



## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Flexible Hours Scheme (In association with Agile Working)

Policy owner for review	Head of HR&OD
Date implemented	
Date last reviewed	n/a
Date of last amendment	n/a
Date of next review	

## 1. Introduction

The flexibility required by the organisation to embrace agile working, extend the opening hours of the Council so services can be delivered at times when they are most needed requires a change in how we apply flexible working arrangements.

The priority for the organisation is to ensure that we protect and develop service delivery. This must be the focus of all employees when considering the application of this new flexitime system.

Utilising the increased flexibility will in turn enable employees to work in a more agile way and help staff better combine work and private commitments.

## 2. Aims of the Policy

- **Improve access and quality of provision to the citizen of Flintshire**

The concept of flexible working time is that it is unnecessary for all employees to begin and end work at the same time. This scheme if applied provides more flexibility in service for the benefits of the citizens of Flintshire

- **Enable a flexible approach to work by giving staff more control over their work time**

The scheme should enable the employee to have greater flexibility on how and when they undertake their duties.

## 3. Scope

All employees can implement some degree of flexible working hours. Managers will determine the level of flexibility offered in each area.

## 4. Definition

The underlying concept of flexible-time is that it is unnecessary for all employees to begin and end work at the same fixed times. This scheme if applied provides more flexibility in service delivery for the benefit of our service users. It is also intended to enable employees to have greater flexibility on how and when they undertake their duties. It helps employees to better combine work and private commitments.

## 5. Policy

Flexible working hours are working arrangements that allow employees, in the same team or organisation, to begin and end work at different times. In order to do this, the manager's will agree, in consultation with the team, the extent of flexibility the service can provide to customers and employees. This will include:

- Bandwidths i.e. opening/closing hours
- Office cover periods – including staffing numbers
- Remote working period

Managers have the final decision, as it is their responsibility to ensure the needs of the service are covered. For this reason some service areas will not be able to implement flexi time to its fullest extent.

Managers should consider the following when deciding the level of flexibility offered:

- Meeting service provision and operational requirements including accessibility to external and internal customers/ clients
- Contractual hours of employment being fulfilled
- Personal work objectives and targets being met

In agreeing to exercise flexibility in hours, line managers and employees have a collective obligation to ensure that service delivery is unaffected as a minimum; and where possible flexibility in hours should improve service delivery.

Each line manager has a prime duty to ensure that the work of the section is efficiently carried out to a schedule, making pre-planning arrangements (as necessary) for the attendance of employees, at specific times to ensure the service is delivered effectively.

Employees will need to ensure service provision is always paramount and in consultation with their line manager and team members ensure that adequate cover is provided throughout the working day. Employees have a duty to communicate with their line manager. Flexible working practices will require more communication, planning and organisation than previously needed.

If working remotely, employees have a responsibility to ensure that they access their work stations and must ensure that they are available via the telephone and or email, this includes transferring their phone extension

When working outside of normal office opening hours or at an alternative location, employees must be aware of their own safety and adhere to Health and Safety procedures.

### **Core Hours**

There are no set core hours under this scheme.

Although there are no core times, employees must accrue a minimum of three hours per day and a maximum of eleven hours per day. An excess of 37 hours a week (pro rata for part time) should only be worked when work is available and meets the needs of service users/or the organisation.

### **Bandwidths**

This refers to the earliest start time and latest finish time. There is no set bandwidth under this scheme, however, Individual service managers in consultation with their

teams will determine the service need and staffing levels and therefore any bandwidths for their teams.

### **Settlement Period**

This refers to the period of time, at the end of which a balance needs to be struck by comparing how many hours were actually worked as compared with the contracted hours. In this case, the settlement period is six weeks.

### **Carry Over Hours/Debit Hours**

Employees are able to work more or less hours than their contract hours in a settlement period. The maximum time that can be carried over to the next settlement period will be

**Credit = 16 Hours**

**Debit = 7 Hours**

This rule applies on a pro-rata basis for part time staff.

Any employee with a credit balance in excess of 16 hours at the end of the settlement period will lose any accrued time over and above this maximum.

### **Flexi Leave**

Employees are able to take up to 10 days flexi leave per year (pro-rata for part time employees). Time granted must be in line with management approval in order to meet the needs of the service. The flexi-leave year will start from an employee's birthday. (When you start the scheme you should work out a pro-rata amount of days from the start date of the scheme to your birthday with regards to the 10 days annual flexi allowance).

Where the maximum flexi leave has already been taken or booked, in exceptional circumstances additional flexi leave, can be agreed by the line manager subject to the employee complying with the debit conditions of the flexitime agreement by the end of the next settlement period. Exceptional circumstances will be relevant to each case; however, these arrangements would include adverse weather conditions.

Leave must be authorised in advance. The notice period for leave should generally be twice as long as the leave period requested, for example to take 1 day off, at least 2 days notice should be provided.

Line Managers can refuse the request, -justifiable reasons include

- Needs of the service cannot be met
- Other absence within the department
- Annual leave takes precedence over flexi leave

### **Working Time Directive**

In line with the Working Time Directive the maximum number of hours worked in a week should not exceed 48 hours (40 hours if under the age of 18). Employees are therefore required to arrange their hours of work having due regard to their workload, responsibilities and the service needs. Employees must have in any 24 hour period a minimum of an 11 hour break.

