



# Schools' HR Bulletin

## Autumn Term 2023

### For All Staff

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Welcome to the Schools' HR Bulletin for autumn 2023 (post-summer edition) for all staff. This is the first HR Bulletin of the 2023/24 Academic Year. The HR Bulletin is aimed at providing relevant information to all staff on a half-termly basis.

**Note** - any supporting documents referenced in this edition of the HR Bulletin can be accessed in the Schools' HR Bulletin area of West Sussex Services for Schools (WSSfS) by your school's Headteacher, Bursar or School Business Manager.

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## Update To The Burgundy Book

The Burgundy Book is a national agreement between the five teacher unions and the national employers (NEOST).

It sets out the conditions of service for schoolteachers in England and Wales and has been updated for the first time in over two decades.

It is relevant to around half a million teachers and is an essential reference for all schools – both maintained and academies – with the majority choosing to incorporate the agreement into their teachers' contracts of employment.

Its main provisions relate to notice periods, sick leave and pay, and maternity leave and pay.

The 2023 edition updates legislation and clarifies terminology **without amending the application of any of the terms and conditions of employment contained in the Burgundy Book.**

The Joint Commentary by the National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers and the Five Teacher Organisations detailing the changes, can be found in Appendix IX on pages 59-63 of the 2023 update.

A copy of the Burgundy Book is available on the Pay and Conditions page of [West Sussex Services for Schools](#) (login required). Contact your headteacher, school business manager or bursar if you require a copy.

## LGPS Annual Benefit Statements Now Available

Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) can now access their 2023 Annual Benefit Statement via the [Hampshire Pension Service Member Portal](#). This statement shows how your pension is building up and acts as a snapshot of your pension benefits up to 31 March 2023.

For more information on the annual benefit statement, including frequently asked questions and videos, please visit the [Hampshire Pension Services website](#).

If you are unable to access the Member Portal, need help logging on or if you need your statement in an alternative format, please email [pensions@hants.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@hants.gov.uk) for support.

**Note:** a short presentation has been published alongside this edition of the Schools' HR Bulletin on West Sussex Services for Schools which will provide you with more information about the annual benefit statements. Contact your headteacher, school business manager or bursar for a copy if you did not receive one.

## Launch Of New Neurodiversity Staff Group

**Any staff identifying as neurodiverse, or that think they might be, are invited to join the Council's new Neurodiversity Staff Group.**

The umbrella term, neurodiversity, is used to describe people that think, process information, and interact with the world differently. It is thought that 1 in 7 people are neurodiverse and we want to celebrate and harness the many strengths that come with neurodiversity.

Like all of our staff groups (see list below) this will be a safe and supportive place where you can:

- Meet with colleagues with similar lived experiences.
- Give and gain support.
- Work in partnership with the County Council to improve the working environment for everyone.

It's important for us that the workplace is somewhere where you can be your authentic selves and flourish without feeling that you have to hide your differences.

For more information about the new neurodiversity staff group, please contact [Jennie.May@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Jennie.May@westsussex.gov.uk) in the first instance.

### Other West Sussex County Council Staff Groups

There are six other staff groups that recognise and value West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) diverse workforce, including the **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff group**. All staff groups meet regularly at different locations across West Sussex to discuss issues that members may be facing. The groups welcome new members all year round. The full list of Staff Groups is as follows:

**BAME** - this group supports Black, Asian, and other Minority Ethnic groups, providing a resource of support, safety, innovation, and collaboration for members across WSCC.

**Email:** [BAMEstaffnetwork@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:BAMEstaffnetwork@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Carers** - this group provides support to all carers by working in partnership to change the culture of our organisation, so their needs are acknowledged and acted upon.

**Email:** [CarersStaffGroup@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:CarersStaffGroup@westsussex.gov.uk)

The **Disability Staff Group** (DSG) is a relaxed, informal group of employees dedicated to supporting staff who work for, or with, WSCC who consider themselves to have a disability. It aims to help ensure WSCC is a compassionate and inclusive place to work for people with disabilities.

