



Flexible Working Policy

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1 Introduction

The Isle of Wight Council has a number of options in place to enable its employees to achieve a work life balance. This document provides guidance and definitions across a range of flexible working models. It is not intended that the models outlined be prescriptive. It is open to individuals and managers to adapt the models to suit local circumstances and service needs, but care should be taken to consider the guidance provided.

The aim of this document is three-fold, firstly to ensure the needs of the Council are met by facilitating a more cost effective working environment as well as allowing employees to request flexible working practices to accommodate personal needs and ensuring a consistent approach is followed across the Council.

Flexible working means working in the most appropriate place, at the best time, and in the best way, to get the work done. It aims to reduce the constraints under which individuals operate. This can relate to when, where and how they work, providing that any change to working practices does not have a negative effect on the service being provided.

In addition to the benefits for employees, flexible working methods can avoid or minimise the costs of overtime, assist with the provision of cover at peak times, reduce absenteeism, improve morale and motivation, increase the retention of highly skilled employees and reduce training costs. Having some control about when/where work is carried out can minimise stress levels.

These issues, together with the organisation's commitment to the better use of its property and adopting modern ways of working, means that guidelines about flexible working and promotion of work/life balance need to be integrated and be applied and managed in a consistent way across the Organisation.

This document sets out the options that are made available to employees.

Please also refer to other related Council Policies, details of which are set out at Section 12 below.

2 Scope

Any of the flexible working arrangements are, in principle, available to all employees, except those under the control of a school governing body and uniformed Fire Service employees for whom separate arrangements apply, but the needs of the service are equally important and some options simply may not be operationally practical for certain jobs. However, it is important to refer to the eligibility criteria under each flexible working option. Some of the flexible working options will be implemented on office spaces by managers wishing to operate their working space in a more flexible manner.

Different flexible working patterns will therefore be more or less suited to particular service areas and types of working. It is the intention of the Council that all employees

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should be given the opportunity to request a flexible working pattern which they feel is either more suited to the job or to their personal circumstances at the time, however, operational feasibility will play a key role when requests are considered. In dealing with any request the needs of the employee must be balanced against the needs of the service and operational practicalities.

In addition to individual employee proposals, flexible working options can also be introduced by management to ensure effective provision in specific areas. This will always be following full consultation with the affected employees.

This guidance may also be useful for managers and employees with disabilities who are discussing the options for making reasonable adjustments.

It is acknowledged that some systems may currently be in operation which do not comply with the scope of this policy and it is therefore expected that the standards of this policy will be fully integrated by managers by the end of 2009.

3 Corporate Office Standards

These standards are intended to be used as guidance for the quality of office accommodation, space occupancy and provision of facilities for Isle of Wight Council offices, wherever opportunities arise for the provision of new accommodation, refurbishment or reorganisation of existing offices. In all cases the application of the corporate standards should be related to the specific function of the offices and the requirements of the occupiers and users. In some exceptional cases the standards may need to be varied to suit particular circumstances and this would need to be agreed between Strategic Asset Management (Property Services) and the users.

3.1 Office Layouts

All offices should be open plan unless the structure of the building means that would be inappropriate. Meeting rooms and areas for quiet working and confidential discussions will be provided. Individual offices will not be provided except in very exceptional circumstances. Issues of confidentiality will be dealt with by careful design of layout, location of teams and partitioning.

3.2 Space Allocation

The space per workstation will be affected by the working practices related to the service needs and this space calculated on the basis of the net internal area (excluding main corridors, lobbies, lifts and toilets) should be between seven and eight square metres. This includes facilities such as meeting rooms and break out areas. The area per workstation, excluding communal areas (meeting rooms and breakout areas), should be approximately six square metres per workstation.

3.3 Provision of Workstations

There is an expectation that the number of workstations will be less than the number of staff. An average of seven workstations for every 10 staff is expected but this will depend upon the extent to which the Council's modern work style and flexible working

policies can be implemented taking into consideration the operational needs of the occupiers. In some cases fewer workstations will be required and in other cases more. In addition, where appropriate, staff will be expected to adopt shared desk utilisation whereby they won't be assigned to a particular desk rather will use one of a variety that are available in a given area. This manner of working may be implemented by managers and staff will be required to comply with management instructions.

3.4 Storage

There is an expectation that the amount of storage within offices will reduce and that files and other storage should only be provided within offices where it is essential for operational reasons, otherwise there is a presumption towards electronic document management (whilst off site storage should be used only as a last resort). Storage should be provided in systems that allow efficient use of space, thereby maximising the space available for staff and facilities.

3.5 Meeting Rooms

An appropriate range of meeting rooms suitable for one-to-one, team and larger meetings will be provided in consultation with services. The number and range of rooms will depend upon the overall size of the building and the needs of the occupiers. Meeting rooms will be considered as corporate facilities and be subject to a corporate booking mechanism.

3.6 Break Out Areas

Areas should be incorporated within the open plan office areas for informal meetings and to give additional flexibility in the use of work areas.

3.7 Confidential Space

Areas should be incorporated within the open plan office areas for confidential meetings and conversations.

3.8 Kitchen / Refreshment Areas

All offices should have access to a kitchen facility with drinking water, a tea boiler and a fridge. The size and range of facilities will depend upon the size of the office. .

3.9 Changing and Shower Facilities

Wherever possible there should be good provision of male and female changing and shower facilities to encourage travel to work and for work duties by cycle and exercise activities. This will depend upon the size of building. For all buildings which accommodate over 200 staff there should be a presumption that male and female shower/changing facilities should be provided. If possible, some locker provision should be provided but this is likely to be possible only for new larger offices.

3.10 Furniture

There will be standardisation of furniture across the Council's offices to encourage efficient use of space and also to facilitate open plan layouts and changes in

occupation or use, avoiding the use of different and incompatible furniture following service or office reorganisations. Additional modular furniture will be procured corporately to ensure compatibility and to enable the open plan layouts and flexible working practices. There will be provision for staff with special needs, including for example variable height desks and chairs to suit particular needs. Account will also be taken of any specialist equipment for staff where risk assessments determine that this is required.

3.11 ICT

Good ICT facilities are essential to enabling staff to work effectively and to allow the adoption of flexible working practices. A number of upcoming projects have been identified to design, specify and commence rollout of systems to provide a standardised desktop experience. This will facilitate touchdown working through reducing the need to download files or print documents in order to work away from the main office base, and will make it possible for individuals to carry out their duties at the most appropriate locality for the service being delivered.

The potential of audio and video conferencing to improve service delivery and reduce travel need is being evaluated.

Due to the increased risk to the Authority if home PC's are utilised for work purposes, it will be necessary for the Council to restrict their access to ensure that they can only connect to the Intranet and web based email services. We will also require a software firewall and an up-to-date commercial anti-virus system to be functioning on the home computers or access will be denied.

If staff are required to access documents or systems other than the Intranet and web based email services in the course of their duties, only equipment provided by the Council may be used and checks will be made to ensure that the hardware being used is legitimate.

Where the Council requires you to work from home on a permanent basis, the Council will provide appropriate hardware and broadband access. Employees will be expected to sign a declaration that no personal use will be made of these facilities.

In all scenarios, all equipment and services must be requested through the ICT Department's Service Desk.

3.12 Travel

A corporate Workplace Travel Plan policy will be developed for the Council in partnership with the Isle of Wight NHS Primary Care Trust as part of the Eco-Island agenda. This plan should ensure that arrangements are put in place to reduce car use as far as possible and support and encourage travel by other means.

As part of this approach, the Council will seek to ensure that where possible appropriate cycle parking facilities, storage lockers, showers and changing facilities are provided at existing Council offices. The Council recognises that powered two

wheelers can for some offer a realistic alternative to travel by car. They can be ideal for commuting, be fuel efficient, require less space for parking and help to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. The Council will therefore, where possible, make provision on-site, in an appropriate and safe and secure location for the parking of motor bikes and scooters.

