

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

Employment Conditions Committee: 23 April 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

**WORK LIFE BALANCE STRATEGY: PILOT PROPOSALS FOR
REVISED FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME.**

Background

1. Members may recall a report considered by this Committee on 16 October 2006 which provided background to the Work-Life Balance Strategy project and the partnership approach working with Chwarae Teg, outlined some preliminary work that was underway and highlighted some key issues that would be considered in the near future. This report updates Members on further developments and outlines a proposal to pilot a revised Flexible Working Hours Scheme within the Council.
2. Work-Life Balance is achieved when an organisation and its employees work together to identify benefits for both through establishing a more flexible approach to working arrangements. This approach supports the ethos that Work-Life Balance is available to all employees, not just to those who can demonstrate caring and/or parental responsibilities and is effectively reason neutral.
3. Benefits for employers of adopting this approach could include:
 - Increased staff loyalty, motivation, engagement and employees feeling more valued.
 - The ability to attract a wider range of candidates – for example older, part time workers, carers, etc.
 - Can be the added incentive required to attract candidates in sectors where recruitment and retention are ongoing issues e.g. Social Workers.
 - Increased productivity.
 - Reduced absenteeism and subsequently costs associated with sickness absence.
 - Cements a reputation as an employer of choice.
4. Similarly, the benefits for employees could include:
 - Greater responsibility and a sense of ownership contributing to a less stressful work environment.
 - Better relations between management and workforce.
 - Improved self-esteem, health, concentration and confidence
 - Increased loyalty and commitment.
 - Time to strike a better balance with life outside work.
 - Greater control of working lives.

5. Working in partnership with Chwarae Teg throughout the WLB Strategy has been of great benefit to the Council, learning from their experiences of working with other local authorities in Wales, the successes they have had else where and the challenges they have encountered.

Issues

6. Since the last report in October, awareness raising has been ongoing with inputs provided to various groups, management team meetings, Business Improvement Meetings and reports to Works Council, as necessary. The learning from others' experience is that a clear early understanding of the principles of Work Life Balance is key to ensuring progress and success in implementing flexible approaches to working arrangements.
7. A WLB Project Group has been established involving representatives from Human Resources, Culture Leisure & Parks, Transport Infrastructure & Waste, Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal, Social Care, Trade Unions and Chwarae Teg. The priority areas of focus included a review of the Council's current Flexible Working Hours Scheme (originally agreed in 1997) and consideration of how Team Based Solutions could be implemented for groups /teams who are not able to access the Flexitime Scheme.

Proposals

Proposed Flexible Working Hours Pilot Scheme

8. Since the development and implementation of the scheme in 1997, the requirements of the business and the needs and expectations of employees, citizens and the community has changed e.g. employees are increasingly required to work outside the current bandwidth to meet business needs. The proposed changes provide a significant opportunity for the Council to maximise its employee resource while at the same time offering major benefits to employees by introducing increased flexibility in the scheme. The revisions also take into consideration, similar schemes operating in other Local Authorities in Wales and the successes they have had. Consequently, revisions to the current scheme are proposed as follows:-

Scheme Element	Current	Proposed
1. Core Hours	9.30 – 12.00 and 2.00 – 4.00 / 3.30	Remove
2. Accounting Periods	4 weekly	4 weekly
3. No. of flexi days to be taken in each accounting period	1 x full day or 2 half days	16 hours / 2 x full days/ 4 x half days
4. Maximum credit/debit carry over between accounting periods	Credit 10 hours Debit 10 hours	Credit 16 hours Debit 10 hours
5. Time Recording Mechanisms	Clocks and Trust Sheets	Clocks and Trust Sheets
6. Bandwith	8am – 6pm	7am – 7pm

