

Savings

How much can I save through the scheme?

care-4 allows you to save up to £933 per year on your childcare costs, through tax and National Insurance savings.

Details of the savings available are shown below.

Basic Rate Taxpayer (Example Annual Salary of £20,000)		
Tax Saving (£243 x 20%) £48.60 per month	NI Saving (£243 x 12%) £29.16 per month	Total Saving £77.76 per month
Higher Rate Taxpayer (Example Annual Salary of £50,000)		
Tax Saving (£124 x 40%) £49.60 per month	NI Saving (£124 x 2%) £2.48 per month	Total Saving £52.08 per month
Additional Rate Taxpayer (Example Annual Salary of £160,000)		
Tax Saving (£110 x 45%) £49.50 per month	NI Saving (£110 x 2%) £2.20 per month	Total Saving £51.70 per month

Are childcare vouchers restricted to one parent per family?

This benefit is offered per employee rather than per family. If your partner's company offers care-4 or another employer supported childcare scheme you can both take advantage of the tax and National Insurance savings available.

Can I participate in this benefit at any time?

Yes, provided that you are eligible to receive this benefit and you are not restricted by your employer scheme enrolment period. New participants can join the scheme up until 4th October 2018, after which time the scheme will be closed to new joiners. However, if you are already participating in the scheme, you can continue to benefit from the savings available through the scheme until you are no longer eligible, your salary sacrifice ceases for more than 12 months or you join Tax-Free Childcare (TFC).

Is there an age limit for children I pay childcare fees for?

You can use care-4 to pay for childcare fees until 1st September following your child's 15th birthday. If your child has a disability the age limit is extended until 1st September following their 16th birthday.

Is there a limit on the number of children I can pay childcare fees for?

There is no restriction on the number of children, provided that you are the parent or legal guardian of each child. The savings are based on the employee and are not affected by the number of children you have.

Can I use the care-4 scheme to pay for a child who is not mine?

In order to take advantage of the savings through the care-4 scheme, you must be the parent or legal guardian of all the children for which you intend to pay childcare fees.

Eligible Childcare

Can I choose my own carer(s)?

Childcare vouchers can be used to pay for a variety of compulsory or voluntary registered or approved care including nurseries playgroups, nannies, childminders, au pairs (childcare element only), holiday schemes and out of school clubs. You can also pay for before or after school tuition, if the provider deems this as "childcare" and is registered or approved to care for the child whilst providing the tuition.

Can my carer register direct with care-4?

Carers do not need to wait to be nominated by a parent and can set-up a care-4 account at any time by registering online.

Can I use childcare vouchers to pay for school fees?

This benefit is solely to support you with your childcare costs and not for the payment of school fees. However, if you pay for before/after school activities or boarding fees provided by the school, and they allow the use of childcare vouchers in payment for this childcare rather than educational fees, you can pay this through the scheme.

Am I able to pay different carers through the scheme?

Provided that your carer(s) are eligible, you have complete flexibility to nominate any number of carers to be paid through the scheme.

Can I make changes to my nominated childcare provider(s)?

You can add or remove your nominated carers at any time. If you are adding a new carer who is not yet registered on our system, we will contact them to request details of their eligibility and bank account details. We will be unable to make payment to your carer until they have provided this information.

Can I use the scheme to pay relatives?

The scheme is for registered or approved childcare and therefore you can only pay a relative if they are a Registered Childminder and also care for other children as well as your own. Please note that spouses, partners or parents of the child to be cared for cannot be paid via care-4, irrespective of whether they look after other children alongside their own.



Salary Sacrifice Arrangements

What is a salary sacrifice arrangement?

This is an agreement between your employer and you, (employee) to change the terms of the employment contract to reduce your entitlement to cash pay. This sacrifice of cash entitlement is made in return for childcare vouchers.

How long does the agreement last?

On signing the contract, you commit to a minimum period of 12 months in the scheme. However, depending on your employer's scheme rules you may have an opportunity to change or cancel your participation during this 12-month period, which may be subject to a specific lifestyle event. Details of the events that qualify would be provided in the rules set by your employer.

Can I cancel the agreement at any time?

Membership of the scheme is normally for a minimum period of 12 months. However, your employer may provide an opportunity to cancel your participation, subject to a specific lifestyle event. Details of the events that qualify would be set by your employer. If you leave the scheme after 4th October 2018, you will not be able to rejoin the care-4 scheme, and this benefit will no longer be available to you. Visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk for more information about the options available.

What will I see on my payslip?