The Council will also endeavour to ensure that new Council premises are provided in locations so as to reduce car use and appropriate cycle racks, showers and changing facilities are provided as part of the design so as to encourage and facilitate travel by sustainable means - walking, cycling and public transport.

Opportunities to reduce car use, such as car sharing and assisted cycle purchase will be supported and promoted where possible.

The Isle of Wight car share website is <http://www.carsharewight.com/default.asp?uxi=&cr=check>. Details of the cycle to work scheme can be found on the Council's intranet site at [http://wightnet2000.iow.gov.uk/staff/staff_benefits/Cycle Initiative](http://wightnet2000.iow.gov.uk/staff/staff_benefits/Cycle_Initiative).

4 Options available under the policy

The following options should be considered as opportunities for flexible working:

- Flexitime
- Job sharing
- Term time working
- Voluntary reduced hours
- Career breaks
- Compressed hours
- Annualised hours
- Additional Annual Leave
- Touchdown Working
- Home Working

Application for any flexible working option should be made using the procedure set out in Appendix A.

4.1 Flexitime

Flexitime is a method of working flexible hours that enables employees to vary their hours during the day to accommodate both the needs of the service and their personal circumstances. Flexitime allows an employee to choose their own starting and finishing times each day within agreed core hours of working. Excess hours can be carried forward from one accounting period to the next or used as flexi leave. Similarly, a limited number of deficit hours can be made up. One hour accrued must amount to one hour off as flexi time.

Flexitime can be applied successfully to many service areas, although inevitably some jobs will not operate practicably under this system.

Additional working out of hours or on weekends should not be carried out without the prior approval of your line manager. Any such time worked if not expressly agreed as overtime by the manager will be treated as part of the flexi time scheme.

4.1.1 Eligibility

In principle flexitime can be applied to most jobs. Managers are responsible for identifying service areas in their department where flexitime cannot be applied because it would have a significant detrimental impact on service provision to clients and customers.

4.1.2 Managing flexitime

Managers should ensure that the required level of service is provided at all times and may reasonably require employees to work standard hours. Managers should not allow employees to carry over more than 10 hours per month (managers may operate this system per four week period if preferred), except in exceptional occasional circumstances. This should assist managers in ensuring that staff are not working in breach of the Working Time Regulations and help staff retain an acceptable work/life balance. Further guidance on the Working Time Regulations can be found on the Council's intranet.

Employees will be required to seek their manager's permission for taking off time accrued as flexi time. Managers should ensure their employees are aware of any limits to the amount of time that can be taken off per accounting period that the manager may choose to impose. The manager should not set a limit of less than one full day per accounting period.

4.1.3 Key features

The following model scheme permits the employee to structure his or her working day:

“Flexible time” The period when employees may vary their starting and finishing times. Employees must agree with their line manager the earliest start time and the latest finish time that they are to be available for work. A lunch break of at least 30 minutes must be taken, eg 8.00am – 10.00am and 4.00pm – 6.00pm.

“Core hours” The period of time within which the minimum staffing levels as defined by the manager will apply, eg 10.00am – 12.00noon and 2.00pm – 4.00pm.

4.1.4 Recording of hours

Hours worked must be recorded in a manner approved by the manager and this will normally be on a flexitime form which can be done electronically. At the end of each accounting period the form must be given to the manager for confirmation of hours worked. If managers choose to they may also monitor this on a weekly basis.

For the avoidance of doubt attendance at training courses may be recorded as the full time spent travelling to or attending the course. However, the employee must ensure that the time they normally spend commuting to work is not included as part of the travel time. Only travel time over and above that normally spent on commuting time may be recorded. If the course involves any overnight stay then the employee may not claim for the time spent at the location which isn't counted as either travel time or time spent in attendance at the course.

4.1.5 Accounting period and time off in lieu

The accounting period is a month (or four week period at manager's discretion), and during this period the employee will be required to work their contracted hours, subject to permitted credits and debits. During the accounting period the employee may work up to 10 hours in excess of their contracted hours which can be carried forward to the next accounting period. During each accounting period excess hours worked may be taken off with the manager's prior approval as flexi leave. No more than four hours of arrears may be carried forward and arrears in excess of the four hours limit will be treated as absence without leave. All excess hours must be used prior to the employee leaving the Council's employment as no payment will be made for the extra hours worked and not taken. When the employee is in arrears, the number of hours in debit will be deducted from the final salary payment.

4.1.6 Absence from work

Time away from work due to authorised absence will be credited to the employee. Absence due to GP and dental appointments will be treated as flexi leave, unless they are emergencies, ante-natal clinics or hospital appointments. Time away from work to give blood will be treated as authorised absence.

4.1.7 Contractual issues

In general, terms and conditions of employment will not be altered by working flexitime.

4.1.8 Annual leave and sick pay

These are in accordance with national and local conditions of service and credited accordingly. A full day is seven hours 24 minutes and a half day is three hours 42 minutes.

4.1.9 Abuse of the system

To maintain an effective level of service, managers will determine the minimum staffing level that will apply during the core hours. It is essential that employees working flexitime co-operate with their manager to ensure that minimum staffing levels within their service area or work group are maintained. Failure to do so may be considered to be an abuse of the system.

4.2 Job Sharing

Job sharing involves the voluntary sharing of a post with the individual sharers receiving pay and benefits in proportion to the number of hours they work. Job sharing allows employees to reduce weekly working hours without having to change job or

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career prospects and may suit the needs of employees who, for example, are working parents, have caring responsibilities or a disability. The Council can also benefit from a dual input of ideas and experience plus improved recruitment, retention and employee motivation.

4.2.1 Eligibility

Job sharing is available to all employees in principle, but there are naturally some posts which will not be suited to job sharing where the impact on service provision negates the possibility of a successful job share. Job advertisements should make it clear where job sharing is available and when determining the division of hours and duties it is important to ensure that each set of hours form a viable package in their own right, to attract new applicants if necessary. Managers are responsible for identifying posts that cannot operate on a job share basis because of a significant detrimental impact on service provision. Requests to job share should not be refused without full consideration and operational justification. Managers should always seek guidance from HR when considering requests.

4.2.2 How does a job share begin?

Two employees doing similar jobs may apply to share one of the jobs and release the other as a vacancy. Two candidates may apply for a vacant post on a job share basis and one or both be successful, but each application will be considered on its own merits. Where applications are received from two employees wishing to job share together they should be assessed in the same way as applications from other candidates. Joint candidates should be interviewed separately to assess individual abilities to do the job. The selection panel may not make an offer of appointment to one job share partner only, if the other partner does not meet the requirements of the person specification until another partner can be appointed. Two separate candidates can be appointed to a vacant post on a job share basis. An existing employee may apply to job share and, if suitable, the other half of the job would then be advertised to find a job share partner before the request can be approved.

4.2.3 Managing job sharing

The distribution of duties and responsibilities for a job share post should be determined by the line manager in consultation with the job sharers (taking account of skills and interests) and with regard to the needs of the service. However, the overall level of responsibility should be equal. Most difficulties with job sharing occur where the job share is not managed properly and where there is a lack of communication and co-operation between the job sharers and other colleagues/the manager, particularly because the job sharers may miss out on day-to-day issues. It is important to build in a period during the week or at least once per fortnight, when the two job sharers overlap their time (without working extra hours). It is recommended that each job sharer records useful information and ongoing issues for the other.

4.2.4 Contractual issues

Job sharers will have service conditions applied to them on a pro rata basis in accordance with the relevant national negotiating body and local conditions of service

with some exceptions. Each job sharer will have an individual contract of employment. The job description may include a section incorporating agreed split tasks.

4.2.5 Rate of pay

This will be the salary grade of the post pro rata to the hours worked. Job sharers will not necessarily be on the same salary point within the grade. Normal incremental progression will apply.

