
PART-TIME WORK

THE LAW AND BEST PRACTICE

A detailed guide for employers and employees



DEPARTMENT for
EMPLOYMENT
and LEARNING

Please note:

From the 1st October 2002, Part Time Workers are entitled to not be
less favourably treated than their full time counterparts. These
changes were made under the Part-Time Worker (Prevention of Less
Favourable Treatment)(Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland)
2002 SR No. 286



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INTRODUCTION

Status and purpose of this guide

This document provides guidance on complying with the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (S.R. 2000 No. 219). The Regulations implement for Northern Ireland the EC directive on part-time work. This guide explains how the Regulations work for employers and employees, what questions they need to consider and what action they should take. In addition to setting out the legal requirements, this detailed guide also offers suggestions for best practice in this area.

This document gives general guidance only and should not be regarded as a complete or authoritative statement of the law; determining the law is a matter for the tribunals and the courts. For more specific advice on how the rules will apply in particular cases, it is recommended that employers and employees seek legal advice.

Reasons for the legislation

Less-favourable treatment of part-time workers is not widespread in the UK. However, where it does occur, it can affect a variety of terms and conditions, including pay, pensions, holidays and training.

It was partly in order to combat these residual cases of less-favourable treatment across the EU that the Part-time Work Directive was drawn up. The Directive aims to end less favourable treatment of part-timers in order to support the development of a flexible labour market, by encouraging the greater availability of part-time employment, and increasing the quality and range of jobs which are considered suitable for part-time work or job-sharing.

The Directive was negotiated at the European level by representatives of public and private-sector employers' associations and the European TUC (the 'social partners'). The UK was represented by the CBI and TUC, both of whom approved the agreement. The Government also supported the proposals. The Government has implemented the Directive in the UK by way of regulations and guidance in order to take account of the specific nature of the British labour market. This will ensure that it is effective whilst not imposing unnecessary burdens on business.



The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 came into force in Great Britain on 1st July 2000, and the corresponding Northern Ireland Regulations i.e. Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 came into operation on the same date. The regulations ensure that part-timers are not treated less favourably in their contractual terms and conditions than comparable full-timers, unless different treatment is justified on objective grounds. Less favourable treatment of a part-timer will be justified on objective grounds if it can be shown that it is necessary and appropriate to achieve a legitimate business objective.



COMPLIANCE GUIDANCE

Reorganising hours

Reorganising the hours of work is a contractual matter between employer and worker. However, in reorganising workloads, employers will need to avoid treating part-time workers less favourably than full-time staff. They should also be aware that in certain situations they may be vulnerable to claims for indirect sex discrimination.

To comply with the law:

- **In reorganising workloads, part-time workers should not be treated less favourably than full-time workers, unless this treatment can be objectively justified.**

Promotion for part-time workers

If individual companies and the economy as a whole are to reap the full benefit of the flexibility part-time work can offer, then more types of job and levels of management must be opened to part-time workers. The process outlined in the Best Practice section for considering requests by workers to move to part-time hours will help in this, but part-time workers should also be given equal opportunity to seek promotion. Not only is this an area where an employer could be open to a claim of less favourable treatment, but applying opportunity fairly will bring benefits to the employer.

It should also be borne in mind that part-time staff may be willing to work full-time on promotion, because the extra pay available would allow them to afford childcare or buy in the necessary help.

To comply with the law:

- **Previous or current part-time status should not of itself constitute a barrier to promotion to a post, whether the post is full-time or part-time.**

Rate of pay

Enhanced pay (*bonus pay; shift allowances; unsocial hours payments*)

As a result of the regulations, part-time workers must receive the same basic rate of pay as comparable full-time workers. They must not be given a lower hourly rate, unless justified by objective grounds.

One example where a different hourly rate might be objectively justified would be a performance related pay scheme. If workers are shown to have a different level of performance measured by a fair and consistent appraisal system this could justifiably result in different rates of pay.



In general, the same principle applies to enhanced rates of pay. In special circumstances, special rates of pay apply. These may include bonus pay, shift allowances, unsocial hours payments or weekend payments. In these cases, part-time workers are entitled to the same hourly rate as a comparable full-time worker.

To comply with the law:

- **Part-time workers should receive the same hourly rate as comparable full-time workers.**

EXAMPLES OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

Bonus pay: A firm awards its workers a Christmas bonus. Its part-time workers receive a pro rata amount, depending on the number of hours they work.

