

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

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Title: Childcare		Version Number: 2.1
		Status: Ratified
Target Audience: Trust Wide		Divisional and Department: Human Resources
Author / Originator and Job Title: Katie Lee, Staff Benefits and Expenses Manager		Risk Assessment: Not Applicable
Replaces: CORP/POL/201 Childcare Policy, Version 1	Description of amendments: Minor updates 09/06/2021 – Version 2.1 – review date extended by six months	
Validated (Technical Approval) by: HR Policy Forum	Validation Date: 12/10/2017	Which Principles of the NHS Constitution Apply? 3
Ratified (Management Approval) by: Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee (JNCC) Version 2.1 – Jayne Taylor, Interim HR Business Partner	Ratified Date: 31/10/2017	Issue Date: 09/06/2021
	09/06/2021	
<i>Review dates and version numbers may alter if any significant changes are made</i>		Review Date: 09/12/2021

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, population and workforce, ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage over others. The Equality Impact Assessment Tool is designed to help you consider the needs and assess the impact of your policy in the final Appendix.

1 PURPOSE

This guidance aims to provide employees with an understanding of the childcare services offered by the Trust, in a bid to improve the recruitment, retention and return of employees with dependent children responsibilities. To improve the quality of our employee's working lives and wider work life balance with particular reference to childcare.

2 TARGET AUDIENCE

This guidance applies to all employees of the Trust who are the legal parent / guardian of a child aged under 16 or of a disabled child up to the age of 18. The guidance does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors.

3 GUIDELINE

3.1 Background

The Trust recognises the importance of providing comprehensive childcare support for all employees to reflect the National Childcare Strategy, as part of the NHS plan and link in with the Improving Working Lives initiative. The Trust's Staff Benefits and Expenses Team are the point of contact for any of our employees requiring information or advice regarding childcare.

3.2 Responsibilities

3.2.1 Employees

Employees entering any of the childcare salary sacrifice schemes should do so having read and understood all the information given to them. They should inform the Staff Benefits and Expenses Team and their childcare provider of any changes to their circumstances. The employee must understand the implications of joining the scheme including amended contract of employment in respect of pay for the period they are a member of the scheme.

Employees' future benefits from contribution based earnings e.g. Pension, will be affected by entering any salary sacrifice scheme. Individuals should therefore consider their position and the potential impact entering into a salary sacrifice arrangement may have upon their final NHS pension entitlement. For further details employees should contact the Benefits and Expenses team on 01253 951178 or NHS Pensions directly on 0300 3301 346 or at <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensions> .

3.2.2 Managers

Managers should oversee and authorise the relevant scheme entered into by one of their employees, having checked and understood their eligibility for the scheme. Managers must not authorise any employee to enter the scheme whilst being ineligible to do so for any of the reasons mentioned in this guidance. Managers may contact the Benefits and Expenses team for guidance.

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3.2.3 Staff Benefits and Expenses

The Staff Benefits and Expenses Team are responsible for informing employees about this benefit available to them and for the services outlined in this guidance. Any queries from employees about current or future child or family care should be directed to them.

3.3 Options for Childcare

For further information on childcare providers employees can contact the Staff Benefits and Expenses Team.

3.3.1 Nurseries

Nurseries provide care for children from birth to four or five and beyond, often integrated with early education and other services.

3.3.2 Childminders

Childminders usually look after children under 12 in the childminder's own home and often collect school-aged children from a nearby school.

3.3.3 Playschemes

Playschemes or out-of-school clubs offer school-aged children a safe and stimulating environment in which they can play and learn outside of school hours.

3.4 Childcare Voucher Scheme – For Any Registered Childcare

Childcare vouchers are a tax efficient scheme that enables an NHS employee to save between 33-40% on the cost of their childcare by making a 'salary sacrifice' direct from their salary. The value of Salary Sacrifice can be up to £243 a month, (dependant on an individuals' tax bracket) and is exempt from Tax and National Insurance (NI).

