



REVISED FLEXI-SCHEME

1. Aim

The objective of the scheme is to provide flexibility in working hours consistent with providing an effective service to the public.

2. Limitations on Flexibility

2.1 In order to achieve this aim, managers and employees need to co-operate to ensure that all sections are adequately covered during the Council's opening hours (both current and future). Ultimately this responsibility lies with the line manager.

Effective and consistent management of the scheme by line managers is fundamental to success.

2.2 Employees may have flexibility in their starting and finishing times and length of lunch breaks within the provisions of the scheme subject to the proviso that if a conflict arises between the needs of the service and an employee's desire to take flexi-leave (either in terms of starting or finishing times, lunch breaks or half or full day's flexi-leave), then the needs of the service will predominate.

2.3 Flexi-leave will be treated as annual leave. Employees need to give at least 24 hours notice to their manager of a request to take a half or a full day's flexi-leave.

Employees do not have an automatic right to take flexi-leave when they want it. If the Manager's assessment is that there would not be sufficient coverage or essential tasks require to be done, the needs of the service must be the deciding factor. The manager has a right to refuse flexi-leave if the needs of the service warrant this.

2.4 Similarly if the different working times that employees choose to start and finish do not provide adequate coverage for the section, the manager has the right to require employees to come in earlier or leave

later when needed, or bring in a morning or evening rota to ensure coverage and fairness within a team.

3. Managers' Role

- 3.1** The Manager's primary role in relation to flexi-time is to manage the scheme in such a way that adequate coverage, efficiency and good customer service are maintained throughout the working day. Within these parameters, employees have a measure of flexibility over their working day under the scheme.
- 3.2** Managers need to ensure that:
- a)** They treat employees fairly and consistently in the way they manage the scheme.
 - b)** They tackle abuses of the scheme and discipline employees who abuse its provisions.
 - c)** They set a personal example in following the rules of the scheme.

4. To whom will the scheme apply?

- 4.1** The scheme will apply to all ex-APT&C staff except where Heads of Service identify that, due to the nature or requirements of their post, it should not apply. Exceptions to the scheme include employees working shifts or abnormal hours; where customer care or service requirements cannot be achieved using flexi time; where fixed hours are deemed essential or working hours are very short.
- 4.2** Where a Head of Service considers a post unsuitable because of its duties/ requirements, he/she must discuss this matter with the employees concerned and, where possible, come to an agreement.
- 4.3** Employees whose posts are identified as unsuitable by Heads of Service have a right to appeal to their Chief Officer and may be represented at such an appeal by a trade union or other representative.

5. Hours of Work

Band-width

- (a)** Staff may work between 8.00 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. providing that the individual Head of Service is satisfied either with the supervision arrangements or that no supervision of an employee is required.

Where:

- (1) The work in a section is such that supervision is required, or
 - (2) The employee is inexperienced, or in other ways needs supervision/ guidance to work effectively, the section head will retain discretion to agree later starting times.
- (b) All staff must work for an average of 37½ hours per week over a consecutive 3-month period (unless they are part-time or have different contractual hours).

(c) Accounting Period

The accounting period will be 4 weeks; the contracted hours for full-time staff will therefore be 150. For part-time staff their contracted hours will be pro rata.

(d) Flexible Hours and Core Time

These will normally be:

Flexible Hours	8.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.
Core Times	10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon
Flexible Hours	12.00 noon to 2.00 p.m.
Core time	2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.
Flexible Hours	4.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

All staff within the scheme are required to work during core time and must have the manager's express permission to have any time off during core time.

Ideally, it is expected that employees will establish a normal pattern of working by agreement within teams and with managers that both suits their personal circumstances and the needs of the service.

Variations to the pattern known in advance should be checked out with the team and manager.

If employees and their line managers co-operate as a team to provide cover, the flexi-time scheme can provide mutual benefit to both the staff and the Council.

(e) Lunch

The minimum lunch break is 30 minutes and the maximum 2 hours, to be taken within the period from 12 noon to 2.00 p.m. Employees should take their lunch breaks to maintain effectiveness and for health, safety and welfare reasons.

The section head in each section is responsible for ensuring adequate staff cover in his/her section over lunch breaks and ensuring staff collaborate with each other to achieve this coverage.

6. Accrual of Credit and Debit Time

(1) Credit time can only be accumulated on work agreed by the supervisor as necessary work.

(2) The maximum number of hours which can be carried over from one accounting period to the next is 15 hours for full time staff (pro rata to the hours worked for part-time staff, i.e. employees working 18¾ hours would be able to carry over 7.5 hours from one accounting period to the next).

(3) Up to 4 hours debit hours may be carried over from one accounting period to the next for a maximum period of 3 consecutive months at the end of which all time owing must be made up to the Council.

In any situation where an employee who owes the Council debit time is working overtime, the debit time owing must be recovered to the Council before any overtime payments are made.

(4) Subject to the prior approval of the section head, officers may take up to one day's flexi-leave in any accounting period. Sufficient credit must already have been built-up in advance. All flexi-leave must be recorded on the flexi-sheet and authorised by the supervisor initialling the flexi-sheet. A whole day is 7 hours and 30 minutes. (A half day is 3 hours 45 minutes.)

(5) For job-sharers and part-timers, paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) above are calculated on a pro rata basis.