Shift allowances: A store has both full-time and part-time workers, working early, day and late shifts. The early and late shifts attract time-and-a-half pay for both full-time workers and comparable part-time workers.

Unsocial hours: A part-time care assistant receives the same unsocial hours payment for working between midnight and 6 am as his comparable full-time colleague.

Overtime

Part-time workers do not have an automatic right to overtime payments once they work beyond their normal hours. Only when part-time workers have worked up to the normal hours of comparable full-time workers do they have a legal right to overtime payments.

This does not affect the right of part-time workers, where they are so entitled, to receive unsocial hours payments, weekend payments or other forms of enhanced pay (see previous section).

To comply with the law:

- **Part-time workers should receive the same hourly rate of overtime pay as comparable full-time workers, once they have worked more than the normal full-time hours.**



EXAMPLES OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

A hotel, in which full-timers work five 8 hour days per week, hits a busy period in the run up to Christmas. It asks its entire staff to work extra hours. A part-time worker who normally works 9-12 agrees to work 9-2. She receives her normal hourly rate of pay, with no overtime payment, for the additional hours. The same applies to a second part-time worker who normally works two days a week, and agrees to work four. A third part-time worker normally works three days a week, and agrees to work for five days and one evening. She receives her normal pay rate for the extra two days, but receives an overtime payment for the extra evening.

Profit sharing, share option schemes

Participation in profit sharing and share option schemes has sometimes been limited, and those who work part-time excluded. This can undermine one of the key aims of these benefits – to motivate staff, and make sure they have a stake in their company’s future success.

The Regulations will make most exclusions of part-time staff from profit sharing or share option schemes unlawful. Part-time workers should receive a pro rata level of benefits in line with the number of hours they work, unless their exclusion can be objectively justified.

In the case of share option schemes, there may be cases where exclusions can be objectively justified. In particular, where the value of the share options was so small that the potential benefit to the part-timer of the options was less than the likely cost of realising them.

To comply with the law:

- **Part-time workers should be able to participate in profit sharing or share option schemes available for full-time staff, unless there are objective grounds for excluding them.**
- **The benefits part-time workers receive under these schemes should be pro rata to those received by comparable full-time workers.**

EXAMPLE OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

A retailer operates a profit sharing scheme. The benefits received are determined by the sales figures of individual workers. All staff, whether full-time or part-time, participate in the scheme.



Contractual sick and maternity pay

The Regulations apply directly to contractual sick and maternity pay. This means that there is an obligation on employers not to treat a part-time worker less favourably than a comparable full-time worker. The benefits that a full-time worker receives must also apply to part-time workers pro rata. The only exception will be if the different treatment is justified on objective grounds.

To comply with the law, part-time workers should not be treated less favourably than full-time workers in terms of:

- **calculating the rate of sick pay or maternity pay.**
- **the length of service required to qualify for payment.**
- **the length of time for which the payment is received.**

EXAMPLE OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

A hotel worker who works 2 days per week has been with the hotel for 7 months, when he becomes ill and is absent for two weeks. The hotel's sick pay scheme entitles staff to full pay on certified sick leave after 6 months' service for up to 1 month of absence. The worker receives full pay (i.e. 2 days per week) for the whole of his absence.

Access to Occupational Pensions

Most part-time workers have had access to their employer's occupational pension scheme since 1995 as a result of the principle of 'equal pay for equal work'. Under this principle, employers must provide equality of access, contributions and benefits to men and women, unless the differences are attributable to a material difference other than sex. As most part-time workers are women, the majority of part-time staff already had access to pension schemes because excluding part-time workers might have represented unlawful sex discrimination against women. However, coverage was not universal. Employers could deny access to part-time workers if the exclusion could be objectively justified on grounds unrelated to sex and there was no disparate impact on women.

Under the new Regulations, employers cannot deny access to both male and female part-time workers, unless different treatment is justified on objective grounds. Scheme rules may need to be revised, to ensure that they comply with the new legislation.

To comply with the law:

- **Employers should not discriminate between full-time and part-time workers over access to pension schemes, unless different treatment is justified on objective grounds.**



EXAMPLE OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

Before the Regulations came into effect, an employer employing full-time and part-time drivers denied the part-time drivers access to the pension scheme. This was not unlawful as, in this company, men and women worked full-time and part-time in equal proportions, and so indirect sex discrimination could not be proved because there was no disparate impact on women.

Under these Regulations, the employer is required to offer the part-timers access to the pension scheme on the same basis as the full-time workers, unless their exclusion can be justified on objective grounds.

