



[Home](#) > [Increasing flexible working in schools](#)



Department
for Education

Contents

[Gender equality](#)

[Recruiting teachers](#)

[What we mean by flexible working](#)

[Flexible Working Summit](#)

[DfE flexible working pledges](#)

[Pledges from the summit](#)

Many teachers tell us that they want to work flexibly but often can't because the school system isn't set up to offer the kind of flexibility today's professionals need.

School leaders can't always offer flexible roles due to:

- perceived increase in costs and management time
- difficulty of managing timetables
- parental expectations

We are working with school leaders, education experts, industry specialists and unions to change these perceptions and increase the number of part-time or job-sharing posts at all levels within the school system, and expand the range of flexible opportunities in schools.

Gender equality

We believe flexible working can help achieve gender equality in schools by:

- allowing women to return to teaching on a flexible basis (for example after having children)
- improving the career progressions of women by offering more flexible opportunities at senior levels within the school system

Recruiting teachers

Offering a wider range of flexible and part-time posts could help schools solve some recruitment challenges by giving them access to a higher number of qualified teachers, including those who:

- can't consider working full-time hours at present
- are looking for a working pattern that suits their personal circumstances

What we mean by flexible working

- part-time working - working less than full-time hours
- job sharing - 2 or more people do one job and split the hours
- compressed hours - working full-time hours but over fewer days
- staggered hours - where the employee has different start, finish and break times from other workers (dependent on individual situations)
- home working

We issued guidance on [flexible working in schools](#) in February 2017, to help school leaders, staff and governing bodies put in place arrangements for their staff.

In March 2017 the Secretary of State for Education announced that she wanted flexible working practices to become the norm in schools across the country, as part of her [vision for the teaching profession speech to the ASCL conference](#).

Flexible Working Summit

In October 2017 we held a Flexible Working Summit for national education sector stakeholders.

The summit looked at:

- the barriers to flexible working in schools and the ways of overcome them
- the benefits of flexible working and how this can improve staff retention and wellbeing
- different options that schools can take in order to give staff the opportunity to work more flexibly
- what government can do to raise awareness of the different options available to schools and the benefits for teachers, including improvements to teacher recruitment services

DfE flexible working pledges

At the summit we committed to:

- carry out research looking at changing recruitment practices in schools, to inform our guidance about

how schools can introduce flexible working

- include the promotion of flexible working opportunities when developing the new Teacher Vacancy Service
- run a one-year pilot of a revised model of the [Leadership Coaching Pledge](#) for women teachers including support for part-time workers and people returning to teaching after a break
- include measures within the DfE Edtech strategy (which supports the roll out of new technologies in schools and educational establishments) to help schools support flexible working practices
- update our guidance on '[Flexible working in schools](#)' to include information dispelling common myths about flexible working and case studies from schools who are putting the policy into practice

Pledges from the summit

At the summit we invited all attendees to make a pledge about what they or their organisation is going to do to help encourage flexible working. Here's what they pledged:

Schools

Representatives from a number of schools, both primary and secondary made their own pledges relating to flexible working. These focused on several themes:

- being an exemplary employer, offering flexible job opportunities unless there is an exceptional reason not to (Southwark Teaching Schools Alliance, Marsh Green Primary)
- identifying and sharing best practice including evaluating new approaches (The Laurus Trust, Southwark Teaching Schools Alliance, Reach 2, Bryanston School, Christ Church C of E primary school, Surrey Square Primary School)
- working with leaderships teams, parents and teachers to make sure they understand the benefits of flexible working and are prepared to support all requests fairly (ARK schools, Reach 2, Charles Dickens Primary School, Surrey Square Primary School)
- reviewing existing teacher recruitment and retention policies or creating a flexible working policy for the school to follow (Solent Teaching Alliance, The Laurus Trust, Kings School Winchester, Wellington College Academy Trust, Marsh Green Primary School, Surrey Square Primary School, Matrix Academy Trust, Regent High School)
- reviewing the school timetable to create more flexible working opportunities (Wellington College Academy Trust)
- ensuring that job adverts and promotional material explicitly state that posts are open to flexible or part time working (Marsh Green Primary School, Kings School Winchester, The Laurus Trust)

DfE is also committed to sharing knowledge and promoting the different policies and practices that schools are using to encourage flexible working by featuring them on our [Teaching blog](#).

