

Job Sharing for School Staff

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to give schools information and guidance on job sharing.

Many people need to combine their career with other, equally demanding, priorities, including family and caring commitments, voluntary or other paid work and full or part-time study. Job sharing provides a means for these people to juggle the various facets of their life.

Job sharing is, for legal purposes, a form of part-time working. The difference is principally that it is a shared responsibility for a single full-time post involving the full range of duties and responsibilities.

Job sharing has been in operation in Nottinghamshire schools for many years and experience has shown that it is beneficial both to the participants and to the school and its pupils. It can increase the range of skills available in the school and often brings a greater breadth of experience to the post.

All posts in schools should be considered for job share. There are, of course, many issues to be considered when reviewing the possibility of a job share which will differ from post to post and will need to take account of the circumstances and operational needs of each school. These will include the possible effects of job sharing on efficiency, costs, supervision, communication, continuity and the maintenance of educational standards.

Definition

Job share is where the duties and responsibilities of a post are shared between two or more people working part time. Responsibilities will be shared in such a way that the jobs equate to a full-time post. The work pattern adopted by the job sharers will be agreed in negotiation between each of the partners and the school to achieve mutual benefit. Each partner to a job share will hold a separate contract showing their terms and conditions of appointment. The pay and benefits are divided between them according to the time they work.

Job sharing is different from part-time work in that a part-time worker carries full responsibility for a specific post in which the duties are performed on a part-time basis.

Reasons For Job Sharing

Job sharing brings a number of potential benefits, including:

- It enables schools to retain the valuable skills of employees who may otherwise leave because they are no longer able or no longer wish to work full time.
- It can increase efficiency, as it has been shown that two workers put more energy into the job than one
- Two people can bring a wider range of skills and experience to a job than a single post holder
- A job share arrangement may create the possibility of having both sharers on duty at the same time for special events, when additional resources may be needed.

Legal Implications

Each request for job share must be considered on its own merits and, if the request is turned down, the employee must be notified in writing of the reasons why. The school should always offer the individual an opportunity to discuss such a decision at a meeting with the Head Teacher, accompanied by their Trade Union representative or person of their choosing, if they wish. It should be noted however, that the majority of appeals brought before Employment Tribunals against decisions not to grant job share arrangements are lost on equal opportunities grounds.

In exceptional circumstances, a post may be considered inappropriate for job share or a job share request turned down if there are reasonable grounds for the decision. Advice should be sought from the CFCS HR Team before making such a decision.

Job Share Requests

There are two ways in which a job share arrangement may be initiated:

1. an existing employee requests that their contract is converted to job share
2. a full time vacancy is advertised, and an applicant requests to be considered for it on a job share basis

Applications from existing employees need to be made on the Request Form to the Head Teacher (Appendix 1).

Each new request to job share must be given due consideration on an individual basis as it arises. This includes any post which has previously been considered for job share and was found to be unsuitable. It may be that those factors which led to initial refusal no longer apply. In addition, it is unlikely to be appropriate to apply 'blanket' rules about the unsuitability of job sharing for particular groups of posts.

Where an application is received for a vacant post on a job share basis, the school should follow the usual recruitment process, as follows:

- The application should be accepted and considered alongside those of applicants seeking a full-time appointment.
- Shortlisting and interviewing should be carried out for all applicants against the requirements of the Person Specification for the post.
- Joint applicants for job sharing should be interviewed separately and their individual suitability for appointment considered. If performance at interview differs between the applicants, it is possible to accept one applicant without employing the other.

Further guidance can be found within [Recruitment and Selection](#) of Staff in Schools.

Finding a Job Share Partner

Arranging a job share does depend on a job share partner being found. It is acceptable to agree 'in principle' to a job share application prior to recruiting to the vacant part of the post. It is important to understand that where a job share appointment can't be made, when a new job share is requested, a decision might be taken to retain the post as full-time. In the case of an existing job share arrangement, the remaining job share partner would then need to choose whether to take up the post on a full time basis, or to seek alternative employment.

Considerations

In order for a job share arrangement to work well, there must be a commitment from the school management as well as the job share employees. Careful planning and a degree of flexibility are required from both sides. Before finalising a decision on a job share request, the Head Teacher and Governors should consider the following issues:

- Carefully consider and determine how the responsibilities will be shared and how the hand-over between partners will work.

Responsibilities must be divided in such a way that the combined jobs equate to the grading of a full-time post. In terms of volume, careful attention must be paid to a realistic allocation of duties according to the hours worked by each partner.

