SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET

Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

NAME OF DOCUMENT	Flexible Work Practices
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	Procedure
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EXECUTIVE SPONSOR or EXECUTIVE CLINICAL SPONSOR	Joy Hiley SESLHD Director Workforce Services
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POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOCUMENT	SESLHD Director Workforce Services
KEY TERMS	Flexible Work Practices, working from home arrangements,
SUMMARY	This procedure provides information on South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's direction for Flexible Work Practices and defines a range of flexible work arrangements that may be initiated either by employees or the employer subject to mutual agreement. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the NSW Premier's Department Flexible Work Practices Policy and Guidelines.

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure all employees of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District are aware of the policies and procedures covering flexible work arrangements and practices.

It is acknowledged that employer flexibility and responsiveness to its workforce changes and requirements are fundamental to SESLHD's longer term success due to employees having a variety of personal responsibilities beyond the workplace which in turn impact upon their lives at work.

For SESLHD, the benefits in providing flexible work practices include improved retention of skilled employees, reductions in recruitment and training costs through lower turnover, decreased absenteeism, improved employee engagement, reduced stress, and promote a work-life balance.

2. BACKGROUND

SESLHD supports the implementation of flexible work practices, consistent with the NSW Premier's Department Flexible Work Practices Policy and Guidelines and NSW Ministry of Health Policy - PD2018_036 Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service.

The District provides a range of different mechanisms for arranging working patterns so that employees can satisfy personal responsibilities while at the same time meet the needs and requirements of their employment.

SESLHD acknowledges the diversity of our workforce and recognises the family as a stakeholder in organisational operations. It also recognises that balancing work and family is not an issue exclusive to one gender.

The District also acknowledges that applications for flexible work practices / temporary individual rostering arrangement need to be assessed and negotiated with employees on a case-by-case basis. In doing so, applications are assessed in consultation with employees, and taking into consideration the practicability for the organisation in allowing flexible arrangements and the needs of employees in seeking such arrangements. The District is under no obligation to approve flexible work practices where the proposal will result in negative effect on the actual outcome of the employees' work and the service provided.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Employees will:

- Appropriately consider personal circumstances and needs in relation to requests for flexible working arrangements
- Be aware of the factors managers must consider when assessing applications for flexible work practices / temporary individual rostering arrangement
- Consider the impacts that flexible work arrangements may have on colleagues and service provision and work with managers to address them

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- Work in consultation with managers to ensure flexible work arrangements operate effectively
- Ensure managers are informed of any changes of circumstances (that may require a change in the flexible work arrangements) in a timely manner
- Seek approval for outside employment in line with NSW Health Code of Conduct if and when appropriate
- Obtain appropriate necessary information in relation to flexible work practices from Human Resources Advisory Services.

3.2 Line Managers will:

- Ensure they are aware of the relevant policies and procedures which provide guidelines on management of flexible work arrangements
- Inform employees of the availability and conditions of employment for flexible work arrangements
- Recommend and support flexible work arrangements where there is a particular need in the case of illness, disability, caring or cultural responsibilities
- Reasonably consider all requests for flexible work practices in conjunction with the identified needs of the team, unit, facility / service and the position in question
- Provide full reasons for non-approval to the employee
- Seek advice from Human Resources Advisory Services when required
- Review and assess applications for flexible work arrangements / temporary rostering arrangement in a timely manner
- Monitor and regularly review flexible work arrangements
- Document all agreed arrangements and set a future review date (12 months or less on a case by case basis) for evaluation of progress, impact and future requirements
- Ensure employees on flexible work arrangements have equal opportunity with other employees
- Promote flexible work arrangements when appropriate
- Consider opportunities to redesign existing positions (as they become vacant) to promote part time or job sharing opportunities.

3.3 Senior Managers will:

- Review all requests for flexible work practices in accordance with relevant policies and procedures
- Ensure the needs of the service are considered when reviewing flexible work practice / temporary individual rostering arrangement applications.

3.4 Human Resources Advisory Service will:

- Provide guidance and support to managers to apply flexible work practices policies and procedures fairly and consistently
- Provide guidance on the range of options available for flexible work practices
- Provide timely support, advice and guidance to managers and employees on the procedure, both generally and specifically to individual cases.

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4. PRINCIPLES

Employees on flexible work arrangements have equal opportunity with other employees for:

- Effective supervision
- Training and development opportunities
- Participation in project teams
- Relieving in higher duties
- Access to all positions except those which have proved to be unsuitable to perform on a flexible basis
- Promotional opportunities
- Accommodation and equipment that meet standard requirements
- Participation in office discussions and decision making, according to the level of responsibility, and access to information, for example organisation planning and development, mediation and grievance procedures as relevant and appropriate.

5. TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

The following arrangements may be implemented, subject to the agreement of the appropriate authorised delegate in the District's facilities having regard to the practicability for the organisation.

However, while the option to return to substantive work arrangements should always be available, this needs to be negotiated **BEFORE** starting flexible work arrangements.

5.1 Full Time Reduced Hours / Part-time Reduced Hours (Temporary Individualised Roster Arrangement)

Reduced hours allows flexibility for SESLHD to better utilise employees, and more effectively and efficiently manage the delivery of services to customers / patients. It also offers greater flexibility for employees in combining their work and family responsibilities.

Reduced hours provides an opportunity for employees currently working full time, to work part time, or part time employees to reduce their part time hours temporarily. At the end of a defined period of reduced hours, the employee returns to their substantive hours.

Refer to SESLHDPR/529 Rostering Best Practice procedure.

5.2 Job Sharing

Job sharing is a voluntary arrangement whereby one job is shared between two or more employees. Job sharing allows managers to implement a greater variety of employment options and provides flexibility for employees to choose preferred work patterns.

5.3 Career Break Scheme

This workplace arrangement is an option available to employees' dependant on whether the service can accommodate such a scheme. An employee can request a career break scheme for purposes such as extended parental leave, study, travel, personal and professional development and voluntary work.

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5.4 Part Year Employment

This option means that employees, by agreement with the employer, may elect to take a number of week's unpaid leave in addition to their annual entitlement to annual leave.

5.5 Variable Year Employment

This option means that employees, by agreement with the employer, may elect to take a year of unpaid leave after working for a pre-arranged number of years. Salary is paid for the years worked, and for annual leave accrued, and the remaining year is unpaid. It differs from a career break scheme in that it is pre-planned a number of years ahead and is likely to be for a shorter period than a career break.

5.6 Short Term Absences for Family and Other Responsibilities

The need to be absent from work to meet family and other responsibilities may be for part of a day, for a day or for a number of days. Flexible arrangements of working hours and a range of leave provisions, either separately or in combination may be used to enable employees to meet these needs.

5.7 Family and Community Services Leave / Carers Leave

This option allows employees to be absent from work to meet family and other responsibilities for a part of a day, for a day or for a number of days. Refer to NSW Ministry of Health Policy - PD2018_036 Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service.

5.8 Working from Home

Working from home is a flexible work practice that enables the employee to work from home or away from the workplace for unforeseen, short term, or long term periods. It allows workers to work at home when the manager and the worker are in agreement that a certain piece of work can be completed efficiently in this manner. The type of work undertaken, availability of facilities and the working environment will influence the approval of a request to work from home. This arrangement is accessible to both permanent and temporary employees, and is a voluntary arrangement applied for through the submission of an application, subject to criteria and authorised approval.
A written agreement covering relevant issues and conditions must be prepared for working from home arrangements. For details on suitable tasks, circumstances and how to seek approval, refer to Section 6.

5.9 Variation of Usual Work Hours (TIRA)

Employees are able to apply for short term changes to their usual hours of work to meet demands or requirements outside the workplace. These short term variations, called Temporary Individual Roster Arrangements (TIRA) should be documented, have a regular review date and are for a maximum of 12 months. For more information and TIRA Application Form see SESLHDPR/529 Rostering Best Practice.

6. WORKING FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Work, Health and Safety Home Risk Assessment and Plan

SESLHD is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its employees who have sought and gained approval to work from home. The employee's home becomes an

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authorised place of work, and the manager's WHS responsibilities are extended to the employee's home. Prior to the arrangement being approved, a working from home self-assessment must be completed by the employee to document the WHS risks and required controls.

The WHS home self-assessment must be documented and completed before an application to work from home can be approved.

The WHS self-assessment and required controls for the home office must address:

1. Fire safety and fire equipment as per SESLHDPR/431 Work Health and Safety - Fire Safety Management Procedure
2. Evacuation plan as per SESLHDPR/431 Work Health and Safety - Fire Safety Management Procedure
3. First aid equipment as per SESLHDPR/210 Work Health and Safety - First Aid Arrangements Procedure
4. Electrical safety as per SESLHDPR/268 Work Health and Safety - Electrical Risks Management Procedure
5. Walkways and flooring, access and egress as per SESLHDPR/311 Work Health and Safety - Regular and Pre-Occupancy Workplace Inspections Procedure
6. Hazardous substances management as per SESLHDPR/208 Work Health and Safety - Hazardous Chemical Management Procedure
7. Appropriate workstation equipment (desk, chair, computer) as per SESLHDHB/362 Work Health Safety - Workstation Set Up Handbook
8. Appropriate communication technology (telephone and/or videoconferencing)
9. Other people and domestic animals in the home while work is being performed.

6.2 Benefits to SESLHD

There must be real defined benefits to SESLHD from an employee working from home and these benefits must be documented as part of the approval process.

