

Flexitime Scheme

Supporting our Staff



If you require this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape please telephone, Organisational Development, Business Support Unit on 01267 224777.

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Introduction

The Council is committed to improving the work life balance of employees through a range of arrangements. Our Flexitime Scheme is a key component, and we hope that employees will use it to more effectively manage their work and personal lives. The success of the Scheme depends on the common sense and goodwill of employees, and must operate according to the demands of the service.

Your manager will discuss these with you as they must always take precedence.

This Scheme is a discretionary benefit, which is offered to all employees whose working arrangements allow an element of flexibility and therefore, may not be suitable for workers whose duties require a fixed working pattern. For further information relating to categories of employees who are excluded from the Scheme, please see your manager or Organisational Development representative. Nothing in the Scheme should be interpreted as providing any employee with a contractual right to flexitime. It is however anticipated that, successfully introduced, both the organisation and staff will obtain significant mutual benefit from the scheme.

Other Council policies which may allow you more flexibility at work if you require it are:

- Right to request flexible working
- Time off for dependants leave
- Parental Leave

These are available from your Manager, Organisational Development representative, or the Organisational Development (OD) intranet site.

There are various examples included throughout this guidance which illustrate how the Flexitime Scheme can help employees balance their working and personal lives.

(The case studies and names used are fictional).

Case Study 1.

John Jones, an employee in Social Care & Housing, receives a call to tell him that his children cannot be picked up from school today. John speaks to his line manager who agrees that he can leave work at 2:45pm. He collects his children from school, takes them to their childminder and is back in work by 3:30pm. Unlike the previous Flexitime scheme, John has not had to take a half-day flexitime leave and has been able to make up most of the time on the day.

Work outside the 'Standard Working Pattern'

■ Work at Weekends

Although the standard working week runs from Monday to Friday there is scope in this policy for staff to work at weekends at their own request, if for instance they wish to work on a particular project or finish a particular piece of work undisturbed. Such work must, as in all other instances of flexitime working under this policy be agreed with the line manager in advance and any flexitime leave taken as a result will be at the standard time (*hour for hour basis*) only.

■ Overtime

Overtime and time off in lieu must be authorised with the line manager beforehand and will normally be paid only for hours worked outside the bandwidth. If this creates operational difficulties in that an employee has to meet a specific peak in workload and cannot balance this by taking Flexi leave within the accounting period, then payment or time off in lieu may be considered in line with Council Policy. *(See Appendix A).*

Case Study 2.

Elin Jones in Resources Division is asked to work additional hours to meet a specific deadline. This results in her working an additional 8 hours in one week within the bandwidth. She is unable to take this as Flexi Leave and is given the choice of overtime or Time Off In Lieu and opts for TOIL. The time is credited to the employee, which will not have to be taken within the current accounting period. The 8 hours are removed from the employee's flexitime credit hours and banked for use as TOIL.

■ General

Where patterns of work emerge which result in staff working regularly outside the standard working pattern under this scheme, this should not be taken as a right to continue doing so by either staff or management. Changes in business needs or the balance of teams may result in a need to alter working patterns. Equally this policy does not confer any right on the employer to alter working patterns without full consultation with staff and trade unions.

Work outside the 'Standard Working Pattern'

Case Study 3.

A team of five employees based in Learning and Leisure, all of whom carry out similar duties, would like to leave work by 3:00pm on Fridays. The line manager says that at least three of the team must be available until 4.30pm on Fridays, but is happy for the team to work this out between them. Within this framework they arrange the rota themselves and each week two of the team are able to work more flexibly on the Friday. (Providing they have made up the hours during the accounting period).

■ Time Off for medical and related appointments

The Flexitime scheme is intended to increase the scope for staff to work flexibly to a degree where, under most circumstances medical appointments can be taken in an employee's own time with the hours being made up during the current accounting period. See also, paragraph 1.2.5 of the Authority's Sickness Absence Policy.

Case Study 4.

Angharad Rees, an employee in Technical Services has a hospital appointment at 10.00am. She knows that she may have to wait for some time before she sees her consultant so agrees in advance, with her line manager that she comes in to work at 08.00am and leaves for the appointment at 9:45am. As expected, her appointment is delayed and she is not back in work until 2.45pm. Although Angharad will have to make the time up she was able to attend this appointment without the need to take a half-day Flexi Leave.

■ Smoking 'Breaks'

The council has a Smoking policy, which clearly states that employees must 'clock out', or record as non-work time, any smoking breaks taken.

■ Abuse of the Scheme

Abuse of this scheme may lead to disciplinary action and to the withdrawal of the flexitime benefit to the employee.

Scheme Parameters

■ General Principles

Any requests for flexitime working outside the standard working day, must be agreed by the line manager in advance.

This would quite reasonably include negotiation for a degree of flexibility within which an individual or team could work without having to gain prior approval on each occasion.

On every working day, a minimum of 4 hours work must be completed, to include at least 1 hour of work before 1:00pm and 1 hour of work after 1:00pm. Where a half day flexitime leave has been agreed, each employee must complete at least 2 hours work before 1:00pm in the case of afternoon leave and at least 2 hours of work after 1:00pm in the case of morning leave. For example, you could work from 9am to 11am, and 1pm to 3pm, or 10am to 2pm, without having to book flexitime leave.