Access to training

Access to training is essential if part-time workers are to work effectively, and employers are to make the most of their staff. There is a strong business case for making sure that staff are equipped to do their job well, and their skills are up-to-date. Investing in training, when well targeted is investing in the future of the enterprise. It also shows a commitment to workers which will pay dividends in increasing the level of staff morale and commitment to the organisation.

Part-time workers often encounter difficulty in obtaining access to training - especially career-orientated development or vocational training. Either they are excluded entirely, or, though they are in theory entitled to attend, their other responsibilities prevent them from participating because of the inconvenient hours. Denying part-time workers access to training will obviously be less favourable treatment.

To comply with the law:

- **Employers should not exclude part-time staff from training simply because they work part-time.**

Redundancy

In a redundancy situation, it used to be common practice to make part-time workers redundant before full-time workers. However, the automatic redundancy of part-time staff is likely to be unlawful on two counts: it could well infringe these Regulations to treat part-time workers less favourably than their full-time equivalents, and, since many part-time workers are women, it is likely to be a form of unlawful sex discrimination. Different treatment of full-time and part-time workers will only be lawful if it can be justified on objective grounds.



To comply with the law:

- **The criteria used to select jobs for redundancy should be objectively justified, and part-time workers must not be treated less favourably than comparable full-time workers.**

EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE:

A library employs an equal number of full-time and part-time staff. A shortage of funding forces the library to reduce the money it spends on staff. The library offers three voluntary schemes - voluntary redundancy, early retirement, and a reduction in hours. However, savings still need to be made. The library therefore looks at the level of public interest (measured by borrowings and attendance) compared both to its opening hours and to its different sections. It finds that the library is least used on the middle three days of the week, and that the fiction and reference sections have seen marked drops in their popularity. The library therefore balances demand and staff availability cover by making redundant three full-time posts and one part-time in the fiction and reference sections, and two part-time posts covering Tuesday to Thursday.

Other benefits: Health insurance; subsidised mortgages; staff discounts; company cars

Where possible, these and similar benefits should be provided pro rata. In some cases, this may prove difficult. In the case of a benefit such as health insurance or company cars, that cannot easily be divided, employers will have to decide whether to withhold it from part-time workers. Employers may decide that the cost of extending such a benefit to part-time workers would be prohibitive. However, it will not be enough for employers to show that a benefit could not be applied pro rata. They must also show that the decision is justified on objective grounds.

Employers providing company cars or car allowance might, by way of best practice, calculate the financial value of the benefit to a full-timer and apply that value pro rata to a part-timer.

Alternatively, if the benefit or allowance was given to a full-timer, for example every year, then a part-timer working half the full-time hours might be given the benefit or allowance every two years.

Other benefits such as clothing allowance, travel allowance or staff discounts might also be extended to part-timers in line with the principles set out here.



To comply with the law:

- Benefits such as subsidised mortgages and staff discounts should be applied to part-time workers, unless an exception is justified on objective grounds.
- Where a benefit, such as health insurance or company cars, cannot be applied pro rata, this is not of itself an objective justification for denying it to part-time workers. The less favourable treatment of part-time workers will still need to be justified on objective grounds. These might include the disproportionate cost to the organisation of providing such a benefit, or the imperative to meet a real need of the organisation.

EXAMPLE OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

A finance company provides staff mortgages at a reduced rate of interest for all staff both full-time and part-time. The same preferential rate of interest applies regardless of hours worked and likewise the same multiplier to determine the mortgage advance.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE:

As part of its package of benefits for workers, a company provides them with new company cars every two years. The company calculates that the benefit to part-timers, many of whom work less than 50% of normal hours, would be disproportionate to the cost of providing the car. After consultation, it agrees to calculate the financial value of the benefit, and to provide it to part-timers on a pro rata basis. After the calculations are complete, it is found that the benefit is worth £7000 per year. A part-time employee working a 40% week therefore receives £2,800 per year towards their travel expenses.

A post as a health visitor requires considerable driving, and hence a car is attached to the job. Two job sharers take on a single post. They share the car in order to fulfil their duties, each using the car on the days that they work.

Leave/holidays/breaks: annual leave, maternity and parental leave; career breaks

Part-time workers, like their full-time colleagues, are entitled to a minimum of statutory annual leave, maternity leave, and parental leave. Many of these entitlements are extended or enhanced by contractual conditions. Part-time workers should have the same leave entitlements pro rata as their full-time colleagues.