6.3 Impact on Service Delivery

The responsibilities and tasks of the position must be suitable to be conducted away from the workplace and the needs of the service must continue to be met.

Suitable tasks that can be carried out at home are those that require work to be performed on an individual basis or with clearly defined areas of individual work such as project work, policy analysis and development, report writing, case work and research. Tasks that require significant face to face interaction, direct patient care, or a high level of supervisory responsibility may not be suitable, in most cases.

All employees who are approved to work from home must be contactable during their agreed work hours via email and/or or phone.

6.4 Impact on the Employee

Working from home reduces face to face work interactions and may isolate the employee from the workplace. The need for the employee to attend meetings and other networking activities should also be considered.

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Working from home is not a substitute for dependent care i.e. It is not to be used as a means to care for children or other dependents.

Clear goals and performance indicators must be established during the approval process and the employee must demonstrate that they are able to meet these goals while working from home.

All employees who are approved to work from home are also expected to adhere to all legislation, NSW Health and SESLHD rules and regulations, policies and procedures including the NSW Health Code of Conduct regarding security and confidentiality for the computer, its data and information, and any other information handled in the course of work.

6.5 Equipment and Resources

SESLHD is responsible for supplying the equipment and resources the employee will require to complete their tasks at home, unless negotiated that their own equipment is assessed as suitable and fit for purpose.

Under no circumstances is an employee able to use their personal motor vehicle for work purposes whilst working from home, as they are not covered for insurance purposes. If the employee is required to make scheduled work visits whilst working from home, a SESLHD pool vehicle should be used.

6.6 Manager's Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- They understand the extent of their responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of the employee while working at home
- They establish a written agreement for employees approved to work from home which will include, deliverables, timeframes for deliverables, KPI's, how productivity and performance will be measured, methods of communication with manager / supervisor, and other key stakeholders, and definition of periods when the employee may be required to attend the workplace for a specific purpose e.g. training
- That the employee's productivity and performance while working from home is monitored
- That any variation to the written agreement must be agreed by both the worker and the manager, must be in writing and attached to the Flexible Work Practices / Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangement (TIRA) application
- That effective communication methods are set up to enable the employee to effectively communicate with other members of their work team and key stakeholders
- That appropriate equipment is provided by SESLHD.

7. APPLICATIONS FOR FLEXIBLE WORK PRACTICES / TEMPORARY INDIVIDUAL ROSTERING ARRANGEMENT

Employee must complete a Flexible Work Practices / Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangement (TIRA) Application and provide demonstrated valid reasons for the request. Additional forms are required for applications for a working from home arrangement, see section 6.

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Applications for Flexible Work Practices / Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangement will be reviewed by the employee's manager, senior manager and department head (refer to Appendix 1).

Applications will be considered in regard to the criteria below and the employee's standard of work performance:

- Type of flexible work practice
- Reasons for the request
- Effects on provisions of service / benefits to the organisation
- Anticipated length of time / duration
- Detailed cost implications.

The employee will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application. In the event that an application for Flexible Work Practices / Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangement (TIRA) is not approved, full reasons for non-approval will be provided in writing to the employee.

When an application for Flexible Work Practice / Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangement is approved, the Line Manager is responsible for completing an electronic assignment change form (Return to Work / Reduced Hours) in StaffLink. The Line Manager is also responsible for entering hours worked per week and contract end date for flexible arrangement in StaffLink. For assistance with Manager Self Service contact SESLHD Recruitment.

8. BREACHES AND TERMINATION OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ARRANGEMENTS

An employee found in breach of workplace flexibility arrangements will be disciplined. This can be up to and including termination, and/or the arrangement cancelled by SESLHD.

Working from home arrangements may be terminated by either party prior to expiry, provided that the party:

- With no notice when work health and safety is compromised
- Otherwise with notice (applying the same notice periods as per termination clauses of the relevant award).

9. DOCUMENTATION

SESLHD Working from Home Application Checklist
SESLHD Working from Home Risk Self-Assessment
SESLHD Workstation Self-Assessment Form
SESLHD Working from Home Emergency Procedure
SESLHD Working from Home Agreement
SESLHD Flexible Work Practice / Temporary Individual Rostering Arrangement Form (TIRA)

Forms available at:
http://seslhnweb/Forms_and_Templates/Forms/default.asp#Workforce

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10. AUDIT

Not Required.

