

## Childcare Voucher Scheme Guidelines

(for existing scheme members to pay for care of children up to the age of 16)

<sup>1. If you</sup>  
are not an existing member and wish to look into your childcare funding choices, please visit the HMRC website as follows:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know>

The University on-line childcare voucher scheme, for existing members of the scheme, is run on the University's behalf by the Sodexo Group. It is a scheme that gives University of Sussex employees<sup>2</sup> the option of taking part of their salary (up to the limits set out in the table below) in the form of electronic childcare vouchers. By being a member of the scheme you are sacrificing part of your salary for vouchers, this alters the terms & conditions of your employment, allowing the University to pay part of your salary in vouchers before Tax and NI is deducted, saving you money.

### **'Tax Free Childcare' scheme:**

As you will be aware, from April 2017 the government initiated the Tax Free Childcare (TFC) scheme. You have a choice to either remain a member, **or** join the Government's new TFC scheme. You cannot be a member of an employer provided scheme and the Government Scheme at the same time. If you decide to end your membership of the employer scheme and join TFC the onus is on you to advise the university that you are doing this. You must log into your Sodexo account within 3 months of joining TFC and request to end your membership of the employer led scheme.

HMRC have confirmed to the University (on 02/04/19) that it is not possible for parents to use both TFC and a childcare voucher scheme at the same time. Therefore, if your partner/the other parent of your child decides to join Tax Free Childcare, you are not permitted to stay in an employer provided scheme such as Sodexo. You would both need to join TFC (similarly, your partner/the other parent of your child would need to leave their employer run scheme (if applicable) if you decide to leave Sodexo to join TFC). It is therefore important to be clear on which scheme will provide the best benefit

for your child should you and your child's other parent no longer be in an amicable partnership.

Should you need to contact Sodexo direct to assist you in doing this, their customer care number is 0800 328 7411.

### **HMRC rules regarding employer provided childcare voucher schemes:**

Government guidelines state that employees **currently** in the childcare voucher scheme can temporarily cease their deduction. They have a 12-month window to re-join the scheme provided they did not join TFC in the meantime and did not leave the employment of their current employer.

Employees who have been in the scheme within the last 12 months, but are currently not receiving vouchers, will have until 11 months after their deductions stopped to re-join, provided they did not join TFC in the meantime and did not leave their current employer during that period. In addition, if, following a request to leave the scheme, employees have asked Payroll for a refund of some or all of the vouchers remaining in their Sodexo account, the value requested will impact on the amount of time the employee has to re-join the scheme.

To clarify: if an employee had received vouchers in their December pay but requested zero vouchers in their January pay (by requesting it by the 31<sup>st</sup> December deadline) and this continued for 6 months until June payday but they also asked for a refund of 3 months' worth of vouchers, then this takes the employee to 30<sup>th</sup> September/9 months in terms of their number of months at zero when adding up the 12 months in which they can have to re-join the scheme --

Since 1 February 2018 the minimum voucher order has been £5 per month. This was implemented due to the Government's introduction of Tax Free Childcare, which explicitly stated that in order to be considered an active member of an employer scheme your monthly salary sacrifice deduction could not be at zero.

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- Childcare vouchers are free from tax and National Insurance contributions for the value of vouchers you order. The amount you save depends on the rate of tax and NI you pay.
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- Co-operative Mid Counties who operate the Childcare facilities on campus is a registered childcare provider.

For detailed information, visit <https://uk.childcare-vouchers.sodexo.com/>. For the helpline <https://uk.childcare-vouchers.sodexo.com/>.