

Staff benefits booklet

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Introduction

Working for Southwark has never been more rewarding.

Our employees are our prized resource reflected in the wide range of benefits we provide to attract, develop and retain them.

This booklet outlines the benefits available to employees of Southwark Council.

It outlines statutory entitlements as well as other schemes and options offered to employees to enrich their working lives.



Travel

The Council is committed to improving the environment and encouraging healthier and safer lifestyles. In light of this, we have introduced a number of beneficial initiatives to help you choose greener forms of transport for work.

Season Ticket Purchase

Tis' the season to be organised! Get the bus, train, tram or tube to work with Southwark's season ticket purchase scheme. The scheme allows staff to buy an annual season ticket for travel from home to work. The season ticket may also be used in non-work time or for business related travel. Eligible staff are given a loan, which is repayable over 12 months. There is no interest rate or administrative charge and no limit on the season ticket price!

Bikes4work Scheme

Ride on! Cycling to work with Southwark's Bikes4work scheme is a "wheeie" good idea. You will make big savings plus you will be helping Southwark's Green Travel Plan. The scheme is a salary sacrifice agreement whereby staff can make huge savings on the cost of bikes and accessories because they do not have to pay the NI and tax contributions on the amount they pay back monthly. To qualify for this scheme you must use your bike to commute either the whole or part of your journey to work. The scheme is open to all permanent employees regardless of length of service, as long as your contract is longer than the pay back

period of 18 months. The scheme is only available periodically.

Car Allowance

You may be required to use a car for carrying out your duties. If so, you will be eligible to receive a car allowance for business use only. There are two classes of users "essential" user & "casual" user. An essential user receives a monthly lump sum and a mileage allowance, which must be claimed by the employee. Casual users receive mileage only. Payments are dependent on class of user & cubic capacity of the car.

Car / Motor Cycle Loan

Southwark operates a car / motorcycle loan scheme for employees who are essential users. The loan period is usually a maximum of 5 years for new cars and those up to 3 years old, and 4 years for older cars (subject to engineers report).

Car / Motor Cycle Leasing

Southwark operates a car / motorcycle leasing scheme for employees who are essential car users. This is also available to employees in hard to fill or JNC posts pre 1st April 2007. The cost to the employee is offset by a contribution from the Council. The Lease Period is usually 3 years. Staff eligible for car leasing under a benefits package (JNC & hard to fill) are encouraged to look at the season ticket purchase option as an alternative to car leasing.

Health & Well-being

The good health & well being of staff is paramount to Southwark!

Health Club Membership Discount

You may have experienced or heard about our health fairs. We also encourage lifestyle changes by making health club discounts available to staff. Fusion is the Council's selected contractor for the provision of sports & health facilities. There is a standard Fusion membership fee available to Council staff and by joining a particular leisure centre you would have access to any of the facilities offered by Fusion in the borough.

The Healthy Living website

Visit the Healthy Living pages under the Working for Southwark section of the Source, designed to help you find information and advice on a whole range of issues to enhance your health and wellbeing.

Confidential Counselling & Support Service

Southwark Council's Confidential Counselling & Support Service provides professional support and guidance for staff



on a range of problems such as childcare, debt, trauma, relationships, stress, legal and consumer issues, alcohol and drug misuse. Simply call 0800 0217 817, available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Eye Care Vouchers

Have you had your eyes tested? Existing DSE users and new employees who are to become DSE users must have appropriate eye & eyesight tests. Southwark's Eyecare Voucher Scheme, operated by Accor Corporate Services, provides vouchers for a Basic Eye Test and a basic pair of VDU corrective spectacles. This will not cost you anything, unless you want more expensive frames, in which case you would need to make up the difference.

Home & Family

Childcarepass

The taxman is “child friendly”. Childcarepass allows parents to make savings on childcare costs by using childcare vouchers. Childcare vouchers are exempt from Tax and National Insurance contributions for up to £243 per month. As a parent, you could save over £900 per year (standard tax rate payer) if you choose to take £243 per month in childcare vouchers. Higher tax ratepayers could save over £1,100 per year. Both parents can claim vouchers!

To join the Childcarepass scheme ask your HR officer for a copy of a Salary Sacrifice form and Carer Agreement form, or download them from the Source. You may also ring Sodexo on 0800 328 7411.

Children's Information Service

Southwark Children's Information Service (CIS) is a free information and advice service which aims to support working parents. Call CIS on free phone 0800 013 0639, visit www.southwarkcis.org.uk or email childrens.info@southwark.gov.uk

HSF Health Plan

What is a Health Plan? Firstly its not health insurance but cash sums payable against:

- Medical expense such as dental, optical and physiotherapy
- In response to life events such as the birth of a child or adoption
- Cash sums payable in the event of hospitalisation, home care assistance or personal injury
- Plus free stress, legal and medical help lines

A range of schemes is available from as little as £1 per week, deducted from your salary. The scheme is entirely optional and highly flexible. Allowing you to join, leave or change the level of contribution at any time. The scheme would cover you, your spouse or partner, including same sex and any dependent children up to the age of 18 at the same address.