The scheme is open to all employees of the Trust who meet the following criteria:

- Employee of the Trust (excluding Bank Staff)
- Legal Parent / Guardian of the child(ren)
- Using Ofsted registered childcare
- The reduction in salary does not take the hourly rate to below the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

If an employee wishes to join the childcare voucher scheme they should contact the Staff Benefits and Expenses Team. Interested employees will then be sent further details, including any relevant application packs, of how to register with the childcare provider.

All information contained in the application pack should be read carefully. Membership of the salary sacrifice scheme will reduce the employee's salary and as such may affect current and future benefits including Pension.

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The Trust can offer advice regarding options available for individuals however employees are recommended to seek independent advice before joining the scheme.

Upon receipt of successful applications, the salary reduction will be applied to the employees' payroll record and it is this new reduced salary upon which current and future benefits will be based including agreed amendment of contract of employment. Their salary will revert back to the higher amount on leaving the salary sacrifice scheme.

Once an employee is on the scheme they should inform the childcare voucher provider of any requests to change their fees one month in advance to ensure that the correct amount is deducted from their salary each month. Failure to do this could result in under / over-payment and a recalculation the following month.

3.5 Workplace Nurseries

The Trust offers a tax efficient salary sacrifice scheme for NHS employees using workplace nurseries where employees can sacrifice their nursery fees, part or in whole, from their salary each month in order to make Tax and NI savings, providing this does not take the hourly rate to below National Minimum Wage.

Eligibility for this salary sacrifice scheme is the same as for the Childcare Voucher salary sacrifice scheme as outlined above.

If an employee wishes to join the workplace nursery salary sacrifice scheme they should contact the Staff Benefits and Expenses Team for an application pack.

The application pack includes an agreement to amend the Contract of Employment where part of current and future salary is sacrificed in return for the childcare savings.

Employees should agree to pay a monthly amount of salary sacrifice generally equivalent to the amount of monthly nursery fees for the period of the nursery agreement. Monthly pay will be reduced by this amount but employees may choose to sacrifice less than the whole amount.

Repayment to the Trust is required where there are any discrepancies to salary resulting from participation in the scheme.

3.6 HMRC Approval

The schemes are provided at the discretion of the Trust in accordance with HMRC approval. Before joining either scheme employees should seek independent advice on how entry into the trusts salary sacrifice schemes may affect any current or future benefits e.g. tax credits, contribution based benefits, earning related benefits and work related benefits. The Trust will not offer advice on the suitability of the schemes for individual staff.

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3.7 Taking Maternity Leave Whilst on the Voucher / Salary Sacrifice Scheme

If an employee becomes pregnant whilst using a salary sacrifice scheme she is still eligible to continue with the scheme provided she has sufficient salary from which to take payments. She should also inform her childcare provider and the Staff Benefits and Expenses Team.

If an employee who has notified her employer of her intention to return to work for the same or a different NHS employer fails to do so within 15 months of the beginning of her maternity leave, she will be liable to refund the whole of her maternity pay and childcare vouchers / benefit, less any Statutory Maternity Pay, received.

3.8 Suspicion of Fraudulent Activity

Any suspicions of fraudulent activity will be referred to the Trust's Counter Fraud Specialist for detailed information gathering.

Should such an investigation find reasonable grounds to suspect an offence has been committed, further action will be taken, in accordance to the Trust's counter fraud and corruption policy.

4 ATTACHMENTS	
Appendix Number	Title
1	Equality Impact Assessment Form

5 PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT STORAGE (HARD AND ELECTRONIC COPIES)
Electronic Database for Procedural Documents
Held by Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator

6 LOCATIONS THIS DOCUMENT ISSUED TO		
Copy No	Location	Date Issued
1	Intranet	31/10/2017
2	Wards, Departments and Service	31/10/2017

7 OTHER RELEVANT / ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS	
Unique Identifier	Title and web links from the document library
HR&OD/PLAN/001	Employment Service Centre (ESC) Business Continuity Plan http://fcsp.xfyldecoast.nhs.uk/trustdocuments/Documents/HR0D-PLAN-001.docx

8 SUPPORTING REFERENCES / EVIDENCE BASED DOCUMENTS
References In Full
Crown. (2010). <i>Equality Act 2010</i> . Available: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents . Last accessed 16/08/2017.