**Email:** [Disability@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Disability@westsussex.gov.uk)

The **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Staff Group** is a relaxed, informal group of employees dedicated to supporting LGBT staff and

ensuring that WSCC is a supportive, inclusive place to work for LGBT people.

**Email:** [WSCCLGBTStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:WSCCLGBTStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Mental Health Staff Group (MHSB)** - the aim of this group is to embed a more positive and proactive approach to mental health within our organisation and culture.

**Email:** [MHSB@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:MHSB@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Women in the Workplace** - this group aims to address some of the barriers and issues affecting women, ranging from dealing with inappropriate office banter and building confidence and negotiation skills, through to influencing policy and process to ensure that women do not feel disadvantaged.

**Email:** [women.intheworkplace@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:women.intheworkplace@westsussex.gov.uk)

## Latest On Local Government Pay - Update

### Background - Reminder

For workers in local government and schools, pay and other terms and conditions are determined by a negotiating body called the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services. The NJC is made up of representatives from trade unions (UNISON, GMB and Unite) and the employers (local authorities in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland).

### The NJC Pay Award - General

The NJC pay award affects support staff in schools and is negotiated at a national level between the employers and the trade unions. It is normally effective from April 1st.

### The NJC Pay Award – 2023/24

In summary, the situation at the time of writing (August 23rd) and based on the information available is as follows – this is of course subject to change:

- On **January 30th** the national trade unions lodged their pay claim which included an increase in pay of the Retail Price Index (RPI) 10.7% plus 2.0%.
- On **February 23rd** the national employers made a full and final offer which included an increase in pay of £1,925 with effect from April 1st, 2023, on all NJC pay points (pro rata for part-time employees).
- On **March 8th** the national committees of each trade union rejected the employers' final offer.
  - UNISON's ballot of its members for strike action ran from **May 23rd to July 4th**. After the results of the ballot, UNISON communicated that it would not ask its members to take industrial action and would talk to GMB and Unite to resolve the pay dispute.
  - On **May 3rd**, it was announced that Unite members had rejected the pay offer. Unite conducted a formal ballot for industrial action on a timetable similar to the one followed by UNISON with members in some local authorities voting for strike action. As of August 23rd, Unite's follow-up plans were not available.
  - On **May 5th**, it was announced that GMB members had rejected the pay offer. GMB said, "If negotiations aren't reopened and a revised offer made, we will move to industrial action ballots in some areas."

- On **July 27th**, GMB confirmed that it will conduct disaggregated industrial action ballots of its NJC 'Green Book' members in some councils and schools with strike ballots between **September 12th** and **October 24th**.
- On **August 17th**, the national employers reaffirmed the pay offer as "full and final", in response to a letter received from the NJC unions on August 16th, in which they sought an improved pay offer.

### More Information

Further details of the claim made by the trade unions and the employers' response can be found on the [Local Government Association \(LGA\) website](#). The latest information on the 2023/24 pay negotiations can be found on the [South East Employers website](#).

### Next Steps

Given the latest information, it is likely that the NJC pay award for 2023/24 will continue to remain unresolved for at least a couple more months. We will of course keep schools informed of key developments through the normal communication channels.

## Latest Editions Of Your Health Newsletter From Health Partners

The July and August 2023 newsletters can be viewed online by clicking on the images shown below (use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge for best results).



Links to back copies of the *Your Health* newsletter published during 2023 can be found in previous editions of the Schools' HR Bulletin. In addition, links to all 12 editions of the *Your Health* newsletter published in 2022 are available in a compilation document. All can be found on West Sussex Services for Schools alongside the Schools' HR Bulletins.

## A Guide To Healthy Eating From Health Partners

To supplement the article on Mindful Eating and Nutrition in the July edition of *Your Health*, Health Partners published their [digital guide on Healthy Eating](#) on Vimeo which we hope school employees will find informative and helpful.

