



**NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY**

Flexible working hours scheme for admin and clerical staff

(up to and including Agenda for Change Band 6)

September 2017

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Flexible Working Hours Scheme (or flexi-time) is an employment benefit which provides a more flexible system of working for Administrative and Clerical staff but which is always subject to operational requirements.

Flexi-time provides an alternative to staff working a standard week contract and provides managers with a degree of flexibility in staffing the organization to meet customer/stakeholder needs and fluctuating work volumes.

The scheme shall apply to all administrative and clerical staff be they permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time. It should be noted that the provisions apply to part-time staff on a pro-rata basis. For some employees who have to work fixed hours because of service delivery requirements or other reasons, it may not be practicable for them to participate in the scheme. Line management will discuss the reasons for exclusion from the flexible working hours scheme with the employee(s) concerned if this situation arises and agree a suitable working pattern.

Staff who wish to comply with the standard office hours of 9.00am to 5.00 pm or agreed part-time hours, are free to do so and, therefore do not have to participate in the scheme.

2.0 PRINCIPLES

Flexible working hours can benefit both the employee and NIPEC when the scheme is operated on the basis of mutual respect for each other's needs and the needs of the service.

Employees who participate in the scheme must accept that when agreeing their normal start/finish times with line management, they must take into account their personal work responsibilities and those of NIPEC's overall pattern of work.

Employees must agree their normal working pattern with line management, i.e. normal start and finish times. If an employee wishes to change this pattern on a particular day or longer term he or she must discuss and agree it with line management in advance. Flexible working does not give an employee the automatic right to start work at 10.00am or leave work at 4.00pm if it does not meet operational requirements.

Line managers will, whenever possible, approve employees' requests for flexibility of working hours. However, the general office must be covered between the hours of 09.00 to 17.00, Monday to Friday, and as such a rota exists for the admin team based in this area – therefore, employees concerned should ensure the rota is covered prior to requesting flexi leave.

The scheme will be operated consistently across NIPEC to ensure fairness for all participating employees.

3.0 OPERATING RULES

Employees must record starting and finishing times and details of their lunch breaks on a daily basis using either the manual or electronic form (see Appendix 1 and 2) and forwarded to their line manager at the end of each month. Failure to adhere to this requirement on a regular basis will be viewed as an abuse of the system and may result in disciplinary action.

The flexible bands during which staff should arrive or depart from work are:

Nominal bandwidth: 0800 to 1800

This is the earliest time at which an employee may start work to the latest possible finishing time. Time registered outside of these hours is not recorded or credited unless an employee's working

pattern is such that contracted hours of work fall outside these times and the flexi-time system has been agreed accordingly with line management.

Nominal core time: 1000 to 1200 and 1400 to 1600

These are the times within the nominal bandwidth during which full-time staff must be present and available for work (subject to authorised absences). Core hours for part-time staff and full-time staff with non-standard contracted hours will vary in line with their contracts of employment and agreed working patterns.

Flexible time: 0800 to 1000 and 1600 to 1800

These periods denote when a member of staff has, within certain constraints, the choice of arrival and departure times. These constraints include managerial consent which will be influenced by workloads, service provision requirements, office cover etc.

Lunch break: 1200 to 1400

A minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours may be taken between 1200 and 1400 hours. An employee who wishes to take longer than a one hour lunch break should obtain the prior approval of line management, who in making decisions, will need to consider the requirements to cover the office through the lunchtime period.

In the event that an employee cannot take a lunch break between these hours, for example because of their attendance at a meeting, he or she should take a minimum 30 minutes break at a convenient time agreed with line management on that day.

The employee must record this on their flexi-sheet and have it authorised by their line manager.

Working Hours

The standard office hours are 0900 to 1700 - Monday to Friday.

Standard Working Week

For the purpose of crediting annual leave, sickness and other authorised absences (excluding public holidays), the following standard times apply for full-time members of staff:

Week	-	37.5 hours
Day	-	7 hours 30 minutes
Half day	-	3 hours 45 minutes

Part-time employees will claim a varying amount dependent on their contracted hours and working pattern. A part-time employee should claim the number of hours he or she normally works on the day on which he or she was absent.