To join or find out more about HSF ring:

- Sally Hall - Area Representative - 07970 829 674
- Adrian Button - Area Representative - 07977 908 380
- The HSF team - 0207 928 6662

As a special concession to the employees of Southwark Council, HSF has offered to waive the three-month qualifying period on optical (excluding eye laser treatment), dental and chiropody treatment. So if you decide to join this scheme and you have a check-up or treatment in the first three months just hold on to the receipts until the qualifying period is up and then contact the Fund in order to make your claim.

Make the most of your money

Making sound financial decisions is an essential life skill. This is why Southwark Council in association with the Financial Services Authority (FSA), offers workshops to provide information and support on how to manage your personal finances.

The workshops last for about 45 minutes with 15 minutes for questions and cover a range of topics such as budgeting, managing debt, saving and planning for the future, including pensions. So there should be something useful for everyone.

Workshop dates can be arranged locally through your business unit manager and Human Resource section. Alternatively you can book directly via Corporate Learning & Development.

For more information visit the Pay and Benefits section of personnel on the Source.

Southwark Credit Union

In 1982 a group of Southwark Council employees volunteered their time to set up Southwark Council Employees Credit Union as a not-for-profit savings and loans facility for staff. Now Southwark Credit Union has grown to be the 13th largest of 600 credit unions in Britain. In addition to savings and low interest loans, it is possible to open a credit union account for a family member or a Young Saver Account for children under 16. The Credit Union also provides home contents, travel and car insurance. Deductions of an agreed amount are made directly from an employee's pay and transferred into a personal Credit Union account.

Payroll deduction plus a 24-hour telephone line and a secure internet site to check your savings balance means it has never been more easy or convenient to begin to save!

For more information, please visit www.creditunion.co.uk



Pension

Pension Scheme

Plan Ahead! The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a statutory, funded pension scheme, governed by the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments and regulations. This means its benefits are set out and guaranteed in law. Employees can choose to join, remain within the scheme or make their own personal pension arrangements. The basic contribution is 6% of pensionable pay.

Highlights of the benefits provided by the LGPS are:

- A tax-free lump sum when you retire
- A guaranteed pension usually based on your final 12 months pay
- Normal retirement from the age of 65
- Early retirement from the age of 50 if your employer agrees
- An ill-health pension from any age
- Redundancy cover from the age of 50
- A death-in-service lump sum of twice your final pay
- A widow or widower's pension
- Children's pensions

- The index-linking of benefits to make sure they keep up with inflation
- The ability to increase your pension by paying extra contributions
- Contributors can transfer accumulated benefits between pension funds on change in employment, where regulations allow.

*** For up-to-date details please visit the Local Government Pensions Scheme website at www.lgps.org.uk**

Reward & Recognition

Long Service Award

Yes, we value your long service! A gift up to the value of £600 can be awarded to staff with 20 years continuous service with Southwark Council or 25 years continuous local government service, 15 of which must have been with Southwark Council.

A gift up to the value of £900 can be awarded to staff with 40 years continuous local government service, 20 of which must be with Southwark Council.

Employees may either select from a brochure of gifts that are purchased directly by the Council, or purchase their own gift, the cost of which is then reimbursed by the Council. Contact your departmental Human Resources for details.



Staff Awards

Are you a STAR? Staff from across the council may be nominated for the STAR awards. The Southwark Top Achievers Recognition Scheme (STARS) is held annually. Categories include: Team of the year, Manager of the year, Employee of the year, Young employee of the year, Community service of the year, Most improved service, and the Special Recognition Award. And the winner is ...

'Hard to Fill' and Senior Manager Posts

As part of its recruitment and retention strategy the Council offers competitive benefits packages to staff in key posts. To qualify an employee needs to occupy a post that is formally designated as "hard to fill" or a senior manager role.

Eligible staff can choose from a range of benefits listed below:

- Child Care Vouchers
- Gym membership
- Health insurance
- Car Leasing
- Season ticket purchase
- Bike purchase
- Removal & Relocation expenses
- Augmentation of pensionable service

The financial value of benefits offered is equivalent to 100% of the Council's car leasing subsidy and would be dependent on the grade of the post.



Working for Southwark

Working for an organisation is not only about monetary rewards. This is why Southwark offers a host of non-cash incentives to make working for this Council a more rewarding and enriching experience.

We offer comprehensive Learning & Development opportunities to all staff; some of which are offered from remote access points. This means you can choose to learn from your desk or at a training centre.

We also encourage social activities & promote healthy lifestyles by hosting staff barbecues, health fairs, seasonal events and sports events. On occasion we offer discounts for some theatre tickets, theme parks, and the like.

Staff benefits



Southwark recognises that people work best when they have a satisfactory balance between their paid work and the remainder of their lives as individuals, carers and members of the community. This is why we offer work life balance initiatives such as: Flexi Time, Term Time Working, Job Sharing, Compressed Working Week, Day Release for studying, Time off for family emergencies, Employment Breaks, Home Working – occasional / permanent, and Special Leave.

There are also other interesting schemes and activities offered departmentally.

Personnel Management Services

29 Peckham Road
London SE5 8UB

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