

Age at Work

Case Study



FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE – RETAINING A SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED WORKFORCE IN SOUTH WALES POLICE

South Wales Police had a retirement policy that was not fit for purpose. It carried out a review and was able to adopt changes that enabled it to retain older and experienced workers.

About South Wales Police

South Wales Police has had a Flexible Retirement Policy in place for a number of years. However, in order for the request for an individual's flexible retirement to be agreed there had to be a savings benefit for the department and wider organisation, and it was a concern that there would be a cost to the organisation if staff aged 60 and over wished to take their pension lump sum and monthly payments and then return to their roles on a part time basis.

We were also not in the position to decrease our establishment numbers within the department so on this basis all requests were turned down.

We were also seeing that, due to factors such as the cost-of-living crisis, staff who want to or need to remain in work longer may not want to drop to part time hours as this can affect their pension and

lower their wage, so they have often remained in work full time.

Many staff who are 55 and over often find themselves becoming carers either for elderly relatives, partners or grandchildren and as an organisation we are keen to support our staff to improve their work life balance.

When work was carried out on the Policy it was established that there was little or no cost to the organisation if staff aged 60 and over wished to take their pension lump sum and monthly payments and then return to their roles on a part time basis.

What South Wales Police did

The agreement is that staff will work a minimum of 40% and maximum of 60% of their current contractual hours – although we are flexible with allowing them to change shift patterns as some are moving to day shifts, no weekend working or evening shifts, whereas some staff are opting to just work 50% of the shifts they are currently working.

We are usually able to accommodate staff requests when we have suitable vacancies, although if this grows in popularity and staff remain in work for a protracted period it may be harder to support all individual requests, but we are confident that there will always be part time positions available for this purpose.

Under this scheme staff also cannot earn more in their combined pension and new salary than they were earning from their previous salary.

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Staff retire from the organisation and return with a new force number and contract and cannot carry any previously accrued TOIL or leave with them – we do support staff in taking any outstanding annual leave prior to them retiring.

Impact and Outcomes

Our organisation has benefitted from retention of knowledge and experienced staff who can then share that knowledge with new staff joining the organisation. Staff are happier and less likely to become disengaged from work as they can have a better work life balance with very little detriment to their take home pay.

“By reviewing and changing our flexible retirement process, we have retained valuable knowledge and experience of staff. These colleagues can then share that knowledge with new staff joining the organisation. We found that staff are happier and less likely to disengage from work as they have benefitted from a better work-life balance with minimal detriment to their take home pay,” said

Alyson Thomas, PSC Manager at the South Wales Police.

At present we can only offer this option to staff who are over 60, but hopefully in the future we will be able to offer it to a wider age range of staff aged between 55 and 60.

We also support staff of all ages in flexible working opportunities including day working, flexible shift patterns and part time working.

“STAFF ARE HAPPIER AND LESS LIKELY TO DISENGAGE FROM WORK AS THEY HAVE BENEFITTED FROM A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE.” [Alyson Thomas, PSC Manager, South Wales Police](#)