4.2.6 Pensions

Employees considering job sharing should contact the Pensions Section for more information on pensions.

4.2.7 Vacancies

Job sharers can apply jointly or individually for vacancies within the Council (where the job is suitable for job sharing) on equal terms with full time employees subject to the usual assessment process.

4.2.8 Resignation of one partner

Consultation should take place between the manager and the remaining job sharer to determine mutually acceptable cover. The remaining job sharer will be given the option of accepting the full time contract or replacement of the job sharing partner. If a suitable replacement cannot be found then the remaining job sharer may not be able to continue in this role.

4.3 Term Time Working

Term time working is a method of flexible working where the employee's working weeks mirror Isle of Wight schools' term weeks. All requests for term time working will be considered subject to operational needs. Requests which do not match the Isle of Wight Council's school terms may be considered by management upon request subject to operational needs.

4.3.1 Eligibility

Line managers have responsibility for identifying whether in their service areas term time working can be applied or whether it would have a significant detrimental impact on service provision. Term time working will not be a practical option for all service areas, as many services outside the school environment will need to operate on an all year round basis.

4.3.2 Managing term time working

Managers should ensure the required level of service is provided at all times and the recruitment of other employees may be needed to cover the school holidays when the permanent post holder is not working.

4.3.3 Contractual issues

A term time working contract means the employee works all the weeks of school terms but employment is regarded as continuous throughout the year.

4.3.4 Annual leave and sick pay

Term time working employees must take their annual leave entitlement during the school holidays. The taking of holidays in term time is not generally permitted. However, it is acknowledged that special arrangements may need to be made for emergencies and the Council's Policy on Special Leave should be referred to in such circumstances. Sick pay and monitoring will only apply for the days of sickness absence that occur when the employee is 'working'.

4.3.5 Working hours

A term time working employee can work full time or part time hours.

4.3.6 Rates of pay

The annual salary will be based on the number of days/hours that the employee works and the salary will be paid in twelve equal monthly instalments.

4.3.7 Pension

Local Government Pension Scheme contributions would be the standard percentage, deducted from each month earnings.

4.3.8 Training

Term time working employees should have the same access to training information and opportunities as year-round employees. A term time working employee will be expected to make themselves available for training even if they fall within the 'weeks off'. Adequate notice will be given to make alternative arrangements for those days and compensatory time off should be offered.

4.4 Voluntary Reduced Hours

This is an arrangement commonly referred to as part-time working whereby employees can voluntarily reduce their working hours. Pay and benefits will be reduced accordingly.

4.4.1 Eligibility

Any employee may request a reduction in their working hours. Reducing working hours may allow an employee to continue in work when otherwise they may not be able to.

4.4.2 Managing voluntary reduced hours

The detail of the reduced hours must be agreed between the employee and the manager to meet both operational and personal needs. The reduced hours may involve working fewer hours per day or working less days per week. In both cases the decision can be taken to either 'fix' the working time, eg set hours or days of working or allow the arrangement to be flexible to meet the fluctuations of operational needs, eg the employee remains on 'flexitime' with an adjusted standard working day and/or the working days can be subject to change on a pre-arranged basis dependent upon workload.

4.4.3 Contractual issues

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In general, terms and conditions of employment will not be altered by the reduction in hours but will be, where applicable, pro rata to reflect the reduction in hours.

4.4.4 Rate of pay

This will be the salary grade of the post pro rata to the hours worked. Normal progression rules will apply.

4.4.5 Flexitime

Flexitime may continue to be appropriate with, if applicable, a reduced standard working day. Flexi leave entitlement will be on a pro rata basis dependent upon the number of hours worked and will be calculated as usual.

4.4.6 Annual leave and sick pay

These are in accordance with national and local conditions of service pro rata to the hours worked.

4.4.7 Public/Bank and extra-statutory holidays

Entitlement to public/bank and extra statutory holidays will be pro rata to the hours worked.

4.4.8 Pension

Employees considering reducing their working hours should contact the Pension Section.

4.4.9 Filling the vacant hours

How the vacant hours are filled will depend upon the number of hours available. The manager may, for example, choose to; delete the hours and/or undertake a minor restructure, taking into account the new work arrangements or fill the hours by recruitment or other internal arrangements to accommodate the vacant hours.

4.5 Career Breaks

A career break enables an employee to take an unpaid break from work for personal reasons and maintain continuity of service with the Council. The employee is required to give a minimum of three months' notice to commence a career break. With the exception of continuity of service, all other terms of the employment contract with the Council will be suspended. On return, at an agreed date following the career break, the employee will be able to return to the same or similar position within the Council without competitive selection. It is recognised that during an employee's working life there will be times when personal commitments may take priority over work. The Council can accommodate such personal commitments, where operationally practicable, through career breaks. The benefits to the Council include the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced employees and knowledge and experiences brought back to the workplace.

4.5.1 What is the purpose of a career break?

The purpose of a career break could be to:

- Extend the maternity leave period

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- Extend a period of adoption leave
- Care for dependant relatives
- Enter full time education
- Extended foreign travel

The reasons are not exhaustive and others may be considered with the exception of taking up other paid employment.

4.5.2 How long is a career break?

The minimum break is three months and the maximum break is one year. There is no limit to the number of career breaks an employee can take providing they return to work for the Authority for a minimum of two years between each career break.

4.5.3 Eligibility

All permanent employees with at least two years continuous Isle of Wight Council service regardless of the number of hours worked are eligible to apply for a career break.

4.5.4 What happens to the employee's job during the career break?

The line manager will give consideration to appropriate arrangements to cover the work of the employee. Decisions will inevitably depend upon the length of the career break but may include; the recruitment of a fixed term employee on a full or part time basis, reallocation of some of the duties or secondment of an existing employee.

4.5.5 Extending the career break

If the employee wishes to extend their career break they must do so in writing giving a minimum of three months' notice. The line manager will give consideration to the extension along the same lines as the original request and may grant up to one year in total.

4.5.6 Cutting short the career break

There will be no automatic right to cut short a career break but managers will consider such requests from an employee if they can be accommodated.

4.5.7 Contractual issues

The employee will be required to sign an agreement suspending all terms of their contract of employment, with the exception of continuity of service, during their career break from the Council and their contract of employment will remain suspended for the duration of the protracted period of absence. The employee will return to their substantive post or to a similar post on an agreed date at the end of the career break subject to any structural changes following an organisational review. This will not constitute a break in service and general conditions of service will apply as at the start of the career break when the employee returns to work.

4.5.8 Rates of pay

At the end of the career break the employee will return to the same incremental point they were on at the start of the career break which may result in salary protection if the post has been downgraded in a restructure.

4.5.9 Pension

Employees considering career breaks should contact the Pensions Section for more information.

4.5.10 Disciplinary warnings

Any live disciplinary warnings will be suspended for the duration of the career break and will be carried forward upon the employee's return to work.

4.6 Compressed Hours

Employees working compressed hours will work their standard hours over fewer days by extending the working day. Examples of this include a four and a half day week, nine day fortnight or 18 day month (based on a four week month). Compressed hours can be a means of introducing some flexibility into jobs which do not meet the requirements for flexitime. Similarly, compressed hours enable extended service availability beyond the standard working day or provide quiet time for work at the beginning and/or end of the day.

4.6.1 Managing compressed hours

Compressed hours can work within a team situation but the day/half day not worked would have to be flexible to maintain service provision. If a number of employees within a service were to work compressed hours it may be that the system would operate more effectively on a rota basis. As with the flexitime system, where a manager believes that an employee is abusing the system then disciplinary action may be taken.

4.6.2 Time recording

Time should be recorded by the employee as with flexitime and regularly checked by the manager.

4.6.3 Annual leave

Compressed hours will affect arrangements for annual leave as entitlements will need to be calculated in hours.

