

Employment E-Brief - 3

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EMPLOYMENT BILL - FLEXIBLE WORKING PROVISIONS

From April 2003, employers will have a legal duty to consider requests for flexible working from employees who are parents of young children.

To be eligible to make a request, employees must have parental responsibility for a child aged under six or for a disabled child aged under 18.

Procedure

- Parents wishing to adopt a flexible working pattern will need to submit a written request to their employer
- This request must set out details of the working pattern they wish to work
- There will be a clearly defined procedure for both employees and employers to follow

Full details on the procedure will be available once the Employment Bill has passed through Parliament. An extensive package of guidance and support will be provided for both employers and employees to help them handle applications for flexible working.

Who will be effected?

Around 3.8 million parents will be eligible to apply for new working arrangements:

- 2.1 million men and 1.5 million women with children under 6
- 200,000 parents with disabled children up to the age of 18

It will be important therefore to treat all such requests consistently and fairly.

This update is for guidance purposes only and should not be regarded as a substitute for taking specific legal advice from your usual Metcalfes' contact.