## Gro Health - Free Digital Weight Management Service

Are you looking to improve your health and lose weight? [Gro Health](#) is a free digital weight management service available to anyone who lives or works in West Sussex.

The Gro Health programme, which supports people who wish to lose weight and maintain a healthier lifestyle, is a new service for 2023, being offered by West Sussex County Council in addition to a range of existing free weight management services available via West Sussex Wellbeing and the NHS.

It offers personalised support for up to 12 months and helps people achieve self-selected goals through access to education, recipes, on-demand exercise classes, group, and one-to-one coaching.

Gro Health can be accessed online using a phone, tablet, or computer, without the need to download any special software. It is available in 19 languages and can also be accessed via free apps available for both iPhone and Android.

Free access to Gro Health is available to those who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Adults aged 18+ (no upper age limit) or registered carers aged under 18.
- Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25 to 40 (see the [BMI calculator on the NHS website](#)).
- Residents who live or work in West Sussex and/or registered with a GP in West Sussex.
- Do not have high blood pressure or diabetes diagnosis.

To find out about more, visit the [West Sussex Wellbeing website](#) or fill out the registration form on the [Gro Health website](#).

## **West Sussex Choices – Contacting Employee Benefits Scheme Providers**

Do you know who to contact if you have an enquiry about one of our many employee benefits? We're currently finding that lots of questions are being sent to the wrong teams that unfortunately can't help.

To ensure there are no delays in getting your questions answered, you should contact the suppliers directly. Here's a reminder of the providers available to employees in schools, what they offer, and their contact details.

### **Cycle To Work from Sodexo**

Hire a bicycle and all the safety equipment from WSCC. The bicycle can be used for your commute and for leisure.

If you have any queries about the scheme please contact Sodexo on 01908 303552 or email [queries@westsussexchoices.co.uk](mailto:queries@westsussexchoices.co.uk)

### **Shared Cost AVCs from AVC Wise**

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) are a tax-efficient way to save for retirement.

They provide an opportunity to supplement your Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and build up an additional retirement fund. You could take this as a tax-free lump sum, or it can be used to help you retire early.

If you have any queries about the scheme, please contact AVC Wise on 01252 959 779 or by completing [their online contact us form](#).

You can find more information on all of the above schemes and more, by visiting the [West Sussex Choices website](#).

**What If They Can't Help?**

If you have a query that can't be answered by the scheme providers, please contact the HRCST Employment Services Control Team via email at: [HRCSTEmploymentServicesControlTeam@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HRCSTEmploymentServicesControlTeam@westsussex.gov.uk)



## West Sussex Choices – Health Plans From Simply Health



**Our cash plan helps you look after your whole body by giving you money back towards your healthcare expenses.**



As part of your employee benefits you have access to fast, easy, and stress-free health cover. Our plans give you the ability to keep on top of your physical and mental wellbeing by allowing you to get money back for a range of healthcare treatments.

### **Money Back Towards Your Healthcare Costs**

Claim money back on Dental, Optical, Chiropody, Physio and more. Once you've had your appointment and sent us your claim, you should have your money back into your account within 3-5 days\*.

\*Check [T&C's](#) for full claiming details – [Benefit Table here](#)



### **Women's Healthcare Support**

Our Health Plan provides benefits that support women throughout their lives and helps to enhance health and wellbeing. Take a look at our flyer [here](#) supporting women's health.



### **Healthcare In The Comfort Of Your Home**

We've got just the tool to bring you the help and advice you need when you need it. Our Simplyhealth app gives you access to 24/7 virtual GP services as well as counselling and advice, and initial physio triage services all available at your convenience.



### **For More Information About Your Employee Plan**

- Call our friendly advisors on: 0330 102 5325
- Email us on: [consumersales@simplyhealth.co.uk](mailto:consumersales@simplyhealth.co.uk)

**Note:** don't forget to tell us you work for West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to get your employee plan.

