

THE HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

FLEXITIME SCHEME

Document Control

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Introduction

The Board has agreed to the Flexitime Scheme for appropriate staff. A flexitime scheme allows staff to have an element of flexibility over their working hours. It involves flexible start and finish times around 'core working hours' (when attendance is required) and within the limitations of the bandwidth (the earliest and latest times between which hours can be worked) allows staff more choice, subject to the operational requirements, over their working hours.

Line Managers/Supervisors and staff will however have to ensure that a proper and effective service is maintained from the different bases where flexitime will apply during normal office opening hours of 9am – 1pm and 2pm - 5pm Monday to Friday.

Eligibility

Subject to the operational needs of the Board to deliver services effectively flexitime is available to all staff.

Staff who, by the nature of their contract i.e. part-time hours or those with working patterns, may be unable to benefit from the scheme.

It is not a contractual right and can be reviewed at any time. It may be amended or withdrawn if there is a detrimental impact on the delivery of the service. If arrangements are changed these will be given in writing.

It does not alter the existing definition of a working week, defined as 35 hours per week and it does not affect overtime working.

The purpose of the scheme is to allow members of staff to effectively manage their work commitments and their personal commitments. Subject to the operational requirements of the department, staff may work flexibly during 'Flexible' hours.

Core conditions

The normal working hours pattern for a full time member of staff is a 35 hour week, 7 hours per day, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm with one unpaid half hour for lunch.

Anyone **routinely** working hours which vary from the normal 9-5 should apply for flexible working.

All staff participating in the flexitime scheme are expected to be present, undertaking their duties during the core hours which are defined as follows:

- 6.30am - 10.00am flexible
- 10.00am - 12.00noon core
- 12.00noon - 2.00pm flexible
- 2.00pm - 4.00pm core
- 4.00pm - 6.30pm flexible

These are the standard core hours for staff to whom this scheme applies and should be used for normal working arrangements.

All provisions under the flexitime scheme are pro rata for part time staff.

In terms of service delivery, it will be for Line Managers/Supervisors to ensure that sufficient staff are available during 9.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00pm - 5.00pm, and out with these hours where business needs require it, to ensure proper service delivery. It will be at the Assessor's discretion to determine who should be admitted to the flexitime scheme according to the demands of the department.

Operating the scheme

Breaks

All staff working more than six sequential hours a day must take a minimum of a half hour break which is not counted within the flexitime scheme i.e. it is taken in staff's own time. For young people under the age of 18 years, a minimum break of half an hour is required if they work for more than four and half hours in accordance with the working time regulations.

Time Recording

All staff participating in the flexi scheme must keep a clear and accurate record of hours worked, using the Board's flexible working system (Imperago). Any amendments to hours, annual leave, etc. will be approved by Line Managers/Supervisors. All records should be kept for three years and are open to audit at any time.

Time accrued as credit hours as a result of the scheme must be taken as flexi leave. A maximum of 14 hours of credit or 7 deficit hours can be carried into the next four-week period.

Any staff who resign from the Board are expected to clear any credit or debit flexitime before leaving.

Requesting Flexi Leave

There are thirteen accounting periods per year. One and a half days or three half days can be requested in any one accounting period. Full and half days are defined by the contracted hours and should be calculated accordingly for part-time contracts.

The success of the scheme relies upon the trust between staff and their Line Manager/Supervisor. Any request to take flexitime should be agreed by the Line Manager/Supervisor in advance. The request should be made electronically via Imperago and be authorised by the Line

Manager/Supervisor before any plans are made. Staff are encouraged to be mindful of busy periods.

A request may be refused if minimum staffing levels cannot be maintained as this may cause undue pressure on the remainder of the team. Appropriate staffing levels will be determined by the Line Manager/Supervisor.

The granting of annual leave and then TOIL will always take priority over flexitime.

In the event of a difference arising between a staff member and the Line Manager/Supervisor on the operation of the Scheme, this should be resolved through the Board's Grievance Procedure.

Abuse Of The Scheme

The opportunity for employees to participate in this scheme may be withdrawn if the needs of the service are not being met or if an employee consistently fails to adhere to the requirements of the scheme in any respect.

The operation of a Flexitime Scheme depends to a significant degree, on trust and it is therefore stated that any abuse and/or knowing infringement of the scheme will be regarded as a serious offence and any persons so doing will be dealt with by the disciplinary procedures within the Board's Disciplinary Procedure Policy.

Time Off In Lieu

Flexitime differs from Time off in Lieu (TOIL) which can only be accrued through additional hours worked, requested or approved in advance by a Line Manager/Supervisor, or a set requirement to undertake additional hours of work. This would normally be in relation to a specific activity or piece of work. Employees' must keep a clear and accurate record of hours worked, using Imperago.

Notes on policy (not for final document)

Flexible working policy will be extended in the morning from 8.00am to 6.30am and from 6.00pm to 6.30pm in the evening.

Office hours will be the same across all offices 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Presently the Inverness office opens between 1pm and 2pm.

These changes are a move towards improving our flexitime arrangements. For comparison, at the Highland Council it is possible to start at 6.00am and finish at 8.00pm, and at Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar hours run from 7.30am to 7.30pm.

Staff will be allowed to take 1.5 days flexi leave during a four-month period, previously 1 day.

The arrangements would allow staff, for example, to factor in public transport better, complete work in the quieter shoulder hours, extend time on survey, and give an overall better work life balance.

The proposal does not look to change any other conditions of service, in particular, the approach to overtime.

As with current flexitime arrangements there would be no compulsion or expectation that staff would work beyond their contracted hours.

These proposed changes have been welcomed by staff who have made the following comments:

“I support the proposals – they make sense and offer the opportunity to further enhance an improved work/life balance.”

“The longer flexi time band means I can get more done in a day without any detriment to myself or without the need for an expensive overnight stay.”

“The benefit to staff and overall motivational levels.”

“This is an excellent opportunity and flexibility for our staff.”