

Version	4
Last Revision Date	June 2011



## Flexi-time Working Hours Policy

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>	
<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>Flexi-time Working Hours <a href="#">Policy</a></b>
Department	Human Resources
Telephone Number	01443 444501/01443 444502/01443 444503
Initial Policy Launch Date	May 1996
Reviewing Officer	<b>Peter Cushion, Alison Cade &amp; Richard Evans</b>
Review Date	March 2012
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	Updated April 2011
<b>REVISION HISTORY</b>	
Date	Revised By
March 2008	<b>Peter Cushion, Alison Cade &amp; Richard Evans</b>
December 2010	<b>Peter Cushion, Alison Cade &amp; Richard Evans</b>
June 2011	<b>Peter Cushion, Alison Cade &amp; Richard Evans</b>
<b>DOCUMENT APPROVAL</b>	
This document has received approval from:	Date of Approval
HR Senior Management Team	May 2011
Corporate Management Team	May 2011
Cabinet	N/A

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## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

The underlying concept of flexible working hours is that it is unnecessary for all employees to begin and end work at the same fixed times and that there may, in fact, be advantages for both management and employees if, subject to certain constraints, employees are allowed the opportunity to arrange their own hours of work.

A flexible working hour's scheme enables employees to choose in accordance with certain criteria, when they start and finish work each day and to vary the length of their lunch break. Basically, the number of hours they are expected to work remains unchanged but, subject to an agreed set of rules and the authorisation of management, how they do so is optional.

## 2. **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

In describing any scheme of flexible working hours a number of terms are used which may be unfamiliar to employees new to this method of arranging the working day. So that there shall be no confusion over their precise meaning, the most common of them are listed below together with the meanings assigned to them for the purpose of this Scheme.

### 2.1 **Bandwidth**

This is the part of the day ranging from the earliest time at which anyone can start work through to the latest possible finishing time (excluding overtime).

### 2.2 **Flexible Time**

The period during each day when a person has, within certain constraints, the choice of arrival and departure times.

### 2.3 **Office Opening Hours**

The times during which every office will be open to the public. Adequate cover must be maintained during this period.

### 2.4 **Settlement Period**

The settlement period will be 4 weeks in length.

## **2.5 Contracted Hours**

This is the total number of hours each employee has to work in the settlement period.

## **2.6 Credit/Debit Balances**

The scheme allows employees to work more or less hours than contracted in a settlement period.

## **2.7 Compensatory Flexi Leave**

Compensatory flexi leave can be taken in any one settlement period but only with the prior approval of the appropriate line manager.

### **3. APPLICATION OF SCHEME**

The Scheme will apply to all employees with the exception of certain occupational groups whose duties are such as to prevent them from participating in the scheme. Group Directors/Directors will inform staff affected individually where it is decided that participation is not possible. This scheme does not apply to Chief Officers within the Council.

### **4. CONSTRAINTS**

The success of the scheme depends on the common sense and goodwill of all employees and management and requires a co-operative approach. It is expected that employees, when necessary, will arrange their times of work to have regard to their current personal workload or the overall pattern of work in their section/service area. A line manager may require an employee to **work at specified times on any day if the exigencies of the service so demand.**

Offices will remain open to the public throughout normal working hours i.e. **9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.** Monday to Friday, and must be adequately covered at all times to deal with enquiries whether made in person or by telephone. It is expected that employees will arrange between themselves to keep offices properly covered, but if agreement is not forthcoming or for any other specific reasons, employees will be asked to revise their working hours to ensure that adequate cover is provided.

**5. THE WORKING DAY**

The working day has been divided as follows:

Bandwidth - From 08.00 to 18.00 hours daily

Flexible Hours - From 08.00 to 18.00 hours daily

The above times apply to all offices for all days of the normal working week (Monday to Friday).

**6. DESIGNATED BREAKS**

Employees who work over 6 hours per day must take a break (subject to the constraints outlined in points 4) of not less than 30 minutes in duration. Employees must ensure that their break period is recorded irrespective of whether they leave their place of work.

