CREATE A BENEFITS PACKAGE AS INDIVIDUAL AS YOU

Newchoices

The Flexible Benefits scheme from New College Durham 2024/25

New College Durham

newdur.ac.uk

Welcome

This is the eighteenth year of newchoices and the College continues to offer a range of useful benefits. This year's scheme is packed full of benefits and discounts to be enjoyed by staff at the College including Cyclescheme, Will Writing Discount, Tusker Car Scheme and Holiday Buy, offering exclusive discounts for our staff and in some cases extending the benefits to immediate families.

As part of the Colleges ongoing commitment to mental health and well-being we implemented a heavily discounted gym rate for the last benefit year. There was a fantastic take up on this benefit and I am hopeful staff have felt both the physical and psychological impacts of going to the gym. Due to the resounding success we have decided to continue the benefit at the discounted rate cost of £25 for the year (as opposed to the old price of £192 per year).

Whether you've been with us for the whole 18 years and not yet found something that's right for you or you're a new member of staff at the College we are always open to feedback, please send us your suggestions for ways the scheme could be made better.

We're proud of our offer of a flexible remuneration package and will continue to look at further developments to respond to staff feedback.

Andrew Broadbent
Principal & Chief Executive

The newchoices brochure is designed to introduce you to the Flexible Benefit scheme at New College Durham. It has been created to ensure you understand the offers available to you and how to select them. If you have any questions that are not covered within this brochure, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the HR team.

What is newchoices?

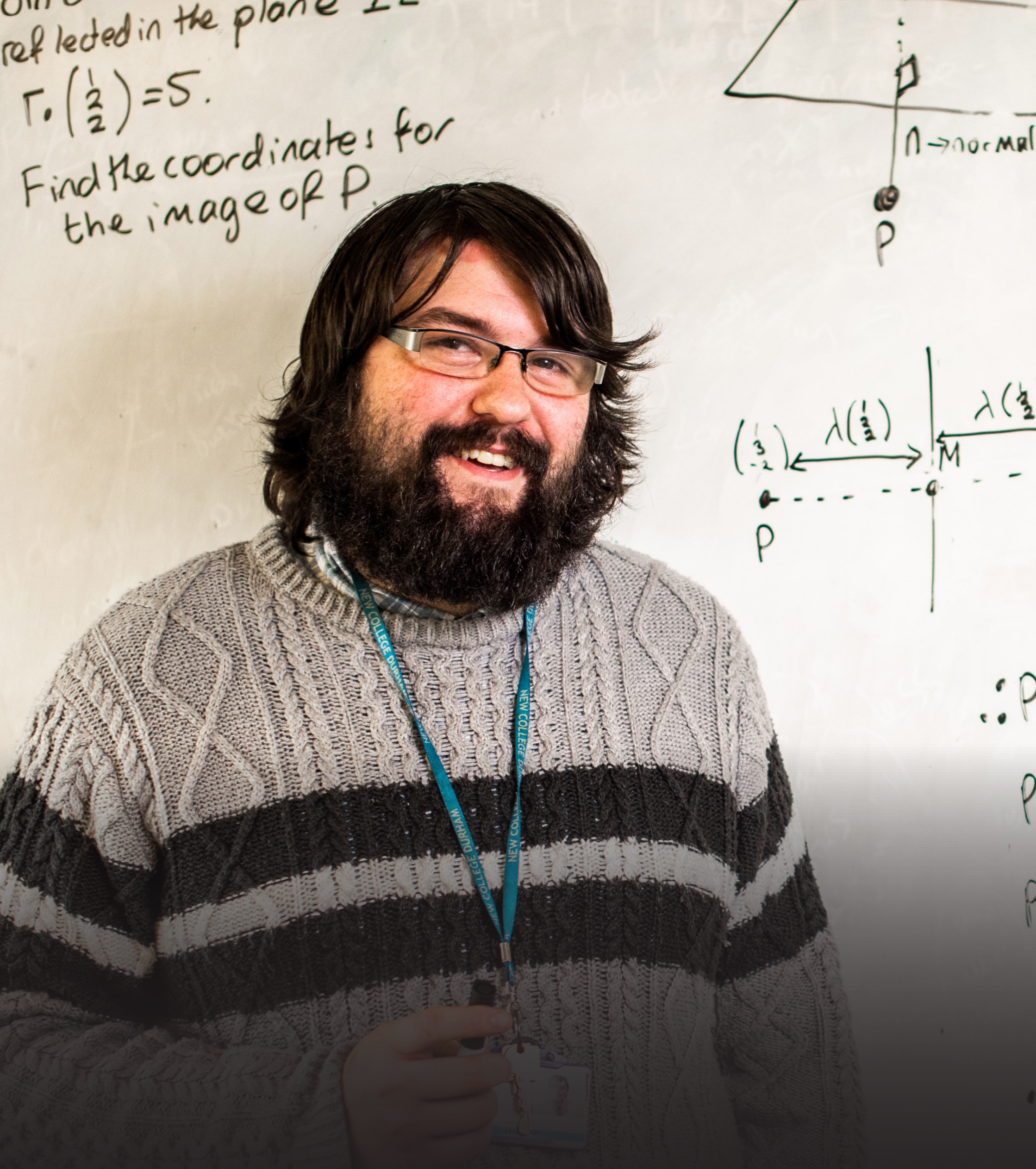
newchoices is the Flexible Benefits Scheme at New College Durham which allows you to choose the make-up of your individual benefits package. newchoices allows you to select the benefits that are relevant to your lifestyle and benefit from New College Durham's buying power. In addition, where possible we have structured benefits to be tax and National Insurance efficient.