4.7 Annualised Hours

Annualised or averaged hours is a system where an employee's hours are totalled over a period, often a year. Employees work more or less hours each week as agreed up to the annual maximum.

4.7.1 Eligibility

Working a system of annualised hours will normally only apply to those employees in areas where the demand of the service varies on a regular basis over a period of time usually fitting in with seasonal peaks and troughs.

4.7.2 Managing annualised hours

Annualised hours can reduce the need for overtime and the cost of recruiting and managing temporary seasonal employees and whilst managers should ensure the required level of service is provided at all times they also need to be aware that working very long hours in times of peak demand can result in increased stress and also difficulties for employees with caring responsibilities. Managers will need to take into account the relevant parts of the Working Time Regulations regarding breaks and the number of hours worked in any particular period. It may be possible and helpful to the service and to employees to have a number of different working patterns available, rather than just one pattern common to all. The manager and employee should review and agree arrangements for working annualised hours each year.

4.7.3 Contractual issues

An annualised hours contract means that, whilst the hours of work may vary at different times of the year, the employee works all the weeks of the year and employment is therefore continuous.

4.7.4 Rates of pay

The annual salary will be based on the number of hours the employee is required to work in a year and will be paid in twelve equal monthly instalments. Employees working annualised hours will not be entitled to overtime payments and adjustments to final salary may be necessary should an employee leave.

4.7.5 Annual leave, public/bank and extra statutory holidays

Entitlement to annual leave and public/bank and extra statutory holidays will be in accordance with national and local conditions of service but calculated and taken in hours.

4.7.6 Pension

Local Government Pension Scheme contributions would be the standard percentage, deducted from each month earnings.

4.8 Additional Annual Leave

Quite simply this gives employees the opportunity to 'purchase' additional annual leave under a salary sacrifice arrangement ie the employee's annual salary is reduced pro rata to the number of days purchased.

4.8.1 Eligibility

In principle any employee can purchase additional leave.

4.8.2 Managing annual leave

Managers should ensure the required level of service is provided at all times and the amount of annual leave to be purchased must be agreed between the employee and manager to meet operational and personal needs. Annual leave cannot be 'sold' and any annual leave untaken at the end of a leave year will be subject to the normal rules on the carryover of leave from one leave year to the next. Managers must ensure that employees take their minimum required annual leave under the Working Time Regulations in the 12 month period. Employees who have purchased additional leave may only revert to their normal contractual basic annual leave entitlement at the beginning of a leave year.

4.8.3 Contractual issues

In general, terms and conditions of employment will not be altered by the purchase of additional leave but will be, where applicable, pro rata to reflect the reduction in annual salary.

4.8.4 Rates of pay

The annual salary will be reduced to reflect number of additional days leave purchased.

4.8.5 Pension

Employees considering the purchase of additional annual leave should contact the Pension Section.

4.9 Touchdown Working

Touchdown working options provide choices for employees about where they do their work. Typically an individual works away from their normal office or administrative centre for some proportion of their working time. This may be an occasional arrangement or it may form a regular pattern. Touchdown working can give employees greater choice about how and where they work and can reduce the amount of time that an individual spends travelling. Rules governing the environment where Touchdown Working will be operating as set out within the Office Environment Rules in Appendix B.

4.9.1 Contractual issues

Managing employees who are not in the office every day can present problems. Managers and employees will have to think through what, if anything needs to be changed in relation to how work is managed. The actual impact will vary relative to the amount of time an individual spends working away from the office and the nature of the job.

4.9.2 Health and safety

Health and safety legislation requires the provision of a safe working environment, safe equipment and safe systems of work. Where flexible working can be authorised outside of a Council building, a Health and Safety Liaison Officer will need to assess the suitability of the alternative location as a workplace. Random audits will be undertaken by Health and Safety Officers to ensure that the areas of work are suitable and that safe systems of work will be practical.

4.9.3 Hours of work

Contractual hours and times of work as a result of remote working will remain unaltered unless by mutual consent. Where a variation is agreed the pattern of working hours will be agreed between the employee and the manager to suit both operational and the employee's personal needs.

4.9.4 Communication

Employees who are regularly working away from the office will be required to attend their office or normal workbase on a regular basis, and at times agreed with their manager. The manager will ensure that the employee receives all appropriate information and communications.

4.9.5 Ownership of equipment

All equipment, documents and materials supplied by the Council for work remains the property of the Council and is provided solely for business use and may not be removed to another location without written consent. If it is used for private purposes there could be tax implications for the individual. The employee will be responsible for the safeguarding of the equipment and for its safe return if and when the remote working arrangement ceases.

4.9.6 Confidentiality and data protection

Individuals working remotely must ensure the confidentiality and security of any papers, files, documents, etc, that are in their keeping. This includes information stored electronically. Reference should be made to ICT Security Policies and in particular the Information Assurance Policy for further guidance.

4.9.7 Insurance

Under the terms of the Council's Employer's Liability Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance, remote working employees who sustain an accident are covered in the same way as employees located on Council premises, provided that the incident occurred whilst undertaking Council business.

4.10 Home Working

As part of the range of flexible working options available to Isle of Wight Council employees, opportunities for home working can be considered where there is a justifiable business case for an employee to undertake this way of working.

Home working can be classified in three ways:

- a. **Touchdown home working**
Employees occasionally work at home, typically on an ad hoc basis, to do a particular piece of work.
- b. **Partial home working**
A regular agreed arrangement for home working has been made between an employee and management to enable the employee to work part of their contracted hours at home.
- c. **Full home working**
A regular agreed arrangement for home working has been made between an employee and management to enable the employee to work at least 90% of their contracted hours at home.

Home working is a voluntary based scheme. In most cases the employee will initiate a discussion regarding the possibility of home working. However, if it is in the interests of the Authority, a manager may approach their team or team member to discuss a possible voluntary arrangement, or a new post may be created with some degree of home working specified as a requirement.

4.10.1 Suitability for Home Working

Successful home working is dependent on a number of factors: the suitability of the role, the individual and the home work environment. Any employee considering home working will be expected to have a discussion with their line manager. The manager will arrange for a suitability assessment to be undertaken which will involve a visit to the home and consideration of the space and resources available by a trained Health and Safety Liaison Officer.

4.10.2 Office Base

Occasional or partial home working would not normally have an effect on the employee's designated office base, although full home workers are likely to have their office base at their home address.

4.10.3 Access by Council Staff

The employee's home should not normally be used for meetings with colleagues, and certainly not with clients. However, there may be occasions when the home may need to be visited by Council Officers to install equipment, carry out assessments of the work environment, and so on. On these occasions the home worker should be given notice of an appointment date and time, during working hours, and by agreement.

4.10.4 Security

The same standards of security of information and equipment that would apply in the office must be maintained at home. Periodic checks of the home may be made to ensure that working arrangements are secure. Reference should be made to the

Council's ICT and Information Policies and relevant Departmental Policies regarding the security of information.

4.10.5 Information Assurance

The Council's Policies provide details of the conduct and standards expected in the Isle of Wight Council and must be adhered to by all employees whether working in a Council building or not. In general, however, staff must not leave information whether in electronic, paper or other form, in a place or format that makes it accessible to non-Council employees. This would include ensuring that documents are kept in locked containers or with sufficient password protection or encryption to avoid unauthorised access. The level of protection required will depend on the protective marking assigned to the information being worked on. Staff are asked to ensure that the correct measures are taken to ensure that information is kept and handled appropriately, the guidance on handling information is provided in the Information Security and Protective Marking Policies. Any employee who fails to take measures to prevent information being inappropriately released may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.10.6 Managing Contact

Employees who regularly work away from the office will be required to attend their team work base on a regular basis, and at times agreed with their manager. Managers must ensure that the employee receives all appropriate information and communications. For full home workers, the employee and manager must agree how communication and contact are to be managed. All employees working from home must be contactable by phone during their agreed working hours.

