

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS POLICY & PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Employees at Church House operate a flexible working hours scheme. All staff are required to record their hours of attendance using timesheets.

CONTRACTUAL BASIS

Full time staff at Church House are normally contracted to work 35 hours per week, with a break for lunch, from Mondays to Fridays.

The working year (from 1 April to 31 March) is divided into twelve calendar months. Timesheet templates automatically take account of the number of working days in each month, by deducting weekends and public holidays. Each of the twelve months forms a separate flexitime period, at the end of which each member of staff will need to provide a printed timesheet showing hours worked and entitlement to flexi-leave during the subsequent month. Timesheets need to be signed by the employee and signed by their line manager.

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

The flexible working hours scheme is designed to enable staff to vary their starting and finishing times so as to give a degree of freedom in the short-term, whilst keeping the average time worked constant over a longer period and ensuring compliance with contractual obligations. The flexibility enables the individual to arrange his or her working hours so as to provide the most effective compromise between the demands of private and working lives. However, the scheme can only be successful if it does not impair the smooth and effective working of the departments at Church House.

THE WORKING DAY

Under the flexible working hours system, starting and finishing times are variable within flexible bands, as follows: Arrival time, between 7-30am and 9-30am. Morning core time, between 9-30am and 12noon. Variable lunch-break, between 12noon and 2pm (minimum of 30 minutes). Afternoon core time, between 2pm and 4pm. Finishing time, between 4pm and 6-30pm.

Members of staff can start or finish work any time during the flexible bands, subject to the demands of departmental working. Staff must be at work (at Church House or off-site) during the morning and afternoon core times, in order to maintain communications and to ensure a reasonable period during which staff can be in contact with their colleagues.

Whilst every effort will be made to give staff freedom within the scheme, it is ultimately the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that adequate cover is provided during the period from 9am to 5pm, when we are "open for business". However, Heads of Department also have a responsibility to ensure that this requirement is not misused so as to interfere unduly with the flexibility underlying the scheme.

An average week (excluding lunch-break) comprises 35 hours. Staff are expected to ensure that, as far as possible, they achieve this average over each flexitime period of one calendar month. However, a carry-over of +/- 10 hours will be allowed at the end of the period. Any time in excess of +10 hours at the end of the period will normally be lost, unless the Diocesan Secretary decides otherwise on the advice of the Head of Department. Any deficit in excess of -10 hours at the end of the period will be subject to an interview with the Head of Department concerned, who will decide on the remedial action required of the employee.

LUNCH-BREAKS

The daily lunch-break will last a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours, subject to satisfactory arrangements within the department. If the recorded lunch-break is too short (i.e. less than 30 minutes), an adjustment will need to be made on the timesheet with the approval of the Head of Department, using the template provided.

FLEXI-LEAVE

Provided that a member of staff has a time credit at the end of the previous flexitime period, that is at the end of the previous month, one whole day or two separate half days' absence on flexi-leave is permitted during each month subject to authorisation in advance by the Head of Department. A full day of flexi leave will be recorded at seven hours. Half-day flexi-leave can start or finish at any time between 12noon and 2pm.

ORDINARY LEAVE

Annual leave and special leave is subject to the normal procedures for prior approval by Heads of Departments (see the section in the Staff Handbook). Again, full days and half days will be recorded on the timesheet at seven hours. Half day absences can start or finish at any time between 12noon and 2pm. The timesheet automatically takes account of public holidays, counting them at seven hours each.

SICK LEAVE

Absences on sick leave and for medical / dental appointments continue to be subject to contractual procedures, including prior approval by the Head of Department in appropriate cases. Time for medical appointments will only be credited during the core periods i.e. 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. and should be recorded on the timesheet.

WORK OFF SITE

All absences from Church House on business are credited under the flexible working hours scheme, under the same terms and conditions as attendance at Church House. Members of staff will be required to provide details on their timesheet with the authorisation of the appropriate Head of Department. In appropriate cases, with the agreement of the Head of Department, allowance can be made for travelling to and from Church House and / or home, in accordance with the following principles:

The normal time at which the member of staff leaves home to travel to Church House and the normal time of return home from Church House will be established. Any additional time spent travelling over and above the normal travel time will be added to the standard 7 hour day. For example, if a member of staff normally leaves home at 8.30am and returns home at 5.30pm and the off-site work requires them to leave at 8am and return home at 6pm, then an 8 hour day may be claimed, being the standard 7 hour day plus the 30 minutes extra in the morning and the 30 minutes extra in the evening. In all other cases where the Head of Department agrees it would not be appropriate for the employee to attend Church House, a standard 7 hour day is recorded. The member of staff is not required to deduct normal travel time. For example, the same member of staff leaves home at 9am for a 9.30am meeting. The meeting closes at 4.15pm, and the employee returns home at 4.45pm. The Head of Department agrees that it would not have been appropriate for the employee to attend the Daresbury office before or after (e.g. the travel time from the venue to Daresbury is half-an-hour and only 15 minutes would have been worked). In such a case the standard day of 7 hours may be claimed. Similar principles apply to half days.

ADMINISTRATION

Authorised timesheets should be provided to the HR department as soon as possible after the end of the month, but by the 10th of the following month in any event.

Timesheets must include the start time and end time of each session of work, including the minimum lunch break period.

The failure to provide a completed timesheet by the 10th of the following month will mean that it will not be possible for the staff member to take any flexi leave during the following month.

LIEU TIME

Lieu time is time accrued outside the normal working day of 7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. e.g. evening meetings or working at the weekend. All lieu time should be pre-authorised and recorded on a lieu time card (similar to the holiday card) which will detail the reason for the time being accrued and the length of time being claimed. Time off in lieu can then only be taken with prior approval of the Head of Department who will sign the lieu time card to authorise it. Lieu time may only be recorded on the timesheet once the completed and signed lieu card has been returned to the HR department.

All lieu time must be taken by the end of the month after it has been accrued e.g. lieu time accrued in January will usually have to be taken by the end of February.

ABUSE OF THE SYSTEM

Staff members who abuse the flexi time system will be withdrawn from the system and will be required to work fixed hours as determined by their manager and / or the Diocesan Secretary.