remotely would require the prior approval of the Manager and are subject to confirmation of the agreed measurable outcomes.

The benefits of flexibility

Research has shown there are a number of benefits for individuals, teams and organisations when employees are enabled to work flexibly.

- Improved output and effectiveness;
- Improved ability to serve customers;
- Retaining knowledge, skills and experience whilst reducing the cost of recruitment and retraining;
- Improved job satisfaction and teamwork.
- Decreased absenteeism.

Enabling employees and Managers to implement work flexibility arrangements can also assist with workforce planning strategies.

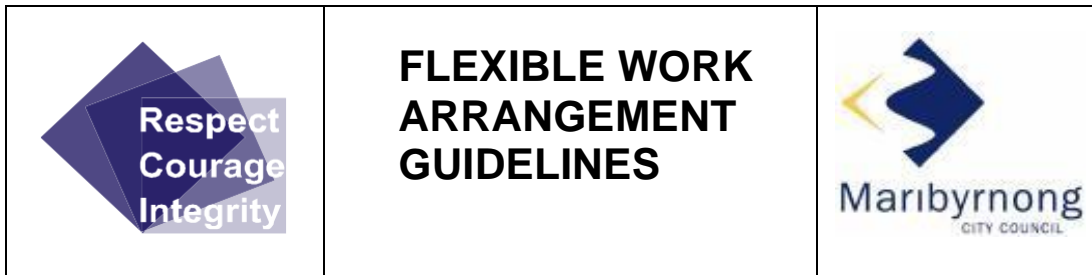
Considerations in making flexible work decisions

Each application from employees requesting a flexible work arrangement will be considered on a case by case basis. Consideration should be given to but not limited to:-

- Benefits such as retention, increase morale;
- The reasons for the request and the employee's personal circumstances;
- The consequences for the employee of either having the flexible work arrangement approved or declined;
- The nature of the employee's role and the operational needs of the work area;
- The financial impact of accommodating the request;
- The arrangements required to accommodate the request;
- The impact on customer service (internal and external) and productivity
- If the request relates to a reduction in hours, the work load implications and how the role/workload could be redesigned;

Any requests from employee who have worked with Council for at least 12 months and relate to:-

- Being a parent or has the responsibility for the care of a child who is of school age or younger;
- Being a carer (within the meaning of the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*)



- Having a disability;
- Being aged 55 or over;
- Experiencing violence from a member of their family, or
- Providing care or support to a member of their immediate family or household who requires care or support because they are experiencing violence from their family;

are specifically covered by anti discrimination law and the Commonwealth National Employment Standards. Council must respond in writing to such a request within 21 days and can only refuse a request on 'reasonable business grounds'. Reasonable business grounds include but are not limited to:

- The requested arrangements are too costly;
- Other employees' working arrangements can't be changes to accommodate the request;
- It's impractical to change other employees' working arrangements or hire new employees to accommodate the request;
- The request would result in a significant loss of productivity or have a significant negative impact on customer service.

Casual employees are entitled to make a request if:

- They have been employed by Council on a regular and systematic basis for a sequence of periods of employment for at least 12 months immediately before making a request;
- There is a reasonable expectation of continuing employment by Council on a regular and systematic basis.

The National Employment Standards do not require an employer to choose between granting an employees' request in full or refusing the request. Rather employers and employees are encouraged to discuss their working arrangements and where possible, reach an agreement that balances both their needs.

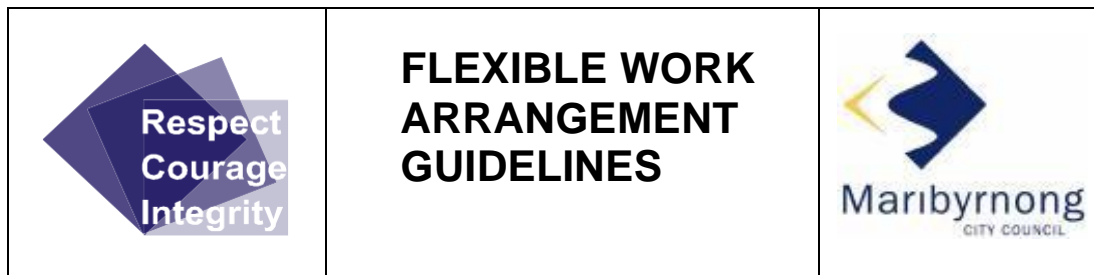
The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 requires employers to consider reasonable requests made by workers to adjust their working arrangements so they can meet their caring responsibilities.

