



FACTSHEET: FLEXI SPACES SERVICE MODEL FOR SHARING SPACES

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WHAT?

In Kalasatama, Helsinki's smart city neighbourhood, the city has experimented with an online service that lets people find and book spaces by the hour. The neighbourhood, once an old harbour, has been developed as a living lab for smart and sustainable innovation. It made sense that the concept of temporary use was first explored here as a tool for urban development.

The city and its innovation unit Forum Virium Helsinki entered into a collaboration with the startup Flextila for the development of Flexi Spaces, a service that allows people to find and use spaces for a wide range of activities. Once a space is booked through the online service, users get access for self-service use through a smart lock.

WHEN?

Piloted in 2016-2017

WHERE?

Helsinki, Finland

WHY?

- Browsing, booking and paying for spaces online
- Helping people find space close by for work, hobbies or events

LESSONS LEARNT

Flexi Spaces makes it easy for citizens and organisations to browse and book available spaces near them. Small time slots — an hour, a day or a week — allow people to test a space without making a commitment. One challenge is that the 'first come, first served' model does not necessarily guarantee the optimal outcome. Some level of 'curation' of users may be needed. New tools are needed to facilitate the communication between the owner of the temporary use location and the user. The service can help with this.

HOW TO TRANSFER

A service like Flexispace is helpful in making available spaces visible to potential users, as well as managing short term contracts. It is useful to test the service in a smaller network, like Helsinki did in Kalasatama, before expanding it to a wider area. There is also great potential in expanding the service, allowing people to book not only temporary use locations but also spaces in other local, city-owned locations such as schools and libraries as well as privately owned spaces in residential or office buildings.

- **Develop an agile, easy-to-use online system for flexible reservations**
- **Find systems and processes that may be used more broadly than for temporary use spaces alone**