7. Absences

7.1 Officers on sick leave, holiday, statutory holidays, dependency or compassionate leave, training courses, conferences or other authorised leave shall be credited for time recording under the scheme with a standard working day under their own contract of employment (e.g. for full timers 7 hours 30 minutes, and pro rata for job-sharers or part-timers).

Absences for authorised trade union duties will also be credited for the time duration concerned.

No credits or debits will apply for the above absences.

7.2 Employees who take smoking breaks must record these absences and deduct them from their working time. Managers are responsible for checking that they do.

7.3 As a general principle employees should book medical and dental appointments in non-core times and be debited for them. Similarly employees working less than a standard 37½-week should try to book medical and dental appointments when they are not scheduled to be at work.

Pregnant employees are, however, entitled to have antenatal appointments credited.

In the following circumstances, however, managers do have discretion to allow credit time during core-time:

- (a) In exceptional circumstances, for welfare reasons;
- (b) For hospital appointments and giving blood;
- (c) For urgent medical or dental appointments, where the employee has become ill at work; attended work when ill or where they are unable to obtain an appointment during the flexible hours period/s.

8. Overtime

8.1 Overtime may not be claimed for hours worked during bandwidth, i.e. 8.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. Overtime therefore normally relates to hours worked after 6.30 p.m.

Time off should be taken as flexi-leave at a time consistent with the needs of the service (e.g. after the exceptionally busy period which has led to longer hours has passed). Supervisors and the employee concerned should discuss the timing of such flexi-leave.

For example, supervisors may suggest a relevant employee comes in later or leaves earlier on certain days and/or has flexi-leave at times where adequate staff coverage is available.

8.2 As a general principle, overtime working should be kept to a minimum and tightly controlled by Heads of Service. Where the need for overtime working occurs, managers need to consider:

- a) Whether employing temporary or casual staff is an option
- b) Giving time off in lieu (at plain time) where feasible
- c) Where overtime is needed for an exceptionally busy period (but not throughout the year), paying an ex gratia payment or honorarium instead.

In some instances, there is a continuing need throughout the year for employees to work a lot of overtime. In such cases, consideration could be given to paying an additional increment (where appropriate, in recompense) or where significant levels of unsocial hours working occur, an all-inclusive grade.

8.3 Employees who owe the council debit time should have hours offset against overtime hours unless they are cleared by the employee.

9 Staff joining/leaving the Authority

New staff must complete one full accounting period before taking flexi-leave. Staff leaving the authority must settle all credit/debit time before leaving. Debits which have not been worked back may be deducted from the employee's final salary. Where employees are in credit at the point of their resignation, their line manager needs to ensure that they take their credit time off before leaving the authority. Only in exceptional circumstances will authority be given to pay credit time which will be up to a maximum of one day's flexi-leave.

10. Time-Recording

Each employee on flexi-time will be responsible for completing their own timesheet and must:

- a) Sign in on arrival in the morning
- b) Sign out when going for lunch
- c) Sign in on return from lunch
- d) Sign out when completing work for the day
- e) Sign out for smoking breaks

11. Abuse of the Scheme

Claiming time and therefore payment for time not worked is a form of fraud and will normally be treated as gross misconduct. This means that it may lead to dismissal. Signing in or out for other employees will also be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Managers are responsible for controlling the scheme and dealing with abuse in their own section. Where fraud is suspected, advice is available from Audit and HR.

12. Withdrawal from the Scheme

The Council reserves the right to take employees off the scheme and put them on fixed working hours where they have consistently not complied with the provisions of the scheme (e.g.. where employees regularly accrue debit hours beyond 4 hours or are not completing time sheets).

13. Review

The Council will review the scheme after one year, and may amend the scheme if needed following consultation with relevant trade unions.

Appendix I**NOTES ON COMPLETION OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS RECORDING CHART**

1. Everyone eligible to do flexible working hours must complete the sheet, even if their hours do not vary.
2. The sheet is a standard form to be used throughout the Council.
3. The sheet should be completed at the time of the event (e.g. starting or finishing) or as soon as possible thereafter.
4. Everyone should initial their own entry for the day.
5. It is not permissible to enter information on someone else's behalf.
6. Absences should be indicated as follows:

F	Flexi-leave
AL	Annual leave
TOIL	Time Off In Lieu (record actual number of hours/minutes not standard credit)
S	Sickness
BH	Bank Holiday
CM	Compassionate Leave
D	Dependency Leave
C	College
T	Training
M	Absent on business e.g. meetings elsewhere
O	Other - indicate reason in "Notes" column.

Credit of 7½ hours is allowed for a full day's absence; 3¾ hours for half a day.

When credit has been given for exceptional circumstances (section 7.3), this should be recorded in the "Notes" column.

No hours should be shown when taking a day's flexi-leave.

7. Agreement to taking flexi-leave should be shown in advance by the manager initialling the appropriate column.
8. Employees who stop work in order to take a smoking break are required to record the break on a separate form and transfer the total breaks for the day to the relevant column on the main form (overleaf). The time must be deducted in calculating the daily total and made up to 37½ working hours per week over the 4-week accounting period.

Blank Flexi-Record and Smoking Record (Smoking) charts are available on the HR section on Infonet.