

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible for the 9 day fortnight scheme?

Professional Services Staff who work a five day week (full time or part time and are not undergoing a performance improvement/capability review) are eligible for the scheme and can opt in if they wish.

Is this only for full time staff?

No, staff on part time contracts who work a 5-day week can participate. However, staff who are contracted to work a fixed number of hours each day to deliver a specific service will not be eligible to participate.

What is the role of Line managers in this scheme?

Line managers assess the business and resource issues affecting their areas to decide if the scheme is appropriate for their team at that time. If they agree the scheme is viable they approve the flexible working request form. They engage in discussions with their staff to agree what days and what schedules are appropriate to ensure that adequate cover is provided and there is no impact on operational requirements. They also exercise managerial discretion when needed to ensure that staff contributions outwith their normal hours are recognised within the scheme.

How does annual leave work with the 9 day fortnight?

Annual leave will be calculated in hours and any leave taken on a working day will have hours deducted which will be equivalent to the hours scheduled for work on that day.

What if you take 2(or more) consecutive weeks of annual leave? Should you record 9 days leave or 10 days?

As annual leave is calculated in hours and reflect your working schedule this should not matter. You would simply record 73hrs or 75hrs as appropriate.

**What happens when someone has accrued some time and then is off sick before their day off. Can they carry over their day off?

If the 2 week working cycle is broken by a single day of absence then the cycle will not be broken. The employee will have the hours allocated according to their working pattern for that day (and have an equivalent amount of sick pay deducted from their annual entitlement). However, their pay will not be affected. If they are sick for more than one day in any single week then the cycle will reset and they will need to start a new cycle from the following week. If staff have already accrued some hours before being off sick, line managers can exercise discretion in allowing time off in lieu to cover the hours accrued.

What happens if I work 9 day fortnight pattern and I am participating in strike action, will I still be entitled to my day off?

No, under the 9-day fortnight scheme, if you were absent from work and were not able to accrue enough hours, you are not entitled to a day off. The pay deductions made for participating in strike are based on 1/365th of your annual salary per day, which only covers your basic contractual hours (i.e. 7.5 hours a day) as such, it does not cover sufficient number of hours for you to claim a day off. The cycle will reset the following week / first week of no industrial action.

Are you able to carry over or accrue your day off?

No, you cannot normally accrue or carry over your day off. You need to begin a new 2 week cycle of accruing hours for the next day off. However, if your line manager has requested you to provide additional cover which prevents you taking your 'day-off' then they have the discretion to allow you have a day off in lieu at an operationally convenient time.

How can line managers and staff calculate their hours?

Line managers and staff will need to agree the hours worked on a weekly basis to ensure that there is sufficient cover at all times. Staff are required to notify their line manager of any changes to the agreed hours and ensure this is agreed. It would also be good practice to make a note of their time at work for their own records.

How long is the lunch break?

Duration of the lunch break is at the discretion of the staff but needs to be a minimum of 30 mins. Whatever lunch break duration is preferred needs to be agreed with the line manager to ensure that staff meet their working time obligations and service levels are not affected. There is flexibility for line managers and staff to review and revise this based on personal and operational requirements.

Can the work pattern change every week?

It is advisable that staff agree a work pattern with their line manager and stick to this unless there are significant challenges. Any challenges need to be discussed and agreed with the line manager. This is because a member of staff's preferred hours need to be balanced against operational requirements and the resource availability within the team. However, Line managers will use their discretion and judgement and communicate their decision to staff members. In some cases they might have the flexibility to vary work patterns. This should be driven by operational requirements.

If there is a requirement to come in for training/meeting on a 'day off' are you allowed to add travel time to your hours?

No. Staff coming into work normally do not claim travel time. The same applies in this case.

Can staff take the 'day off' in advance and then work up the hours?

No. You have to work the full hours required to be entitled for the day off.

Can Managers still use TOIL to cover flexible requests for staff to come in at short notice?

No, the 9-day fortnight supersedes TOIL. If staff on the 9 day fortnight are needed on an ad hoc basis any hours worked can be added onto the hours accrued over the 9 day period to take a day off.

If for some exceptional circumstances a member of staff is required to come in and work on their 'day off' do they lose the day off without compensation?

No. The line manager can agree other time off in lieu of their scheduled day off. The staff is entitled to a 'day off' as they have worked the hours.

When can I take my day off?

'Day off' can be taken on day 10 of the scheme. The specific day of the week will depend on both the needs the individual and the team and will be agreed in advance with the line manager. Hence, the start day of the scheme can be varied to ensure that enough hours are accrued by the 9th day to take the 10th day off. If not taken then the day is lost unless previously agreed with the line manager.