

Flexitime Policy

Policy Statement

The Council is committed to the promotion of a healthy work-life balance for all staff and welcomes the contribution that a degree of flexibility in working arrangements can make. The operation of a flexitime scheme can also enable employees to work in a more effective way and assist in more efficiently meeting the needs of a service, which can be significantly beneficial to their service area and to the Council as a whole.

The aim of this policy is to ensure a fair and consistent application of the scheme across the Council subject to service requirements and that the flexibilities allowed by the Scheme will be of mutual benefit to both the Council and its employees.

Principles

Flexible working hours is a concept designed to replace arrangements where staff start and finish work at fixed times, with a system which allows each individual a degree of freedom in choosing his or her time of arrival or departure.

Under this scheme, it allows employees some discretion in arranging their working time. However sufficient cover within a section must be maintained as agreed with their Manager and provided the needs of the service are met as determined by management.

Scope

Flexitime arrangements will apply as far as practicable to all council staff however it is acknowledged that some may be excluded owing to the nature of their duties and the requirements of the service are that they work in.

It is easier to be more flexible with some staff than others due to the differing nature of duties across the Council and Managers will need to be mindful of the needs of the service when managing the times staff work and when considering any flexi-leave requests under the scheme.

The services provided by each service area must not be compromised to accommodate the flexitime scheme. Service areas participating in the flexitime scheme shall be responsible for adapting it to fit their operational needs with the approval of the relevant Head of Service.

Supporting Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- Leave and Work Life Balance Policy
- Flexible Working and Work Life Balance Policy
- Training Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

Responsibilities

Employees

It is the responsibility of Employees to manage their flexitime credits and debits within the prescribed limits and also manage their time effectively so that they only accrue flexitime in consideration of the needs of the service.

Employees are expected to co-operate with their service area and to be flexible in ensuring that any minimum staffing levels required are maintained during the normal working day, including lunch times and other breaks.

Managers

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure that flexitime is only being accrued in order to meet the needs of the service.

Managers are responsible for ensuring the correct operation of the flexitime scheme in their section and for resolving any related issues as detailed in the policy.

Operation of the Scheme

All working time will be recorded by the use of equipment operated by a swipe or proximity card or by logging on at the desk top.

All staff will be expected to use the clocking system for time recording and fire/roll call purposes although not all employees will be on a flexi-time contract and may work fixed hours instead.

Each employee should 'swipe in' on arrival, and 'swipe out' on departure each day including lunchtime. This is important as the system is used for fire evacuation procedures. In the event of evacuating the building the information recorded on the flexi system will be passed to the caretaker's mobile and to the Duty Fire Officer who will instigate a roll call.

For the Fire Evacuation Procedures to work effectively all employees need to get into the habit of swiping in and out of the building every time they leave and enter.

Employees must also be mindful of the limits of the working time directive and not work over 48 hours per week.

The length of a lunch break is variable but must be a minimum of 30 minutes if working hours are over 6 per day.

Employees who do not swipe during lunchtime will automatically be deducted 30 minutes by the system, but should more than 30 minutes be taken without swiping they will need to submit an adjustment to show the extra time taken.

Employees who have swiped in but forget to swipe out will not receive any credit for that day. An adjustment will need to be completed for any time worked.

Civic Centre

Normal Office hours are 08:30 to 17:00

- Earliest start 07:15
- Latest finish 19:00

- Lunch break to be taken between 11:00 to 15:00
- At the end of the day the system will allow you to swipe out after 19:00 until 19:15 to enable the system to register your swipe out-(but will record you out at 19:00)

Copse Road

Normal working hours vary depending on the role undertaken.

- Earliest start 05:00
- Latest finish 19:00
- Lunch break to be taken between 10:00 to 14:30

Marine Hall/Thornton Little Theatre

Working hours vary considerably depending on events/shows taking place.

Start and finish times are very much dependent on the events taking place at each venue.

Credit/Debit Flexitime Hours

Eligible employees who work hours in excess of their contracted hours accrue “credit” flexitime hours. Any hours where employees fall short of their contracted hours are referred to as “debit” flexitime hours. Employees can use accrued credit hours to request time off work in the same way that they would request annual leave.

The settlement period over which working hours are calculated is four weeks i.e. 148 hours for full time, pro rata for part time. You must work your contracted hours during the settlement period.

These periods are pre-determined and listed next to the recording equipment are available on the Intranet. Each employee must account for his or her contracted hours within the 4 weeks period, subject to the carry-over allowance.

Hours built up during a settlement period may be carried over into the next settlement period, up to a maximum of 14 hours 48 minutes (pro rata for part-time employees). Any credit in excess of 14 hours 48 minutes will be forfeited (pro rata for part-time employees). It is therefore imperative you manage your flexi accordingly. Similarly hours in debit may be carried forward but they must not exceed 7 hours 24 minutes at any time during the settlement period, (pro rata for part-time employees). Part Time staff who are unsure what their carry-over allowance should be can contact Human Resources.

Credit hours should only be accrued where there is a genuine need for tasks to be completed at work.

