

GUIDE TO FLEX



Introduction

North Norfolk District Council's flexible working practices enable managers to run effective services whilst supporting employees to maintain a good work/life balance. Flex time enables employees to vary the time they start and finish work as long as the requirements of the job are fully met and that either service delivery or colleagues are impacted by the timing of their attendance. Access to flex is discretionary and dependent on your job role and service demands.

These guidelines are designed to provide guidance for managers and staff regarding accruing and taking time off work as 'flex'. The guidelines provide information in regards to who can accrue flex, when time can be accrued, how and when time can be booked.

What is flex time?

Staff are contracted to work a specific number of hours each week. However, with discretion that benefits you and your employer, this Council allows the majority of staff to use the flex time system. Please note however, because of service delivery requirements there are some roles within the authority that are not able to work under the flex scheme.

If you are able to use the flex time system, you are still contracted to work a certain number of hours per week (37 for full time employees, varies for part time employees), but the flex time system allows you to vary the time at which you start and finish work, and take your lunch break.

It is also possible to work more, or less, than your normal hours where this is in line with the needs of the organisation. Any extra hours worked during the flex time period are counted as 'credit' (up to a maximum of 15 hours, pro-rated for part time staff) and allow you to build up flex leave.

Does everyone have flex time?

In some areas of the Council, there is a requirement for a continuous service to the public or at predetermined times. This means that flex time is not always possible. If you are unsure as to whether you have the option to work flex time, please check with your line manager or see a member of HR.

Although the examples in this guide are based on full time employees, some part time employees are still eligible for flex time. If you are a part time worker and have any questions about flex time, please speak to a member of HR.

Working times

In your contract, you will find your contractual working hours and days, if you are a full time employee they will be:

0830 - 1700 Monday to Thursday } with 1 hour
0830 - 1630 Friday } for lunch

Flex time allows you to vary your working hours, between the hours of **0700-1830**, as long as you are here during core hours. Core hours are the hours in which you must be present (0930 - 1200 and 1400 -1600).

For a full time employee, this means that you can start any time between **0700 -0930**, but you must be present from **0931 - 1200** (core hours).

You must take at least 30 minutes lunch break at some point between 1201 -1400. However, you are able to take a maximum of 2 hours, as long as it is in this period, and meets the needs of your service. This will be deducted from your total hours worked.

You must be present in the afternoon between **1401 - 1600**, but you can finish work anytime from **1601 - 1830**.

At all times, the ability to use flex as outlined above is subject to meeting the needs of the service and requires agreement from your line manager.

Flex time periods

The flex time system runs on 4-weekly periods. These periods are set by the authority and are the same for all staff. If employed full time, your periods are most easily divided into:

- **148 hours per period (4 weeks),**
 - **37 hours per week, or**
 - **7 hours 24 minutes per day.**

These are only guidelines, as the very nature of flex time allows you to vary the amount of hours you work per day. You can vary your hours as long as the following criteria are met:

- There is **office and phone cover** in your section during working hours
- Your working hours **meet the needs of your service area** (advice on this can be obtained from your line manager)
- You **work within the boundaries** of core hours and flexible hours (above) &
- You are **not less than -10 hours in debit at the end of a flex time period**, pro rata for part time employees (see below).

Credit/debit

It is possible for employees to be up to **15 hours in credit or up to -10 hours in debit** at the end of a period. Anything more than +1 minute (+00.01) on your flex time is credit. Less than 00.00 is a debit.

You must enter your hours on the spreadsheet provided and this will automatically calculate your credit/debit by subtracting your target hours from your cumulative hours worked.

For example, a standard period is 148 hours, so if you worked 151.36, you would have a credit of +03.36 (151.36 - 148.00). However, if you only worked 145, you would be in debit by 3 hours, i.e. -03.00 (145 - 148). Please note, if you are carrying over a debit into your new flex sheet, you should record this in the 'Brought forward' section, entering **both the hours and minutes figures with a minus sign in front**. For the example above you would record this as -3 and -00.

You cannot carry more than +15 hours into the next period (pro rata'd for part time staff) and will lose any credit above 15 hours. So if you were +16.50 in credit at the end of the last period, you will lose 01.50 and start the next period with +15.00 credit.

If your manager requires you to work additional yours, you can request for these to be paid. This will be subject to agreement with your line manager and must be agreed in advance.

Put simply, you cannot be more than -10 in debit at the end of a period and cannot be more than 15 hours in credit. This will be checked, and signed off by your line manager.

Overtime

In times of heavy workload or tight deadlines, you may be asked to work overtime. Overtime hours are hours not covered by the flex time period i.e. after 1831. See the overtime policy for further details on eligibility. These hours will be paid at the appropriate rate and needs to be authorised in advance by your line manager.

In some instances there may be local agreements, or contractual agreements covering different arrangements regarding overtime, or where it is agreed that overtime may be taken as 'TOIL' (time off in lieu).

To claim your overtime, please complete an [Overtime Claim Form](#). This needs to be authorised by your line manager and then sent to Human Resources for payment by the 3 of each month.

When can I take flex leave?

If **authorised by your line manager (in advance)**, you are able to take the equivalent of 2 days flex leave in any flex period, but no more than this. For full time workers this is equal to 14.48 hours, either taken as 2 days, or in 4 half days at 3.42 hours.

Staff may take two flex days consecutively at any point in the 4 week period (if authorised by the line manager in advance).

After your flex leave has been deducted from your time sheet, you must be in credit, or no more than -10 in debit at the end of the period.

How do I book flex leave?

To book flex leave you should fill out an [Application for Leave](#) form as normal.

Smoking Breaks

Please note that whilst the Council does allow employees to take smoking breaks, as per the [Smoke Free Policy](#) these must be taken out of core hours and the **actual** time taken for breaks must be deducted from your timesheet.

Time Sheet Procedures

A [computerised flexsheet](#) (Excel file), based on full time hours, can be provided by HR or is available on the intranet in the 'downloads' section under 'Organisational Development'. If you do not use the computerised flex time system, you should complete a [Staff Attendance Record](#) (again this is available on the intranet or from HR) for each 4 week period, using these notes as a guide. Whichever format you use, it must be signed by you, then countersigned by your line manager and forwarded to the nominated record holder in your section. All signed time sheets should be held in a central file in each service area. These must then be retained for a period of two years.

[Instructions](#) for completing the computerised timesheet are also available on the intranet.

Any Questions?

If you need more information on flex time, you can ask your line manager or speak to a member of the Human Resources team.