11. REFERENCES

NSW Premier's Department Flexible Work Practices Policy and Guidelines
Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman - Flexible Working Arragements
NSW Ministry of Health Policy - PD2018_036 Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service
NSW Ministry of Health Policy - PD2015_049 Code of Conduct
SESLHDPR/431 Work Health and Safety - Fire Safety Management Procedure
SESLHDPR/210 Work Health and Safety - First Aid Arrangements Procedure
SESLHDPR/268 Work Health and Safety - Electrical Risks Management Procedure
SESLHDPR/311 Work Health and Safety - Regular and Pre-Occupancy Workplace Inspections Procedure
SESLHDPR/208 Work Health and Safety - Hazardous Chemical Management Procedure
SESLHDHB/362 Work Health Safety - Workstation Set Up Handbook
SESLHDPR/564 Injury Management - Non-Work Related Injury or Illness Procedure

12. REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
August 2015	1	Endorsed by Executive Sponsor.
January 2016	2	Minor change to wording Section 7, endorsed by Executive Sponsor
August 2017	3	Major changes
November 2017	3	Changes endorsed by Executive Sponsor
December 2017	3	Endorsement by DET
November 2018	4	Minor review approved by Executive Sponsor. Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing.

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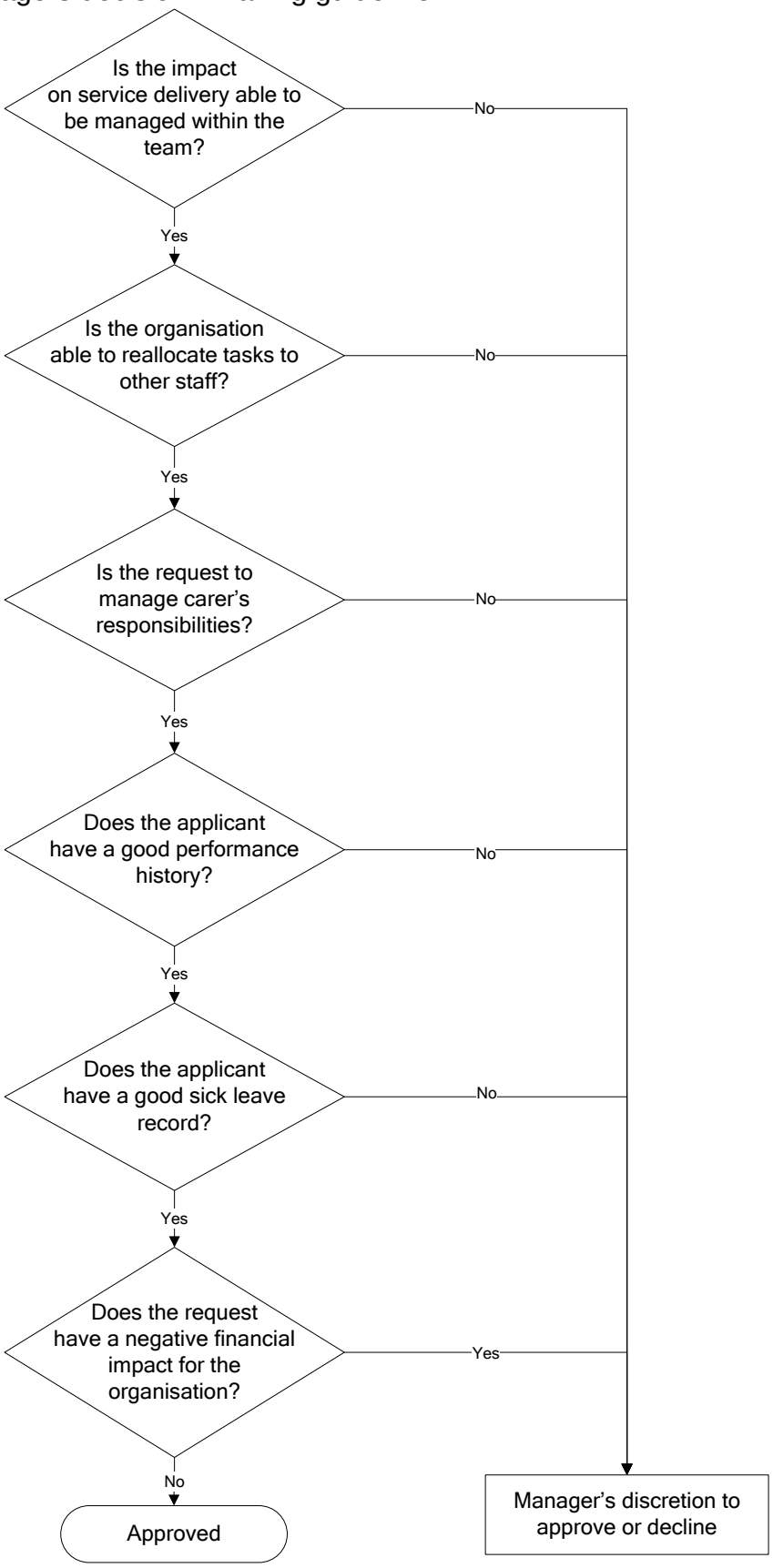
Appendix 1 – Managers decision - making guideline



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