9. The proposal, if approved, is that the pilot should be applied to all existing employees on the current system (whether using flexi clocks or trust sheet arrangements) for a 12 month period. Measures to assess the effectiveness of the revised scheme will be established and will be monitored on a quarterly basis via the People and Leadership Programme Panel and any other forum as necessary. These measures will be further considered as part of the development of the Implementation Plan and will include monitoring of sickness absence levels, recruitment & retention statistics, volume of special leave requests, employee and manager feedback mechanisms, etc.
10. An Implementation Plan is being developed to support the roll out of this pilot and includes:
 - Communication /Awareness Raising
 - Briefing sessions for managers
 - Q & A sessions for managers and staff
 - FAQs and Guidelines
 - Core Brief / Newsletter / email to all staff
 - Feedback links
 - FWH Section on WLB Intranet
 - Responses to related issues
 - Health and Safety / lone working
 - Impact on IT, access to buildings etc
 - Links with other policies
11. It will be reinforced at various stages of the implementation of the revised Scheme through guidelines, FAQ's, briefings, intranet, etc, that the business needs are of paramount importance; that the revised scheme does not offer an automatic entitlement to avail of two days flexi leave per month; and that the pilot and working patterns of employees must be managed by managers, taking into consideration the needs of the business.
12. Attached as Appendix A therefore is the proposed pilot policy for the revised Flexible Working Hours Scheme, which clearly outlines manager and employees rights and responsibilities under the scheme. Also attached as Appendix B, is a FAQ document, developed to assist managers and employees in their understanding of the changes to the scheme, the scope, nature and reason for the pilot exercise
13. In view of the potential impact of these changes and numbers of employees affected, a major consultation exercise has been undertaken to seek views from a number of groups. Groups consulted have included: Human Resources Development Group, Works Council, Trade Unions and Service Area Management Teams. The documents attached have been amended to reflect feedback received.
14. Key issues raised during the consultation process have included:
 - How managers will be supported throughout the pilot and general communication and awareness issues
 - The need for managers to look at the current work patterns of their staff
 - Managing expectations of staff and ongoing delivery of efficient services is paramount.
 - Implementing the scheme consistently, including dealing with abuse of the Scheme
 - The need to manage the perceptions of those who are not able to access FWH scheme

- Need to establish clear measures by which to assess the effectiveness of the pilot
- Removal of core hours, extending bandwidth and increasing the amount of flexi available will require managers to consider existing service delivery arrangements.

Team Based Solutions

15. In recognition of likely perceptions of those employees not currently on flexi-time, as outlined in paragraph 7, another priority area being addressed by the Project Group is that of Team Based Solutions. This is an approach that Chwarae Teg used in Wrexham where teams not able to access flexi could develop and implement, with the support of their managers, flexible working solutions for their respective teams. In Wrexham, teams from Parks, Highways, Maintenance, Residential Care Homes, etc. were able to develop and introduce a level of flexible working not previously considered.
16. In order to trial this approach in Cardiff, volunteer teams have been sought via Core Brief and again at the WLB Awareness Raising sessions held with senior managers. Nominations from teams in Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal, Finance, Childrens, Adults, Transport, Infrastructure and Waste and Schools and Lifelong Learning have been received to date. Further work is underway to collate information which will assist the WLB Project Group in developing a framework which can then be used by volunteer teams. Pilot arrangements, meeting service and team needs, will be discussed, implemented and measured by the WLB Project Group.

Investment for Reform/Benefit to Service User

17. The implementation of Work-Life Balance will enhance employee motivation and increase productivity which will in turn benefit Service Users.

Council Policies Supported

18. This policy supports the Cardiff Connections- Serving the City element of the Corporate Plan.

Advice

19. This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Corporate Directors and reflects their advice. It contains all the information necessary to allow members to arrive at a reasonable view, taking into account the following advice.

Legal Implications

20. The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Functions and Responsibilities)(Wales) Order 2007 provides that “Appointment and Dismissal of Staff” shall not be an Executive function. This is a narrowing of the provisions of the 2001 Order as amended. On the face of it this impacts on the terms of reference of this Committee in that it is arguable that these should now only cover the responsibilities within the quotation marks. The issue will be clarified with WAG and a report put to a forthcoming Constitution Committee with advice. In the interim the recommendations in this report may be considered by this Committee.

Financial Implications

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any changes in working hours arising as a result of the implementation of the pilot scheme will be managed by service areas from within existing resources.

Human Resource Implications

22. Implementation of a Work-Life Balance Strategy will have a positive impact on a range of HR issues, including employee engagement, it will further support the Council's Commitment to being an employer of choice, improve relations between managers and employees and will contribute to a number of Corporate Health Standard issues. Specifically, other benefits will include a contribution to a reduction in sickness absence, help retain valuable and skilled employees and can help attract a wider field of candidates.

