A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a blue spiral-bound book. The person is wearing a patterned headscarf and a white top. The background is blurred, showing an indoor setting with other people. The book cover is blue with a red spine and features the title 'Flexible working' in large white letters, with the subtitle 'A quick guide' in smaller white letters below it.

Flexible
working
A quick guide



Flexible working is a way of working that suits the needs of the employee.

It is a way of sharing, staggering or breaking up the normal working day or week in order to improve work/life balance.



All employees (not just parents or carers) have the legal right to request flexible working if they have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks.

The law **does not** give an automatic right to flexible working, but employers **must** respond to requests.

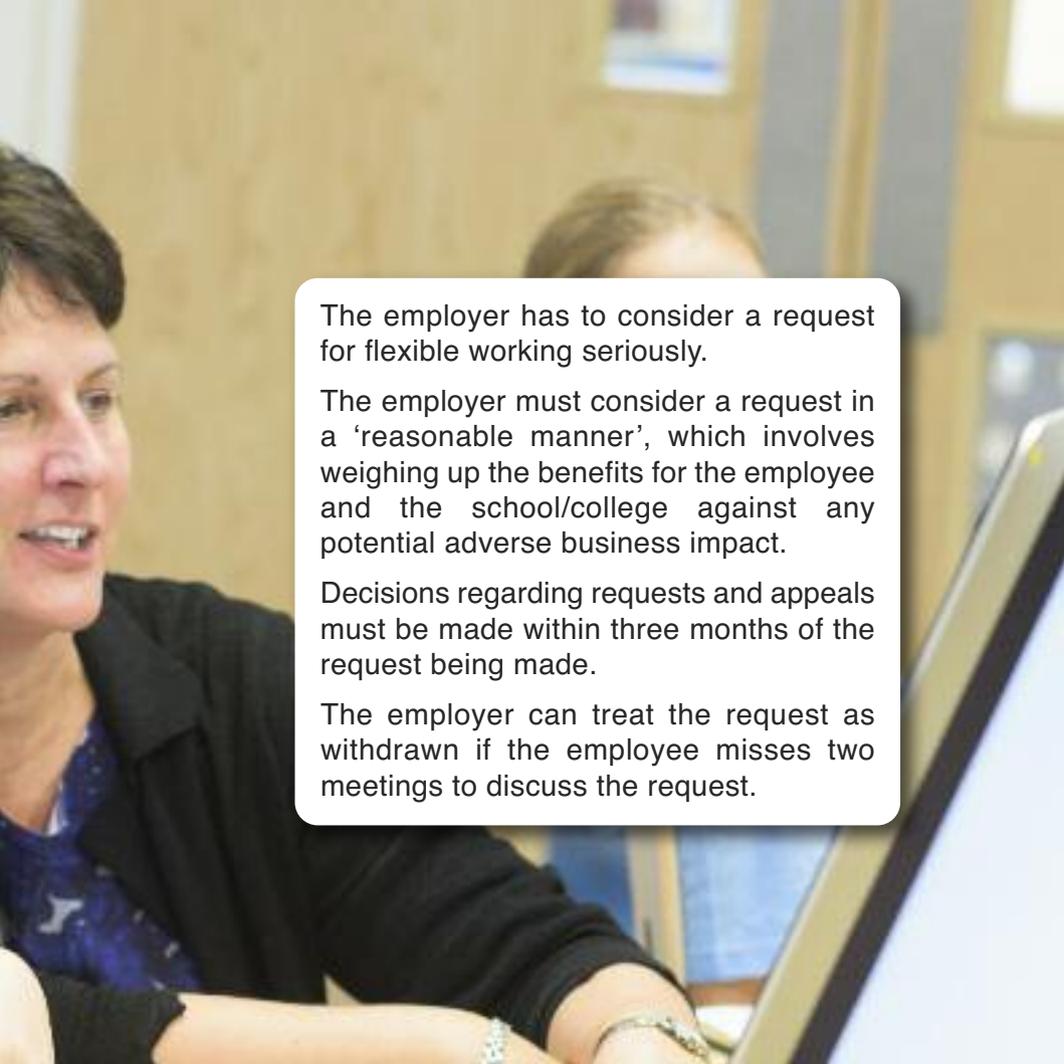
A teacher can only make a request under the legislation once in any 12-month period.

A young boy with red hair and a woman are smiling together. The boy is wearing a light blue shirt. The woman is wearing a dark blue top. They are both looking towards the right side of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or office setting with some colorful posters on the wall.

