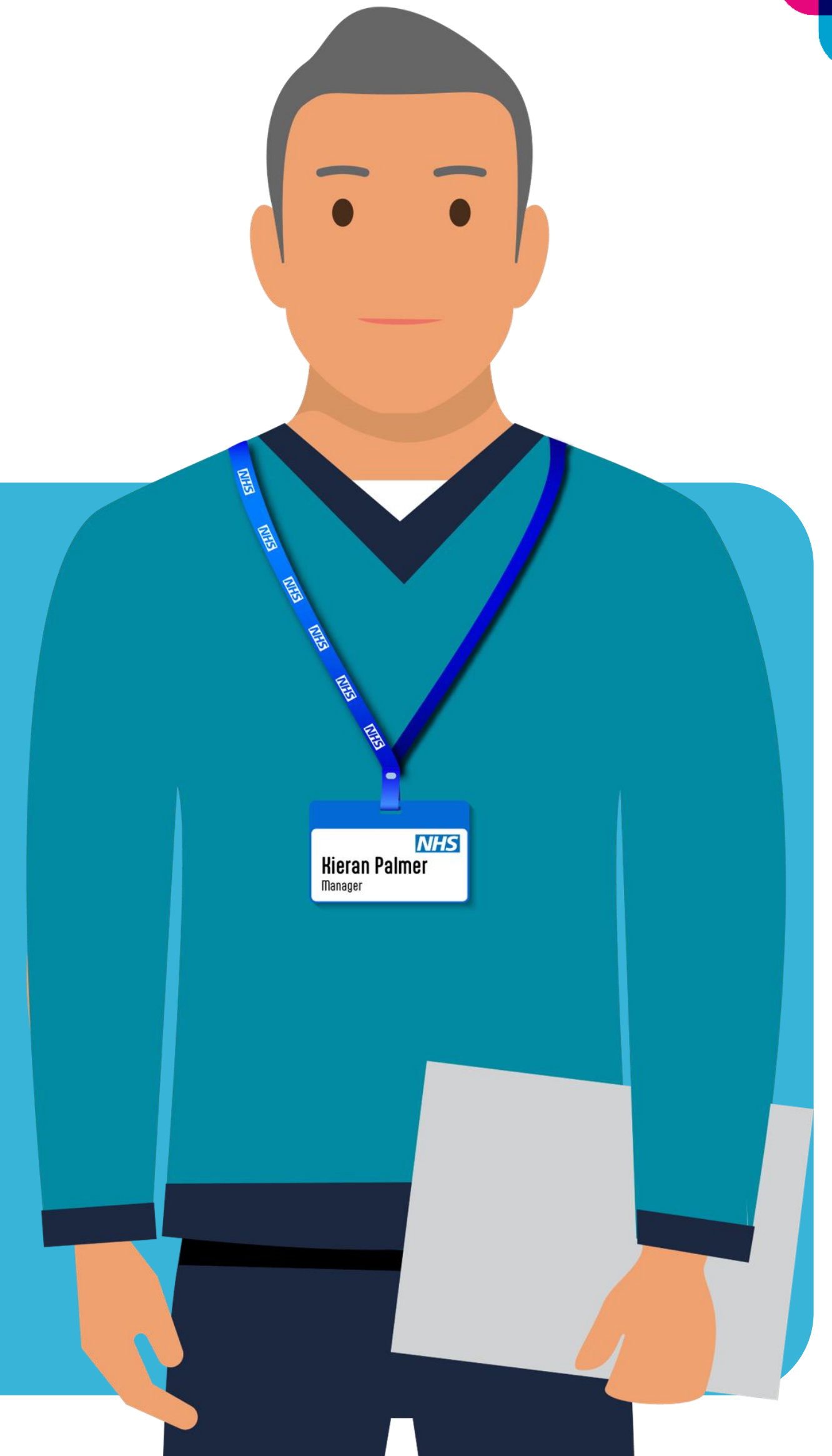


# You choose...

One flexible  
working request:  
Four scenarios



# You choose...



You are Joan's manager.

Joan is a band 5 staff nurse and has been working in the hospital for the past 15 years. Joan loves her job but is finding it difficult to manage work and family life and often feels guilty about not having enough time to spend with her two small children.

Joan asks to reduce her hours from 37.5hrs a week to 22.5hrs a week, as she feels this will give her the work/life balance she's looking for.

What is your response? Click on the link to find out what happens in each scenario.

