**Human Resources and Organisational Development**

Flexible Working Hours Scheme

Version 1.0

Implemented: 6 July 2020

# INTRODUCTION

* 1. This scheme sets out the principle of flexible working hours. The Council is committed to improving recruitment, retention and work life balance and implementing initiatives that support staff combining work, family and other personal interests and responsibilities. The benefit to the Council is that flexible hours can help to provide a more responsive service to the needs of the community that it serves.
  2. Our ordinary working hours as a Council are between 0700 and 2100.
  3. The scheme provides for a flexible system of attendance that allows staff to vary the time of arrival and departure from work. The scheme is applied subject to the needs of the business area, is not a contractual right and managers may refuse to allow staff to operate flexitime.
  4. The Council reserves the right, on giving reasonable notice, to vary working pattern/hours to meet the needs of the service.
  5. The scheme will not form part of the terms and conditions relating to staff.
  6. The Council operates the scheme for officers appointed on grades L and below only.
  7. The scheme runs from 1st April to 31st March in a year.

# OPERATING THE SCHEME SUCCESSFULLY

* 1. Working hours must be agreed with the line manager in advance, to ensure service provision and personal targets as agreed are maintained and achieved.
  2. Staff will be required to fulfil their contractual hours in relation to the total number of hours worked; flexi-time enables some flexibility as to when hours are worked. There will be a requirement to meet fixed work commitments e.g. attendance at meetings, one to one’s, PDR’s and team meetings.
  3. Up to seven hours (one day) (or pro-rata for part-time staff) flexi-leave can be accrued in a calendar month and is subject to the agreement of the line manager. A maximum of 7 hours (or pro rata for part time staff) credit may be carried forward.

# RECORDING ATTENDANCE

* 1. Hours of work are detailed in the statement of terms and conditions. Full time hours are normally 35 hours per week.
  2. A flexi-time record sheet must be completed by the employee on a monthly basis and submitted to the line manager for approval within three days of the month end.
  3. A standard flexi-time record sheet is available to use to record hours worked. This form is available in electronic format and enables easy calculation of hours worked, because columns automatically calculate time and breaks entered. Start times, lunch times and finishing times must be entered daily as well as all other breaks away from work such as prayer and smoking breaks.
  4. Incomplete or inaccurate recording can lead to flexi being unauthorised by the manager. Staff must ensure accurate recording.

# THE WORKING DAY

* 1. The earliest start time is 7.00am (or earlier subject to local operational service needs[[1]](#footnote-1)1) and the latest finish time is 9.00pm. This is the span of hours over which the Flexi-time scheme operates.
  2. Within these limits, management determine the earliest start time and the latest finish time for the service area and staff can request to work within these hours in a flexible way, providing the needs of the service are met.
  3. A lunch break of at least 30 minutes must be taken by staff when working within the flexi scheme.
  4. Any hours worked without prior management agreement outside the hours agreed as the limits for the service area are beyond the flexi-time scheme and flexi hours will not be authorised.
  5. Some jobs may involve occasional work outside normal working hours where other arrangements or overtime may be appropriate.

# FLEXI-TIME

* 1. The maximum number of hours that can be accrued over a calendar month to the next period as flexi-time is 7 hours (or pro rata for part time staff). Any hours accrued in excess of 7 hours (or pro rata for part time staff) over a calendar month will be lost.

# CORE TIME

* 1. This is the period when staff are required to be present by management unless the absence is authorised. Core hours will be agreed by the line manager and will be subject to service need. For example, core hours could be operated between 10.00am and 12.00 noon and 2.00pm and 4.00pm but this will be determined by the needs of the particular service.

# ACCOUNTING PERIOD

* 1. Flexi-time operates over a calendar month accounting period. At the end of the period, hours worked will be the contracted hours, plus or minus a maximum of 7 hours (pro rata for part time staff) which can be carried forward to the next calendar month.