A request for flexible working should:

- be in writing;
- make clear that it is a statutory request;
- state the date of the application;
- make clear the change being requested to working arrangements;
- state how this change might impact upon the school/college and how any such effect might be dealt with;
- include a statement saying if, and when, any previous application was made.

Check the employer's flexible working policy before making a request.



The employer has to consider a request for flexible working seriously.

The employer must consider a request in a 'reasonable manner', which involves weighing up the benefits for the employee and the school/college against any potential adverse business impact.

Decisions regarding requests and appeals must be made within three months of the request being made.

The employer can treat the request as withdrawn if the employee misses two meetings to discuss the request.

Flexible working – the benefits



Reduced levels of stress

More job satisfaction

Better work/life balance

Reduced sickness absence

Good-quality staff retained

Employers have a greater talent pool from which to recruit

Continuity of staffing

Flexible working – the facts



77%

**work in places
that provide
flexible working¹**

UK employees



66%

**report greater
work satisfaction²**



50%+

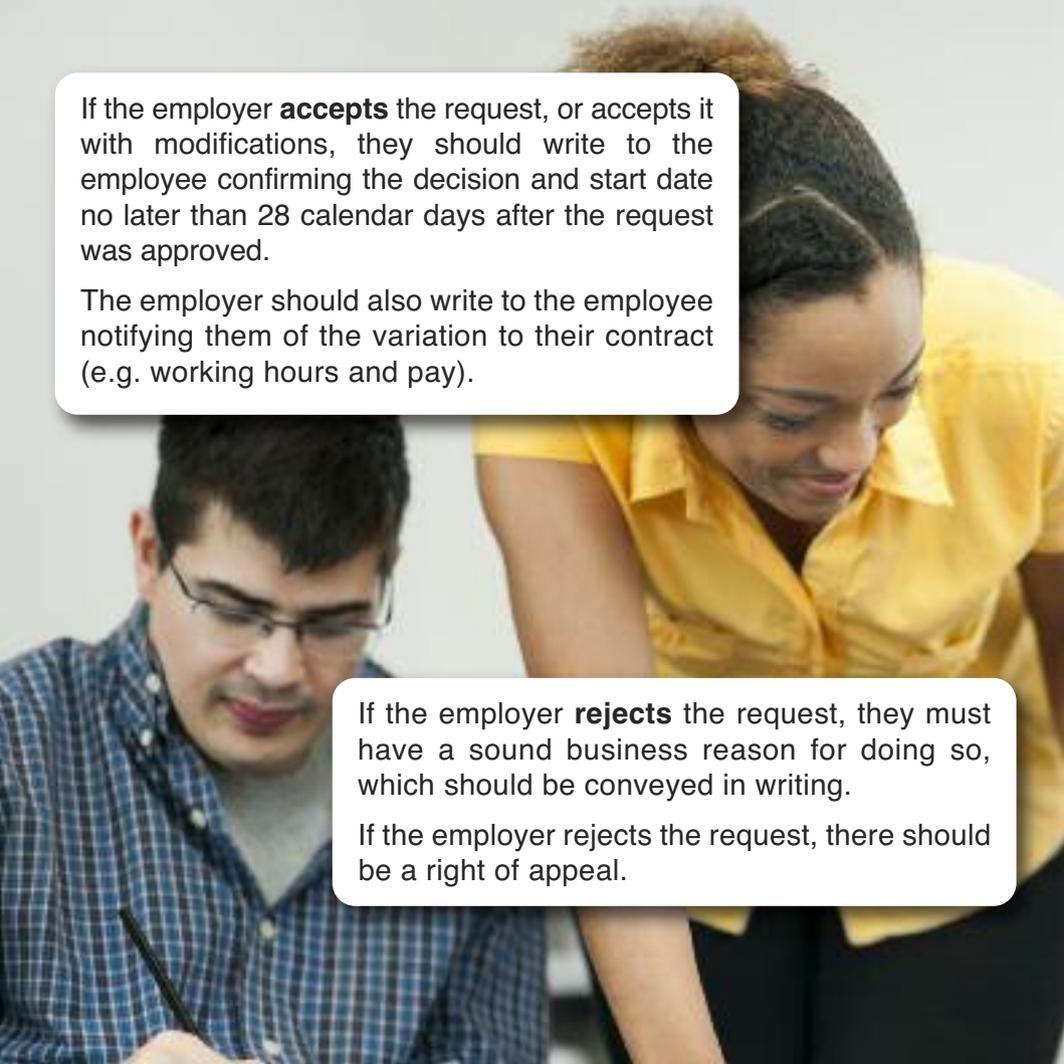
**report better
work/life balance³**



5.1 hrs

**the number of productive hours employers
say are gained per week per employee⁴**

¹ The Flex Factor: *Realising the Value of Flexible Working*, RSA & Vodafone Report, July 2013; ² Ibid; ³ Flexible Working Provision and Uptake, CIPD Survey Report, May 2012; ⁴ The Flex Factor: *Realising the Value of Flexible Working*, RSA & Vodafone Report, July 2013.

