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Flexi-time (Staff)

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1 Overview

1.1 What is this about?

1.1.1 We want to have a flexible and adaptable workforce, giving our people the autonomy to manage their working time to the mutual benefit of themselves and the organisation. Here, we set out the arrangements for using and managing flexi-time.

1.2 Who is this for?

1.2.1 This is for authority/police staff only.

1.3 Key information

- Flexi-time is a way that staff can balance work and home life while still ensuring that service needs are met.
- Flexi-time is available to all staff, including flexible and part time workers. It is not available to staff who are shift workers where applicable allowances are paid.
- Posts may be excluded from the scheme if flexi-time would detrimentally affect our ability to deliver an efficient service.
- Which system you use to record your flexi will depend on the location you work at.
- There are no 'core hours' that you are required to work.
- Flexi-time applies between the hours of 0700 and 1900 hours (the flexi-bandwidth) and is linked to the standard working day.
- The standard working day for non-shift workers is a period of seven working hours beginning at 0900 and ending at 1700 Monday to Friday with a one hour unpaid meal break.
- The full-time standard working week is 35 hours with a standard working day being seven hours. A half day is therefore three and a half hours. These amounts may differ if you are a flexible or part time worker
- When taking (and recording) a meal break it must be at least 30 minutes long, unless you are a flexible or part time worker where a 20 min break might be part of your working pattern.

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- There are 13 four week accounting periods over the annual leave year for flexi-time.
- Staff eligible for flexi-time cannot accrue overtime within the flexi-time bandwidth. Operational circumstances may override this arrangement occasionally.
- Managers are responsible for overseeing the application, use and recording of their team's flexi-time.
- Staff with two or more posts will have a flexi-time record for each one where the role is eligible. The records must be kept and used separately.
- Flexi-time is not a contractual entitlement and it can be removed as a benefit at any time.

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2 Staff

2.1 What you need to do:

- Accurately record any flexi-time using the recording system in place at your work location.
- Be accurate and thorough with your records and make sure that you follow the rules of the scheme.
- Manage your time to ensure that you do not build up an excess of hours in credit or deficit.
- For flexi-time arrangements to work there needs to be co-operation between you and your manager. You are expected to manage your time according to your personal workload, working pattern and operational needs and keep your manager informed about your use of flexi-time.
- You might build up flexi-time credit when your workload increases or you are working towards a specific goal. Flexi credit should only be built up where there is a business need for additional time to be worked.
- Keep your manager informed about any concerns over your flexi-time balances and discuss options with them to lessen any problems.
- At the end of each four week accounting period you must get your flexi record checked and approved by your manager.

2.2 Recording flexi-time

2.2.1 To benefit from flexi-time you need to record the hours that you work and there are different systems in place for you to do this depending on where you work.

2.2.2 In some work areas there are online portal/swipe systems which record your time at work. This will be either Etarmis or Timeware. Some buildings do not have a swipe card system and where either of these two systems are used by you, you should record your flexi-time on the relevant online portal.

2.2.3 If you work in a building or location where there is no online portal/swipe system installed and you are not a user of Etarmis or Timeware you will need to complete a flexi-time recording spreadsheet.

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- 2.2.4 There is a template flexi-time recording spreadsheet with guidance included as a resource with this procedure. If other spreadsheets already being used meet the requirements of this new procedure they can be used instead.
- 2.2.5 You must make sure that the pattern on your flexi-time record is the same as your contracted working pattern. On online portal/swipe systems this should be automatic but you will need to fill it in on a spreadsheet
- 2.2.6 If you use an online portal/swipe system you will need to make sure you record your time or swipe your card on the locally installed machines when you start work, at the start and end of your meal break (if applicable) and when you finish work.
- 2.2.7 Online portal/swipe card systems will automatically deduct a thirty minute unpaid break from all full time staff flexi-time records each day. You will be asked to log this or swipe your card (if applicable) to make sure your records are accurate.
- 2.2.8 If using the spreadsheet provided to record your flexi-time you will need to update the number of hours you are scheduled to work every day on the appropriate column before entering the times that you actually work including your lunch break.
- 2.2.9 You will need to make sure that any annual leave you have booked is also recorded on your flexi-time record. This is done as a 'correction/adjustment' on an online portal/swipe system and on the spreadsheet this will be recorded as hours scheduled and worked being exactly the same.
- 2.2.10 The user manuals and guidance for the online portal/swipe card flexi-time recording systems currently in use are included as resources with this procedure.