4.10.7 Health and Safety

There is a duty on employers to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees, including home workers. Therefore, once home working has been approved and implemented, all home workers are required, as with other employees, to have a DSE assessment and a COSHH assessment in addition to the risk assessment outlined below.

In addition to this, all employees are required to have regard to health and safety legislation.

Under the management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to perform a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by home workers. The risk assessment must identify the hazards relating to the home worker's work activities and ensure sufficient steps have been taken to prevent harm to them or to anyone else who may be affected by their work. For occasional and partial home workers this can be undertaken as a self assessment. Assessments for full home workers will be carried out by a Health and Safety Liaison Officer.

4.10.8 Home workers Changing Jobs or Leaving the Authority

Files, equipment and any other item, data or information belonging to the Council must be returned by the employee before their leaving date. Any services such as broadband/telephone will be terminated at the leaving date of the employee.

4.10.9 Finance and Costs

a. Income Tax

Where an employer provides equipment, services or supplies to an employee working at home, there is no tax charge or liability for National Insurance on them if they are used by the employee for work purposes only and they are provided for the sole purpose of allowing the employee to work at home.

b. Household Expenses

Only where the Council requires individuals to work from home on a permanent basis (ie the employee works at least 90% of their contracted hours at home) will an allowance be payable to employees. The standard allowance to cover energy costs and wear-and-tear will be at a rate as determined from time to time but will be no more than the Inland Revenue tax free limit of £3 per week.

c. Telephone Expenses

Where a personal phone is used for business calls, any reimbursement for calls made must be backed up by an itemised statement of numbers called and cost. Where itemised statements are not provided, a list of calls made must be kept as evidence of additional expenditure and submitted with the claim. If there is a business requirement the Council may provide the necessary telephone service: employees will be expected to sign a declaration that no personal use will be made of this facility. Under current tax rules, no reimbursement of line rental can be made.

d. Reimbursement for Work Journeys

The usual Council Expenses Policy will apply to all staff. Specifically for travel claims, normal rules for claiming of mileage as set out in the Travel Allowances Policy will apply.

e. Council Tax and Business Rates

It is extremely unlikely that Council Tax will change as a result of working at home. The same applies to the business rate. In practice, where domestic use can take place after work has finished, it is unlikely that liability for the business rate will arise. However, employees will be expected to check for themselves on any implications for Council Tax, Business Rates or Capital Gains Tax, particularly if they make building alterations or devote an entire room to their employment.

f. Mortgages and Tenancy agreements

Employees must check for themselves with their lender/agent if they are spending any of their time working at/from home, and ensure that there are no terms or conditions, leases or covenants, which prevent them from working at home.

g. Insurance

Employees who have agreed a flexible working arrangement with their manager are covered by the Council's insurance arrangements for employer's liability and personal accident as if they were at work. However, it is not current Council policy to provide insurance cover for equipment. Individual services may purchase additional insurance coverage for any equipment purchased for home use. Further information and quotes can be obtained from the Risk and Insurance Team who are located within County Hall and can be contacted by using the main County Hall reception number of 821000.

Employees working regularly from home should inform their insurers of the change in their working arrangements.

h. Home Broadband

Where the Council requires you to work from home on a permanent basis the Council will provide appropriate hardware and broadband access. Employees will be expected to sign a declaration that no personal use will be made of these facilities. This declaration will be retained on the employee's personnel file.

i. Equipment and Installation

The Council may provide ICT equipment, furniture or storage where there is a business requirement, and will also bear the cost of installation, maintenance and repair. Account will also be taken of any specialist equipment required where risk assessments indicated that it is a requirement. A Change Request Form is available on the Intranet which must be completed for an assessment of the necessary equipment.

The employee will be expected to take all reasonable care of any such equipment, to use it only for work and then in accordance with operating instructions where applicable. Staff will be required to sign an agreement upon installation of equipment that these expectations have been made explicit and that they understand the responsibilities placed upon them. In accordance with Health and Safety requirements all electrical equipment must be inspected regularly.

The type of equipment supplied will depend on the space available and the wishes of the home worker. In the case of ICT equipment, ICT services will determine the most appropriate equipment to be supplied. Ownership of the equipment will remain with the Isle of Wight Council and should the employee leave the employment, all equipment must be returned to the Council.

j. Office Consumables

Individuals should not be expected to provide their own consumables. Full home workers will be expected to order through existing channels and collect from the appropriate work base.

5 Responsibilities of Employees

In areas where shared desk utilisation is operating, employees are required to comply with the following:

- Ensuring that at the end of the working day, or following the use of a workstation, desks are left tidy, clean and clear from rubbish, personal possessions and paperwork.
- Storing paperwork and hard files away when not in use. All staff will have access to a designated, secure, storage area in which to keep any essential paper-based documentation, stationery supplies and personal items.
- Setting aside a regular date and time to clear paperwork that is no longer required.

Employees wishing to apply to start working flexibly need to:

- consider how to maintain their work/life balance by thinking through the implications of flexible working on their work and the impact on their colleagues.
- ensure that contact arrangements will work effectively (eg use of in/out/whiteboards, electronic diaries, phone numbers for each location they will be working from, mobile phone number, etc).
- ensure they maintain attendance at team meetings and one-to-one/supervision meetings with their manager.
- ensure they maintain regular contact with other colleagues to minimise feelings of isolation that could develop.
- consider all aspects of Health and Safety, in particular, in conjunction with their manager carry out a Health and Safety risk assessment when they are working from a variety of locations, and DSE risk assessment when home working is agreed, raising any issue of concern with their line manager.
- ensure the safety and security of Council equipment and information.
- record their working time in the required format, ensuring they take regular rest breaks and holidays and comply with the Working Time Regulations.
- raise any concerns about their work/life balance or their flexible working arrangement as soon as possible with their line manager in the first instance.
- recognise that home working is not a substitute for childcare.
- consider whether they have the personality traits required to make flexible working successful eg self-motivation and self-reliance for home/touchdown working.

6 Responsibilities of Managers

Whether their department is operating flexible working or not, all managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff comply with the clear desk arrangements outlined under employee responsibilities dealing sympathetically with employees who find the transition to clear desk working arrangements difficult.
- Providing staff with access to a designated, secure, storage area in which to keep any essential paper-based documentation, stationery supplies and personal items.

6.1 Managing requests for flexible working

Managers must:

- approach HR to consider all the issues and enlist their support in discussions between themselves and their employees ensuring that contractual changes are made where necessary.
- consider employee's requests and ensure that the needs of service users are met.
- ensure a Health and Safety risk assessment is carried out for any employees that are fully home-based/mobile and ensure that action is taken to address the issues identified.
- document the agreed arrangements in conjunction with HR.
- ensure fairness and consistency in application so particular groups are not put to a disadvantage eg employees without childcare responsibilities should not always be expected to cover early/late working requirements.

6.2 Communication with employees working flexibly

It is recognised that flexible working may result in a loss of interpersonal contact and exchanges with both colleagues and managers. To reduce this loss of contact and social interaction, managers should set up clear communication channels to ensure that the flexible worker continues to receive the same communications as office based employees, for example:

- receives IWC communications materials.
- receives information on social events.
- attends regular team meetings.
- receives regular management contact.
- offered and receives appropriate training.
- kept informed of technical or legislative changes, where necessary.
- carries out formal personal development reviews.
- undertakes regular, scheduled one-to-ones.
- has access to Policies and Procedures.