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9 CONSULTATION / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS WITH STAFF, PEERS, PATIENTS AND THE PUBLIC		
Name	Designation	Date Response Received
	HR Policy Forum	12/10/2017
	JNCC	31/10/2017

10 DEFINITIONS / GLOSSARY OF TERMS	
NI	National Insurance
NMW	National Minimum Wage

11 AUTHOR / DIVISIONAL / DIRECTORATE MANAGER APPROVAL			
Issued By	K Lee	Checked By	Mark Casson
Job Title	Staff Benefits and Expenses Manager	Job Title	Remuneration and Benefits Manager
Date	August 17	Date	August 17

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APPENDIX 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM					
Department	Organisation Wide	Service or Policy	Policy	Date Completed:	August 2017
GROUPS TO BE CONSIDERED Deprived communities, homeless, substance misusers, people who have a disability, learning disability, older people, children and families, young people, Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual or Transgender, minority ethnic communities, Gypsy/Roma/Travellers, women/men, parents, carers, staff, wider community, offenders.					
EQUALITY PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS TO BE CONSIDERED Age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender identity (or reassignment), religion and belief, carers, Human Rights and social economic / deprivation.					
QUESTION	RESPONSE			IMPACT	
	Issue	Action	Positive	Negative	
What is the service, leaflet or policy development? What are its aims, who are the target audience?	The Policy Document is to ensure that all members of staff have clear guidance on processes to be followed. The target audience is all staff across the Organisation who are eligible	Raise awareness of the Organisations format and processes involved in relation to the procedural document.	Yes – Clear processes identified		
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development impact on community safety • Crime • Community cohesion	Not applicable to community safety or crime	N/A	N/A		
Is there any evidence that groups who should benefit do not? i.e. equal opportunity monitoring of service users and/or staff. If none/insufficient local or national data available consider what information you need.	No	N/A	N/A		
Does the service, leaflet or development/ policy have a negative impact on any geographical or sub group of the population?	No	N/A	N/A		
How does the service, leaflet or policy/ development promote equality and diversity?	Ensures that all staff are treated equally even when they are on nil pay.	All policies and procedural documents include an EA to identify any positive or negative impacts.			
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development explicitly include a commitment to equality and diversity and meeting needs? How does it demonstrate its impact?	The Policy includes a completed EA which provides the opportunity to highlight any potential for a negative / adverse impact.				
Does the Organisation or service workforce reflect the local population? Do we employ people from disadvantaged groups	Our workforce is reflective of the local population.				
Will the service, leaflet or policy/ development i. Improve economic social conditions in deprived areas ii. Use brown field sites iii. Improve public spaces including creation of green spaces?	N/A				
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development promote equity of lifelong learning?	N/A				
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce risks to health?	N/A				
Does the service, leaflet or policy/ development impact on transport? What are the implications of this?	N/A				
Does the service, leaflet or policy/development impact on housing, housing needs, homelessness, or a person's ability to remain at home?	N/A				
Are there any groups for whom this policy/ service/leaflet would have an impact? Is it an adverse/negative impact? Does it or could it (or is the perception that it could exclude disadvantaged or marginalised groups?					

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Does the policy/development promote access to services and facilities for any group in particular?	No			
Does the service, leaflet or policy/development impact on the environment	No			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During development • At implementation? 				
ACTION:				
Please identify if you are now required to carry out a Full Equality Analysis		Yes	No	(Please delete as appropriate)
Name of Author:	Katie Lee	Date Signed:		August 2017
Signature of Author:				
Name of Lead Person:	Mark Casson	Date Signed:		August 2017
Signature of Lead Person:				
Name of Manager:	Mark Casson	Date Signed:		August 2017
Signature of Manager				

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