**1. Dismiss the request without consideration – there's no way it will work in your team**

**2. Approve the request – with some changes**

**3. Escalate the request – and find an alternative solution**

**4. Refuse the request after escalation**





# You dismiss the request without consideration

You agree to an informal meeting with Joan and explain to her that flexible working doesn't work in your department and so you won't be approving any requests that she submits.

Joan is upset and feels demotivated and undervalued – she doesn't believe that it's an unfair or unrealistic request, and she was happy to discuss different options to see what could work. But she now feels that even if she submits a formal Flexible Working Request, you won't consider it fairly and that there's no chance of changing your mind.

She contacts an agency to discuss bank work and signs up with them while she looks for a new permanent role – and hands in her resignation.

You meet with HR and your finance business partner to start the recruitment process to fill the vacancy. You'll need to cover the vacancy with agency staff until it's filled – around £25k for 11 weeks. And train and induct the new recruit. Your team are unhappy about losing a valued colleague and two other nurses begin to look for new roles.



**Change your choice**



# You consider and approve the request with changes

You agree to an informal meeting with Joan. You have a very constructive initial conversation, discussing some of the options which could enable Joan to reduce her hours without impacting service delivery. You advise Joan to submit the formal Flexible Working Request in line with the hospital's flexible working policy, and say you'll be in touch to arrange a formal meeting.

In the meantime, you look at the 'Staff in post' reports from HR and workforce budget information from finance. Working with the eRoster team you identify work patterns that could allow Joan to reduce her hours and also help you to fill the gap. You meet with HR to discuss how this could work.

You invite Joan to a formal meeting and explain that you've been investigating how her request could be accommodated. You present Joan with two alternatives – reduce her hours to either 21.5 hours or 23.5 hours a week – both of which allow for two shifts per week, without additional need to amend rota working patterns. Joan feels valued, and is keen to avoid any negative impact on her colleagues. She agrees to reduce her hours to 21.5 hours a week.

You offer the additional hours out to the rest of the department, as an increase to their contracts, avoiding the need for recruitment.

Joan is happier and more motivated at work, and with more headspace, she provides great care to her patients. The team work well together, and you notice improvements in morale and retention across the board.



**Change your choice**



# You escalate the request and find an alternative

You agree to an informal meeting with Joan. You have a very constructive initial conversation, discussing some of the options which could enable Joan to reduce her hours without impacting service delivery. You advise Joan to submit the formal Flexible Working Request in line with the hospital's flexible working policy, and say you'll be in touch to arrange a formal meeting.

In the meantime, you look at budget information, rosters and service delivery commitments. After reviewing all the information, you can't see a way to accommodate Joan's request, so you ask a senior manager for support. The escalation manager reviews everything and agrees that the request can't be facilitated in Joan's current role. They look at other opportunities in the hospital, that could enable Joan to find the work/life balance she is looking for in a different role or department.

They identify a vacancy in another team where Joan's skills would be easily transferrable. With some training, Joan could very easily meet the requirements of the role. Having checked with HR, the manager confirms that this vacancy could be a suitable alternative arrangement for Joan.

You invite Joan to a formal meeting to discuss the alternative arrangement. Joan is happy to accept this option, and excited at the prospect of doing something new as well as getting a better work/life balance. She feels more motivated at work and thrives in her new role. Your team are also happy to see the commitment from the hospital to flexible working and valuing staff. You're able to recruit quickly to the vacant post, thanks to positive word of mouth about the hospital's culture.



**Change your choice**



# You refuse the request after escalation

You agree to an informal meeting with Joan. You have a very constructive initial conversation, discussing some of the options which could enable her to reduce her hours without impacting service delivery. You advise Joan to submit the formal Flexible Working Request in line with the hospital's flexible working policy, and say you'll be in touch to arrange a formal meeting.

In the meantime, you look at budget information, rosters and service delivery commitments. After reviewing all the information, you can't see a way to accommodate Joan's request, so you ask a senior manager for support. The escalation manager reviews everything and agrees that the request can't be facilitated in Joan's current role. Despite their efforts, the escalation manager is unable to find a different role/department to help support Joan's request.

You invite Joan to a formal meeting to explain that despite exploring a wide range of options, you've been unable to accommodate her request or find an alternative. You and Joan have a positive and respectful conversation before sending the formal letter responding to her request.

While you can't accommodate Joan's request now, you tell her you'd like to review it in six months' time, when you hope that vacancy levels will have improved. There's no guarantee that the request will be approved, but there is a chance. You say that you want to do everything you can to keep her on the team and how much you value her knowledge and experience.