Council's Enterprise Agreement requires Council to consider all requests for part time work upon return from parental leave unless it can be demonstrated that to do so would place an unreasonable burden on Council.

Requesting flexibility

When you start to think about requesting flexibility, things to consider are:

- What sort of flexibility would you prefer?
- What effect may it have on your team and your Manager?



- What might your Manager be most concerned about in considering your request for flexibility? Understand your Manager is responsible for an entire team and therefore has many factors to consider.
- What can you do to help flexibility work effectively for your Manager and team? Think about how the needs of the work area can be met and suggest options to make it easier for your request to be agreed to.
- What are Council's legal responsibilities?
- What if you can't have the specific type or amount of flexibility you want or need?

A formal request needs to be in writing, explain clearly what changes you are requesting and the reason for the request. Remember, flexible arrangements work best when both parties benefit from the arrangement. Remain flexible about your flexibility needs.

Preparing for flexibility

While it is possible that you will get flexibility right first time, the more common scenario is that productive flexibility is an outcome of a concerted effort to learn and make adjustments until the right mix is found.

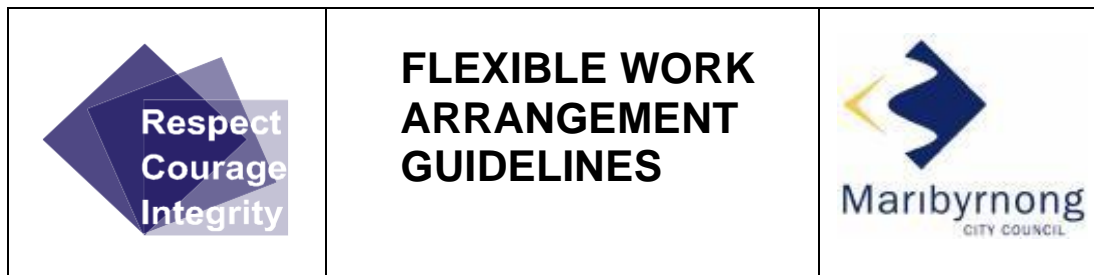
A trial period gives everyone (Manager, employee and the team) the opportunity to see how it can work and a chance to decide if a different type of flexibility may be better. A trial period of about three months may be sufficient (it can be longer or shorter). During this time, the flexible working arrangement should be actively monitored. Look at aspects such as customer service, team culture, information flow, resource planning, performance and self management. Identify areas that need to be discussed or altered and make the necessary adjustments. Approaching flexibility as a cycle of learning enables everyone to make the most of the arrangement.

If you and your Manager prefer different flexible work options, try to work these differences through by:

- Showing willingness to negotiate to find a mutually beneficial agreement;
- Identify where there is agreement;
- Identifying a small set of preferred flexible working arrangements to further explore;
- Making further investigations if more information is needed;
- Thinking creatively to arrive at a solution;
- Meeting in the middle with a compromise solution.

Document your agreement

It is important to document your agreement to introduce or trial flexibility. This provides the opportunity make sure that everyone has the same understanding of how the flexible working arrangement will operate and establish clear expectations.



The agreement should note that major adjustments may be needed initially. These should be given with fair notice. Ensure the agreement clearly establishes the main details:

- The specific flexibility option to be trialled including when and how the work will occur;
- The duration of the trial;
- The methods that will be used to monitor the arrangement's success e.g. customer service, team culture, information flow, resource planning, performance, self management.
- The agreed strategies that will be established to resolve the possible challenges that may arise from the flexible working arrangement, together with time frames.

A scanned electronic copy of the agreement is to be provided to the Human Resources Section for inclusion in the employee's personnel container.

Monitoring, evaluating, adjusting and consolidating flexibility

When an issue is identified, adjustments should be made quickly so that any downsides do not have a prolonged effect. Major adjustments should be made with fair notice, particularly if they will have significant impact on the employee, Manager, team or customer service.

