



# Improving your financial wellbeing

## Practical help from Unity Schools Partnership

We understand that making the most of your money can be an important part of your overall wellbeing. That's why we've put this guide together to signpost you to helpful tools, resources and reminders which build on the support we already offer.





## Helping you stay on track

Our staff wellbeing provider, LifeWorks has a Financial Wellbeing Toolkit including:

- Assessing your financial wellbeing
- Budgeting
- Debt
- Saving
- Planning for the future
- Financial change
- Stress, money, and emotions

Financial wellbeing—often referred to as “financial wellness”—is now understood to be as important as physical and mental wellness. It’s about more than having money in the bank. Financial wellbeing means feeling in control of your finances, being able to handle a financial setback, and being on track to achieve your financial and life goals (including having a plan for retirement).

This toolkit offers resources to set you, and those who may depend on you, on the path towards financial security. You'll find resources on understanding the basics of budgeting and cash flow, saving, getting out of debt, and being prepared for an emergency or changed financial circumstances.

To Speak to LifeWorks: 0800 169 1920 (any time, 24/7, 365 days a year).

Video for information on the scheme:

<https://spark.adobe.com/video/oFxeHrFP782zq>

URL: <https://login.lifeworks.com>

Please check your email inbox (where you have your payslips sent) for instructions on how to sign up to LifeWorks or contact

[Hrhelpdesk@unitysp.co.uk](mailto:Hrhelpdesk@unitysp.co.uk) with any queries

## What is Help to Save?

Help to Save is a type of savings account set up by the government for people on working tax credits or Universal Credit.

If you open an account, you can pay in a maximum of £50 a month for four years. For every £1 you save, you'll get a bonus of 50p.

If you save the maximum amount of £2400 over four years, you'll receive an additional bonus of £1200 from the government, meaning your savings would total £3600.

How does the scheme work?

If you use Help to Save, you can get a bonus from the government at the end of your second and fourth years of saving.

- After your first two years, the bonus will be half of the highest balance you've saved in your account
- After four years, the bonus is half of the extra money you pay into your account above the highest balance you saved in the first two years

If your highest balance doesn't increase, you won't earn a bonus in your fourth year. You're allowed to withdraw money from your account, but if you take money out this will make it harder to earn the largest possible bonuses.

You can also close your account at any time, but if you do so you'll miss your next bonus – and you're not allowed to reopen your account.

After four years your account will be closed, and the money saved will be transferred into your bank account.

Who is eligible?

You can apply for a Help to Save account if you're either:

- Entitled to Working Tax Credit and receiving Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit payments; or
- Claiming Universal Credit and your income from earnings in your last monthly assessment period was £542.88 or more

Also, if you and your partner have a household award of tax credits or Universal Credit and are eligible for Help to Save you can each open individual accounts.

Even if your circumstances change and you stop receiving Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit, you can still save into your account and receive bonuses.



**How to open your account**  
You can open an online account, or check your eligibility within minutes. You can do this at [gov.uk/helpertosave](https://gov.uk/helpertosave) or through the HMRC app.

If you don't have access to the internet call 0300 322 7093 and Help to Save advisers will help you set up an account.

## Marriage Allowance

Marriage Allowance is a tax benefit designed for married couples and civil partners where one person earns less than £12,500 a year.

If you earn less than the £12,500 Personal Allowance, then you can transfer £1,250 of your allowance to your spouse, as long as they earn between £12,501 and £50,000.

By doing this, your spouse will pay less tax because their personal allowance will go up.

It can save your family up to £250 a year.



## Check if you can claim flat rate expenses for uniforms.

Find out what work-related expenses you can claim tax relief on for clothing if you're an employee.



What a uniform is:

A uniform is a set of specialised clothing that's recognisable as identifying someone as having a particular occupation, for example nurse or police uniforms.

A uniform is not clothing of a similar design or colour that you must wear for work (for example, a bank who wants to promote its corporate image by requiring all counter staff to wear a shirt or blouse in their corporate colours).

