



Bridgewater Housing Association Policy

Policy name	Flexi-time and Time off in Lieu
Policy category	Corporate (HR)
Policy number	CS43
Date adopted	September 2006
Last review	September 2019
This review	September 2022
Next review	September 2025
Equalities impact assessment required	Yes
Links to other documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance & Absence Management Policy • Disciplinary Policy • Health & Safety Control Manual • EVH Statement of Terms & Conditions of Employment • Staff Code of Conduct • The Equality Act 2010.
Consultation	This policy was circulated to all staff for comment.

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the principle operation of the Association's flexi-time and time off in lieu (TOIL) scheme and assists the Association to deliver on its commitment to family friendly policies and Equality and Diversity obligations.

Flexi-time and TOIL are not part of the EVH Statement of Terms & Conditions of Employment, however Bridgewater provides this contractual benefit to compliment the spirit of these terms and conditions. It should be noted that this benefit can be withdrawn, subject to consultation with staff and Board approval.

2. SHR STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This policy is intended to provide additional assurance to the Board of Bridgewater Housing Association that it is complying with:

Standard 2

The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

Standard 5

The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

3. PURPOSE

These schemes enable staff to balance their work and personal commitments and manage workflow within their departments more effectively. If managed properly, these arrangements will provide a range of business benefits:-

- Improved staff morale, commitment and engagement
- Enhanced organisational efficiency
- Improved service flexibility
- Reduced staff turnover, absence and lateness

Flexi-time allows staff to choose, within reason and agreed limits, when to begin and end work and enables individuals to attend to domestic or other responsibilities. Staff are required to work during some essential periods (known as core times).

4. PRINCIPLES

Staff must work an agreed number of hours within a monthly 'accounting period.' Outside core times staff may request permission to use accrued flexi-time in order to be absent from work. This enables staff to vary their start, finish and lunch times. Within agreed limits, staff may carry over any excess or debit in the number of hours they are required to work to the next accounting period.

The flexi-time scheme does not apply to staff appointed to posts with fixed times of work e.g. housing support or may have limitations for those covering reception duties or answering telephones. Additionally, it will not apply when staff must be present to undertake a particular task to which they have been assigned.

Staff are advised to liaise with colleagues to ensure departmental cover is maintained during office hours. However line managers retain the right to refuse or withdraw approval on any particular day to ensure operational demands are met. Where this occurs, as much notice as possible will be given.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for the overall administration of the scheme and will highlight any problems to the appropriate line manager or Chief Executive.

Staff have a key role in the management of their own time particularly in ensuring their own attendance meets the requirements of the service and communication and cooperation with colleagues to ensure that adequate staffing levels are maintained.

6. FLEXI-TIME PARAMETERS AND PROCEDURES

- **Standard Working Hours**

The standard working week is 35 hours. Part-time staff will be notified of their hours separately. The accounting period for the flexi-time system is monthly, comprising:

Monday – Thursday	09.00-12.00 13.00-17.00
Friday	09.00-12.00 13.00-16.00

- **Core time**

Core time is when staff must attend for work unless on authorised leave:

Monday – Thursday	10.00-12.00 14.00-16.00
Friday	10.00-12.00 14.00.15.00

- **Flex-time**

Flexi-time is when staff have a degree of flexibility about when to attend work, subject to adequate departmental cover being provided:

Monday – Thursday	08.00-10.00 12.00-14.00 16.00-18.00
Friday	08.00-10.00 12.00-14.00 15.00-17.00

- **Lunch break**

Staff **must** take a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes* each day, between the hours of 12.00-14.00. If not taken 1 hour will automatically be deducted by the time & attendance management system. Staff cannot take any part of their lunch break outwith these hours except in exceptional circumstances and when authorised by line managers.

**to ensure compliance with minimum statutory daily rest break of 20 minutes.*

- **Other breaks**

Staff will be permitted to take short breaks within core time, with the approval of their line manager e.g. for smoking, vaping. Staff should swipe out when leaving the building and swipe back in when returning.

