

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT TO CARERS

There are a range of initiatives which are available to all staff but which may give additional support to staff also have care responsibilities.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Council employment:

- All vacancies are advertised on our website and in the job search bulletin which is sent to council offices and libraries.
- One point of reference makes searching for jobs simpler for those with limited time.
- Applying on-line saves on the cost of postage (important if several applications are being made and the household income is low).
- Applying on-line also saves time as personal, education & employment details need to be entered only once and are then retained on the system.
- The Haringey Website has full information for carers regarding support available to carers, flexible working & time off to deal with emergencies, benefits and respite breaks. Details can be found on either the Social Care and Health pages or on the Advice, Tax & Benefits pages (both areas are directly accessible from the Home page).

Child care Vouchers:

- Vouchers are available to parents in order to pay for registered childcare.
- Up to £55pw (£1,195pa) can be claimed in vouchers with the amount deducted from salary before tax, making the vouchers a tax efficient way of paying for care.
- Both parents are entitled to claim, which doubles the amount available to £2,390 p.a.

Flexible working:

- Fitting in work and care responsibilities often prevent people from working full time.
- Existing benefits may be affected if working hours exceed 16 hours p.w.
- The 2006 Work and Families Act gives employees the right to request flexible working. Options can include: term time work; compressed hours; part time work; annual hours or home working.
- Where it is practical to offer, flexi time is available with the option of arranging to start/finish work at a convenient time to fit in with care responsibilities.

Flexible retirement:

- An option for those taking on care responsibilities towards the end of their working life.
- Employees can request to work past 65 on reduced hours;
- Those aged 55 or over can apply to either reduce their working hours and to draw on part of their pension or
- To reduce to a lower grade and to make up the salary difference by drawing on their pension.
- The final decision to grant the request rest with the directorate as budget implications may arise.

Interest free travel loan:

- The cost of travel by public transport can take a large part of an employee's salary, especially if the individual is on a low grade and works part time.
- An annual ticket can often be cheaper than buying monthly tickets.
- An interest free loan is available for the annual amount with monthly deductions made from salary. This decreases the cost of travel and helps with budgeting.

Local Government Pension Scheme:

- Being sure of a guaranteed income on retirement is critical for those with sole care responsibilities.
- Expert advice is available from the in house Pensions Team on any aspect of pension entitlement and payment.

<h2>EXTERNAL SUPPORT</h2>

Financial planning seminars:

- Free lunchtime seminars are run by the Financial Services Authority for all staff covering all aspects of financial planning including saving, investments, mortgages & pre-retirement planning.
- Approximately 200 staff have attended the seminars which are always well received.
- The seminars are run by certified independent financial advisors who are available for advice outside work on any aspect of financial planning.

Simply Health (formerly HSA):

- Cash back Health and Dental plans are available at a reduced cost for employees, family members can also be included for the same monthly amount.
- Children under 18 are covered free under the Health plan.
- The plans can reimburse the cost of consultant or testing fees and cover both conventional and alternative medical practitioners.
- Being able to access health information quickly and for free can be important when caring for children.

Staff Discount Website:

- A free site for all staff is accessible from Harinet or from a home computer.
- Among others, discounts are available on entertainment; days out; utilities; gifts; shopping & insurance.
- The reductions offered can help carers either to reduce the cost of everyday items or to afford items which may otherwise be outside of their budget.

Leisure activities:

- Carers can often feel isolated and in need of a break.
- All employees can take advantage of a 10% reduction on the cost of any course arranged by the Adult Learning Service.
- Courses may relate to leisure, work training or hobby interest.
- The cost of entry to Haringey Leisure Centres can also be reduced by buying an Active Card in advance.

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