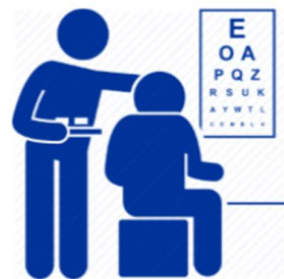
You can claim tax relief if you wash the uniform given to you by your employer, unless your employer provides a laundering service, and you choose not to use it and wash your uniform yourself.

For more information, please visit [Check if you can claim flat rate expenses for uniforms, work clothing and tools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-claim-flat-rate-expenses-for-uniforms-work-clothing-and-tools)

## Free Eye Test Vouchers (subject to eligibility)

A voucher for a free eye test can be obtained by emailing HR ([hrhelpdesk@unitysp.co.uk](mailto:hrhelpdesk@unitysp.co.uk)) or you can visit an optician of your choice and claim back via staff expense form.

Eligibility: All employees of Unity Schools Partnership that regularly use a digital screen continuously for an hour or more per day.





### **Tax-free childcare**

Tax-free childcare is a government scheme to help eligible working families save on their childcare costs. Eligible working parents and carers can open online childcare accounts – just like an online bank account – to pay registered childcare providers directly. For every £8

paid into an account, the Government will add £2 (£4 for a disabled child), and the total amount in the account can only be spent on childcare. The maximum that can be paid into an account each year is £8,000 and the maximum that will be received from the Government is £2,000 (£4,000 for disabled children.) Parents can open an individual account for each child they pay childcare for. For example, if you have three children, you can open three tax-free childcare accounts and deposit up to £8,000 into each. Only a parent or carer can set up a tax-free childcare account, however money can be deposited into the account by parents, friends, family and employers.

For further information, please visit [Tax-Free Childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare)

### **What is the Energy Bills Support Scheme?**

- The Energy Bills Support Scheme will deliver a £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households to help with energy bills from October 2022.
- There is no need to apply for the discount, Energy suppliers will deliver this support to Great Britain households with a domestic electricity connection over 6 months from October 2022.



### **Who is eligible for the Energy Bills Support Scheme?**

- All households with a domestic electricity connection in Great Britain are eligible for the £400 discount. There is no need to contact energy suppliers concerning this.

### **How will you receive the discount?**

The £400 discount will be administered by suppliers and paid to consumers over 6 months with payments starting from October 2022.

Households will see a discount of £66 applied to their energy bills in October and November, rising to £67 each month from December through to March 2023.

The discount will be provided on a monthly basis regardless of whether consumers pay monthly, quarterly or have an associated payment card.

Breakdown of the delivery process for each payment method:

- **direct debit customers** will receive the discount automatically as a reduction to the monthly direct debit amount collected, or as a refund to the customer's bank account following direct debit collection during each month of delivery
- **standard credit customers** and **payment card customers** will see the discount automatically applied as a credit to standard credit customers' accounts in the first week of each month of delivery, with the credit appearing as it would if the customer had made a payment
- **smart prepayment meter customers** will see the discount credited directly to their smart prepayment meters in the first week of each month of delivery
- **traditional prepayment meter customers** will be provided with redeemable vouchers or Special Action Messages (SAMs) from the first week of each month, issued via SMS text, email or post. Customers will need to take action to redeem these at their usual top-up point.

For more information visit

[Energy Bills Support Scheme explainer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)



### Basic bank accounts:

A basic bank account (without credit facilities e.g., overdrafts, loans, credit cards) is a transactional bank account which is fee-free for standard operations. The 9 largest personal current account providers are designated to provide basic bank accounts that comply with the Payment Accounts Regulations 2015. These firms

are: Barclays UK, The Co-operative Bank, HSBC UK, Lloyds Banking Group (including Halifax and Bank of Scotland brands), Nationwide Building Society, NatWest Group (including RBS and Ulster brands), Santander UK, TSB and Virgin Money (formerly Clydesdale & Yorkshire Bank). Since the start of 2016, the 9 largest personal current account (PCA) providers in the UK have been legally required to offer basic bank accounts that are fee-free for standard operations, including a failed payment, removing the risk that customers run up unintended overdrafts. Basic bank account customers can use the same services (e.g., ATM, telephone / internet banking and Post Office counter access) as a financial institution's other PCA customers. For more information please contact your bank or one of those listed.