Trade Union Comments

23. In addition to usual consultation arrangements, the Works Council on 14 March, 2007 received a joint presentation outlining details of the Flexible Working Hours proposals. The Trade Unions support this initiative and are reassured Work-Life Balance will be accessible to all and that requests will be dealt with on a 'reason neutral' basis. The working examples from other local authorities have reinforced to the Trade Unions that Work-Life Balance is not solely for office based employees with childcare or caring responsibilities. The scope of Work-Life balance is much wider and this has been welcomed by the Trade Unions. They broadly welcomed proposals for those on flexi but urged that other non-office based employees be offered some form of flexible working where practicable.
24. They acknowledged that , in relation to proposals for the revised Flexible Working Hours Scheme, the key change was removal of core hours and commented that they would not wish to see this diluted or changed in any way. They felt proposals should be applied across all Service Areas and that training and support for managers in implementation was crucial. A range of practical implications were raised including health and safety, earlier access to buildings, links with car parking, overtime arrangements, monitoring criteria, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. It is recommended that:-
 - (i) The pilot proposal for implementation of revised Working Hours Scheme be agreed.
 - (ii) The proposed revised scheme and FAQ , attached as Appendices A and B respectively , be agreed.
 - (iii) A progress report on the effectiveness of the pilot exercise be considered at a future meeting of this Committee.
 - (iv) An update report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee on progress with Team Based Flexible Working Solutions

BYRON DAVIES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Appendices Attached:

Appendix A : The Proposed Pilot Policy for Flexible Working Hours Scheme

Appendix B : FAQs

CARDIFF COUNCIL

PILOT - FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS (FWH) SCHEME

Purpose

1. The FWH Pilot Scheme is one of Cardiff Council's Work-Life Balance policies being developed and piloted under the Work-Life Balance Strategy. The review of the Flexitime Scheme is in response to the increasing expectations of employees, Cardiff citizens and communities and the changing nature of how we live and work. The pilot aims to provide significant additional flexibility for employees, to enable them to better balance their work and home commitments. It further aims to provide flexibility in service delivery for the benefit of internal and external customers.

Scope

2. The pilot scheme will apply to all employees currently on the FWH Scheme regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time or job share positions, (i.e. those on the flexi automated system or trust sheet system.) Those who are recruited into posts, in the coming financial year, identified as being compatible with the Scheme, will also have access to the pilot scheme. Teaching and other associated school employees are not covered by this policy.
3. The pilot will commence at the start of the 4-week accounting period on... TBC.

Key Principles

4. In line with the Council's commitment to the Work-Life Balance Strategy, the Council recognises that increased flexibility with regards to individuals working hours, carries benefits to employees and the Council as a whole.
5. The scheme will be applied on a basis which enables quality services to be delivered and meets the needs of service users, the organisation and employees.
6. The success of the pilot requires effective communication, co-operation and reasonableness between managers and employees.

7. Managers need to take into account the needs of service users, the organisation and other employees; and ensure that a quality service is maintained at all times.
8. Employees can choose their hours of work in accordance with the scheme subject to the agreement of their line manager, who will take into account the business needs of the Service Area.
9. Employees are expected, when arranging their times of work, to have regard to their current personal workload and the overall pattern of work in their Service Area. There may be a need to work specified times to meet the exigencies of the service.
10. Employees must recognise that the increased flexibility offered under the revised scheme is not an automatic entitlement and at all times the provision of a quality service is paramount.
11. It is recognised that no, one scheme, will cover all circumstances and eventualities. Therefore, the Council's expectation is that managers will consider sympathetically the Work-Life Balance needs and requests of all employees.

Responsibilities and Rights of Management

12. These include the following:
 - a. To ensure that the working hours of employees meet the needs of service users, the organisation and employees and that individual's working patterns do not have a detrimental affect on their colleagues.
 - b. To familiarise themselves with this policy, in particular their responsibilities and how to deal with abuse of the scheme.
 - c. To operate the scheme fairly and reasonably with no detrimental effect on overall efficiency or service.
 - d. To ensure the scheme is effectively implemented.
 - e. To ensure employees fully understand the scheme and their rights and responsibilities in relation to its implementation.
 - f. To ensure that hours worked, in excess of 37 hours per week, will only be worked when work is available and meets the needs of service users and/or the organisation.

