

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME – EXCEPT FOR TEACHING STAFF, CRAFT OPERATIVES AND FORMER MANUAL WORKERS

The Council operates a Flexible Working Hours Scheme in those areas of its service which are conducive to this type of working.

Introduction

- ◆ The Flexible Working Hours Scheme will enable employees to organise their working hours so that they may have some measure of freedom as to when they work.
- ◆ The scheme however, is designed and operated in such a way as to maintain the efficiency of the Council and the services it provides.
- ◆ The success of the scheme depends on the co-operation and good will of all employees. They will therefore be required to arrange their working time having regard to the post's workload and to the overall pattern of work within their service or section.

Principles of the Scheme

The Scheme of flexible working hours must observe the following principles:-

- ◆ Standards of efficiency or service provided in any part of the Council's undertaking must be maintained.
- ◆ It will not be possible for all employees to reconcile flexible working hours with the exigencies of the service or the requirements of their post. The Council therefore reserves the right to exclude from participation in the scheme, any post or posts which it considers are of such a nature their inclusion in the scheme will reduce the effectiveness of the service provided by the Council.
- ◆ The scheme is dependent on co-operation between employees and service or section heads to ensure provision of the service at all times throughout normal office hours.
- ◆ At public contact points, or to suit particular workload patterns of the service, the service or section head must ensure proper cover is available for the maintenance of the service.
- ◆ In order that service levels are maintained, employees must keep the service head advised, in advance, of proposed changes to starting and or finishing time, permission to vary working hours within the flexible bands will not be unreasonably withheld.
- ◆ Employees may be required to vary their working arrangements to meet the exigencies of the service.

- ◆ Where an employee of staff is unable to attend work, for whatever reason, including sickness, they must notify the appropriate officer within their service as soon as possible and in any event prior to the commencement of core time, 10.00 a.m. on the first day of absence.
- ◆ Employees participating in the scheme will have their working hours recorded by mechanical, electrical or electronic equipment, as determined by the Council. Booking in and out will be required at the start and finish of each day and at lunch times.
- ◆ On completing the "booking in" procedure staff must commence work immediately.
- ◆ Any grievances relating to the operation of the scheme should be pursued in accordance with the Council's Grievance Procedures. (see section 3)
- ◆ Any abuse of the scheme by an employee will result in that employee being excluded from the scheme and return to the normal working arrangements i.e. start/stop times, relevant to that employee.

Role of Directors/Heads of Service

Directors/Heads of Service will be responsible for flexible working hours' arrangements in relation to their employees. They may, at their discretion, delegate this responsibility to a member(s) of their staff.

The overall responsibilities of "line managers" for the work and the employees under their control do not change in any way with the operation of flexible working hours.

It is recognised that the following areas are the most likely to require management action:-

To ensure that work is available for employees in the Permitted Working Hours when "line managers" are not present by; if necessary, directing employees in advance to particular tasks during those periods;

To ensure that arrangements are made to maintain adequate staffing levels at particular times or for particular tasks;

To ensure all employees are complying with the rules and meeting the obligations of the Scheme as well as enjoying the advantages.

To authorise credits or debits of time in approved circumstances;

To ensure that employees are trained in the operation of the system and receive appropriate support to participate fully in the Scheme.

Role of the Nominated Administrators

Administrators of the Scheme have been nominated by each Head of Service to cover an appropriate section or grouping of employees.

New Starts

Administrators should ensure that a new start who will be participating in the Scheme collects their card on the first day of commencing work.

Leavers

Administrators should ensure that the terminating employee clears outstanding credit or debit hours on or before the last day of attendance at work.

The completed leaver documentation should be passed to I.T. Services in order that the leavers' details can be deleted from flexi-time system.

Clocking out for Smoking Break

Where an employee has permission granted by their line manager/supervisor for a smoking break, the time for this will be restricted to:-

Periods outwith flexi-core time, subject to normal clock-in/out procedures

Full details of the Policy on Smoking in the Workplace. (see section 5)

Definitions

◆ Permitted Working Hours

The permitted working hours will extend from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

◆ Core Times

All employees must be present at work during the following core times:-

◆ Morning Core Time:

Monday - Friday 10 am - 12 noon

◆ Afternoon Core Time:

Monday - Friday 2 pm - 4 pm

◆ Flexible Working Hours

You may vary your starting and finishing times each day during the following:-

Morning	:	8 am - 10 am
Lunch	:	12 noon - 2 pm
Afternoon	:	4 pm - 6 pm

- ◆ Flexible Lunch Break
 - a) Lunch breaks must be taken between 12 noon and 2 pm. A maximum of 2 hours may be taken.
 - b) A minimum of 30 minutes must be taken whether or not you leave the office.
- ◆ Accounting Period and Contracted Daily Hours (based on 35 hour week)

Accounting period ~ 4 weeks.