2.3 Positive balances and time off

- 2.3.1 You can build up flexi-time hours in credit during each accounting period, a maximum of 14 hours (pro-rated for part time staff) can be carried over into the next accounting period.
- 2.3.2 In exceptional circumstances this carry-over amount may be overridden by a Head of Department or Divisional Commander. This might happen if you have been asked to deliver a specific piece of work, for example.
- 2.3.3 You can request up to two of your full normal working days' flexi-time off during each accounting period. This can also be broken down into half days or hours if you prefer. Flexi-time off is pro-rated for part time staff
- 2.3.4 You normally need to request time off at least 24 hours in advance. Requests need to be approved by your manager and are subject to operational demands.

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2.4 Negative balances and time back

- 2.4.1 A maximum of seven hours (pro-rated for part time staff) deficit can be built up within an accounting period in exceptional circumstances. Any deficit larger than this may be considered to be an unauthorised absence.
- 2.4.2 Any deficit hours must be made up as soon as reasonably practicable, taking individual circumstances into account. Deficits should not be carried into the next accounting period.

2.5 Annual leave that has been converted to flexi-time

- 2.5.1 If you have requested to convert annual leave to flexi-time and had this approved you will see an increase in your flexi-time balance. You can convert a maximum of 14 hours from annual leave to flexi-time over the annual leave year (pro-rated for part time staff)
- 2.5.2 These hours are treated slightly differently to your regular flexi-time. The hours must be recorded on your normal flexi-time record as converted hours.
- 2.5.3 The converted hours are not subject to the maximum credit amount that can be carried over between accounting periods. You must use all hours you have had converted already before you make a further request to convert annual leave to flexi-time (if applicable).
- 2.5.4 You must also use all the converted hours by the end of the last accounting period in the annual leave year or it will be lost.

2.6 Appropriate use of flexi-time

- 2.6.1 Flexi-time is a system that is based on trust, any misuse of flexi-time may be considered a breach of that trust.
- 2.6.2 Any misuse and/or abuse of flexi-time may result in exclusion from the scheme, a requirement to clear a deficit if appropriate and/or disciplinary action.
- 2.6.3 Routine dentist, GP or opticians appointments etc. are expected to be made out with working hours however flexi-time can be used to accommodate them if operational circumstances allow.

2.7 Leaving your post

- 2.7.1 If you leave, or change role, within SPA/Police Scotland you will have to make sure that your flexi-time balance is zero. If you leave you will not be paid for any flexi-time in credit and we will claim back time that is owed from your final salary.

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3 Manager

3.1 What you need to do:

- Ensure any flexi-time worked is correctly requested and recorded using the system in place at your team member's work location.
- Review and monitor staff flexi-time records at the end of each four week accounting period, creating an auditable record for the full year to ensure accuracy and maintain a healthy work life balance in your team.
- Review applications for flexi-time off in accordance with business needs and individual circumstances.
- For flexi-time arrangements to be successful there needs to be co-operation between staff and management. Your staff are expected to arrange their time according to their workload, working pattern and operational needs and to keep you informed about their use of flexi-time as appropriate.
- Address any concerns you have with your staff about their flexi-time records and discuss options with them to rectify any problems.

3.2 Recording flexi-time

3.2.1 To benefit from flexi-time your staff will have to accurately record the hours that they work.

3.2.2 There are different forms of recording system in use for staff to record flexi-time depending on their location. There are online portal/swipe systems at selected locations and a spreadsheet recording system everywhere else.

3.2.3 The user and manager guides for the online portal/swipe systems that we currently use (Etarmis and Timeware) can be found in the resources section of this procedure.

3.2.4 A flexi-time recording spreadsheet and guidance on its use is also a resource. If other spreadsheets already in use meet the requirements of this procedure these can be used instead.

