

# PROPOSED REMOVAL OF THE FLEXI-TIME SCHEME

**This message is intended primarily for members that work under the flexi-time scheme. It has been sent to all members, as we do not know who is currently working under this scheme.**

We apologise that it has taken some time for us to get a message out to members. This is due to the confusing and sometime contradictory nature of the information put out by the employer. We have consistently been asking the employer for clarity since the initial document was published.

The City of Edinburgh Council has announced its intention to end the current clocking in/out recording system and scrap the current flexi-time policy. These are two separate issues with confusion caused by a lack of adequate communication from the employer.

The current clocking system is decades old and we have been informed it needs to be replaced or removed. This could be turned into a saving if manual recording was introduced. Manual recording is already in use in many areas of the Council and, with working from home likely to continue for many of us, it may be the way forward.

The proposal to remove the current Flexi time scheme is a different issue. UNISON has been contacted by many of our members, who are angry and confused regarding these proposals, so we have prepared some FAQs which may help in creating a better understanding of the situation as we currently understand it:

**1. The Council states that they have been in informal discussion with UNISON since before the lockdown; is this correct?**

Whilst there has been no formal discussion

with UNISON on these issues, the employer had informed us of their intention to review flexitime and that the clocking system was no longer fit for purpose. We have always advised the employer that we needed formal terms of reference before we can properly consult with members about this issue.

**2. I feel let down by the Council. With all that is going on, why are the Council not acknowledging personal circumstances or our hard work and dedication to duty?**

We have received many comments of this nature and completely agree. We share your concerns and have continually raised these issues with the employer. We have been advised that we will receive updated paperwork that accurately reflects the proposals that the employer wishes to present.

**3. I am confused by the different communications that are coming out. What should I believe or act upon?**

As proper negotiation on these matters are still to begin, the employer are still to provide UNISON with a set of clear and concise proposals from the employer. When we receive more information, we will let you know.

**4. Will my flexible working arrangements be affected?**

No. Compressed working, reduced hours, etc. fall under a different policy so will not be affected.

## 5. Will the Flexi-time scheme just be scrapped?

Information on the Orb suggests that the employer intend on scrapping the current scheme and propose a new arrangement that appears to rely upon managers' discretion. Managerial style and priorities differ throughout the Council. This creates a situation equivalent to a 'postcode lottery', where staff may be treated differently depending on their department, section or workplace.

## 6. What parts of the scheme could remain?

**Flexible start and finish times** as they currently stand may remain.

**Building up hours** over time between -10 and +15 hours is proposed to be removed. The Council state that, you will "ordinarily work your contracted hours each week". Where you feel you have to work extra hours for the needs of the service this will be agreed with your manager and time off will be given back. Where you are asked to work extra this should be overtime.

**Flexi days off.** This is confusing as one document indicates they will cease: "there may be occasions when you need some ad-hoc time off but the hours can't be worked back in the same week. You would agree with your line manager in advance to work the hours back at another time, when there's a service need." Alternatively, the initial consultation paper has staff comments that allow staff to "free up an afternoon to pursue a hobby or have time to collect the children

from school"

These issues have been raised with the employer as they continue to cause confusion. We are waiting for that written clarity from the employer.

## 7. How do I feed in to the consultation process?

We are planning on creating a survey for you to complete and share your views. You can also email the UNISON Branch Office or contact the UNISON representatives listed below, but we would strongly encourage you to complete the survey.

## 8. Is it possible that my manager may be given more power to refuse any flexibility under the flexi-time scheme?

This is a possibility, so it is vital that we have much clearer proposals to avoid this scenario and ensure fairness.

UNISON will start consultation with members and the employer when we receive clear terms of reference and timeline for the replacement Flexi-time scheme.

We are due to meet with the employer tomorrow (**18th June**), where we expect to be provided with formal proposals.

**Gerry Stovin**  
Service Condition Officer

**Michael Smith**  
Resources Convener

**Tom Howorth**  
Place Convener

If you are interested in becoming a UNISON shop steward or Health & Safety Representative please contact the branch office on 0131 558 7488 for further information.

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