- g. To take proactive steps to ensure that there is effective monitoring of the operation of the scheme.
- h. To follow the disciplinary procedure in the event of any misconduct in the operation of the scheme.
- i. To ensure that when the operation of full flexible working hours is not practicable, every effort is made to providing maximum flexibility, in accordance with the needs of service users, the organisation and employees.
- j. To feedback any issues arising during the implementation of the scheme to the Work - Life Balance Project group and to provide data for the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot as required.

Responsibilities and Rights of Employees

13. These include the following:

- To negotiate and agree with their manager, the implementation of this pilot scheme, in relation to their working hours and/ or patterns.
- To negotiate and agree with their manager requests for time off under the Flexi Working Hours Scheme, prior to taking leave.
- To recognise that there is no automatic entitlement of two days / 16 hours leave, per accounting period, and that at all times managers must take into account the business needs of the Service Area when making the decision to approve requests.
- To be flexible in working with colleagues to ensure that the needs of service users, the organisation and other employees are achieved.
- To comply with the requirements of the pilot FWH scheme and not to abuse the scheme.
- To work the hours when work is available and which meets the needs of service users and the organisation.
- To bring to the attention of Management any difficulties or problems in the operation of the scheme.

- To co-operate with management in the effective implementation and monitoring of the pilot scheme.
- To implement the Grievance Procedure in the event of a disagreement with management over the operation of the scheme.
- To act flexibly if it is not possible to operate the full flexible working hours scheme.
- To be aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Working Time Regulations. In particular, the guidance in relation to the maximum number of hours to be worked in any one day / week and their entitlement to “in work rest breaks”. (A Code of Guidance on the Working Time Regulations is available on CIS 1.CM.067.)
- To provide feedback to the Work - Life Balance Project Group as required.

Abuse of the FWH Scheme

14. It is management's responsibility to address all abuse of the FWH Scheme. If employees fail to follow the rules of the scheme, managers have the right to remove individuals from the scheme and/or deal with cases under the [Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).
15. Where abuse of the scheme involves the deliberate attempt to falsify flexible hours worked or clocking someone else in; managers will commence the disciplinary process against the employee/s concerned.

Review of the pilot FWH Scheme

16. The FWH scheme will be reviewed on a quarterly basis throughout the 1 year pilot period.

Working Hours

17. A quality service will be provided to service users from 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (4.30 p.m. Friday) including lunch periods.

18. Line Managers normally will ensure that adequate cover is provided throughout the day, including at lunch times.
19. Accordingly working hours of employees must be co-ordinated so that a quality service is provided throughout this time.
20. Employees may be required to work specified times on any day subject to the operational requirements of the Service Area.

Start Time* 7.00am – This is the earliest time the working day can commence

**Lunch Times / Breaks
In Work Time**

Lunch times no longer specified under pilot scheme as core hours are removed. However full-time and part-time employees must take a minimum of 30 minutes break after any 6 consecutive hours worked. There is no maximum limit to the duration of a break as those hours will not count as work time.

All breaks taken during working hours, regardless of length of time, will be taken only with manager's consent.

Finish Time* 7.00pm – This is the latest time the working day will finish, unless prior alternative arrangements have been made with employees member and manager.

The bandwidth of 7.00am to 7.00pm applies Monday through Friday inclusive.

Carry Over 16 hours credit or 10 hours debit to the following 4 weeks only.

**Flexi leave
by agreement** 16 Hours, 2 days or 4 half days per 4 week accounting period,

- *** Where flexible working arrangements have been operating outside of these hours prior to the pilot, these will continue, providing the needs of the Service Area are continuing to be met.**

Maximum hours to be worked per week

21. Employees and managers should be mindful of the Working Time Regulations guidelines suggesting that no employee should consistently work more than 10 hours in any one day.
22. The maximum number of hours to be worked per week is 48 hours, except for employees under the aged of 18 years for whom the maximum is 40 hours. Code of Guidance Working Time Regulations (1.CM.067)
23. Employees and managers are required to arrange their hours of work having regard to their personal workload, supervisory responsibilities and the overall pattern of work in their department / Service Area.

