



## Flexi Time Scheme

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## **1. Introduction to the Flexi Scheme**

The Council has a flexi time scheme available in many of its locations. The aims of the scheme are to improve service delivery, to respond to operational needs within each Department and to give flexibility to employees in planning their pattern of work. This scheme is not a condition of service but is a facility that is afforded to as many employees as possible. However due to the nature of their post, not all can participate as availability depends on operational requirements and management discretion.

One of the main objectives of the scheme is to provide employees with a degree of flexibility to their start and finish times. This will help them achieve a work and life balance to deal with, for example, travel difficulties at peak times or dealing with family/personal matters.

For the avoidance of doubt however, the scheme is not in place to give employees simply the option to be present for longer hours with the aim of subsequently taking flexi leave. Managers are justified to question why an employee is working longer hours without the necessary additional workload or approaching deadlines.

To vary start and finish times, take a part day absence or flexi leave day, prior approval must always be obtained as there is no automatic right because Managers must consider the operational requirements and minimum staffing levels before agreeing to a request.

## **2. Scheme Principles**

Everyone participating in the scheme must understand and observe the following principles:

- The need to maintain standards of service delivery and efficiency during the normal working day, especially at public contact points, help lines and reception areas;
- To comply with the rules and meet the obligations of the scheme as well as enjoying the advantages;
- To consider the impact of flexible working on service delivery, team working and colleagues;
- To ensure that employees do not accumulate credits at times of the permitted working day when there is no need, justification or added value.

The successful operation of a flexi scheme is based to some extent on trust and a degree of 'give and take' between the manager and their employee through how they operate the scheme. Both parties must ensure however that they follow the above scheme principles in doing so and take due account of their respective responsibilities below.

## **3. Scope and Exclusion from the Scheme**

The scheme is an employee benefit, it is not a term or condition of service. There are areas of the Council where the scheme cannot operate due to service delivery requirements.

Certain work patterns are incompatible with the scheme (start time before 8am or finish after 6pm).

There may be situations where it is considered that an individual employee, who otherwise could participate in the flexi scheme, is removed from it. If this is due to service delivery issues, the manager should discuss this with the employee in advance and ensure all possible alternatives have been explored before this action is taken. If the issue is related to conduct, this should be done on a formal basis through the [Discipline Procedures](#).

Temporary removal from the scheme may also be considered in consultation with the appropriate HR Business Partner. This could occur, for example, due to an employee having a debit balance in excess of 7 hours 10 minutes for 2 consecutive accounting periods and failing to rectify it.

#### 4. Scheme Rules and Conditions

These are the basic rules under which the flexi scheme operates for everyone.

<p><b>Permitted Working Day</b></p>	<p>This is the earliest start and latest finish time during which employees can accumulate time credits.</p> <p>There is no 'core time' within the bandwidths.</p> <p><b>8am to 6pm</b></p>
<p><b>Normal Working Day</b></p>	<p>Although the scheme allows a degree of flexibility in the working day, employees should refer to their contract of employment which clearly states contracted hours.</p> <p>The normal working day is the part of the day that the Council must provide a service to its customers and there is an expectation that employees with access to the flexi scheme will ensure that their workplace is adequately covered during these hours, and especially during the lunch period.</p> <p><b>Monday to Thursday: 08:45 – 16:45 (50 minute lunch break)</b>  <b>Friday: 8:45 – 15:55 (50 minute lunch break)</b></p> <p>(pro-rated for part-time)</p>
<p><b>Notional Working Day</b></p>	<p>The number of hours normally worked on a specified day (pro-rated for part-time)</p> <p><b>Monday to Thursday: 7 hours 10 minutes</b>  <b>Friday: 6 hours 20 minutes</b></p>
<p><b>Accounting Period</b></p>	<p>The period over which the actual hours worked are compared with contracted hours in order to calculate credit or debit balances.</p> <p>The accounting period covers <b>4 calendar weeks</b> and has 140 contracted hours (4 x 35 hours, based on 35 hours per week).</p> <p>The end of the accounting period is always the Friday before pay day.</p>

