



CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOB SHARE POLICY

JULY 1999

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PART 1

JOB SHARE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Castlereagh Borough Council is committed to the concept of Job Sharing. The Council recognises the contribution it makes to the development of Equal Opportunities in employment; this is a core principle which underpins both efficient and effective service delivery. Through this policy it is our aim to improve staff retention and enhance flexibility so that we can continue to provide a high quality service to the citizens of the Borough.

It is important that all requests and arrangements for job sharing are treated consistently across the Council, this policy will therefore provide guidance to staff and managers regarding job sharing arrangements.

DEFINITION OF JOB SHARE

Job sharing occurs where a conscious decision is made to divide or share all the duties of an established full-time post between two people. Job sharing is different from part-time work in that although the hours worked by each member of staff are part-time, together they take joint responsibility for the full-time post and are regarded as a full-time unit.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of job sharing are:-

- to retain the skills and expertise of staff and protect the Council's investment in recruitment and training;
- to access a wider field of recruitment (particularly amongst women who wish to return to work)
- to develop greater flexibility in working patterns;
- to enable staff to combine personal goals and circumstances with a continuing career.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Applications for job sharing will be considered from staff employed in a full-time permanent capacity who have completed one year's service.

In assessing each application the Council will first consider:-

1. What is the nature of the job?
2. What is the best way of sharing a particular post?
3. How might it affect the work of others inside and outside the Council?
4. Will extra resources be needed?

If it is determined that the post is suitable for job sharing the Council will be required to give consideration to the needs of the prospective job sharer(s).

Provided the requirements of the full-time post are being met, the working arrangement should be agreed with the Director of the Department and approved by the Council.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES - THE COUNCIL

The Council has a responsibility to consider each application for job sharing carefully, by the application of relevant objective criteria.

Case law has shown that industrial tribunals may regard a refusal to grant a request for job sharing as discriminatory unless there are clear and justifiable reasons for the decision which the employer can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the tribunal.

The overriding responsibility of the Council is to act reasonably in relation to applications for job sharing.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES - THE HUMAN RESOURCE SECTION

The Human Resource Section can provide advice and information to Directors in the interpretation and implementation of the Council's Conditions of Service and in relation to the implementation of this policy.

7. REVIEW

The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the Scheme and keep it under review.

PART 2

JOB SHARE PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of an effective job sharing scheme can provide advantages to management , staff and customers in a number of ways:

- retention of experienced and well trained staff who wish to work fewer hours
- optimising levels of attendance
- more efficient and effective use of working time

2. APPLICATIONS FOR JOB SHARING

A job share application may originate in one of the following ways:-

1. A member of staff may apply to the Council to be considered for a job sharing arrangement
2. Two members of staff may apply to the Council to share a post.

Staff should make applications in writing to their Line Manager if they wish to be considered for a Job Share.

3. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS - SUITABILITY OF THE POST

When considering application(s) for job sharing the Council should give cognisance to the objectives of the Scheme and the advantages of job sharing.

When assessing the suitability of the post, consideration should be given to:-

1. What is the nature of the job?

- Can the duties or responsibilities be clearly defined and divided?
- Will the quality of the service be maintained if the post is filled by job sharers?
- Does it require a broad range of skills?

2. What is the best way of sharing a particular post?

- Half a week each?
- All mornings/all afternoons?

- Any other combination?

It is important to consider the practicalities of the best working arrangements, and these must be agreed with the Director and the line manager. If there is only one job share option, then this must be made clear to job sharers at the outset.

3. How might it affect the work of others inside and outside the Council?

- Will it change the line manager's work adversely?
- If there is responsibility for other staff how will this be managed?
- If the job sharers provide a service to others are there likely to be difficulties?
- Will significantly more work be generated for others if a job share arrangement were to exist?

A job share arrangement may impact on others. It is important that this is considered to ensure that a job sharing arrangement will not have a detrimental effect on the work of others.

4. Will extra resources be needed?

- Will extra furniture/phones be required?
- Will there be any increased in the salaries budget?

There may be additional costs associated with appointing job sharers and these need to be considered and weighed up against the benefits of having job sharers.

If it is determined that the post is suitable for job sharing the Council will be required to give consideration to the needs of the prospective job sharer(s).

It is important that the decision in relation to the viability of a job sharing arrangement is based on objective measures which are able to be justified and defended.

In circumstances where the Council determines that a post is not suitable for job sharing it must record the reasons for its decision and a letter should be sent to the applicant(s) setting out the grounds on which their decision was based.

4. APPLICATIONS FROM STAFF

4.1. Application from one permanent member of staff to job share

Where it is determined that the post is suitable for job sharing the Council should advise the member of staff that his/her application has been accepted subject to a suitable partner being found, if a suitable partner cannot be identified the Council cannot proceed with the Job Share post. The Council should seek to identify a suitable partner in accordance with the following procedure:

Recruiting staff for the position

The Council may conduct an internal trawl or conduct an external recruitment exercise to identify a suitable job share partner.

Internal

The post should be trawled within the Council. The trawl notice should include the essential and desirable qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills required.

Applications should be made using the Council's application form.

Following the closing date, where one or more applications have been received, the Council should, after short-listing, interview any candidate who meets the essential criteria for the post. Applicants who are unsuccessful should be informed of the outcome of the interview.

If a suitable partner for a job sharing arrangement has been selected by this process, effective working arrangements should be agreed in consultation with the Director and approved by the Council, prior to the commencement of job share.

External

The Council should take steps to advertise the post externally, in accordance with the Councils recruitment and selection procedure.