Accounting Period

24. The total number of contracted hours in any one accounting period for a full time employee is 148 hours (37 x 4 weeks).
25. A Standard Working Week for the purpose of the FWH Scheme

week		37 hours
day	is	7 hours 24 minutes
half day		3 hours 42 minutes

Carrying Over of Balances

26. The maximum number of hours which may be carried forward to the next 4 week accounting period only:

Credit	16 hours
Debit	10 hours

27. Employees will not carry over a debit balance larger than 10 hours. Any un-worked hours in excess of 10 hours will be regarded as unpaid absence and may result in deduction of salary. The persistent accumulation of debit hours in excess of 10 hours, in addition to loss of salary, may also result in the commencement of the disciplinary process.
28. Managers must monitor debits on a four weekly (accounting period) basis and where necessary instigate the disciplinary procedure.

29. For employees who need to make up their hours and where sufficient work is available, a Chief Officer may authorise flexible arrangements e.g. offsetting time against annual leave.

Flexible Leave

30. Credit hours accumulated during the accounting period may be taken as flexible leave (max. 16 Hours, 4x 1/2 days, 2 full day, per accounting period), **subject to manager's approval and the needs of the Service Area**. Applications for flexi leave must be made on the appropriate form and approved by the line manager in advance,(see para.38.)

Authorised Absences

Special Leave

31. Subject to prior approval, time off for dentist, doctors, opticians etc appointments is allowed under Special Leave Scheme. Employees are encouraged to arrange all non-urgent appointments at a time which causes least disruption to the service provision. In circumstances where employees attend medical/dental appointments, actual hours worked together with the time for the appointment will be credited, subject to a maximum of the standard working day for that employee, (e.g. 7.24 or 3.42 etc)
32. However, in cases where an employee returns to work and works hours in excess of their standard working day, the manager may accredit this to the employee providing there was sufficient work for them to attend to.

Overtime

33. Overtime must be kept separate from flexitime and overtime claims will be processed through the appropriate procedures i.e. submitting claims at the end of the month.
34. Without exception, all overtime must be authorised beforehand. Overtime claims will be submitted at the end of the month. Overtime payments will be made for hours worked outside office opening hours, provided that normally 148 contracted hours will be

worked/credited for the period. Hours worked as authorised overtime will not count as a credit under the FWH Scheme.

Recording of Attendance

35. The following arrangements will apply:

- Employees are required to record their attendances and absences accurately and promptly in accordance with the procedures approved. Persistent failure to do so will be treated as abuse of the scheme and may result in removal from the scheme and / or the initiation of the disciplinary procedure.
- Employees are individually responsible for the accurate recording of their working hours and under no circumstances whatsoever will someone record hours worked on behalf of someone else.
- Smoking breaks must be recorded, and time deducted from working hours.
- All entries / adjustments made must be certified by the line manager who will be satisfied that the reasons and time are valid.

Leaving the Organisation

36. During the last accounting period (or part period) of service with the Council an employee may continue to work FWH on the clear understanding that they work the full contracted hours. Failure to work contracted hours will result in an adjustment to final salary.

37. When employees leave the Council they will ensure that:

- (a) credit/debit balances are eliminated by the last working day;
- (b) they work their total contracted hours appropriate to whatever stage of the accounting period is reached.

Monitoring of Scheme Operation

38. Although employees have responsibilities to comply with the requirements of the scheme, the overriding responsibility for the

operation of the scheme lies with line management, who must monitor hours of work on a four weekly basis as per accounting periods. Managers will need to identify those employees carrying forward, or in danger of carrying forward, more than 10 hours debit or 16 hours credit, and take appropriate action.

39. Having identified the relevant employees, line managers will need to address various issues, (which may involve an interview with the individual(s) concerned):
- (i) Where an individual has accrued excess debit hours there will be a need to:
 - (a) bring the matter to their attention in order that it may be remedied as quickly as possible (See Abuse of the FWH Scheme below)
 - (b) establish whether the deficit is due to any work, personal or domestic problem and offer support as appropriate
 - (ii) Where an individual has accrued excess credit hours they should be made aware of the requirements of the scheme. It may also be appropriate for line managers to consider whether this indicates a problem with any aspect of the workload or particular task(s).

