

DRAFT

FLEXI-SCHEME

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Epping Forest
District Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of the Scheme is to provide flexibility in working arrangements for both managers and employees. The Scheme enables managers and employees to manage workload peaks and troughs. Hours worked in addition to an employee's core hours must be agreed by the manager to ensure that service demand is being met and there is work to be completed. The Scheme is not to be used by employees to build up hours just for the purpose of flexi leave; there must be a service requirement. This includes agreement on start and finish times.
- 1.2 Additional hours will be worked in accordance with service requirements and at the discretion of the manager.
- 1.3 Assistant Directors/Line Managers have the discretion to decide whether the Flexi Scheme would apply to a role taking account of service requirements. They and line managers will have discretion on how some elements of the scheme will apply depending on service requirements. Therefore different arrangements may be in place across the Council from time to time.
- 1.4 All employees, regardless of whether they are on the scheme or not, must use the electronic Time Recording Sheet, however, if they do not have access to a computer a paper form will be satisfactory. All flexi-leave must be in agreement with managers and must be shown on the time recording sheet.
- 1.5 Employees who work 'flexibly' may still participate in the Flexi Scheme and will be subject to all its requirements. However, their arrangements may mean the Scheme is not appropriate; in any event a discussion will take place between the manager and employee to agree any working arrangements.
- 1.6 The provision of cover is a joint responsibility of both management and employees. The workplace must be staffed throughout normal working hours (including lunch time) in order to maintain service cover.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy covers all employees except Craft Workers, Grounds Maintenance Operatives, those who are employed to cover specific time periods and those who work on a shift/rota system basis. Other staff may also opt out of the Scheme in agreement with their line manager and an alternative recording/ working arrangement put in place. Part-time employees, including job sharers can be included in the scheme, subject to the needs of the service.
- 2.2 Where a service to the public is offered it must be accepted that the provision of cover is a joint responsibility between staff and management. With this in mind, employees participating in the scheme may have certain restrictions imposed on the operation of flexible working in order to facilitate the delivery of service. The manager will make the decision on how the scheme will be applied.

3. Application of the Flexi-scheme

3.1 The Working Day

- 3.1.1 Core hours are the time periods when all employees must be at work. For full time staff the core hours are 5 hours to be worked in agreement with the line manager, see paragraph 3.2.1.
- 3.1.2 For part time workers the number of core hours will be determined by their line managers which will be dependent on the number of hours worked, the requirements of the team and service.

3.2 Length of Day

- 3.2.1 Attendance at work may be from 7.30am to 7pm Monday to Sunday. Attendance may depend on access to the workplace being possible and if the manager has agreed there is work to be done. The line manager has the discretion to determine the normal, permanent start/finish times for employees on the grounds of service delivery and taking into account the requirements of the team.
- 3.2.2 Employees cannot start work earlier than their normal working time unless agreed by their line manager who will base their decision on the circumstances of the request, availability of work to be done and service delivery requirements.
- 3.2.3 Employees cannot leave the workplace before their normal finish time without the permission of their line manager.
- 3.2.4 Refer to section 13 for information regarding attending evening meetings.

3.3 Lunches

- 3.3.1 A maximum of two hours, in between the hours of 11.30am to 2.30pm, may be taken for lunch and a minimum of half an hour must be taken. If employees are taking a long lunch break (i.e. between 1 to 2 hours), they are required to agree this with their Manager in advance. Meal breaks are unpaid and a break of an half an hour must be taken after a period of 6 hours of continuous working.
- 3.3.2 The workplace must be staffed throughout lunch time, to a level prescribed by the manager, in order to maintain service cover.

3.4 Smoking/Other Breaks

- 3.4.1 Employees taking smoking or other breaks during work time will record the time taken on the time recording sheet, using the deduction column, and they will be required to make up any time taken.

3.5 Working Times

- 3.5.1 It is a condition of the scheme that employees will establish a normal pattern of working within their team and with the agreement of their direct line

manager. In doing this, wherever possible, the manager will take into account individual personal circumstances, subject to effective delivery of the service.

- 3.5.2 Variations to the established working pattern, including working additional hours, must be agreed with the manager, who will take account of the requirements of the service and team. However, employee emergencies and unforeseen occurrences will be dealt with sympathetically and flexibly.

3.6 **Internal Transfers**

- 3.6.1 Where employees are transferring across Directorates and Services, they should try to use up all their flexi-leave before transferring and not be in deficit or credit. In other words they should start with a zero balance, unless there are compelling operational reasons to the contrary.

4. **Accounting Period**

- 4.1 The main accounting period for flexible working is four weeks starting always on a Monday. Employees do not have to start the accounting period on the same Monday, the accounting period can be staggered across the team.
- 4.2 The standard hours for full time employees to be worked over a period is 144 hours. (i.e. 36 hours x 4 weeks=144). For part-time staff the same formula is applied i.e. number of hours the individual is contracted to work, multiplied by 4. This is known as the employee's core time. Any hours in excess of, or less than this, may be carried over to the next period as credit or deficit subject to the Policy.

5. **Credit** (where the number of hours worked exceeds the target hours)

- 5.1 Credit can be built up when time in excess of 'core time' has been worked. Credit cannot be built up by working additional hours unless this has been agreed in advance with the line manager.
- 5.2 The maximum number of hours, which may be carried over from one period to the next is 10 for full time employees and pro rata for part time employees. Any hours above 10 will be lost except in cases of employees working annualised hours or where prior permission is given. (See 5.3 below).
- 5.3 Approval to carry forward credits in excess of the maximum number of hours (pro rata) will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances and, even then, only if specifically approved in advance by the relevant Assistant Director.
- 5.4 Excess credits for reasons of 'general workload' will not be agreed, it will be at the discretion of the Assistant Director on how many months the additional hours can be carried forward and authorised.

