



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23rd August 2021

Jean Conditent,

RE: FLEXIBLE WORKING

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding flexible working with specific reference to the associated Ten Minute Rule Bill. I have read your concerns with great interest.

Flexible working patterns can be mutually beneficial to the employer and the employee, helping attract and retain a workforce, increasing productivity and reducing costs.

Legally, at present, all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service with their employer have the right to request flexible working. The Government will be consulting in the longer term on making flexible working the default, unless employers have good reasons not to, as committed to in the 2019 Conservative Party election manifesto, which covers a range of working arrangements around the time, place and hours of work, including part-time working, flexi-time, or compressed hours, not just working from home. I understand this consultation will be published later this year, with legislation to follow when parliamentary time allows. I am sure you will agree that this is a welcome step and demonstrates the Government's desire to deliver on our manifesto commitment to protect and enhance workers' rights.

Ministers have also consulted on proposals for large employers (with over 250 employees) to publish their parental leave, pay and flexible working policies, and to advertise jobs as being open to flexible working. I understand that they are now considering the next steps.

The current arrangements provide that all employees meeting the service requirement have the legal right to request flexible working, not just parents and carers, by making a statutory application. Options for a request include working from home, job sharing, working part time or full time over fewer days, flexi-time, annualised working hours, staggered hours compared with colleagues, and progressing through a phased retirement.

Once an application has been made, the employer has three months to decide, or longer if by agreement with the employee. Agreement with the request will lead to a change in the employee's contract, whereas in the event of refusal the employer must write to the employee setting out a legitimate business reason for the refusal. In the event of a dispute, the employee may have recourse to an employment tribunal.



The Government will also examine evidence from a consultation on flexible working and decide as to whether to make flexible working a default option, unless employers have good reasons not to, as committed to in the Conservative Party manifesto. In addition, I understand that there will be no legal right to work from home as there are benefits to being in the office, including collaboration with colleagues.

With specific reference to the Ten Minute Rule Bill on flexible working, I am encouraged by the steps that the Government is taking to consult on future working arrangements and as such, I feel it is premature to support a Bill before responses to the consultation are analysed and the Government has put forward its policy proposals in response.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**