3.2.5 If using a spreadsheet flexi-time recording system your team will need to update the number of hours they are scheduled to work according to their working pattern on the appropriate column for each accounting period as well as record the times that they work.

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3.2.6 You must make sure that the pattern showing on their flexi-time record is accurate and, if your staff have any time off arranged, that their record reflects that correctly.

3.3 Managing positive balances and requests for time off

3.3.1 A team member can build up credit hours within an accounting period although they should try not to let this get too high, bearing in mind carry-over limits as appropriate.

3.3.2 You are responsible for ensuring that they manage their flexi-time balance appropriately and are mindful of their work life balance.

3.3.3 The maximum credit carry over into the next accounting period is 14 hours (pro-rated for part time staff)

3.3.4 In exceptional circumstances this carry-over amount may be overridden by Head of Department/Divisional Command. Additional hours might be worked to deliver a specific piece of work, for example.

3.3.5 Staff can request up to two of their full normal working days flexi-time off during each accounting period. This can be broken down into half days or hours if they prefer. Staff will normally need to request this at least 24 hours in advance. Flexi-time off is pro-rated for part time staff.

3.3.6 When considering a request for flexi-time off you should check they have sufficient hours in credit and also review business and operational requirements before making a decision.

3.3.7 Your team member is responsible for updating their own flexi-time record. You may need to approve the time off on the system if you use Etarmis or Timeware.

3.4 Managing negative balances and time back

3.4.1 Sometimes situations arise that mean a negative flexi-time balance is created.

3.4.2 You are responsible for assisting your team to minimise this possibility and helping them manage the situation if it does occur.

3.4.3 A maximum of seven hours (pro-rated for part time staff) deficit can be built up within an accounting period. Any deficit larger than this may be considered to be an unauthorised absence.

3.4.4 All deficit hours must be made up as soon as reasonably practicable, taking individual circumstances into account. Deficits should not be carried into the next accounting period.

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3.5 Annual leave that has been converted to flexi-time

- 3.5.1 Your team member may have requested to convert up to 14 hours of annual leave (per annual leave year) to flexi-time and had this request approved by you. If this occurs you will need to authorise an increase in their flexi-time balance.
- 3.5.2 These hours are treated slightly differently to regular flexi-time. The hours must be recorded on their normal flexi-time record as converted hours.
- 3.5.3 The converted hours are not subject to the maximum credit amount that can be carried over between accounting periods. They must, however, use all hours converted already before you can approve a further request to convert annual leave to flexi-time (if applicable).
- 3.5.4 They must also use any converted hours they may have by the end of the last accounting period in the annual leave year or it will be lost.

3.6 Appropriate use of flexi time

- 3.6.1 Flexi-time is a system that is based on trust, any misuse of flexi time could be considered a breach of that trust.
- 3.6.2 Misuse and/or abuse of flexi-time in your team will need to be dealt with appropriately. Possible outcomes could include exclusion from the scheme, a requirement to work back hours if appropriate and/or disciplinary action.
- 3.6.3 Routine dentist, GP or opticians appointments are expected to be made out with working hours however flexi-time can be used to accommodate them if operational circumstances allow.

3.7 Maintenance and monitoring

- 3.7.1 You are required to check and sign off your team member's flexi-time record at the end of each accounting period.
- 3.7.2 You should check that scheduled hours are accurately recorded as per their working pattern as well as the actual times that they worked.
- 3.7.3 If annual leave or any other authorised time off is included in that accounting period you should ensure that no flexi credit is gained on those days. Equally if flexi-time off has been granted and taken their flexi record should reflect that.
- 3.7.4 Once you are content that the record is an accurate reflection of the hours worked you can sign off the accounting period and discuss any carry over if appropriate.

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- 3.7.5 All records must be accurately maintained and retained for audit purposes. Please refer to the Records Retention and Management link below in the Information Governance Section for guidance.

