

# **Flexi Time (Vision Time) Procedure**

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## Version control

This document is subject to regular review due to legislative and policy changes. The latest versions of all our publications can be found on our website. Before contacting us about the content of this document, we recommend that you refer to the most recent version on the website and any relevant guidance.

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Notes / changes
v1.0	18/07/23		New guide

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# Flexi Time (Vision Time) Procedure

## Introduction, Application/Scope of Guidance

The Flexible Working Hours procedure (flexi-time) outlines the details of the council's Flexi-time system and how flexible working hours can help the council provide an extended service to its customers and help employees achieve a balance between work and home life.

This guidance will apply to any council employee that uses the flexi system. The flexi scheme however will not be suitable for all groups of employees. Exemptions include:

- Staff appointed by School Governing Body
- Directors and Heads of Service

This list is not exhaustive and may be subject to amendment either in the interest of the Council or where an employee's work pattern does or does not readily lend itself to the principles of the scheme. It should also be noted that there may be scope for employees in some of the groups listed above to work flexibly within the constraints of their contracted hours for example when lunchtimes are taken. Where appropriate, part time working patterns can also be accommodated under this procedure.

## What is the Flexi time system?

By operating a Flexi time system the council allows qualifying employees the opportunity to arrange their own working times and manage their workloads in accordance with the needs of the business. All agreed hours worked will be recorded as credit hours and authorised absences including annual leave and sickness absence will be credited as standard hours.

In order to accurately record Flexi time hours, employees will clock in and out of the Vision Time system which will enable individuals to monitor their working hours, accommodate personal appointments and plan annual leave with line manager approval.

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## **The Procedure – Flexi time**

### **Staffing Levels**

Line managers must ensure that there are adequate staffing levels to respond to the public either as detailed above or in accordance with local arrangements. There is also a responsibility on employees to ensure, in conjunction with their line manager and colleagues, that there is sufficient cover at all times. All employees must be made aware of the minimum staffing levels which apply for their department and provide cover in accordance with this level.

In order to achieve adequate staffing levels, managers are able to ask employees to start work earlier or later if there is a need for them to attend at a particular time. This request will need to be reasonable and providing sufficient notice is given, the employee would be expected to attend. Employees failing to comply with minimum staffing levels for their department may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Working Time**

There are no set times which the employee should attend work providing they work a minimum of 4 ½ hours on each normal working day (for a full time employee) and the times are agreed by their line manager.

### **Flexi Period**

Each flexi period is 6 weeks. During this time, employees are expected to account for a minimum of their contracted hours. For a full time employee their contracted hours for the flexi period will be 222 hours.

Hours worked in excess of the employee's contracted hours will be banked. Up to 20 hours can be carried forward from one flexi period to the next. Hours in excess of 20 hours at the end of each flexi period will be lost.

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## **Credit Hours, Authorising & Taking Flexi Leave**

Credit hours can be accumulated and taken as flexi leave. Within a flexi period, employees can take up to the equivalent of 2 days flexi leave. Managers should check individual flexi records to ensure that employees have sufficient credit before authorising flexi. Flexi can be taken as whole or half days. All leave must be authorised in accordance with departmental arrangements.

It will be up to the manager to determine whether the 2 days can be taken consecutively or if they should be taken as individual days. It may not always be appropriate, taking into account the business needs of the service and other absences within the Department, to allow the employee to take two consecutive flexi leave days. Therefore, there is no automatic right to 2 consecutive days flexi leave.

Where the manager has a justifiable reason to do so, they can refuse an employee's request for flexi leave.

Where the manager is faced with two requests for leave – one for flexi leave and one for annual leave - the annual leave should take precedence over the request for flexi leave.

Before taking flexi leave, employees must ensure that they have sufficient credit hours to cover the leave. Flexi leave must not be taken if there are insufficient credit hours.

## **Debit Hours**

All employees should aim to be in credit on their flexi hours. If an employee does get into debit, the debit hours at the end of any given day should not exceed 4 hours, and the employee should ensure that they are in credit by the end of each flexi period.

If an employee is in debit at the end of the flexi period for two consecutive periods, they will forfeit the right to work flexible hours for a 3 month period and will be required to work standard hours in accordance with the office hours. In addition, the employee will be required to work additional hours in order to make up the debit hours. This will need to be arranged with the line manager.

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In such cases, the employee will continue to use the time recording system in place within their place of work.

In exceptional circumstances only, the employee may be given an extra flexi period to get into credit before the right to work flexible hours is withdrawn. If the employee feels that they have a genuine reason which may warrant an extension, they must discuss this with their line manager.

If an employee does have personal issues which are affecting their attendance at work, they should discuss them with their line manager as soon as possible.

### **Standard Working Day**

For the purpose of recording adjustments such as leave, sickness, or other authorised absence, the standard working day for employees who are contracted to work 37 hours a week will be 7 hours and 24 minutes.

