



DOC. REF:	Flexible Working Hours Policy R2-0
PROJECT:	Learning & development
AUTHOR:	S.WILSON R2-0
DATE:	01/08/06 <span style="float: right;">21/11/2006 16:41</span>

# **ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

**Version R2-0**

**Implemented 01.01.2007**



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### **FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The following Flexible Working Hours Scheme (FWH) has been agreed between Antrim Borough Council, NIPSA, GMBU and T and GWU and shall apply to staff as agreed by management.
- 1.2 The main purpose of FWH is to provide a more flexible system of attendance for staff. (The number of hours that an employee works on FWH is based on 37 hours or as applicable). The difference lies in the considerable scope which individuals on FWH have to vary their times of arrival and departure from work, to vary the length and timing of their lunch break and to take time off if they work extra hours.
- 1.3 Pay is not affected by FWH arrangements; similarly FWH should not affect any other conditions of service.
- 1.4 Council believes that managers should have some discretion in the application of all policies in order to ensure that any decisions taken are in the best interests of both Council and individual employees, while ensuring that a consistent and fair approach is taken at all times. In view of this senior management (i.e. Assistant Director level or above) will consider written requests from employees in respect of exceptional circumstances. Such requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate manager in conjunction with Human Resources prior to a decision being taken.

#### **2.0 CONDITIONS**

The introduction and continuation of flexible working hours for the staff, where applicable, by Antrim Borough Council will be subject to the following: -

- 2.1 That the high standard of efficiency and service to the Council and the public be maintained
- 2.2 That no additional staff will be required to maintain those standards as a result of the implementation of flexible working hours
- 2.3 That there is adequate coverage by sufficient staff in each workplace throughout the full working day, including lunch times when the Council offices and facilities will be open to the public; Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

It is the responsibility of the staff & line managers within each section to ensure that the office is adequately covered and if this is not the case the Line Manager may have no other option but to suspend the operation of the Scheme until a full review is carried out.



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A minimum number of staff in each department must be in attendance throughout the normal office hours 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m in order to ensure the service is maintained. This number will be agreed between staff and the Line Manager. In periods of pressure the minimum number in attendance may need to be increased, but, where possible, this will not be done without prior notice.

- 2.4 That in those circumstances where staff are working as a team, their method of working flexible working hours must be agreed in advance so that the present service continues to be provided;
- 2.5 Staff may start earlier than the normal starting time (9.00 a.m.) or remain later than the normal finishing time (5.00 p.m.)
- 2.6 That the Council reserves the right to determine, after consultation with the relevant Staff Representatives, those staff or groups of staff who, because of the nature of their work, will be excluded from the Scheme or who will have the opportunity to participate in the Scheme in a modified form.
- 2.7 Staff who wish to continue to work a standard 37hour week Monday to Friday (pro rata for part time employees) are free to do so.
- 2.8 Council will initially implement a method of manual recording which may be subsequently replaced by the use of mechanical & electronic equipment; consultation with the Staff Representatives will be conducted prior to the mechanisation of the recording system. Council also reserves the right to change the administration or recording of hours as new systems are introduced.
- 2.9 That the Council shall have the right, after consultation with Staff Representatives, to withdraw the Scheme from any section or members of staff who abuse its provisions.
- 2.10 That the introduction of Flexible Working Hours shall not worsen any individual's position in relation to his/her conditions of service as decided by the National and Northern Ireland Joint Councils.
- 2.11 The provisions within this scheme will be applied on a pro rata basis for part-time employees.**



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### 3.0 THE SCHEME FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

3.1 The flexible bands during which staff will arrive at work and depart from work will be: -

Arrival 8.00 a.m. - 10.00 a.m.  
Lunch 12.00 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.  
Departure 4.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

The minimum lunch break will be 30 minutes. Core time will be:  
10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m., and 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

- 3.2 The accounting period will be 4 weeks and the same accounting period is used for all staff using the Scheme. Staff who join the Scheme during an accounting period will simply record flexi time for the remainder of the period.
- 3.3 At the end of the accounting period, there is a reconciliation between hours recorded and standard hours. Carry over to the next accounting period – a credit of 11hrs 15 mins or a debit of 7 ½ hours may be made (pro rata for part time employees).

