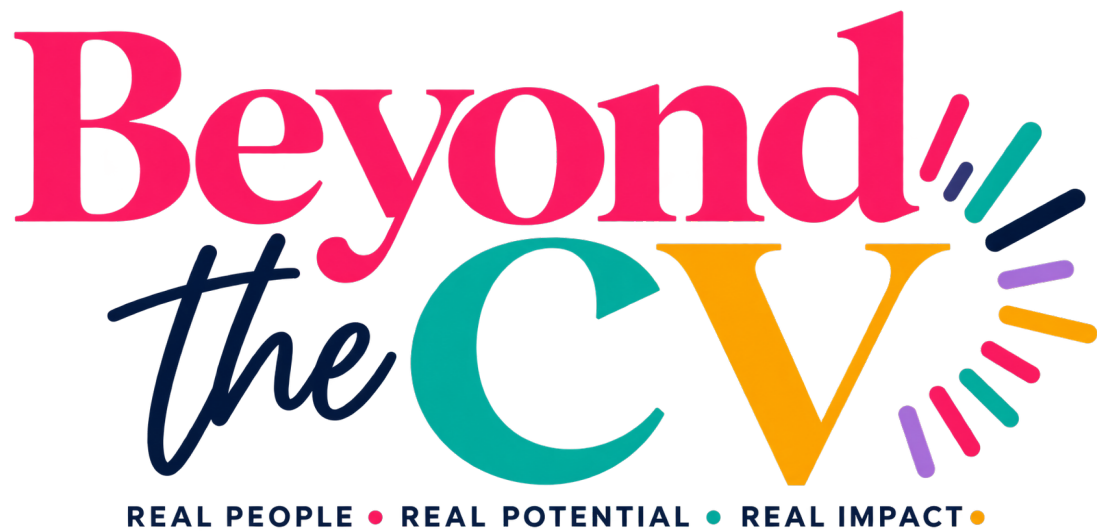




FLEXIBLE WORKING

WHAT COULD WORK?

Practical options for employers supporting military spouses and partners

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FREE EMPLOYER RESOURCE | OCTOBER 2026

01 Flexibility is not one-size-fits-all

Flexible working can be good for employers and employees, but no single arrangement suits every role, team or business.

What this guide is for

Practical ways to consider where, when and how work is carried out, without promising arrangements a business cannot sustain.

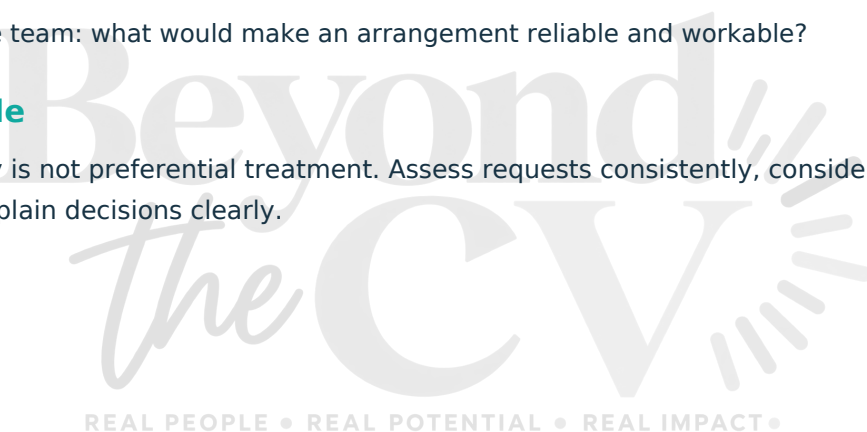
Military spouses and partners are individuals. Some need flexibility because of postings, deployments or caring responsibilities; others prefer conventional arrangements. Ask, rather than assume.

A fair starting point

- Start with the job: what tasks must happen at a fixed time or place?
- Start with the person: what arrangement is being requested, and why might it help?
- Start with the team: what would make an arrangement reliable and workable?

The principle

Fair opportunity is not preferential treatment. Assess requests consistently, consider operational realities and explain decisions clearly.



02 What flexible working can look like

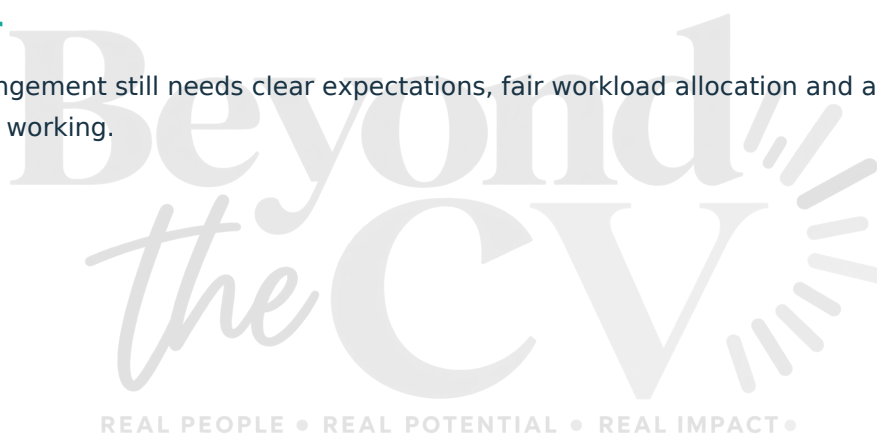
Remote working is only one option. A modest adjustment to hours or scheduling may be more practical than a fully remote role.

