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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Flexible Working Hours (FWH) Scheme provides authorised time worked beyond the weekly contracted hours to be 'banked' as 'credit' and taken as time off at a later date (within the four-week accounting period) to suit both the employee and the employer.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the importance of promoting the Health and Wellbeing of its employees and the FWH scheme contributes to this by providing a more flexible system of working hours for employees. There is, however, a guiding and overriding principle that this flexibility should be achieved without adverse effect on the overall efficiency of departments or their service, and without the need for additional employee to maintain service standards.
- 1.3 The FWH applies to all employees who are deemed eligible to work flexi hours.

2 AIM

The policy aims to:

- outline the purpose of the FWH Scheme;
- set out clearly the basic principles and conditions of the FWH Scheme;
- outline the procedure to be followed by employees participating in the FWH Scheme and their roles and responsibilities;
- provide employees with clear and consistent information in relation to the FWH Scheme.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1 The Policy applies to all employees who participate in the FWH Scheme.
- 3.2 Part-time employees may be included in the scheme, however the amount of flexi time accrued or debited will be pro rata, based on the FTE per week.
- 3.3 The Council reserves the right to determine those employees or groups of employees who, because of the nature of their work or service requirements will be included in the scheme.
- 3.4 The Council have the right to withdraw the provisions of the scheme from any section or individual employee who abuses the scheme or where the scheme is deemed not to be working satisfactorily. Similarly, amendments to this scheme may be made from time to time to meet service/delivery requirements. Abuse of the scheme may be regarded as misconduct which could ultimately lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee.
- 3.5 Data recorded via time and attendance software will be used to assist with reconciliation and verification of working hours, leave records, shift rotas etc.

- 3.6 All employees will be required to use the time and attendance system, and will be required to clock in/out using facial recognition clocking systems and/or mobile phone apps. IP addresses will be recorded for each clocking entry made by an employee, which will identify where the employee has clocked in/out as well as recording the time each clocking action occurred.
- 3.7 If a disciplinary issue arises, in the first instance, the employee may be spoken to informally by their manager. If a subsequent issue arise information from the time and attendance system, may be used, but cannot be the only authority of whether a disciplinary act has occurred.

4 BASIC PRINCIPLES AND CONDITIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that the FWH scheme operates satisfactorily and that the high service standards continue, a number of criteria must be satisfied:
- (a) A minimum number of employee in each Department must be in attendance throughout the normal office hours of 9.00 am – 5.00 pm. This should be agreed between employee and management. On occasions, particularly during periods of pressure, management may require the number in attendance to be increased and will determine this in conjunction with employees.
 - (b) Teams/sections must agree in advance, their method of operating the FWH scheme, in order to ensure effective service delivery during operational hours. Individual arrangements can be reviewed at any time by agreement with other team members within their department.
 - (c) There is, in the opinion of the line manager, sufficient work available for those members of employees who start earlier than the normal start time or remain later than the normal finishing time.
- 4.2 The Council reserves the right after consultation with employee representatives to determine those employees or groups of employees who, because of the nature of their work, will only be required to work standard office hours, i.e. 9.00 am – 5.00 pm or will have the opportunity to participate in the Scheme in a modified form.
- 4.3 The introduction of FWH shall not have an adverse impact on an employee's position in relation to his/her conditions of service.
- 4.4 Employees who do not wish to participate in FWH Scheme can request to opt out, at the discretion of their line manager. However, all employees must clock in and out regardless of whether they participate in the FWH Scheme or not.

5 THE SCHEME

5.1 Core and flexible hours

In the table below standard core hours are set out for employee to whom this scheme applies and should be used for normal working arrangements.

From	To	Flexible/Core
*8.00 am	10.00 am	Flexible
10.00 am	12.00 pm	Core
12.00 pm	2.00 pm	Flexible (Lunch)
2.00 pm	4.00 pm	Core
4.00 pm	*6.00 pm	Flexible

**Employees who avail of the legacy Craigavon flexi policy will continue to avail of flexi from 7.30am – 6.30 pm. New employees*

The clocking system will not account for hours worked outside these time bands.

In line with Council's duty of care to provide appropriate breaks to employees throughout the working day, and in line with the Working Time Regulations (NI) 2016, all employees must take a minimum lunch period of 30 minutes per day, if required to work continuously for more than six hours the break should be taken during the six-hour period; not at the beginning or end of it - no exceptions will be considered. A minimum of 30 minutes must be deducted for lunch breaks, including when having 'working lunch' meetings.

It is essential that employees clock in/out for lunch time breaks. If employees are unable to, or forget to, clock in/out, the system will automatically deduct two hours. In this instance an adjustment must be made to reflect the actual time taken.

