

Introduction

The Flexi-time guidance includes the procedure and guidance in relation to the following:

- What is flexi time
- The scope of the scheme
- Guiding principals
- Application of the scheme

Aims of the Guidance

To provide clear guidelines for managers, and employees to follow to utilise flexi-time appropriately, supporting a culture of service delivery which focuses on the achievement of agreed targets and objectives.

Scope

The scheme is applicable to all employees whose working hours/practices allow for flexible working hours to be implemented, it is however recognised that there are employees whose working hours/practices dictate that the policy cannot apply or may need to be modified.

Employees working part-time or reduced hours have access to the scheme, usually on a pro-rata basis.

To be read in conjunction with:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Flexi and Annual Leave Tracker Guidance
- Working Time Regulations Guidance
- Disciplinary Policy

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POLICY

Newport City Councils corporate vision is 'to be recognised as a high performing council – ensuring the right services are provided to our communities, our councillors and our staff', to achieve this, new ways of working have to be found to make the best use of staff and resources. Newport City Council recognises that flexible working brings benefits to both employer and employee. Flexible working arrangements can assist in addressing pressures by maximising the availability of staff and improving customer service.

The Flexi-time scheme allows for a flexible system of attendance to help employees manage their daily hours of work to suit their workload and home life. The objective of the scheme is to:

- enable the Council to better meet the needs of our communities,
- allow for greater flexibility in the management of working time,
- achieve a better balance between work and home life,
- support the health and wellbeing of employees

which by extension, reduce absenteeism, increase productivity and enhance employee engagement and loyalty.

Definition of terms

In describing the flexi-time scheme a number of terms are used which may be unfamiliar to employees. To avoid confusion over their meaning the most common terms are explained as follows:

- **Core Hours** - The hours of the working day that employees must be present and available to work. This scheme does not prescribe set core hours as there is an expectation that Core Hours will vary based on the business needs of each service area. Under this scheme, Core Hours will be agreed by individual Service Managers for their respective teams.
- **Bandwidth** - The bandwidth sets out the potential time that an employee can work ranging from the earliest time anyone can start through the latest possible finishing time. Under this scheme there is no set band width, however, employees are to be mindful of working within their teams' Core Hours and balancing their own health and wellbeing.
- **Public opening times** - The times during which most offices will be operational, team cover must be maintained during this period. Under this scheme Normal Office Hours are between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm.
- **Accounting period** - The period at the end of which it is necessary to assess how many hours were worked compared with the actual hours. Flexi-time can be accrued and taken in the same accounting period.
- **Standard hours** – This is the total number of hours each employee is contracted to work each week. Standard office hours for most of the authority are 8.30 am to 5.00 pm.
- **Credit hours** - Credit hours are those which arise from the employee having worked more hours at the end of the accounting period than is standard. Credit hours of more than 8 (pro rata) at the end of the accounting period will be lost.
- **Debit hours** - Debit hours are those which arise from the employee having worked less hours at the end of the accounting period than standard hours. The maximum debit hours that you can have at the end of an accounting period is 8 (pro rata).
- **Carry over balance** - The scheme allows employees to work more or less than the contracted hours in an accounting period. Where this occurs, provision is made for the difference to be adjusted in the following period. Under this scheme the number of credit hours that can be carried over to the next settlement period is 8 hours and the number of debit hours is 8. This will be on a pro rata basis for part time employees.

- **Recording systems** – For the majority of employees, hours worked are recorded in the flexi tracker via their Employee Self Service (ESS) Account, the tracker shows credit and debit hours and is used to record working hours, it also enables managers to monitor how many hours over/under the standard working week an employee has worked. Employees are responsible for updating and maintaining their ESS Account to reflect their hours worked each day.
- **Business absence** – This is applicable to employees whose work takes them away from the office on Council business, employees should make their manager aware of their location and commitments including perceived times of departure and arrival. Employees are responsible for ensuring this time is recorded accurately.

Application of the scheme

The success of the Flexi-time scheme depends on trust, common sense and the goodwill of both employees and managers. Employees are expected to plan their times of work around business needs as well as their personal workload and the patterns of work of colleagues to ensure office cover and the delivery of services. Managers should agree minimum staffing levels, and the process for agreeing time off and 'normal' working hours for employees so that cover is always maintained.

Constraints of the Flexi-time scheme

Although flexi-time will bring benefits to the employee, time off may be refused by managers if minimum staffing levels are not met. Employees should, where possible give reasonable notice of intent to take flexi-time. Flexi-time is intended to support the needs of the organisation and assist with work/life balance for employees, it is not intended to be used as a mechanism for accruing additional leave. The flexibility of the scheme allows employees to manage peaks and troughs of workload and it is not expected that employees will regularly work the full bandwidth. Employees are expected to be mindful of their own wellbeing and not regularly work excessive hours. In addition, managers will regularly monitor their team's flexi and annual leave tracker in order to ensure that excessive amounts of debit and credits are not accrued and that optimum productivity is achieved. Flexi-time should only be accrued where employees are required to work longer hours as a result of heavy workload.

