



Colchester  
City Council



Colchester  
COMMERCIAL HOLDINGS

# Flexitime Policy

[www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)

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### 1. Introduction

We want to give employees as much flexibility as possible in where they work, their working hours and working patterns to assist them in managing their work life balance and wellbeing. We must ensure that this is balanced very closely with the operational needs of the service and our customers.

The Flexitime Scheme is open to all grades within the organisation but it should be noted that for certain roles or groups of employees flexitime may not be suitable or desirable; for example, where it is felt that including such roles/groups may present difficulties in providing the necessary service to our customers particularly where their work pattern is covered by rotas and shift patterns, or in some cases, part-time fixed hours. The scheme applies to the Council, Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd and Colchester Amphora Trading colleagues as appropriate.

All employees should work within the Working Time Directive, which came into force in October 1998 (and amended in August 2003). This directive provides a limit of an average 48 hours a week calculated over a 17-week period, which a worker can be required to work.

### 2. Aims of the Scheme

The Flexitime Scheme aims to provide the employee and the employer flexibility in their working hours, wherever their work location may be, either in the office, at home, or at a different location. It can help staff to plan their journeys to avoid traffic congestion and to assist with caring arrangements or personal appointments. It can also be used by the business to help manage peak work periods and provides an alternative to overtime. However it is used, the needs of our customers are paramount, and as such it is important that this flexibility does not adversely impact the quality, or levels of service provided.

We are committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and take steps to ensure that all employees are not discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, disability, marriage and civil partnerships, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race.

Availability should be arranged around service and customer requirements and managers should ensure staff are available to deliver these.

Your start time and finish time is when you begin and end work at your work location for that day and **not** at any point during your commute to or from your work location. If you are working from home, please refer to the home working policy for further guidance.

Your hours of work must be recorded on a flex time sheet, which can be found on COLIN>MyHR. It is the line managers role to ensure that employees are not working too many hours.

### 3. General Pattern of Working

Whilst the aims of the scheme are to offer more flexibility, staff cannot be free to come and go as they please as this could affect service delivery. Each employee must therefore arrange their hours subject to the overall requirements of the Service and obtain prior approval to a general pattern from their manager.

If there is a need to change this general pattern of working significantly for one day or perhaps on a longer-term basis then the employee should first obtain the approval of their manager so that adequate service cover can be planned.

Employees can make up to two statutory flexible working requests every 12-month period to change their working hours, location or work pattern. Please see the Right to request flexible working policy.

There may also be occasions when it is necessary for an employee to vary their normal pattern of work at the request of their manager. It is in the spirit of Flexitime that employees should do their best to co-operate. The organisation retains the right to instruct employees to attend at specific times to meet particular work requirements.

### 4. The Working Day and the Accounting Period

For the purpose of flexitime, the scheme is based on a working week of 37 hours (if you work part time your working week hours will be adjusted accordingly) calculated over a 4-week period (the accounting period). There are 13 accounting periods in a calendar year.

Each accounting period totals the hours that you are contracted for over that period. Each day in the accounting period totals 7.4 hours (or the hours that you are contracted to work). 3.7 hours for a half day (or the hours that you are contracted to work).

Hours in excess of your contracted hours are called “plus hours”; hours which are short of your contracted hours are called “minus hours”.

For a full time employee a maximum of **30 “plus hours” or 4 “minus hours”** is the standard that can be carried over from one accounting period to another. Please refer to section 14 for how this applies to part time and job share contracts.

Any excess “Plus hours” that you are permitted to carry over can be approved by an employee’s manager. This could have been as a result of extraordinary workloads or a specific pattern of work for an ad hoc period; in all cases approval should be sought by Heads of Service. “Plus hours” in excess of more than 5 hours of your permitted carry over can be cancelled and 'lost' unless they have been worked with the prior approval of the employee’s manager. For example, if you are permitted to carry over 30 plus hours anything more than 35 hours can be cancelled.