You will see your revised salary and details of the care-4 benefit as a separate non payable amount on your payslip. If, however, you have joined the scheme as part of a flexible benefits scheme package, your payslip may reflect the total amount of salary reduction in respect of your flexible benefit selections.

When will I receive my vouchers?

Following your first salary reduction, funds will normally be credited to your care-4 account in line with your payday. If you have registered an email address, you will receive automatic notification of any fund credit made to you and the total balance in your account.

What is a basic earnings assessment and why is this required?

The amount of salary you can sacrifice for this benefit and the savings available are based on the rate at which you pay tax. A Basic Earnings Assessment (BEA) is an assessment that your employer undertakes to determine which rate of tax you are likely to pay, including basic pay, taxable benefits, allowances, bonuses and commissions. Your employer will undertake a BEA when you join the scheme and annually at the start of each tax year. The value assessed will be valid until the new tax year (regardless of any changes to the rate at which you pay tax / NI during that tax year).

What are "Protected Rights" and what effect do they have?

The legislation for employer supported childcare changed with effect from 6 April 2011 so that the tax savings available to employees were the same across all tax bands. However, any higher / additional rate taxpayers who elected the benefit prior to this date were able to have their original savings level "protected". These "Protected Rights" remain in force provided that they do not change employer and that there is no single continuous break in benefit of more than 12 months.

I have "Protected Rights" and am changing employer – what impact will this have on my savings?

Provided you are moving under a TUPE arrangement, there will be no effect and you can continue to make savings on the maximum £243 per month. However, if you change employer after 4th October 2018 under a new contract of employment, unfortunately the employer supported childcare voucher benefit will no longer be available to you.

I didn't start claiming vouchers straight away - can I backdate the benefit?

Please check your scheme rules, as backdating of the benefit is normally undertaken only if there was an error on the part of either care-4 or your employer. If an error has occurred, care-4 will need to liaise with your employer regarding any possible backdating of funds.

Will there be any effect on my state benefits?

Participation in a salary reduction scheme may impact upon your entitlement to certain state benefits. In particular, you may be worse off joining the scheme if you receive the childcare element of Working Tax Credits. To calculate whether you will be better off with care-4, Universal Credit or Tax-Free Childcare visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Will this benefit affect my Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)?

If you already have a child and are participating in the care-4 scheme your SMP could be affected as calculations will be made on the amount of pay that you receive after your salary sacrifice reduction. You may be better off remaining in care-4 and continuing to receive the savings, or you may wish to leave the scheme prior to the start of the calculation period for SMP (weeks 17-25) to ensure that your SMP is calculated on your full salary. You should refer to your employer and your company maternity policy in order to understand the best option for you.

Am I able to continue to receive childcare vouchers while on maternity leave?

Your participation is subject to the terms and conditions of your contract of employment so you should check these details and refer to your company's maternity policy. However, in most cases you can continue to have salary reductions whilst on maternity leave, provided that these do not reduce your take home pay below minimum SMP, which must be paid in cash.

What happens if I leave my Employer?

You need to advise both your employer and care-4 if you decide to leave so that the necessary arrangements can be made in respect of your salary reductions (if you have elected care-4 as part of a flexible benefit arrangement, you will need to instruct your flexible benefit administrator). Following your final salary reduction any further payments into your care-4 account will cease and any remaining funds can continue to be used in payment to your carers. If you have scheduled regular payments set up these will continue to be processed, subject to fund availability (regardless of whether or not you have cancelled your salary sacrifice arrangement). Your account can be used until your balance becomes nil, or your account has been dormant (no payments in or out) for a period of 18 months in line with the terms and conditions of the scheme.



care-4 Funds

How will I know when funds have been credited to my account?

Funds will normally be applied to your care-4 account in line with your payday. If you have registered an email address, you will be sent an automated notification advising you that funds have been credited and confirming your updated account balance.

Do I have to use up my funds each month?

You have the flexibility to make payments as and when you require. While some parents choose to spend their full balance each month, others accrue funds ahead of their childcare starting or build up their balance for use at specific times e.g. to pay for summer holiday schemes.

How can I check details of payments I've made?

Details of all credits and debits on your account are detailed on your care-4 statement which is available to view online. Simply click on the "View Statement" option in the left-hand menu (your account balance is shown at the top of the screen), enter the date range required and then click on "Search". You can download a PDF or Excel copy of your statement by clicking on the relevant download button

I have set up regular payments - how do I know when a payment has been sent?