To comply with the law:

- The holiday entitlement of part-time staff should be pro rata to that of full-time workers.
- Contractual maternity leave and parental leave should be available to part-time workers as well as full-time workers.
- Career break schemes should be available to part-time workers in the same way as for full-time, unless their exclusion is objectively justified on grounds other than their part-time status.

EXAMPLE OF COMPLYING WITH THE LAW:

Holiday entitlement: An engineering firm allows its full-timers, working five days a week, 25 days holiday a year. A part-time worker who works for two-and-a-half hours every afternoon would be entitled to 25 days holiday paid at her usual rate of two-and-a-half hours per day. A worker working 3 mornings a week for the same firm would be entitled to three-fifths of the leave entitlement, a total 15 days paid at her usual rate.

Contractual maternity and parental leave: A health authority provides its workers with four weeks extra paid maternity leave, on top of their statutory entitlement. A part-time worker who works 20 hours a week will be entitled to the full four weeks (of 20 hours) in extra paid maternity leave.

Career break: A retail store allows its workers a career break of up to two years. The qualifying period for the break is three years. A part-time worker is entitled to a two year break under the same conditions as a full-time worker.

Public holidays; bank holidays

The rights of part-timers in relation to public holidays and bank holidays may not always be clear. However, the adoption of best practice should avoid any practical difficulties.

Under the regulations, part-timers should not be treated less favourably than comparable full-timers in their entitlement to public/bank holidays. Allowing full-timers the day off, but not part-timers, is less favourable treatment and unlawful under the regulations unless there is objective justification.

However, if a company gave the day off to all staff who ordinarily worked on the day of the public/bank holiday but no time off in lieu to any other members of staff, then it would probably not be acting unlawfully under the regulations. For, on this basis, no distinction is made between full-timers and part-timers; thus, for instance, a full-timer who worked Tuesday to Saturday but did not work



on Mondays would not receive a day off in lieu in respect of a particular bank holiday Monday. Nor would Monday to Friday workers receive a day off in relation to a holiday falling at the weekend such as Easter day. Where however none of the staff work weekends, so that the part-timers alone are disadvantaged, it is possible that this could be regarded by a court or tribunal as less favourable treatment under the regulations. Furthermore, most bank and public holidays fall on a Monday. This can put both full-time and part-time staff who do not work Mondays at a disadvantage.

In view of these considerations and as a matter of good practice, some firms may find it beneficial to adopt another approach. To compensate for the disadvantage suffered by those staff who do not receive particular days off as a result of their particular working pattern, firms could allow them a pro rata entitlement of days off in lieu according to the number of hours they work.

BANK AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: THE LAW AND BEST PRACTICE:

A firm has both part-time and full-time staff. In a particular year there were 8 bank/public holidays.

The full-timers work a five-day week, Monday to Friday. The firm also has part-timers working a two-day week some on Monday-Tuesday, some on Wednesday-Thursday, and some working varying days. The firm allows all workers the day off in respect of all bank/public holidays falling on a day they would ordinarily have worked.

Furthermore, for those part-timers working Wednesday-Thursday (or varying days) who would never (or rarely) work on the day a bank/public holiday fell, the firm allows them a pro rata entitlement of days off in lieu based on the number of days they work, by way of best practice. They therefore receive two-fifths of the eight-day entitlement.

This approach ensures that all workers enjoy a share of the benefit received by full-timers.



BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

WIDENING ACCESS TO PART-TIME WORK

Recruitment

The regulations do not cover external recruitment. However, if recruiting employers do not consider applications from people who want to work part-time or job-share, then they will be limiting the field of applicants and may not recruit the best person for the job. They may also in certain situations be vulnerable to claims for indirect sex discrimination.

As best practice, it is recommended that:

- **Employers should review periodically whether part-time workers could perform the posts they are offering.**
- **When approached by an applicant who wishes to work part-time, employers should give consideration as to whether part-time work arrangements could fulfil the requirements of the post.**

Making a wider range of jobs available part-time

Part-time workers often suffer from others' perception that they are not interested in moving on from the job they are doing. Just because someone works part-time does not mean he or she does not want to continue developing a career. Reducing or blocking the chances of part-time workers to move around the organisation may demoralise them, or cause them to look for other job opportunities elsewhere. Conversely, allowing part-time workers to apply for other posts ensures that the employer will be able to pick the best person for the job, and will not be shutting out talented individuals.

