

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME

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Policy Ratified By:	Cabinet
Date Policy Ratified:	
Effective Date of Policy	
Review Year:	Biennial
Applicable To:	All Caerphilly employed staff whose posts are designated ‘Mobile’, ‘Home’ or ‘Flexible’ with time independence.
Equalities:	<p>Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.</p> <p>This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.</p>



**GWASANAETHAU POBL
PEOPLE SERVICES**



INDEX

SUBJECT	PAGE NUMBER
Introduction	3
Scheme Scope	4
Main Considerations	4
Accrual of Working Hours	5
Making use of Working Time Flexibility	6
General Working Time	6
Additional days off work (flexi)	7
Other Scheme Considerations	7
Interpretation of the Scheme	7
Review of the flexible working hours scheme arrangement	7

INTRODUCTION

1. At Caerphilly County Borough Council, we recognise the importance of supporting our employees to work more flexibly where business needs will support this.
2. Where services can offer minimum constraints on working time, the mutual benefits to the employer and the employee are numerous. Employees may seek out a better balance between work and home life, improve their health and wellbeing and feel more engaged. The Council in return, may benefit from reduced absenteeism and increased productivity and support optimised employee performance.
3. The principles of this Scheme are based on equity and fairness, but it must be accepted that in the application of this Scheme, there will be different outcomes for employees relating to the job that they do, relating to the service, its business needs, and its client base.
4. Thus, tailored to meet the complex and varying needs of our services, this flexible working hours scheme supplements the 'time flexibility' that is referred to in the Council's agile working policy.
5. Using the categorisations of 'Fixed', 'Flexible', 'Mobile', 'Home' and 'Community' as below, our Heads of Service have quantified the basic level of time flexibility that exists in every one of the services provided by the Council:

Category	Role Determining Factors
Fixed	<p>Your role requires you to work in a fixed location all the time. You may need a desk in a fixed location, for example, a reception area. You may share that desk. You may need to use specialist equipment which cannot be moved.</p> <p>Your role is location dependent. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Flexible	<p>You may spend time in the office but you may also choose to work from home or out and about. You could work from any office or from home given the right equipment and access to systems.</p> <p>Your contractual work base will remain as the Council offices. You will be required to attend the Council offices when asked to do so by your manager e.g. for meetings, specific tasks, supervision and appraisals.</p> <p>Your role is location independent. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Mobile	<p>You have an office base or you can choose to work from home but spend more than half your time out on site either visiting customers, residents or businesses at various locations.</p> <p>Your role is location independent if you can also choose to work from home rather than the office. If not, your role is location dependent. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Home	<p>Through mutual agreement, a homeworking agreement is in place that confirms your entitlement to work from home a 100% of the time.</p>

	<p>Your home is your work base. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Community	<p>Your role has never required you to attend an office base or designated Council building. You leave home each day to work in the heart of community, for example visiting clients' homes for the purpose of providing care.</p> <p>Your role is location dependent as you provide a service to residents / clients in their homes or in the community. Your role could be time dependent or independent, depending on the service being provided.</p>

6. Where the work of the service/team supports time 'flexibility' or as referred to above time independence, employees in collaboration with their colleagues and Manager, may be entrusted to have greater control over their working hours.
7. The operation of any flexible working hours scheme would ideally apply to as many employees as possible. We recognise however that a number of services will not be able to offer maximum flexibility and in some cases, they will only be able to offer limited flexibility or no flexibility at all. The core operational hours of the Service must be met and thus, the level of flexibility that any post offers will be confirmed by the Head of Service and led by service's business needs and the client base.

SCHEME SCOPE

8. The flexible working hours scheme applies to those employees whose posts offer time independence. This scheme does not apply to the Council's Corporate Management Team.
9. The Council's recognised trade unions have been consulted on the introduction of this scheme.
10. The effective date of this scheme is (*Insert Date*). This scheme supersedes all earlier schemes.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

11. In support of offering employees time flexibility, Managers will first ensure that employees are aware of the core hours of the business. Thereafter, they will entrust employees to work effectively with team colleagues to ensure that the core hours of the business are consistently covered, whilst supporting them to have greater choice over when to work.
12. Managers in supporting time flexibility must always be able to effectively organise work amongst team members aligned to the working hours of the client/customer base; ensure that they know where the employee is and what they are doing; set and monitor work performance and output expectations.
13. Employees in return must always be able to commit to work rotas and/or work collaboratively with their colleagues to ensure work attendance around the core hours of the client/customer base; ensure the delivery of essential services/the undertaking of essential tasks and meet work performance and output expectations.

14. Ensuring service delivery will be the leading factor in Manager and employee conversations when decisions about flexi time arrangements are being discussed.
15. In support of enabling 'greater flexibility' around working time, a simplified time recording system has been put in place. In the simplified system, there is no bandwidth and/or reference periods that restrict working hours. The simplified time recording system enables employees to record all hours worked at any time of the day throughout Monday to Sunday.
16. Employees must continue to clock in and out on their Council laptop and/or keep a transparent record of their working time in line with the agreed process of the service/team.
17. Having a greater expanse of days and hours to work over makes it easier for the employee to manage their working time and commit to their contractual working hours. For example, whilst supporting the needs of the service and business delivery, an employee who works Monday to Friday may welcome the opportunity to catch up with some work in the early morning/late evening and/or on the weekend if their post offers them that level of flexibility.
18. Greater flexibility over 'when to work', does not mean that employees can fundamentally change their core working days which have to be aligned to business needs, without the prior agreement of their Manager/Head of Service. This means that employees who work Monday to Friday will still be expected to be in work predominantly on those days unless the needs of the service change.
19. Heads of Service through their Managers have the responsibility for ensuring this scheme is applied to all eligible employees in their Service Area.
20. If an employee is disabled and does not already have access to this scheme and/or limited access to this scheme, accessibility issues must be considered to enable them to take part.