The scheme runs annually allowing you to make selections throughout June. For 2024/25 the election period will run for a three week period commencing on Monday 10 June 2024 until Friday 28 June 2024. Benefits will then be set for a 12 month period from 1st September 2024. Each year you will be able to renew your benefits relevant to your lifestyle and also enabling you to take advantage of new benefits that may be added to newchoices in future years.

newchoices provides you with a number of benefits that you can select. Benefits are available to select at various levels, enabling you to include your partner and/or children where relevant and allowing you to pay for these on a monthly basis directly from your salary.

Who is eligible for newchoices?

Every effort has been made to include as many staff within the scheme as possible. As a result, flexible benefits will be available to all substantive staff and fixed term staff who have a contract for more than 7.4 hours per week (ie. a full day), and who will meet the qualifying salary. If you are not eligible to participate in newchoices, but you are still interested in receiving some of the newchoices benefits please contact the HR department who will be happy to discuss your options.



Benefit Election Period

10 June 2024 - 28 June 2024

Benefits Go Live

1 September 2024

The launch of the benefit election period will be communicated through an email to all staff.

Your newchoices

As an employee at New College Durham, you now have access to a range of benefits. Please note any elections that were made in 2024/25 will automatically be re-set to zero (ie no benefits selected). If you wish to take these benefits for the forthcoming year you will need to ensure that you notify HR accordingly using the agreed form. Some of the benefits available to you are operated via salary sacrifice, subject to HMRC approval. This means that an amount is deducted from your salary in exchange for benefits of the same value. Because your pay is reduced, you pay less tax and national insurance. Read on to find out which benefits are tax and National Insurance efficient.

The newchoices scheme includes:

Buying Additional Holiday	Dental Insurance	Will Writing Discount
Cycle2Work	Gym Membership	Charitable Donation
Car Benefit Scheme	Independent Financial Advice	Pension
Pension AVC's	IT Equipment Giveaway	

LGPS members

Where a LGP scheme member foregoes remuneration to purchase additional holidays, there is no longer a requirement for that individual to pay pension contributions on those holidays purchased. This means that anyone in the LGP scheme that purchases additional holidays will have less pensionable pay during the year, which will affect their pension as this is now calculated on Career Average Earnings. However, the individual can choose to apply to pay an Additional Pension Contribution (APC) to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during this period.

Your flexible benefits...