It may not be necessary or even practical, to check every post in an organisation for its suitability for a part-time worker. However, the fact that a post is currently being done full-time should not be used to prevent people who wish to work part-time from applying for it. The post can be looked at using the process outlined below for dealing with requests for reduced hours. Sometimes the hours the post necessarily requires are incompatible with the hours the applicant currently works. If the applicant would otherwise be suitable for the job, the recruiter could discuss with the applicant whether they would be able to work other hours in order to fit in with the demands of the job.

As best practice, it is recommended that:

- **At all levels of the organisation including skilled and managerial positions, employers should seek to maximise the range of posts designated as suitable for part-time working or job-sharing.**



Jobsharing

Jobsharing arrangements are a special form of part-time work, where a full-time job is divided between two part-time workers. The job can be divided in a number of ways to suit the circumstances of the workers and their employer. For example, one may work mornings, the other afternoons, or each may work 21/2 days a week. Sometimes there is a hand-over period when both jobsharers are working.

This arrangement means both jobsharers have predictable hours, which allows them to make other arrangements (for example, childcare), while the employer knows there will always be cover. The employer also benefits from having two people working on a project, with their combined energy, skills and experience, rather than one, and is likely to have cover when one job sharer is away or on holiday.

However, it can be difficult to organise a jobshare arrangement, because of the need to find two workers who can do the job, are capable of working together and who want to work complementary hours. Some large companies and organisations organise a database of people who want to jobshare. This can be particularly useful in helping women with children who wish to return to work find a suitable jobshare 'partner'.

As best practice, it is recommended that:

- **Employers seriously consider requests for jobsharing.**
- **Larger organisations should keep a database of those interested in entering job-sharing arrangements.**

Requests to increase and decrease hours

Requests to transfer between full-time and part-time employment

Currently, there is no legal right for a worker to be able to change his or her hours of work. This is a matter for negotiation between the worker and the employer. However, there have been some legal cases concerning women returning to their employer from maternity leave, where the courts have ruled that refusing them part-time hours was indirect sex discrimination. This case law means that employers need to think carefully whether there is a good business reason for refusing such a request. Also, if an organisation allows women to change their hours, then they must treat requests from men on the same basis or be liable for claims of direct sex discrimination.



As best practice, it is recommended that:

- **Employers should look seriously at requests to change to part-time working, and where possible explore with their workers how this change could be accommodated.**
- **Employers should consider establishing a procedure for discussing with workers whether they wish to change from full-time to part-time employment for any reason.**

Refusal by workers to change from full-time to part-time employment or vice versa

Changing the total number of hours a worker works has profound implications for the commitments that person can take on outside the workplace. An increase in hours may hamper caring arrangements. A decrease in hours may cause serious financial difficulties.

In some cases, the operational needs of an organisation may make it necessary to change the number of hours that workers work. This is a contractual matter, and must be agreed with the workers concerned. Full consideration should be given to the circumstances of individual workers, and changes should be made with as much notice as possible. In some cases, insisting that a part-timer work full-time can constitute indirect sex discrimination.

Providing information to workers

Giving part-time workers less information on vacancies than full-time workers would be less favourable treatment. While it is unlikely that an employer would have a deliberate policy of denying information to part-time workers, organisations should examine their practices to see if there is anything that might disadvantage part-time workers. If a lot of vacancies are filled by word of mouth, managerial discretion, or other informal management practices, does this make it harder for part-time workers to find posts in areas which do not have any part-time workers? These points are important as part of an overall equal opportunities policy.

Employers need to be able to consider the best possible candidates for available posts. Equally, workers need to make informed decisions about varying their hours, or transferring between full-time and part-time work. Information on particular posts needs to be made available where part-time workers can see it. It also needs to be circulated in plenty of time, so that potential candidates have the opportunity to consider and plan any necessary changes in their out-of-work routine.



As best practice, it is recommended that:

- Employers should periodically review how individuals are provided with information on the availability of part-time and full-time positions.
- Organisations should consider how to make it easier for workers to vary their hours, including transferring between part-time and full-time work, to the benefit of both workers and employers.

Providing information to representative bodies

Larger firms may have formal or informal bodies for representing the workforce in discussions with management, such as works councils. These bodies may find it useful to be kept informed about certain aspects of the organisation's use of part-time workers. The exact details of what information is required should be worked out with the representatives themselves. Topics could include:

- the overall human resources policy in regard to part-time work, and plans to change it;
- how many part-time workers there are, where they are employed in the organisation, and what grade or level they are at;
- whether any requests to change hours have been refused, and if so, why;
- what training opportunities there are for part-time workers, and what the take up is of these;
- what is being done to ensure part-time workers have equal access to promotion.