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4 Resources

How to Guides

- Etarmis Online Personal and Manager User Guide
- Timeware Guidance Notes
- Flexi-time recording spreadsheet and guidance

Reference Documents

- Frequently Asked Questions Staff/Manager

Related Procedures

- Flexible Working
- Annual Leave (Staff)



Appendix A

Frequently Asked Questions – Staff

How do I record my worked time?

If you are using an online portal and/or swipe card system please read the relevant user guide. This can be found in the resources section of this procedure. If you do not have an online portal and/or swipe cards at your work location you will need to use a flexi-time recording spreadsheet. A version of this and guidance on how to use it can also be found in the resources section.

All non-shift staff are now on flexitime. Can staff opt out of this arrangement?

Yes staff may opt out of this arrangement or indeed management may decide that certain posts cannot participate for operational reasons. However, by agreeing opt out or exclusion, managers must understand that if they require staff to work additional hours they will need to be either paid overtime or TOIL at an enhanced rate.

I want to arrange some flexi-time off what do I need to do?

Firstly speak to your line manager and make sure the time off you want can be accommodated then you will need to update your record with the time off. On an online portal/swipe card system this will be added as a correction/adjustment and the request will then be sent to your line manager for approval. On a spread sheet record you will need to speak to or email your line manager and request the time off. If they give you the go ahead you will then need to update the hours you work on your flexi-time record. If you have the whole day off your scheduled hours will be what you were due to work and your actual hours worked will be zero. See the example below for information.

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Name/PSI:								
Week Beginning:		08/01/2023			Flexi Balance b/f		11:30	
	Start	Unpaid Break Start	Unpaid Break End	Finish	Total Hours Worked	Contracted Hours that day	Flexi Balance	Notes
Monday	08:30	12:30	13:30	16:30	07:00	07:00	11:30	
Tuesday	08:30	12:30	13:30	16:30	07:00	07:00	11:30	
Wednesday	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00	00:00	07:00	04:30	Flexi Off
Thursday	08:30	12:30	13:30	16:30	07:00	07:00	04:30	
Friday	08:30	12:30	13:30	16:30	07:00	07:00	04:30	

I have gone into a negative balance on my flexi record, what does that mean?

If you have created a negative flexi-time balance you will need to make up the hours in the following days to make sure that you are back in credit as quickly as possible. You should discuss the situation with your line manager if you are coming to the end of an accounting period or if you are concerned that you might struggle to bring yourself back into credit again.

I have more than 14 hours of flexi-time and I can't take any time off before the end of the accounting period, what do I do?

You will need to speak to your line manager and allow them to review the situation with you. The circumstances leading to your flexi balance being so high will need to be discussed. In some exceptional circumstances a higher amount can be carried over however this would need to be agreed by your head of department or divisional command and is not guaranteed.

I have a dentist appointment and it is during my working day, can I use Flexi-time?

We expect you to make routine dentist, GP or opticians appointments out with working hours however flexi-time can be used to accommodate them if operational circumstances allow.

I have been held up and offered overtime to complete an essential piece of work will I get paid overtime even though it is within the flexitime bandwidth?

Some roles may require staff to stay on at work for operational reasons. In exceptional circumstances and where overtime has been authorised to meet a specific organisational requirement you will be required to record your normal working time on your flexi record and claim overtime instead for any additional time worked.

I have a personal appointment early afternoon, can I work from 7.00-12.00 and then 16.00-19.00 that day to accommodate this?

Yes, you may work these hours providing you have agreed this with your manager as operational requirements still have to be met. The removal of core hours has allowed for this type of flexibility for staff.

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Due to my travel to work arrangements I tend to routinely work 7.00-15.30. Do I need to have a flexible working pattern and change of contract to work this?

As long as you have agreed this working arrangement with your manager and business needs are being met then you would not need a flexible working pattern and change of contract. However, if it is difficult for you to work alternative hours then you may wish to consider formalising the arrangement with a flexible working pattern to protect your arrangements.

Can I have more than one break during the day? For example clock out to attend a doctor's appointment and then clock out for lunch time?

Yes, under the new arrangements you may, in agreement with your manager, have more than one break per day. You will need to manually adjust the flexi recording system to record this accurately.

