

Merton Council's Policy on Hours of Work

Version 1.1
Issue Date: August 2002

Hours Of Work

Contents

(Click on page number to take you to the relevant section)

Link to [Forms](#)

1	Hours of work	3
2	Flexible working hours scheme	3
2.5	Introduction	4
2.6	Scheme details	4
2.7	The recording system	5
2.8	Non-compliance with the scheme	5
3	Overtime payments	6
3.3	Payment for additional hours worked	6
3.4	Contractual overtime	6
4	Attendance at evening meetings	7
5	Standby duty allowances (Callout)	7

Contacts:

For further information on this document please contact:
Your Human Resources Department

www.merton.gov.uk

Hours of Work
Version 1.1 August 2002

2



Hours of Work

1 Hours of work

1.1 The standard working week for employees is:

- Former officer employees 35 hours
- Former Manual and Craft employees 37 hours
- Former Residential employees 37 hours

1.2 The number, pattern and arrangement of hours worked by each employee are contained in the employee's statement of employment particulars.

1.3 Service Managers within each department have a responsibility to ensure that a service is provided within agreed service opening hours. Arrangements for provision of services outside of normal working hours will be in accordance with the appropriate conditions of service or local agreements made from time to time. Details of working hours and the requirement to provide cover outside "normal hours" should be advised at the earliest opportunity during the recruitment process and quoted in the individual's statement of employment particulars.

2 Flexible working hours scheme

2.1 The Council provides the facility for certain groups of employees to work flexible hours, i.e. not fixed to a traditional 9.00 – 17.00 pattern. This scheme is designed to give employees, wherever possible, more freedom to fit their working arrangements to their personal circumstances, and to enable the Council to provide an enhanced service to clients and the public.

2.2 The scheme is in all cases operated first and foremost to suit the needs of the service. Directors have discretion to agree the introduction of flexible working hours arrangements for particular groups of employees where it can be demonstrated that as a result the service to the clients is improved.

2.3 However, the Council retains the right to withdraw any such arrangement, after consultation with employees, if this is necessary to improve the service delivery.

The right of an individual employee to work flexible working hours may be withdrawn where that employee is found to be abusing the scheme.

2.4 The details of the scheme are set out below.

2.5 Introduction

2.5.1 The flexible working hours scheme operates for employees in the Council service, except in those work areas where the Director determines that flexible working is not practical because of service considerations. Employees who do not work flexi-time are required to work the standard hours.

2.6 Scheme details

2.6.1 Pattern of Working

The hours between which employees may be at work are from 08.00 to 18.00. The pattern of working hours, including lunch breaks and absences, must be agreed in advance with the line manager. At least one day's notice of any variation to the pattern of working must be given in order to cover service requirements and workload.

2.6.2 Core-time

The fixed periods during which all employees present that day must be at work are from 10.00 - 12.00 and 14.00 - 16.00 hours each day. Periods during which employees may have some discretion in regard to their own starting and finishing time are between 08.00 to 10.00 and from 16.00 to 18.00 hours and also include the lunch period 12.00 to 14.00 hours.

2.6.3 Accounting Period

The period over which employees must work their contracted hours, allowing for any carry over, is four weeks.

2.6.4 Contracted Hours

The hours which employees are required to work during the accounting period are 4 x 35 hours = 140 hours plus or minus credit or debit hours which may be carried over between accounting periods.

2.6.5 Carry Over Arrangements

A credit or debit balance at the end of any accounting period may be carried forward to the next period up to a maximum of eight hours. Any credit hours in excess of this, other than for overtime required by management, shall be lost.

2.6.6 Full Day's Absence

A full working day's paid absence taken as annual leave, sickness, day release, etc. shall be counted as seven hours.

2.6.7 Half Day's Absence

A half working day's paid absence shall be counted as 3 hours 30 minutes regardless of whether it is taken in the morning or afternoon.

2.6.8 Accumulated Hours

Any credit hours accumulated by an employee may be taken by agreement with the line manager. Hours may be taken as one day or two half-days in any accounting period.

2.6.9 Lunch Period

A lunch period of a minimum of half an hour must be taken between 12.00 and 14.00. Lunch breaks must be arranged to ensure that the work area is adequately covered. Line managers are responsible for co-ordinating the timing of breaks.

2.6.10 Overtime

Previously agreed overtime working outside the period 08.00-18.00 may be worked where unavoidable. These hours shall be regarded as outside the flexi-time scheme.