Education sector organisations

Chartered College of Teaching

- as an employer, model flexible working for our staff

publish and promote positive models of flexible working throughout the profession

- continue to positively promote the teaching profession through our features 'proud to teach'
- work with WomenEd to promote issues and opportunities that enable women in our profession to continue to excel

Leading Women's Alliance

- continue to work with schools and other organisations to implement its six-point pledge (launched in January 2016), which includes a commitment to flexible working

Sheffield Hallam University

- share the findings of an upcoming doctoral thesis on pathways of female teachers working part time in secondary schools, and use these to inform good flexible working practice

Teach First

- help develop ideas through our innovation series, supporting our community to find new ways to break down the barriers to flexible working in schools
- use our 'Innovation Series' project ambassadors to develop and pilot a training package to support SLT, governors and job seekers on flexible working to include case studies and practical advice

Teacher Development Trust

- provide more guidance for continuous professional development (CPD) leads on how to accommodate part time staff and review existing advice to check that it is part time friendly

Teaching Schools Council

- proactively highlight the importance of flexible working with teacher and headteacher networks to establish how the organisational barriers to flexible working can be addressed, leading to cultural change

TES

- establish a 'best employer' award at the TES Schools Awards that recognises schools that invest in their teaching staff and support them with progressive working practices
- endorse and encourage flexible working options as an important recruitment and retention solution for school customers
- ensure that all job adverts on tes.com clearly display whether the school will accept job shares and flexible working solutions
- build jobs sharing and multiple applicants into the candidate application process for teaching jobs
- ensure the TES talent matching service supports candidates who are looking for job share or part time teaching roles

WomenEd

- work with our network, ASCL and Chartered College of Teaching to develop case studies of successful flexible practices and the impact of these

Industry and educational technology organisations

Barclays

- host an event for school governors, senior school staff and members of the Dept. of Education to showcase the Barclays Dynamic Working Campaign “How do you work your life?”

British Educational Suppliers Association – EdTech companies and providers

- update our articles of association to incorporate flexible working practices in the governance of both our trustee arrangements and our own staff working practices
- issue flexible working best-practice guidance to the 400 companies we work with to encourage companies to provide support for schools that helps facilitate flexible working

‘Educate’ UCL Knowledge Lab, Institute of Education

- work with educational technology entrepreneurs and innovators to find ways for technology, especially Artificial Intelligence, to support those who want to work flexibly in schools
- provide ways to show what practices work well, and how and when schools should consider using them
- organise an expert summit to look at the ways in which technology can be used to support flexible working
- encourage increased flexible working within the Educate team, recruit accordingly and provide appropriate CPD

Edval Timetables

- assist the improvement of efficiencies within UK school timetabling to help with flexible working
- promote flexible working, when consulting with schools on their timetable and publically in published articles
- offer free basic timetable audits to UK schools and initial advice on how to incorporate flexible working in their timetables

Further & More

- work with DfE and schools on sharing knowledge and evidence of effective job-sharing posts
- co-create a section of the Leaders Conference on job sharing, sharing data on outcomes, case studies and ‘how to’ guides to inspire change

Microsoft

- extend Microsoft’s partnership with WomenED to share best practice on flexible working online and via events

Timewise

- help develop ideas of flexible working in schools based on wider industry knowledge
- work with DfE and others on sharing good practice of part-time and flexible working from other sectors
- champion case studies of successful flexible working practices through our networks

Professional associations and teaching unions

Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

- endorse and encourage flexible working options to our members as a way of recruiting and retaining good staff. This will be through a specific information paper for members and our equalities work

ASCL, National Education Union, Voice, National Association of Headteachers, WomenEd, Chartered College of Teaching

- promote case studies from a variety of schools and colleges, across different phases and settings, who are successfully adopting flexible working practices and share them on our websites

Institute of School Business Leadership (formerly NASBM)

- look at flexible and innovative solutions to organisation design and deployment in schools.
- develop guidance and toolkits to support school business managers and leaders in providing more opportunities for flexible working

National Education Union

- promote the advantages of flexible working in schools to our leadership and encourage them to extend the availability of flexible working from day 1 of employment

The National Governance Association (NGA)

- encourage governing boards to endorse flexible working options to improve wellbeing as well as recruit and retain staff
- produce a factsheet on the topic, encourage debate at NGA events and promote case studies of successful flexible working practices

Contact us

Email us if you'd like to get in touch about flexible working or tell us what your school is doing to help you work flexibly.

Flexible working in schools

Email

Schools.FLEXIBLEWORKING@education.gov.uk

[Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

Departments and policy

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Policies](#)

[Publications](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Help](#) [Cookies](#) [Contact](#) [Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

Built by the [Government Digital Service](#)

OGI

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright