

Thanet District Council Flexitime Policy & Procedure

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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several overlapping, flowing blue waves in various shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Policy	Flexitime Policy and Procedure
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Service	HR
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Policy Statement

This Flexitime Policy and Procedure outlines how Thanet District Council (“the council”) encourages flexible working for employees within the bounds of service need.

It sets out expectations and requirements of employees, managers and the council, as well as the council’s underlying flexitime operating principles.

It is one of the HR flexible working policies alongside the:

- Flexible Working Request Policy
- Flexitime Working Arrangements Policy.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council constantly looks to develop new ways of working that benefit the organisation, employees and customers. The Council is committed to assisting employees to achieve a balance between their work and personal lives.

1.2 It is the Council’s policy to encourage managers to give serious consideration to the option of flexible working time where it is appropriate and supports the needs of the service, which must take priority.

1.3 Managers are encouraged to implement this policy consistently and fairly with due regard to the Council’s commitment to developing flexible working arrangements and becoming an Employer of Choice.

2. Scope and Audience

2.1 This policy applies to all employees. However, it is recognised that some posts, because of the nature of the duties, will not be able to benefit in full from the provisions of this policy. Examples of such posts would be those where there is a requirement to work fixed shifts, or fixed attendance patterns.

2.2 It is the responsibility of the line manager to decide if a post is not suitable to be included in this scheme.

2.3 All references to ‘line manager’ may also be taken to include their nominated representative, where appropriate.

3. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Act as a resource for employees on the use of flexi time
- Demonstrate our commitment to promoting employee work-life balance as far as possible within the council’s requirements.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Employees will:

- Abide by the principles of the Council's flexi time scheme;
- Maintain accurate records of hours accrued. Attempts to falsify records may result in disciplinary action being taken;
- Be mindful of the needs of the business before requesting to take credit hours as leave and ensuring line manager approval is given prior to taking such Hours.

Managers will:

- Abide by the principles of the Council's flexi time scheme;
- Actively monitor and manage flexible working hours within their work area;
- Ensure they comply with the Council's commitment to developing flexible working arrangements and becoming an Employer of Choice;
- Make sure their employees are fully aware of the scheme and their responsibilities under it.
- Line managers are ultimately responsible for ensuring that offices/workplaces are adequately staffed at all times; therefore all aspects of 'flexitime' will be under their direction.

Heads of Service / Directors will:

- Make suitable arrangements to ensure the full implementation of the policy and procedure;
- Ensure all managers are actively aware of the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity in line with our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the development of flexible working practices.

5. Operating Hours

5.1 This scheme allows flexibility of working hours, within a seven day week, within the criteria set out at the discretion of the Director, or their nominated Representative.

5.2 There is no requirement to set standard core times, although there is a requirement to ensure that the Council is staffed during business opening times. If local agreement requires core time to satisfy service requirements this will be determined by the relevant Director and made clear to staff. This may include evening weekend working as appropriate to the needs of the Business.

5.3 Staff working outside of normal office hours will have the framework for their working pattern agreed by their line manager. Copies of the agreed framework should be held formally by the line manager, the employee and HR.

5.4 A standard full-time week is 37 hours and a standard day is 7 hours and 24 minutes (7.4 hours).

5.5 The accounting period is 4 weekly.

6. Recording and Taking Flexi Hours

6.1 Where flexitime is available to employees and is being utilised, the times worked should be recorded in 15 minute blocks on the Flexitime Sheet Accessed through the Council's intranet.

6.2 Managers must ensure that there is adequate time recording in place and hours in credit or debit must be agreed at the end of the accounting period by both the employee and their line manager.

6.3 If during any given accounting period a member of staff accrues credit hours, this may be taken off as flexible leave, which must be pre-arranged and agreed with the line manager. Flexi leave taken should be noted and agreed with the line manager and must be recorded on the Flexitime Sheet.

Time off for hours in credit will only be allowed if properly recorded and agreed by the line manager.

6.4 Requests for flexi leave must be requested with good notice, where possible, and at all times the needs of the service must be considered and take priority.

6.5 It is anticipated that most flexi leave will normally be taken in hours in agreement with the line manager. Any leave should be recorded on the Flexitime Sheet as hours taken.

6.6 The maximum credit hours allowed to be carried over into the next accounting year is 15 hours, except in exceptional circumstances with the prior agreement of the line manager.

6.7 Staff must endeavour not to go into debt with their hours. If they do however, a maximum of 15 debit hours will be allowed to be carried over into the next accounting year. If more than 15 hours are carried over or an employee is continuously in debit by 15 hours or more then this may lead to disciplinary action. Where a debit of hours is carried over an employee will be expected to work sufficient hours during the next accounting period to bring the balance back to nil. If this is not achieved, without good reason, the normal disciplinary procedures may apply.

7. Overtime/Credit Hours

7.1 Staff will not be permitted to claim overtime, if they are in debit with their flexitime at the end of the accounting period.

7.2 Overtime will be kept separate from the flexible working hours system and credit hours will not be counted as overtime.

8. Time off In Lieu

8.1 Some roles require staff to work outside of the operating hours in section 4 and include evening or weekend work. These staff may have in place arrangements to take time off in lieu for any hours they have to work and these arrangements, where they exist, continue to be in place and are not covered by this policy.

8.2 All time off in lieu may only be taken with the agreement of the line manager and with consideration to the principles in 4.5 above.

9. Variations to Employment

9.1 A member of staff due to commence any long term period of absence, such as maternity or paternity leave or known long term sickness is encouraged to take any outstanding hours in credit before commencement of such Leave. Any hours in debit must, wherever possible, be cleared.

9.2 If an employee requests to reduce their hours, then accrued hours in credit must be taken prior to the employee reducing their hours.

9.3 A member of staff leaving the employment of the Council who has a credit balance, must endeavour, where this does not negatively impact on service delivery, to take the credit hours prior to their departure, otherwise credit hours may not be paid.

9.4 A member of staff leaving the employment of the Council, who is in debit of hours, must make every effort to make up the hours before their departure, otherwise, they may have an amount proportionate to the hours remaining in debit calculated and reclaimed from their final salary.

9.5 Where an employee leaves for reasons over which they have no direct control (i.e. redundancy, ill health) consideration will be given to paying credit hours at flat rate or making no deduction for debit hours, as appropriate and at the Councils' discretion.

10. Operating Principles

10.1 It is not intended that flexitime should be utilised to supplement annual leave as a regular feature i.e. it is not acceptable for employees to accrue additional time on a regular basis for working additional hours that the service does not require. If this is found to occur the flexitime system may be withdrawn, replacing this with set hours.

10.2 If there is proven abuse of the scheme, or failure to come to an agreement between the manager and individual, a review of hours will be undertaken which may require the employee to work fixed hours.

10.3 Any member of staff found to be falsifying flexible working hours records or in any way undermining the integrity of the system may be subject to the normal disciplinary procedures.

10.4 Any member of staff that feels they have been subject to unfair treatment under this policy should put their concerns in writing to their line manager, or if the matter relates to a decision made by their line manager to that person's line manager, the Grievance Procedure should be followed.

11. Equality Statement

11.1 The Council is committed to promoting EDI and combating unfair treatment. We will endeavour to ensure equal access to its policies and procedures and will combat discrimination or less favourable treatment on grounds of any irrelevant consideration, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.