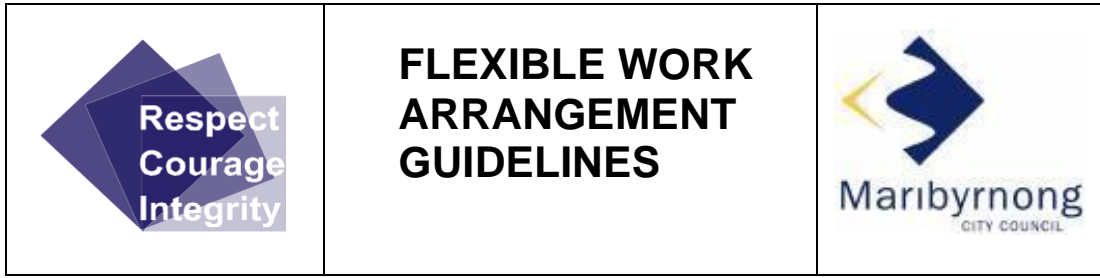
After the trial period, it should be clear of what works and what doesn't work in the flexible working arrangement. However some issues that were not apparent during the trial phase may arise later. Both parties to the agreement should remain open to the possibility that the flexible working arrangement may still need to change over time.

Ongoing management of flexibility

Some people at work may have negative ideas about employees who work flexibly. They may believe that employees who work flexibly are less committed to the Council, less ambitious, less competent or less deserving of a promotion. These ideas may be related to the belief that flexibility is primarily a benefit to employees.

What does it take to challenge these negative ideas about flexibility? It can be a simple matter of direct personal experience – 'seeing with your own eyes'. This might mean observing improved productivity through a successful flexible working arrangement. It might require reading and research to develop more knowledge about some of the benefits that may arise from flexible work arrangements.

For trust to develop over time with any flexible work arrangement, managers need to feel confident that employees are working and achieving their goals.

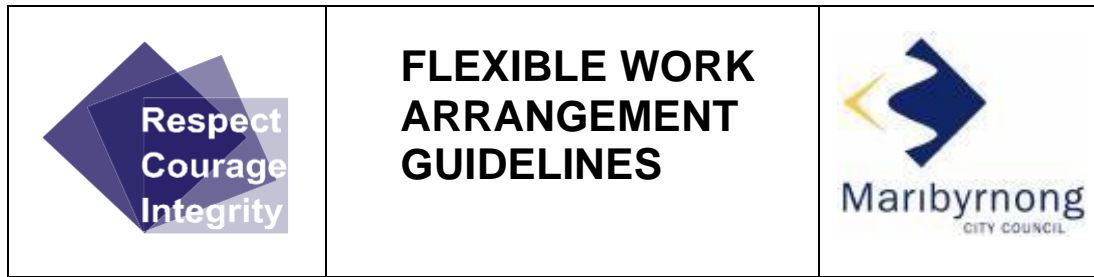


Approved: Executive Management Team July 2019

Updated: March 2020

Date for review: December 2020 unless there is a change in legislation or prompted by a change in environment or learning.

Responsible Officer: Manager People and Capability



References and Attachments

Maribyrnong City Council: *People and Workplace Strategy 2018 - 2021*

Fair Work Ombudsman: *Best Practice Guide - Work & Family. The right to request flexible working arrangements*

Fair Work Ombudsman: *Requests for flexible working arrangements and the National Employment Standards*

Workplace Gender Equality Agency: *Employee flexibility toolkit. How to negotiate and manage a successful flexible working arrangement*

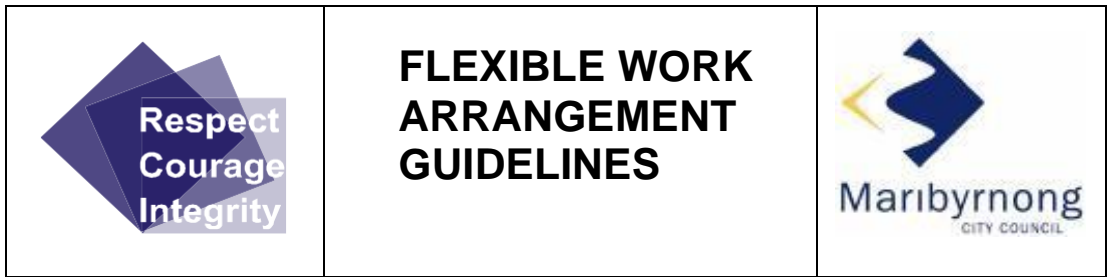
Queensland Government Public Service Commission: *Good Practice Guide for creating flexible workplaces*

