

**North Somerset Council**

# About Us & Employee Benefits



Open, Fairer, Greener

We act with integrity, we respect each other, we innovate, we care, we collaborate

# Table of Contents

<b>ABOUT NORTH SOMERSET .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OUR VISION &amp; VALUES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BHSF CORPORATE HEALTH CASH PLAN.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>STAFF SUPPORT GROUPS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) SCHEME.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CSSC SCHEME .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>OTHER GREAT BENEFITS .....</b>	<b>16</b>



# ABOUT NORTH SOMERSET

**North Somerset is part of the South West of England and situated on the M5 corridor. It extends from the edge of Bristol and the River Avon in the North, to the River Axe and the Mendip Hills in the South.**

North Somerset is an area of contrasts from a coastline made up of cliffs and sandy beaches, to beautiful countryside with wooded hills, open moor land, wetlands, rhynes, reed beds and rich pasture land, with two thirds of the area greenbelt or an area of outstanding natural beauty.



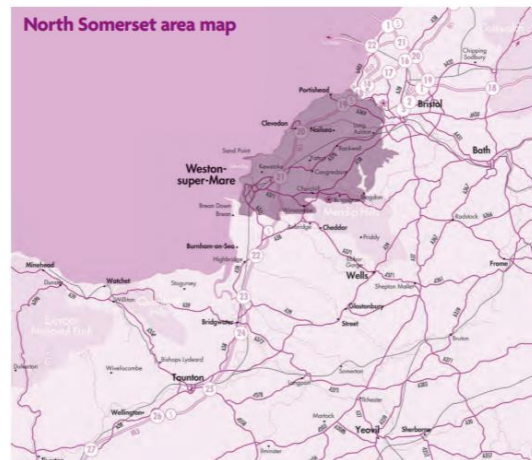
There are many district communities within the area which includes 35 rural parishes and the four towns of Weston-super-Mare, a large seaside resort; Clevedon, a Victorian seaside town, Nailsea, a new town built around the original village; and Portishead, a seaside town with its own marina and views across the River Severn and the two Severn Bridges.

North Somerset Council plays an important role in the life of the communities within the area and provides services to around 201,000 people in partnership with the private and public sectors, the voluntary sector and local people. The majority of our employees work from two bases in Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon.

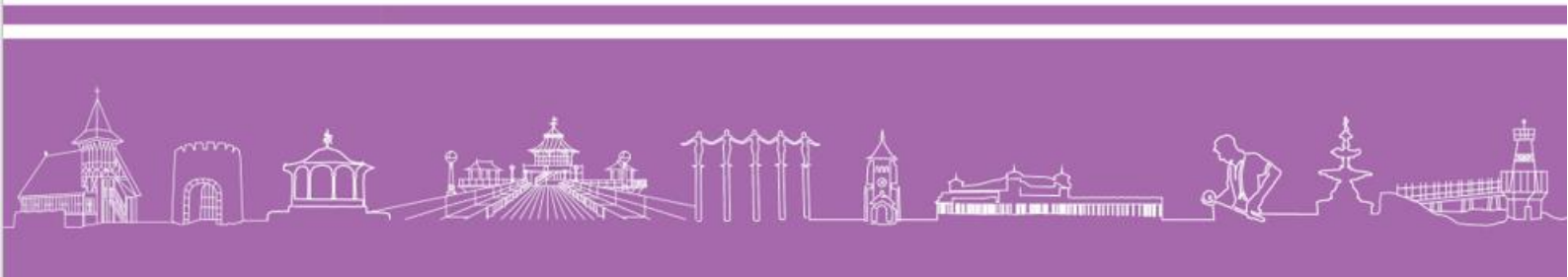
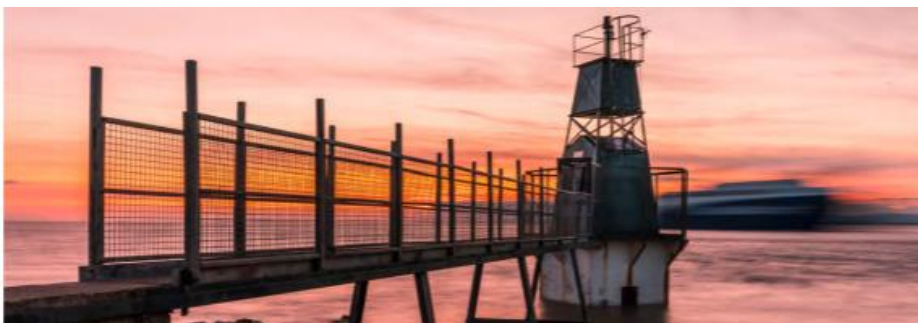


