

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT

**4 DAY  
WORKING**

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**4 DAY/REDUCED HOURS WORKING SCHEME**

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## **4 DAY/REDUCED HOURS WORKING SCHEME**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of the Single Status Agreement, the Authority is committed to the introduction of opportunities for 4 day/Reduced Hours Working (e.g. 30 hrs/week), which are both of assistance to employees and suitable from a service needs perspective.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Scheme is to give employees the opportunity to reduce their working week by a small amount to assist with out of work responsibilities and activities and, where possible, to seek improvements to service delivery.
- 1.3 In future, the Scheme may be extended to potential, in addition to existing, employees. This should prove useful in attracting employees with caring responsibilities and in combating skill shortages.
- 1.4 The Authority recognises that there are a number of potential advantages and disadvantages to both the employer and the employee in setting up 4 day week working opportunities. These are summarised as follows:

#### **Employer Advantages**

- a reduction in hours may provide an opportunity to re-focus resources where they are most critically needed. It may also allow for the more effective utilisation of time and energy within the workplace. This also results in a saving of some salary expenditure
- a simple scheme to allow for the reduction of working hours can meet a tremendous amount of needs relating to the circumstances of the individual
- once arrangements have been made, there are minimal additional costs to be incurred as part of the running of this scheme.

## **Employee Advantages**

- reducing by even a small amount the number of hours worked may assist enormously with out of work responsibilities. These may occur in response to the needs of dependants at particular times of their lives
- it can be a temporary solution to what may be a temporary problem and which under other circumstances would require more drastic action
- it affirms the value of the employee to the organisation willing to create opportunities which meet individual needs
- receipt of all the benefits, on a pro rata basis, of full time working whilst participating in the scheme. A 4 day week may reassure many individuals who fear a loss of status or responsibility with more conventional forms of part-time working.

## **Employer Disadvantages**

- requires extra attention to the schedule of work related activities i.e. focus programmes of work around shorter periods of time. (*Options for the provision of cover are set out in Appendix A*).
- with less salary expenditure, budgets may be cut to reflect this change. However the expectation to achieve the same output will remain consistent and not reflect the reduced hours worked by some employees. Alternatively, there may be no reduction in staff complement with spare resources being used to employ additional employees or purchase new equipment
- need for consistency of approach (e.g. in management style) or of service (e.g. due to the complexity/nature of the work undertaken), that can only be provided by the same postholder, on a 5 day/week basis.

## **Employee Disadvantages**

- it may put pressure on full time employees not to take their leave on the day of the week where there is reduced cover

- perception that it may prove to be a barrier to promotion
- it may put pressure on the individual to attempt to maintain the same level of output as a full time employee

All of the above should be taken into account when considering requests/applications to work on a 4 day/Reduced Hours basis and when identifying opportunities to promote this initiative.

## 2. **Employees covered by this Policy**

- 2.1 This Scheme applies to all employees covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, other than those staff employed by schools operating with fully delegated personnel powers.

## 3. **Accessibility**

- 3.1 Copies of this Scheme will be available, upon request, from the Directorate Personnel Officer.

## 4. **General Principles**

- 4.1 4 day/Reduced Hours working facilities will not be granted where it is considered by the Head of Service that the efficiency of the service will be adversely affected. Changes to the existing working arrangements for a particular job shall be determined by the Head of Service concerned, in consultation with the employee(s) involved.

In determining whether the post is considered to be suitable for 4 day/reduced hours working, the factors outlined in the Employer/Employee Advantages and Disadvantages in paragraph 1 above will be taken into account.

- 4.2 In order to ensure consistent and fair treatment of employees, all existing 4 day/Reduced Hours working within the Authority will comply with this Scheme, subject to employee consultation and phased transition.
- 4.3 The 4 day/Reduced Hours working scheme will initially be piloted on a trial basis for a specified periods of time. The terms of each pilot will be set out in writing and signed by the employee and his/her Head of service.

These terms will include the right to terminate the facility on either side with appropriate notice ( a minimum of one month).

4.4 In the interests of consistency, the Head of Strategic Personnel will be available to assist all Heads of Service in considering requests for revised working practices in accordance with this Scheme.

