

WME Operational Policies

WME's host employer is Staffordshire County Council and we are required to follow the HR Policies of the council in relation to our employment contracts. However WME is a separate legal entity and operates as a small not for profit business; as such we have the right to establish 'operational policies' in relation to how we conduct and manage our day to day business, that is in the best interest and efficiencies of WME.

WME Local Rules for Flexible Working and Flexitime

When WME was formed in 2013 it was agreed not to have a flexitime system because it was onerous for staff to sign in and out and keep time records. As a small organisation we are unable to support up to an additional 12 days of potential flexi-leave per individual. We therefore opted instead to work flexibly.

In 2015 as part of a business service review WME Management Team agreed that a flexitime approach would be introduced solely for use by the Business & Customer Services Hub. This was to enable greater flexibility in on site cover during core business hours to support and deliver customer service systems.

Flexible Working

- **WME staff not in the Business Hub will not operate a flexi-time system** but will have flexible working, which means that we work on a basis of trust that staff will manage their own time to effectively deliver their job roles. Managers are expected to monitor compliance.
- If there is a business need that requires staff to work significantly more than their contracted hours, then they should bring this to the attention of the line manager to agree a suitable approach to recouping such time back.

Flexitime System for the Business Hub

Generally WME will follow the SCC policy (as located on SCC Intranet) for flexitime but with the following adaptations to reflect the operational and business needs of WME.

- Staff will sign in and out and record hours worked using WME documentation
- Staff should only be working extended hours to meet a specific business need
- Hub Team Leader will monitor hours worked and ensure time is generally recouped via shorter days wherever possible
- Whilst 'flexitime leave days' will be permitted these are to be agreed by the Line Manager and will be kept to a minimum
- Staff may not carry over more than 7 hours per month
- WME Core hours are 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 3.30pm; our bandwidth is 8am to 7pm; and Hub service cover must be in place between the hours of 9am and 5pm
- SCC policy elements that do not apply at WME are;
 - Days cannot be banked and flexi days are not a given (6.1)
 - Out of hours and weekend working does not apply (8.1)
 - Overtime for part time contracts does not apply (8.1)

[Note: This WME flexitime system was introduced May 2016 for the BCS Hub only.]

Please check the latest version on the SCC intranet as this may not be the most up to date policy.

Staffordshire County Council HR Policy			Owned by: Strategic HR			
Reference Number	HR16	Approved by:		Version 5	Date	Sept04 June08 Oct08 July09 (FAQ 2)
Policy Title	'Flexitime' Working Hours Scheme					

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Staffordshire County Council will operate a flexible working hours (flexitime) scheme to enable employees to choose, within certain limits, the times that they start and finish work and take lunch breaks. The aim of the scheme is to give employees the ability to use 'flexible hours' more flexibly to give greater freedom to balance work commitments and personal pressures. For example it gives the opportunity to take full or half days flexi-leave as well a short authorised absences during the working day (for example, to attend appointments etc).

There is **no contractual right** for employees to be admitted into the flexible working hours scheme.

As a provider of services to the public, Staffordshire County Council must ensure that offering flexibility in working hours to its employees does not detract from service provision or quality. It may therefore be the case that flexible working hours apply to some departments or posts but not to others. Separate arrangements apply to staff in schools, for details contact the C&LL Directorate HR Team.

2. Trade Union

2.1 There are many trade unions working within Staffordshire County Council who can assist with this process. It is recommended that a trade union

representative be contacted at the earliest stage so that appropriate advice, guidance and support can be offered to the employee.

3. HR Units

Directorate HR units can assist with the interpretation and application of this process. It is recommended that a HR representative be contacted at the earliest stage so that appropriate advice, guidance and support can be offered to both the manager and employee.

4. Guidance On How To Apply The Policy

4.1 Levels of Authority

Throughout this policy document, there are many references to 'manager'. For the purposes of this policy, 'manager' is the person delegated by the Director to perform the task. The manager could vary according to Directorate staffing structures, but it is likely to be the employees line manager or business unit manager. For further clarification please check with your Directorate HR Unit.

4.2 Eligibility

As part of Staffordshire County Council's commitment to promoting equal opportunities the scheme will be made available to as many employees as possible whether on full time, or part time contracts.