6.3 Managing flexible working

In addition, to ensure that flexible arrangements do not impede service delivery, or the health of employees, managers must:

- set clear objectives eg what is expected and when, and set current targets (establish a system of success criteria to measure the output, eg number of completed cases per stated time period).
- regularly feedback and appraise work produced (more frequent review sessions in addition to annual personal development reviews).
- review the working arrangement at regular intervals.
- Monitor working hours to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations and discuss with employees when working hours are excessive, or too few, and/or worked at times outside of agreed hours. The causes must be investigated and an action plan agreed to mitigate the effects. Ensure annual leave entitlement is planned and taken.
- ensure that employees do not become isolated and monitor for any signs of stress ensuring that the flexible worker is appropriately supported.
- adopt a coaching approach to help flexible workers adjust and increase effectiveness.
- ensure that flexible workers have the same promotion and development opportunities that office based workers would receive.

7 Impact on Employment

The following considerations will primarily relate to flexible working options which involve reduced hours, but some issues may also be relevant for other patterns such as home working.

Advice should always be sought from the HR Team by managers when they receive a request for flexible working and guidance sought in relation to the current employment legislation, in particular, the Working Time Regulations and the Flexible Working Regulations. The Council's Parental Leave Policy also should be considered.

Other issues that need to be taken into consideration are:

7.1 Pay

Employees taking up flexible working options which result in reduced working hours will be paid on a pro rata basis according to the number of hours worked. With the exception of career breaks and any unpaid special leave, employees will continue to receive their pay monthly. If necessary, employees should seek advice from the HR Team prior to agreeing a flexible working proposal so that specific salary details can be calculated and considered.

7.2 Leave

The impact on annual leave arrangements will vary according to the type of flexible working options agreed. Managers should refer to the individual flexible working option when assessing the impact.

7.3 Employee Loans

Repayment of loans is not affected by any reduction in working hours. Employees must continue with the agreed payments.

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7.4 Car Allowances

Mileage allowances are unaffected and will continue to be paid in accordance with the Council's existing arrangements. The impact on car user allowances will vary according to the type of flexible working options agreed. Managers should refer to the Travel Allowances Policy when assessing the impact

7.5 Sickness Absence

Entitlement to occupational sick pay will be pro rata according to the number of days actually worked.

7.6 Maternity Leave / Pay and Paternity Leave

Employees will be entitled to the benefits of the maternity or paternity scheme but payment will be reduced on a pro rata basis. To ensure entitlement to maternity pay, all employees working flexible patterns will have to return to work for three months following their maternity leave if receiving occupational maternity pay.

7.7 Filling Vacant Hours Created by Employees Taking Up Flexible Working

Where an employee taking up a flexible working pattern has created a number of vacant hours within that post, then careful consideration must be given to filling these hours/weeks. Where it is decided to fill the vacant hours then this must be done without incurring significant additional cost ie the hours must be paid at a normal rate.

7.8 Approved overtime

Where hours are worked in excess of the contract, payment at plain time will be made up to 37 hours ie normal full time hours, before the appropriate enhanced rate is applicable.

7.9 Provision of information

Employees, who, because of the nature of the flexible working pattern, are remote from the workplace, must be kept informed by their manager about relevant workplace information.

7.10 Accommodation and equipment

Consideration will need to be given to the possible impact on accommodation and equipment if, for example, a number of staff reduce their hours within a section and these are subsequently used to make up another post.

8 Flexible Working Application Process

The following process sets out the arrangements that are to be undertaken in considering and giving approval to flexible working requests. Appendix A provides a flowchart for reference.

8.1 Considering the initial request

The employee will make a request for flexible working in writing to their line manager. The application form for flexible working is set out in Appendix C. The information provided by the employee will form the basis for a meeting with the manager where

the request can be more fully explored. The employee should give an indication of a possible start date and the period during which flexible working is required.

The manager must arrange for a suitability assessment of the home to be carried out. Such assessment will consider whether the space and resources meet the criteria required and if so, the assessor will list what office equipment is required so that the manager can assess the cost implication of the request. A list of the current Health and Safety Liaison Officers who are able to carry out a suitability assessment can be found on the Council's Intranet.

The manager must meet the employee within 28 days of receipt of the request. Within 14 days of this meeting the manager must notify the employee of the decision.

The employee will be required to give reasons for requesting a particular flexible working option. This information is confidential to those responsible for making the decision and any employee providing advice such as from HR or Legal. The manager should not make speculative judgements about the importance or relevance of reasons for requests. It is essential to view the request as objectively and fully as possible, taking into account only the practical implications:

- Workload of the person making the request and the team in which they work.
- Options for re-scheduling and/or re-prioritising work.
- Alternative options for flexible working.
- Implications for conditions of employment.
- Financial implications.

There may also be other issues that are unique to the situation and these should also be considered.

Within their written proposal the employee will be expected to give consideration to any impact their request may have upon their own work, other team members and service delivery and will be expected to offer constructive suggestions as to how these can be managed. A checklist is provided in Appendix D to assist managers in considering requests.

A Change Request Service Needs form available on the intranet at <https://wightnet.iow.gov.uk/ict/centralisedBudget.aspx> will need to be completed if there is to be any further office equipment required as a result of the application.

8.2 Making the decision

It is requisite that managers consider flexible working applications in consultation with the HR Team. This will encourage consistency and provide a facility for recording and monitoring flexible working within the Council. Model letters for both employees and managers are attached at Appendix E.

8.3 Multiple requests

Where a manager receives a number of flexible working proposals, or a joint proposal from a group of employees, the requests will have to be considered collectively.

8.4 Agreeing the request – informing the employee

The agreed changes must be subject to the successful completion of a trial period after which a review must be undertaken to assess the viability of the change. The review should be arranged for a suitable period after commencement agreed between the employee and the manager. The employee will need to be issued with a formal letter of notification about the trial period including an explanation of the impact on the individual's conditions of service and the agreed flexible working arrangements. Model letters can be found in Appendix E.

8.5 Reviewing the arrangement

An initial review meeting should be arranged at the end of the trial period which would normally be no longer than three months, although it is important to discuss any difficulties or problems before this time. A successful trial period should be confirmed in writing. If the trial period is unsuccessful, this must be explained to the employee and confirmed in writing. It is the manager's responsibility to ensure this review takes place.

8.6 Ending the arrangement for operational reasons

Beyond the review period, all flexible working arrangements will be made subject to a proviso that the individual may be required to revert to their original pattern of working or an alternative if there are identifiable and significant operational problems identified at any time. Such action will not be taken unreasonably and will always be subject to full discussion with the individual concerned and the giving of appropriate notice.

8.7 Right to revert voluntarily to original pattern of working

Individuals will have the right to revert to their original pattern of working within the trial period subject to their giving appropriate notice. Once the trial period has been served and the arrangement has been confirmed, individuals will not have the right to revert to their original pattern of working. They will, however, have the right to request a variation of their pattern of working and managers should treat this as a new request for flexible working.

8.8 Action where agreement is not given to take up flexible working

If it is considered that a post is unsuitable for the specific flexible working option proposed by the employee or group of employees, the reasons for this decision must be communicated to the employee, ideally by discussion and followed up in writing. Requests for flexible working should only be refused on one or more of the following grounds:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work among staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff

- Detrimental impact on service quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Planned structural changes
- Other relevant business grounds

8.9 Misuse of Flexible Working Arrangement

Employees found abusing the system may be excluded from the flexible working arrangements and may be subject to disciplinary action being taken against them under the Council's Disciplinary Policy. The following examples of misuse, which are not exhaustive may constitute gross misconduct:

- Making a personal accident claim when the home worker was not working.
- Persistently working less than the contracted hours.
- Fraudulent claims on timesheets.

9 Health and Safety

It is vital that Health and Safety issues are discussed when considering flexible working options.

It is essential if someone is working outside normal office hours or travelling/working from a number of locations their personal safety is not compromised.

As a minimum, employees and their managers need to consider:

- what the work involves (lifting, storage, visits).
- personal issues (are they capable of working on their own, any medical conditions to consider, first aid provision, feeling isolated).
- where they will work (designated office space within own home or locations across the Island, will they be working alone, etc).
- fire safety/electrical testing.
- Data Protection/security of information and its disposal.
- equipment needed (both ICT and furniture).
- lone working and security issues.
- use of mobile phones.

