

## Human Resources

# Flexible Working (Flexi-Time) Policy

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### 1. General Policy Statement

The Flexi-Time Policy is primarily to enable Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust to maintain quality service delivery standards to its members and clients. Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust recognises that employees and the organisation can benefit from having flexible working, which enables individuals to meet their work commitments; their caring, lifestyle or other personal commitments; and achieve a healthy work-life balance.

The nature of the work undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust requires employees to work fixed and/or flexible hours, dependent on the job they fulfil. Employees with key responsibilities for telephone answering, reception and enquiry services are required to work hours that enable these services to be maintained during office opening hours. For employees with responsibility for servicing committees or developmental, advocacy and outreach work occasional evening and week-end working will be an essential feature of their role, dependent upon the variable demands of the job.

Flexible working arrangements have to accommodate the needs of the organisation at any particular time. In considering such arrangements employees should address:

- the need to communicate with colleagues as to when they will/will not be at work and about what has happened while they have been away from their normal place of work;
- identify and consider solutions to the disadvantages as well as the advantages to working flexibly for the organisation in general, their team and themselves;
- the implications for member/client/colleague contact; and
- the needs of the job and the organisation at that time, including the need for appropriate cover.

The standard weekly hours are 37 hours for all full-time employees and less than 37 hours per week for part-time employees.

### **2. Purpose**

This policy applies to all staff employed by Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust. The purpose of this policy is to enable employees to benefit from having flexible working, which enables individuals to meet their work commitments; their caring, lifestyle or other personal commitments; and achieve a healthy work-life balance.

### **3. Flexible Working Hours**

Except where the requirements of the job demand otherwise, employees can choose to start work anytime before 10.30am and finish work after 3.30pm, as long as they work their contracted hours within the flexi-time period (usually four or five weeks), subject to carrying over excess or deficit hours.

All full-time employees, and part-time employees working whole days, are required to work between the core hours of 10.30am to 12.00 noon and 2.00pm to 3.00pm.

Employees who need to adjust their daylight working hours in order to meet religious obligations are entitled to adjust their working hours accordingly.

### **4. Breaks**

Employees working more than six hours continuously are entitled to, and should take, a 20 minute rest break. Employees under the age of 18 years working more than four and half hours continuously are entitled to, and should take, a rest break of 30 minutes. Rest breaks should be taken during the working period and not at the beginning or end of it.

Lunch breaks must be taken between 12.00 noon and 2.00pm and should not normally exceed 1½ hours.

The time used for the break is not working time (and is therefore unpaid) and must be included on the employee's Monthly Flexi-Time Record sheet as a break, even if the employee voluntarily chooses to work through this break.

If an employee is required to have a working lunch break (e.g. while attending a day conference) then this should be included in their working time.

Employees should not work more than 13 hours in any one day or 48 hours in any one week.

### 5. Working Time Patterns for Part-time Employees

Working time patterns (days, hours and core time) for part-time employees are agreed upon commencement and confirmed in writing. These will, where possible, include an element of flexible working time. Part-time employees may occasionally change their day(s) off providing they have regard to the issues set out in the General Policy Statement.

Part-time employees who wish to change their regular working pattern and full-time employees who wish to change to part-time working may request consideration of a revised working time pattern. Such a request should be in writing and have regard to the issues set out in the General Policy Statement. Consideration of the request and a meeting to discuss the proposed changes will take place within four weeks; with a written response given within two weeks of the meeting.

Part-time employees undertaking job related training outside their contracted hours may count this as working time.

### 6. What Counts as Working Time

Where appropriate to the job, working time may include:

- travelling that is part of the job (e.g. travelling to a meeting held elsewhere than the usual place of work);
- working lunches, dinners or breakfast meetings;
- evening and week-end working;
- working on a public or bank holiday;
- working at home (by arrangement if during office opening hours);
- time spent responding to, travelling and dealing with, a call out (e.g. to attend a break in);
- job related training;
- participation in professional development courses of study and examinations at the discretion of the Trustees.

Working time does not include:

- daily travel time from home to an employee's usual place of work;
- lunch and rest breaks;
- being on call and free to pursue leisure activities.

### 7. Absence from Work

Employees unable to attend work (or someone acting on their behalf) must inform the Chief Executive of the reason for their absence and how long they expect to be away from work. This should be done by 9.30am or as soon as is reasonably practical. Failure to report absence may result in the absence being regarded as unpaid leave; paid time off for sickness or ill health will not be given prior to the day on which notification is received.

If the Chief Executive is not available, the employee should speak to their line manager, a colleague in their team or the Administrator, or leave a message indicating if they are able to receive telephone calls from the Chief Executive or their line manager. Employees should also indicate when they expect to return to work and give information about any work commitments that need to be cancelled. Any further notification of absence or changes to the expected return date must also be notified to the Chief Executive as soon as is reasonably practical.