Job sharers and part time employees will not be excluded from the scheme purely because of the part time nature of their employment, although the opportunities for taking advantage of flexible working hours may be limited by their pattern of working. A modified form of the flexible hours scheme may be more appropriate and can be negotiated between the employee and their manager.

There will be some posts for which flexible working hours cannot be made available because of the nature of the job or the need to provide a particular

service. Managers will determine which posts will be excluded from the scheme, based on operational needs, but employees who feel that they have been unreasonably excluded from the scheme should discuss this with their manager in the first instance, but have the right to raise the matter under the grievance procedure.

5. Provisions

5.1 Working Hours

The **standard working hours** (normal office hours) for the purpose of the flexitime scheme are:

8.30 – 17.00 Monday to Thursday

8.30 – 16.30 Friday

This is equivalent to a 37-hour working week, a day being defined as 7 hours and 24 minutes (7.4 hours) and half a day being defined as 3 hours 42 minutes (3.7 hours).

Note: Contracted hours and standard office hours may be subject to amendment from time to time in light of any changes which are nationally or locally agreed.

The flexitime scheme will allow a member of staff to commence work as early as 7.30am leave as late as 7.30pm – subject to the availability of access to the office and the ability to work in a safe and efficient manner. These outer limits are known as the '**bandwidth**' and working hours carried out between 7.30am and 7.30pm will count as hours accrued under the flexitime scheme. These can be varied locally, subject to office opening availability, service requirements and the ability to provide safe and efficient ways of working

Lunch can be taken at any time and must be for at least half an hour, although staff may work for up to 6 hours without a break. There is also the

opportunity to have other short authorised absences during the working day – for example to attend appointments.

Employees have a responsibility to carry out their own workload and to contribute to the smooth running of their department, so this flexibility is permitted subject to ensuring that offices are staffed during normal office hours, including lunch times, so that services to customers can continue to be delivered. Therefore all working and time off arrangements are subject to local agreement.

6. Accounting Period

6.1 Whilst flexible working hours allow employees to alter their start and finish times, there is still a requirement to fulfil the contractual working hours for their post averaged over a period of time known as the **accounting period**.

Accounting periods are 4 weeks in length and contracted hours therefore will be 148 for full time employees and pro-rata for part time employees.

One full day of 7 hours and 24 minutes, or two half days of 3 hours and 42 minutes (pro-rata for part time) may be taken off in any accounting period (i.e. 4 weeks). These should be booked in advance with the manager.

Alternatively employees may bank flexi-days to be taken at some other time, suitable to the employee and within the business constraints of the service. Not more than 5 banked days can be taken together at any one time. The most appropriate way of recording the banked hours is a matter for local determination. How employees take their days is a matter for local agreement between them and their manager.

Over a period of 12 months employees may only take an average of one day's flexi-leave for each 4 week period (pro-rata for part time). This limits any flexi leave to an overall combined maximum of 13 days per annum. All requests for time off must be agreed with the manager in advance.

7. Credits and Debits

7.1 At the end of each accounting period employees who have worked more than the contracted hours for the accounting period can carry forward those accrued excess hours into the next accounting period – under normal circumstances this will be up to a maximum of 20 hours (in addition to any ‘banked’ days). Consequently, at the commencement of the new accounting period they will be up to 20 hours in credit.

If an employee has worked less than the required contracted hours for the accounting period employees can, under normal circumstances carry forward a deficit of up to 8 hours into the next accounting period.

Consequently, at the commencement of the new accounting period they will be up to 8 hours in debit. Employees should always seek to work off the whole of any debit in excess of 4 hours by the end of the next accounting period, with any remaining outstanding debit to be totally cleared by the end of the following period.

8. Overtime

8.1 Paid overtime will not normally be encouraged within Staffordshire County Council and the majority of additional hours worked will normally be accounted for under the flexi-time provisions. See Appendix 1 – Recording Time.

However, from time to time some authorised overtime will be necessary and will attract payment as set out in the relevant National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service – time and a half or double time as appropriate. The manager must approve overtime working in advance if payment is to be made.