On the date that you have scheduled for the payment to be released to your carer, we will attempt to make a payment and you will be sent an email advising you of the status of the payment. If the payment has been successful, no further action is required on your part. However, if for any reason the payment has failed, you will be notified of the reason by email and you will need to authorise a new payment (payments will not be re-submitted automatically).

How will my carer know I've paid them?

If your carer has registered an email address, they will receive daily notifications detailing all payments made to them that day. Carers also have access to their own online account and are able to view or download their statement information.

What happens to any unspent funds?

Monies will remain in your care-4 account to be used to pay a registered or approved carer until such time as your account has been dormant (no funds in or out) for a period of 18 months, in line with the terms and conditions of the scheme.

Payments

How do I make payments to my carer?

Making payments is simple and can be arranged through your online account 24 hours per day or via the care-4 Helpline 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. You will need your 8-digit care-4 account number and Password/PIN to access your account.

You can authorise one off or ad hoc payments as frequently as you like, or you can choose to set up a regular payment instruction. All payments are made direct to your carer's bank account via BACS and confirmation of the payment will be provided direct to them.

How long will it take for a payment to reach my carer?

All payments are processed via BACS so will take between 2 to 3 working days to credit your carer's bank account.

Can I update my carer's bank account details?

No - carers are responsible for providing and maintaining their own bank account information. They can do this via secure online access to their account or by contacting care-4 and requesting a banking form to be emailed to them.

Can I get a refund for unused vouchers?

When joining the scheme, you will give up your pay in return for funds to be paid into your care-4 account and used to pay for registered or approved childcare only. You should calculate your childcare costs carefully as any unused funds cannot be converted into cash.

I've made an incorrect payment - what do I do?

If the payment is still showing on your statement as "Pending" you are able to cancel it through your online account by selecting the "Payments" menu option and clicking the link in the "Cancel Pending Payment" section. However, if the payment is showing on your statement as "Paid" it has already been released and cannot be amended. In this situation you should contact care-4 as soon as possible either by phone or email. Whilst we will endeavor to support the recovery of any funds made to carers due to an incorrect payment instruction made by you, we cannot guarantee the recovery of such funds.

My childcare fees vary month from month - how can I manage this?

Whilst the funds coming from your pay and into your care-4 account are fixed, you have complete flexibility to specify the value of each payment made to your carer, provided you have adequate funds available in your account.

Managing My Account

Where can I find details of my logon information?

Details of your account number are included in your joining information (issued either by email or post). Shortly after registering with care-4 you will have been sent a link to set up your Password- details of this are known only by you.

What happens if I forget my Account Number?

You can use the "Retrieve My Account Number" link in the login section of the homepage. You will be asked to confirm your First Name, Postcode and Email Address. Provided this information matches the details registered, an email will be sent to you with a reminder of your account number.

If you do not have online access, you will need to contact the care-4 helpline on *0344 800 1444*.

What happens if I forget my Password?

Provided you know your account number you can use the "Retrieve My PIN / Password" link in the login section of the homepage.

Can I change my Password?

Yes - you can amend your Password via your online account by selecting the "Change Details" options from the left-hand menu and scrolling down to the "Security Details" section.

I would like my partner to be able to manage my account - how do I set this up?

You will need to send an email to info@care-4.co.uk authorising their access to your account. Your email should be sent from the address held on your care-4 account and must include your full name / care-4 account number / the name of the person you wish to nominate and their relationship to you. care-4 will then add a note to your account confirming 3rd party authority.

Added Benefits

Are there any other benefits of being a member of the care-4 scheme?

Yes. As a care-4 participant you have access to a range of services.

Childcare Helpline – a free and confidential childcare helpline available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. This provides parental support on every aspect of your child’s wellbeing from weaning through to bullying.

Emergency Childcare – enables you to book emergency childcare on the same day or up to 3 weeks in advance. Registered childminders and nursery places can be booked through Emergency Childcare. In addition, this service provides access for parents to a wide selection of information sources from webinars on a variety of work/life and childcare subjects, access to a “speak to an expert” helpline and a library of helpful factsheets.

Discounts – please visit the “Discounts” section of the home page for current offers

Regulatory Bodies

- Ofsted (England)
- Health and Social Care Trust (Northern Ireland)
- Care Inspectorate (Scotland)
- Care Inspectorate (Wales)

Official Websites

In England.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Tel 0300 123 4666

In Wales.

<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/>

Tel 0300 7900 126

In Scotland.

<http://www.careinspectorate.com>

Tel: 0345 600 9527

In Northern Ireland.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/>



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