## West Sussex Choices – Health Cash Plan From BHSF



Health cash plans mean employees can manage the cost of everyday healthcare. This insurance provides cover that meets the demands and needs of someone who wishes to have help towards covering everyday healthcare costs such as dental check-ups and treatment, eye tests and glasses or therapy fees.

All you need to do is pay a monthly premium and then you can claim cash back on the above healthcare services (plus much more!).

The great news is there is no need for a medical and we typically authorise over 90% of eligible claims within 2 working days of receipt.

The full list of the benefits of this plan can be found in the policy details.

Things you need to know:

- You need to be aged 16 or over and be a resident in the United Kingdom to apply\*.
- Your policy may have qualifying periods, exclusions and / or limitation. Please check the policy terms and conditions to ensure you understand what these are prior to applying and when you can start to claim.
- Premiums for this policy are paid by convenient monthly instalments.
- Insurance Premium Tax is included at the applicable rate.
- No advice will be given by BHSF in relation to the purchase of this product.

So, what do you need to do now?

- **Step 1** - decide which level of cover you want and complete your details. If you choose an applicable policy remember to include the details of your partner and any children you wish to cover. There may be age restrictions for your dependent children. This information will be contained within the policy.
- **Step 2** - read and accept the declaration and important information - we'll need this before your sign up can be completed.
- **Step 3** - once sign up is completed, we'll send you a link so you can create your own online account. Here you'll find all your account details. You can also use this link to claim for some benefits online.

Remember if you are not completely satisfied with the policy, simply tell us in writing within 14 days of the date you receive your welcome pack and we will cancel it. And provided a claim has not been paid, we will refund any premium we have collected.

Have any questions regarding the set-up of your health cash plan? No problem, give us a call on 0121 454 3601 and we'll be happy to help.

Click on [BHSF Health Cash Plan](#) for information and details on how to apply. **Note:** the following application code may be required - **WW0569**.

\* BHSF cannot accept applications from addresses outside of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom does not include the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.

## West Sussex Choices – September Discounts



**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PLATFORM**

# YOUR SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Wickes**

**LIMITED TIME!**  
Save 8% on Wickes eVouchers when you purchase before midnight 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (usually 6%).

**SAVE 8%**

**airbnb**

Fancy a quirky little getaway? Browse Airbnb for a great deal and 7% off on top with an eVoucher.

**SAVE 7%**

**Morrisons**

Save 5% on all your essentials at Morrisons, and even fuel at their petrol stations with an eVoucher.

**SAVE 5%**

**COSTA COFFEE**

Holidays are coming... Get your spiced lattes with 10% off when you purchase a Costa eVoucher.

**SAVE 10%**

**Uber Uber Eats**

Save 5% on taxis and takeaway delivery when you purchase an Uber or Uber Eats eVoucher.

**SAVE 5%**

**Nothing caught your eye?**  
Pick from hundreds of other great deals on your platform.

Want to find out more?  
Visit: [www.westsussexchoices.co.uk](http://www.westsussexchoices.co.uk)  
Call: 01908 303531



Full terms and conditions apply - visit your benefits website for full details

## West Sussex Choices - Competition

**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PLATFORM**

# SAY WHAT YOU SEE COMPETITION

**DO YOU LOVE A BRAIN TEASER?**

From 11th – 15th September 2023, we'll be dropping a daily clue for you to guess the retailer from your platform. Get it right for the chance to win up to £250 EVERY DAY!

**5  
DAILY CLUES**

**DAILY TOP PRIZE  
£250  
EVOUCHER**

**10x DAILY  
RUNNERS UP  
£25  
EVOUCHER**

**LOG IN EACH WORKING DAY  
TO SUBMIT YOUR ANSWER!**

Want to find out more?  
Visit: [www.westsussexchoices.co.uk](http://www.westsussexchoices.co.uk)  
Call: 01908 303531



Full terms and conditions apply - visit your benefits website for full details