10 Grievances

Where an employee is dissatisfied with a decision in relation to a proposal they have made to work more flexibly, they have the right to access the Council's Grievance Procedure.

11 Case Studies

Attached at Appendix F are two flexible working case studies.

12 Related Policy Framework

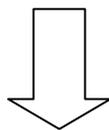
Policy	Purpose of Policy
Disciplinary Policy	This Policy is intended to help and encourage all employees to achieve agreed acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour whilst ensuring that they are all treated consistently and fairly. It is used when employees are suspected or believed to have failed to act in accordance with any of the Council's Policies or rules or any other action that may otherwise be considered a disciplinary matter.
Annual Leave Policy	All employees of the Isle of Wight Council have an entitlement to paid annual leave. This document sets out the Policy, procedures, entitlements and obligations in relation to annual leave.
Grievance Procedure	It is the responsibility of managers and their staff to create and maintain harmonious and good working relationships in the workplace. When employees raise problems or complaints with their line manager, these would normally be dealt with informally. There may however be occasions when employees wish to raise a formal grievance if matters relating to the employer/employee relationship remain unresolved or are deemed not to have been satisfactorily concluded. This Policy sets out the Council's procedure for dealing with such matters.
Special Leave	The Council's annual leave entitlements and flexible working arrangements should normally be sufficient to provide enough time off to meet the personal needs of most employees. Additional special leave may, however, be granted to employees in special circumstances. This document sets out the procedures for application and approval of special leave.
Data Protection Policy	It is important that staff understand their responsibilities when using, storing and handling personal information at work. This Policy sets out the responsibilities and actions required of staff to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.
Lone Working Policy	Many staff are required to work on their own as part of their job. This Policy sets out the responsibilities of managers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety.

<p>ICT Policy ICT Electronic Communications Policy ICT Hardware Policy ICT Software Policy ICT Standards Policy ICT Telecoms Policy ICT Mass Mailing Policy ICT Security Policy Information Security Policy Protective Marking Policy</p>	<p>It is important that staff understand their responsibilities when using information communication technology at work or at home. Of significance is the need to ensure that the Council complies with all relevant legislation concerning Health and Safety, copyright and Data Protection. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action, large fines, embarrassment and even prison sentences for employees.</p> <p>This and other related Policies have been written to help you understand the Council's rules concerning the use of your computer and other Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems and to help you avoid some of the common pitfalls.</p>
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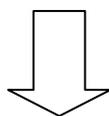
Appendix A: Flow Chart

The flowchart below details the procedure for applying to change your way of working:

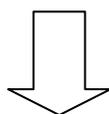
Employee advises manager that they want to request flexible working.



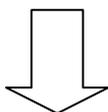
Employee fills in Flexible Working Application form.
If flexible working request involves partial or full home working then the Line Manager must arrange for a Health and Safety Liaison Officer to carry out a suitability assessment.



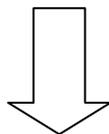
Within 28 days of receiving application form, manager undertakes an assessment and has meeting with employee to discuss the request and methods of accommodating it.



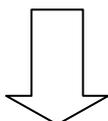
Manager to complete Change Request Service Needs Form if request affects ICT or equipment needs.



Within 14 days of meeting, employee to be advised of outcome in writing, including any trial period review dates, by manager. If the agreement includes changes to contract hours etc, then manager to notify Human Resources for contract and pay alterations to be done.



If successful the employee can start new flexible work pattern. If not satisfied, employee can appeal, via the Grievance Procedure.



Trial period of up to three months, if successful, confirmation is given of permanent flexible working pattern arrangements

Appendix B: Office Environment Rules

Office Environment Rules

All staff working in a touchdown environment should be aware of and follow guidance. Please note this does not apply to Home Working.

1 Bookings

- It is recommended that where possible staff book touchdown space in advance to avoid a situation where space is not available and staff are required to make alternative arrangements at short notice.
- Each touchdown point will be bookable via a central facility on the Intranet.
- Bookings can be made for workstations, up to five working days in advance.
- Workstations should not be booked unnecessarily and bookings no longer required should be cancelled in a timely manner to allow others to utilise the resource.
- Abortive bookings will be monitored and if necessary users will be prevented from using the touchdown point.
- Employees should contact the Building Manager if they have any queries regarding booking or availability.

2 Security

- All employees visiting buildings to make use of touchdown workstations must comply with the Visitor Policy applicable within that building.
- Individuals must wear appropriate ID at all times whilst in Council buildings.

3 Health and Safety

- Before using a workstation it is the responsibility of the individual user to ensure that all elements are set for ergonomic comfort.
- If an individual experiences any health and safety problems with the touchdown space, staff must bring this to the attention of the Building Manager immediately and move to an alternative work area.

4 Fire Evacuation

- On ARRIVAL it is the responsibility of the employee to familiarise themselves with the fire exits and evacuation procedure for the building.
- In the unlikely event of a fire, staff should make their own way to the designated assembly point (detailed on posters in the vicinity).

5 Behaviour

- It is vital that touchdown points are welcoming and productive environments in which to work if flexible working is to be successful. Therefore, both visiting employees and employees based permanently at touchdown points must be courteous and friendly to all colleagues and have an open approach to sharing work space.

- Possessions and papers should be cleared away after use. Work areas should always be left tidy and free of rubbish.
- Furniture allocated to a shared desk should not be removed. If a workstation is missing a piece of equipment or there are any faults, this should be reported to the Building Manager immediately.
- ICT equipment allocated to a shared desk should not be removed. If a workstation is missing a piece of equipment or there are any faults, this should be reported to the ICT Service Desk immediately.
- If carrying a mobile phone, this should be kept with you at all times. If mobile phones are left unattended in the touchdown point, it must be understood that other users have the right to turn off the phone if it is causing a disturbance.
- Mobile phones should be set to a discrete ring tone.
- Meetings should not be held in the touchdown area.
- Please do not conduct loud conversations or meetings in touchdown areas.
- Please do not use speakers in the touchdown areas.
- You must assume ALL screen and paper information is sensitive unless you are explicitly invited to view it.
- REMEMBER: The touchdown space should always be left in the condition in which you would wish to find it. This includes workstations; break out areas and tea and coffee making facilities.

Appendix C: Flexible Working Application Form

(Before completing this form please refer to the Flexible Working Policy and Procedures)

Name: _____ Payroll No: _____

Directorate: _____ Manager: _____

To the employer

I would like to apply to work a flexible working arrangement that is different to my current working pattern under the Council's Flexible Working Policy. I confirm I meet the eligible criteria as follows:

- I have worked continuously as an employee of Isle of Wight Council for the last 26 weeks (two years if applying for a career break).
- I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.

Please give a brief outline of the reason you are requesting to work flexibly:

Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

Describe the working arrangements you would like to work in future (including days/hours/times worked):

Describe the working location/s you will be at; when you will be there; where these will be; etc.

Have you discussed your plans with your colleagues? What was the response if you have?

How will this be of benefit to the service?

I would like this working pattern to commence from:

SignedDate

Approved:

Line Manager: Date:

Please send completed forms to your manager and also send a copy to the HR Department.

