

**financial
services
union**



TEMPLATE POLICY



**Right to
Disconnect**



Template Policy

Right to Disconnect



Joint Employer/Union Statement

New technologies are providing a great opportunity for flexible working arrangements for staff. Many staff now avail of different hours and location arrangements meaning work is often conducted at different times of the day or week. However, we are conscious that this can create risks, expectations, or pressures to work longer hours that often encroach on home life. Disconnecting from work is vital to a healthy and sustainable work life balance. Staff's mental health, wellbeing and personal down time is important to us. In this context we support our staff's right to disconnect.

As an employer, we do not expect staff, normally, to work more than their contractual working hours. If you find you are, you should talk to your line manager or your union representative. If you do receive a work email, or any other form of communication outside of working hours, there is no expectation that you read it or respond until you are working.

We have an overtime agreement with FSU and we are committed to paying overtime to those staff eligible, as per the agreement. We encourage eligible staff who work overtime to claim and ensure they are paid for this work. We also have an on-call and standby allowance, again for those eligible. Anyone required on standby should be in receipt of this allowance.

Other than contact related to on-call, or where expressly agreed with the staff member, (the Bank management) as your employer undertake not to contact you outside of your agreed working hours for work related matters.

We are committed to this statement and to providing staff a fair right to disconnect. This right and policy apply to all staff under our group including agency and contract workers.

Employer

Trade Union

Hours of work and overtime

The fulltime expected hours in this company are X but all staff should also refer to their individual contract of employment which we will provide if requested. We do not expect staff to work more than these hours. If staff have to, this is considered overtime. Overtime must be agreed, approved and is subject to the overtime policy rate of X.

We believe in staffing and allocating work that should be able to be done within the working week. It is only in unusual or extraordinary circumstances that overtime should be required. We do seek flexibility and support for this when necessary, but it should not be a regular and ongoing part of the working week.

We are committed to the working week of X hours and do not support the informal extension of the working week through an always on work culture. However, if time is worked out of these hours overtime applies.

Disconnect out of hours

We support and encourage our staff to disconnect out of hours. Personal life and time are vital. This company respects that.

We understand that many staff now have a range of devices for work that provide flexibility to work from different locations at different times. These devices are not provided to create an expectation of working out of hours. We recognise the negative effects this can have on wellbeing and mental health as well as relationships.

For the vast majority of staff these devices can be turned off out of hours. For those staff who are formally on-call or standby, appropriate allowances are provided. For senior staff required in case of emergency, it is vital for your health that the interference is not regularised or expected.

Regular breaks and lunchtime

The Organisation and Working Time Act (OWT) provides in general, you are entitled to a 15 minute break when you have worked for 4 ½ hours. If you work more than 6 hours you are entitled to a 30 minute break, which can include the first 15-minute break. In this Company we provide XXXXXX

We want all our staff to take full breaks and lunchtimes. We do not want our staff working through lunches, whether they are in the office or remote working. It is vital staff have down time during the day too.

In addition to regular breaks, the OWT also provides for 11 consecutive hours rest in any period of 24 hours and you should normally get 24 consecutive hours rest in any period of 7 days. This means it is important you do not check emails or devices before you go to bed and first thing in the morning.

Managing meetings and times

With more flexible ways of working often comes more meetings. While meetings are a core part of how we work we are also conscious of trying to minimise unnecessary meetings and meeting fatigue. Therefore, we ask those calling meetings to avoid doing some during normal lunch or break times. As often staff feel obliged to forego their break to attend. This shouldn't happen. Meetings should only be scheduled during normal working hours. Meetings should not be held over break times and only those necessary should be invited.

We also appreciate that if staff need to block time in their diary for vital work to be done, they should do so. Diary time is not just for meetings and because someone is 'free' in their diary does not mean they are not busy.

On-call, standby, weekend attendance and other allowances

We recognise that some roles operate on an on-call or standby basis. We have in place appropriate allowances of X for these roles. If you are in such a role and required, this will be part of your contract and role profile. It will be clear to you. If you are not, then you are not required to be on standby or on-call. This is important to ensuring your right to disconnect. Those who are required are remunerated appropriately.

We also recognise the difference between occasional overtime in an evening and the imposition of weekend overtime. Therefore, we have a specific weekend attendance rate of X for those staff on Mon-Fri contracts.

Culture of work

We recognise that working life is made up of policies and procedures but also our company culture. This often emanates from the expectation set down by the executive, senior managers, and line managers. We wish to make very clear we support staff's right to disconnect and we do not believe that staff need to be regularly working out of hours.

We want to cultivate a culture of hard work within your hours while fully respecting your personal life and time outside of work.

If this does not match the environment you have in our company we are disappointed. That is why we outline below a formal complaint procedure. While we hope it isn't necessary, we do recognise that working culture doesn't always mirror what we are trying to achieve.

We believe by respecting your right to disconnect you will reciprocate by working hard during hours and showing us support on those rare occasions we need it out of hours.

We wish to make very clear that there should be absolutely no detrimental impact on your career with us for expressing your right to disconnect. This will not lead to victimisation and will not negatively impact your performance rating or promotional chances. We will investigate any such victimization and take seriously. Equally, staff who may be perceived to be 'connected' outside of work hours will not be treated more favourably.

Complaint Procedure

While we hope complaints aren't necessary, we believe having a fair and transparent complaint procedure is a vital part of working life. Should you feel this policy is being breached, for example, by the following, not exhaustive list, then you should speak out:

- Regular out of hours contact;
- Expectation to work out of hours;
- Meetings schedule on breaks;
- Non-payment of overtime; or
- Victimisation for not responding out of hours.

Firstly, we encourage you to speak out to your line manager and/or trade union representative. However, we acknowledge that in many cases it may be the very line manager who is in breach of this policy and so we invite you to speak out to a different line manager or senior manager within the organisation to try have the issue resolved informally. Should this not happen, then a formal complaint under the grievance procedure can be made and we encourage you to engage your relevant trade union representative on this. If an employer is found to be in breach they will pay wages owed for time worked and a compensation amount calculated on basis of X.