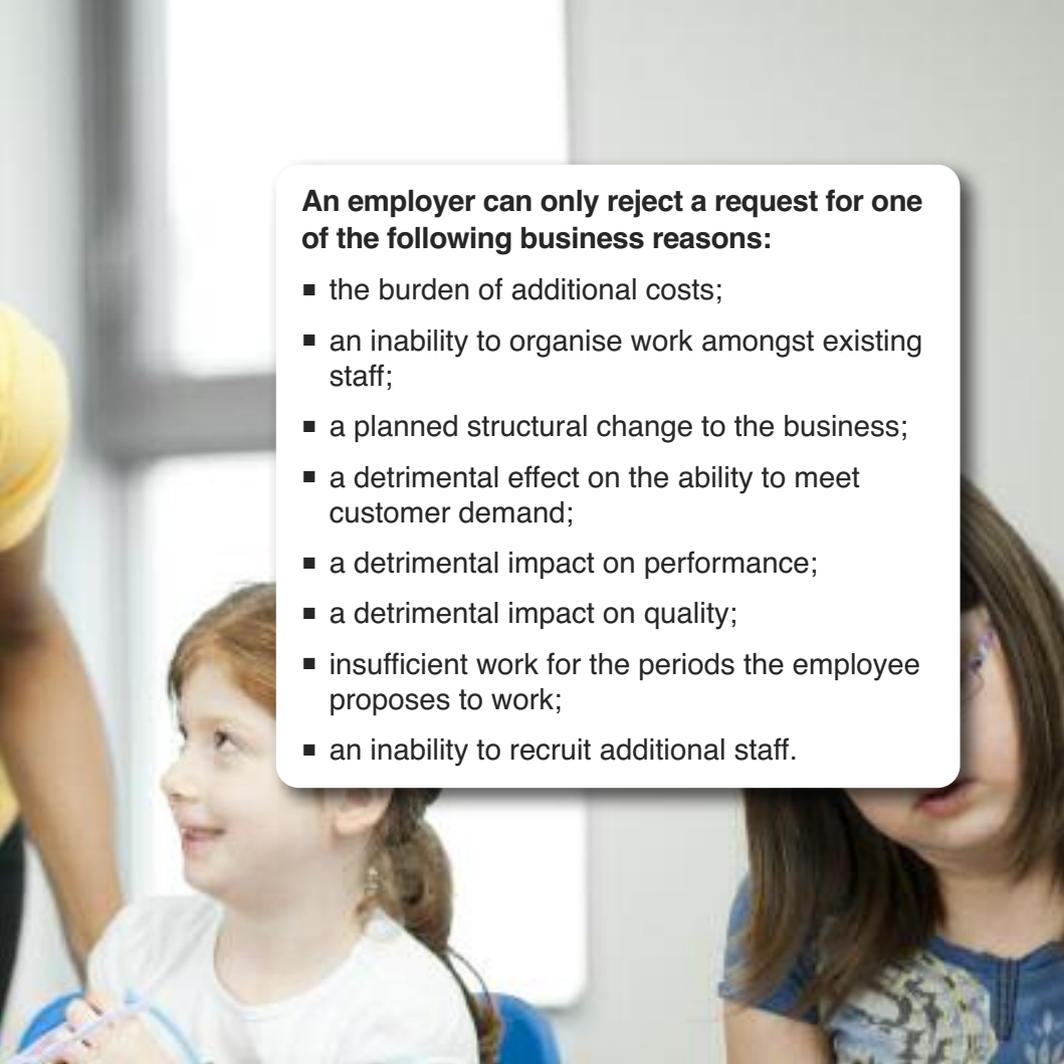
A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright yellow short-sleeved button-down shirt, is leaning over a man. The man has dark hair, wears glasses, and a blue and white plaid button-down shirt. He is looking down and writing with a black pen on a piece of paper. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

If the employer **accepts** the request, or accepts it with modifications, they should write to the employee confirming the decision and start date no later than 28 calendar days after the request was approved.