Department of Social Services: *Carer Recognition Act 2010 Guidelines. A guide for Australian Public Service Agencies for the implementation of the Carer Recognition Act 2010. April 2016*

Fair Work Act 2009 (Commonwealth)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)

Victorian Public Sector Commission: *Mainstreaming Flexibility Across the VPS. Guiding Principles 2016*



Attachment 1

Thinking through your needs and drafting the proposal – for employees

Utilise this format to assist you put together your proposal for flexible working options. This will ensure that your plans are well considered and communicated to your supervisor.

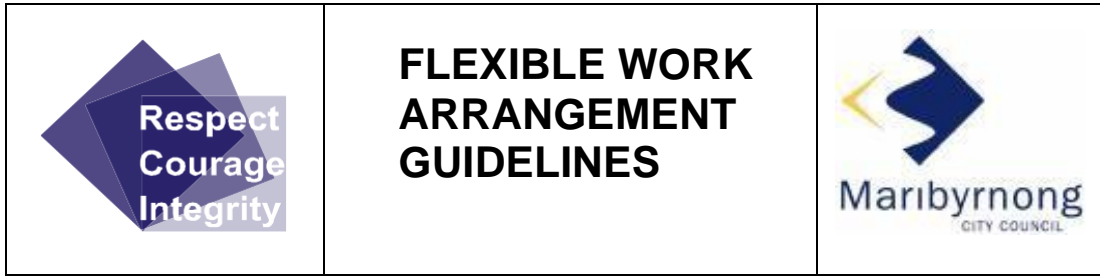
Name:	
Position and Department:	
Date:	

Flexible work option proposed (may involve a combination):

- Part time
- Flexible start / finish times
- Job sharing
- 48/52 Arrangements
- 50/52 Arrangements
- Ad hoc working remotely

Proposed schedule:

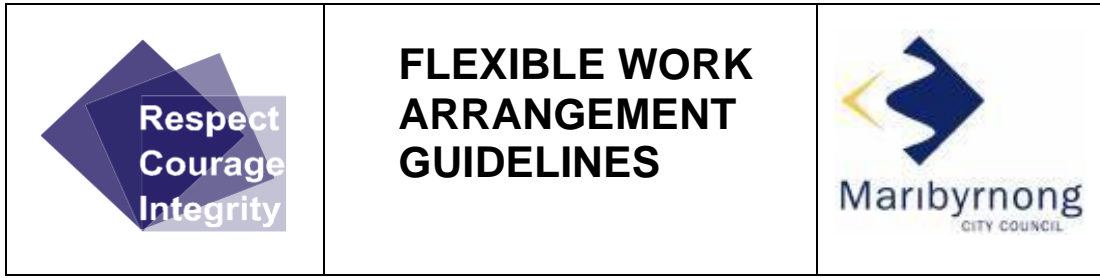
	Hours/times	On site	From home (if appropriate)
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			



Total fortnight/weekly hours			
------------------------------	--	--	--

Employee: What is the reason for your proposed flexible work arrangement?
Supervisors Comments:

Employee: How will the proposed schedule contribute to meeting the department/organisation's goals?
Supervisors Comments:



Employee: Who (e.g. clients, co-workers, suppliers) will be affected and how?

--

Supervisors Comments:

--

Employee: What are your suggestions regarding the affects your proposal will have on others?

--

Supervisors Comments:

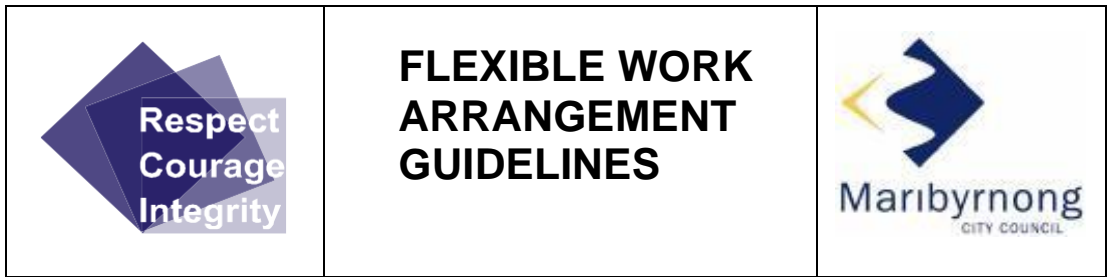
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Employee: What additional expenses/resources/equipment may this incur?