### **Minimum Working Day**

A minimum of 4½ hours must be worked on each normal working day (pro rata for part time employees).

### **Maximum Working Day**

In order to protect the employee's welfare, a maximum of 12 hours can be worked on any normal working day. The only exception to this is if the employee is required to attend meetings/conferences/seminars/training which require early starts and/or late finishes which may exceed the 12 hours working day. In such cases, the employee can claim the total hours worked subject to the prior approval of the line manager. When agreeing the time to be claimed, the line manager should take into account travel time; time attending the meeting/conference/seminar/training but exclude any leisure time, attendance at social dinners or events. This must be agreed by the line manager prior to accumulating the time.

### **Young Workers**

A young worker is defined as an employee who is under 18. A young worker may not work more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week. Managers have a duty to ensure that if they

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have an employee who is within this age category that they do not exceed the maximum hours stated.

### **Flexible Working Lunch**

A minimum of 30 minutes must be taken for lunch. This can be taken at any time of the working day as long as it is not at the start or end of the day and as long as it fits in with the needs of the service. In order to ensure that there is adequate cover, employees should arrange their lunch break in conjunction with the line manager and/or colleagues.

An employee working 6 hours or more must take a 30 minute break within those 6 hours. Employees must clock out before eating their lunch.

### **Monitoring**

Managers should regularly monitor flexi balances to ensure that employees are not in debit or accruing excessive flexi hours which are regularly lost. If either of these are the case the manager should meet with the employee to review the situation and take appropriate action. Managers should also ensure that workloads are appropriate for the number of hours worked.

### **Absences**

All absence from the office must be agreed with the line manager in accordance with departmental arrangements. Absence due to sickness must be reported to the line manager in accordance with the Sickness Absence Procedure. Annual leave can only be taken in whole or half days (7 hrs 24 min; 3 hrs 42 min respectively). Please see the Annual Leave Guidance for Managers and Employees for more information.

### **Personal and Domestic Leave**

Employees will be allowed to attend medical or personal appointments during the normal working day subject to adequate work cover. The employee will be required to clock out for such appointments and will not be credited for this time.



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An employee attending hospital appointments will be required to clock out for such appointments but will be credited for this time. Hospital appointments which are ½ a day or more will be classed as sick leave.

A pregnant employee attending ante-natal appointments or an employee attending routine cancer screening appointments will be required to clock out for such appointments but will be credited for this time.

Employees attending hospital, routine cancer screening or ante-natal appointments will be required to provide the line manager with proof of the appointment.

In support of the Blood Transfusion Service, employees will be entitled to time off to donate blood and will not be required to clock off for this time as long as it is near where they are working. Please see the Time Off Work Policy for more information.

### **Abuse of the Scheme**

Any abuse of the scheme may result in disciplinary action being taken and/or the employee being excluded from the flexi time scheme. Examples of abuse are:

- Failure to comply with staffing level arrangements
  - Operating the clock on behalf of someone else
  - Failing persistently to use the clock
  - Consistently failing to work their contracted hours
  - Consistently in debit hours at the end of the flexi period
  - Making false claims
  - Attending work outside of normal working hours when there is insufficient work to justify this
- This list is not exhaustive.

### **Leaving the Council**

During the last flexi period (or part period) of employment with the Council, employees may continue working flexi hours on the clear understanding that he/she works his/her contracted hours. Failure to work contracted hours (including debit carried forward) will necessitate the Council in billing the member of staff for the contracted hours not worked.

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Employees (with their line managers' permission) should ensure that they have a zero flexi balance when leaving the council's employment as no credit hours will be paid by the council.

## **Recording Hours**

All employees, whether working flexible hours or not, will record their hours using the methods determined by the Council. Employees will be required to record their arrival and departure time to and from work. This includes clocking out/in for personal appointments, lunch, smoking breaks and any other absence from work which is not covered by business absence or authorised leave.

## **Termination of the Scheme**

The Scheme may be terminated by the council by giving three months' notice in writing. The Scheme may, at the discretion of the council, be suspended in circumstances which affect the efficiency of the council's services.

## **Vision Time Operating System Instructions**

All users will be issued with a personal number for use on the system and a pin number for security. Both are required for using the clock and accessing the system.

It is possible to clock in/out as many times a day as necessary. If the employee is leaving the building for any other reason than business absence, then the employee must clock out for the duration of the absence.

If the employee fails to use the clock i.e. clock in/out they will be required to submit a correction for authorisation by their line manager via the computer. The correction must be submitted within 2 working days of the error.

Should employees fail to clock off at the end of the day, the system will automatically clock them off one minute after they last clocked in.

If the employee fails to use the clock during lunchtime, the system will automatically deduct 2 hours.

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An employee working 6 hours or more must take a 30 minute break within those 6 hours. If the employee is clocked out for less than 30 minutes, the system will automatically deduct up to 30 minutes. No correction can be made to reclaim the difference.