

Human Resources
Goireasan Daonna

Flexi-Time Scheme

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Introduction

Flexible Working, Hybrid/Mobile Working and the Flexi-Time scheme create the 3 Flexible Working Strands which sit under the [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#).

The Flexi-Time Scheme provides an employee with the ability to **vary** their hours around core business hours each day and outlines expectations, considerations and process with regards to implementing the Flexi-Time Scheme.

The Flexi-Time Scheme is designed to complement the Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and should be read alongside the relevant policies and guidance. [Flexible Working Guidance](#) and [Hybrid/Mobile Working Guidance](#) should also be considered when reviewing this scheme, as these strands work together to support flexible and effective working practices.

Guidance

Definitions

Please see the [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#) for definitions of key terms.

Core business hours

All staff participating in the Flexi-Time scheme are expected to be undertaking their duties during The Highland Council's **core business hours** which are defined as **10am to 12pm** and **2pm to 4pm**.

For the purposes of Flexi-Time, the working day is divided into core and flexible periods as follows:

- flexible between 6am and 10am
- **core** between 10am and 12noon
- flexible between 12noon and 2pm
- **core** between 2pm and 4pm
- flexible between 4pm and 8pm.

What is the Flexi-Time Scheme?

Provided employee's overall hours are managed appropriately, the Flexi-Time Scheme gives employees the flexibility to vary their hours around core business hours each day.

Outside of core hours, employees have flexibility to choose their start and finish times and may also take an extended lunch break, provided this does not impact service delivery or agreed working patterns.

Any additional hours worked beyond the standard working day can be banked and used later to take Flexi-Leave, either as a half day or a full day. Employees may also use banked hours for a late start, extended lunch or early finish, as long as core hours are covered.

The scheme also allows for a limited time deficit, meaning employees can temporarily owe time back to the Council.

Eligibility criteria

The Flexi-Time Scheme may apply to:

- full or part-time employees **without** fixed start and finish times.

The Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) has the discretion to determine which roles may access the Flexi-Time Scheme based on service delivery requirements.

The Flexi-Time Scheme does not apply to:

- employees with a structured work pattern which includes **fixed start and finish times** outlined in a Flexible Working agreement (e.g. fixed, compressed or annualised hours)
- school-based, term-time employees
- roles where the nature of work makes it impractical to offer Flexi-Time (e.g. rota or shift work).

Scheme conditions

For full-time employees, the standard working week is either 35 or 37 hours, typically worked over 7 or 7.5 hours per day, with a 30 or 60 minute unpaid lunch break. Participation in the Flexi-Time Scheme does not change the definition of contractual working hours. Employees are still expected to meet their weekly total (35 or 37 hours) and any overtime worked outside of these hours will continue to be managed separately, in line with the [Overtime Policy](#). For part-time employees, all provision under the Flexi-Time scheme is pro-rata.

The Flexi-Time Scheme operates across 13 accounting periods each year.

Employees routinely working hours which vary from their standard hours should apply for [Flexible Working](#).

Flexi-time is not a contractual right and can be reviewed at any time. The scheme may be amended or withdrawn if there is a detrimental impact on service delivery.

Any staff who resign from the Council or move to a different post within the Council are expected to clear any credit or deficit flexi-time before leaving or moving roles.

Where the Flexi-Time Scheme is in place, managers must ensure that appropriate service coverage is maintained during standard business hours, including lunchtimes.

Flexi-Time limits

Employees can accrue and carry forward up to 14 hours (pro-rata) of surplus time into the next accounting period. Additionally, employees may carry forward a deficit of up to -7 hours (pro-rata), which must be made up in future working periods. These limits help ensure the scheme remains fair and manageable while supporting flexibility in how employees structure their working hours.

Breaks

All employees working more than 6 consecutive hours in a day must take a minimum unpaid break of 30 minutes. This break is taken in the employee's own time and is not counted towards flexi-time accrual. For employees under the age of 18, a minimum break of 30 minutes is required after 4.5 hours of work in line with Working Time Regulations.

Flexi-Time recording

Employees are responsible for keeping a clear and accurate record of their working hours using a Highland Council Flexi-Time recording sheet. This helps ensure transparency and fairness in how time is managed and flexi-leave is taken.

The success of the Flexi-Time Scheme relies on mutual trust between employees and their managers. Accurate timekeeping supports that trust and helps maintain the integrity of the scheme.

All recording sheets should be submitted to line managers regularly for review and retained for 3 years for audit purposes.

Flexi-leave

Flexi-time should only be accrued where there is a legitimate business need to work additional hours and should not be booked speculatively or in anticipation of hours being accrued. Flexi-leave should only be requested once the employee has accumulated the required hours.

Employees may request either 1 full day or 2 half-days of flexi-leave during any single accounting period. A full or half day is determined by an employee's contracted hours. Flexi-leave must be requested and approved in advance by the employee's manager, prior to leave being taken.

The request and approval should be recorded on the relevant flexi-leave sheet. When approving requests, annual leave and Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) take priority over flexi-leave. Managers may refuse a request where there is a legitimate business reason.

Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)

TOIL is different from Flexi-Time and only applies when extra hours are worked at the request of, or with prior approval from, your manager. It is usually linked to a specific task or operational need and should not be used as an ongoing arrangement.

Employees must not assume entitlement to TOIL without prior discussion and agreement. Once approved, TOIL should be recorded and used within 4 weeks of being accrued to ensure it relates to the original activity. Both employees and managers share responsibility for making sure TOIL is managed appropriately and in line with service requirements.

Quick Links

The Hyperlinks listed here will redirect you to the related guidance, letters, information, and relevant organisations mentioned in this policy.

[HR Microsite](#)

[Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#)

[Flexible Working Guidance](#)

[Hybrid/Mobile Working Guidance](#)

[Flexible Working Arrangements Guidance for Managers](#)

Additional Resources

[NHS Policies](#)

[Overtime Policy](#)



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