Contracted accounting hours ~ 140 per four week period.

Contracted weekly hours ~ 35. Contracted daily hours ~ 7.

Half day ~ 3½ hours.

Debit Hours

- ◆ Debit hours are the number of hours worked less than the total hours for the accounting period i.e. less than 140 hours.
- ◆ Employees will be allowed a maximum debit balance of 4 hours during an accounting period which may be carried over into the next accounting period.
- ◆ Settlement of any debits must be made within the next accounting period. Where at the end of an accounting period, an employee is in debit, it is expected that at some point during the next accounting period a credit balance will be realised. Failure to do so will be considered as an abuse of the system.
- ◆ Staff with debits in excess of the permitted limit will be reported to the appropriate service manager officer by their immediate supervisor or section head as appropriate. Two such consecutive debits created by any office may result in an employee's exclusion from the scheme.
- ◆ Where a debit of hours is not cleared within the next accounting period or in the case of an employee leaving the service or transferring out of flexible work hours arrangements, then the debit will be recovered by way of deduction from salary.

Credit Hours

- ◆ Credit hours are the number of hours worked in excess of the total hours for the accounting period i.e. more than 140 hours.
- ◆ Employees will be allowed a maximum credit balance of 10½ hours (i.e. 1½ days) during an accounting period which may be carried over to the next accounting period.

Flexi Leave

- ◆ One of the main objects of the scheme is to afford employees the opportunity to vary start and finish times in accordance with the principles of the scheme. It is expected that time credits/debits will normally only vary slightly but at times flexible arrangements may lead to an accumulation of (credit hours) and it is expected that these will be settled within the flexible working hours bands of the next accounting period. However subject to the exigencies of the service, such credit hours may be taken as flexi leave during core time, subject to prior approval and provided reasonable notice has been given.
- ◆ Employees will only be allowed 2 half days ($\frac{1}{2}$ day equals $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours) or one full day (7 hours) flexi leave during each calendar month not account period (4 weeks).

Normal Working Day

- ◆ Office services and service to members of the public must be available throughout the normal working day i.e. 9.00 am till 4.45 pm Monday - Thursday and 9.00 am till 4.30 Friday.
- ◆ Arrangements will therefore have to be made to ensure that sufficient staff are available during these times.

Overtime

- ◆ All overtime must be authorised in advance by the head of service and in accordance with the terms and conditions of service.
- ◆ Authorised overtime will be paid under the normal payment for overtime provisions.

Overtime, suitably requested and approved, can only be worked prior to 9.00 am or after 4.45 pm Monday - Thursday (4.30 pm Friday).

Employees working overtime will not record overtime hours on the FWH recording system, these hours will be kept totally separate and will not be time credits in terms of the Scheme.

Absence on Personal Business

All absences related to personal business e.g. medical/dental/opticians appointments must be confined to the periods of flexible working i.e. outwith core time.

This section will not apply to those matters for which "time off" is governed by statute, e.g. Ante Natal Clinics, Trade Union Duties or Activities.

Disciplinary Action

Any abuse of the flexible working hours scheme will be treated as a disciplinary offence and the appropriate disciplinary procedures will apply.

Alterations to the Flexible Working Hours Scheme

It may be necessary in the light of experience to alter or amend the scheme. Employees will be informed in advance of any changes.

Operation of the Scheme

Time Recording

All employees participating in the scheme will require to record their actual attendance by way of the electronic equipment provided.

Cards

All employees participating in the Scheme will be issued with a card which will operate the electronic terminal located on the floor or area in which they are based.

Terminals

Employees may only use the terminal on the floor or area in which they are based. The card will not operate a terminal on another floor, or area of any of the buildings.

Arrival/Departure Procedure

Employees are required to use their card to key in to the terminal their arrival and departure times.

Business Absence

Employees are also required to record at the terminal their absence from the building because of business.

Unauthorised Absence

All unauthorised absences will be recorded centrally on receipt of information from the appropriate services management on the basis of Notional Daily Hours.

Further action may be taken by service management but in any event, an appropriate adjustment will be made to the employee's salary.

Other Absences

Credit will not be given in respect of the following:-

Car Breakdown

Transport Failure

Travelling Time

Adverse Weather Conditions (except in exceptional circumstances)

Replacement Cards

Should an employee lose their card a replacement will be made available by the employees' service flexi-time administrator.

New Starters/Leavers

New employees who will be participating in the scheme will be issued their card by the service flexi-time administrator.