Granting of Flexible Leave

40. The following arrangements will apply.

- (i) Flexible leave is not an automatic entitlement available to employees with credit hours, and in all cases an application for leave must be submitted to the line manager.
- (ii) Applications must normally be made in advance unless circumstances prevent this, in which case some discretion should be applied.
- (iii) Granting of flexible leave will normally be dependant on the individual having accrued sufficient credit hours. However, some discretion should be employed in cases of requests to meet a specific need, where the hours may be 're-paid' in the next accounting period.

(iv) The criterion for granting of a request for flexible leave is again that of operational requirements. Normally if the individual would be granted annual leave then the request for flexible leave should be agreed.

Abuse of the FWH Scheme

41. Abuse of the FWH Scheme is a disciplinary matter which is management's responsibility to address. If employees fail to follow the rules of the scheme then management should consider their removal from the scheme as an option. This would entail reverting to a 'standard' working day. The following procedures should be followed in cases where employees accrue more than 10 hours debit in the accounting period:
42. The matter should be brought to the attention of the individual and the cause of the deficit discussed. If it relates to a specific problem appropriate support should be offered to deal with both the problem and the deficit.
43. Where there is not an acceptable explanation for the deficit the individual should be instructed to make up the deficit in the next accounting period, and advised of the steps management may take if the matter is not resolved.
44. If by the end of the next accounting period the deficit is not down to 10 hours or less the excess should be deducted from any annual leave allowance, or from pay if there is no leave left.
45. Where an individual presents a persistent or re-occurring problem in terms of not working sufficient contractual hours management should not allow this to continue, and the individual should be excluded from the FWH scheme either permanently or for a set period. Any further infringement of contractual attendance times by the individual will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
46. Fraudulent abuse of the Scheme is gross misconduct and will be dealt with under the Council's [Discipline procedure](#).

Related Documentation

[5.C.027](#) – Location of Flexitime Terminals



[4.C.093](#) – Flexi Adjustment Form

[5.C.026](#) – Guidance for Employees on Using the Time Recording Equipment

[5.C.034](#) – Frequently Asked Questions

CARDIFF COUNCIL

PILOTING THE REVISED FLEXITIME SCHEME

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. Why has the Flexitime Scheme been revised?

The FWH Pilot Scheme is one of Cardiff Council's Work-Life Balance policies being developed and piloted under the Work-Life Balance Strategy. The review of the Flexitime Scheme is in response to the increasing expectations of employees, Cardiff citizens and communities and the changing nature of how we live and work. The pilot aims to provide significant additional flexibility for employees, to enable them to better balance their work and home commitments. It further aims to provide flexibility in service delivery for the benefit of internal and external customers.

Q2. What are the main changes in the pilot scheme?

The key changes are:

- Extension of Bandwidth: 7am to 7pm
- Core hours: there are no set core hours in the revised scheme
- Compensatory / Flexi leave: increased to up maximum of 16 Hours, 4x 1/2 days, 2 full day, in any 4 week accounting period
- Credit carry over: increased to 16 hours credit in any 4 week accounting period
- Debit carry over: remains at 10 hours debit in any 4 week accounting period
- Accounting period: remains at 4 weeks
- To be piloted for 12 months with formal quarterly reviews.

Q3. Who can participate in the pilot scheme?

The pilot scheme will apply to all employees currently on the FWH Scheme regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time or job share positions, (i.e. those on the flexi automated system or trust sheet system.) Those who are recruited into posts, in the coming financial year, identified as being compatible with the Scheme, will also have access to the pilot scheme. Teaching and other associated school employees are not covered by the Flexi Scheme policy.

Q4. Can employees not currently on flexitime take part in the pilot?

The requirements of certain posts may limit or preclude some employees from participating in the scheme. Employees should check with their line managers if they are eligible for flexitime working. It is recognised that no, one scheme, will cover all circumstances and eventualities. Therefore, the Council's expectation is that managers will consider sympathetically the Work-Life Balance needs and requests of all employees.

Q5. Are part-timers included?

Yes, they have the same rights as full time employees within the scheme.

Q6. What are the benefits to managers?

