



What do I do if I want to work Part Time?

Flexible working practices are fundamental to the work of the public sector in the 21st century, and the police service has the opportunity to embrace and take full advantage of the benefits which varied working patterns can bring to the individual and to the organisation. By providing flexible working arrangements, the police service is more likely to retain staff, which in turn cuts the cost of advertising, recruiting, interviewing and training, as well as keep all the experience and skills that only time can build. With this extra adaptability the police service should also be able to manage peaks and troughs in demand more effectively, and provide a better service to the public.

What do I do if I want to work Part Time?

Part time working in basic terms is when an officer requests to work less than full time hours. Police officers who work full time are paid an annual salary for 40 hours duty per week. Officers who work part time are paid an hourly rate pro rata to the salary they would receive if they were full time. Annual leave is also calculated on a pro rata rate according to length of service and hours worked. The Police Regulations allow for a wide variety of working patterns and flexible approaches to part time working. There is no “menu” of shift patterns, and each application should be treated on an individual basis. All requests for part time working should be **negotiated** between the individual and their manager. A balance has to be struck between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organisation.

Like full time officers, part time officers are entitled to a 12 month duty roster. A part time officer's roster may comprise of duty days, rest days and additionally **non working days**. (Sometimes referred to as “free days”). Like full time officer's part time workers may be requested to work overtime, have changes to duty, or work on a rest day. Part time workers may also be requested to work on a **non working day**, but these occasions should be rare and should only be if the duty is one only that officer can perform (i.e. attendance at Court) or for operational exigencies were all other options have been explored.

Different provisions apply for part time workers for their entitlements, it is therefore important that the individual and their manager when agreeing a duty roster both have a clear understanding of start and finish times of shifts, duty days, rest days and non working days. It may be helpful to keep a copy of your agreed duty roster.

Part time agreements should be reviewed annually. This presents opportunities on both sides to review current arrangements, and explore options, if appropriate, to increase or decrease working time. Part time workers can exercise their right to return to full time work at any time, providing that they make their application in writing at least a month prior to the date.

If you are thinking of applying to work part time it is advisable to speak at the earliest opportunity to your manager. Use this initial stage to gain support from and work with your manager to come to an acceptable negotiated agreement that is workable by you. Don't be prescriptive. Be prepared to be flexible in negotiations and present solutions to any perceived problems.