Where ‘Minus hours’ appear for two consecutive accounting periods, even where these are within the permitted hour limit, this will be investigated by the line manager. Continuous minus hours may result in the removal of flexitime for the employee concerned and formal disciplinary action.

### 5. Using Plus Hours

Plus hours can be used to adjust working time during an accounting period, for example to have a longer lunch break than usual. Plus hours may also be used to take time off in the current or in a following accounting period. This is called “flexi leave”.

The flexi leave must be taken at times agreed with the manager. Obviously not everyone can be away on the same day and unlike annual leave, flexi leave is unlikely to be booked too far in advance. Flexi leave can be booked via MySelf>Other Absence.

There are a number of rules to remember about flexi leave:

- Plus hours must first have been accrued before the flexi leave can be taken.
- No more than a total of 30 hours (or your permitted pro-rata amount) flexi leave should be taken in one accounting period. If you require more than your permitted amount in one period please discuss this with your manager.
- At least 3 working days’ notice should **normally** be given of any flexi leave required.

### 6. Lunchtime

To comply with the working time directive you **must not** work more than 6 hours without taking a **minimum** break of 30 minutes. It is strongly advised that you take your break away from your workstation at whatever location you are working from. If an employee is under 18, a minimum 30-minute break must be taken if the working day is longer than 4.5 hours.

Lunch breaks should be agreed with the manager to enable sufficient office/phone cover.

### 7. Personal Appointments

Staff will be expected to conduct their personal affairs in their own time, wherever possible. Flexible working arrangements and flexitime allow for this and this means that credits should not be automatically claimed for absences relating to routine medical or dental appointments etc.

If you are not able to work flexitime because of shifts, rotas or other reasons then you will be expected to make personal appointments (e.g. doctor and dentist) in your own time. Please ensure you discuss this with your manager in advance of any appointments you may have.

### 8. Overtime

One of the benefits the organisation can expect is that employees will utilise flexitime and flexible working arrangements to meet peaks of workload so that paid overtime can be reduced.

In the exceptional cases where overtime has to be worked it must be with the prior approval of the employee’s manager who is able to approve the claim.

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Paid overtime may not normally be worked during 7:00am and 8:00pm, but if due to circumstances beyond the employee's control this is required it must be authorised **in advance** by the Head of Service.

Overtime for attendance at evening meetings will only be paid where, as a result of attendance at the meeting, an employee exceeds the maximum plus hours.

### **9. Sickness Leave**

Absences due to sickness will be credited on the basis of your daily contracted hours. For example, a full time person would credit half a standard day 3.7 or a full standard day 7.4.

If an employee finishes work due to sickness during the morning or does not start work at all due to sickness, the whole day will be counted as sick and your contracted daily hours will be credited.

If any employee is sick for half a day, then half your contracted daily hours will be credited for the sickness period plus any hours worked prior.

### **10. Attendance at College/Training Courses/Conferences or Meetings away from the normal workplace**

If an employee attends a training course / conference or meeting which is not at their normal place of work then any additional time over and above what they would normally take to get to work will be credited as well as the course itself.

If any employee attends a training course for half a day, then 3.7 will be credited for the course and the hours worked will be credited as well.

If an employee attends a Post-Entry Training college (or equivalent) course, then only time within the normal working day will be credited to the employee.

Attendance at college or seminars in the evenings or at weekends will not be automatically credited and should be discussed with the manager.

### **11. Transport Delays**

Transport delays on journeys to work must be borne by the employee.

### **12. Inclement Weather**

When weather conditions are very bad, Senior Leadership-Board (SLB) may give a general authorisation for employees living outside of the City Centre to leave early, subject to agreement between employees and their managers.

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This situation does not arise very often but when it does credits will not be automatically given and employees should discuss any problems with their manager.