No more than 6 hours must be worked without a break of at least half an hour.

The scheme is available to all employees both full and part time, unless specifically excluded as detailed in the second paragraph of the **Introduction**.

■ Bandwidth

The Bandwidth runs from 7:00am to 7:00pm

■ Accounting Period

The accounting period is 8 weeks, and based on full time contracted working hours of 296 over that period, and pro rata for part time.

■ Credit/Debit Hours and Carry Over

A maximum 16 hours credit, or 8 hours debit can be carried over from one accounting period to the next. Any hours in excess of 16, will be lost at the end of an accounting period unless it has been agreed that it can be taken as time off in lieu. If more than 8 hours debit is worked without reasonable prior arrangement, then the disciplinary procedure may apply.

Scheme Parameters

■ Flexible Hours Leave (Flexi Leave)

Up to 1 full or 2 half days flexi leave during each accounting period, may be taken by agreement with your line manager. Flexi leave cannot be taken if it results in a debit of more than 8 hours.

Case Study 5.

Bill Owen in the Chief Executive's Department has an elderly relative needing care in the afternoon, and has requested to be able to start and finish earlier for a period of time until permanent care arrangements can be made. The line manager is able to make some adjustments to ensure continuity of service delivery, and agrees to the request also agreeing a timescale and date for review. Bill is able to continue working whilst caring for his relative.

■ Time Recording

All locations should operate electronic time recording systems. Where this is not practical, the manager will decide on an appropriate system. Employees are expected to use the time recording system provided. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including the withdrawal of the Flexitime scheme.

If you have any queries in relation to this Flexitime Scheme, please contact your line manager, or Organisational Development department.

Appendix A

■ Planned Overtime - Work in Excess of Normal Hours

1. Time spent in attendance at a conference as a delegate, or at a course as a participant, be not regarded as a requirement to work overtime.
2. Flexitime arrangements cover the hours 7.00am.to 7.00pm, Monday - Fridays and that payments/compensation for overtime work will be considered when such overtime involved working at weekends (if not agreed as part of the Flexitime Scheme) and statutory holidays or, on standard working days, before 7.00 a.m. and after 7.00 p.m.
3. The requirement to work overtime for the Authority should be foreseen and preplanned and should only, for the purposes of this policy, be undertaken with prior approval of the Chief Officer. No retrospective applications will be considered.
4. Staff graded below SO1, who have been authorised to work a period of planned overtime, and where the expectation to work above a 37 hours week had not been recognised in their salary grading, they be offered the choice of time off in lieu (at time and half at week days and Saturdays, double time for Sundays or treble time for statutory holidays) where it is considered practicable to offer such time off in lieu, or overtime payment (at time and a half at week days and Saturdays, double time for Sundays and double time plus a day off in lieu for statutory holidays).
5. Whilst, from time to time all senior staff work longer than a 37 hour week or work outside of normal office hours, this is viewed as part of the job and recognised within the salary grading, though, the requirement to work planned overtime could arise as an exceptional circumstance and therefore:-
 - (i) staff graded SO1 and above, who have been authorised to work a period of planned overtime, and where the expectation to work above a 37 hour week had not been recognised in their salary grading, be granted compensatory time off in lieu at single time rate irrespective of when the overtime is worked; and
 - (ii) where time off in lieu is, in the opinion of the Chief Officer, not a practical proposition, then the Chief officer may authorise the payment of overtime at single time rate irrespective of the day when the overtime is worked.

Appendix B

■ Definitions

Flexitime: This is to be used as the name for this scheme to ensure there is no confusion with other flexible working policies.

Bandwidth: This is the earliest time that a member of staff can start work under this scheme through to latest finishing time. The bandwidth is 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Accounting period: The period over which contracted hours must be balanced. Accounting period is 8 weeks.

Carry over hours: At the end of each accounting period staff are permitted to carry a certain number of hours either credit or debit into the next accounting period. Staff may carry over up to 16 hours credit hours or 8 hours debit hours. This is based on 296 hours per accounting period for full time staff and pro-rata for part time.

Standard working day: To give a baseline from which flexitime can be managed this is the day on which conventional office hours are based. The standard working day is deemed to be 8:45 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday. 8:45 am to 4:30 pm Friday with a ¾ hr lunch break.

Working day: A working day is any day other than one on which a member of staff has authorised leave (including a full or half day flexitime leave).

Flexi leave: This is leave taken with prior permission of line manager as a result of accruing hours under this scheme. Flexi leave will not be granted if it takes the debit balance of employee's hours beyond 8.

Full or half day FlexiLeave: These are days on which there is no requirement to attend work for at least 1 hour before 1.00pm in the case of morning flexitime leave, 1 hour after 1.00pm in the case of afternoon flexitime leave or to attend work at all in the case of a full days flexitime leave. Employees may take up to 2 half or 1 full days flexi leave each accounting period.

Flexitime working: this is any work carried out by an employee outside the standard working day

Eligible employees: These are all employees who have not been excluded from the flexitime scheme. Some employees will inevitably not be able to be part of this scheme because type of work or work patterns do not allow it.

Standard Working Pattern: A standard working pattern is the normal working day from Monday to Friday