

Introduction

The Work Life Balance Policy includes procedures and guidance in relation to the following:

1. Changes in Working Hours / patterns
2. Job Share
3. Compressed working hours
4. Flexitime

Aims of the Policy

To provide clear guidelines for managers and employees to follow when considering requests under the policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees with the exception of those employees working in maintained schools under the direct control of a school Governing Body.

School Based Employees:

Newport City Council commend this policy to individual Governing Bodies for adoption. If adopted by a Governing Body, the policy will apply to all employees under the direct control of that Governing Body.

To be read in conjunction with:

Family Friendly Policy
Flexi-time Guidance

Flexible Working

Flexible working enables an employee to request a variation to their working pattern, contractual hours or work location on a permanent or temporary basis. However, it does not provide the automatic right to work flexibly. Agreeing to one employee's request will not therefore set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern. All requests are considered on an individual basis, taking into account the needs of the business and the impact that agreeing the request will have on service delivery.

The Council / School is committed to the provision of flexible working and has considered it appropriate to extend its statutory provision to include the whole of its workforce. The forms of flexible working covered by this policy are:

- Changes to Working Hours / Patterns
- Job-sharing
- Compressed Working Hours
- Flexitime Scheme

The Council / School will only consider one application for any form of flexible working from an employee within a 12 month period.

Process

Employees who wish to request a variation to their contracted hours, work pattern or location are required to complete the application form [Work Life Balance Application](#) and return it to their Head of Service who will in turn nominate an appropriate officer to determine the outcome of the application. For school based staff the form must be returned to the Head Teacher who will determine the outcome of the application. The Headteacher may nominate another member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to determine the outcome of the application.

The [nominated officer / Headteacher \(or member of SMT\) must acknowledge the request](#) and meet with the employee within 28 calendar days of receiving the application. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a Trade Union representative or work colleague, and is entitled to have the meeting postponed for up to seven calendar days from the original meeting date to facilitate this arrangement.

N.B. The nominated officer / Headteacher (or member of SMT) has the authority to agree a request on the basis of the application itself, without the need for a meeting should it be felt appropriate.

The nominated officer / Headteacher (or member of SMT) will consider the business case for supporting/refusing the application, taking account of the factors indicated below:

1. Additional costs
2. The effect on the ability to meet service user demand
3. The ability to re-organise work among existing employees
4. Planning and scheduling of work;
5. The ability to recruit additional employees
6. Impact on quality
7. Impact on performance
8. The sufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
9. Any planned structural changes
10. Establishing a system for review at appropriate intervals.

A different working arrangement or trial period may be considered as a temporary measure to determine whether the request is feasible (recommended no more than nine months / one school year), however in all circumstances the nominated officer must communicate in writing the decision reached within 14 calendar days of meeting with the employee confirming the employee's right of appeal against the nominated officer's / Headteacher's (member of SMT's) decision ([Letter accepting application](#), [Letter rejecting application](#))

Whatever the outcome, all relevant documentation must be sent in accordance with agreed time scales, unless the [nominated officer / Headteacher \(member of SMT\) and employee agree an extension to the time scales](#). An automatic extension will also apply where the individual who normally deals with the request is absent from work due to leave or illness. In this instance the extension will last as long as the period of absence.

Appeals Procedure

Should an application be refused and the employee wishes to appeal against this decision, this should be made in writing to the Head of Service within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision, outlining the reasons for the appeal.

School Based Employees

In a school, an employee who wishes to appeal against the decision of the Headteacher has the right of appeal to the Governing Body's Staffing Appeals Committee. The appeal must be made in writing within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision outlining the reasons for the appeal.

An employee who wishes to appeal against the decision of the member of the Senior Management Team has the right of appeal to the Headteacher. The appeal must be made in writing within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision outlining the reasons for the appeal.

An appeal meeting must be arranged with the Head of Service / Staffing Appeals Committee (or Headteacher) within 14 calendar days of receiving the employee's appeal.

The Head of Service / Staffing Appeals Committee (or Headteacher) must inform the employee of their decision within 14 calendar days after the date of the appeal meeting. If the request is accepted a letter should be sent to the employee informing them of the decision and the date on which it is to take effect.

If the request is refused the Head of Service / Staffing Appeals Committee (or Headteacher) must set out the grounds for the refusal, explaining the reasons for their decision. The Head of Service's / Staffing Appeals Committee's (or Headteacher) decision shall be final.

All time periods for the hearing of the appeal can be extended where both the Head of Service / Staffing Appeals Committee (or Headteacher) and employee agree. Any extensions must be recorded in writing and copied to the employee, specifying the period the extension relates to and the date on which it will end. An automatic extension will also apply where the Head of Service / members of the Staffing Appeals Committee (or Headteacher) who normally deals with the appeal is absent from work due to leave or illness. In these instances the extension will last as long as the period of absence.

N.B. Where the Head of Service determined to deal with the application personally, any appeal would be heard by the relevant Strategic Director.

TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING AN EMPLOYEE CAN APPLY FOR

Changes to Working Hours / Patterns ([Work Life Balance Application Form](#))

Flexible working enables an employee to request a variation to their working pattern or contractual hours on a permanent basis. However, a temporary period of up to 9 months / one school year may be considered as an interim measure to determine whether the request is feasible. At the end of a temporary variation, the employee will either revert to their substantive hours or request a permanent change to their contractual hours, work pattern or location; there should not be a temporary extension to the arrangement.

