UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
Childcare Voucher Scheme

A childcare voucher scheme is available to help working parents at the University of Sussex to pay for the care of children up to the age of 16\(^1\) and for all types of registered or approved childcare, eg after school clubs, holiday activity clubs, etc.

The SayCare Pass on-line childcare voucher scheme is run on the University's behalf by the Sodexo Group. It is a scheme that gives the University of Sussex employees\(^2\) the option of taking part of their salary (up to the limits set out below) in the form of electronic childcare vouchers. By completing the registration form 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.

The maximum amount of vouchers you will be allowed to take is £243 per calendar month although since 6 April 2011 this has been restricted to £124 per calendar month for new joiners to the scheme who pay tax at the higher rate and to £97 per calendar month for new joiners to the scheme who pay additional rate tax.

Once you have registered with the scheme (and the University has accepted your application) electronic vouchers will be credited to your account each month from the next available pay day\(^3\), which you can then use to pay your childcare provider directly. Please note that the University’s scheme does not allow new joiners to the scheme to request paper vouchers.

To qualify for the tax and NI savings you must stay in the scheme at least one year from the date you joined the scheme, except under exceptional circumstances.

For detailed information, visit [www.saycarevouchers.co.uk/index](http://www.saycarevouchers.co.uk/index). For the helpline call Freephone 0800 328 7411.

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\(^1\) Vouchers can be used until 1 September following the child’s 15\(^{th}\) birthday, or 1 September following their 16\(^{th}\) birthday if they are registered as disabled.

\(^2\) Employees must receive a regular salary throughout a 12 month period which are both required by the Revenue and Customs (who have agreed the Scheme). Staff on zero hours contracts are therefore not eligible to join the Scheme.

\(^3\) If your application is made by the last day of the month you will be able to access your vouchers at the end of the following month.
To join the voucher scheme
Click on the link below to register. The key 129870Y at the end of the link ensures that you are associated with the University’s scheme.

When you apply on line the amount that you enter is the monthly figure. The frequency is monthly.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>By (date)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>You create an individual account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>You add the details of your carer(s) to your account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>The University orders vouchers for you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>The vouchers show up as credit in your individual SayCare Pass account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>You can pay your carer(s) directly from your SayCare Pass account</td>
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To leave the voucher scheme
Log into your individual Sodexo account and request to leave the scheme. Please note that to qualify for the tax and NI savings you must stay in the scheme at least one year from the date you joined the scheme, except under exceptional circumstances.

To make changes
To change the amount of vouchers you receive or to change your childcare provider, log into your individual Sodexo account and edit the details. Any changed amount will take effect at the end of the following month.

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Frequently asked questions

What are childcare vouchers?
Childcare vouchers are a Government initiative to help working parents. The most common method of offering childcare vouchers is through your salary; parents elect to take part of their existing salary as childcare vouchers. The University then orders your vouchers and you receive them electronically on your payday. You then use these e-vouchers to pay your carer directly online.

How does the scheme work?
You register on-line completing a form which alters the terms and conditions of your employment allowing the University to pay part of your salary in vouchers which you use to pay for childcare. Vouchers are credited to your internet account on your normal University payday. You can then pay your childcare provider with the vouchers and they redeem them through SayCare Pass.

How do I use the SayCare Pass vouchers?
You can make payment directly to your carer via your online account. They redeem them through SayCare Pass who runs the scheme. All carers must be registered with Ofsted in order to be able to accept childcare vouchers. If your carer is regulated by a national body such as Ofsted they should have a registration certificate. If this isn’t the case, they should contact the national body and ask for one.

How can the voucher scheme save me money?
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.

Is there a limit to the amount of vouchers I can have?
For new joiners to the scheme up to 5 April 2011, the amount of vouchers you can take is capped at £55 per week (£243 per calendar month). Your net pay after vouchers should also remain above the Lower Earnings Level (£109 per week from 6 April 2013). This is to ensure you always pay the minimum amount of National Insurance on which a number of state benefits, including Statutory Sick Pay, are dependent (except during maternity leave when you are in receipt of Statutory Maternity Pay only or nil pay).

For new joiners to the scheme from 6 April 2011, the amount of vouchers you can take will be restricted to £28 per week (£124 per calendar month) if you pay tax at the higher rate and to £22 per week (£97 per calendar month) if you pay additional rate tax. This will mean the tax savings are approximately even for all tax payers.
What if my childcare costs vary every month?
You can keep the vouchers for when you have a more expensive month e.g. during the school holidays.

Do I need to nominate a childcare provider as soon as I join the scheme?
No. You can join the scheme without having a registered carer, and you can start collecting or saving up vouchers as soon as your child is born in anticipation of future childcare needs.

