

## **Revised Flex Scheme: questions and answers**

A single, revised Flex Scheme is being introduced across Birmingham City Council – replacing all existing flex schemes – from 4 September 2017.

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### **Can I still take flex leave if I accrue it – and how much?**

The aim of this policy is to enable employees, where jobs allow, to carry out their duties whilst providing flexibility for personal commitments. There should be no reason to build up flex-time credit where there isn't a business need.

If you do accrue credit, a maximum of 30 hours' leave can be taken during each eight-week flex settlement period. You should use any credit within the eight-week settlement period in which it has been accrued. You can carry over a maximum of seven hours 18 minutes (a standard working day) to the following flex period.

### **Can I still go into debit with my flex-time?**

Again, because of the new agile working arrangements, you shouldn't need to, but if you do go into debit, you can carry over no more than seven hours 18 minutes as debit from any eight-week flex settlement period.

### **What is the difference between flex-time and flexible working?**

The two shouldn't be confused. Flexible working refers to permanent working patterns that have been agreed with the council – for example, if you always work four days a week. You can find out more about this in the [Flexible Working Policy](#) or through your trade union representative or by filling in an 'Ask HR' request.

This Flex Scheme, however, is about temporarily changing your working pattern to meet other specific commitments – such as attending a child's school activity for two hours in a morning and working for two hours in the evening to make up this time.

### **Under the new scheme, how do I record my hours?**

The method of recording hours worked and flex-time requests must be in place before any request for flex leave is made (this may be via Borer, time sheet, People Solutions or another method of recording). The method used must be agreed between the employee and their manager.

### **What if I fall behind on my hours for family reasons?**

We may all have times when our external commitments take precedence but, where possible, you should try to discuss anything that could impact on your work with your manager in advance. Your manager will be able to support you appropriately, in line with your needs and the needs of the service.

**If I have accrued flex-time credit but, due to unforeseen circumstances, I will be off work for a few months, what will happen to my accrued hours?**

Your manager will discuss your absence from work with you, and your accrued flex will be frozen until you return to work.

**I am going to be off work due to maternity leave. What will happen to my accrued hours?**

Any flex credit must be taken before maternity leave starts.

**I need to attend an appointment which is likely to take most of the day, how can this be accommodated?**

In agreement with your manager (and depending on the type of appointment – further guidance can be found on the [staff intranet](#) if you click on ‘Medical and other appointments’ or by asking your manager or trade union representative), you could work your hours differently. For example, you could work a portion from home in the evening and make up the time throughout the week, alongside using any flex-time credit you may have already accrued.

**I like to work normal office hours and go home, this is OK isn't it?**

Yes, if this is in line with the business need and provision of services to citizens.

**If I have to attend my child's school in an afternoon, can I pick up working again in the evening?**

Yes, if this is in line with the needs of the service, the service is covered during business hours and it is agreed with your manager.

**If I occasionally work from home or from another work location does my line manager have to complete a risk assessment?**

No. Increasingly large numbers of our workforce are required to operate in a mobile and agile way working from home on occasions and at other locations. This is not the same as formal permanent home-working arrangements which would require a full risk assessment before implementation.

**If I have accrued hours but have been unable to take them due to service delivery needs what will happen to my credit?**

Your manager will discuss the reason for declining flex leave with you. In some circumstances your manager may agree to carry forward additional credit. Any credit should be taken within the next full eight-week period. The ‘carry forward’ of additional credit should not become normal practice.

**Will my manager ask me to work odd arrangements, for example split shifts, if they say this is in line with business need?**

The aim of this policy is to enable employees, where jobs allow and with management consent, to carry out their duties whilst providing flexibility for personal commitments. Any change to contractual hours or patterns of work would require separate consultation.

**If I am in credit and the scheme is temporarily removed what happens to my credit?**

Your manager would discuss any temporary removal with you. If you are unable to use your flex-time credit, any accrued flex will be frozen so it can be taken at a later date. You and your manager will need to agree how this will be recorded.