



Healthy Living Scheme

Policy, procedure and guidance

Policy

Health Benefits

1. The Commissioner recognises that the culture, structures, policies and processes of an organisation, together with personal lifestyle factors, can play an important role in the health and wellbeing of staff.
2. We aim to support staff as far as reasonably practicable to achieve and maintain a positive state of mental health and wellbeing.
3. It is well known that physical activity is essential for good health. The aim of the healthy living scheme is to encourage you to increase your physical activity levels.
4. The purpose of this scheme is therefore to support you to take part in physical activities in your own time that contribute to your health and wellbeing, thus helping to improve your overall health. The scheme has been designed to be as flexible as possible to cover a wide range of physical activities.

Financial Benefit

5. The scheme works on a yearly basis by reimbursing you 50% of the costs of taking part in a physical activity or range of physical activities that contribute to your general health and well-being, up to a maximum of £180¹ between 1 April and 31 March of each year. You may not carry any unclaimed balance over into the following year.
6. As the scheme has been designed to support your participation in physical activities that contribute to your general health and well-being, reimbursement of costs will be restricted to your own personal use and cannot be extended to a third party.
7. Please note that reimbursement of your costs is a taxable benefit and will also be subject to National Insurance Contributions.

Eligibility

8. The scheme is open to all staff. There is no distinction between part-time and full-time staff.

¹ The amount of the allowance will be reviewed annually

Procedure

How do I apply?

9. Before you make an application, you may wish to consult the FAM to confirm that your chosen physical activity or activities are covered under this policy.
10. To apply, please complete the Healthy Living Scheme application form using the template in VC and save it to your HR-Admin folder in VC.
11. Please print and sign the completed form and hand it to the FAM together with your original receipt(s) and/or signed declaration letter (see paragraph 16). Your claim will not be processed unless a valid receipt or signed declaration accompanies your application.
12. The FAM will arrange for reimbursement to be made through the payroll.
13. You can make claims under this policy at any stage between April and March of each year. You may choose to make claims on a regular basis, for example, on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis, or you may prefer to make claims as and when you incur costs.
14. All information obtained by the FAM in relation to your claim or application, for example, receipts and completed application forms, will be handled in confidence.

What happens if I pay my physical activity by direct debit or standing order and cannot therefore produce a receipt?

15. We will ask you to sign a declaration confirming that you have a direct debit agreement and also ask for your permission to approach the relevant organisation to confirm that you are continuing with that arrangement. This will not be done automatically; however, we may carry out a check on up to 10% of such applications to confirm that the arrangement is still in place. The declaration form should be accompanied by supporting documentation, for example a letter or email confirming the fee for the activity.

What if my application is refused?

16. If your application is refused you may submit an appeal (an email will be sufficient) to the HOOM stating the reasons why you think your chosen activity should be covered under the policy and how it will contribute to your general health and wellbeing. The HOOM will inform you in writing of the decision, which will be final.

Guidance

What activities are covered?

17. The scheme is designed to be as flexible as possible to ensure that it is accessible to every member of staff. To assist you in your application, we have put together an indicative list of activities that would be covered:
- (i) yoga and pilates classes;
 - (ii) gym and health club membership;
 - (iii) sports club membership;
 - (iv) membership fees or other payments for physical activities such as hill-walking, fishing or sailing;
 - (v) exercise classes;
 - (vi) swimming or aqua-fit classes.
18. The above list is for illustrative purposes only and is not exhaustive.

My chosen physical activity involves the purchase of equipment. Will I be reimbursed for these additional costs?

19. No. The policy only covers the cost of the physical activity.

Does the policy cover the cost of any travel or an overnight stay related to my chosen physical activity?

20. No, you will be responsible for meeting any such costs.

What measures have been put in place to make sure the policy is accessible for all staff?

21. In the spirit of this policy, we will want to ensure that everyone has access to the provision laid out in this policy and that there are no barriers to participation.
22. If, as a result of your financial circumstances, you find it difficult to access the policy, for example, because of the requirement for you to pay a membership fee up front and claim back 50% later on, you are welcome to discuss your application with the HOOM.
23. Similarly, you are also welcome to contact the HOOM if you have a disability and are not able to participate in certain physical activities. In such circumstances, it might be appropriate for us to assist you with any additional expenses or make adjustments to help you participate in your chosen physical activity. If you wish to participate in an activity that is more suited to your needs, and which promotes a healthy living lifestyle, please let the HOOM know and we will make the necessary adjustments.
24. If you have a dependent(s) and you incur additional childcare or carer costs as a result of taking part in your chosen physical activity or activities, you may include these costs in your claim. In these circumstances, you will still only be able to claim a maximum of £180 per year.

What happens if I join after 1 April?

25. Your entitlement will be calculated from the month you commence your employment with us. If, therefore, you join on 7 August you can claim a total of £120, i.e. $\text{£}180 / 12 \text{ months} \times 8 \text{ months}$.

What happens if I leave before 31 March?

26. Your entitlement would be calculated from 1 April to the month in which you leave. If you have exceeded your entitlement any excess would be recovered automatically from your final salary.

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