Can anyone apply for vouchers?
To take childcare vouchers you must be either the parent or step-parent of the child, or the child lives with you and you have parental responsibility for that child. Childcare vouchers can be used to pay for care up to 1 September following the child’s 15th birthday, or 1 September following their 16th birthday if the child is disabled. You must use the vouchers to pay for registered or approved childcare.
You can find out more on the HM Revenue & Customs website.

Can my partner and I both apply for vouchers?
Yes. The amount of vouchers that a parent or legal guardian can take must be within the current Revenue limits, irrespective of how many children you have. So you could maximise your savings by ensuring that you both take part in a childcare voucher scheme. If your partner’s employer is not currently running a scheme, call the Sodexo helpline on 0800 328 7411 and ask for more information or visit www.saycarevouchers.co.uk/index to send a message to their employer.

Can I apply for vouchers for more than one child?
You can pay for as many children and carers as you wish with your vouchers, but the amount of vouchers that can be taken must be within the current Revenue limits. If both parents claim vouchers, the benefit is doubled.

Can I use any kind of childcare?
You can only use the vouchers to pay for registered care. Many carers are now registered and are happy to take childcare vouchers. If your carer is not registered, information is on the Sodexo website on how to join - join here.

What if my carer doesn't know about the scheme?
Most carers do know about voucher schemes. If not already registered, they need to provide their details to SayCare Pass who will set up automatic payment into their bank account.
Can I use more than one carer?
You can pay as many carers as you wish providing they are registered with Sodexo Motivation Solutions. If you wish to add a carer to your account, you can call the Sodexo helpline on 0800 328 7411 and they will send you the registration document. Vouchers come in various denominations which enables you to split payment to as many carers as you use.

Can I change my childcare provider?
Yes. Log into your individual Sodexo account and make the changes on line. This will also fulfil your responsibility to inform the University of any change of carer which is required under the guidelines for childcare.

How long do I have to sign up for?
Membership of the University’s childcare voucher scheme is for a minimum of one year.

Can I leave the scheme at any time?
No. To qualify for the tax and NI savings you must stay in the scheme at least one year from the date you joined the scheme, except under exceptional circumstances e.g. separation, divorce, marriage, birth, death or pregnancy. Other exceptional circumstances may be agreed on an individual basis with Human Resources.

How do I leave the scheme?
To leave the scheme, log into your online account and remove your order for vouchers (but please note that you must stay in the scheme for a minimum of one year). Also please bear in mind that you will also be considered a new joiner if you wish to rejoin the scheme after 12 months.

Do vouchers have an expiry date?
SayCare Pass vouchers last for 15 to 18 months, so you can save them up for times when you may need extra childcare throughout the year.

What do I do if my vouchers have expired?
Sodexo has in the past undertaken to replace vouchers for a further 15 to 18 months. Contact them to find out more.

Will taking childcare vouchers affect my maternity pay?
Yes. Maternity pay is calculated on salary on which National Insurance is payable so your maternity pay will be based on your sacrificed salary if you are in the childcare voucher scheme when you go on maternity leave.
What happens to my vouchers if I am in the scheme when I go on maternity leave?

If you are already a member of the childcare voucher scheme when you start your maternity leave you may choose to remain in the scheme for the duration of your maternity leave. The University will pay half the cost (you pay the other half) while on half pay (if option 2 of the maternity scheme is chosen). The University will pay the full cost when you are receiving SMP only and will continue to do so even if you are no longer receiving occupational maternity pay or SMP.

How will my pension be affected?

USS and USPAS are happy to accept vouchers as notional pay. NHS pension rules stipulate that childcare vouchers are deducted before pension is deducted. NHS pension scheme members will therefore have a lower pensionable salary. SGSS contributions are deducted before vouchers. If you are contributing to a personal pension scheme you are unlikely to be affected. The impact on S2P (formerly SERPS) of a single year’s reduction in National Insurance contributions is likely to be negligible.

How will my overtime be calculated?

The University will continue to calculate work benefits on gross salary, so your overtime/other benefits will not be affected.

Will my claim for Working Tax Credit (WTC) be affected?

There may be an effect on the childcare tax credit element of the WTC. It is advisable to contact the WTC helpline on 0845 300 3900 prior to applying for childcare vouchers.

Will the childcare services located on the University campus accept the vouchers?

Yes, the Co-operative Mid Counties is a registered childcare provider.

For detailed information, visit [www.saycarevouchers.co.uk/index](http://www.saycarevouchers.co.uk/index). For the helpline call Freephone 0800 328 7411.

Human Resources
April 2013