ACCOUNTING PERIOD

The accounting period is one calendar month. Staff who join the flexi scheme during an accounting period will record flexi time for the remainder of the period. See Appendix 1 and 2 for a manual and electronic record sheet.

Carry Over

The maximum number of hours above or below the contracted hours that may be carried forward into the next accounting period is 8, either as a credit or debit.

Important – all time credits over 8 hours will be lost at the end of every accounting period

The above limits shall apply on a pro-rata basis for part-time staff. It is recognised however, that a situation may arise during the year which may result in a very heavy workload. The flexible working hour scheme is not intended to penalise employees who for a short period work hours in excess of contracted hours. It is therefore permissible for a line manager, in conjunction with the Head of Corporate Services, to give prior authorisation to an exceptional carry-forward of hours in

excess of the standard level. These exceptional hours may only be carried forward to a pre-designated date agreed with line management and the Head of Corporate Services, after which normal accounting period rules will apply. Consideration will also be given to those employees who have been unable to reduce excess credit through sickness absence.

Maximum Debit

Staff should be discouraged from remaining in continuous debit for a prolonged period. Debit for a period of three months may lead to the facility being withdrawn. New employees are not permitted to be in debit for the first three months of employment. The maximum number of debit hours an employee is permitted in an accounting period is 8 hours.

It is not permissible for an employee to have a negative balance in excess of 8 hours. Any employee who has a negative balance in excess of 8 hours will be required to reduce the deficit to the acceptable level by the end of the next accounting period. Continual or frequent balances in excess of 8 hours deficit will constitute abuse of the system and may result in disciplinary action. Each employee's balance at the end of an accounting period is reported regularly to the Corporate Services Manager.

It is possible for line management and the Head of Corporate Services to agree in advance that an employee can develop a deficit in excess of eight hours in exceptional circumstances, for example, when it is known that the employee will be working long hours to meet operational requirements. This deficit must be eradicated by a pre-designated date.

Time Off

Credit time is time taken off in lieu of excess hours worked. Credit hours may be taken outside core time or as one day or two half days flexi leave in an accounting period up to a maximum of 2 days per month. Staff must have accrued credit time of at least 2 hours 30 minutes for one half day's flexi leave and five hour's credit time for one day's flexi leave.

Employees can leave from 12 noon if they are taking the afternoon off and must come in between 12.30 pm and 2.00pm if they have taken the morning off. Flexi leave may only be taken with prior management consent and if the absence will not cause the employee to have a debit in excess of eight hours at the end of an accounting period. In exceptional circumstances, for example when a heavy workload and long working hours are forecast for a short period, this can be waived with the prior agreement of line management and Head of Corporate Services.

All requests to use accrued flexi time should be recorded on HRPTS.

Duties Away from NIPEC

If an employee is required to attend official duties (e.g. approved attendance at conferences, representing NIPEC at meetings, etc) away from the Office, he or she may claim back the hours over and above they would have worked on a normal working day.

Reasonable travel time may be claimed. This will exclude normal travel time to and from NIPEC. For example an employee who has a normal home to work journey of thirty minutes each way should deduct an hour from the travel time taken to reach another venue and claim the balance.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments should be arranged where possible outside core time and the employee's normal working hours utilising either the first or last appointment of the day. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for staff to make an appointment during core hours and in such cases the rules are as follows:

1. Staff should inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity and no later than the previous day.
2. Staff will be attributed a standard day provided that:
 - (a) such absence lasts less than two hours;

- (b) actual hours worked total at least 5 hours 24 minutes; and
 - (c) the time departed to and returned from the appointment is noted and certified by a manager.
3. Any time in excess of two hours taken for appointments will be debited from the officer's actual accumulated hours worked. *Check 2 and 3 with BSO policy*
 4. Time spent at a medical appointment should be entered onto HRPTS as a leave request, selecting the 'medical and dental appointment' option.

