

Flexible Working Scheme



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: Review:

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

| Version | Key Changes | Approved By |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| July 2020 | Reformatted only | DMT |
| August 2023 | Core Hours information removed; Expectations & Responsibilities updated | |

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent is committed to being an employer that supports a positive work life balance. It recognises that everyone has a life outside of work and that at some point employees may need help from their employer to balance their work and home life commitments. In addition to this, customers are requiring a more flexible service to meet their own needs, and as a Council we provide a very diverse range of services that require staff to be flexible.

The Flexible Working Scheme aims to provide flexibility in service delivery for the benefit of customers. It further aims to provide significant additional flexibility for employees, to enable them to better balance their work and home commitments and support the Council in becoming an Employer of Choice.

2. Benefits to the Council

- Improved employee retention as a result of being recognised as an employer of choice.
- A more flexible workforce that responds to peaks and troughs in work and can respond more effectively to customers outside of traditional 9-5 hours of work.
- Improved service provision.
- Reduced absence levels.
- A more motivated and engaged workforce.
- Enhanced work performance.
- Improved inclusion and diversity of workforce.
- Positive working culture.

3. Benefits to Employees

- Promotes a healthy work life balance.
- Flexibility to balance interests and responsibilities in and outside of work.
- Flexible working for parents and those with caring responsibilities.
- Reduced stress through greater control of work life.
- Improved job satisfaction.
- Improved accessibility to work.

4. Key Principles

- Council services operate at different times dependent on the service area but business operating hours will continue to primarily be 9am – 5pm and staff cover is vital during these times.
- It is imperative that the Council's efficiency and levels of service provided are maintained (and where possible, improved).
- The operational business requirements of each service area are paramount. The provision of service and working hours should reflect this.
- The online flexi system is used to monitor time and attendance and where appropriate service areas should operate utilising this system. Employees are not able to opt out of utilising the system.

- Managers are responsible for administering and managing the Flexible Working Scheme within their own teams.
- Increased flexibility is not an automatic entitlement, and at all times the provision of a quality service is essential. For example, this scheme is not an opportunity for employees to permanently amend their working pattern. If employees wish to consider an alternative working pattern, they should refer to the [Right to Request Flexible Working Policy](#).
- Providing service needs can be met, employees could work in 'bursts of time' throughout the day, for example, personal appointments, for the school run, for caring responsibilities and for health & wellbeing.
- The accrual of flexi time should be consistent with the demands of the service. The accrual of excessive hours is strongly discouraged in order to manage employee health and wellbeing.

5. Expectations & Responsibilities

Managers will:

- Manage employees time and Wellbeing.
- Operate the Flexible Working Scheme fairly and reasonably for all their direct reports.
- Ensure the needs of customers, the organisation and other employees are considered.
- Ensure there is always cover to provide an effective service.
- Explain the reason for refusal if a request for flexi leave cannot be granted.
- Show employees how to work the flexi system.
- Ensure the flexi system is up to date and accurate by managing exceptions and requests for leave in a timely manner.
- Ensure excess flexi/TOIL is not being accrued.
- Ensure employees are not consistently in a negative flexi balance.
- Inform the appropriate superuser (a flexi system administrator) when a member of staff terminates their employment so that they can be removed from the system.
- Advise their superuser of any change to an employee's annual leave entitlement including any carry over at the start of the entitlement year in order for the flexi system to be updated.
- Not convert excess flexi into TOIL.

Employee's will:

- Ensure that cover is maintained between the team throughout the day.
- Consider their own workload and that of their team to ensure hours are only accrued to meet the demands of the service.
- Ensure that contractual hours are worked and will usually only work within the bandwidth hours.
- Ensure their flexi system is up to date and accurate by submitting any relevant adjustments i.e. missed clocking's.
- Not work excessive hours and should be mindful of their health and wellbeing.
- Only book flexi time off (whole days) when the time has been accrued and not before.
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with their manager any carry over of annual leave prior to the flexi system being updated. |
| <p>Superusers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up new users (managers must inform a superuser of the details). Be responsible for closing accounts when employee leaves (managers must inform a superuser of leaving date and any annual leave adjustments). Add new leave entitlements based on managers instructions. Link new patterns should an employee change their working hours. Move employees to different branches based on managers instructions. <p>Offer basic advice and guidance to managers should their query not be resolved with the online guides.</p> <p>Superusers will not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the system on behalf of managers. Override the system and convert flexi into TOIL. Calculate annual leave entitlements. |

6. Flexible Working Scheme

The Council's flexible working scheme is detailed below:

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| Standard Hours | Week: 37 Hours Day: 7 Hours 24 Minutes Half Day: 3 Hours 42 Minutes |
| Bandwidth | 7am – 7pm |
| Core Hours | No core hours. |
| Lunch Period | Staff must clock out on the system and take a 30 minute lunch break if a shift is in excess of 6 hours. No restriction when this must be taken. |
| Accounting Period | 4 weeks |
| Flexi Leave | 13 full days per annum (96 hours 12 minutes for full time employees, pro rata for part time staff). Only full days need to be recorded and can only be booked once the necessary time has been accrued. The use of half days to top up periods of Annual Leave needs to be managed. |
| Credit/Debit that can be carried over into next accounting period | 14 hours 48 minutes credit (pro-rata) 7 hours 24 minutes debit |
| Appointments | Dentist, Doctors, Optician appointments must be taken in own time. Hospital appointments will be credited for appointment time only. Travel time for hospital appointments will not be credited. All appointments must be scheduled to minimise the disruption to service delivery wherever possible. |

The following documents are available on the [intranet](#) for employees/managers:

- End of Accounting Periods
- List of Superusers
- Guide for Employees
- Guide for Managers

7. Flexi Balances

Where a minus balance of up to the maximum of 7 hours 24 minutes is carried over, there will be a requirement to make up those hours in the next accounting period. If the carry over is more than the allowed maximum debit, in exceptional circumstances and where the manager has agreed, the excess hours (i.e. over and above 7 hours 24 minutes) must be cleared during the first five days of the new accounting period. However, the discretion of the manager should recognise a genuine effort to reduce debit hours.

Where an employee is transferring to another team in the Council, excessive credit/negative balances should be cleared as far as is possible before the transfer and not carried into the new team.

8. Reviewing the Flexible Working Scheme

Managers may at certain times be required to review the flexible working scheme in line with the operational needs of their service. If it is not felt that the scheme is working for the benefit of the service, this should be discussed with the Senior HR Business Partner. Where an amendment to existing working practices is being considered, this must be done in conjunction with key stakeholders such as OD and the Trade Unions.

9. Overtime

Overtime traditionally refers to where employees are required to work additional hours beyond their usual weekly contractual hours.

In circumstances where employees are entitled to time off in lieu, the hours accrued will be based on the time worked.

Part-time employees are entitled to these entitlements and enhancements only at times and in circumstances in which full-time employees would qualify (over 37 hours).

10. Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)

TOIL may be accrued when an employee, at the request of management, works additional hours that have been authorised in line with Council protocols. This would

normally relate to hours worked over and above standard full time hours (37 hours per week) and for those employees operating on the flexible working hours' scheme for time worked outside of the bandwidth (i.e. 7am – 7pm). In addition, TOIL is accrued for bank holiday working.

In circumstances where employees are entitled to TOIL, hours accrued will be based on the time worked.

When authorising additional hours' managers need to consider the Working Time Directive, which states no employee should be asked to work more than 48 hours a week (including overtime) without prior consent. Managers are responsible for monitoring hours worked and the accrual of any TOIL to ensure staff are not regularly accruing lieu time and to also ensure the workloads are at a manageable level.

TOIL should be recorded by management and in the case of staff operating on the flexi system, there is a facility to record this time and this should be used.

TOIL should not accrue to excessive levels and should be taken within the month that it is accrued; and no later than 3 months of it being accrued. Managers need to ensure that, within operational requirements, that resources are managed so that staff are allowed to take this accrued time off work, as time in lieu **will not be paid**.

Employees and Managers must also ensure that any accrued TOIL is taken prior to termination of employment as any untaken lieu time **will not be paid**.

For employees working under the flexible working hours scheme any time accrued as flexi time should be managed by the employee. Any excess flexi over the allowed carry-over of time from one accounting period to another i.e. 14.48 hours **should not be converted to TOIL** to avoid losing it.

11. Termination of Employment

When an employee terminates employment with the Council, the manager will need to ensure that:

- They inform the appropriate superuser when a member of staff terminates their employment so that they can be removed from the system.
- The employee has worked the full number of contracted hours appropriate to the date of termination (any debit balances may be subject to an adjustment of pay).
- Accrued flexi time **will not** be paid upon termination.
- On the last working day, the employee will return key fobs and any other equipment/documentation to their Manager.

12. Disciplinary Action

Employees who do not adhere to their responsibilities, or abuse the scheme, may be subject to action in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure. Managers can consider removing an employee from the scheme and returning them to a 'standard' working day in addition to dealing with the employee under the Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

13. Health and Safety

- Staff must be aware of their own safety and adhere to the [Lone Working Policy](#) and Health and Safety Procedures as appropriate.
- The Flexible Working Scheme operates in accordance with the [Working Time Regulations](#), therefore the maximum working week, including overtime, should be no more than 48 hours averaged over a 17 week period, and must include a rest break of 30 minutes for every 6 hours worked. Staff must ensure that their working hours allow for a period of at least 11 hours away from the workplace between working days. The Flexible Working Scheme does not encourage longer working hours.