School Based Employees

In determining a Flexible working application in schools, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- *necessity for the employee to attend INSET days*
- *attendance at weekly staff meetings*
- *attendance at parents evenings*

The above provides examples of considerations and is not an exhaustive list.

If it is determined that the employee should attend all INSET days, weekly staff meetings and / or parents evenings, not just those on their normal working days, there will be an additional cost to the school.

Job Share

Job share enables an employee to reduce their working week by more than one day. Applications for job share arrangements should be approved *subject to* a job share partner being recruited, and the employee will continue to work their contracted hours until a partner is found.

Should a Job Share partner leave, the remaining partner will be offered the post on a full time basis. If they wish to continue job sharing another partner will be sought through the current recruitment and selection procedure. Should another partner not be found, then the remaining partner will once again be offered the post on a full time basis. Should they refuse this offer, then suitable alternative employment will be sought and where this is not possible notice of termination of employment will be issued.

Detailed arrangements in relation to hours/days of work will be agreed between the job sharers and the manager. The hours to be worked will be individually stated for each partner, along with start and finishing times which if applicable will include flexible working hours as per the Council's / School's scheme. Hours of work may be varied at the discretion of the manager in order to meet services requirements. This will be done in consultation with both job sharers.

In certain circumstances job sharers may be required to cover the absence of their job share partner; reasonable notice will be given by management in these instances.

School Based Employees

In determining a job-share application in schools, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- *necessity for both job-share partners to attend INSET days*
- *necessity for both job-share partners to attend weekly staff meetings*
- *necessity for both job-share partners to attend parents evenings*
- *arrangements for handover*

The above provides examples of considerations and is not an exhaustive list.

If it is determined that both job-share partners should attend all INSET days, weekly staff meetings and / or parents evenings, not just those on their normal working days, there will be an additional cost to the school.

Compressed Working Hours

Compressed hours is a flexible working arrangement whereby employees work their contracted hours (37 hours or less) over a shorter period i.e. 9 days rather than 10 days per fortnight (74 hours over 9 days). This is also referred to as a compressed working fortnight and would usually replace flexi time. Compressed hours may not be suitable for employees who either work a set shift pattern or who operate in front-line service provision with set operating times.

The day off in a compressed week (i.e. the 10th day) will need to be agreed with the manager, it may be a set day each fortnight or it may be a 'floating' or 'rolling' day depending on the demands of the service area and the size of team. The service must be covered during the office hours of the team, for example Monday to Thursday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Applications are only approved on the understanding that flexibility will be required of employees.

In most circumstances, the Compressed Hours bandwidth starts at 7:00 am and ends at 7:00 pm (Monday to Friday), however the bandwidth is dependent on health and safety and security considerations of the work location. Employees must agree with their manager their start and finish times which can only be changed with the prior approval of their manager. Breaks will not count as work time.

Annual leave is not reduced but entitlement should be converted into hours for ease of calculation. When an annual leave day is taken by an employee on compressed hours, the correct number of hours must be deducted, for example for a full time employee who reduces from 10 days to 9 days the new average hours per day will be 8.22 hours (8hrs 13mins). Entitlements to public, bank holidays and other statutory public holidays are unaffected, for a full time employee who reduces from 10 days to 9 days per fortnight and whose average working hours per day is 8.22 hours, 7.40 (7hrs 24mins) will be taken away from 8.22 and therefore 0.49 minutes would be 'owed' by the employee.

School Based Employees

It is unlikely that a compressed working hours arrangement could be approved in the majority of school based posts, as employees in schools are normally required to be available during the hours that schools are open to pupils. However, it is possible that compressed working hours arrangements could apply to a small number of administrative employees.

Notification of Approval

Approved applications for work-life balance should be forwarded to Employment Services along with a completed HR/Payroll form providing details of the new hours and working pattern.

Flexi-Time

Flexi-time is applicable to all employees whose working hours/practices allow for flexible working hours to be implemented. For detailed guidance please see the FlexitimeGuidance.

Overtime

Employees requested to work outside of the bandwidth of 7am to 7pm, will usually be paid this time as overtime. Any overtime will only be worked at the request of and by authorisation of your manager. Employees are responsible for updating and maintaining the flexi and annual leave tracker, any employee found to be abusing this trust will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Code. Any attempt to falsify hours will be regarded as gross misconduct.

Template Information

Template information can be used during the Work Life Balance Application process and can be accessed below.

- [Work Life Balance Application Form](#)
- [Work Life Balance Application Acknowledgement Letter](#)
- [Work Life Balance Application Extension to Timescales Letter](#)
- [Work Life Balance Application Withdrawal Letter](#)
- [Work Life Balance Application Acceptance Letter](#)
- [Work Life Balance Application Rejection Letter](#)
- [HR/Payroll Form](#)

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Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes/Changes
V1	16/12/2011	Human Resources	New Policy - bringing together number of existing policies and amending processes. New Template
V1.1	04/01/2012	Human Resources	Grammatical / Spelling issue
V1.2	23/01/2013	Human Resources	Service Area to People & Transformation, schools reference included and Template change
V1.3	20/01/2017	Human Resources	removal of flexitime (now separate guidance)
V1.4	03/10/2017	Human Resources	Version Control Added