

MEMORANDUM

TO: All non-teaching Employees
FROM: Amanda Lowe, Head of People and Culture
REF: AL/AG
DATE: 24 March 2022

CIRCULAR PER 06-22

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cabinet, at its meeting of 16 March 2022, agreed the introduction of a new Flexible Working Policy which brings together and updates the current flexible working options into one policy.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all Council employees with the exception of those covered by SNCT Conditions of Service. In addition, flexible working hours, is dependent upon the suitability of the role, however all other elements of the Policy are available for all non-teaching employees to request.
- 1.3 The Trade Unions have been consulted and have confirmed their agreement.

2. FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

- 2.1 The Policy brings together the following flexible working options which the Council currently has in place for employees:
 - Variable Hours/Reduced Hours
 - Compressed Hours
 - Job Share
 - Flexible Working Hours
 - Homeworking
- 2.2 Whilst many of these remain unchanged the following amendments have been made: The proposed amendments are as follows:

- **Work-styles/blended approach to homeworking**

With work having being undertaken to categorise office-based posts under one of the four agreed work-styles: fixed, flexible, mobile and remote, the Policy outlines the principles of homeworking associated with a blended model of working and provides the opportunity for employees to request a change to their work-style where they believe this will allow them to achieve a better work-life balance.

- **Removal of formal homeworking.**

This was introduced in 2003 and has had very little uptake during the time it has been in place. Informal homeworking, which supports the principles of smarter working, remains in place and, with the exception of fixed posts, where in the main the duties of the post will require the post holder to be office based, all other categories involve a degree of homeworking under the new blended approach. There is therefore not seen to be a requirement for the continuation of a formal homeworking scheme.

- **Flexible Working Time Scheme (Flexi Time)**

Since 23 March 2020 flexi time has been suspended for those working from home with the expectation that employees should only be working their contracted hours. However, there has been flexibility for employees to work those hours in a way which suits their personal circumstances whilst ensuring business needs continue to be met. In line with the above the Policy removes the formal flexitime system and replaces it with this informal approach to flexible working hours. A key principle of the revised arrangements is that employees do not ordinarily exceed their contracted hours, thereby supporting an effective work/life balance. The proposed changes can be summarised as follows:

- i. Removal of the formal flexi time recording system to be replaced with a method for recording working hours determined by Services/teams;
- ii. Removal of standard core times, although services may determine appropriate times to suit their operational requirements;
- iii. Removal of the 4 weekly credit/debit accounting periods with contracted hours generally being worked within the week resulting in full flexi days being less of a regular occurrence;
- iv. Removal of the requirement to formally apply for periods of time off e.g. for appointments unless a full day is being requested.

As the formal flexitime scheme is ending, it has been agreed that employees are required to use any outstanding balance of accrued hours within 3 months of the date the policy was approved at Cabinet i.e. by **15 June 2022**. These hours should only have been accrued prior to 23 March 2020 or by employees who have not been working from home.

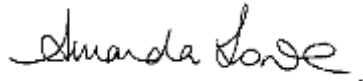
3. COMMUNICATION

Employees will be able to view the Flexible Working Policy in the Council's Intranet Site by going to Quick Links, Human Resources, choosing Circulars or Policies and Procedures from the HR Menu.

Office based employees (excluding those in schools) will be issued with contract variation confirming the work style applicable to their post along with notification that their work location will now be known as an administrative base.

Those employees who currently are part of the flexi time scheme will also be notified that this will no longer be in place

I should be obliged if you will arrange for all employees who are not on the e-mail system to be advised of the contents of this Circular.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Lowe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

**Amanda Lowe
Head of People and Culture**