Joan is disappointed but understands the pressures on the department and appreciates your efforts. She agrees to wait six months and continues in the team full-time, while you work on filling the other vacancies.



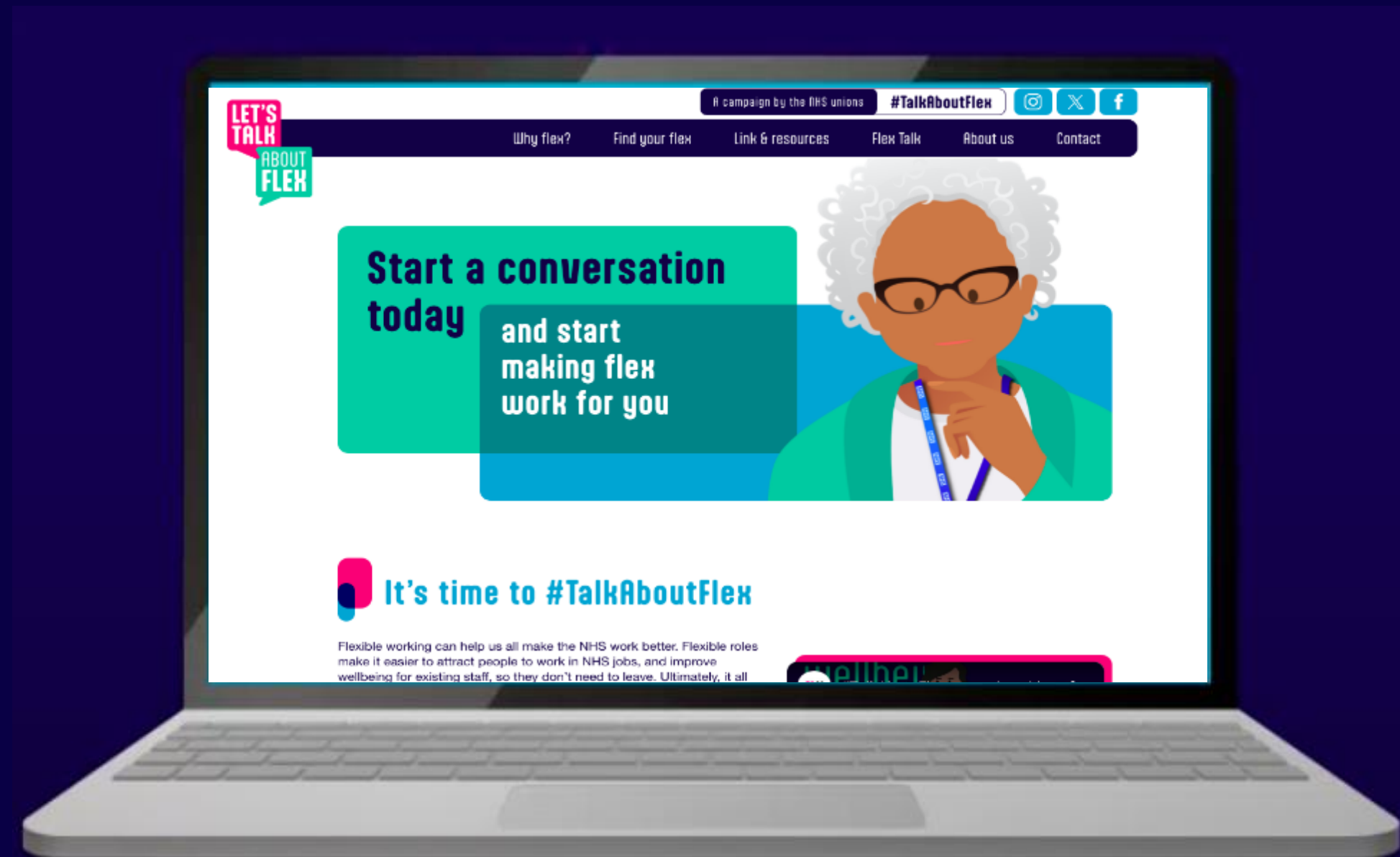
**Change your choice**

## Flexible working is a great way to:

- attract and retain staff
- support wellbeing
- increase equality and diversity in the workplace, and
- reduce agency and recruitment costs in the long term



# Why not use our microsite to help you...



- Find NHS **case studies**
- Discover **tips for managers**
- Get inspiration from **different examples** of how flex can work
- Access **practical toolkits** to help you find a form of flexible working that works for you
- Read **blogs** from people across the NHS
- Learn about **different types of flex**