**7. STANDARD WORKING WEEK**

For the purpose of crediting annual leave, sickness and other authorised absences the following times will apply based on full time employee:

WEEK 37 hours (pro rata for part time employees)

DAY 7 hours 24 minutes

HALF-DAY 3 hours 42 minutes

**NB** - For part time employees the day/ half-day hours above maybe pro-rata but this will depend upon the employees' pattern of work.

**8. SETTLEMENT PERIOD**

The settlement period is 4 weeks, at the end of which a balance has to be reached to show how many hours were actually worked as compared to contracted hours.

**9. CONTRACTED HOURS**

The total of contracted hours that must normally be worked in any one settlement period is the product of the number of hours currently worked in the standard week (37 for a full time employee) multiplied by the number of weeks in the settlement period (4), i.e. 148 hours. Hours will be pro-rata for part time employees.

**10. MAXIMUM HOURS TO BE WORKED IN A WEEK**

No general determination is placed on the number of hours to be worked in a week but the maximum number of working hours that can be accrued is limited to 47½ hours i.e. 5 days x 9½ hours (assuming the employee works from 8 am to 6pm and takes minimum 'designated break' of 30 minutes each day).

Employees and managers are required to arrange their hours of work so as to avoid large fluctuations in the distribution of such hours and ensure that workloads are managed and the work location is appropriately covered.

Staff are expected to attend work on every contracted day unless taking annual leave, flexi etc'

**11. CARRY OVER BALANCES**

The maximum number of hours which may be carried forward, to the next settlement period only, are as follows:

Credit - 8 hours

Debit - 8 hours

**Credit hours** may be taken within the same period as they are earned, subject to the provision that the maximum number of credit hours taken (including any carried forward from the previous settlement period) must not exceed 8 in any one settlement period (pro rata for part time staff). With the agreement of the Chief Officer, the credit hours may be taken in the form of a compensatory flexi days leave.

In regard to part time employees, the following examples (whilst not exhaustive) should prove helpful for managers when working out their entitlements:

1 Employee works 30 hrs over 5 days i.e. 6 hours per day.	Employee would be entitled to a day off but this would be based on 6 hrs .
2 Employee works 18.5 hrs over 5 days i.e. 3.42 hours per day.	Employee would be entitled to a day off but that one day would be based on 3.42 hrs.
3 Employee works 18.5 hrs over 3 days i.e. 7.24 hours for two days and 3.42 hrs for third day.	Employee would be entitled to a day off but that one day would be based on the day they work i.e. 7.24 hrs or 3.42 hrs.

Employees will be permitted to take a flexi-day in advance of any time being accrued. However, they will have to ensure that if they are in a debit position then the hours will be worked back.

**Debit balances** of up to 8 hours will be allowed to be carried forward from one settlement period to another, subject to prior agreement with the manager and on the clear understanding that these debit balances **must be** cleared by the end of the following settlement period. Should an employee fail to clear these debit hours, then one of the following steps will be taken:

- an appropriate full/half day leave will be deducted from the employee's annual leave entitlement and credited to their flexi balance, or
- a deduction of salary

## 12. **DUTIES OUTSIDE THE OFFICE**

Where attendance on official duties away from the office necessitates the commencement and termination of work at times outside normal office hours, then credit will be given for the hours worked between 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. subject to the necessary 'designated break'.

There may, however, be individual circumstances where hours worked outside the bandwidth will justify compensation and this will be dealt with separately by the line manager in line with Council policies e.g. TOIL.

**13. POST ENTRY/QUALIFICATION COURSES**

Credit hours for employees undertaking qualification courses will be up to a maximum of the standard working day as follows:

- a) Full day (i.e. day release) – up to 7 hours 24 minutes;
- b) Half day (i.e. full morning/afternoon) – up to 3 hours 42 minutes

No credit can be claimed for courses undertaken outside of the normal working day i.e. evening courses. Time off in lieu (TOIL), plain time overtime or any enhancements will also not apply.

**14. TRAINING COURSES, SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES**

For full or part time employees on seminars, conferences and non-qualification courses where attendance occurs on a normal working day, individuals will be credited hours for attendance at the course or event. In the case of this scheme, hours will be credited as 7 hours 24 minutes for a full day and 3 hours 42 minutes for a half-day. There is **no** entitlement to claim flexitime credit for travelling or an overnight stay.