--

Supervisors Comments:

--



Employee: What additional review criteria would you suggest for you and your supervisor/manager to assess how your performance and the new flexible arrangements are meeting expectations?

--

Supervisors Comments:

--

Employee: How frequently do you propose the arrangement be reviewed?

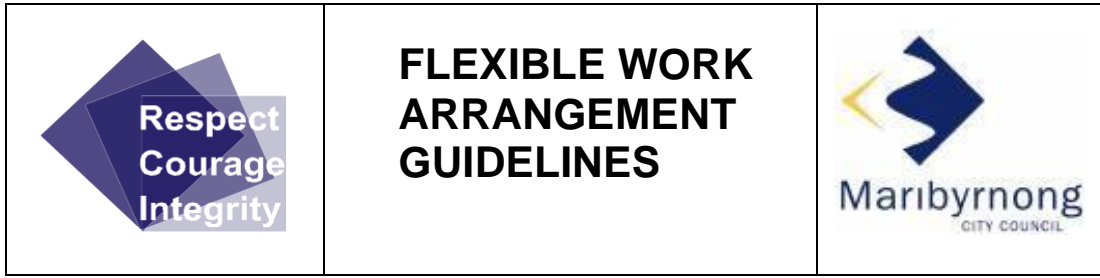
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Supervisors Comments:

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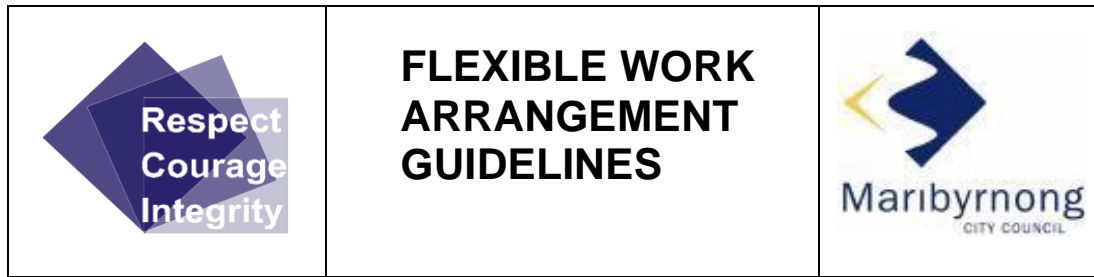
Employee:

Print Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	



Supervisor/Manager:

Print Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

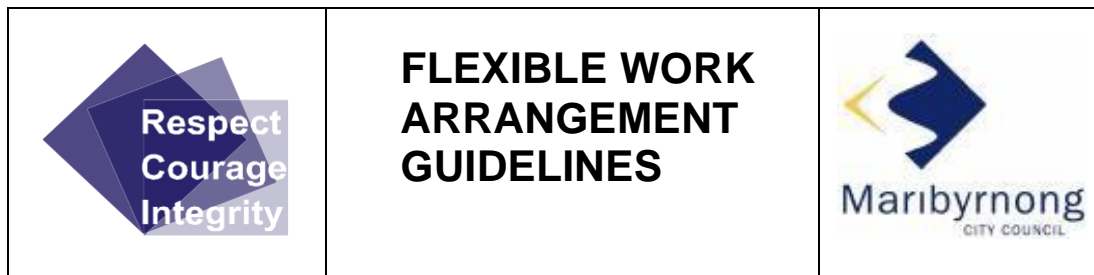


Attachment 2

Assessing the proposal – for Managers

This section provides some prompts for Managers to consider when considering a request for a flexible working arrangement.

1. Will the proposal improve the employee's work – life balance, health and/or wellbeing?
2. Is the proposal consistent with Council's guidelines for working flexibly?
3. Are there any legal issues to consider? (e.g. The National Employment Standards and Section 65 of the Commonwealth Fair Work Act provide a legal right to request flexible work arrangements for several categories of employees).
4. Are there any reasonable business grounds for refusing the request? (refer page 3 of these guidelines).
5. How could you and the employee make it work?
6. What are the potential costs or savings? (e.g. OHS provisions, salary savings, information security).
7. How can you manage and the employee manage any risks associated with the request?



