



## Childcare voucher benefit scheme

### How to save on your childcare costs

A voucher scheme is available to help working parents at Sussex University to pay for childcare. What's more, the vouchers can be used to pay for the care of children right up to the age of 16 and for all types of registered or approved childcare. Childcarepass, run on the University's behalf by a company called Sodexho Pass, is a scheme that gives Sussex employees the option of taking part of their salary (up to a limit of £55 per week) in the form of childcare vouchers. By doing this you can save money, as you do not pay tax or National Insurance (NI) on the part of the salary you take. The amount you save depends on the level of tax and NI you pay.

For detailed information, visit Sodexho Pass or the Inland Revenue (links to the right).

To join the Childcarepass voucher scheme, read the details below and then complete the 'Employee Salary Sacrifice Form' available at the bottom of this page or from Sodexho Pass. This form alters the terms and conditions of your employment, allowing the University to pay part of your salary in vouchers.

### What is a childcare voucher benefit scheme?

A childcare voucher benefit scheme enables you to take part of your salary in childcare vouchers in either a paper or e-voucher format - the choice is yours.

### Is there a limit to the amount of vouchers I can have?

The amount of vouchers you can take is capped at £55 per week (£243 per calendar month). Your net pay after vouchers should also remain above £420.33 per month (£97 per week). This is to ensure you always pay the minimum amount of NI on which a number of state benefits, including Statutory Sick Pay, are dependent. When you fill in the form the amount that you enter is the MONTHLY figure. The frequency is monthly. To work out your monthly total multiply your weekly deduction by 52 and divide by 12. E.g. the maximum is  $(55 * 52) / 12 = £243$

### How does this save money?

You do not pay Income tax or National Insurance contributions on the part of the salary you take in vouchers.

### How much can I save?

The amount you save depends on the level of tax and NI you pay - With NI at a rate of 9.4% and £55 of your salary per week taken as vouchers you will save up to £915 p.a. as a 22% tax payer, and up to £1195 p.a. as a 40% tax payer.

### **How does the scheme work?**

You register on a form which alters the Terms and Conditions of your employment allowing the University to pay part of your salary in vouchers which you use to pay for childcare. Vouchers are sent to your home address or credited to your Internet account on payday. Simply pay your childcarer with the vouchers and they redeem them through Sodexo Pass.

### **Will taking childcare vouchers affect my Statutory Maternity Pay?**

SMP is calculated on salary on which NI is payable so your SMP will be reduced if you take childcare vouchers. For this reason we advise you to come off the scheme 23 weeks before your baby is due.

### **Will my pension be affected?**

USS and USPAS are happy to accept vouchers as notional pay. If you are contributing to a personal pension scheme you are unlikely to be affected. The impact on S2P (formerly SERPS) of a single year's reduction in NI contributions is likely to be negligible.

### **How will my overtime be calculated?**

The University will continue to calculate work benefits on gross salary, so your overtime/other benefits will not be affected.

### **Will my claim for Working Tax Credit be affected?**

There may be an effect on the childcare tax credit element of the WTC. It is advisable to contact the WTC helpline on 0845 300 3900 prior to applying for childcare vouchers.

### **Can my partner and I both have vouchers?**

Yes, the amount of vouchers that a parent or legal guardian can take is limited to £55 per week each (£243 per month), irrespective of how many children you have, so you could maximise your savings by ensuring that you both take part in a childcare voucher scheme. If your partner's employer is not currently running a scheme, call 01276 687094 and ask for more information.

### **Can I join the scheme if I am a member of SFCC?**

No, for tax reasons you can not be a member of both schemes.

### **What if I have more than one childcarer?**

Like cash, vouchers come in various denominations. This enables you to split payment to as many carers as you use.

### **Will University childcare services accept the vouchers?**

Yes, the crèche and the nursery will both be registered.

### **How do I use the Childcarepass vouchers?**

Simply pay your childcare provider with the vouchers. They redeem them by email, freepost or freephone through Sodexo Pass who runs the scheme. If using e-vouchers you can make payment directly to your carer via your online account.

### **Who can accept the vouchers?**

- Registered childminders, nurseries and play schemes
- Out-of-hours clubs on school premises run by a school or local authority
- Childcare schemes run by school governing bodies under the 'extended schools' scheme
- Childcare schemes run by approved providers, for example, an out-of-hours scheme or a provider approved under a Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme
- In England only, childcare given in the child's own home by a person\* approved to care for your child or children
- In England only, childcare given in the child's own home by a domiciliary worker or nurse\* from a registered agency who cares for children
- In Scotland only, childcare given in the child's own home by (or introduced through) childcare agencies, which must be registered
- Approved foster carers (the care must be for a child who is not the foster carer's foster child)

**\*Childcare provided in the child's own home will not qualify if the person approved to give that care is a relative of the child**

**All carers must be either registered or approved in order to be able to accept childcare vouchers. If your carer is not currently registered or approved, information on how to register is available at [www.childcareapprovalscheme.co.uk](http://www.childcareapprovalscheme.co.uk)**

### **What if my carer doesn't know about the scheme?**

Most carers do know about voucher schemes. If not already registered, they simply provide their details to Sodexo Pass who set up automatic payment into their bank account. There is a useful leaflet available to explain the scheme to your carer.

### **What if my childcare costs vary every month?**

You can keep the vouchers for when you have a more expensive month e.g. during the school holidays.

### **Can the vouchers go out of date?**

Yes, however, Sodexo Pass undertakes to replace any Childcarepass voucher for up to 18 months after the printed expiry date.

### **Can I change my childcare provider?**

Yes. Simply ring the Childcarepass helpline on Freephone 0800 328 7411 and request a new childcarer registration form, get your carer to complete it and then send it to Sodexo Pass with their carer certificate. Childcarer registration forms are also available at the bottom of this page or from Sodexo Pass. Please note that under the new guidelines for childcare you have a responsibility to inform the University of any change of carer.

### **Can I leave the scheme at any time?**

No, to qualify for the Tax and NI savings you must stay in the scheme until the renewal date, except under exceptional circumstances e.g. separation, divorce, marriage, birth, death or pregnancy. Other exceptional circumstances may be agreed on an individual basis with your Personnel Officer.

### What happens if my vouchers are lost or stolen?

You can call **Freephone 0800 328 7411** for advice.

### What do I do next?

To join the Childcarepass voucher scheme simply fill out the Salary Sacrifice form available at the bottom of the page or from Sodexo Pass, or from your Personnel Officer. The Salary Sacrifice form alters the Terms & Conditions of your employment allowing the University to pay part of your salary in vouchers.

The maximum amount of vouchers you will be allowed to take is £55 per week (£243 per calendar month).

Ask your carer to complete the Carer Agreement form available at the bottom of this page, from Sodexo Pass or from your Personnel Officer. All carer forms must be accompanied by a valid registration/approval certificate at time of application.

All completed documentation should be returned to your Personnel Officer for processing. You will receive your Childcarepass vouchers on the next available payday.

### Annual childcare costs savings

<b>Salary</b>	<b>Savings (Voucher amount £2,860 per annum)</b>
£35,000	£1195
£30,000	£915
£25,000	£915
£20,000	£915
£15,000	£915
£10,000	£915
£7,500	£915