

Wiltshire Council Human Resources

Flexitime Policy

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

What is it?

This policy gives guidance on the council's flexitime scheme which enables an employee to vary their start, finish and break times to suit both operational requirements and their individual needs.

Go directly to the section on:

- [Working hours](#)
- [Rules of the flexitime scheme](#)
- [Time recording](#)
- [Breaks](#)
- [Line manager responsibilities](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)

Who is covered by this policy?

All employees – however the flexitime scheme is not an employee right. The availability of the scheme depends on the operational requirements of the business and management discretion.

What are the main points?

Working hours

1. Opening times across the council for public access at hubs and by telephone are 8.30am – 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.
2. Where there is an operational requirement work places must be staffed throughout these opening hours, including lunch times.
3. Departmental working hours may be extended due to operational requirements and this would take precedent over the hours outlined above.
4. Details of the number of hours employees are required to work are contained within their contract of employment.

5. Working patterns should be agreed between the manager and employee and take account of operational requirements both of the service the employee delivers and other services they link into.
6. There are no standard “core hours” during which employee must be in work as these will vary between departments.
7. Where, at management request, hours are worked outside of the flexitime scheme operating hours [time off in lieu](#) rules will apply.

Flexitime rules

8. The flexitime scheme is designed to allow employees to deviate from their agreed working pattern on occasion.
9. Any permanent change of working pattern must be agreed with your manager in advance.
10. As standard the scheme should operate between 7am and 7pm with no core hours. However each department may determine what hours their flexitime scheme operates within and whether core working hours are required. If core hours are required then the flexitime scheme will only operate outside of these hours.
11. Full time staff are required to work 148 hours per four week settlement period, this is pro-rata for part time employees
12. You may carry over a credit of 16 hours per settlement period.
13. If you have enough credit, one day or two half days leave may be taken during the next settlement period.
14. Leave under the flexitime scheme is subject to management consent and you are required to give at least two days notice of your request to take leave.
15. Any credit in excess of 16 hours will be cancelled at the end of the each settlement period.
16. You may carry forward a debit of up to 8 hours per settlement period (pro-rata for part time employees). You must clear these within the next four week settlement period.
17. If you regularly accumulate debit hours in excess of 8 hours you may be subject to the council’s disciplinary procedure.

18. Flexitime is not normally available to staff who work on [annualised hours](#) contracts.

Time recording

19. You are required to record the hours that you work. You should record start and finish times as well as lunch breaks and any other absence for non work related reasons.
20. You will be credited with a standard day's hours when you are absent due to annual leave or sickness
21. If you leave work due to sickness absence after the start of work you should be credited with hours up to your standard hours for that day.
22. You should try to book appointments of a private nature (doctor, dentist, optician etc.) outside of your normal working hours. Where this is not possible managers have the discretion to credit hours.
23. Where your manager requests that you attend a training course as part of your role, which extends beyond your normal working hours, you should agree with your manager in advance of the course how any additional hours should be recorded (e.g. a flexitime, TOIL or overtime).
24. If you undertake a training course for your own development you should record a standard day's hours on your flexi time sheet.
25. Any abuse of the flexitime scheme may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with the council's [disciplinary procedure](#).

Breaks

26. If you work more than 6 hours you are required to take a minimum unpaid break of 30 minutes for lunch which must be recorded on your flexitime sheet.

Line manager responsibilities

27. To agree (usually as part of a wider departmental review) your team's normal working hours.
28. To ensure office cover during the council's normal working hours, including over the lunch period. This may require physical cover in the office or appropriate telephone cover.

29. To agree
- whether it is appropriate to operate a flexitime scheme within your team and who can participate.
 - determine whether “core hours” are operationally necessary and if so ensure your flexitime scheme includes these.
 - ensure that any team/departmental changes to the standard flexitime scheme are documented and that a copy is provided to all employees.

See **manager’s guidance – introducing/changing flexitime for your team.**

30. To ensure that a suitable time recording sheet is given to all employees who are in the flexitime scheme (see **example**).
31. To sign off flexitime sheets at the end of each settlement period and ensure credit and debit rules are observed.
32. To ensure debit hours are cleared and that any excess debit is highlighted with the individual.
33. To prevent abuse of the flexitime scheme.

Frequently Asked Questions

34. **Is it true that I must be in work between 10am and 3.30pm and take lunch between midday and 2pm?**

It depends on the flexitime scheme which is in operation within your team.

If your team operates a flexi scheme with core hours then you will need to attend work during these hours. You may also have specified times when you may go for lunch.

There is no standard flexitime scheme or core hours across the whole council as different departments have different operational requirements.

Your manager will be able to explain the rules of your specific flexitime scheme.

