

APPENDIX 2 - FLEXI-TIME POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The policy has been developed to allow for enhanced flexible working hours to be operated enabling a degree of flexibility to accommodate employees commitments whilst always ensuring the needs of the Council and its services as key priority. Council services are increasingly provided around the clock and traditional 9 to 5 working hours may no longer be appropriate. It recognises that there can be peak and troughs of work and that work can be delivered outside traditional office hours. Properly implemented it supports and improves both service delivery and employees' work-life balance.

The Flexi-time policy is an arrangement whereby, employees may choose when to begin and end work in agreement with their manager. To be successful the policy requires trust and co-operation of staff, giving them greater control of their working hours whilst maintaining service delivery. Messages need to be balanced in terms of some staff choosing to work say during the evening and weekends but this is not an expectation unless a core part of the job.

Employees must cooperate with managers to ensure that minimum staffing levels are maintained during required working hours. This is fundamental to ensure that the efficiency of the Council and the delivery of services are maintained.

The policy aims to:

- Improve service delivery – providing services over an extended day
- Provide where possible maximum flexibility in when an employee chooses to work during the day, whilst maintaining high standards of service delivery
- Demonstrate a commitment to implementing the Government's and Council's family friendly policies
- Promote a well motivated, flexible and responsive workforce, dedicated to providing services when they are required.

SCOPE

The policy applies to all employees, subject to the requirements and priorities of the service. This will mean that certain posts or groups may be excluded where attendance for a specified period during the day is imperative. However, exceptions should be limited and the policy will be applied as widely as possible. Where the flexi-time policy cannot be applied, Flexible Working Arrangements may be a more suitable option.

OPERATION OF POLICY

Service requirements

The Council guarantees to provide services within different establishments between certain times depending on customer needs. It is essential for managers/supervisors and teams to work together to plan the levels of cover required in order to provide an effective service. The manager/supervisor will ultimately be responsible for the efficient operation of the service. In agreeing the operation of the Flexi-time policy, managers/supervisors must ensure:

- There is cover for the service
- There is work available
- Start and finish times do not disrupt the efficient running of the service

The scheme

The policy is based on a twelve week period broken down into three, four week sections. Employees generally are able to carry forward no more than 5 hours debit and 30 hours credit four week period. They are able to take up to two days flexi-leave within that four week period.

It is recognised that some services have significant peaks and troughs in workload and a wider twelve week view can be taken in these cases. This enables up to 6 days flexi-leave to be taken nearer the end of the twelve week settlement period if planned and agreed by the manager. Managers should monitor Flexi-time records every 4 weeks and work with the employee to ensure hours credited do not become unmanageable. Any credit above 30 hours at the end of the twelve week period will be written off (*pro rata for part-time employees to ensure manageability of number of days 30 hours would equate to for part time employees*).

Where employees regularly have 30 hours in credit at the settlement period the manager will need to review the employee's work load and prioritise or reallocate work as appropriate. A further option may be to consider alternative Flexible Working Arrangements to meet the service and individual needs.

Where appropriate, and in agreement with their manager, an employee makes choices about when they start and finish work and can claim the time that they actually work. This may, in agreement with their manager, include time worked at evenings and weekends. This does not suggest however, that all employees need to work in this way. By recording time in this way, time off in lieu (TOIL) and overtime would be the exception and would need to be agreed in advance by the manager.

In managing their time an employee must be mindful of the Working Time Directives ensuring a minimum break of 20 minutes is taken within a 6 hour period.

Other considerations

Employees leaving the Council with a debit of hours will lose a proportionate amount of pay.

Credit Leave

Credit leave may be taken subject to the needs of the service and with the prior approval of the manager/supervisor. Subject to agreement, time accumulated can be used by either taking complete or part days leave, or by working a shorter working day.

Debit

Any debit hours in excess of the allowed 5 hours should be agreed by the manager/supervisor and if remaining at the end of the twelve week settlement period will result in time deducted from annual leave or the employee's salary. If a consistent pattern of debit hours exceeding the agreed allowance occurs, the employee will be placed on fixed working hours.

Authorised Absences

Authorised absences including holiday, sickness, hospital and emergency medical appointments and special leave are credited at the standard hours the employee would work on that day. Wherever possible, routine appointments should be arranged for a time that causes least disruption to the service. Credit hours are not given for medical appointments apart from the following exceptions:-

- Ante-natal care (excluding relaxation classes)
- Cervical smear tests or mammogram
- Prostate gland tests
- Urgent medical/dental treatment
- Appointments with the Council's Occupational Health Unit

Hospital Appointments where the timing is out of the employee's control, i.e. Consultant appointments or specialist treatment, the employee will receive credit to the actual time spent away from work up to a maximum of a standard day. Managers / Supervisors must be informed of appointments and employees must begin work before or after the appointment wherever possible.

For the purposes of time recording the standard times are as follows:

Week	37 hours
Day	7 hours 24 minutes (7.40 decimal minutes)
Half Day	3 hours 42 minutes (3.70 decimal minutes)

Work Visits, Seminars, meetings etc

Employees attending seminars, conferences and meetings at a distance from the Council premises record time credits for the hours involved up to a maximum of 10 hours in agreement with the manager / supervisor. Adjustments for the time spent away from the work base should include travelling time between the work base and the place of business.

Adverse weather conditions or transport delays

In the event of adverse weather conditions or transport delays the employee should where possible consider alternative working locations dependent upon whether relevant equipment is available. If the Council decides to close a building due to adverse weather conditions, or a Council emergency, and no alternative work place can be found, credit up to a standard day will be given.

Recording Arrangements

To ensure the smooth operation of the Flexi-time policy it is the employee's responsibility to maintain accurate records either manually or electronically in line with local practice. Deliberate falsification of entries will be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

Time off in Lieu / Overtime

Time off in lieu and overtime can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and when all other Flexi-time options have been utilised.