ACCRUAL OF WORKING HOURS

21. The operation of the flexi scheme relies on trust and all employees who can use this scheme will be entrusted to do so responsibly, particularly in relation to the accurate recording of any hours worked. Any proven breaches of trust that leads to abuse of this scheme will be deemed to be gross misconduct and referred for relevant consideration under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.
22. Based on the position of trust, there are no bandwidths in the new time recording system that restrict working time. This means that any hours worked at any time over the period Monday to Sunday will register on the employee's record.
23. Employees must however continue to work sufficient hours to meet their contractual working time and avoid large fluctuations in their working hours, unless these have previously been agreed with their Manager.
24. To ensure adherence to the working time directive, employees must:
 - a. continue to clock out when they are not working and take at least one uninterrupted 20 minutes rest break during their working day if they work more than 6 hours that day,

To support employee wellbeing, the Council requires employees to take an uninterrupted break of 30 minutes during the working day if employees work more than 6 hours. This break cannot be at the beginning or at the end of the working day,

- b. ensure their working time stays below 48 hours averaged over a 17 week period and,
 - c. ensure that their working hours allow for a period of at least 11 hours away from the workplace between working days.
25. The time recording system will hold a limited number of flags, which will alert Managers to the working time of employees if;
- a. The employee's working time falls to ten hours or more below their contractual working hours at any point over the period of the calendar leave year, January to December.
 - b. The employee's contracted working hours reach thirty seven or more at any point over the period of the calendar leave year, January to December.
26. These flags will be an alert to Managers to review employee working time in line with their contracted hours, the business needs of the service and any material factors that are affecting the employee's working time. The Manager will review these flags with a view to supporting the employee to work their contracted hours and/or support their work life balance as appropriate.

MAKING USE OF WORKING TIME FLEXIBILITY:

General working time

27. Where the post supports time flexibility, employees could choose to manage their working time around their childcare, caring and/or work life balance commitments/preferences, providing that service needs can be met, and they obtain permission from their Managers.
28. Employees could work in 'bursts of time' throughout the day, for example, stepping out of work for religious observance; for the school run/for caring responsibilities, or for a fitness class or to take the dog for a walk/take themselves for a walk, etc. This again is providing that service needs can be met, and they obtain permission from their Managers.
29. Absence from work on any contracted day must still be requested and authorised as usual by the Manager in line with the 'Additional days off work (flexi)' section of this policy below, and/or the Council's annual leave, leave of absence and sickness absence policies.
30. If the employee works eighteen minutes or more than half of their contracted daily working hours on any given day, no authorised absence request will be needed. If they work less than this, they must cover the remainder of their working day with an authorised absence request. For example:
 - a. An employee who is required to work 7 hours and 24 minutes a day, must work for at least 4 hours or more.
 - b. An employee who works 6 hours a day must work at least 3 hours and 18 minutes or more.

Additional days off work (flexi)

31. In addition to the employee's annual leave, they may use their accrued working time to request a flexi day or flexi half day off work, subject to the following constraints:
 - a. No more than 12 flexi days or 24 half days can be requested over the period of the calendar leave year (January to December).
 - b. Part Time employees may request the pro-rata equivalent of 12 flexi days or 24 half days off in relevance to their contracted working days/hours.
32. There will be no cut off periods of time accrued during the calendar year and all time worked by the employee will show on their worked time record.
33. Flexi leave must be approved by Managers and wherever possible be pre-booked. In an emergency, employees may book flexi leave at short notice, subject to the operational requirements of the Service Area.
34. The maximum flexi leave that an employee will be supported to take at any one time throughout the calendar year will not exceed six full days or twelve half days or the pro-rata equivalent of these days for employees who work part time.
35. Any flexi leave taken must also be balanced against the employee's annual leave entitlement and Managers should ensure that annual leave is taken throughout the year.

OTHER SCHEME CONSIDERATIONS:

36. All debit and credit flexi balances belong to the service in which the employee accrued those hours. For this reason, they must be cleared before the employee transfers to another Service Area or leaves the service of the Council.
37. No payment for flexi leave will be made for an employee who is transferring to another service or on termination of an employee's employment. However, if the employee is in a debit situation, the deficit hours will be reclaimed.
38. A debit flexi or credit balance will only transfer with the employee to another service area if the service area to which they are transferring approves this.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SCHEME

39. In the event of a dispute relating to the interpretation of the scheme, the Head of People Services or a HR Service Manager along with a Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services will make the final decision on interpretation.

REVIEW OF THE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME ARRANGEMENT

40. A review of this scheme will take place when appropriate. Any amendments will be consulted on with all the relevant parties. However, in the case of amendments relating to legislative requirements, the scheme will be amended and reissued.
41. An employee who disagrees with their manager's position on flexible working arrangement, may issue an appeal to their Head of Service.