



A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

Kings College Hospital NHS Trust

Kingsflex scheme

Summary of the initiative

Kings College Hospital NHS Trust is a London's teaching hospital, recognised for work in liver disease and transplantation, neurosciences, foetal medicine, cardiac, stroke and blood cancers.

King's College Hospital's Kingsflex scheme has been identified by UNISON a good practice in promoting flexible working arrangements through models of partnership between trade unions and employers. King's College Hospital scheme has proved key in reducing absenteeism and increasing recruitment. Flexible rostering, widespread part-time working, personalised annual leave and enhanced parental and carer leave are all widely promoted both in-house and in the surrounding area. King's College Hospital in London, which has 4,200 employees, launched a new initiative in 2000, called Kingsflex, to sell what was previously a piecemeal set of policies, which had been developed over several years. This has been widely promoted in-house and in the surrounding area, resulting in many applicants from the local community who might not otherwise have come forward.

"I took up nursing again, rather than going into teaching, after I met somebody in the local playground who told me about the brilliant flex-scheme at King's College" says a King's College Hospital NHS Trust employee.

Comprehensive leaflets were attached to payslips outlining the choices offered under the Kingsflex scheme, with the pros and cons of each option. Kingsflex featured in King's News and was flagged up using email. Roadshows were held where staff could come and raise issues and a mailshot was sent direct to people's homes. Under the scheme, wards now offer rosters with a combination of short shifts or long shifts, and staff can choose which they work, allowing them to complete contracted hours in a way that is most suitable to them. Staff may also 'buy' annual leave in return for a lower salary or reduce leave in return for more income. There are also examples of staff taking extended leave to travel, with a commitment to getting a job back on their return.

"I believe King's College's Kingsflex is absolutely brilliant! I have three children and have been out of professional practice for some time. I was able to undertake a return to practice course on a 9am-2pm basis. I now work term time only and I get annual leave. Therefore working does not affect my children at all. I am really committed and will do anything not to have time off" comments a King's College Hospital employee.

To help both employees and managers think through the best flexible option to suit their needs, a new booklet has been launched, which suggests some of the practical considerations employees and their managers need to think about when they negotiate requests. The booklet also clearly sets out the impact on the pay and benefits of each option and provides answers to commonly asked queries. Kingsflex has board level, departmental and workforce commitment. Targets for reducing absenteeism and turnover are set for managers and flexibility is seen to be key in helping them to meet these.





Priorities

Supporting work-life balance **Sector(s)**

Hospital activities

Type

Enterprise initiative

Country

United Kingdom

Model of social partnership Bipartite

Launch date

Since 2000

Number of employees

>250

References

<https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/On%20line%20Catalogue/17346.pdf>

This initiative was submitted by: TUC- ETUC

Website

<http://careers.kch.nhs.uk>