- **Training courses/conferences/seminars**

Staff attending any of the above will be given flexi credit if the time spent at the event plus the travel time is equivalent to or exceeds the standard working hours for the day(s).

- **Travel time**

Travel time is the time it takes to get to and return from the destination of the event minus the normal travel time between home and office, if relevant.

If travel time is less than the normal travel time from home to office then no credit will be given. Instead the working time starts on arrival at the location.

Staff should accurately note their times separately for manual entry to the system.

Where a staff member is away from home on business overnight, flexi-time stops when their working day finishes e.g. a staff member is attending a 2 day conference in Edinburgh and the sessions finish at 17.30. The flexi then stops at 17.30. If the sessions continue later, then flexi continues until 18.00 at the latest, as per flexi-time hours stated above. However where travel to the location/overnight stay occurs beyond 18.00, this additional time may be claimed as TOIL (see section 8).

- **Flexi-leave**

A maximum of 14 hours flexi-leave is allowed in any accounting period provided adequate credit exists. Part-time staff will be entitled to pro rata flexi-leave. Flexi-leave involving core hours, may only be taken with the prior approval of your line manager.

A maximum of 14 hours credit can be carried forward from one accounting period to the next. Any credit above 14 hours will be lost, unless due to exceptional circumstances and with prior authorisation of your line manager.

A maximum of 7 hours debit can be carried forward. Any debit over and above 7 hours will be considered grounds for informal disciplinary action, unless due to exceptional circumstances and with prior authorisation of your line manager. It is expected that annual leave, special leave or unpaid leave would be applied in such circumstances.

7. DOCTOR/HOSPITAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Staff attending routine doctor, hospital or dental appointments will be expected to attend outwith core times if possible, but in any case will not receive flexi-credit. Part-time staff should attempt to arrange appointments outwith their normal working hours where possible.

Staff who are required to attend hospital appointments where the date and time is outwith their control, will be allowed to attend during working hours and will receive flexi-credit. Proof of appointments should be provided to your manager.

Staff who have to attend an unplanned emergency appointment will be permitted to attend within working hours, if necessary. Flexi-credit may be given in these situations but should be discussed and agreed with your manager.

8. LATE ARRIVAL

Flexi-credit will not be given in the event of late arrival eg car breakdown, public transport failure.

9. TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)

TOIL may be accrued where a member of staff works on Association business outside flexi-time hours i.e. before 08.00 and after 18.00 (17.00 on Fridays). This includes attending or travelling to an event in the evening, weekend or on a public holiday.

TOIL must be agreed in advance with your line manager and accrual of TOIL should be an exceptional rather than regular occurrence. Although there will be no cut off level for TOIL that can be retained, staff will be encouraged to use TOIL as soon as possible and where 14 hours TOIL is accrued will be encouraged to use this within the next accounting period.

Under no circumstances should negative TOIL situations arise where any staff member takes TOIL before accruing it.

10. SCHEME ADMINISTRATION

All staff are issued with a card, which, when in the office, should be scanned by the time-clock when starting or finishing work, lunch or other breaks. Staff can also submit requests/entries through web access to the time & attendance system.

Individual reports will be sent to line managers at the end of each reporting period.

11. CONDITIONS

No member of staff may scan any card other than his/her own.

If, following appropriate investigation any staff member is discovered to have abused the scheme, this will be considered as misconduct and will result in disciplinary action, including possible withdrawal of the scheme from the staff member(s).

Line managers, in accordance with the operational needs of their departments, will discuss cover arrangements with staff and may place restrictions on the scheme to maintain adequate staff cover during the normal working day or busy periods.

Flexi-time cannot be used for office shutdowns e.g. 2 days during the festive period. Adequate annual leave must be retained and used as stated in the Bridgewater Contract of Employment.

12. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Association recognises that a flexi-time arrangement must not mean that staff Health & Safety is compromised in any way. This includes lone working, excessive hours or presenteeism which could exacerbate any health issues and affect performance.