**15. OVERTIME WORKING**

Without exception, all overtime must be authorised by the manager beforehand. Overtime claims must be submitted at the end of the settlement period. Overtime payments may be made for hours worked either before or after the working day providing that at the end of the settlement period an aggregate of 148 hours (excluding overtime) has been worked. Hours worked, as authorised overtime will not count as a credit under the flexi scheme.

**16. RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE**

Employees are required to record their attendance and absences in accordance with the approved procedures and are individually responsible for the accurate recording of their working hours. Under no circumstances whatsoever should an employee record hours worked on behalf of another employee.

At the commencement of work, an employee must register his/her attendance by signing/swiping in; also when he/she terminates work he/she must sign/swipe out in the same way. Departure and return from the 'designated break' must also be recorded in this way regardless of whether or not employees leave the building. When signing in, employees **must** state exact times of arrival and departure, and not 'round up or down' to nearest 5 minutes. **It is not sufficient to only record times on an electronic system.**

Any '**additional break**' outside the 'designated break' e.g. visits to bank or smoking, **must also be** recorded on the relevant systems.

Time credits due to an employee in respect of authorised absences will be recorded by him/her on the Flexible Working Hours Adjustment Form/Flexi system for daily approval by his/her line manager and the subsequent updating of the individuals attendance record.

Employees who are engaged on duties away from the office, e.g. attending meetings, site visits or other approved purposes and are therefore unable to record their attendance in the usual way, will do so by recording all hours worked on their return to work.

## **17. TERMINATION OF SERVICE**

During the last settlement period (or part period) of service with the Council, an employee may continue to work Flexible Working Hours on the clear understanding that he/she works his/her full contracted hours: failure to work contracted hours will necessitate an adjustment to the employees salary and possible delay in its payment.

## **18. MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHEME**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF MANAGERS**

These include the following:

- To ensure that the working hours of employees meet the needs of service users, the organisation and employees, and that the individual's working patterns do not have a detrimental effect on their colleagues.
- To familiarise themselves with the Flexi Scheme, in particular their responsibilities and how to deal with abuse of the scheme.

- To operate the scheme fairly and reasonably with no detrimental effect on overall efficiency or service.
- To ensure the scheme is effectively implemented.
- To ensure employees fully understand the Flexi Scheme and their rights and responsibilities in relation to its implementation.
- To ensure that hours worked in excess of 37 hours per week, will only be worked when work is available and meets the needs of service users and/or the organisation.
- To take proactive steps to ensure that there is effective monitoring of the operation of the Scheme.
- To follow the disciplinary procedure in the event of any misconduct in the operation of the Scheme
- Credit/debit balances are authorised and checked at the end of each four week settlement period.
- Flexi leave is recorded on the relevant annual leave card and that this is approved prior to the leave being taken.
- For paper based systems, that all records relating to time recording are reconciled on a regular basis and authorised by the employee and line manager.
- The office is appropriately covered during the normal office hours.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

These include the following:

- To negotiate and agree with their manager, the implementation of the Scheme, in relation to their working hours and/or patterns.
- To negotiate and agree with their manager requests for time off under the Flexi Scheme, prior to taking leave.
- To recognise that there is no automatic entitlement to flexi-leave, and that at all times managers must take into account service needs when considering requests for leave.
- To be flexible in working with colleagues to ensure that the needs of the service users, the organisation and other employees are achieved.
- To comply with the requirements of the Flexi Scheme, and not to abuse the Scheme.

- When signing in on paper based system, employees **must** state exact times of arrival and departure, and not 'round up or down' to nearest 5 minutes.
- To work the hours when work is available and which meets the needs of service users and the organisation.
- To bring to the attention of management any difficulties or problems in the operation of the Scheme.
- To co-operate with management in the effective implementation and monitoring of the Scheme.

The nominated manager has a responsibility to ensure that adequate records are maintained of employees' flexitime.

Advice is readily available to managers on all aspects of this scheme from Human Resources.

#### **19. ABUSE OF SCHEME**

Because Flexible Working Hours hinge on trust, abuse of the scheme will be regarded as gross misconduct and the offending employee will be dealt with in accordance with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's disciplinary procedures.