Employees making personal appointments (e.g. doctor or dentist appointments) should, where possible, try to arrange these outside core hours. Appointments within core hours should normally form part of the flexi-leave arrangements set out below.

### 8. Working at Home

Employees may make arrangements with colleagues, and have the agreement of their line manager, to work at home on a regular or occasional basis, provided the nature of their work does not require the employee to be present in the office. This may be at their own request for the sake of convenience or at the request of Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust. Last minute, unplanned, arrangements may also be made if circumstances require an employee to work at home, providing colleagues are informed.

Prior to their first occasion of working at home, the employee must satisfy the Health and Safety Officer that it is suitable for them to work from home. See *Health and Safety Policy* and *Home Working Policy* for further details.

Employees wishing to work at home must provide a home and/or mobile telephone number and a home email address and be willing to take calls from colleagues at reasonable times while working at home.

Employees must have regard to the issues set out in the General Policy Statement. Working at Home must be recorded in the Global Calendar on the office ICT system.

### **9. Flexi-Time Records**

Employees must complete, on a daily basis, a Monthly Flexi-Time Record sheet for each four or five week flexi-time period (see example in Appendix 1).

Employees who work on a public or bank holiday are entitled to add the hours worked to their normal contracted hours for that day and should record these on their Monthly Flexi-Time Record sheet. Alternatively, the employee may substitute a day's leave (see *Leave and Time off Work Policy*).

At the end of each flexi-time period employees should calculate their working time and any excess or deficit hours worked before returning their signed Monthly Flexi-Time Record sheet to the Administrator. Flexi-time records will be kept for two years from the end of the year to which they relate.

### **10. Excess and Deficit Hours**

Employees may carry over from one flexi-time period to another, an excess or deficit of no more than 35% of their contracted hours for that period. In exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement a higher excess or deficit may be carried over, subject to an average weekly maximum of 48 working hours, averaged over four flexi-time periods.

Accrued excess hours should normally be used up by working reduced hours and/or taking flexi-leave. Ideally this should be done within the following flexi-time period to prevent a build up of flexi-time, unless there are particular difficulties in doing so. Similarly, deficit hours should normally be made up in the following flexi-time period.

Employees working their notice should adjust their hours to arrive at their contracted hours. Where this is not possible (e.g. where there is a previously agreed high deficit or excess of hours) the employee's final leaving date may be adjusted accordingly. Such matters need to be mutually agreed at the time notice is given. There is no guarantee that any excess hours will be paid.

### **11. Flexi-Leave**

Flexi-leave allows for flexible working hours and for excess hours to be taken as leave at a mutually convenient time.

Employees wishing to take time off during core hours must request this in advance by completing their Leave Record card and following the Leave Application Procedures set out in the *Leave and Time Off Work Policy*. This will be authorised (or otherwise) by their line manager or, in the case of the Chief Executive, by the Chairperson of the Trustee Board.

Those requesting/approving flexi-leave must have regard to the issues set out in the General Policy Statement. Flexi-leave must be shown on the Monthly Flexi-Time Record sheet and whole days recorded as zero hours worked. It must also be recorded on the Global Calendar available on the office ICT system.

### 12. General

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

Specific working time requirements will be notified to potential job applicants at the time of application.

**Employees may be asked to change their normal hours of work or work additional hours, should this be necessary for them to fulfil their responsibilities and/or meet organisational work loads. Such requests will be reasonable, subject to reasonable notice and mutually agreed. Additional hours will not be excessive and can be used to accrue flexi-leave or worked as overtime.**

Additional hours worked as overtime will be paid at the employee's normal rate of pay (or other rate agreed at the time). Overtime working may only be agreed in individual circumstances with the employee concerned and authorised by the Chief Executive in exceptional circumstances on a temporary basis.

Employees may also voluntarily choose to work excess hours in order to fulfil their duties. In doing so employees should ensure that these are not excessive, having regard to their own well-being and the need to provide services in the forthcoming period.

Changes to working patterns and requests to carry over more than the permitted excess or deficit hours will be authorised by the Chief Executive who may also monitor an individual employee's use of the flexi-time scheme where this is felt to be appropriate and reasonable. Abuse of flexible working arrangements will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.

This policy is consistent with the requirements of the *Working Time Regulations 1998*, which shall apply in full, and relevant health and safety legislation.

### **13. Flexible Time Period**

As standard a new Flexible Time Period will be start on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

### **14. Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy, and its procedures, will be monitored and amended as and when necessary by the Chief Executive. Significant changes will require the approval of the Trustee Board. They will also be reviewed every three years as part of our continuing review of organisational policies.