### Local Government (support staff only) 50/50 Pension scheme

The amount you pay is based on your salary and when you are enrolled into the LGPS, you will be placed in the 'main section' of the scheme, pay the full rate and build up the full amount of pension, which is currently 1/49th of your pensionable pay.



If your actual pensionable pay is:	You pay a contribution rate of:
Up to £15,000	5.5%
£15,001 to £23,600	5.8%
£23,601 to £38,300	6.5%
£38,301 to £48,500	6.8%
£48,501 to £67,900	8.5%
£67,901 to £96,200	9.9%
£96,201 to £113,400	10.5%



The amount you pay is based on your salary and when you are enrolled into the LGPS, you will be placed in the 'main section' of the scheme, pay the full rate and build up the full amount of pension, which is currently 1/49th of your pensionable pay.

What is the 50/50 section? If you feel that the 'main section' is not for you, even for a short period of time, perhaps due to the cost of living, then you can elect to be in the '50/50 section' where you pay half of the amount in, and build up half of your pension, which would be 1/98th of your pensionable pay. You can only be in this section for a maximum of 3 years, or when your employer reaches their automatic reenrolment date, where you will then be placed back into the 'main section'. But don't worry! You can re-elect to join the '50/50 section' by completing another form. If you decide you wish to join the 'main section' again, you can do so at any time.

However, before you make a decision to reduce your contributions, you may wish to check what wider financial support may be available or contact the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Please contact payroll [unitysp-payroll@unitysp.co.uk](mailto:unitysp-payroll@unitysp.co.uk) in the first instance who will advise which pension fund you need to contact.

### **Other external sources of information and support:**

[The Trussell Trust website](#)

[Find a local foodbank – Trussell Trust](#)

[List of foodbanks – Suffolk County Council](#)

[List of foodbanks – London Borough of Havering](#)

[Martin Lewis, money saving expert – advice on the cost of living crisis 2022](#)

[Citizens Advice – advice on the cost of living crisis 2022](#)



### **Cycle to Work Scheme**

Provider: Cyclescheme

Save money and spread the cost of a new bike and accessories. Cyclescheme no longer has a limit! This means you can save money on everything you need. Go for a bike, a bike and accessories, or just accessories – it's your choice!

Cyclescheme is an employee benefit that saves you 25-39% on a bike and accessories (or even more with offers). You pay nothing upfront, and the payments are taken tax efficiently from your salary on a monthly basis, by Unity Payroll.

Eligibility: All employees - conditions apply:



The value of the bike should be less than 3 months net pay.

To complete your application, you will need:

- Your employer code (06de01)
- Your payroll number (the 7-digit number, found on the front of your payslip opposite the postcode)
- An idea of your budget

**Who should I contact if I need advice or help?**

**Trish Townsend**, Head of Finance [ttownsend@unitysp.co.uk](mailto:ttownsend@unitysp.co.uk)

### Electric Vehicle Leasing



Save money and lease a new electric vehicle. This salary sacrifice scheme will allow you to save tax and national insurance whilst being able to enjoy driving a new electric car and doing your bit for the environment.

Electric Vehicle Leasing is an employee benefit that saves you 25-40% of the cost of a private lease. You pay nothing upfront, there are no credit checks, and you can even take out a lease for a family member if you want to. The payments are taken tax efficiently from your salary on a

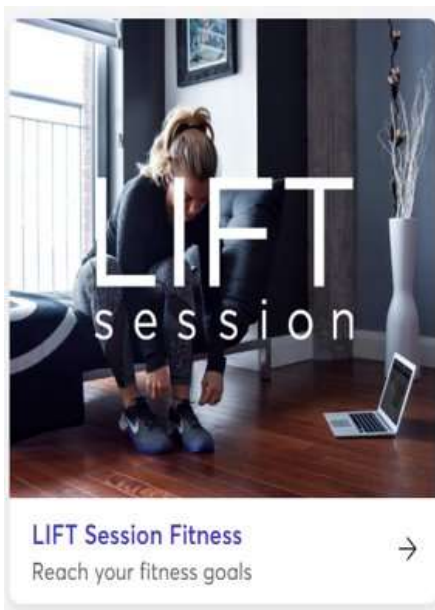
monthly basis, by Unity Payroll.