Buying Additional Holiday

In addition to your existing annual leave you may wish to buy extra time off. All employees are able to purchase up to three additional weeks of holiday directly from their gross pay.

Holiday is calculated in line with the standard formula used by New College Durham. **Before selecting this benefit employees are required to gain authorisation from their line manager to ensure that their department will be able to accommodate the request.** All holiday requests will be done in line with college policy.

You make a saving on Tax and National Insurance liability

Gym Membership (Steps2Fitness)

Gym membership is offered at a heavily subsidised rate, allowing you to help maintain a healthy lifestyle at a minimal cost.

Gym membership entitles you to unlimited use of the Steps2Fitness facilities at New College Durham. In line with the College's ongoing commitment to Health and Wellbeing the 2024/25 rate will continue at the reduced rate which is to cover just the costs of induction and set up.

IT Equipment Giveaway

As part of the College's commitment to sustainability a scheme has been created to allow for staff to access free IT equipment as part of the College decommissioning process. All equipment will be in working order. Availability of equipment will change throughout the year, with opportunities being available to apply throughout the benefit year.

Cycle2Work (Cyclescheme)

You can keep fit and healthy, save money and do your bit for the environment by taking advantage of the Government's Cycle2Work initiative.

You can purchase a bike of your choice and your choice of equipment. New College Durham will pay for the cost of the bike and then reclaim this amount from you in 24 monthly deductions. You will be effectively hiring the bike from New College Durham. However you may purchase the bike at the end of your 24 month hire period for a nominal fee.

You can decide how much you want to spend on your bike and equipment up to a maximum of £5,000. You can choose your bike from a number of local bike stores.

Salary Sacrifice

Salary Sacrifice Cycle2Work is operated via salary sacrifice. Therefore you make a saving on tax and National Insurance liability'

Dental Insurance (UNUM)

Dental Insurance enables you to cover the cost of your dental treatment providing different levels of cover to suit everyone's needs.

You are able to access your choice of NHS or private dentist and can claim back the cost for a range of crowns, fillings and other reatments depending on the level of cover you select. You are able to select from three levels of cover and also include your partner and/or your children.

Car Benefit Scheme

Your Car Benefit Scheme from CPC Drive in partnership with Tusker is a new way for New College Durham employees to run a car. A fixed monthly amount is taken directly from your gross salary and in return, you get the use of a brand new electric or plug-in hybrid car.

As with all College benefits the deductions for any scheme can't take employees earnings below the national minimum wage threshold.

Will Writing Discount

As a member of New College Durham staff you are eligible to discount from the Colleges legal services provider, Forbes Solicitors, for their will writing services. Further details on this benefit can be requested from Human Resources.

Independent Financial Advice

To provide you with important guidance around investments and financial security. Independent Financial Advice through newchoices provides you with free access to a list of approved Independent Financial Advisers in their local area, available all year round.

Go to www.unbiased.co.uk for further information*

Note: **Although access to IFA details are provided through newchoices, no specific IFA is endorsed by New College Durham. Employees must assess and choose the appropriate IFA for their own circumstances*

Pension

It is never too early to start planning towards your future. We provide you with the opportunity to pay into a Pension Scheme, which depending on your role at New College Durham, will either be the Local Government Pension Scheme or the Teachers Pension Scheme.

We encourage our employees to plan ahead. All staff are encouraged to join a Pension Scheme, which provides a great opportunity to save towards retirement. New College Durham makes employer contributions in addition to the contributions you make into your pension.

Charitable Donation

Give As You Earn provides you with the opportunity to make regular donations to a worthy cause in a tax efficient way. Tax free contribution to a good cause through your salary. You can select from any of the listed charities to donate to on a monthly basis, including:

Against Breast Cancer
Age Concern
Alzheimer's Society
BLISS
British Heart Foundation
British Red Cross
Children with Leukemia
Cancer Research
Disability North
Durham Wildlife Trust
Marie Curie
NSPCC
National Trust
Oxfam
Prostate Cancer
Pure Trust
RNLI
RSPCA
St Cuthbert's Hospice
WWF

AVC WISE (LGPS members only)

We are now working with AVC Wise to facilitate our salary sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (Shared Cost AVC) scheme.