Attachment 3

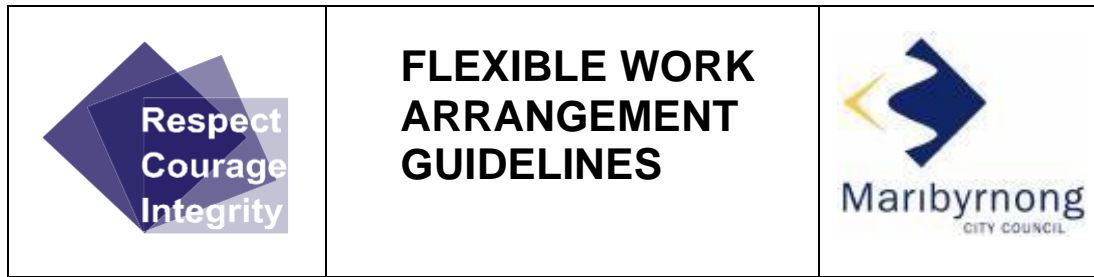
Monitoring the flexible work arrangement – for employees and Managers

Periodic monitoring is a key step to ensuring that flexible work arrangements are effective. This section provides some prompts for the employee and Manager to consider at a predetermined point/s, when collaboratively monitoring / reviewing the arrangement.

The objective is for both the employee and Manager to satisfy themselves that:-

- They both continue to have confidence in the arrangement and generally believe that it contributes to positive outcomes;
- The arrangement has led to an improvement in the work-life balance, health and wellbeing of the employee or improvement in managing these;
- The arrangement has proven consistent with business requirements;
- The arrangement remain consistent with Council's policies, procedures and guidelines;
- The arrangement is consistent with the provisions of Council's Enterprise Agreement;
- The workload is appropriate and manageable;
- Agreed expectations around outputs and deliverables are met;
- The arrangement is consistent with the employee's learning and development needs;
- The arrangement allows for an appropriate level of interaction with the team and work colleagues including team meetings and other scheduled events;
- Any impacts on the team are manageable;
- There is no associated increase in employee absence.

Consideration should also be given to whether the existing arrangement is sustainable and if not, what improvements (e.g. changing days of remote working, reconsidering timelines for part time work, reviewing starting and finishing times etc.) could be made.



Attachment 4

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the impacts on my entitlements (leave, superannuation, salary etc.) if I enter into flexible work arrangements?

The impact on your entitlements may vary depending on the arrangement you enter into. The Payroll Section can provide you with further information regarding the possible impact on your leave entitlements. Your superannuation fund will be able to explain to the impact of any flexible work arrangement on your superannuation entitlements.

I am worried about dealing with urgent enquiries when my colleagues is not in the office. What can we do to manage this?

It is important that there is an agreement as to who and how any urgent issues will be dealt with when a staff member is not in the office.

What do I do differently when managing people on flexible work arrangements?

Establishing clear performance expectations and communication channels is very important when managing flexible work arrangements. Health and safety considerations are also important when an individual is working from home or another location.

Can my Manager / Supervisor say no to my request for flexible work?

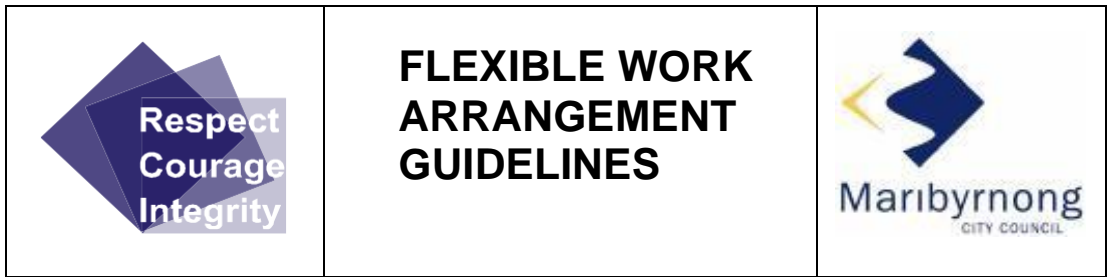
The short answer is 'Yes'. However the intention is carefully consider all reasonable options prior to this occurring, jointly trying to problem solve so that wherever possible, a solution can be found that satisfies both the needs of the individual and the Council.