The above limits shall be applied on a pro-rata basis for part-time staff. The underlying principle is that no one should gain time from attendance at a medical appointment that they would not have gained had they been at work.

It is recognized that there is less flexibility when making hospital appointments and every effort will be made to accommodate any reasonable request. Such requests should be referred to the appropriate manager.

Where staff are undergoing a course of treatment that may lead to frequent absences during working hours, the line manager will liaise with the employee in determining the most appropriate way of facilitating attendance taking into account any organisational pressures. However, every effort will be made to facilitate the member of staff and options may include either using accrued hours or another form of flexible working arrangement.

Employees may not claim time for attendance at the medical appointment of a dependant but line management will, whenever practicable, allow the employee to be absent to attend the appointment.

4.0 DELAYS DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Credit for time lost due to delays because of extreme weather conditions will be considered on the merits of each case by line management in consultation with the Head of Corporate Services. Employees who are unable to reach NIPEC because of adverse weather may not normally claim for lost time except where the offices were closed due to weather conditions. Time lost due to individual travel difficulties may not be claimed. Traffic delays must be accepted as a normal hazard.

5.0 CREDIT/DEBIT ON LEAVING THE SERVICE

On receipt of a resignation, the line manager must ensure that the employee's flexi record is showing nil credit/debit by their last working day. In exceptional circumstances where this has not been achieved, any debit balance should firstly be off set against any outstanding leave. If this is not possible, final pay must be adjusted accordingly. Similarly an addition will be made for an excess balance of hours. Adjustments will be to the nearest 15 minutes. Excess flexi credit may also be used to offset annual leave overtaken at date of resignation.

6.0 ABUSE OF THE SCHEME

Any instance of alleged abuse or fraudulent activity will be managed within NIPEC's Disciplinary Procedure. If gross misconduct is proven, abuse of the system could lead to summary dismissal. Anyone unsure of the Rules should seek guidance from their line manager.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Chief Executive

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS PERSONAL RECORD (Manual)

Appendix 1

NAME: **MONTH:**

GRADE: (All times to be rounded to next higher five minutes - use 24 hour clock)

Work Day 1	Date 2	Morning			Afternoon			Time Credit (see*) 9	CODE 10	Approved By 11	Daily Total 12	Cond. Hours 13	Dr 14	Cr 15
		Arrive 3	Depart 4	Total 5	Arrive 6	Depart 7	Total 8							
BROUGHT FORWARD														
Total for month														

* Abbreviations: Please mark time in col. 9

Debit/Credit
Carried Forward

- Codes**
- Annual Leave AL Public Holiday PH
 - Sick Leave SL Doctor etc D
 - Special Leave SP Flexi Time Leave FT
 - Training T

Officer's Signature: _____

A debit/credit of is noted and agreed.

Supervisor's Signature: _____

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS PERSONAL RECORD (Electronic)

Name : _____

Period Commencing : _____

Grade : _____

Daily Hrs : 07:30

Carried Forward

No	Date	Morning			Afternoon			Code	Credit	App	Total	DR/CR
		Arrive	Depart	Total	Arrive	Depart	Total					
1				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
2				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
3				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
4				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
5				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
6				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
7				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
8				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
9				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
10				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
11				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
12				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
13				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
14				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
15				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
16				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
17				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
18				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	-07:30
19				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	00:00
20				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	00:00
21				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	0
22				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	0
23				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	0
24				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	0
25				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	0
26				00:00			00:00		0		00:00	0

- Annual Leave AL
- Sick Leave SL
- Special Leave SP
- Training T
- Public Holiday PH
- Half Day
- Flexi/Half Day FTHD

Staff are asked to insert hours away from NIPEC for Doctor Appts and All other leave in the Credit Column

Monthly Total
DR/CR Carried Forward

Officers Signature _____

A debit/credit of _____ is noted and agreed

Supervisor's Signature _____