I need to have a late start one day but wouldn't need a half day flexi off. Can I arrange with my manager to start at 11.00 and work until 19.00 as I have plenty of work to do?

Yes, providing you have the agreement of your manager.

If the business allows and I have flexi to support this, could I work for two hours and then finish for the day?

Yes, providing you have the agreement of your manager.

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Appendix B

Frequently Asked Questions – Manager

My team work nine till five according to SCoPE so how does this flexi-time scheme work for them?

Although staff have a contracted working day, say for example nine till five with a one hour break, flexi-time means that they have the ability to not have to default to these hours and can flex within the parameters of the scheme and as business requires. They may have different start and finish times or perhaps vary their meal break. Having the ability to flexibly manage their working time means that issues such as travel to and from work, caring responsibilities or emergencies are managed more easily and at shorter notice whilst still meeting the needs of the business. Flexi-time working is an element of our people strategy and drive to create a positive working environment for our staff. This strategy is fully endorsed by the Chief Constable and the SPA.

I am not sure that flexi-time is appropriate for my team, how can I make sure that service needs are met and still allow it?

It is your responsibility to ensure that business needs are met by your team but even though there may be a requirement to provide cover between certain hours this does not mean that flexi-time cannot be used. You should discuss this with your team and ensure that they are aware of the requirement to provide cover and allow them to make arrangements as required. You should encourage them to discuss flexi time use with each other and you particularly if they know in advance if they are going to be in late or otherwise differ from their usual working day. Flexi-time has been used by many staff throughout the whole of the force for a number of years and does work where management are clear about the requirements of cover where this is important. If you are certain that flexi-time will not be suitable for your work area you should discuss this with People Direct before removing the benefit from your team.

My team work a variety of patterns; how do I keep on top of things?

As long as you know what each of your team members work you can make sure their patterns are recorded correctly. If you have an electronic/swipe card system the pattern should be uploaded automatically. On the flexi recording sheet you can check each pattern individually to make sure it matches up. You might want to ask your teams to update the sheet for the full year in advance to make it easier for you, or if they have an annual pattern. Otherwise just check each accounting period at the end of every four weeks and ensure the time scheduled and worked is correct.

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One of my team works 7 till 3.30 every day to avoid the traffic but they don't have flexible working pattern; should they apply for it or is flexi OK to use?

Flexi time is fine to use for this sort of arrangement as long as you are happy with the hours they work and business needs are met. If the individual would struggle to change their working hours at all, for whatever reason, then they may wish to formalise the arrangement with an application but it is not required.

I have a team member who wants to come in for a few hours take a long break and then come back to complete their day; is this allowed?

Flexi time is fine to use for this sort of arrangement as long as you are happy with the hours they work and business needs are met.

I work remotely from my team, how does this work for me?

As you work remotely from your team there is probably an element of trust in play already. The flexi recording system will formalise and standardise the records that you may already keep and ensure that your staff maintain a good work life balance with an auditable record.

I think one of my team may be abusing the flexi-time system, what do I do?

Have a look at their records and at an appropriate time review it with them. If there are any concerns about their time keeping or the records then discuss this with the individual concerned and ensure they are clear about how to use the flexi-time recording system appropriate to them. If any adjustments need to be made to that reporting period ensure that they are carried out. Make sure that the individual is clear about their responsibilities and arrange to carry out a further review at the end of the next accounting period. If the abuse/misuse of flexitime is chronic and/or sustained you may wish to consider revoking the use of flexi-time for that individual or even perhaps disciplinary action. Consider all circumstances and ensure that individual welfare issues are looked at before proceeding down this path. You would be advised to speak to People Direct to discuss any concerns before taking any formal action.

One of my team has asked for flexi time off but they do not have enough credit, what do I do?

You need to consider if you can support the time off and what it is for. Managers have discretion to allow the creation of a negative flexi-time balance but individual circumstances must be taken into consideration. The other thing you may wish to consider is the likelihood of the balance being made up in good time. Remember that a negative balance should be paid back before the end of the accounting period. Perhaps other leave forms may be more appropriate and you should refer to the annual leave procedure and the special leave procedure depending on individual circumstances involved.

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