While all reasonable requests will be fully considered, all forms of flexible work may not be appropriate to all employees or positions at particular times or in particular circumstances.

I want to adopt the same flexible work arrangement as my colleague but it has been refused. Why?

Each decision will be made on a case by case basis with the ultimate decision resting with the Manager. If any request is unable to be met, a modified arrangement may be considered which meets the needs of the business and the individual.

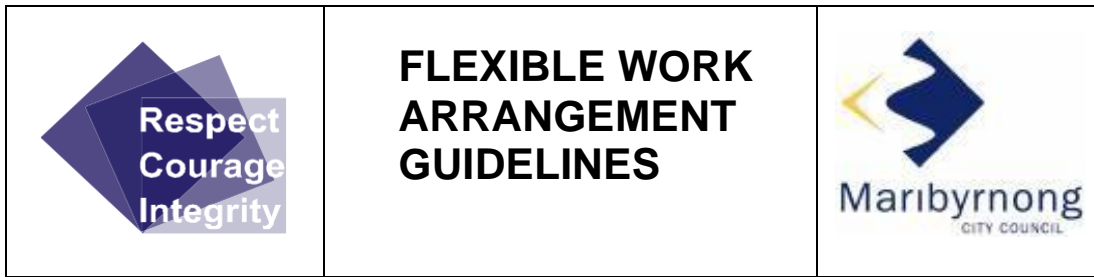
It may be that the Manager cannot approve the same request as your colleague at this point in time because of operational requirements but may consider the request when circumstances within the Department change.



Attachment 5

Ad Hoc Working Remotely Arrangement

Applicant Details	
Name of Employee	
Position	
Remote location/s	
Contact details	
Working Remotely Details	
Details of specific project(s) that require ad hoc arrangements	
Commencement date	
End date	
OHS Requirements	
Workstation Self-Assessment (overleaf)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Response plan in place with Manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sign off	
I have read and understood the requirements in this Ad Hoc Working Remotely Arrangement and the Working Remotely Guidelines.	
Staff member's signature	
Date	
Manager's signature	
Date	



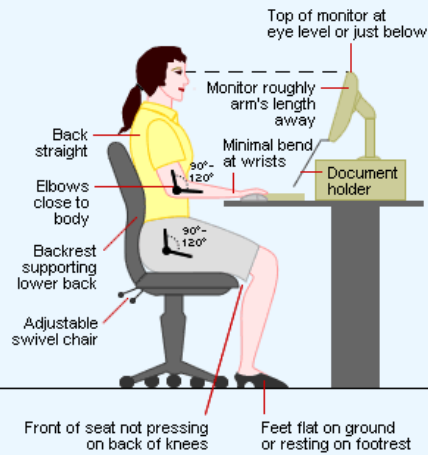
<p>Please indicate whether your workstation complies with the recommendations and note any concerns below.</p>	
Chair	✓
Adjust backrest height and back tilt to fit the curve of your back and allow a slightly reclined posture.	
Adjust seat height and angle so that you can sit with your feet flat on the floor, hips between 90 degrees and 120 degrees.	
Desk	✓
The surface of the desk should be set just below your elbow height. If the desk is not adjustable raise or lower your chair to achieve the desired height. Use a footstool if both feet are not flat on the floor.	
Your desk should be deep enough to allow the computer screen to be an arm's length away from you.	
For a standing desk the surface of the desk should be just below the user's elbow height.	
Computer	✓
Position keyboard close to the front edge of the desk allowing space for the wrists/forearms to rest on the desk surface (about 12 – 15cm).	
Position the keyboard as flat as possible on the desk (no keyboard legs).	
Touch type to avoid the need to look down at the keys.	
Position the mouse as close to the keyboard as possible.	
Position the screen(s) at approximately one arm's length from your seated position with the top of screen level at or below eye level.	
Please note concerns below:	
Employee Sign Off and date:	



FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT GUIDELINES



Workstation ergonomics: ideal set-up



Equal Use Monitor