Any excess credit and debit hours shall be treated as follows:-

**Credit:**

A maximum of 11hrs 15 mins credit may be carried forward to the next accounting period. In certain circumstances, (e.g. exceptional unforeseen work needs during the latter part of an accounting period), an excess of more than the stated maximum may be carried forward with the approval of the appropriate Line Manager. In all other cases, any excess will be forfeited.

**Debit:**

A maximum of 7½ hours debit may be carried forward to the next accounting period. Any excess will usually be deducted from the staff members annual leave entitlement on the basis of one half day (3 hours 45 minutes) or multiples thereof, or will be treated as special unpaid leave.

- 3.4 Persistent abuse of this section of the Scheme will result in suspension or removal from the Scheme and/or disciplinary action which could include dismissal”

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3.5 Credit leave may be allowed up to a limit of 2 days in an accounting period and may be taken as four half days or one full day and 2 half days etc as appropriate. As in the case of annual leave such absences must be authorised in advance, however, approval will not be withheld unreasonably. Credit leave may be taken in lieu of excess hours attended or in anticipation of hours, which will be made up later. Requests for flexi leave should be made on the “Application for Flexi Leave” form.

3.6 The only restriction on the timing of half-day leave is that the leave period should not normally impinge on more than one core period. Thus after a morning’s leave an employee may arrive at the office at any time during the flexible lunch break (12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m.) and when taking an afternoon off he/she may depart at any time during the same period. There is no requirement to have a lunch break when taking a half-day’s leave. For credit leave no entry on the FWH record is made other than the hours actually attended: for a half days annual leave half a standard day should be credited in addition to the hours attended. Credit for a half-day’s leave is 3 hours and 45 minutes (pro rata for part time employees).

In exceptional circumstances Line Management may approve staff to take flexi leave that covers two flexi periods.

3.7 In relation to overtime there is a clear distinction between extra hours worked by individuals on FWH to suit themselves, as part of normal FWH arrangements, and additional attendance outside of core time which may attract overtime or other payments or time off in lieu, where appropriate. It is a general rule that all overtime for which payment is to be made must be authorised, and that claims for overtime or other payments must be properly supported by a record of hours worked. Overtime for staff on FWH must, therefore, be authorised and supervised in the normal way, and work for which overtime or other payments are being claimed should be recorded separately from FWH. Before starting to work overtime, staff must record the time at which normal working ended. The commencing time for such overtime shall be not earlier than the normal flexible starting and finishing times (currently 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m).

3.8 Because overtime is worked at the request of management, and is recorded separately from FWH, it follows that

- (a) Staff are able to work overtime and still accumulate the number of debit hours on their FWH record up to the normal limit.
- (b) Hours credited to the FWH total will not attract payment of overtime as an alternative to credit leave and extra attendance which is authorised as overtime may not be added to the FWH total, whether such overtime is remunerated by payment or time in lieu.

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### 3.9 Leave, illnesses and other absences from duty

- (a) FWH should not place staff in a less favourable position than at present (i.e. normal working hours) in relation to time off for casual absences.
- (b) Annual leave, Public and other holidays and sicknesses will be credited, the time being related to the standard working day (7 hours 25 minutes and 7 hours 20 minutes on a Monday). A half-day of annual leave will consist of 3 hours 45 minutes (pro rata for part time employees). An employee taking a half-day of leave shall only be absent during one core period.
- (c) Time off (up to one hour) will be allowed for visits to the Doctor, Dentist, Optician etc with the prior approval of the Supervisor but staff shall be expected to make arrangements for such visits outside core time wherever reasonably possible. Employees should only make appointments inside core time where they can satisfy their Line Manager that there are exceptional circumstances. Appropriate time off for hospital appointments, as agreed with line managers, will be credited to the record. Such absences, together with absences on leave, sick leave, special leave, training courses etc shall attract a credit to the record. For exceptional, urgent and unavoidable visits within core times credits up to one hour may be given at the discretion of the Line Manager. Pre-arranged medical and dental appointments should be arranged as far as possible outside core time.
- (d) Credit time will be allowed only for the following absences and shall relate to the normal working pattern which shall be defined as the most normal starting and finishing times:
  - i) Where an employee attends a medical examination at the request of the Council.
  - ii) Where an employee must attend a pre-arranged appointment, for example, antenatal appointments.

