



Flexible Working Hours Policy

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Version control

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Transport for the North (TfN) recognises that employees and the organisation can benefit from having flexible working hours, which enables individuals to meet their work commitments; their caring, lifestyle or other personal commitments; and achieve a healthy work-life balance. The work undertaken by TfN requires employees to work flexibly and agile depending on the job being undertaken. This policy applies to all employees.

1. Introduction

The Flexible Working Hours Scheme allows employees flexibility and discretion over their working hours. Under the scheme, employees have the ability to accrue a defined amount of credit or debit of working hours, and to take time-off in the form of Flexi-Leave.

Having working times that can be varied means that, within certain limits, employees can fix their daily hours to suit their own circumstances, alongside of the needs of TfN. Flexible working can make for a more productive workplace, focused on outputs and performance, and provides Line Managers with the mechanism to effectively manage peaks and troughs in work demands.

This policy forms part of the TfN Handbook and is available on Intranet. This policy does NOT form part of the normal Terms and Conditions of Employment of any employee. No individual should work hours which impair the efficiency of their team, and no assumption should be made that to start work late or finish work early every day is acceptable.

Employees who wish to request a set working pattern, reduced hours, or a compressed hours arrangement should refer to the Flexible Working Policy, which outlines the formal process for submitting a flexible working request, including eligibility, timescales, and how requests will be considered. We recognise that flexible working plays a key role in promoting work-life balance, improving wellbeing, and enhancing productivity. TfN actively encourages employees to explore flexible working arrangements that suit both individual needs and organisational objectives. We aim to support all employees in finding sustainable ways of working that reflect the evolving nature of work. All applications will be reviewed fairly and in line with business needs, with a commitment to supporting work-life balance wherever possible.

2. Hours of Work

The standard working week for full-time employees is 37 hours. It must be remembered that the operational requirements of TfN are paramount and that hours of work and the taking of any leave are subject to Line Manager authorisation aligned to these requirements. Line Managers have a responsibility to ensure that a service is provided within the agreed Core Service Opening Hours, which will be

adequately resourced as 'Open for Business' to provide an excellent service to customers both internally and externally.

The Core Service Opening Hours are:

Monday to Thursday	09:00 – 17:00
Friday	09:00 – 16:30

Arrangements for the provision of services outside of these hours will be in accordance with the individual's Contract of Employment or local agreements made from time to time.

3. Eligibility

Notwithstanding all employees' rights to apply for flexible working, there are certain employees who are not eligible for flexible working hours, i.e. those in specific roles who work in areas where the business determines that flexible working is not practical due to the service delivery requirements. Employees who are not eligible to work flexi-time are required to work set hours as set-out within their individual Contracts of Employment.

4. Part-time Employees

Part-time employees have contractual entitlements based on a pro-rata comparison with full-time employees. Part-time employees, eligible for flexible working hours are allowed to accrue Flexi-Leave pro-rata and take the equivalent leave pro-rata to full-time.

5. Scope of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme

Bandwidth

The Flexible Working Hours Scheme operates on the following basis:

07.00	Flexible Starting Time		Flexible Finishing Time	19.00
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The Bandwidth means the earliest possible start time and latest possible finish time, which may be agreed with your Line Manager, to work. The Bandwidth will be from 07:00 until 19:00 Monday to Friday.

In exceptional circumstances, there may be odd occasions due to business needs where individuals are required to work outside of the standard hours (i.e. before 07:00, after 19:00 and/or over a weekend period). Any such working hours must be agreed in advance with your Line Manager and will be recredited to the employee's flexi balance accordingly.

Employees are not permitted to accrue more than 11 hours in one day and Line Managers (and employees themselves) **must** ensure that employees have a minimum break of 11 consecutive hours between the end of one working day and the commencement of the next in accordance with the Working Time Regulations.

Flexi-time & Business Need

All employees covered by the Flexible Working Hours Scheme who work full-time are required to be on duty for a minimum of four hours each full working day and two hours for each half working day.

Employees working on a part-time basis will have pro-rata minimum daily attendance requirements based on their contracted daily hours.

Employees are required to ensure cover is provided aligned to business need and service levels set by your Line Manager within the specific area of operation.

Rest period

Employees **must** take a minimum 30 minutes break, after working a continuous period of 6 hours or after 4.5 hours for employees under 18 in order to comply with the Working Time Regulations.

Breaks must be arranged to ensure continuity of service delivery at all times, aligned to the needs of the business.

Accounting period

The period over which employees must work their contracted hours, allowing for any credit or debit hours carry over, is four weeks. This is referred to as the 'Accounting Period'.