# CREDIT HOURS

* 1. Credit hours are those hours in excess of contracted hours at the end of a calendar month. Credit hours, up to a maximum of 7 hours (or pro rata for part time staff) may be carried over to the next calendar month. These hours must be taken within the next calendar month or they will be lost.
  2. Staff will need to request to take credit hours off in the same way as annual leave is requested.

# DEBIT HOURS

* 1. The flexi-time scheme permits 7 debit hours to be carried over from one calendar month to the next. These hours must be made up in the next calendar month. Where debit hours are in excess of 7 hours at the end of a calendar month, the equivalent monetary value of these excess hours will be deducted from salary, or the equivalent annual leave deducted. This will be discussed with the employee.

# 10. STAFF LEAVING TOWER HAMLETS

* 1. When staff submit their resignation, it is unlikely during the notice period that further flexi time can be accrued. All credit hours must be taken prior to leaving the Council’s employment. Payment will not be made for any excess hours worked and not taken. Where in debit, you must ensure that you make up the hours during the notice period otherwise the number of hours in debit will be deducted from any final payment.

# 11. ABUSE OF THE SCHEME

* 1. Any abuse of the scheme, e.g., by accruing credit hours through unproductive working or by submitting incomplete entries on a flexi sheet, will result in the employee being excluded from the flexi scheme on a temporary or permanent basis.
  2. Retrospective completion of forms will be viewed as an abuse of the scheme. Flexi-time sheets must be submitted by the employee for each calendar month as a true record of hours. Managers will hold all flexi-time record sheets for a service area. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that all times are entered correctly on the flexi-time sheet. If an entry is deliberately falsified or breaks are not recorded on the flexi-time sheet, the employee will be liable to disciplinary action, which may lead to dismissal for gross misconduct.
  3. If a staff member leaves early without the permission of their manager or they are repeatedly late in either core time or outside of core time, they will be subject to disciplinary action under the Council’s disciplinary procedure and may be excluded from the flexi scheme.

# 12. PRAYER BREAKS

* 1. If a staff member is in the scheme and requires prayer breaks, the time away from work should be agreed with the line manager and will be required to make up the time within the flexi scheme. Prayer breaks should be recorded on the flexi sheet in the column entitled ‘other breaks.

# 13. HOSPITAL, DOCTOR AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

* 1. It is expected that hospital, doctor and medical appointments are made outside of normal working hours where possible.
  2. The flexibility of the scheme can, with agreement with the line manager, be used to attend medical appointments outside of working hours e.g. early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Where this is not possible, this could be taken as annual leave.

# 14. PART TIME AND JOB SHARING

* 1. Where work is part time or where one job is shared between two people, who might work alternate days, half weeks, or alternate weeks, flexi-time will apply to the days that are worked. For flexi-time to operate successfully in these circumstances there must be a high degree of co-operation between staff and managers.
  2. The debit/credit hours will be pro rata to the number of contractual hours per week.

# 15. HOME WORKING

* 1. If working at home for a day or several days, the employee will be considered as working for the full day on each occasion (normally 7 hours) and will not be able to use or gain flexi-time.

# 16. STATUTORY REQUESTS TO WORK FLEXIBLY

* 1. Some employees have a legal (‘statutory’) right to ask for a change to their contract with a ‘flexible working request’. This is different to working within the Flexible Working Hours Scheme and it will mean changing your employment contract (either on a temporary or permanent basis).
  2. In accordance with our Flexible Working Policy, to make a request under the statutory provisions you should be employed directly by the Council, have worked for the Council continuously for 26 weeks at the date the application is made and not have made a request during the previous 12 months. However, all requests for flexible working arrangements will be considered.

# 17. FURTHER INFORMATION

* 1. For further information on the operation of this scheme, please contact the Recruitment and Resourcing team on ext. 6400 or email [hr.generalenquires@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:hr.generalenquires@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)