**Template letters for use by line managers when rejecting a request for flexible working under New Ways of Working**

Departmental letterhead/email

*[This letter should be used for a final outcome to discussions once all team preferences have been discussed and considered]*

Date [XX/XX/XX]

Dear [name]

**Re: New Ways of Working request**

Thank you for your request to change your working arrangements under the New Ways of Working scheme and for meeting with me to discuss your preferences.

Your working pattern before the COVID-19 pandemic was [*delete as appropriate*] full-time on-site working/ occasional remote working/ regular remote working / majority remote working/other. You have asked to change your working pattern to [*delete as appropriate*] full-time on-site working/ occasional remote working/ regular remote working / majority remote working/other - specify. [*if appropriate add* You also asked for the following changes to your working hours / pattern: [specify request].]

*[include information about discussions and options considered, if appropriate]*

I have seriously considered your request and I am sorry but I am unable to accommodate your request for the following reason(s):

*[This list gives examples of reasons for rejecting an application; it is not exhaustive and the details should be adapted to the circumstances. If performance is referenced this should be on the basis of clear discussions about this having taken place already with the employee]*

* you need to be present in the office to perform your job because [eg, because it involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues or third parties or involves equipment that is only available in the office]; or In order to meet operational needs some/all of the team need to work on-site for part/ all of the week [*give details].*
* In order to accommodate your request I would need to re-allocate [eg particular duties] to other members of the team and this not possible.
* The working pattern you have requested means you will not be available when you are needed to [specify duties that need to be completed at certain times] or you will not be able to meet / communicate with your colleagues when they are working.
* It has been clear during the period when the team has worked remotely during the pandemic that you/the team have/has not been able to work effectively and meet your/its objectives or has been less effective.
* Based on your performance during the recent period of remote working I have concerns about your ability to work independently / motivate yourself / use your own initiative / complete work to set deadlines whilst working remotely.
* As part of your role I need you to support colleagues and this will be most effectively done by the team/relevant team members working closely together on-site.
* I consider that your own development will be best supported by working closely with colleagues on-site.
* You have not been able to resolve the pressures created by working remotely given [specify circumstances].
* As we have discussed, some aspects of your performance/standard of work are currently unsatisfactory [give details, eg time-management] and I consider that you need supervision to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work. This can be most effectively delivered by us working closely together on-site.

[Include if appropriate] As an alternative, I am able to offer you [specify arrangement]. I know that this is not the arrangement you requested, but would afford you more flexibility, and I think this would address the concerns outlined above. If you would like to move to this arrangement, please let me know so that we can agree a start date.

[Include if appropriate] I would be happy to consider a further request from you in the future if you can show that you can [delete as appropriate]:

* work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative;
* manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines;
* identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home; and
* adapt to new working practices including maintaining contact with your line manager and colleagues at work.

I can support you in working towards these requirements through [training / coaching / mentoring].

As I explained to you when we met, the New Ways of Working scheme aims to find informal agreement to requests and therefore there is no appeals procedure. However, we can, if you wish, discuss my decision further or, if you remain unhappy, you may submit a formal flexible working application which will be considered through that process. You can find information about how to make such an application on the HR Support website: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/flexible-working-employee-guide>.

Yours, etc