- Be aware that each post holder will be entitled to terms and conditions no less favourable or more onerous than full time employees. For example, schools will need to consider the timing of staff meetings, parents meetings, etc, so that between them, the job share partners are not required to attend more than an equivalent full-time employee. When such meetings take place on a non-working day, the member of staff can not be required to attend. If they do agree to attend, an additional payment or time off in lieu needs to be agreed in advance. For teachers, the directed time budget should be planned on a pro-rata basis for each employee. This should show their percentage of 1265 hours of directed time, split between teaching time and non-teaching duties, including PPA.
- In the case of teachers, careful consideration will also need to be given to the timing of INSET days across the school year so that both partners have an entitlement to INSET and are not excluded. Between them, the job share partners should not be expected to attend more INSET than an equivalent full-time employee, unless it is agreed and either time off in lieu is given, additional payments are made or other flexible arrangements are agreed in advance.
- Where job share teachers undertake additional responsibilities for which full-time teachers would receive additional non-contact time, or leadership and management time, they should also receive additional non-contact time for those responsibilities.
- Where each job share partner carries out part of the responsibility attached to a TLR, each will receive the pro rata proportion of the TLR payment. They should also receive a pro rata proportion of associated non-contact time.
- Job share partners will receive benefits on a pro-rata basis, depending on their working hours. This includes bank holiday leave, which will be shared between the job sharers on a proportionate basis.
- Colleagues of job share workers should be fully informed of all the arrangements.

Those making a request to work on a Job Share arrangement must also be made aware of the following issues and requirements:

- The partners should undertake to work collaboratively and flexibly with each other and to ensure effective communication and hand-over arrangements.

- Partners would need to demonstrate that they can make satisfactory arrangements for consulting each other so that the full responsibilities of the post can be discharged efficiently. No additional payment would ordinarily be made for this overlap time.
- Job Share partners also need to be aware that it may be necessary to attend meetings (eg, parents' evenings, staff meetings, etc) outside of their normal working hours, but only in proportion to that expected of an equivalent full-time employee.
- The partners need to be aware and understand that working as a job share will have implications for their pension. Both the Teachers' and Local Government Pension Schemes use the number of years' service an individual has in the scheme as part of the calculation of pension benefits on retirement. However, pension calculations are not based simply on years' service – the number of hours worked are also taken into consideration. For example, if an employee works half time for 20 years, 10 years' service would be used in the calculation of their pension benefits.

When discussing job share requests with staff, it is good practice to ensure that they have seen the Flexible Working Policy before making their final application. By understanding the full range of options available, staff can be sure that they are requesting the working arrangements that are best suited to their individual situation.

Further guidance on considering a job share request is available from the CFCS HR Team. Employees may also wish to seek advice from their Trade Union.

Work Patterns

Job sharing work patterns will vary according to the needs of the school, eg:

- A set share of days in the week
- Mornings or afternoons
- Week on / week off
- Alternate days
- Other patterns

Once a job share arrangement has been agreed, the job sharer has no right to return to full time work. Should a job sharer wish to return to full time work they would have to apply for vacancies and compete in the normal way, or take on the additional hours when their job share partner leaves.

Resignation of a Job Sharer

If one of the job sharers resigns, or if an appointment is terminated by the school, the remaining job sharer may opt for one of the following:

1. To convert to full-time work in the post, provided that the remaining job sharer is suitably qualified to undertake the full range of duties required.
2. To remain in post on a job share basis with no contractual change, where it is practicable. An appointment is then made to the remaining vacancy. Where a contractual change is necessary this shall be mutually agreed with the job sharer.
3. To remain on a job share or part time contract where there is no requirement for the school to fill the vacant element of the post.
4. Be redeployed to another post in the school, if practicable (providing this is of no higher status) on the pay, terms and condition applicable to that new post.

Staffing Reductions

In a potential redundancy situation at the school the job share post shall be considered as one full time equivalent post. The job share employees must be treated no less favourably than other employees at the school and both partners will be treated separately in respect of any skills audit. In particular, if there is a need for a redundancy less than a full-time equivalent, it should not be assumed that one of the job share holders will automatically be selected for redundancy. If a job share post is selected where there is a staffing reduction of less than one full time equivalent, then both partners shall be considered equally.

Further guidance can be found within [Reductions in Staffing](#).

Training and Development

It is important that all employees, irrespective of their contractual status, have the opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, both to fulfil the demands of their current job and also to develop the ability and confidence to meet new demands and challenges. An employee who is job sharing will have the same access to training and development opportunities as a full time employee.

Action for the Head Teacher

If an application for job sharing is agreed, you should:

- Inform the individual and agree a provisional implementation date, subject to the recruitment of a job share partner.
- Instruct HR-Pay to adjust the individual's salary and issue a variation to their contract.

If an application for job sharing is not supported by the school, you should:

- Discuss the situation with your contact in the CFCS HR Team
- Be able to demonstrate clearly the detrimental impact of such an arrangement on the school
- Fully explain to the job share applicant the reasons why you are unable to support their request, and follow up this discussion in writing.