When a suitable partner for a job sharing arrangement has been selected, effective working arrangements should be agreed in consultation with the Director and the staff and approved by the Council prior to the commencement of the job share.

If a suitable job share partner has not been identified by internal trawl or by external advertisement, the member of staff who applied to the job share should be informed in writing that the reason not to agree to the request was the inability to find a suitable partner.

4.2 Application from two permanent members of staff to job share a post

The Council having satisfied itself that the post is suitable for job sharing, should determine that the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills of the members of staff concerned meet the needs of the post.

Where the job sharing arrangement has been agreed, effective working arrangements should be agreed in consultation with the Director and members of staff involved and approved by the Council prior to the commencement of the job share.

Where the Council considers that the application should not be granted, both staff should be advised in writing setting out the grounds for the decision.

PART 3

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Provided the requirements of the full-time post are being met, the working arrangements should be agreed between the Director and the members of staff concerned and approved by the Council.

Job Share Contracts

Although only one post is effectively being occupied, each job sharer has a separate contract of employment. Each contract may have a number of identical items relating to conditions of service, but other items such as actual working hours, notice periods, holiday entitlement and salary may vary because of different lengths of service.

It is important that the job sharer is aware that their employment is an integral part of a full-time post. A clause stating this should be incorporated ie:

Should the person also employed in this post leave, or otherwise have their contract terminated, every effort will be made to seek a suitable replacement. If this is not successful or a suitable job sharer cannot be recruited and if it is decided to restructure the post to full-time working, you will be offered the post on a full-time basis. If you do not accept this offer, every effort will be made to move you to a post which is consistent with your current hours of work/pattern of employment. If this is not possible, or if you refuse a fair offer of alternative work, you will be made redundant.

Hours

The contract should set out how the hours are to be organised between the sharers. Overlap time is sometimes useful or necessary to the job sharers but management can also benefit from some overlap, for example by having both employees available at peak times. Managers should decide whether or not to apply the scheme of flexible working hours to the job sharers.

Division of Working Hours

There are a variety of ways in which job sharers choose to divide up the working week and some of the more common include:

Split day - one sharer works mornings and one sharer works afternoons

Split week - each sharer works two fully and one half day each

Two days one week and three days the next - the sharers alternating to cover the week

Alternate week - one sharer works one week while the other works the next week

Unequal split of hours - the sharers split the hours on an unequal basis, e.g. one sharer always works two days, the other three.

The above is not intended to be a comprehensive list as other arrangements may be more suitable. However, the aggregate hours of the job sharers should not exceed 37 hours which represents the contractual hours required per working week.

Where the Council considers and can justify that the hours of work or working pattern requested by the staff cannot be accommodated, alternative arrangements should be considered.

Salary

Salary should be calculated using the normal grade and salary but pro rata to the number of hours worked. Commencing salary and increments should normally be determined in the same way as for a full-time employee.

Annual leave/public and extra statutory holidays

Leave entitlement will be pro rata to the number of hours worked.

The following formula should be used to calculate public and extra statutory holidays:

$A \times B \times C/D$ = public/extra statutory holiday entitlement in hours where:

A = number of public/extra statutory holidays per year (twelve)

B = standard daily number of hours per full time employee

C = weekly hours of the job sharer and

D = weekly full-time hours (37)

For example a job share between two partners working 18.5 hours each a week to cover a full-time 37 hour a week post will be entitled to:

12 (public/extra statutory holidays) \times 7.4 (standard full time daily hours) \times 18.5 (weekly hours of individual job sharer) divided by 37 (weekly full-time hours) = 44 hours (the equivalent of six full days - i.e. exactly half the full-time entitlement).

Occupational sick pay/leave

Job sharers have the provisions of these schemes applied to them pro rata to the number of hours worked, subject to the normal qualification criteria

Cover arrangements

In the event of one sharer's absence the other may be offered extra hours of work at plain time rates or additional hours of work could be recompensed with time off in lieu. Where the partner is unable to cover the hours the normal arrangements for recruiting temporary part-time staff will apply.

Continuity of employment

Regardless of the number of hours worked per week, all part-time employees qualify for the same employment protection rights as full-time employees subject to their meeting the same eligibility requirements.

Liaison Between Job Sharers

To ensure the effective performance of the duties of the post the Director will determine that liaison between the job sharers is planned and scheduled into the working arrangements and will allocate sufficient time for liaison purposes.

It is the responsibility to the job sharers to ensure that effective liaison takes place.

Replacing job sharers

If one job sharer leaves the following procedure should be followed:

The remaining sharer should be given the option to take over the post full-time or continue on the same basis.

If the remaining sharer wishes to continue the job share arrangement another sharer should be sought for the job in accordance with the Councils Recruitment and Selection procedures.

If the remaining sharer does not wish to fill the remaining part of the post by taking over the duties full time and it is not possible to successfully recruit to the remaining part of the post, the Council have the option of restructuring the post to full-time working. In these circumstances, the remaining job sharer should be moved to a post which is consistent with their current hours of work/pattern of employment. If this is not possible, or if an otherwise fair offer of employment is refused by the remaining job sharer, they should be made redundant.

This should be clearly outlined in the job sharers contract.

On receipt of the resignation of the original sharer, the remaining job sharer will be given notice by the Council of the requirement to return to full-time employment after three calendar months if a suitable replacement partner is not identified using the procedures outlined.

Resumption of Full-time Working

Staff job sharing shall have no automatic right to return to full-time employment, except in circumstances relating to temporary cover.

When a vacancy occurs within the Council the job sharer may apply for the post under the appropriate procedure for recruitment and selection.