

# STAFF BENEFITS

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## STAFF BENEFITS

**At Eastleigh Borough Council, we are proud of having an inclusive and enjoyable culture; by creating a welcoming and supportive work environment and ensuring competitive benefits, we want to communicate to staff that they are valued.**

This booklet is a summary of the key benefits for our staff, which are regularly reviewed to ensure we remain competitive and are an employer of choice within the area.

We recognise that staff are passionate about their work and are the key to our success. Therefore, reward is an important part of our strategy to maintain engagement and high performance.

Our key staff behaviours are:

- Working with others
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Customer service
- Communication
- Personal improvement
- Taking responsibility and achieving results.

### Equality & Diversity

Fairness and equity are central to our organisation. We aim to employ a diverse range of staff representative of our local community. We have strong and active links with a wide range of community groups.

We operate a zero tolerance approach to any form of harassment and bullying and have in place a range of policies to ensure we comply with all statutory requirements and create a supportive and inclusive working environment.

# WORK / LIFE BALANCE

We know staff need to balance work with family/other commitments and so we have developed a number of initiatives to try and help get the balance right.

- **Flexi-time** – subject to service needs, most areas of the council operate core and flexible working hours. This means that staff can start and finish at times that fit with their home life. Employees can also accrue up to 16 hours flexi-time per month (pro rata for part time staff) which means they can take additional time off (subject to manager approval).
- **Annual leave** – (please see the adjacent table). In addition to the statutory bank holidays, one extra day is given (normally around Christmas / New Year).
- **Flexible working** – any member of staff may request flexible working to enable them achieve a better work/life balance. All requests are fully considered and reviewed against the service need. This includes requests for part time working and compressed hours.

Annual leave entitlement (FTE) per year		
Grade	Basic	After 5 years
Up to and inc. Grade 4	22 + BH	27
Grades 5-7	24 + BH	27
Grades 8-11	25 + BH	28
Grades 12	27 + BH	30
13 & above	30 + BH	30

- **Flexible retirement** – under our Flexible Retirement Policy, employees can request to continue working on fewer hours or on a lower grade with less responsibility whilst accessing their pension. We will consider all such requests where there is a business case to support this.

- **Unpaid leave and/or career break** – we will consider requests for extended unpaid leave e.g. to return to studying/caring responsibilities/extended travel etc.
- **Compassionate leave** – we will give up to 5 paid days compassionate leave, which may be authorised by an employee's service lead in cases of bereavement.
- **Maternity leave** – as well as statutory maternity pay, we have an enhanced scheme: 6 weeks @ 90% pay / 12 weeks @ half pay + statutory maternity pay / 21 weeks @ statutory maternity pay / 12 weeks unpaid leave (depending on eligibility). We also offer full pay for KIT days.
- **Adoption leave** – staff are provided with the same support/terms and conditions as maternity leave.
- **Paternity leave** – 2 weeks leave full pay (occupational paternity pay) for one week, statutory paternity pay for second week, subject to eligibility.
- **Shared parental leave** - employees can share up to 50 weeks of leave between themselves and their partner, subject to specific criteria.
- **Parental leave** – each parent/adopter can take a total of 18 weeks parental leave for each of their children, up to their 18th birthday (up to four weeks per year). The leave is unpaid, and subject to eligibility criteria.
- **Dependants unpaid leave** – we know that sometimes staff need to take last-minute leave to deal with an emergency e.g. issues with child care arrangements or emergency situation with a dependent. Up to a half day or one full day can be taken. Dependants leave is unpaid.
- **Homeworking** – we support occasional homeworking, where this is possible in the job role and service area. Homeworking must be agreed with the line manager.



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We want to continually deliver outstanding services to our customers. This is achieved through the expertise, innovation and efforts of our staff.

The excellent reputation of our staff is what sets us apart from others. In support of this we place a heavy emphasis on continuous professional development and provide career opportunities, wherever possible, for those who are passionate about what they do.