4.5 The Authority is committed to an ongoing review with the Trade Unions of all flexible working arrangements, including voluntary reductions in the working week.

## 5. **Eligibility**

5.1 Eligibility to participate in this Scheme is open to both male and female employees (as defined in paragraph 2.1 above). It is expected to be of particular benefit to those with caring responsibilities.

5.2 Applicants for the Scheme should complete an application form (See Appendix B(i)). They need not disclose why they are interested in 4 day/Reduced Hours Working. The proposed use of their free time will not be used as a reason to reject an applicant or terminate a job unless it involves an alternative employment or activity which may:

- lead to a financial or other conflict of interest which may weaken public confidence in the Authority's reputation.
- involve breaches of the employment contract;

If the employee is in doubt, he/she should consult the relevant Head of Service.

5.3 Full and proper consideration will be given to all requests for 4 day/Reduced Hours working. A form for this purpose is attached as Appendix B(ii). Advice will be sought by the Head of Service from the line manager and the Directorate Personnel Officer, before completing the form. As stated in paragraph 4.1 above, such requests will not be granted where it is considered that the efficiency of the service will be adversely affected.

## 6. **Right to Return to Full Time Working**

- 6.1 The employee will have the right to be considered for a return to full time working in the job in which he/she was employed prior to the reduction in his/her hours.
- 6.2 In such circumstances, the employee should put his/her request in writing to the relevant Head of Service, including the date on which he/she would like to return to full time work. The Head of Service will make a decision based on objective and job related reasons. This decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee, normally within one month of receipt of the request.

## 7. **Annual Leave**

- 7.1 The basic annual leave specified for the equivalent full time post will be apportioned on a pro rata basis. Any additional entitlements to this, e.g. long service leave, will be applied individually and pro rata to the hours worked. Annual leave may be expressed in terms of hours rather than days per annum, where appropriate.

## 8. **Salary/Wages**

- 8.1 Salary/wages will be apportioned on a pro-rata basis depending on the rate of pay for the full time post.

## 9. **Flexible Hours**

- 9.1 The Authority's Flexible Working Hours Scheme will, where applicable to the equivalent full time post, also apply to 4 day/Reduced Hours workers. This matter will be included in the employee's revised Statement of Particulars (see paragraph 15 below).

## 10. **Hospital and Medical Appointments**

- 10.1 Hospital and medical appointments should normally be arranged outside working hours. However, it is recognised that some clinics and surgeries take place on set days and that, in some cases, cancellation of an appointment can lead to a long delay in treatment. In these, unavoidable, circumstances, paid absence under paragraph 18 of the Authority's Flexible Working Hours Scheme will apply.

## 11. **Bank Holidays**

11.1 Entitlement to statutory Bank Holidays (and the Authority's Christmas/New Year Extra Statutory Day) will be apportioned on a pro rata basis.

11.2 Where a particular working pattern leads to an employee receiving more or less than his/her pro rata entitlement to bank holidays (and ESD), then an adjustment to annual leave entitlement must be made to compensate.

## 12. **Pension Benefits**

12.1 4 day/Reduced Hours Workers will be eligible to join or remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme and will need to assess their personal circumstances in relation to this matter before opting to work on a reduced hour basis.

## 13. **Pay for Working Additional and/or Unsocial Hours/Days**

13.1 Opportunities to work on the employee's designated weekly day off will be subject to the prior approval of the relevant Head of Service.

13.2 Premium rate payments for additional hours worked will be applicable only to hours worked in excess of 37 per week, but unsocial hours payments will be made on the same basis as is applicable to full time employees in accordance with Green Book provisions, subject to any locally agreed variations.

## 14. **Essential Car User Allowance**

14.1 The mileage criteria, which determines eligibility for essential car user allowance, will be applied on a pro rata basis.

## 15. **Statement of Particulars of Employment**

15.1 The employee will, in accordance with employment legislation, receive a revised written Statement of Particulars of Employment. This will set out his/her revised terms and conditions of employment and will be similar to that currently issued to full time post holders. It will be clearly marked as "4 day/Reduced Hours Work"

## 16. **Leavers**



16.1 Where a 4 day/Reduced Hours worker leaves the service of the Authority, the Head of Service will review the needs of the post and determine whether to advertise the vacancy on a reduced hour or a full time basis.