6. **Deficits** (where the number of hours worked is less than the target hours)

- 6.1 The maximum number of hours that employees can carry over to the next accounting period is minus four hours and pro rata for part-time employees. This deficit must be cleared within the next accounting period except where prior permission is given.

- 6.2 Approval to carry forward debits in excess of the maximum number of hours (pro rata) will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances and, even then, only if specifically approved in advance by the relevant Assistant Director.
- 6.3 Leavers must not be in deficit at their time of leaving. If there is a deficit, their salary will be adjusted accordingly or an invoice for the outstanding debt will be sent.
- 6.4 In any event, unless there are exceptional reasons, the Assistant Director should not authorise an excess of hours or debit for more than 2 consecutive accounting periods, except where the employee is working annualised hours or arrangements are subject to para 12 of this Policy.
7. **Taking Flexi-Leave**
- 7.1 Flexi-leave must be taken in accordance with the needs of the service and by prior agreement with the manager. A maximum of four half days flexi leave is allowed in any one period (pro rata for part time staff).
8. **Minimum Flexi-Leave Allowed**
- 8.1 It is recognised that there will be times where it is necessary to leave work for less than half a day, for example for dental appointments, or to attend to family emergencies. For such reasons, a minimum of one hour's flexi-leave may be granted and this could be within core hours. Employees are required to agree this in advance with their manager.
9. **Taking Leave Without the Necessary Credits**
- 9.1 A total of four hours flexi-leave may be requested in an accounting period, even if the necessary credit has not been built up, pro rata for part-time employees. However, this must be cleared within the next accounting period.
10. **Absence from Work**
- 10.1 Employees will only receive credits for authorised reasons such as sickness, annual leave, authorised college attendance, special leave, compassionate leave, public duties etc. Credits will also be given for hospital appointment attendance where employees are unable to arrange the appointment outside of working hours, for example for appointments with Specialists or Consultants.
- 10.2 Credits will not be granted for attending doctors, dentists, opticians etc., leave must be used instead (either flexi or annual leave). If flexi-leave is used, the provisions of paragraphs 7 and 8 apply.
- 10.3 Employees undertaking a day or half day external training should only book 7hrs 12mins or 3hrs 36mins respectively, regardless of travelling time.
- 10.4 Credits must not be used in lieu of employees taking sickness absence.

11. **Additional Hours**

- 11.1 Where additional hours are worked, by mutual agreement, beyond a normal working day, it may be treated as paid overtime as per the Collective Agreement and recorded on the normal overtime claim forms. Where the hours are not to be paid they will be recorded as part of the flexitime system, and subject to the requirements of the Flexi Scheme. All flexi time will be at plain time.

12. **Realignment of the Flexi-Scheme**

- 12.1 If managers anticipate a period of peak workload with tight timescales that will preclude staff taking accrued flexitime, they may make a request to the Director that the flexitime scheme be suspended for a specific team(s) for a specified period of no more than 4 months. This will allow a relaxation of the maximum carry forward credit, and will avoid operational difficulties during the peak period. This will only occur in exceptional circumstances, and will require the Director's agreement in advance of the proposed period of suspension. Management Board agreement will be necessary if the period of suspension is required to extend beyond 4 months.
- 12.2 This will include seasonal or annual peaks in work, such as the closure of accounts in Finance and the seasonal service provision in Country Care. In such recurring circumstances, agreement will stay in place for subsequent years, unless there is a further change required in either the period of suspension or the group of staff affected.
- 12.3 Managers are to take care to ensure that excessive hours are not worked by employees, as per the Working Time Regulations. For further guidance on the Regulations, please consult HR.

13. **Evening Attendances**

- 13.1 Evening attendance at Council, Cabinet, Committee, Working Groups, Town and Parish Council meetings etc will be paid at the appropriate attendance allowance. Staff cannot claim flexi-time and evening attendance allowance for the same meeting/event. For example, where an evening meeting/event starts at 6.30pm and finishes after 7pm the employee should only claim evening attendance allowance from 6.30pm.

14. **Recording**

- 14.1 Employees must use the electronic timesheet unless the nature of their work means that they do not have computer access. For these employees recording their time on paper forms is satisfactory. Both forms of recording must be monitored, checked and signed by the line manager at least on a monthly basis. (see para 1.4)
- 14.2 Each employee on the Scheme is responsible for filling in their own times and for paper records signing that it is a true record. It is not acceptable to enter information on someone else's behalf. The times should be entered as they are worked, or as soon as possible after they are worked. For example, if a member of staff goes straight home after a site visit, the sheet would need to be completed as soon as they are back in the office.

14.3 Employees working 'flexibly' and on the Scheme must also use the electronic time recording sheet.

14.4 Assistant Directors/Line Managers will make periodic checks of staff to ensure that actual times worked match times recorded by staff.

15. Abuse of the Flexi-Scheme

15.1 The Scheme requires the complete honesty of staff and the trust of managers.

15.2 Where the flexi-scheme is abused, or where records are not properly kept, an investigation will take place and the individual may be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedures. Where the records have been falsified, this would be deemed as gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal under the Disciplinary procedure. The Council has the right to remove an employee from the flexi-scheme where it has been abused by them.

16. Review

16.1 A review of this Policy will take place in December 2016.