Benefits to managers of flexible working include:

- Retaining experienced people
- Spending less time and money on recruiting, selecting and training new employees
- Having a more flexible workforce to respond to 'peaks and troughs' of work
- Employees feeling greater loyalty and motivation because they have more control over their working life
- More effective teams as a result of better communication and mutual co-operation.

Q7. When will the pilot start?

TBC

Q8. How long will the pilot last?

The revised scheme will be piloted for 12 months with quarterly evaluations.

Q9. How are you going to measure whether or not the pilot has been a success?

We will be asking employees and line managers for feedback as well as looking at any changes in performance and attendance levels.

Q10. Do security issues need to be considered?

Yes, this is an important area especially in small teams where there are unlikely to be many people around. Managers will need to carry out a risk assessment and put in place appropriate working practices to ensure safety of employees and the public.

Q11. The revised scheme seems to give employees a lot more freedom, what happens if employees abuse the scheme?

If employees fail to follow the rules of the scheme, managers have the right to remove individuals from the scheme and/or deal with cases under the [Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).

Q12. How will time be recorded?

Existing methods of recording time will be maintained whether you swipe or hold a Trustcard. For those who use the Trustcard system of recording time, a new corporate spreadsheet is available via CIS and the intranet. If you have any query regarding time recording, please contact your Service Area Flexi Operator.

Getting started

Q13. As a manager, do I need to involve my employees?

Yes. You need to discuss the revised scheme as soon as possible with your team to look at how it will work in their area so that you and your team are able to benefit from increased flexibility and equally to ensure that you and your team continue to meet (or exceed) your service objectives.

Q14. As a manager how do I go about introducing the pilot in my team/area?

You need to discuss and agree with employees how the revised scheme is going to operate. Some of the areas you need to consider are:

- any previous arrangements agreed within your team and Service Area
- arrangements for opening and closing hours (e.g. building, security etc)
- identification of safety issues that need to be address, i.e. lone working

- agreeing alternative times with employees if the 7am – 7pm bandwidth is not operationally possible
- agreeing minimum employees levels during the day with employees so that operational needs can be met
- ensuring that the working hours of employees meet the needs of service users, the organisation and employees and that individual's working patterns do not have a detrimental affect on their colleagues.
- the need to take proactive steps to ensure that there is effective monitoring of the operation of the scheme
- identifying and agreeing with employees any protocols, i.e. who (if anyone) gives permission for employees to leave the office throughout the day
- any ICT considerations, especially at the beginning and end of the day
- will cleaning/caretaking employees be able to operate satisfactorily
- Building/work area opening and closing times
- how your team can provide feedback
- ensure employees fully understand the scheme and their rights and responsibilities in relation to its implementation

Q15. Do I have to change my normal working hours due to the implementation of the new pilot scheme?

No.

The working day

Q16. Will there be any change to normal opening hours?

No, not at this stage, but it will be looked at as part of the evaluation of the pilot.

Q17. During the pilot the bandwidth runs from 7am to 7pm – how does this affect my employees and I?

Not all employees will be able to come in at 7.00am or leave at 7.00pm or will want to change their current working patterns. It will depend on whether there is work available, the business needs of the Service Area and also the arrangements in place for opening up and closing offices/ buildings. Managers will need to discuss these issues with employees.

Q18. Will there be any change in the provision of IT systems?

No, there will be no change in the availability or support of IT systems currently in operation. The ICT Helpdesk will be open from 8.00 am to 5.30 Monday -Thursday (5.00 p.m. on Fridays).

Q19. Why aren't there any core hours as in the old scheme?

Removing the core hours will provide increased flexibility for employees and support service delivery and Council business.

Q20. Can a member of my employees come in at 7am, leave at 8.30am to take the children to school, come back at 9am, work to 3pm then go and pick the children up and come back to work at 4pm?

Yes. However, such arrangements must be agreed by you and the employees member in advance and fit in with operational requirements. Furthermore, colleagues should not suffer a detriment as a result of an individuals work hours / pattern.

Q21. What is the maximum number of hours that my employees or I can work in a day?

You need to be mindful of your employees and your own general well being in relation to how many hours are worked in a day. As a guideline no employee should, consistently work more than 10 hour in any one day. A Code of Guidance on the Working Time Regulations is available on CIS (1.CM.067.)