For all of the above, employees should adjust their "*Flexible Working Hours Scheme*" - Time Record Sheets (Excel Sheets) accordingly.

- (e) Flexi leave, (i.e. leave taken in lieu of credit or debit hours) **must** have the prior approval of the appropriate Line Manager. The frequency of taking flexi leave during the core time in any accounting period shall be four occasions. Two core periods may be taken on the same day.

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(f) Management will exercise a judgement in regard to credit for time lost due to delay in arriving or permission to leave early because of clearly unavoidable circumstances and where a substantial reason is given by the member of staff, e.g. severe climatic conditions or security problems.

3.10 Local absences from work with appropriate credit, or special leave, for industrial relations activities should be allowed to staff working FWH. Similarly Safety Representatives have statutory rights to local absences from work or special leave.

### 3.11 Working Away from the Office

Where an employee is travelling direct from his/her home to an assignment without calling at the office, his/her starting time should be calculated as follows:-

- (a) If the office lies on his/her route, his/her starting time is the time at which he/she passes his/her office.
- (b) If the assignment lies on his/her route, his/her starting time is the time at which he/she starts at their assignment.
- (c) If the assignment lies in the opposite direction to that in which he/she travels from his home to the office, his/her starting time is the time at which he/she leaves his/her home.
- (d) In circumstances other than those covered in (a), (b) or (c), his/her notional starting time is calculated by adding the duration of normal home-to-office journey to the time at which he/she leaves home.
- (e) Finishing times will be similarly calculated.
- (f) Employees who leave work on business absence and who do not return to work that day will be given a credit up to 5.00 p.m. An adjustment should be completed for any other finishing time.

3.12 The Council have the right, after consultation with Staff Representatives, to restrict any section or member of staff who abuses provisions of the Scheme to work standard office hours, i.e. 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

3.13 Staff should note that part time and casual workers involved in the flexi scheme hours of credit and debit will be pro rata as per their contract hours, terms and conditions.



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#### 4.0 INFRINGEMENTS

4.1 An infringement constitutes a break in core time. Persistent abuse of this section of the Scheme will result in suspension or removal from the Scheme and/or disciplinary action.

- (a) For two or more infringements committed in any one accounting period, an employee may lose an entitlement to flexi leave in the following accounting period(s) on the basis of one half day flexi leave per infringement.
- (b) Persistent infringements, for example, an infringement persistently each month or eight infringements in any five-month period, will result in suspension or removal from the Scheme and/or disciplinary action which could include dismissal. This will be continually reviewed by Management.

#### 5.0 FLEXI RECORDS

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that their “*Flexible Working Hours Scheme – Time Record Sheet*” and adjustment sheets are maintained on a daily basis.
- 5.2 Requests for flexi leave should be forwarded to the appropriate Line Manager who will sign and authorise such leave.
- 5.3 Completed Time Record Sheets (Excel Sheets) should be signed and submitted to the Line Manager at the end of the flexi period for signature and approval.
- 5.4 Employees whose flexi records are not up to date will not be permitted to take flexi leave until the appropriate documentation is completed.
- 5.5 Line Managers will spot check records, which will be held in a folder in an area, designated by the Line Manager.
- 5.6 Persistent abuse of this section of the Scheme will result in suspension or removal from the Scheme and/or disciplinary action.



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## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The successful operation of the Scheme will depend largely on the co-operation of all staff. A review off the Scheme will be undertaken on an annual basis.
- 6.2 Whilst Management are fully committed to the scheme and will make every effort to ensure its successful operation, Council reserve the right to amend the scheme at the end of the trial period or on subsequent periodic review, if the scheme or any part thereof is found by the Council to be of detriment to the efficiency and/or delivery of the service.