	All employees should be on target to meet their 140 contracted hours (pro-rated for part-time employees) by the end of each accounting period.
<b>Flexi Credit</b>	<p>A flexi credit is the extra hours and minutes that have been worked over and above the contracted daily hours.</p> <p>The maximum balance that can be carried over at the end of each accounting period is <b>15 hours</b> (pro-rated for part time employees).</p>
<b>Flexi Debit</b>	<p>A flexi debit shows the deficit of hours that are needed to reach the contracted hours before the end of the accounting period.</p> <p>The maximum debit that can be carried over into the next accounting period is <b>7 hours 10 minutes</b> (pro-rate for part time)</p> <p><b>Flexi debit is</b> pro-rated for part time employees e.g. if someone works 17.5 hours the maximum debit balance is 3 hours 35 minutes.</p> <p>Where the debit balance has been in excess of 7 hours 10 minutes employees must be warned of the consequences of a further excess debit balance being generated at the end of the next accounting period without due reason. Any employee who has a debit balance in excess of 7 hours 10 minutes at the end of 2 consecutive accounting periods risk their exclusion from the scheme. The two exceptions to this rule relate to <a href="#">carers</a> and <a href="#">religious observance</a>.</p>
<b>Lunch Break</b>	Employees working more than 6 hours per day must take a break of <b>30 minutes</b> .
<b>Flexi Time</b>	When an employee wishes to vary their start or finish time by approximately 1 hour either side (i.e. come in a bit later or leave early and still work the majority of the working day).
<b>Flexi Leave</b>	<p>Employees can take a maximum of <b>one day flexi leave per accounting period</b> (maximum of 13 in a calendar year).</p> <p>This should not be viewed as an entitlement to be worked towards but as an allowed adjustment where a time credit has been created as an outcome of additional work demands.</p> <p>Managers are justified to question why an employee is working longer hours without the necessary additional workload or approaching deadlines.</p> <p>Flexi leave should not be granted if it takes the employee into a negative balance.</p>
<b>Flexi Leave (Part-Time or Irregular Work Pattern)</b>	<p>The maximum of 13 days per year should be actioned on a pro-rata basis for employees who work part-time or have an irregular work pattern e.g. compressed hours.</p> <p>Example 1: An employee who works 3 full days per week can take 3/5ths of 13 days (<math>13 \div 5 \times 3 = 7.8</math>, round up to 8 days).</p>

	<p>Example 2: A full time employee who compresses their hours into 4 days, i.e. 8.75 hours per day. Based on the average notional day of 7 hours, they have a 'pot' of 91 hours flexi leave per year (<math>13 \text{ days} \times 7 \text{ average hours per day} = 91</math>) that can be used to take full days off.</p>
<b>Part Day Absence</b>	<p>Although there is no core time, there is a requirement to work a minimum of <b>3 hours per day</b>. These hours can be worked at any time during the permitted working day.</p> <p>If a minimum of 3 hours are worked and the employee is absent for the remainder of a day, this is a part day absence which must be done with prior approval with the line manager.</p> <p>Part day absences do not count towards the one day of flexi leave permitted per accounting period.</p>
<b>Half Day Flexi</b>	<p>Half day absences will be recorded as:</p> <p><b>Monday to Thursday: 3 hours 35 minutes</b>  <b>Friday: 3 hours 10 minutes</b></p> <p>A half day flexi leave will count towards the 1 day flexi leave per accounting period.</p>
<b>Making Corrections</b>	<p>Employees can retrospectively correct bookings made within the current accounting period. If a correction is required for a previous accounting period, the employee's manager needs to do this on MSS.</p>
<b>Overtime</b>	<p>Overtime is only paid for hours worked outside of the permitted working day. <b>If employees are working overtime, they must book out of the flexi system</b> at the agreed time. Employees should not be paid enhanced overtime rates and granted flexi simultaneously.</p>
<b>Public Holidays</b>	<p>Public holidays are programmed into the system and no further action will be required. Where employees are required to work on a public holiday they must not book in or out on that day.</p>
<b>Carry Over at End of Accounting Period</b>	<p>The maximum credit that can be carried over is <b>15 hours</b>. Employees who have credit in excess of this at the end of the accounting period will have their balance reduced to this. This is pro-rated for part-time employees.</p>
<b>Business Absence</b>	<p>Business absence is not an option in the iTrent flexi system. Working time should be recorded in the usual way.</p>
<b>Special Leave</b>	<p>A notional working day hours should be recorded for special leave taken for – jury/witness service, attending conferences/training, time off to attend funeral service, public duties, election duties, occupational health appointments. Please refer to the Council's <a href="#">Special Leave Policy</a> for other types of leave.</p>