Planned overtime must not begin any earlier than 17.00 Monday to Thursday or 16.30 on a Friday or before 08.30 Monday to Friday for people

on standard 37 hour per week contracts. Overtime can only be worked outside the standard working hours for the post. If an employee is in debit this must be deducted from their overtime hours worked before payment is made (so that the employee's working hours for the accounting period are bought out of a negative balance)

For employees on part-time contracts any overtime (paid at plain time rate) will be payable from the end of their normal working hours up to 37 hours for the week. If 37 hours are exceeded part time employees will then become entitled to time and a half or double time as appropriate

9. Medical Appointments

9.1 Staff needing to attend medical appointments may do so at any time subject to the needs of the service. It is expected that time would usually be credited back to employees in respect of non-standard medical appointments, however hours will not be credited for standard medical appointments such as doctors, dentists etc.

It is not possible to give specific examples of what constitutes a standard medical appointment. Line managers will therefore be required to use discretion. However assistance will be available from Directorate HR units.

The following examples are for guidance purposes only:-

Standard

- Routine Dental Checks
- Follow-up Dental Appointments
- Doctors appointments which can be arranged in advance, i.e. not same day appointment
- Follow-up Doctors appointments
- Hospital appointments which can be pre-arranged for specific times.

Non-Standard

- Emergency Dental or Doctors appointments
- Hospital treatment, i.e. accident and emergency attendance or others where there is no choice re attendance times
- Hospital appointments for which only allocated times are available, i.e. Consultant appointments
- Anti-natal care

10. Attendance Records (Flexitime Sheets)

10.1 All hours worked should be entered onto an attendance record (see appendix 1) on a daily basis. The record should show the time of arrival, the time of commencement of lunch, the time returned from lunch and the time of leaving at the end of the day (as well as any other absences from the workplace). The hours worked each day, each week and each accounting period are calculated automatically – if the electronic flexitime sheet is being used. If a paper version is being used the total hours worked must be calculated manually.

Improper certification of working hours may result in disciplinary action.

When planned overtime is scheduled to take place after the end of the normal working day the normal finishing time should be entered onto the flexi-time sheet – normally 17.00 or 16.30 or the normal finish time for a part time employee. Overtime is then accrued from this time onwards and accounted for elsewhere (normally an overtime claim form).

11. Authorised Absences

11.1 All absences from work, having been authorised as appropriate by the Manager, will need to be accounted for on the attendance record using one of the codes given below:

- **LA** = Annual Leave. For a full day 7 hrs and 24 minutes should be credited to the attendance record, in the absence hours column, as the hours are being deducted from annual leave entitlements rather than

from accrued flexi hours. Half a day's leave should be credited as 3hrs and 42 minutes.

- **A** = Authorised absence (such as Compassionate Leave). Record as per LA above.
- **LP** = Public Leave (Bank Holidays). Record as per LA above.
- **LT** = Lieu Time. Employees make take time off in lieu of flexi hours worked where they have sufficient credited hours to accommodate this. Up to 1 full day or 2 half days per accounting period may be taken. No hours should be credited to or deducted from the absence hours column as the absence of start and finish times will ensure that the hours taken are deducted from the total hours accrued.
- **S** = Sickness absence.
- **IA** = Industrial Action. For someone absent because of industrial action this will involve deducting a day's pay from his or her salary. As it would be unfair to penalise an employee twice he or she will be credited with 7hrs 24 minutes for that day.

When an authorised absence is for other than an exact day or half day, then the time allowed will be for the length of the authorised absence, which should not normally extend beyond the standard office hours. An example might be:

An example of accounting for a half day authorised absence is given below:

Arrive at office	09:00
Commence lunch break	12:30 = 3 hrs 30 mins
Depart for College	13:30
Leave college for home	18:00 = authorised absence from 13:30 to 17:00 is counted as 3hrs 42 minutes as it represents half a day.

12. How to apply

12.1 Having accrued working hours under the flexi-time scheme an employee wishing to take time off should do this in accordance with agreed local arrangements i.e. by entering this on their authorised absence (annual leave) card against a code of 'LT' for Lieu time. This should not be deducted from their annual leave balance.

13. Other considerations

13.1 Misuse of the scheme or will result in the scheme being withdrawn or subject to a warning. Falsification of timesheet records will be a disciplinary matter

14. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Question: If I'm already in credit on my work hours and want to finish at lunch time, do I have to make a formal request for ½ a days' flexi?

