

Flexible Working as a Reasonable Adjustment

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Flexible working isn't just a perk — for many neurodivergent employees, it's a genuine adjustment that makes the difference between sustainable performance and burnout.
- This guide covers what flexibility can look like in practice.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Why This Matters

A fixed 9-to-5, fully in-office structure suits some people well and genuinely doesn't suit others — regardless of effort or capability.

Flexibility often costs little operationally but has a significant impact on someone's ability to sustain their performance.

Treating flexibility as a normal option, not a special exception, makes it easier for people to actually ask for it.

What This Might Look Like

- Someone who does their best focused work early morning or late afternoon, not in the traditional core hours.

- A team member who finds a full commute plus full office day exhausting on top of the work itself.
- Someone requesting a later start time to avoid peak rush-hour sensory overwhelm.
- A colleague who works more accurately from home on detail-heavy tasks, but values in-office time for collaboration.

What You Can Do

1. Separate “when” from “how much.”

- Flexible hours can shift when work happens without changing total output or availability.
- Core hours for essential meetings can coexist with flexible start/end times either side.

2. Consider hybrid arrangements individually.

- Some roles suit more remote time for focus-heavy work, balanced with in-office collaboration days.
- Avoid a one-size-fits-all hybrid policy where the role and person both allow flexibility.

3. Make flexibility requests low-friction.

- Treat requests for adjusted hours as a normal conversation, not an exceptional favour.
- Review arrangements periodically rather than treating an initial agreement as permanent and unchangeable.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

Opening the flexibility conversation:

“If a different start time or more remote days would help you do your best work, let’s talk about what’s realistic for your role.”

Responding to a flexible working request:

“Let’s trial this for a few weeks and check in on how it’s working for both you and the team.”

Quick Tips

- Flexible hours can shift when work happens without reducing output.
- Treat flexibility requests as normal, not exceptional.
- Review flexible arrangements periodically rather than leaving them static.
- Core hours and flexibility can coexist for essential collaboration.
- Commute and environment fatigue are legitimate factors, not excuses.
- What works well can change over time — build in a review point.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “Sensory-Friendly Environments” for related environmental adjustments.
- See “Adjustment Reviews” for keeping flexible arrangements effective long-term.
- Speak with HR about the UK statutory flexible working request process.

Before You Go

Flexibility isn’t a loophole — for many people, it’s the adjustment that makes everything else possible.

Treating it as a normal, reviewable option benefits your whole team’s resilience, not just one person’s.