5.3 Accounting period

The accounting period will be four weeks and the same accounting period is used for all employee. Employees who join the scheme during an accounting period will simply record flexi time for the remainder of that period. At the end of each accounting period, there is a reconciliation between hours recorded and standard hours

5.4 Credit balance

An employee may carry over up to maximum of 15 hours excess hours (pro rata for part time employee) recorded from one accounting period to the next. Any excess of more than 15 hours will be lost. In exceptional circumstances, which requires approval from the line manager, excess hours may be carried forward to the next accounting period. If an employee has an excess carry over for 3 months or more this will be reviewed by the line manager.

5.5 Debit balance

An employee may not normally carry forward more than the maximum deficit of 15 hours (pro rata for part time employee), from one accounting period to the next. Where an employee has a deficit in excess of the limit at the end of the accounting period, the line manager will judge the case on its merits and may allow the additional debit to be carried forward to the next 4 week accounting period. In

serious cases, such as repeated excess debit of 3 months or more, the line manager may deduct the excess from the employee's annual leave entitlement or toil balance.

In the event of an employee leaving the organisation, any deficit balance will be recouped from the overall monies owing to them.

5.6 Method of recording hours

The method of recording hours worked will be via the Council's approved time and attendance system. The Council reserves the right to implement/ amend the method of recording hours/ equipment.

5.7 Absence from duty

Employees on annual leave, statutory holidays, sickness absence or other leave will be credited the time relating to their standard working day. An employee taking a half day of leave shall only be absent during one core period.

Part days worked due to sickness absence:

Employees who work part of his/her target hours for a day but goes home sick during his/her working day will be credited the difference between the total hours actually worked and his/her target hours for that day

example:-

employee's target hours = 7 hours 30 minutes

the employee works 2 hours and then goes home sick

Correction to be submitted = 5 hours 30 minutes

If time in lieu is taken, a correction should be made on the time and attendance system, which should correspond with the Toil record.

Corrections made on the time and attendance system may be subject to audit processes as appropriate.

5.8 Medical appointments

Reasonable credit time will be allowed for medical appointments i.e. Doctor, Dentist, Hospital etc. with prior approval of the line manager, however, employee are expected to make arrangements for such visits outside core time as far as possible and in line with the Leave Entitlement Policy.

5.9 Authorisation of flexi leave

Flexi leave must have the prior approval of the employee's line manager. The maximum number of flexi leave occasions during the core times in any accounting period shall be a maximum of four core periods or two days.

5.11 Travel

Where an employee is travelling directly from their home to an assignment without calling at the office, the starting time should be calculated as follows:

- (a) the time at which he/she passes the office, if it is on route to the assignment;

- (b) the time at which he/she arrives at the assignment, if the assignment lies en route to the office,
- (c) the time at which he/she leaves home, if the assignment lies in the opposite direction to that in which he/she travels from home to the office.

Finishing time will be similarly calculated.

Officers who leave work on “business absence” and who do not return to work that day will be given credit up to 5.00 pm, however an adjustment should be made to reflect the actual finishing time.

5.12 Infringements

An infringement constitutes a break in core time. A break in core time of up to five minutes i.e., arrivals up to 10.05 am and up to 2.05 pm will not normally be treated as an infringement. However, persistent breaks in core time of this nature may result in suspension or removal from the FWH Scheme and/or disciplinary action.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Line Managers

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- sufficient employees are in place to ensure the effective delivery of the service;
- flexi-Time/TOIL/overtime/annual leave are approved in line with policy and absence records are accurate and kept up to date;
- where non-compliance is identified, appropriate action is taken;
- employees correctly reconcile their time and attendance record with their annual leave record and TOIL record (if applicable) regularly, and at the end of each leave year, before submitting annual leave/ TOIL records to HR.

6.2 Human Resources

Human Resources will ensure that:

- existing and new employees are made aware of and understand the rules and procedures within the FWH Scheme;
- line managers understand the rules and procedures associated with the policy;
- compliance with the policy is adhered to;
- the time and attendance software’s administrative system is regularly and consistently managed;
- the time and attendance system is monitored for abuse and/or failure by employees and/or managers to maintain records accurately and promptly
- Employee and Managers are adequately trained to enable them to use the system.

6.3 All employees

All employees must:

- be fully aware and comply with the requirements of the FWH scheme;

- make the required adjustments and maintain their record in a timely manner, including clocking in and out at lunch time, and submitting accurate adjustments (with appropriate evidence where relevant) when required, to line managers for authorisation.
- reconcile their time and attendance record with their annual leave record and TOIL record (if applicable) regularly, and at the end of each leave year, before submitting annual leave/ TOIL records to HR.

7 REVIEW

The successful operation of the Scheme will depend largely on the co-operation of all employees including those at supervisory level. The scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis in light of any changes in legislation or service needs.