Answer: You still need to agree your request with your manager in advance, and then you simply sign off your flexi sheet. Your time off will come out of the hours that you have already accrued.

2. Question: How much time off can I take in any one (4 week) period?

Answer: You can take up to one full day of 7 hours and 24 minutes or two half days of 3 hours and 42 minutes (pro-rata for part time) in any accounting period. You can also take up to 5 banked days in any one period (subject to an overall combined maximum of 13 days per annum). Any request for time off must be agreed with your manager in advance.

8. Question: What's the most time I can take off in a year?

Answer: Over a 12 month period the most banked/flexi leave you can take off is 13 days in total.

9. Question: How much time can I hold in credit?

Answer: Over a period of 12 months you may only take an average of one banked/flexi day for each 4 week period (pro-rata for part time). Therefore you would not be expected to have more than 13 banked days in credit, plus the 20 hours (max) credit that you are entitled to carry forward over accounting periods.

10. Question: How long do I have to use up my banked days?

Answer: Up to 13 banked days can be accrued in any leave year and should be taken within a twelve month period following that leave year.

15. Accountabilities

15.1 Employees have a responsibility to ensure that all their work is carried out within their working hours and that they contribute to the smooth running of their work establishment and to service delivery. Employees are responsible for maintaining accurate records of their own working hours.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that service delivery is maintained whilst allowing flexibility of working arrangements for their employees and must also ensure that employees take lunch breaks.

16. Further Advice and Information

16.1 If you need any further advice on how to apply this policy please contact your departmental HR Manager. See also national conditions of service and local agreements before determining or issuing advice.

17. Standard Documents

17.1 Appendix 1 - Flexitime record sheet for recording start and finish times and calculating accrued hours. (Electronic version). NB: using the 24 hour clock start and finish times must be entered in this format:

e.g. 8am is entered as 8:00
3pm is entered as 15:00

Appendix 2 – Flexitime record sheet for recording start and finish times and calculating accrued hours (for completion by hand)

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Directorate HR Manager.

Recording time

All County Council employees have a personal responsibility to get to their place of work for the right time. The time that this takes is referred to as their 'usual journey time'. All employees have a usual journey to work time, and for those employee's whose place of work regularly changes, they will have a place of work (or work base) agreed with their manager.

Sometimes as part of their job an employee will be required to work somewhere that isn't their usual place of work. Where an employee is not at their agreed place of work at the start or end of their scheduled working day (i.e. within their usual attendance times), and they have travelled from/to home, they should still record the time it takes them to get from/to home.

The time that they record should be the actual time it takes to get from or to home, minus their usual journey time to or from work, where it falls outside of their usual work hours. **So, only the actual time over and above the usual journey time that falls outside of their usual attendance times at work, should be credited.**

For teams/services that do not operate flexi-time then this additional journey time should still be recorded, accrued and paid for through either; time off in lieu (TOIL) or paid overtime, where eligible within the employee's conditions of service.

Example A

Rob lives in Stone and has a usual place of work in Stafford with a usual journey time of 15 minutes. Today, Rob has a meeting in Lichfield at 9am (his usual duty start time). Rob travels from Stone to Lichfield in 35 minutes. He can record the additional 20 minutes on his timesheet.

After his meeting Rob travels to his normal place of work in Stafford, during his normal working day. At the end of his working day he travels back home to Stone. He can only record the 20 minutes from his first journey in the morning.

Example B

Sue lives in Cheadle and commutes to Stafford to her usual place of work with a normal journey time of 40 minutes. She has to work in Leek once a week. The journey from Cheadle to Leek takes her only 15 minutes. Therefore she will not be able to record any time for her journey to this other place to work.

Sue attended a meeting at 4pm in Tamworth. It took Sue 1hour 10 minutes to travel to Tamworth from Leek during her working day. After her meeting Sue went straight home. The journey from Tamworth to Cheadle took her an hour. Sue should record the additional 20 minutes for her journey.

Example C

Carmen lives in Telford and works in Cannock. Her usual journey time is 30 minutes. She attended a training course in London starting at 10am and travelled by train. Her journey from Telford to London took 2 hours 30 minutes. Carmen should record 2 hours for her journey and also for her return journey.