Employees are required to take a minimum of 20 minutes break after any six consecutive hours worked. These breaks shall not count towards working time.

Breaks may be taken at any time as long as it is in line with service needs and team agreements. Employees can therefore clock in/out as required. However, it is not possible to take the break at the beginning or end of the period worked. If an employee works **up to** 6 hours they are not required to take a break. There is no maximum limit to the duration of any breaks, however the service provision must be paramount and the impact of too many interruptions should be considered

Employees should also be mindful of their own general well being especially in relation to the maximum number of hours per day.

### **Overtime**

Overtime may be paid to employees who are eligible to receive payment in accordance with their conditions of service.

Overtime must, by mutual agreement, be authorized in advance by the line manager and it is necessary for employees to agree with their line manager when overtime starts

### **Medical and Hospital Appointments**

With the increased flexibility that has been given to employees, any appointments made to visit the Doctor, Dentist, Optician or hospital should be arranged during time off, i.e. you must clock out during appointment times and the hours should be made up during the current settlement period.

Employees will however be credited for absences on medical grounds for attending Cancer Screening. For employees on a recognised care plan and undertaking treatment, managers will be able to use their discretion in allowing time off. Further advice is available from HR.

Employees will still remain entitled to time off for antenatal appointments as per the Maternity Entitlements Guidelines.

### **Abuse**

Success of the scheme depends on trust and goodwill. Any employee found to be abusing this scheme will be dealt with in accordance with the Authority's Disciplinary Procedure. Abuse may also result in the withdrawal of the flexi-time benefit to the individual.

Examples that would constitute abuse of working hours include:-

- Deliberate falsification of time keeping records
- Failure to communicate with the line manager
- Unable to demonstrate productivity during working hours
- Persistent accumulation of debit hours in excess of the balance allowed
- Failure to comply with workforce requirements

### **Termination**

Employees leaving the employment of the Council will be required to ensure that they have completed the appropriate number of contractual hours up to the time of their termination of employment. Line managers are expected to help these employees to ensure that they have a nil balance at the time of leaving. If this has not been achieved any hours in debit will be deducted from the employee's final salary

### **Flexible Working Remotely/Outside the Office**

It is a basic principle that employees travel to and from work in their own time. Where days or part days are spent working from home the time to be recorded will be the actual time spent working.

Where an employee spends a day or part of a day at a different location only excess time of travelling can be claimed.

## **6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Flexible Working arrangements will be open to continuous review to ensure these arrangements are working and are enabling the service to be more flexible and meet its aims and objectives.

## **7. Training and Development**

Training and Development will be available for managers and employees, individuals should contact a member of the Learning and Development team. Advice and coaching is also available from Employment Services and the HR Business Partner Team.

## **8. Procedure**

Managers must complete a Flexible Working Scheme for their own team – Please see Appendix 1.

Managers should complete A Flexible Working Team Agreement – please see Appendix 2 – to help facilitate discussion and ensure operational details are agreed in advance of any

Where managers do not think Flexible Working can apply in any form within their team they will need to submit a business case to the Head of Service as to the reasons and rational why flexible working hours cannot be applied.

## **9. Role of the Manager**

It is the Managers responsibility to agree, in consultation with the team, whether or not the service can accommodate the extent of flexibility offered in this scheme.

Managers have the final decision, as it is their responsibility to ensure the needs of the service are covered. For this reason some service areas will not be able to implement flexi time to its fullest extent

Managers should consider the following when deciding whether an employee's role can accommodate flexibility in the times that they work

- Meeting service provision and operational requirements including accessibility to external and internal customers/ clients
- Contractual hours of employment being fulfilled
- Personal work objectives and targets being met

In agreeing to exercise flexibility in hours, line managers and employees have a collective obligation to ensure that service delivery is unaffected as a minimum; and where possible flexibility in hours should improve service delivery.

Each line manager has a prime duty to ensure that the work of the section is efficiently carried out to a schedule, making pre-planning arrangements (as necessary) for the attendance of employees, at specific times to ensure the service is delivered effectively

Managers must ensure that there is effective communication particularly when employees are working on a flexible basis from a remote location

Managers are responsible for administering and managing flexi-time working arrangements within their section

Managers must ensure employees are not abusing the flexi time scheme and are advised to discuss their concerns with the HR if a situation occurs.

## **10. Role of the Employee**

Employees are responsible for ensuring they complete their full contractual hours, and ensure that they have a flexi deficit of no more than 7 hrs.

Employees will need to ensure service provision is always paramount and in consultation with their line manager and team members ensure that adequate cover is provided throughout the working day.

Employees have a duty to communicate with their line manager. Flexible working practices will involve more communication, planning and organisation than previously

If working remotely employees have a responsibility to ensure that they access their work stations and must ensure that they are available via the telephone and or email.

When working outside of normal office opening hours or at an alternative location, employees must be aware of their own safety and adhere to Health and Safety procedures.

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Flexible Working Scheme.

Appendix 2 - A Flexible Working Team Agreement.