## 17. **Monitoring**

17.1 To ensure fair treatment and effective implementation, it is important to monitor 4 day/Reduced Hours. Working applications and their progress. Heads of Service must therefore maintain proper records of these to enable directorate and corporate statistics to be compiled.

17.2 Copies of all Application Forms (Appendix B(i)) and Response to Application Forms (Appendix Bii) will be forwarded to the Strategic Personnel Unit, without delay, for monitoring purposes.

## 18. **Basis of the Scheme**

18.1 In any case where there may be an area of doubt regarding the interpretation of the content of this 4 day/Reduced Hours working scheme, the decision of the Head of Strategic Personnel will be final

## 19. **Implementation of the Scheme in relation to Individual Employees**

19.1 Any grievance arising about the implementation of the scheme in relation to individual employees will be dealt with in accordance with the Authority's Grievance Procedure.

## 20. **Review**

20.1 The Authority reserves the right to review the conditions of service of 4 day/Reduced Hours employees in response to the results of pilots of the scheme (see paragraph 4.3) and/or legislative change. Additionally, the provisions of this 4 day/Reduced Hours working scheme will be subject to review from time to time.

**OPTIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF COVER**

Options for the arrangement of cover at the same level, or for only part of the duties typically at a different skill level, on the employee's designated day off:

**Overtime worked by existing full-time employees**

- ◆ at additional cost

**Variations in hours by existing part-time employees**

- ◆ at no additional cost

**Employment of a part-time employee for one day (or equivalent) a week**

- ◆ recruitment may be difficult, especially if there is no flexibility in when the work can be undertaken

**Employment of a temporary, fixed term, fixed task or casual employee, if the reduced hour week is on a trial basis**

- ◆ the Directorate Personnel Officer will advise on the most appropriate form of contract
- ◆ there may be a salary saving
- ◆ student availability during school holiday periods may assist recruitment

**Secondment/Acting Up opportunities for other employees**

- ◆ helpful to employee development
- ◆ temporary cover may nevertheless be required for the seconded employee's duties

**Work placements arranged via external agencies**

- ◆ minimal cost - often training only
- ◆ usually supplied by schools, colleges and universities
- ◆ can be in the form of a Supported Placement (SPS) for a person with a disability, which is arranged via the Employment Service

**Note:** It may not be necessary to arrange cover at all, particularly where there is a reduction in workload or there is scope to reallocate tasks.

<p><b>APPLICATION FOR 4 DAY/REDUCED HOURS WORKING</b></p>
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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directorate or Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please specify your proposed working pattern i.e. which day of the week you would be absent and how many hours a week you would work:**

4 Day/Reduced Hours Working must be agreed by your Head of Service and would normally be effective 3 months after the date of this application.

When would you like to start 4 Day/Reduced Hours Working? \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understood the Authority's 4 Day/Reduced Hours Working Scheme

I apply for 4 Day/Reduced Hours Working on the basis outlined above

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Send a copy of this form to:     Your Head of Service  
                                          Your Directorate Personnel Officer

**RESPONSE TO HEAD OF SERVICE TO APPLICATION FOR 4 DAY/REDUCED HOURS WORKING**

*To be completed and returned to the applicant, following consultation with the Directorate Personnel Officer and the relevant Line Manager.*

**Name of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Post No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Head of Service:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

I have examined the proposal for 4 Day/Reduced Hours working (copy attached) and:- (*\*delete as appropriate*)

- (a) I agree to its implementation, as set out \*
- (b) I agree to its implementation, subject to the amendments detailed below, which I have discussed with the employee concerned. \*
- (c) I do not agree to its implementation for service efficiency reasons, as set out below \*

(NB grounds for refusal must be objective and job-based. A general objection, in principle, to 4 Day/Reduced Hours working or to the inconvenience that a deviation from previous working practices would cause, will not be supported.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(attach a separate sheet, if necessary)*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: Please send a copy of this form, together with the application form, to the Strategic Personnel Unit, for monitoring purposes.**