

June 2023

Staff Benefits

We know that many people are struggling with the high costs of living, and as a result, we are in the process of reviewing what benefits we offer to staff. We want to support our staff to save money, so here are some of the new things we have implemented...

Arriva Travel Club

We're happy to let you know that we've joined Arriva Travel Club. This scheme allows staff to purchase monthly tickets by direct debit at a discounted rate. While discount rates vary depending on the type of ticket you require, it is usually around 20%. Tickets purchased through the app can be used for an entire month (longer than the standard 4 weeks) meaning you only have to purchase 12 a year, instead of 13. If you select the 'paper ticket' option when setting up your account, you can also benefit from up to 2 children travelling free on weekends and bank holidays when accompanied by the ticket holder. You can find out more, and sign up for Travel Club tickets, by clicking [here](#).



Stagecoach Discount

We're pleased to have partnered with Stagecoach to offer staff up to 10% discount on 7-day and 28-day Mega Rider tickets. Staff are required to visit [this webpage](#) to download the Stagecoach mobile app which enables access to the discount. For more information and instructions on how to join the scheme, click [here](#).



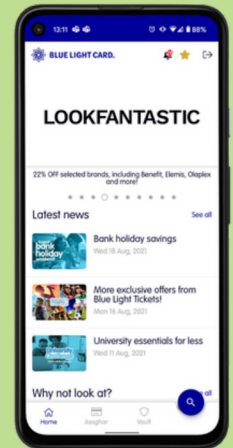
Fix Your Bike Voucher



If you primarily cycle to work, you can claim a £50 Giant Bicycles gift voucher that can be used against cycle services and repairs in-store. This scheme is limited to one voucher per staff member per year. If you require a voucher, please contact **HR@ofsl.org.uk**

Blue Light Card

A Blue Light Card allows social care staff to access thousands of discounts from online and high street retailers. Savings can be made on things like clothing, insurance, days out, restaurants and even holidays. These cards cost £4.99 and last for 2 years. Options will reimburse staff for the purchase or renewal of a Blue Light Card. All you have to do is sign up **here**. You then need to send an **Expenses Claim Form** and a copy of your receipt into the office, addressed to Lisa Goulding (you can ask your TL to do this with their returns). Your money will then be reimbursed into your bank account.



Health Assured (Employee Assistance Programme)



Our Employee Assistance Programme through Health Assured allows our staff to access a free 24-hour confidential helpline. Support is available in a number of areas from dealing with stress and anxiety, to accessing counselling and financial well-being advice. This support is also available for family who live with staff, who can also use the helpline.

Further support is available through an online health portal that can be accessed **here**. Through this portal, you can access more information about what Health Assured can offer, along with resources about physical health, emotional health, wellbeing and more. Use the following login to access the portal - Username: Wirral, Password: Council .

Cycle to Work



Cycle to Work allows staff to spread the cost of buying a new bike and cycling equipment over a year, allowing them to save money by not paying tax or national insurance. If you join the scheme, you can choose the bike or equipment that you want from a wide range of shops (up to £1000) and pay this back through payroll deductions over 12 months. You can find out more information and apply for the scheme [here](#) (you will need your payroll number which can be found on your payslip).

Learn to Drive

Learn to Drive enables staff to take driving lessons at a discounted rate. Eligible staff source their own driving instructor. Options then purchase a block of lessons (worth up to £900) upfront, paying the fee directly to the instructor. Staff then repay 75% of the cost through payroll deductions and Options contributes the other 25%. To apply for this scheme, you need to have passed your 6-month probation and have the approval of your Team Leader. If eligible, you can send your application to hr@ofsl.org.uk explaining why you want to take part in the scheme.



What's Next?

We are currently working on a number of other benefits that will be implemented in months to come, including a 'fix your bike scheme', credit union partnership, and exploring other potential travel discount schemes.

If you have any other ideas for staff benefits that you would like us to explore please contact sophie.kervin@ofsl.org.uk

Other money-saving ideas

Medicash

Medicash is a low-cost medical insurance package which provides cash back towards healthcare costs. Medicash offers 5 different tiers of insurance from bronze to platinum, with the most basic package costing just £6.95 a month. Medicash payments can be made via payroll deductions. Even better, your Medicash cover extends to up to 2 children under the age of 16. Children receive the equivalent of half your coverage (e.g. if you can claim up to £50 in optical fees, children are covered for £25 each). To find out what benefits are available through Medicash, click [here](#). If you're interested in joining Medicash, please contact HR@ofsl.org.uk.



Prescription Payment Certificates

If you have to pay for a lot of prescriptions, Prescription Payment Certificates can be a great way to save money. A 3-month PPC costs £31.25 and will save you money if you need 3 prescribed items in 3 months. An annual PPC costs £111.60 and will save you money if you need 11 prescribed items in a year. To learn more about PPCs and to find out how to apply click [here](#).



Concerts for Carers

Concerts for Carers allows social care staff to join ballots for free concert and event tickets. People pay £4.50 to enter a ballot which is refunded if an entry is unsuccessful. You can sign up for Concerts for Carers [here](#). To sign up, you need to select 'Health and Social Care' as your organisation, and will need a picture of your payslip.



TopCashback

TopCashback is free to join and could earn you money back from online purchases. You can get cashback on purchases from 1000s of retailers such as Amazon, ADSA, Sainsbury's and Tesco. All you have to do is set up an account [here](#) and search for the retailer you want, click the 'get cashback' button and shop as normal. Once the purchase has been complete you will get cashback credited to your account. To find out more about how it works, click [here](#).



Too Good to Go



Too Good to Go is an app that aims to reduce food waste. By registering for the app, you can access 'surprise bags' at a reduced cost from local restaurants and supermarkets. These bags contain food that would otherwise be thrown away at the end of the day including groceries, meals and pastries. Participating stores include Starbucks, Costa, Greggs and Aldi. All you have to do is download the app, sign up, claim your surprise bag and collect it from the restaurant/store. You can find more information [here](#).