Q22. Is there a minimum number of hours that must be worked in a day?

No. However, any substantial reduction in your contracted hours must fit in with operational requirements and be agreed by your line manager beforehand.

Q23. Can I still work Overtime in the new scheme?

Yes, however, overtime must be kept separate from flexitime and overtime claims will be processed through the appropriate procedures i.e. submitting claims at the end of the month.

Without exception, all overtime must be authorised beforehand. Overtime claims will be submitted at the end of the month. Overtime payments will be made for hours worked outside office opening hours. Hours worked as authorised overtime will not count as a credit under the FWH Scheme.

Q24. What if a member of employees works outside the new bandwidth?

It is appreciated that there may be occasions when the service needs employees to work outside the bandwidth. This should be agreed between the employees member and line manager before hand.

Where flexible working arrangements have been operating outside of these hours prior to the pilot, these will continue, providing the needs of the Service Area are continuing to be met.

Q25. Am I automatically entitled to take two days flexi leave per accounting period if I have worked sufficient hours?

No, requests for leave must be discussed and agreed with your line manager who will take into account the needs of your Service Area before approving such requests.

Time off

Q26. If employees have enough credit, can they take flexi leave when they like?

No. As with all leave it has to agreed in advance with their line manager and is subject to the requirements of the business.

Q27. What happens if employees are 10 hours in deficit, can they still take flexi leave?

Granting of flexible leave will normally be dependant on the individual having accrued sufficient credit hours. However, some discretion should be employed in cases of requests to meet a specific need, where the hours may be 're-paid' in the next settlement period.

Employees should be made aware that the persistent accumulation of debit hours in excess of 10 hours, in addition to loss of salary, may also result in the commencement of the disciplinary process.

Q28. Can employees still take a flexi day or a half day flexi?

Yes, under the pilot scheme you can now request 2 full days, 4 x 1/2 days or a maximum of 16 hours per settlement period, subject to line manager approval and the needs of the Service Area.

Q29. I have got a new fridge being delivered at 11am; can I leave work then return after?

Yes. Once again this is subject to the requirements of the business and has to be with the agreement of your line manager. This will be unpaid time away from your workplace and therefore you will not be accredited these hours.

Q30. Can I claim for the time spent at the Doctors/Dentists?

Subject to prior approval, time off for dentist, doctor, hospital appointments etc, is allowed under the Special Leave Scheme. **Employees are encouraged to arrange all non-urgent appointments at a time which causes least disruption to the service provision.** In circumstances where employees attend medical/dental appointments under the Special Leave Scheme, actual hours worked together with the time for the appointment will be credited, subject to a maximum of the standard working day for that employee (e.g. 7.24 or 3.42.)

Q31. My child has had an accident in school and I have to leave work early to take him to see our GP for an emergency appointment. Will I get a flexi credit or do I apply for Special Leave?

Paid time off to deal with certain unexpected emergencies is available to employees under the Special Leave Scheme (1.CM.081). This example constitutes an emergency, you are therefore able to apply for Special Leave and have your hours credited to your clock, to a maximum of your standard working day (e.g. 7.24 or 3.42.)

Q32. My mother's home carer arrives at 10am and I'd like to be there to pass on information about my mother's care. Can I do this?

Yes, as there are no longer any core hours. Once again this is subject to the requirements of the business and has to be with the agreement of your line manager beforehand.

Breaks

Q33. Must employees take a break?

Yes, if employees (full time or part time), are contracted to work for over 6 hours then they must take a break of at least 30 minutes after 6 hours.

The Working Time Regulations state that 'in general' a worker is entitled to an unpaid uninterrupted break of 20 minutes when daily working time is more than six hours.

Q34. Do employees have to take lunch breaks between 12 noon and 2pm?

No, not necessarily, as there are no core hours during the period of the pilot.

Evaluating the pilot scheme

Q35. How will the pilot scheme be evaluated at the quarterly reviews and at the end of the 12-month pilot?

We will be asking line managers and employees for feedback and monitoring improved attendance, labour turnover, retention levels, sickness absence etc.

Q36. Who do I contact if I still have a query regarding the new Pilot Flexi scheme?

You should contact your Service Area Flexi Operator.