2.6.11 Dentist and Medical Appointments

Employees are encouraged to arrange medical and dental appointments for outside the core time if possible. Where appointments may need to be made during core time these should be with the agreement of the line manager. Emergency medical appointments which fall within the core time must be notified in accordance with the procedures for reporting sickness absence.

2.7 The recording system

2.7.1 Personal record sheets should be filled in accurately each day at arrival and departure to the nearest five minutes. Only in exceptional circumstances and by agreement with the line manager can an earlier time be recorded. Normal daily fluctuations in arrival, for example, due to traffic conditions, are not covered by these exceptional circumstances.

2.7.2 Personal record sheets must be available at all times for examination by the line manager. At the end of the accounting period the summary sheet should be completed and the records passed to the line manager. The personal record sheet will be returned to the employee and the summary sheet will be kept according to departmental arrangements. The employee should retain the personal record sheet for a period of three months.

2.8 Non-compliance with the scheme

2.8.1 The successful working of the scheme relies largely on mutual trust between management and employees. Non compliance with the scheme criteria will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Code. "Offences" will include arriving or leaving during core-time without prior agreement of the line manager, not working the contracted hours, inaccurate completion of the time recording form.

3 Overtime payments

- 3.1 Overtime working should only take place in exceptional circumstances and with the prior approval of the relevant Director. When the need for such overtime arises, every effort should be made to give employees advance notice of the requirement in order to minimise any personal inconvenience. There may however be occasions where it is not possible to predict the need for overtime working in advance, and in such cases employees may be asked to work additional hours at short notice.
- 3.2 The allocation of overtime should be equitably distributed amongst those employees who have indicated a willingness to participate in those arrangements.

3.3 Payment for additional hours worked

- 3.3.1 Wherever possible employees should take time off in lieu of overtime hours worked. However, where it is felt that time off in lieu would disrupt the workload priorities and deadlines, then the Director may authorise the appropriate overtime payment to be made. In these circumstances overtime payments will be in accordance with the rates laid down by the National and Provincial agreements. Please refer to the Payroll Section for further details of the rates. Managers should contact their Departmental Human Resources Section for further information.
- 3.3.2 For those employees who were previously designated Manual and Craft employees and whose overtime hours is in excess of the 37 hour week are paid in accordance with the previous relevant National Agreements. Please refer to the Payroll Section for further details of the rates. Where such overtime is a contractual requirement of the post, or where overtime payments and premia have been negotiated locally, reference should be made to the Departmental Human Resources Section.

3.4 Contractual overtime

- 3.4.1 Certain posts by their nature will require a level of overtime to be worked on a contractual basis. This contractual obligation will be made clear to potential employees at the advertisement and interview stages, and will be included in the employee's terms and conditions of employment.

4 Attendance at evening meetings

- 4.1 Compensatory leave will be granted for attendance at evening meetings. However, where a Director is satisfied that, through pressure of work in the department or other good reasons, it has not been possible for an employee to take compensatory leave to which they are entitled, they shall be paid overtime at the appropriate rate under the relevant overtime provisions.
- 4.2 Calculations of overtime hours due will be made on a monthly basis. The period to be reckoned for compensatory leave or overtime purposes will be the actual duration of the meeting, plus one hour. Where an employee does not remain during the whole of a meeting, then the only period allowed shall be the actual time spent at the meeting plus one hour. Where more than one meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee is held on the same evening, then it will be in order to count the compensatory leave from the commencement of the first meeting to the end of the second or subsequent meeting so including any short breaks between meetings and then add one hour. This provision is subject to review.
- 4.3 A subsistence dinner allowance (please refer to the Expenses Policy) will be paid for attendance at evening meetings commencing after 5.00 p.m. irrespective of when the meeting commences. It is only payable, however, in respect of those meetings where compensatory leave is taken.

5 Standby duty allowances (Callout)

- 5.1 A number of the Council's employees are accorded standby allowances where there is a requirement for a 24 hour standby rota to be in operation.
- 5.2 These employees fall into two categories. Firstly, social workers, where the standby provisions are incorporated in the previous National Agreement for APT&C Staff and is subject to review. Secondly other employees who participate in standby rota arrangements, where locally agreed provisions apply, dependent upon the needs of the service.
- 5.3 Further details can be obtained from your Departmental Human Resources Section.