

# A to Z of rewards and benefits

Information and  
guidance for staff



**Our employees are at the heart of everything we do. You help us to achieve our vision of ‘better homes, friendlier communities – together’.**

We offer a wide variety of rewards and benefits for our staff, with a real focus on recognition within the organisation. This A-Z guide lets you know about all the rewards and benefits you can receive as part of our team.



## **Annual leave**

All of our staff enjoy a generous leave entitlement of at least 28 days per year, pro rata, plus bank holidays. You can add to this by purchasing up to three extra days a year. You can also take up to two days each year to volunteer in the community.

## **Annual awards**

Everyone is eligible to win an annual award. These awards recognise our shining stars and the employees who are committed, work together and are customer-focused.

## **Adoption leave**

An employee must have a minimum of six-months' service to be eligible for adoption leave. They are entitled to 52 weeks' leave in total – 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave and 26 weeks' additional adoption leave.

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## **Car parking**

Free car parking is available for staff at our head office (but please note that spaces are limited, so we cannot guarantee that one would be available).



## **Cycle to work scheme**

You can buy a new bike through our salary sacrifice scheme – which pays for the bike upfront and deducts the cost from your wages over a 12 month period – to save on tax and National Insurance! Speak to HR to find out how.

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## **Dependency leave**

We recognise that employees with carer responsibilities may need support to combine work with care. All employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours for this purpose – up to five days per year.

## **Dress-down Fridays**

The first Friday of every month is dress-down day, when employees in the office are allowed to dress in casual clothes!

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## **eCards**

Our eCards make sharing thanks even easier. There a number of messages to choose from, so you can send a card thanking your colleagues and sharing recognition for a job well done, for representing our values, or even just to wish them a happy birthday. These can be shared on our ‘social recognition wall’ for everyone to see.

## **Eyecare**

Everyone's job involves technology, and we know that using screens can sometimes put strain on your eyes. That is why we subsidise eye tests for all employees, as well as contributing towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses.

## **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

The mental health of our staff is just as important as their physical health. Our EAP offers you the chance to talk to a professional outside of the organisation. If you have any problems, whether they are at home or work, financial or personal, our free service is there to help.

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## **Flu jabs**

Prevention is better than cure, as the saying goes. We agree, and so we offer free annual flu jabs.

## **Fruit**

Fruit is delivered to our office every Wednesday for employees to enjoy a healthy snack!





## **Gateway Rewards**

Through our online benefits portal, Gateway Rewards, we are able to offer you a huge range of exclusive commercial discounts, cashback deals and instant vouchers which all help make your pay go even further.

## **Gym membership**

We are pleased to offer all Watford Community Housing employees a discount on gym membership at all Everyone Active gyms nationwide.

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## **Health cash plan**

We understand that there are some things which aren't covered by the NHS, such as new glasses or urgent dental treatment. That's why we offer a health cash plan. For a monthly fee these items are covered so you can spread the cost across the year without having to worry about paying the full cost up front.

## **Health and safety**

Watford Community Housing has a Health and Safety Manager who provides support to all employees. We also have a number of fire wardens, first-aiders and mental health first-aiders, and we ensure relevant training and assessments are available to all.



## **Involvement and communications**

We encourage all employees to use our intranet, Grapevine, which is updated regularly in order to provide you with essential information. We have annual staff conferences, quarterly briefings and 'Tea and Coffee' sessions with our Chief Executive, Tina Barnard, to keep staff informed and engaged, and a staff gateway, who meet to discuss how we can make further improvements for you.

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## **Jury service**

Called to be a juror? No problem! We will pay for up to one week of jury service.

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## **Kitchens**

Every floor of Gateway House has a kitchen for all employees to use. This includes hot water, free tea, coffee and hot chocolate, a dishwasher and a fridge to keep your lunch in.

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## **Life assurance**

Your family are important to us, so if anything happens to you, we ensure that they receive a payment of four times your salary. We hope we don't have to do this, but it's good to know it's there should the worst happen.

## **Learning and development**

We are proud to invest in our employees' continuous development. Contributing to your progression brings benefits to both the organisation and your future employability. We offer a range of learning opportunities via e-learning, external conferences and workshops, and we will pay for one job-related professional fee or subscription per individual in any tax year.

## **Long service awards**

On your five-year anniversary of employment, you will receive an extra three days of holiday for that year. You will receive further benefits every five years, in recognition of your long service.

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## **Mileage**

Lots of our employees work out and about in our communities and we know that getting around costs money. We pay mileage at the generous rate of 52p per mile – plus any parking and congestion charges!



## **New ways of working**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we introduced our new ways of working which means that our staff are empowered to decide the best way to meet the needs of their role. We want to be able to meet the needs of our customers from anywhere, this includes our main office at Gateway House, our community hubs, remote working at home or in a café, and other spaces that we share with partner organisations.