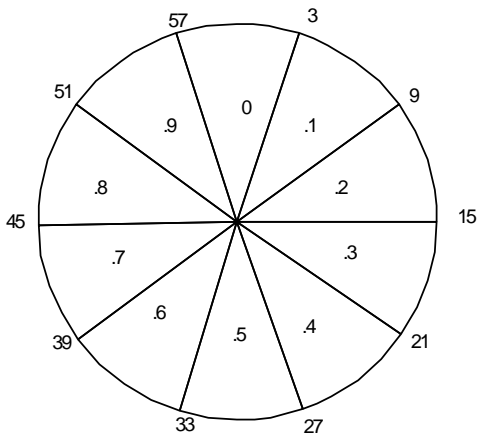
### 13. Time Recording

All employees participating in the Flexitime Scheme must record their hours of work on the Flex sheet.

The basic system of crediting and calculating time is decimal hours. Intervals of 6 minutes are equal to 0.1 hours. Employees must complete their time sheets **personally** and special care must be taken to ensure all entries are correct and up to date.

Line managers have the right to question information if they believe it not to be accurate.

For ease of reference the decimal clock is illustrated below.



The accounting period is 148 hours.

A full time standard day is 7.4

A standard half day is 3.7

Employees who would be due to work on public holidays and company holidays (statutory days) need to credit their flex sheet with their normal working hours. If they are not due to work, zero hours are to be recorded.

Time should be recorded to one decimal place, which is to the nearest six-minute interval, using the 24-hour clock.

For example, an employee arrives at 9.00am, takes a 30-minute lunch break and departs at 4.55 pm, their entries will follow the pattern below

Date	Day	Start Time	Finish Time	Total	Start Time	Finish Time	Total	Day Total
16-Feb	Sun			0.0			0.0	0.0
17-Feb	Mon	9.0	12.5	3.5	13.0	16.9	3.9	7.4

### 14. Part time and Job Share employees

Part time or Job Sharers are able to participate in the flexitime scheme. The main arrangements remain the same, although some areas are pro-rated according to the hours worked.

Carry over amounts and the hours permitted to take as flex time each accounting period, either plus or minus, are pro-rata'd on the employee's contracted hours.

For example, a part time person working a 4-day week:

Their 29.6 part time hours (4 x 7.4-hour days) divided by 37 hours for a full time hours = 0.8 FTE).

This would be that their permitted carry over, plus or minus hours, would be: 30 hours x 0.8 pro-rata = 24 hours carry over, or - 4 hours x 0.8 pro-rata = - 3.2 hours.

### 15. General Notes

Employees must always complete their own flex sheet.

Abuses of Flexitime **will** result in disciplinary action which may include the withdrawal of the employee from the Flexitime Scheme or in the case of falsification of records or misappropriation of time, summary dismissal.

When an employee leaves the employment of the organisation for whatever reason they must be "in balance" on the last day of service. No payment in lieu will be made for hours which exceed the "in balance" figure.

Flexitime can be used to take short smoking breaks during the day, but employees must seek their manager's permission before a break to ensure services continue and also must ensure that all time taken is shown as non-working time on their flex sheet.

All flex sheets will be kept in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

If an employee is unsure of any point relating to the Flexitime Scheme having read these notes, then it is their responsibility to seek clarification from their manager.



### Appendix and Document information

#### Appendix

The following policies and forms should also be read alongside this document:

Policies	Forms
Home and remote working policy	Flexible working - right to request form
Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy	Flex sheet – there is a standard Excel spreadsheet for you to record your working hours
Right to request flexible working	
Terms and Conditions of Employment	
Flexible working options - guidance	

The policies and forms are shown on COLIN:

- [The A-Z](#)– this link will take you to the "all in one place" page which has a short summary of the HR subject, what you need to do first, useful documents and links, and related items.
- [the Staff Handbook](#).

#### Document information

<b>Title:</b>	Flexitime Policy
<b>Date:</b>	2024
<b>EQIA:</b>	See HR EQIAs <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Review Frequency :</b>	Every five years or if change occurs

For more information or advice about this policy please contact the HR Service Centre on 01206 282112 or email [hrrservicecentre@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:hrrservicecentre@colchester.gov.uk).

This policy applies to you if you are working under the Terms and Conditions of Colchester City Council and Colchester Amphora Group of Companies