Flexi-time is not a mechanism to amend working patterns. Adjustments to hours of work may be granted by management on an ad hoc basis, however requests to alter working patterns either permanently or on a fixed term basis should be done via the Flexible Working Policy.

Breaks

Upholding the principles of the Working Time Directive (1998), employees should take a break when working more than six hours. A minimum break of 30 minutes should be taken approximately mid-way through the working day and not at the beginning or end of the working day, subject to business needs.

Each employee must record their arrival and departure times and all breaks from work in their flexi-tracker in their ESS Account.

Religious Observances

Managers should, where operationally possible, assist employees to meet their religious observances. This consideration should be taken in line with annual leave and/or flexi-leave for specific days but should also be considered for any daily religious observances. Any break from work must be recorded in the flexi tracker located in each employee's ESS Account.

Standard Working Week

The standard working week for full time employees is 37 hours, for part-time employees it is their weekly part-time hours. Employees can work in excess of these hours where there is a business need, however due regard must be taken of the Working Time Regulations which sets a maximum working week of 48 hours averaged over a 17-week period. Employees can work in excess of 48 hours where there is the business need, however they must 'opt out' of the Working Time Regulations by signing a waiver. Employees must ensure that an 11-hour break from work is taken each day, in accordance with the Working Time Regulations.

Employees can work less than their standard working week where business needs allow, however employees are required to manage their time appropriately to avoid large fluctuations in credit and debit hours.

Using your Flexi-Time Balance

Flexi-time is primarily designed to allow employees to balance work and home life commitments and address business needs. Where an employee has accrued credit time, they may wish to take it back as flexi-leave. Flexi-time must be approved by line managers and where possible be pre-booked, however there may be occasions where emergency leave may need to be taken.

The maximum amount of flexi-time that can be taken in any four week period is 8 hours, which can be taken as half days or a full day providing it does not exceed 8 hours.

Flexi-time can only be taken where an employee will not exceed 8 hours' debit and will usually be agreed in-line with business needs.

Flexi-time must be booked and recorded through the employee's ESS account,

Phased Return

Employees on an agreed phased return to work following a period of long term absence should only claim their standard working hours during their phased return (as actual hours worked and the top-up to contracted hours). In the event that an employee works more than the agreed hours during the phased return period, they will not be able to claim these 'additional' hours as flexi time as they are already being paid full working hours.

Travelling Time

Where an employee spends part of a day on site and either travels directly from home to site or directly from site to home, the time recorded should take in to account the employee's normal commute (the time which the employee would have spent travelling between their home and the office); employees should always deduct their normal home to work travelling time.

Employees attending external training/seminars/conferences or meetings away from their base will be given a credit for the hours attended including *additional* travelling time; employees should always deduct their normal home to work travelling time.

Managers Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate cover at all times in locations where the Flexible Working Hours Scheme operates, setting out expectations of cover and the process for requesting flexi-time. Managers are also responsible for the correct implementation of the scheme and should carry out random audits on the employees' time recording system. In order to comply with the Working Time Regulations 1998, Managers

should also monitor working hours in line with this piece of legislation. Managers should always consider these Regulations when asking employees to work longer hours and agreeing flexi-leave.

Misuse of the scheme

Employees using the flexi time scheme must ensure that any time recordings are accurately entered. Suspected misuse of the scheme will be investigated in accords with the Disciplinary Policy.

Opting-out of Flexi Time

It is recognised that not all employees will want to work under the provisions set out in the Flexi Time Policy and would prefer to manage their daily hours of work to suit their workload and home life without needing to record their working hours or accrue time. If an employee opts-out of the Flexi Time Scheme then they would be unable to utilise the provisions of the scheme such as taking flexi-leave, unless they had formally opted back into the scheme. In these circumstances each employee is able to opt-out of the scheme via their ESS account. This is located until the Employment tab and can be found via the Questionnaire section, *Flexi-Time Opt-Out*.

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Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes/Changes
V1.1	01/09/2016	Human Resources	New policy
v.1.2	01/01/2017	Human Resources	Click to enter text
V1.3	01/10/2017	Human Resources	Policy update
v.2	25/03/2020	Human Resources	Version control added

V 3	03/02/2022	Luke Butcher	Policy update following new normal
V3.1	16/08/2022	Kevin Howells	New Policy Agreed by Cabinet Member following trade union and stakeholder comments.
e.g. V1	Click to enter date.	Click to enter text	Click to enter text
e.g. V1	Click to enter date.	Click to enter text	Click to enter text
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