**Eligibility:** All employees – who have passed probation, not on a support plan or at risk of redundancy and will still earn above National Minimum Wage once the salary sacrificed amount has been deducted.

**Who should I contact if I need advice or help?**

**Sarah Garner**, Deputy CEO [sgarner@unitysp.co.uk](mailto:sgarner@unitysp.co.uk)

### Discounted Gym Membership



**Provider:** Real Bodies Gym (Haverhill)

Gym in Haverhill are offering a 50% discount to UnitySP employees, please feel free to visit the gym and just present your ID badge to claim the discount,

**Eligibility:** All employees of Unity Schools Partnership.

TGS Leisure Centre discount open to all Unity Staff, please contact Liz Clements

[lclements@tgschool.net](mailto:lclements@tgschool.net)

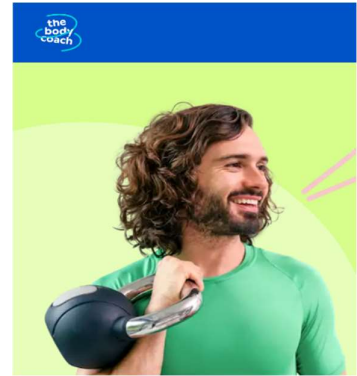
**LIFT Session Fitness is also available to all employees via LifeWorks – see earlier sign-up details**



## The Body Coach app: free access for teachers in the UK

Joe Wicks wants to give all teachers in the UK the tools to improve their mental and physical health with The Body Coach app. 3 months free for new members. To sign up, please visit:

<https://thebodycoach.com/teachers>



## Teacher Perks

Free membership for staff working in education (central team and school staff) and schools to access incredible perks from high street brands and edu-suppliers.

To sign up please visit:

[Incredible Perks and Discounts for UK Teachers and School Staff | Teacher Perks](#)



**Nuffield Health** - 10% off gym membership















**Raging Bull** - Get 15% off leisurewear



**FatFace** - Save 20% sitewide



**JoJo Maman Bébé** - Save 10% sitewide

 <b>ALL YOUR PERKS</b>	 <b>FOOD &amp; DRINK</b>	 <b>TRIPS &amp; TRAVEL</b>
 <b>CARS/TRANSPORT</b>	 <b>HIGH STREET</b>	 <b>UTILITIES &amp; BILLS</b>
 <b>CLOTHING &amp; ACCESSORIES</b>	 <b>HOME &amp; FURNISHINGS</b>	
 <b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	 <b>ONLINE</b>	
 <b>FITNESS &amp; LEISURE</b>	 <b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	


## discounts for teachers

Whether you are someone who teaches in the classroom or you're a part of the admin team, we recognise the challenges you face in the education sector. That is why we connect hard-working individuals like yourself to money-saving discounts. Enjoy the small wins!

To sign up please visit [Discounts For Teachers: Exclusive Discounts, Offers & Codes](#)

### Top Shopping Discounts & Deals


[View all Shopping discounts and deals >](#)



**Baebrow**

Baebrow - 20% Teachers discount


Use code at checkout



**Boden**

Boden - 10% off

Full price items only  
Free delivery over £30  
Use code at checkout




**Turtle Bay**

Turtle Bay - 20% Teachers discount

Available on your food bill when dining in or call & collect  
Download the app & enter the promo code

EXCLUSIVE



**JD Sports**

JD Sports - Up to 50% off + extra 20% off for Teachers

Both full price and sale  
Use code at checkout  
Online only

EXCLUSIVE HOT