## **New employee induction**

Starting a new role can be daunting, so we try to make your first day, week and month as easy as possible. We ensure you are introduced to all your colleagues and make sure you know where you are with a tour of our office.

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## **Occupational health**

When an injury or illness is affecting your ability to come into work, or is stopping you performing your duties, our occupational health service can help by providing qualified medical advice.

## **Office space**

Our core office hours are 8am-6pm. Office space is available to all employees, including break-out areas, desks, training rooms and other meeting spaces.

## **Pension**

We offer a generous and competitive contributory pension scheme, which exceeds the minimum legal requirements. In order to help you plan for your retirement, we offer a range of contribution rates. As your employer, we will put in between 6% and 11% depending on what you choose to put in yourself.

## **Performance-related pay**

We're committed to recognising colleagues who perform well, helping us to deliver great services and achieve our goals. We reward great performance through bonuses and consolidated pay awards.

## **Parental leave**

We are committed to providing a supportive and caring work environment for all employees who have parenting responsibilities.

All employees are entitled to paid maternity or paternity leave, and in some circumstances may also be entitled to unpaid parental leave for children under the age of 18. Entitlement will be dependent on length of service. Full details are available on Grapevine or by speaking to HR.





## **Qualifications**

Watford Community Housing will support you if you wish to study for a professional qualification relevant to your role. A minimum of six months' continuous service is required to make a request.

## **Quarterly awards**

Our quarterly awards recognise our employees for going above and beyond.

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## **Recognition**

We recognise employees in many ways and for lots of different things. Whether you've gone out of your way to help a customer or improved a process or experience, we're always looking to shout about the things you do best.

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## **Smart pay (SmartTech/SmartFit)**

We give you the opportunity to spend up to £400 on SmartTech or SmartFit items and pay this back interest-free! SmartTech covers a wide variety of products from Currys PC World, while SmartFit includes a range of health club and gym memberships.

Through our salary sacrifice schemes, employees can also pay for things like a new bike or extra holiday days by having it deducted straight from their salary – making it a more tax-effective way to pay!

## **Sick pay**

We recognise that you might be absent from work for good reason, such as ill health or injury. Depending on service length, we offer between two weeks' and six months' full pay.

## **Staff conference**

Our annual staff conference brings the organisation together to revisit the achievements of the past year, as well as looking ahead and considering our objectives for the future. It's a great chance to enjoy spending time with colleagues.

## **Season ticket loans**

If you buy a season ticket to get to work, then you can get an interest-free loan to help pay for it!

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## **The lounge**

So that you can enjoy a well-deserved break, we provide a comfortable and relaxed eating area which includes microwaves, toasters, refreshments and a TV – this is on the ground floor of our Gateway House office.

## **Time off in lieu (TOIL)**

If you work additional hours, you can have them back as TOIL (with the agreement of your line manager).

## **Total rewards statement**

Every month you will have access to your 'total rewards statement' which shows you all the benefits you receive into one place. This sets out your pay, pension contributions, performance-related pay and benefits.

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## **Unpaid leave**

All employees with at least two years of service are eligible for unpaid leave. This is for a minimum of three months and a maximum of two years.

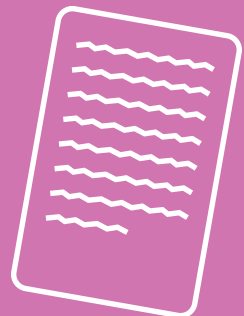
## **Uniform**

If you are based in the office there is no formal dress code, while employees such as GRT members, scheme officers or estates officers are provided with smart and comfortable uniforms.

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## **Volunteering**

All our employees are entitled to use two days of work a year to go and do some volunteering – fully paid!



## Wellbeing

We want you to enjoy life, both inside and outside of work. Our employee benefits offer includes access to a 'wellbeing hub' through Gateway Rewards – which has things like healthy recipe ideas, exercise tips and mental health advice – free, independent counselling through our employee assistance programme and a wellbeing strategy which covers training and webinars.

## Wheel of fortune

Do you have a good performance rating? If so, you'll be entered into a draw each quarter in which one lucky employee will be able to spin the wheel of fortune and win a prize.

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## Xmas

We run a range of activities in December as part of our Festive Fridays to help you get in the festive spirit, as well as raising money for charity. Every year we hold a Christmas raffle to raise money for Peace Hospice Care, have a Christmas jumper day, host quizzes and much more! Employees do not need to work on Christmas day unless they are on call.

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## Yearly appraisals

Appraisals take place before the financial year ends, in the first quarter of the year. A positive appraisal can lead to a performance-related bonus and consolidated pay award, but it's also a chance to look at your development for next year.



**You!**

We believe every employee is a benefit to Watford Community Housing! You are important because you help us achieve our vision of 'better homes, friendlier communities - together!'



**watford**  
community  
housing