<b>Doctor/Dentist/Optician Appointments</b>	Appointments such as doctor or dental appointments should be made in the employee's own time with no credit given. Where appointments cannot be made outside working hours, the employee's own flexi-time or leave should be used.
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## 5. Special Circumstances

### 5.1 Carers

Employees may request an additional flexi leave day in an accounting period to undertake significant caring responsibilities and family emergencies as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the [Carers Policy](#). This is subject to a maximum of 15 flexi leave days per year (pro-rated for part-time).

In exceptional circumstances only, where an employee has caring responsibilities that require additional flexibility for a short period, the manager can authorise for the employee to exceed the maximum debit balance, with agreement on how the balance should be returned to normal as quickly as reasonably possible.

### 5.2 Religious Observance

To support employees in accommodating observance of religious beliefs, where operationally practicable managers can authorise employees to be credited for work undertaken outside of the normal [permitted working day](#).

Additionally, employees may exceed the maximum debit balance during this period, with advance agreement on how the balance will return to normal as soon as reasonably practical.

### 5.3 December Festive Arrangements

An early closure will normally operate for employees who are normally office-based on the last working day before the public holidays on the 25 December and on 1 January.

For employees working their normal hours on these days, credit will be given when they leave after 14:00 until their normal finishing time (i.e. 16:45 Monday – Thursday, or 15:55 on Friday). Employees should record their time on the flexi system with their normal finishing time.

- Any employee wishing to be on leave for the full day must use one full day of annual leave or flexi leave.
- Any employee wishing to take a half day of flexi-leave or annual leave in the afternoon can do so. No additional credit in respect of the early closure will be given.
- It is not possible to take a half day of flexi-leave or annual leave in the morning and then come into work until 14:00.

Where employees provide a front-line service to the public, these arrangements will be subject to the needs of the service.

HR will issue a notification each December to confirm if the above arrangements apply.

## **6. Responsibilities**

### **6.1 Directors and Heads of Service**

Directors/Heads of Service have overall responsibility for flexi time arrangements of their employees. In order for both the Council and employees to gain the maximum benefits from the scheme, it must be properly managed and administered within departments. It will be most effectively operated if employees' use of flexi is managed through their line manager.

### **6.2 Managers**

Managers must ensure that they follow the above scheme principles and the responsibilities outlined below:

- Ensure employees are trained in the operation of the system and receive appropriate support to participate in the scheme
- Respond to requests promptly
- Ensure there is sufficient cover across the time when considering flexi requests
- Review employee records regularly for accuracy
- Address any concerning levels of credit or debit, arrange for the employee to return to an appropriate balance as soon as possible and advise of the consequences of continually operating with an excessive balance
- Ensure employees are taking appropriate breaks
- Set up a delegate to review and approve requests in their absence e.g. if they are on annual leave. Delegates must be on the same level or above to the manager.

### **6.3 Employees**

Employees must ensure that they follow the above scheme principles and the responsibilities outlined below:

- Make flexi bookings in a timely fashion i.e. at the end of the working day or the start of the next working day
- Ensure appropriate breaks are being taken
- Ensure bookings are accurate and routinely check record to correct any errors/inaccuracies
- Make any requests to use flexi time, flexi leave or part day absences in advance
- Prior to leaving employment of the Council, clear any outstanding credit or debit hours on or before the last day of attendance at work
  - In exceptional circumstances, if it is anticipated that debit hours cannot be cleared then arrangements should be made to recover the debit by deduction from final salary. No payment can be made for any credit hours.

## **7. Monitoring of the Scheme**

It is understood that genuine mistakes will be made over time and in the majority of cases it will be accepted that the employee will have acted in good faith with no attempt to defraud the Council.



However, if evidence is found that shows there is a deliberate attempt to falsify flexi records to the employee's benefit, then the [Discipline Procedures](#) will be applied.

Should a manager repeatedly fail to undertake a basic level of scrutiny and one of their employees is investigated for possible falsification of flexi records then they may also be subject to a disciplinary investigation for their role in not preventing such behaviour.