Opportunities for training and development take a variety of forms: informal and formal; internal and external. We aim to give staff the best opportunity to maximise their potential.

**Induction** – we have a comprehensive induction process to welcome all new staff to the council so you will feel fully supported as you start your new role.

**Training & development support** – during the course of employment, staff have access to a whole range of learning and development tools which include:

- Access to online development courses and elearning
- Professional development
- Leadership and management development for those in appropriate roles

- In-house courses
- Opportunities for personal development e.g. mental health awareness training, resilience training, assertiveness training
- Mentoring and coaching
- Project involvement
- Presentation opportunities.

### **People performance framework**

– employees are provided with regular performance and wellbeing conversations with their manager, leading to four quarterly performance reviews. These are seen as a two way conversation, enabling employees to feedback and self assess as a key part of the process. This will also inform the performance related pay assessment.

**Management development** – we are committed to developing team leaders and managers, through relevant HR training and support, and development training. We recognise the importance of ensuring management capability within the council, for both managers and staff.

**Payment of agreed annual professional subscription** – we actively support membership of professional bodies and will therefore fund one annual subscription, per person, where this is relevant to the role.

**Apprenticeships** – we offer a wide range of apprentice opportunities in a variety of services. Apprentices are provided with structured support through a mentor and buddy system, provided with on the job training whilst gaining a qualification at competitive rates of pay.



## HEALTHY LIVING

**Staff health and wellbeing (both mental and physical) are of great importance to us. We ensure regular wellbeing conversations take place between managers and staff, beginning on induction through our wellbeing questionnaire. The Council has signed the Time to Change Pledge as we recognise the value in being open and supportive about mental health. By signing the Pledge, we want to change attitudes to mental health so all our employees feel able to discuss mental health in a supportive and safe environment. We encourage staff to be healthy and active, and offer the below benefits to enable staff to take care of their mental and physical health.**

### **Free Employee Support Line –**

we provide access to a free, confidential and independent staff helpline/ counselling service. Staff, if they meet relevant criteria, are able to access up to six counselling sessions. Counselling is available on both work and non-work matters.

The service also offers free legal and financial advice and a dedicated manager's support line.

**Free Body MOTs** – the council provides free 'Body MOTs' for staff (normally every 2 years) and can provide a range of advice on diet, exercise and healthy living.

### **Discounted access to dental and health plans**

– we offer voluntary access to a dental scheme and cash plan through various providers at preferential rates. Staff can pay for this directly from their salary.

### **Occupational health support**

– we use the services of an independent Occupational Health service. This service can provide staff with a range of advice and support, including help to return to work after a long-term or serious health issue.

**Adjustments to the workplace** – where staff require a change in work pattern or support due to a health condition, we will consider all reasonable adjustments that can be made to support the employee. This will depend on the service area, job role, medical advice and the individual's circumstances.

### **Free eyesight tests and contribution towards glasses**

– For staff who are required to use Display Screen Equipment (computers/tablets etc) or drive on behalf of the council, we will pay for an eye-test every two years and contribute up to £45 for glasses where these are specifically required for DSE usage.

### **Support for mental health**

– we are committed to promoting mental health wellbeing and have signed up to the Time to Change Pledge. We are committed to raising awareness, having open conversations and ensuring support for mental health.

Length of EBC service	Our scheme
During 1st year	1 months` full pay and (after completing 4 months` service)/ 2 months` half pay.
During 2nd year	2 months` full pay/ 2 months` half pay
During 3rd year	4 months` full pay/ 4 months` half pay
During 4th/5th year	5 months` full pay/ 5 months` half pay
After 5 years	6 months` full pay/ 6 months` half pay

### **Support for people with disabilities/ long term health conditions**

– we are proud to be a Disability Confident organisation. We aim to support all employees who have a disability to ensure they can access all facilities and opportunities and are not disadvantaged in any way so they can perform to the best of their ability in their role.

**Stay Connected;** Our Staff Hub is the place where all information and news is posted including the weekly blog from our Chief Executive.