The employer should also write to the employee notifying them of the variation to their contract (e.g. working hours and pay).

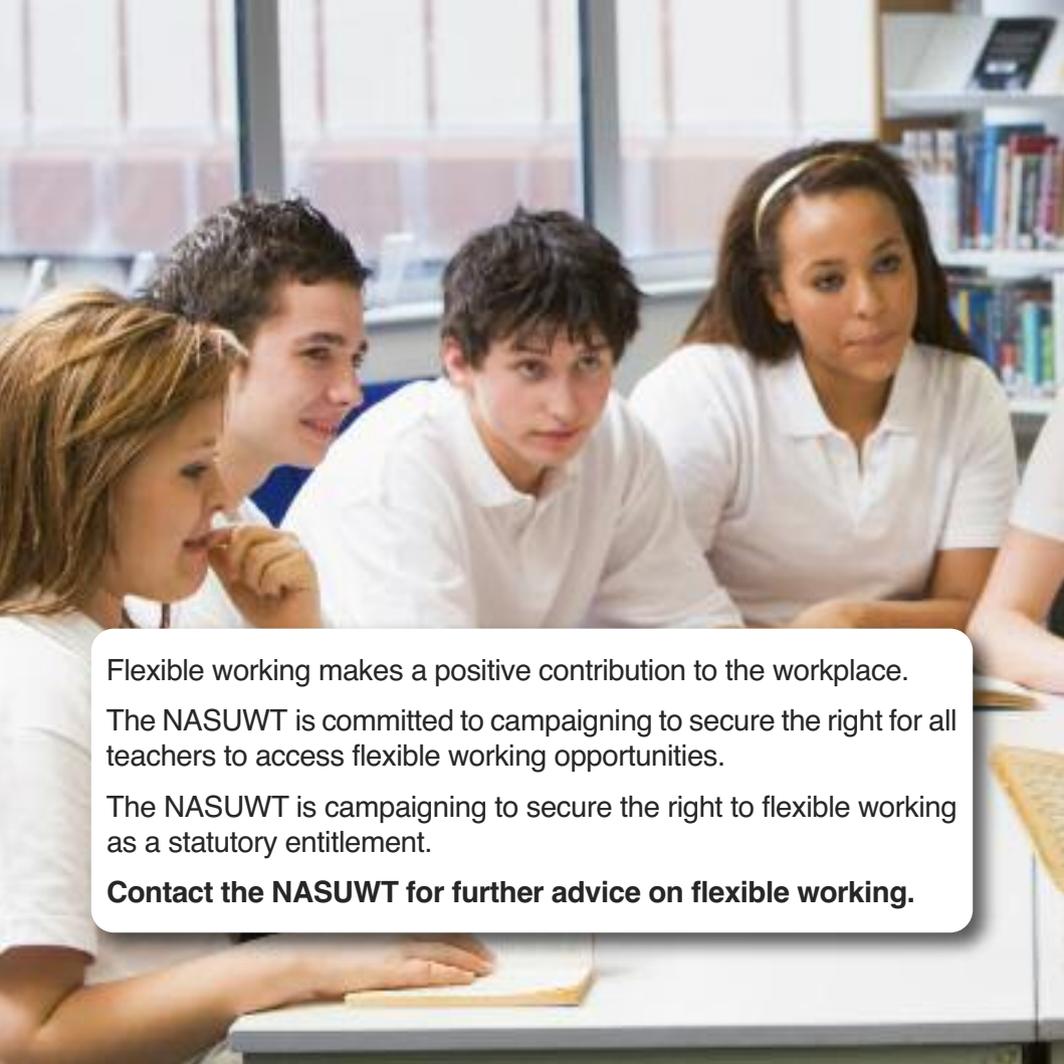
If the employer **rejects** the request, they must have a sound business reason for doing so, which should be conveyed in writing.

If the employer rejects the request, there should be a right of appeal.

A blurred background image showing children in a classroom setting. A young girl with red hair in a white shirt is looking towards the left. Another girl with long dark hair in a blue patterned shirt is partially visible on the right. A person's arm in a yellow shirt is visible on the far left.

An employer can only reject a request for one of the following business reasons:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to organise work amongst existing staff;
- a planned structural change to the business;
- a detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work;
- an inability to recruit additional staff.



Flexible working makes a positive contribution to the workplace.

The NASUWT is committed to campaigning to secure the right for all teachers to access flexible working opportunities.

The NASUWT is campaigning to secure the right to flexible working as a statutory entitlement.

Contact the NASUWT for further advice on flexible working.



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