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**POLICY AMENDMENT FORM**

<b>Policy Name / Ref No: Flexible Working Hours Scheme. FW / 01.</b>	<b>Section No.</b>
Remove the words "To be discussed with staff side"	1.1
Remove the words " As a full time equivalent"	1.2
Add the paragraph "Council believes that managers should have discretion in the application of all policies in order to ensure that any decisions taken are in the best interests of both Council and individual employees, while ensuring that a consistent and fair approach is taken at all times. In view of this senior management (i.e. Assistant Director level or above) will consider written requests from employees in respect of exceptional circumstances. Such requests will be assessed on a case by case basis by the appropriate manager in conjunction with Human Resources prior to a decision being taken.'	1.4
Add the words " It is the responsibility of the staff within each section to ensure that the office is adequately covered and if this is not the case the Line Manager may have no option but to withdraw the Scheme"	2.3
Add word "electronic" to the paragraph"	2.8
Change the time of 10 ½ hours credit to 11hrs 15 mins.	3.3
Add the following statement " Persistent abuse of this section of the Scheme will result in suspension or removal from the Scheme and/or disciplinary action which could include dismissal"	3.4
Add the words" Requests for flexi leave should be made on the Application for Flexi Leave form".	3.5
Change credit leave from 11/2 days to 2 days credit leave.	3.6
Add the sentence " In exceptional circumstances Line Management may approve staff to take flexi leave that covers more than two flexi periods.	3.9 (d)
Add the words "For all of the above, employees should adjust their Flexible Working Hours Scheme - Time Record Sheets (Excel Sheets) accordingly".	
Clarification of sentence to ensure when staff start at their assignment this is their start time.	3.11.b
Remove the sentence "In exceptional circumstances flexi leave may be taken in advance"	3.9 (e)
Addition of paragraph, Flexible working hours calculated on pro rata basis for part time staff .	
Removal of paragraph	4.1 (c)
Change the words "flexi and adjustment sheets" to Flexible Working Hours Scheme- Time Record Sheet and adjustment sheets"	5.1
Add the following sentence "Completed Time Record Sheets (Excel Sheets) should be signed and submitted to the Line Manager at the end of the flexi period for signature and approval.	5.3
Change the words " six months" to "annual basis".	6.1

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## AMENDMENT RECORD FORM

### POLICY: FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME

Amend No.	Issue No.	Date	Sec.	New Issue No.	Nature Of Change
01	01	Oct 06	1.1	02	Remove the words "To be discussed with staff side"
02	01	Oct 06	1.2	02	Remove the words " As a full time equivalent"
03	01	Oct 06	1.4	02	Add the paragraph "Council believes that managers should have discretion in the application of all policies in order to ensure that any decisions taken are in the best interests of both Council and individual employees, while ensuring that a consistent and fair approach is taken at all times. In view of this senior management (i.e. Assistant Director level or above) will consider written requests from employees in respect of exceptional circumstances. Such requests will be assessed on a case by case basis by the appropriate manager in conjunction with Human Resources prior to a decision being taken.
05	01	Oct 06	2.6	02	Remove the paragraph " Management will draw up this list .... And change it to "Management will advise the Staff Representatives, in writing, of any groups of employees who cannot participate in the Scheme and clear reasons will be provided for non – inclusion of such posts. Individuals may appeal this decision to the next level of management if they are not satisfied with the reasons given. Appeals must be in writing and the basis of the appeal must be clearly stated.
06	01	Oct 06	3.3	02	Change the time of 10 ½ hours credit and to 11hrs 15 mins.
07	01	Oct 06	3.4	02	Add the sentence "Persistent abuse of the Scheme will result in suspension or removal from the Scheme and/or disciplinary action which could include dismissal". Change the times as above at 3.3.
08	01	Oct 06	3.5	02	Add the words" Requests for flexi leave should be made on the Application for Flexi Leave form. 1 1/2 days flex credit changed to 2 days.
09	01	Oct 06	3.6	02	Add the sentence "In exceptional circumstances Line Management may approve staff to take flexi leave that covers more than two flexi periods".
10	01	Oct 06	3.9 (d)	02	Add the words "For all of the above, employees should adjust their Flexible Working Hours Scheme - Time Record Sheets (Excel Sheets) accordingly".
11	01	Oct 06	3.9 (e)	02	Remove the sentence "In exceptional circumstances flexi leave may be worked in advance.
12	01	Oct 06	3.11.b	02	Clarification of assignment start time.