Possible arrangements

- Remote or hybrid work: tasks completed away from the workplace where security, equipment and service delivery allow.
- Flexible start and finish times: agreed core hours with some discretion around the working day.
- Part-time or compressed hours: reduced hours, or full-time hours arranged across fewer days where appropriate.
- Job sharing: two employees share responsibilities with a clear handover process.
- Predictable shifts or advance rotas: earlier notice to support childcare and planning.
- Temporary adjustments: short-term changes around a posting, deployment or family transition.

Remember

A flexible arrangement still needs clear expectations, fair workload allocation and a reliable way to review what is working.



03 Start with the role, not assumptions

Before ruling flexibility in or out, map the genuine requirements of the position.

Role review: five questions

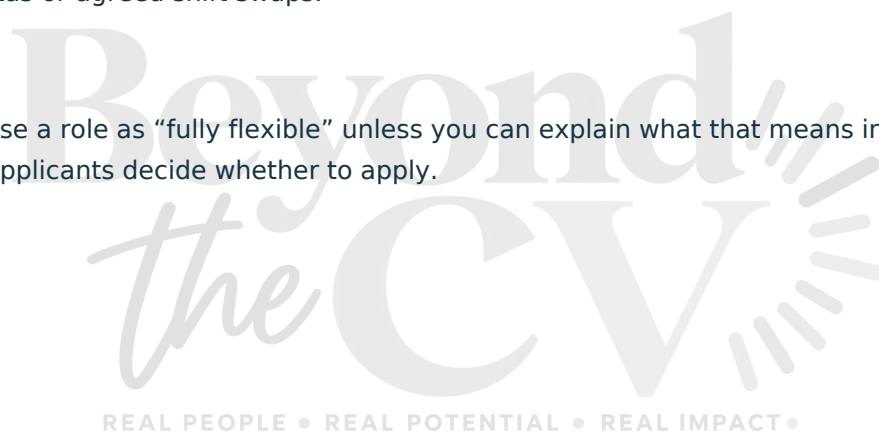
- Location: Which duties genuinely require physical attendance, and how often?
- Time: Which hours are essential for customers, colleagues, supervision or safety?
- Security: What equipment, confidentiality or information-security controls are necessary?
- Collaboration: Which meetings, handovers or training activities require overlap?
- Outcomes: How will you know the work is being delivered well?

A practical example

An administrative role may need access to secure systems and daily team contact, but not necessarily a daily commute. A customer-facing role may need fixed cover but could still offer predictable rotas or agreed shift swaps.

Avoid

Do not advertise a role as “fully flexible” unless you can explain what that means in practice. Clarity helps applicants decide whether to apply.



04 Military life: circumstances worth understanding

Military family life can involve uncertainty, but experiences vary across families and services.

Changes that may affect work

- Postings: moving home may affect commute, childcare and local support networks.
- Deployment or separation: one partner may temporarily take on more caring or household responsibilities.
- Training and exercises: schedules may change at short notice.
- Transition out of service: a family may face another move or a change in routine.

How to respond well

Ask what the employee needs rather than assuming a military connection creates a problem.

Keep discussions private and proportionate. A manager usually needs to know the requested arrangement, not sensitive operational or family details.

Agree a contact and review plan where circumstances may change.

Important

Not every military spouse or partner has children, experiences frequent moves, or wants remote work. Do not stereotype.

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05 Small businesses can take part too

You do not need a large HR department or an expensive programme to consider workable flexibility.

Low-cost starting points

- Write down the essentials: hours, coverage, deadlines, equipment and communication standards.
- Offer an honest conversation: invite suggestions without promising agreement.
- Trial an arrangement: agree a reasonable review date and success measures.
- Cross-train where feasible: reduce disruption when cover is needed.
- Use clear handovers: simple shared task lists can help distributed teams.

Where flexibility is limited

Be transparent about genuine on-site requirements. Consider whether predictable schedules, earlier rota notice or occasional adjustments could still help.

A business can support fair recruitment without being able to offer every requested working pattern.



06 How to have the conversation

Good flexible-working discussions are practical, respectful and based on what the role requires.

Questions employers can ask

“Which parts of your current working arrangement are difficult, and what change would help?”