MAKING PART-TIME WORK MORE ACCESSIBLE

From time to time a worker may ask to be allowed to increase or decrease the hours he or she works. Below is set out a number of factors that an employer could take into account when considering whether to agree to such a request. This will make it easier for the employers to know whether part-time working would be advantageous to their organisation.

Any worker requesting a change in hours should try to present a good argument why this would help the organisation. Part-time work may not always be appropriate to the situation. The worker should be prepared to accept a refusal, if there are good reasons for it, or look for alternative ways of reshaping the job.

Considering requests to work part-time

When workers request to work part-time, it is helpful if their employer has a procedure for handling their request. This could include some of the factors listed below. Even where a recognised procedure exists, there may need to be discussion focusing on the worker's tasks and responsibilities, and how a change in hours can fit in. This may require employer and worker to invest time and effort in order to work out an arrangement which suits them both. A successful solution will ensure that the job gets done, and the morale of the worker is enhanced.

Some of the factors to be taken into account may include:

- Does someone need to be present in this post during all hours of work?
- Can the post be filled as a job share?
- Is there a suitable candidate for a job share? Could one be recruited?
- Can all the necessary work be done in the hours requested?
- Can the job be redefined to make it easier to do part-time?
- Is there another job of similar level that the worker could do part-time?
- Is the change for a known period?
- How much would it cost to recruit and train a replacement if the worker left?



- What benefits would the organisation get from this arrangement?
E.g. more commitment, keep a valued member of staff, a better skilled worker if time is used for training or education, lower wage bill, keep staff cover for peak periods.
- Effect on the morale and commitment of other staff

Considering a request to increase hours or work full-time

Some of the factors to be taken into account may include:

- Is there sufficient work for those hours?
- Could the extra hours be used to reorganise a number of jobs more efficiently?
- Can the organisation afford the increase in pay?
- Will the increase save money on recruitment?

Other measures to facilitate part-time working

In larger organisations it may be appropriate to consider:

- Would it be cost-effective to provide childcare facilities onsite?
- Could a contribution towards childcare costs be offered?
- Both large and small organisations might consider whether it would be appropriate to consider introducing flexible forms of working, such as term-time working, lunch-time working, flexi-time, and home-working, a parental leave scheme and reduced hours working.



Training

Employers should also look at whether their training is arranged in a way that is inconvenient for part-time workers. For example, it can be difficult for part-time staff to attend residential courses if they have other commitments. It would be easier if they were able to attend courses which run at times when they are normally working. Employers should ensure that the needs of part-time workers are given proper weight when the structure, time and location of training is being planned.

As best practice, it is recommended that:

- The provision of training should be arranged so as to ensure that it is conveniently located and timed for part-time staff, unless this is not possible.

EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE:

A media company employs ten part-time and ten full-time staff. The company provides IT training for its staff. The course consists of two full days of training. This arrangement would make it difficult for its part-time workers to attend since they work mornings only. After a request from the company, the trainer agrees to offer the course as four mornings.

Part-time workers should not lose out in their training simply because of their part-time status. In cases where employers cannot tailor the time and location of training to suit part-time as much as full-time workers, a range of other options should be looked at. Measures, which might be considered to support the career development of the part-time worker, include:

- paying the part-time worker (at their normal rate of pay) for the extra hours they attend outside their normal working hours.
- offering an equivalent course from an alternative provider at a convenient time and place.
- offering the comparable level and quality of training in another area.
- offering other training methods, such as open or distance learning courses. Employers with few part-time workers may consider this too expensive, but their full-time workers may also benefit from being able to use different styles of learning.



In a fast-changing job market, it is as important for part-time workers as for full-time workers to prepare for their future. Employers should consider all applications for vocational training and career development on their merits. Addressing the career development needs of part-time workers will also help employers to retain their staff.

In certain circumstances, part-time work can offer a form of training in its own right. Workers who are taking a career break, for example parents or carers, can find periods of part-time work a useful way to keep in touch with developments in their organisation. Employers should consider what training, on and off the job, would be most useful for workers in this situation. Properly handled such an arrangement can be a significant benefit to the employer. Not only does the organisation keep the services of the worker during the career break, but also when the worker returns he or she will be able to play a full role in the organisation straight away.





PART-TIME WORK

THE LAW AND BEST PRACTICE

A detailed guide for employers and employees



DEPARTMENT for
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