Appendix D: Managers Flexible Working Checklist

Items to check:		Signed and Dated
1.	Employee expresses an interest in flexible working - Flexible Working Application	
2.	Hold informal discussion and ensure employee has read the Flexible Working Policy and any related Policies. Discuss requirements for equipment and consider the impact on the job, the person and the location.	
3.	Arrange follow up meeting after completed application allowing time to get answers to points 4-8.	
4.	If home working request arrange a suitability assessment with a Health and Safety Liaison Officer	
5.	Check that employee has advised mortgager/landlord/insurers etc, if main base is to be their home.	
6.	After consideration of application decide if:- a) Agreement in principle subject to cost analysis b) Rejection – what grounds	
7.	Before speaking to employee, if 6b discuss issue with HR Advisor. If 6a, follow steps 8-10 <u>before</u> speaking to employee.	
8.	Carry out full cost analysis, including discussions with Directorate employees.	
9.	Discuss all financial and other implications with appropriate manager including the impact on other employees.	
10	Draw up planned timetable with approximate date when amendments to contract can commence. Submit Change Request Form for necessary equipment.	
11	Inform employee of outcome to application.	
12	Agree points on hours being worked, changes to duties, reporting lines, nominated base, base from where he/she will collect or order stationery, mail etc. Set the approximate date for equipment to be set up in employee's home. Decide how long the flexible working arrangement will last for.	
13	Agree review date.	
14	Agree the notice period to end the amendment to contract/flexible working arrangement on either side.	

15	Agree start date of amendment to contract/flexible working arrangement with employee.	
16	Inform HR Advisor of start date plus all points agreed in 10.	
17	Arrange with HR Advisor/Payroll to receive appropriate allowances if taking up full home working option. Complete appropriate change form to inform HR of any changes to terms and conditions of contract that may be needed.	
18	Ensure relevant Health and Safety assessment has been carried out at their flexible working locations or arrange to carry out an assessment at their home (if that is to be their main base). Lone Working Policy DSE/VDU Assessment	
19	List all equipment for audit that is in employee's possession/home. Ask employee to complete declaration form in relation to any equipment in their home to be kept on personnel file.	
20	Advise all other relevant parties about change in working location and/or need to collect mail/order stationery, etc.	
21	Change Directorate records and advise others on strictly "need to know" basis of new contact address or telephone number.	
22	Inform ICT regarding servicing of equipment and relevant officer regarding payment of invoices and bills for telephone connection/rental/bills.	

Appendix E: Model Letters

1 Rejection of Trial Flexible Working Proposal

Dear

Re: Flexible Working Proposal

Further to your meeting with.....on....., I confirm that it will not be possible to introduce a variation to your working arrangement because of operational difficulties which prevent a trial of the proposed arrangements.

The reasons for this decision are set out below:

(insert details of the issues that have arisen and were discussed at the review meeting)

Should you be dissatisfied with this decision, you do have the right to have your complaint dealt with and this may be done using the Council's Grievance Procedure.

Yours sincerely

Appendix E: Model Letters

2. Agreement to Trial Period

Dear

Re: Request for Flexible Working

Further to your meeting with.....on....., I confirm that there will be a mutually agreed variation to your working arrangement for a trial period with effect from..... . For the duration of the trial period you will work on the following basis :(insert full details of revised working arrangements).

This arrangement may be made permanent subject to the successful completion of the trial period which will be reviewed on If this working arrangement is not considered to be operationally feasible the reasons for this will be explained to you and confirmed to you in writing. You will then revert to your original working hours arrangement. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of any decision made in relation to your flexible working proposal, you will be able to pursue this via the Council's Grievance Procedure.

I understand that it has been explained to you that you are responsible for considering the short and long-term implications of this new arrangement in relation to your conditions of service and entitlements under the Local Government pension Scheme. The main changes are however, specified below:

(insert details of revised terms and conditions; pay (pro-rata), holiday entitlements etc)

If you require any further information about the arrangement please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are in agreement with the details above, please sign and date the declaration below and return one copy of this letter to.....which will be retained on your personal file.

Yours sincerely

I agree and accept the temporary, mutually agreed variation to my terms and conditions of employment.

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix E: Model Letters

3. Confirmation of Flexible Working Arrangement

Dear

Re: Flexible Working Proposal

Further to your meeting with.....on..... , I confirm that the trial period for your flexible working proposal has been successful and the arrangement can now be made permanent/extended until the date requested which is..... .

My letter dated confirmed the details of your revised working arrangements and the main changes to your terms and conditions of employment.

I confirm that although this arrangement may now be viewed as permanent, the needs of the service may in future require a review of work patterns making amendment necessary. Any proposed changes will be the subject of full consultation with you.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are in agreement with the details above, please sign and date the declaration below and return one copy to which will be retained on your personal file.

Yours sincerely

I agree and accept the mutually agreed variation to my terms and conditions of employment.

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix E: Model Letters

4. Termination of Trial Flexible Working Arrangement

Dear

Re: Flexible Working Proposal

Further to your meeting with on , I confirm that the trial period for your flexible working proposal has identified operational difficulties which will mean that the arrangement cannot be made permanent or extended further.

The difficulties are explained below:

(insert details of the issues that have arisen and were discussed at the review meeting)

As discussed, you will revert to your original arrangements with effect from

Should you be dissatisfied with this decision, you do have the right to have your complaint dealt with and this may be done using the Council's Grievance Procedure.

Yours sincerely

Appendix F: Case Studies

Service Delivery Case Study

Beacon Theme: Benefits Administration

Authority name: Salford City Council

Case Study title: The benefit(s) of a homeworker

Overview of service delivery

This initiative allows Housing and Council Tax benefit staff to work from their own home by linking to a high-profile service that assesses and calculates 30,000 Housing and Council Tax benefit forms. This project has positive outcomes for both the organisation and the member of staff.

The key drivers and benefits for considering this initiative were as follows: -

Modernising service delivery

The drive towards e-government and the provision of services by technology-based solutions provided possibilities for new and innovative options to achieve business benefits, while also making the most and obtaining value for money from the I.T. systems already in place.

Accommodation strategy

Linking home working to an accommodation strategy provided an opportunity to reduce accommodation needs and make associated cost savings.

Best Value

The best value process required Salford to look for continuous improvement in the way services are provided.

Appendix F: Case Studies

Case Study



Anite delivers a mobile working solution to upgrade the London Borough of Havering's Social Care Systems

<p>Overview Havering Council is progressive and forward thinking, and keen to make use of new technology to improve services. This is evident in their decision to upgrade their Social Care and Housing systems as part of a joint project designed to provide a more efficient and cohesive service to clients.</p> <p>Business Situation The Council's existing Social Care system was ageing and ill equipped to handle new legislation such as the Single Assessment Process and the supporting People Initiative. Traditionally, care workers had filled out paper assessment forms whilst on client visits, entered only basic information onto the existing system and spent large amounts of time faxing information around the borough. The Single Assessment form also spans ten pages, so manual entry is laborious and inefficient. As Sally Holland states, "at the moment it is done manually, which is resource hungry and hard to monitor. We don't have proper records and if we do then they are on paper, which is hard to keep track of and make available to the people who need it."</p> <p>Solution To resolve this the Council is piloting Anite Mobile Social Care software – an application designed for the Pocket PC platform. All care workers are equipped with the Compaq iPAQ and can work off-line to capture information on electronic assessment forms whilst interviewing clients. Upon completion, the care workers can connect remotely to transfer the data. "The capture technology integrates neatly with Swift" says Ann Rennie. "It takes less than 30 seconds to upload and download information, and it is looking very promising. We would be looking to maximize the use of the mobile technology with SWIFT to include recording of Care Plans, Case Notes and Financial Assessments which could then be produced in the customer's home." The electronic assessment forms help guide the care worker and Service User through the person centred approach to Assessment.</p>	 
 	<p>Solution Summary</p> <p>Industry Community Services</p> <p>Client Profile The London Borough of Havering lies in the north of the city on the southern fringes of Essex. It has a high proportion of elderly people and a fast growing number of over 85s.</p> <p>Situation As part of a project designed to provide a more efficient and cohesive service to clients, Havering Council needs to implement a mobile working solution to avoid laborious manual data entry and improve accuracy.</p> <p>Solution The Council is piloting Anite Mobile Social Care software. Each care worker is equipped with a Pocket PC so they can capture information whilst interviewing clients.</p>