35. **Can you give an example of a flexitime scheme which includes core hours?**

A scheme which includes core hours may state “Normal working hours are 8.30 – 18.00. Core working hours are 10.00 – 15.30.”

This would mean an employee could not arrive later than 10am or leave before 3.30pm.

Core hours should only be included if operationally necessary as they can reduce the effectiveness of the flexitime scheme in achieving work-life balance.

36. I only work 3 days per week – what should I enter on my flexitime sheet for the 2 days I do not work?

It depends on the flexitime recording template you are using.

You either need to ensure that your working week adds up to 37 hours i.e. deduct your contracted hours from 37 and enter the difference on one of the non working days so that if you enter your contracted hours on your working days the total for the week adds up to 37.

Alternatively you need to ensure that your flexi-time sheet takes into account your part time hours so that your total hours for the settlement period equates to four times your normal contracted hours and that any hours over this show as a credit.

37. I work specific hours, agreed with my manager and stated in my contract – can I still do flexitime?

You should speak to your manager. Usually where specific hours have been agreed no flexitime is possible. Any hours worked outside of your normal working hours may be taken as **time off in lieu** if agreed in advance with your manager.

38. What should I enter on my flexi sheet if I am off sick for a day?

If you always work a standard number of hours on a particular day then you should enter this on your timesheet.

If the actual hours you work each day can vary, depending on when you start and finish under the flexi time scheme, you should divide your contracted weekly hours by the number of days you work and enter this on your timesheet. For example if you work 37 hours over 5 days you should enter 7 hours 24 minutes on your timesheet.

39. One of my team keeps accumulating debit hours – what should I do?

An employee should only accumulate a maximum of 8 hours debit each month. This should be cleared by the end of the next settlement period (i.e. they should be neutral or in credit at the end of the next period).

In the first instance the line manager should speak to the employee to understand the reasons for the debit being accumulated and to put in place an action plan for making up the hours. This meeting should be informal but documented.

If the situation continues to occur or is not remedied the line manager should manage the issue in line with the council's disciplinary procedure.

40. **Can I be paid for hours which I am in credit?**

No. The advantage of a flexitime scheme is to enable employees to balance additional hours which they have worked – perhaps during a particularly busy period at work - with additional time off in the next four week settlement period. Paying the hours would undermine the work-life balance impact which the flexitime policy is designed to achieve.

If there is a particular piece of work, approved in advance by the line manager, which has required an employee to work a large number of additional hours they may be paid in line with the council's [overtime policy](#) or taken as time off in lieu.

41. **Can I build up flexi over several months in order to take additional time off for a special occasion?**

No – the flexi time scheme is designed to help ensure good work life balance and it would not be appropriate to work long hours over several months without taking time off.

The [annual leave policy](#) enables employees to bank up to 5 days leave each year for a particular purpose, such as a special trip.

Alternatively you could discuss with your manager the possibility of using unpaid leave to extend your annual leave in exceptional circumstances.

42. **Why am I required to take a 30 minute lunch break if I work over 6 hours.**

Under Working Time Regulations anyone who works for 6 hours or more in a day has the right to a break. Requiring all employees to take at least a 30 minute break meets our requirements for all staff under these regulations and reduces health and safety risks.

Wherever possible it is advised that employees take this break away from their normal work place, in a single block and approximately mid-way through their normal working hours.

43. **I transferred from an ex-district council and the flexitime scheme I was working to had a higher credit or debit entitlement. Will I lose any flexi leave that I have built up which is in excess of the 16 hours allowed under the new policy.**

It has been agreed with the unions that there be a transition period to enable ex-district staff to use up any accrued flexi leave, or to reduce their debit hours down, to come in line with the new policy.

This transition period will run for three months from the effective date of this policy. Employees should discuss with their managers how they should plan this transition period to ensure that by **ADD DATE** they comply with the new flexitime policy.

Are there any exemptions?

The flexitime scheme is not an employee right. Managers must assess the benefits of using a flexitime scheme both for the service and employees and have the right to refuse or stop flexitime if it is operationally unfeasible or being abused.

Definitions

Settlement period The four week period over which you record your hours. At the end of the period you must calculate whether you have worked more or less hours than you are contracted to do. In the next period you may use any credit to have additional time off, or you must work extra hours to clear any debit.

Core hours Core hours ensure that employees are in the office by a certain time and do not leave before a certain time. They should only be included in the flexitime scheme if they are operationally necessary.

Further advice

Related policies and documents:

- Flexible working policy
- Example flexitime scheme
- Example flexitime time recording sheet
- Disciplinary policy

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, service director or contact a member of your human resources advisory team.

Policy author	HR Policy and Reward Team – (PM)
Policy updated and implemented	