Hours worked over during each Accounting Period can be converted to banked Flexi-Leave and can subsequently be taken as Flexi-Leave in half-days periods up to a maximum of 2 days per accounting period and up to a maximum of 18 Flexi-Leave days in total per annum (pro-rata for part-time employees). Flexi-Leave banked but not taken by 31 March each leave year will be reset and lost on 1 April each leave year.

In exceptional circumstances, employees may be permitted to carry over excess hours or banked Flexi-Leave days beyond the standard limits set out in this policy. Such arrangements must be formally approved by the Head of HR, in consultation with the Chief Executive, and will only be considered where there is a clear and justifiable business or personal reason. Each case will be assessed on its individual merits, and any approved carry-over must be used within a specified timeframe agreed at the point of approval.

Contracted hours

The hours which employees are required to work during the accounting period are 4 (weeks) x 37 (hours per week) = 148 hours plus or minus credit or debit hours which may be carried over between Accounting Periods.

Arrangements for carry over of credit/debit hours

A credit or debit balance at the end of any four week accounting period may be carried forward to the next period up to a maximum of **15 hours up** and a maximum of **10 hours down**. Any credit balance in excess of this, is subject to approval by the Line Manager in consultation with the relevant Operating Board Member.

Accumulated hours or Flexi-Leave

Any credit hours accumulated by an employee may only be taken by agreement with their Line Manager, taking account of the need for adequate cover to be in place to allow for continuous service provision.

Employees wishing to take half a day's leave (annual or flexi) in the morning should not record their starting time prior to 12 noon. Similarly, employees wishing to take leave (annual or flexi) in the afternoon should record their signing out no later than 13:00.

There are no restrictions on the number of hours which can be carried forward from week to week within the four-week Accounting Period.

Recording of absences from work

Annual leave/bank holidays – credit will be given for a standard day (or part thereof) in accordance with the employee's contracted hours of work, i.e. 7.4 hours/full standard day, 3.7 hours/half standard day.

Leave for other reasons - approved leave for other reasons with or without pay, for example: attendance at training events, compassionate or bereavement leave, jury service, election duties etc.; will be credited as a normal full or half day. Requests for such time off must be agreed by the employee's Line Manager and reported to the HR & Skills Representative accordingly.

Sickness

Where employees are absent due to sickness, time will be credited in accordance with normal contracted hours, i.e. 7.4 hours for a day's sickness absence and 3.7 hours for a half day.

Medical appointments (hospital/day clinic appointments)

Employees required to attend a hospital/day clinic appointment will be able to claim back the actual time of the appointment only, up to a maximum of 7.4 hours within a day. This will be credited to their flexi-time.

If an employee is travelling to the appointment from work and returning to work afterwards, the employee is entitled to the travelling time for both journeys as well as the appointment. Reasonable travel time must be approved by the employees' Line Manager. If the employee is travelling to the appointment prior to work, or if the employee is not returning to work after the appointment, then the employee is entitled to claim back the time for the journey only from or to the appointment as appropriate.

Employees should endeavour to arrange appointments at the beginning or the end of their working day and outside of Core Service Opening Hours. Employees must obtain prior authorisation from their Line Manager before attending their appointment and must provide proof of their appointment to their Line Manager.

Breaks

Employees are permitted to breaks during the day, provided that such breaks do not impact adversely on the needs of the business. Credit will not be given for breaks, and as such, it is the employee's responsibility to record such breaks (where a minimum five minutes or more) on their personal record sheet.

Employees leaving TfN

Employees leaving TfN must balance their flexible hours in line with their contractual obligations, however TfN reserves the right to make any deductions from the final pay for deficit hours outstanding upon leaving the Organisation where deficit hours remain.

Payment will not be made for hours you are in credit at the time that you leave TfN.

6. The Recording System

Personal on-line record sheets should be filled in accurately each day on commencement and finishing duties to the nearest five minutes. Only in exceptional circumstances and by agreement with the Line Manager can a differing time be recorded.

Personal record sheets must be available at all times for examination by the Line Manager. Where personal on-line record sheets are not available for any reason a manual personal record sheet must be completed and forwarded through to the Line Manager.

At any time, an employee's personal flexi-time records may be audited to ensure continual compliance with both the Flexible Working Hours Scheme and the Working Time Regulations. Employees found to be purposely abusing the scheme may be subject to TfN's Disciplinary Policy.

TfN reserve the right to withhold payment of expenditure where personal on-line record sheets have not been completed.

info@transportforthenorth.com
0161 244 0888

Transport for the North
Level 6, Town Hall Extension,
Lloyd Street
Manchester
M2 5DB