**Sick pay** – sickness and attendance is carefully monitored and staff are expected to achieve a high levels of attendance. However, we understand all of us may be sick at some point in our lives and will need support. We offer a comprehensive occupational sick pay (up to six month's full pay after five year's of service).

### **Subsidised membership to Eastleigh's state of the art Leisure Centre**

– staff receive a 30% discount off full membership at Places Leisure Eastleigh and 50% discount for off peak classes, courts and pitches.

### **Subsidised health activities**

**throughout year** – we offer a range of activities to support wellbeing such as lunch time yoga/Barre Fusion/Virgin Pulse Global Challenge or access to council schemes.

**Shower time** – up to 15 minutes paid time for staff who cycle or run to work to shower or change.

### **Time-off for visits to dentist/Drs/ hospital appointments**

– up to one hour paid time is given for these appointments, including travel time, where authorised by line managers (longer may be provided for hospital appointments).

**Discounted physio** – 10% off Go Physio for staff.

**20% discount at Sensib holistics** – centre for complementary therapies based at The Point.

## PENSION SCHEME

### Local government pension scheme:

- the local government pension scheme is a defined benefits scheme. This means you will know exactly how much pension benefit you will receive when you retire and it's value is not subject to the stock market or investments like most other pension schemes. For each year of service 1/49th of annual pensionable pay will be put into your pension account. This is increased each year in line with the rate of inflation as defined by the consumer price index
- Additional Voluntary Contributions - these are a tax efficient way to increase your pension by paying extra contributions

- Employees can take voluntary retirement from age 55 (with a reduction in benefits)
- The scheme offers an ill health pension from any age where an employee is considered incapable of work due to ill health. This is subject to a number of different rules
- a choice of tax free lump sum when you retire
- redundancy cover from age 55
- a death-in-service lump sum of three times your final pay
- a widow's, widower's, civil partner's or nominated co-habiting partner's pension
- children's pensions.

## TRAVEL

**Access to Co-Wheels Car Club** – pool cars are available for staff use during the working day (and preferential rates for private evening/weekend use).

**Subsidy on some local buses** – contact [sustainability@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@eastleigh.gov.uk) for further deals.

**SW Trains Season discount** – contact [sustainability@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@eastleigh.gov.uk) for further details.

**Cycle to work scheme** – a cost effective salary sacrifice way to purchase a bike over an agreed period

**Loans** – for staff who meet relevant criteria, we offer loans for rail season tickets to work, cars or motor cycles.



## DISCOUNTS AND SAVINGS

**Food and drink** – a variety of discounts are available at local restaurants and coffee shops.

**Discount and benefit sites** – access to sites providing discounts on lifestyle products and entertainment.

**On-site staff restaurant** – offering a range of hot and cold food and drinks, catering for a range for dietary requirements. Staff are also entitled to a discount (25%) at the Woodland Café at Itchen Valley Country Park. 10% discount at The Point & Berry Theatre Café Bar.

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## COMMUNICATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

We aim to communicate with staff regularly and to keep them informed of what is occurring within the council, using the below methods. We are also interested in what our staff have to feedback to us to enable the council to continually improve it's processes and ways of working.

- Staff Conference
- Team meetings
- Regular 1-2-1s
- Intranet - The Staff Hub, with all matters relating to employment and general council updates
- Joint Consultative Committee (senior council managers and trade unions) - held every two months
- Staff survey – every two years
- Econnect - weekly electronic staff newsletter.

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## STAFF RECOGNITION

**Honoraria** – one-off payments for outstanding work.

**Performance related pay** - We are committed to achieving high standards of service and driving performance is a key feature of our pay and reward strategy. Staff are regularly assessed as per our performance framework, and staff can progress through their pay grade based on annual pay assessments linked to the performance framework.

**Long Service Awards** – Recognition of service with Eastleigh Borough Council. Employees may choose a gift or receive a monetary award.