Staff with debit flexitime hours on termination of employment will have these hours charged against outstanding annual leave or, if there is no leave outstanding, will have their final pay adjusted to cover the deficit. Staff with an excess of flexitime hours on termination will be required to take these hours as flexitime prior to termination of employment. In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to take the time owed it will be paid at single time rate with their final pay.

Managers are responsible for monitoring the amount of credit and debit hours for the staff in their section. Where employees look likely to exceed the maximum amount of credit/debit hours allowable under the scheme, managers should ensure that this is discussed with the employee concerned to establish why this is the case, with the aim of assisting them to manage their working pattern.

Flexi Leave

In addition to the flexibility with start and finish times flexitime may allow for additional flexi leave days to be taken from credit hours.

The maximum number of flexi days that can be taken each settlement period is 2 days (pro rata for part-time employees) subject to Manager's approval.

However, in exceptional circumstances due to the demands of the service this can be increased to 3 days at the discretion of the Head of Service. It is not anticipated that the need to increase to 3 days would occur on a regular basis.

Recording Flexitime in Special Circumstances

Where an employee starts or finishes their working day at a location which is not their usual base of work, they should ensure that their actual start/finish times are added to the flexi system at the first available opportunity excluding the time it normally takes to travel home to office or office to home.

Adjustments for the time spent outside the office on official business, should include travelling time between the office and the other place of business, subject to a maximum adjustment of 11 hours 15 minutes per day. If travelling from home and back to place of business or event, deduct the time that it normally takes to travel from home to office and back.

Adjustments for attending agreed seminars, conferences and externally organised training events should be dealt with in the same way.

When attending approved 'College' day release (including day/evening class) the maximum adjustment is your standard hours for that day. Employees who leave the office for 'college' during the course of the day and are absent for the remainder of the day should swipe in/out as normal and submit an adjustment for the difference up to a maximum of their normal standard hours for that day.

Staff who assist with election duties for Wyre during their normal working day will be able to claim back time up to their normal working hours for that day. Credit will not be given for duties outside of the normal working day such as the Poll Officer/Presiding Officer training and the count. Nor will time be given for any election duties carried out on a normal day off.

Credit will not be given for staff carrying out election duties for another Council.

Any employee working overtime (which has been agreed by their Manager) must have already completed their normal standard hours on the current day, or they must not commence overtime before 17.00. Employees must not swipe out to commence overtime (due to Fire Evacuation Procedures) but should submit a negative adjustment for the hours worked so that they can be deducted off the flexi system.

Under normal circumstances staff will not be credited for time away from work for doctor or dentist appointments.

Where a hospital appointment is necessary (for example where the employee has no control over the timing of the appointment), this will be treated as an authorised absence and the time allowed. Time credited will be from leaving the office to:

- Returning to the office; or
- Leaving hospital if not returning to the office, less lunch break if appropriate
- It should be noted that except in exceptional circumstances time should not exceed 7 hours 24 minutes for the day (or equivalent if part-time).

Suspension of Flexitime Arrangements

In the event that a manager becomes concerned about any aspect of an employee's work performance or health, they may require that the employee works to a standard work pattern or standard contractual hours rather than participating in the flexitime scheme.

This will only apply where the manager has reason to believe that the flexitime pattern of work is contributing to the problem. Some examples of this could be where an employee will not have appropriate support contacts in place at the times they are choosing to work, or where Occupational Health or an employee's GP has advised that longer working days are not appropriate due to an ongoing health condition. Another example could be where the employee is not managing their time effectively and has exceeded the agreed limit of credit or debit hours.

The employee's manager should arrange to discuss any difficulties with the employee at the earliest available opportunity and an appropriate pattern of work will be agreed between them. This may be applied on either a temporary or permanent basis, dependent on the circumstances.

Cards

Each card is unique and will only access the record of the individual concerned. In no circumstances should an employee attempt to swipe in or out with another employee's card or allow anyone else to use their card. This could result in disciplinary action being taken against those involved.

The swipe card will be the property of Wyre Council and its safety will be the responsibility of the employee to whom it is issued.

In addition to operation of the flexi system the card will also act as an Identification Card. It provides access to the security doors in the Civic Centre and is used to activate the printers/photocopiers.

Lost cards are a security risk and should be reported immediately to IT who will cancel the card and issue a replacement. (Please see information on the Intranet regarding staff passes).

Charges may be imposed on staff who repeatedly lose cards and require replacements.

Abuse of the Scheme

Abuse of the scheme may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual concerned and any employee who has knowingly sanctioned such abuse. Also deduction of pay, where appropriate and removal from the scheme may be considered.

The use of a card issued to another officer is not permissible under any circumstances. Any such abuse will be considered as Gross Misconduct under the Council's Disciplinary Procedures, and could lead to the Employee's dismissal.

Under no circumstances should an Employee upon arriving at work during the course of the day leave his/her vehicle or bicycle in an unauthorised area merely to 'swipe in', and then return to the vehicle to park or store their bike before commencing work.

It is expected that when staff swipe in or log themselves at work through their desk top that they are ready to start work.

Equality Impact Assessment and Monitoring

The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different staff groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the Council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

Data Protection Act 1998

In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.