“Which hours or duties do you think need to remain fixed?”

“How could we maintain service, team communication and deadlines?”

“Would a trial period and review be useful?”

Questions to avoid

Do not demand unnecessary details about a partner’s deployment, military unit or personal circumstances.

Do not assume a candidate will move soon, be absent often, or lack commitment because of military family life.

Document the outcome

Record the request, alternatives considered, agreed terms, review date and reasons for the decision. Use your organisation’s policies and current legal requirements.

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07 The business case: a balanced view

Flexibility is not charity. Where it works operationally, it may widen recruitment and support retention.

Potential employer benefits

- Wider talent pool: fewer unnecessary geographical restrictions can help reach qualified applicants.
- Retention: employees may be able to stay with a business when family circumstances change.
- Continuity: remote-capable roles can sometimes reduce disruption from relocation.
- Engagement: clear, trusted arrangements can support employee satisfaction.

Costs and constraints to assess

Supervision, training, equipment, data protection, customer coverage, team fairness and costs must be considered.

Measure outcomes rather than assuming flexibility will always improve performance.

An example from our community

At JB Property Law, a genuine business need led to a remote administrative opportunity for Macey, a military partner and one of the original applicants for an earlier vacancy. The arrangement serves the business while allowing Macey to develop her career. It is an example, not a universal model.

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08 A simple flexible-working trial

A structured trial can help employers and employees learn whether an arrangement is practical.

Agree the basics

- Arrangement: what changes, and what stays the same?
- Availability: agreed working hours, contact channels and response expectations.
- Tools: equipment, security and training needed.
- Measures: output quality, deadlines, customer service and team cover.
- Review: choose a date and a fair process for feedback.

At the review

Ask what has worked, what has been difficult and whether adjustments would help.

Record the outcome and next steps. A trial is not a guarantee of permanent approval, nor should it be an excuse to avoid fair consideration.

Legal note

In Great Britain, employees have statutory rights relating to requests for flexible working. Employers should check current ACAS guidance and applicable law before deciding requests. Rules can differ by jurisdiction and may change.

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09 Employer action checklist

Use this as a discussion prompt with managers, recruitment teams and HR.

Recruitment

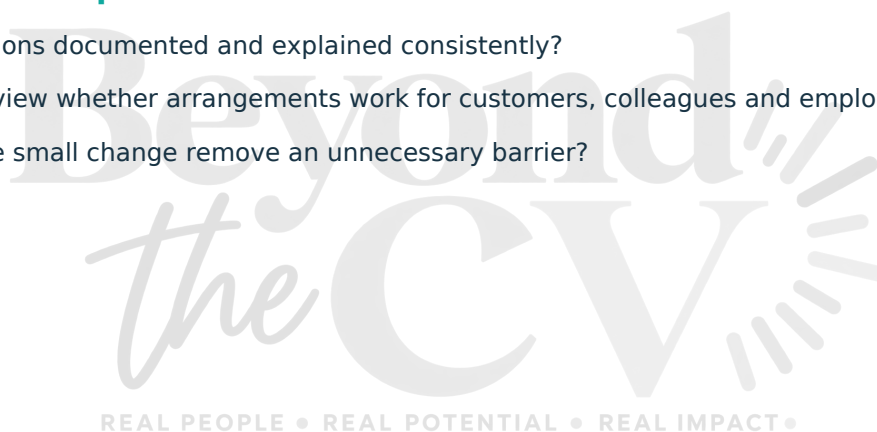
- ☐ Have we separated essential on-site requirements from habits or preferences?
- ☐ Are we honest about hours, location and flexibility in job adverts?
- ☐ Do we assess skills fairly, without assumptions about military connection?

Supporting employees

- ☐ Do managers know how to listen to and consider requests respectfully?
- ☐ Can we consider short-term changes when circumstances shift?
- ☐ Have we planned communication, cover and review arrangements?

Learning and improvement

- ☐ Are decisions documented and explained consistently?
- ☐ Do we review whether arrangements work for customers, colleagues and employees?
- ☐ Could one small change remove an unnecessary barrier?



10 Let's have a conversation

You do not need to have all the answers. You just need to be willing to have the conversation.

Free support from Beyond the CV

Joanne Bowmer and Amy Lovely are happy to speak with employers, managers, recruitment teams and HR professionals, completely free of charge.

Whether you employ two people or two thousand, we can discuss military family life, realistic flexibility, recruitment and practical support for employees.

No membership fee, no obligation and no expectation that every role can be remote.

Explore more

Military Spouse & Partner Employment Guide

Looking Beyond the CV: A Practical Recruitment Guide

Employer Charter and further resources: www.btcv.co.uk

A final thought

- We're not asking you to lower the bar. We're asking you to stop moving it.

This guide provides general information, not legal or HR advice. Check current law, policies and individual circumstances before making decisions.

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