



FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS POLICY

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Aim of Scheme

Flexible working hours is designed to provide staff with the opportunity of arranging their individual work pattern by choosing, within predetermined limits, the starting and finishing times of each working day.

Staff will, on the whole, have greater freedom to plan their activities around their workload, responsibilities and commitments, both in and out of work. Nevertheless, it is an overriding principle of the scheme that no less a standard of service should be maintained than is presently provided and therefore staff will need to be flexible at all times in their response to the demands of their jobs, particularly on those occasions when the operational requirements of the service have to take precedence.

Participation in the Scheme

The scheme is designed for NHS Dumfries and Galloway staff. The standard working day must be covered at all times and staff may be required on occasion to restrict their flexible working arrangements so as to ensure full service provision.

It will be the responsibility of the Head of Department to determine if participation in this scheme should be mandatory for that department or parts thereof.

Basic Principles

The operation of the flexible working hours scheme must observe the following basic principles:

- (a) the level of service must not be reduced in any way through the operation of flexible working hours;
- (b) the needs of the service must always have priority over individual employee's flexibility;
- (c) the Head of Department (or designated deputy) can require an employee to attend at any time during the standard working day;
- (d) minimum staffing levels should be agreed and must be adhered to.

Glossary of Terms

Core Time – the pre-lunch period together with the post-lunch period during which all employees must be at work.

Flexible Hours - The earliest start time and latest finish time should be confirmed

by Head of Department, the periods during the morning, at lunch time and at the end of the day when individual is free to choose when he/she arrives at or leaves work in conjunction with Line Manager and dependant of the service needs.

Flexible Lunch Period - the time between the earliest permitted lunch break start and the latest permitted lunch break finish. It should be noted that the default period is 2 hours if no clock in/out is undertaken. NOTE : The Working Time Regulations stipulate that a minimum rest period has to be taken where the working day is longer than 6 hours. The minimum break allowed is confirmed as 30 minutes.

Flexible Working - a day containing flexible time period and core time periods.

Maximum carryover of Hours - the maximum hours that an employee can carry over in credit or debit from one accounting period to the following accounting period.

Standard Hours - the number of recorded hours which should be achieved in each accounting period.

Standard Working Day - The standard working day is defined as the contracted hours per week divided by the normal number of days worked per week.

Time Credit - the number of hours worked by an employee over and above the standard working day.

Time Debit - the number of hours not worked by an employee which falls below the standard working day.

Flexible Leave (flexi-leave) - the time taken in lieu of credit hours (with the prior permission of appropriate line manager). Flexible leave will normally be taken in half or full day periods or otherwise at the discretion of the appropriate line manager.

Operation of Scheme

The idea of flexible working hours is straightforward. Basically the working day is extended to comprise two central periods of core time during which attendance is obligatory and three periods of flexible time at either end of the core time and at lunchtime during which hours of attendance can be flexible to suit individual needs, subject of course to the needs of the service.

Flexible and core periods will be in accordance with departmental procedures.

Standard Working Day

The standard working day will be 7.5 hrs Monday - Friday i.e. (8.30 am - 5.00 pm with unpaid lunch break of 1 hour). For part time staff this will be as per contracted hours and normal working days.

Part-time Staff

Individual part-time members of staff would have core times and flexible times agreed by head of department/appropriate line manager pro rata allowances will apply.

Accounting Period

An accounting period will be a calendar month.

Time Credits

At any one time, staff may accumulate a time-credit of not more than 10 hours which will be carried forward to count in the next accounting period. Any credit hours in excess of this, other than for approved overtime, will not count and will be lost. Credit hours accumulated during the month may be taken as time off outside the core time. Staff may also take up to a maximum of 1.5 days off as flexi-leave in any one accounting period. Where staff are prevented from taking time off which is in excess of 11.25 hours during the accounting period due to their sickness absence, they will not be penalised in respect of the excess credit hours.

Time Debits

Staff will be allowed to accumulate up to 10 hours debit which may be carried forward into the next accounting period. Debit hours in excess of 10 will be notified to the Head of Department and could result in deduction from salary. Where staff are prevented from making good their balance by sickness absence, they will not be penalised in respect of the debit hours.

Flexi-Leave

The following will be deducted:

- for one day flexi-leave - 7.5 hours
- for one half day - 3.75 hours

Applications for flexi-leave must be submitted in accordance with departmental procedures.

Permission to take flexi-leave will not be withheld without good reason. However, management reserve the right to refuse flexi-leave where this conflicts with the needs of the service. In any event, applications for annual leave will normally take precedence over requests for flexi-leave. It should be noted that cover will not be provided for flexi-leave.

Overtime

All overtime worked must be authorised in advance by the Head of Department/Appropriate Line Manager or other authorised officer, and must be recorded outwith the scheme of flexible working hours.

Payment/compensatory leave for overtime worked will be in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate salary conditions.

All work authorised and completed outwith the flexible period will be treated as overtime if total hours worked for the week exceed 37.5 hours.

Leave

Authorised paid absences from duty which can include annual leave, public holidays, sick leave, special leave for jury service, training courses etc. should be calculated with reference to the times of the standard working day, i.e. 7.5 hours per complete day.

Other Absences

All absences relating to personal business other than unavoidable GP/dental appointments must be confined to periods of flexible working. i.e. outwith core-time. In either case, such time off will not be credited with the exception of a maximum of two dental appointments (confirmed by appointment card) per year. The amount of credit for a dental appointment will be determined by the Head of Department (or designated deputy) Arrangements for GP appointments must be made with the appropriate line manager and outwith core times except in exceptional circumstances. However, no credit will be given for GP appointments. This provision does not however apply to those matters for which "time off" is governed by statute e.g. to attend ante-natal appointments.

Transfer and Terminations

Members of staff transferring to another department or leaving the Board's employment must reduce their credit or debit to NIL by the date of departure or lose it. The value of any debit outstanding will be deducted from salary.

Discipline

Any abuse of the flexible working hours arrangement will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Among possible abuses are:

stopping work for lunch while not clocked out;

keying in or out for someone else;

persistent failure to record time keeping.

Review of Procedures

The system will be monitored closely and a review of the operational procedures will be carried out periodically.