Shared Cost AVCs are a cost-efficient way to top up your pension pot, providing flexibility, security, and value. Not only will you benefit from the available Income Tax and National Insurance contribution savings, but you'll also have the option to amend your contribution amount as and when you need to. For example, a £100 contribution will only cost a basic rate taxpayer £66.88! Further information regarding this benefit will be shared in due course.

NB – Due to Teachers Pension rules and regulations, this benefit is only available to LGPS members.

National insurance & Tax

The benefits within the newchoices scheme have differing tax and National Insurance treatment. Some are free of liability whilst some are directly liable.

The majority of benefits provided through newchoices are purchased via net pay and consequently have no further tax or NI liability. Holiday Buy and Cycle2Work scheme are operated through salary sacrifice. This means that you exchange part of your gross pay in return for the employer's agreement to provide the benefit.

To see which benefits are operated through net pay and which are operated through gross pay please see the table. Remember benefits operated through gross pay save you on tax and National Insurance contributions.

newchoices benefit	GrossNet
Buying Additional Holiday	Gross
Cycle Scheme	Gross
Dental Insurance	Net
Care Benefit Scheme	Gross
Gym Membership	Net
Independent Financial Advice*	n/a
Charitable Donation**	Net
Pension**	Net
IT Equipment Giveaway*	n/a
AVC Wise	Gross

* These benefits are not charged through newchoices.

** This benefit although taken from your net pay recieves tax relief.

Life events

You will be able to modify certain benefits during the newchoices scheme year if you experience a 'Life Event'.

A 'Life Event' is the term used to describe a significant event in your home or work life. Such events would include marriage, the birth of a child, promotion or military mobilisation. The benefits you are able to change as a result of a Life Event are dependent on the specific event.*

If you experience one of the following Life Events and you wish to make changes to your newchoices, please contact the HR department via email at human.resources@newdur.ac.uk.

Once confirmed, an election period will be opened for you to amend your benefits on the 1st of the following month. Any changes you make will take effect from the 1st of the month thereafter.

Examples of Life Events

Marriage/Civil partnership
Divorce/Legal separation
Becoming pregnant
Death of child
Birth/adoption of a child

Death of spouse/partner
Promotion/demotion
Child passes eligibility age for a benefit
Moving home
Military Mobilisation

* The amount of change you can make will vary dependent on the life event and the rules of each benefit provider

FAQs

What is Salary Sacrifice?

Salary Sacrifice is an agreement whereby your salary is reduced by a given amount in return for New College Durham providing a benefit of equivalent value. The reduction in salary means you pay less tax and National Insurance and actually save money on the cost of the benefit compared topaying from your net pay.

When benefits are taken as a reduction of the salary, does this affect other rights based on salary including my pension?

Although benefits such as Childcare Vouchers, are provided through salary sacrifice, any other rights based on salary will remain unaffected and will be based on your 'Notional Salary' (ie. your salary before salary sacrifice deductions).

If I don't opt in, when do I have the next opportunity to join?

If you do not opt in during the election period, you will have to wait until the next annual enrolment (typically in June each year) to select your benefits, unless you have a life event.

Will my benefit simply continue if I don't do anything?

Your current benefits will all be reset to zero (ie. no benefits selected). If you want your benefits to continue you will need to ensure that you notify HR accordingly using the agreed form.

What happens if I leave?

If you leave New College Durham all benefit entitlements and cover will cease on the date of termination. However some benefits may have been taken before you leave and if this occurs the company will deduct any outstanding amount from your final salary.

Further information

If you have any questions regarding the newchoices scheme please contact a member of the HR department. We are also keen to hear of your feedback and views. If you have any positive comments or suggested improvements you would like us to consider then please contact a member of the HR team.

Annual enrolments will typically take place in June. Benefits will go live from 1st September - the start of the newchoices flexible benefits year.

New College Durham is committed to using providers of a high quality and if you should have any problems with any of the providers please contact the HR department.