



FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME

1. Introduction to the Scheme

1.1 This document has been revised to reflect changes to the Flexible Working Hours Scheme and is effective from 1 January 2009. It replaces existing policy.

1.2 In drawing up this scheme the basic provisions of the Working Time Directive have been incorporated and all managers and employees will operate this scheme within the provisions of this Directive.

1.3 The opportunity to work flexible working hours is a benefit, which will be afforded to as many employees as is possible. The Scheme should be applied to part time staff on a pro-rata basis.

1.4 Heads of Service will be responsible for monitoring and controlling the flexitime of their employees. The provision of public services will remain as a paramount priority and emphasis will be laid on achievement of standards and service delivery. Adequate staffing to provide services will be the fundamental principle of this responsibility and service provision should not suffer because of flexible working hours.

1.5 The scheme will continue to operate on the basis of timesheets to record working hours.

1.6 The operation of this scheme will be founded largely on the trust and responsibilities of all employees in order to make it work.

2. Definitions

2.1 Official Office Hours

The hours during which the Council Offices are open to the public are Monday to Friday 9:00 to 17.00. The office hours will be subject to review and may be changed in line with changing service requirements.

2.2 Contracted Hours of Employment

All employees are issued with a Contract of Employment that stipulates their working hours. A full-time employee will work on 37 hours per week under national conditions of service. This gives a standard working day of 7 hours and 24 minutes (7.4 decimal) and a half working day will be 3 hours 42 minutes (3.7 decimal).

2.3 Flexible Hours

2.5 Core Times

There will be no core times however employees will be expected to normally work their hours between 07:00 and 18:00 and attend evening meetings as required. Heads of Service may agree employees' working hours subject to the exigencies of the service in a fair and equitable manner. Staff may work outside these hours where there is no detrimental impact on performance and the working time directive and health and safety legislation is not breached.

It is expected that cover will be maintained where appropriate during normal office hours. (9:00 to 17:00)

Requests for flexible working hours will be sympathetically considered in line with current legislation. (Advice to be sought from the HR Section.)

The needs of the service are paramount and working hours must be practical and effective in terms of the provision of service.

2.6 Lunch Breaks

For all employees whose working day is longer than 6 hours the minimum lunch break period will be 30 minutes.. No member of staff should work longer than 6 hours without a break.

Under the working time regulations 1998 Employees under 18 years of age must not work more than 4.5 hours without a 30 minute break

3. Method of Operation

3.1 Time Recording

Under the flexible working hours scheme employees must record the number of hours they work during each accounting period. The timesheets should be completed daily and printed off each month for authorisation by the appropriate Manager.

3.2 Accounting period and settlement period

The accounting and settlement period, "the flexi period", is a four-week period during which staff will complete a time recording sheet.

3.3 Carry over time

Carry over credit

Time in credit can be carried over for up to a maximum of 11 hours per flexi period. This will be pro-rata for part time staff.

Hours in credit may be taken as a full day (this will be pro-rata for part time staff) or shorter working hours if the service needs can accommodate (the Managers view will prevail if there is disagreement on service needs). Where an employee has accrued excess credit hours during the flexi period this should not be paid as overtime. This would constitute overtime paid without the prior approval of the Head of Service.

In exceptional circumstances the Head of Service may approve an increase in the hours carried forward so long as the balance is taken during the next flex period or exceptionally another practical arrangement is agreed with the Head of Service.

Carry over deficit

For those with a deficit at the end of each flex period the maximum deficit which can be carried forward will be 5 hours (pro-rata for part time staff). Employees will be expected to make good that deficit as far as possible during the following month. Where this is not possible on the part of an individual employee, a decision must be reached in conjunction with the Head of Service as to whether this will be converted and counted as annual or unpaid leave.

3.4. Overtime

All overtime must be agreed in advance with the Head of Service and must be in accordance with the Working Arrangements – Overtime Policy. Hours claimed as overtime must not be recorded on the flex system or double counting may occur.

The option to take hours as flexitime is also available in line with the Working Arrangements – Overtime policy. For employees who attend evening meetings the additional hours can be counted as overtime or as time off in lieu by agreement with the Head of Service. Staff who regularly attend evening meetings may have a contract that counts those hours as part of the normal working week. If this is the case time off in lieu should be taken during the period to ensure a normal 37 hours per week is worked on average.

Heads of Service will not claim overtime unless there are exceptional circumstances and the approval of the Corporate Director/ Chief Executive is obtained.

3.5 Absence and Travel Time

3.5.1 Time off for sickness, annual leave, compassionate leave, or any other leave authorised through the Council's Leave of Absence Policy will be credited on the basis of the standard working day. This will be 7 hours and 24 minutes for a full day. Pro-rata for part-time employees.

3.5.2 Employees who arrive late or leave early because of sickness will be credited with the appropriate number of hours to make up their normal working day of 7.24 hours (pro-rata for part time staff).

3.5.3 Time off for travel and attending business meetings will be allowed up to a maximum amount of time between 0700 and 1800 hours, subject to a 30 minute lunch break, i.e. maximum 10.5 hours which represents the extent of the flexible hours day minus the minimum half hour lunch break. If less time is worked, or any more lunch taken, then the appropriate time must be recorded. Travelling time for evening meetings will be allowed after 18:00 where required. Excess travel time home to work and vice versa to different locations in Melton Mowbray are not claimable.

Employees who home work for part of a day must ensure home to work and work to home travel time is deducted from working hours.

3.5.4 Time off in connection with attending post entry training will be recorded as a standard day, i.e. 7.24 hours.

3.5.5 Time off in connection with attending seminars relevant to the post currently held by the individual will be recorded as a standard day, i.e. 7.24 hours.

3.5.6 Overtime payments will not be appropriate in any of the above circumstances except where the working arrangements – overtime policy allows.

3.6 Special Conditions

Special leave approved by the Corporate Director/ Chief Executive will be counted as per paragraph 3.5.1 above.

Visits to the Doctor and Dentist will be deducted from flex balances. Employees may choose to take annual or unpaid leave rather than flex. Some doctors appointments attract paid time off- see Leave of Absence procedure.

Hospital appointments, when referred by an employee's GP and appointments for cancer screening, may be credited between 7:00 and 18:00 where it is not possible to make appointments outside working hours. Time

may be credited to make up to a maximum of 7:24 hours (pro-rata for part time staff.) per day.

If a member of staff leaves the scheme, either due to terminating their contract with Melton Borough Council or a change in duties then staff must ensure that hours in credit or debit are reduced to zero.

Any abuse of the scheme by dishonesty or deliberate non co-operation may lead to disciplinary action. Abuse of the scheme as above will usually result in the employee reverting to set working hours.

AT/22.11. 05.

Revised December 2008