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Flexible Working Programme



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Case study

Debbie's flexible retirement approach

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Inspiring Futures



Debbie's flexible retirement approach

Thomas Gainsborough School

Debbie is a dedicated **Cover Manager** with **20 years of service** at Thomas Gainsborough School, who has shared her experience with phased retirement using flexible working. As she approached retirement, she realised she wasn't quite ready to leave the job she loved. Balancing health, personal life, and professional contributions, Debbie opted for a part-time schedule, working mornings only.

The collaborative process: planning and transition

The school supported Debbie's desire for phased retirement and recognised the value of retaining experienced staff members. They had a series of meetings prior to Debbie starting flexible working which covered:

- **Timetable creation:** A carefully crafted timetable aligned with Debbie's preferred working hours—mornings. This allowed her to contribute effectively while maintaining a work-life balance.
- **Succession planning:** Identifying colleagues to gradually take over Debbie's responsibilities was crucial. She mentored them, ensuring a seamless transition.
- **Training and continuity:** Other team members received training to handle cover management tasks. This prepared them for the future and maintained operational continuity.

Benefits for Debbie:

Wellbeing & job satisfaction



- **Work-life balance:** The flexibility of phased retirement improved Debbie's overall well-being. She now enjoys the afternoons for personal pursuits.
- **Increased satisfaction:** Remaining connected to the school community and fulfilling her role has positively impacted Debbie's job satisfaction.

Impact on school culture

Debbie's visible presence as a phased retiree demonstrates the school's commitment to flexibility. It sends a powerful message—our institution values its employees' needs.

In conclusion, phased retirement with flexible working allows Debbie to transition smoothly while maintaining her sense of purpose. It's a win-win for both her and the school.

For more information on their flexible working journey, visit the [Flexible Working in Education website](#) and watch the 'Flexing to retirement' webinar recording.