North Somerset has a reasonably broad economic structure supporting defence, engineering, food processing, printing and packaging as well as agriculture, catering and the care industry. Tourism makes a significant contribution to the economic well-being of the area.

There are excellent roads and rail links to London and Bristol, and to Devon and Cornwall and the South West. Air transport is available at Bristol International Airport, which is situated in the North Somerset area, and there are port facilities at Royal Portbury Dock, which has contributed to attracting many new businesses to the area.



The council's headquarters are situated in Weston-super-Mare, conveniently placed within walking distance of the shops, other town centre facilities, the railway station and bus stops. Weston-super-Mare is one of the premier holiday resorts in the West Country, and is the largest town in the area. It offers a large range of shops and restaurants that offer dishes from virtually every corner of the world. Local schools provide high standards of education, and there is a wide choice of housing in the area, both in the towns and surrounding villages.





# OUR VISION & VALUES

## Vision

North Somerset Council is a high performing council and a great place to work. We have a value driven, engaged, agile and motivated workforce.

We have a clear vision for North Somerset, one of which sets out what we want both for the area and for the council as an organisation. Our vision is for a more open, fairer, greener North Somerset.



## Values

Our organisational values are important. They help guide us in how we work and provide services for our residents. Producing our values in collaboration with our staff, these five values provide a strong ethos and help us to deliver our ambitious agenda, working in partnership across the council and beyond.



# BHSF CORPORATE HEALTH CASH PLAN

This scheme is a health cash plan which can help you manage the cost of dental treatment, eye tests, new glasses and contact lenses, professional therapy treatments, health consultants etc.

## How to benefit from the health cash plan

- The health cash plan may help you reduce the cost of your regular healthcare such as optical and dental treatments.
- The health cash plan may also help with those unexpected illnesses that require diagnostic health consultations, day-case surgery and even stays in hospital.
- Included in your cover is access to a 24 hour, 365 days a year confidential telephone helpline, offering a counselling service on issues such as stress, family relationships, substance abuse and debt along with legal and financial advice and information on medical matters.

Cover starts from just £5.98 per month. Anyone over the age of 17 at the time of application can apply and no medical is required. Children can be covered under a family policy until their 18th birthday. Premiums will be deducted from your salary by payroll.

You will be eligible to claim 13 weeks from the start date shown on your policy with the exception of the maternity payment where there is a 10-month qualifying period.



# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Health Assured Employee Assistance is a confidential and impartial service that has been appointed to provide advice and support, whenever and wherever it's needed.

## Help is at hand

We all face challenges in life that can take a lot of time to resolve and can even result in a great deal of worry, frustration and distress. It may simply be that you haven't encountered this situation before and need some specialist advice, or maybe it's something more serious, something that's affecting your personal life or your work and you need someone to talk to.

## What Health Assured Employee Assistance offers

- A telephone service operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that gives you access to specialist information and advice at a time that suits you.
- Confidential telephone counselling for when you need someone to talk to.
- Assistance with face to face counselling when appropriate.
- Legal information (excluding employment law).
- Medical and General Practitioner call back.
- Free mobile App - Health e-Hub
- Access to the Online Health Portal - [www.healthassuredeap.co.uk](http://www.healthassuredeap.co.uk)

health  assured



# HEALTH & WELLBEING

Focusing on the wellbeing of our staff and maintaining our low levels of sickness absence is a priority.

**In line with our core values of 'we care', we would like our staff to feel safe and supported, having the confidence to seek what they need and to thrive in their roles. We have a dedicated wellbeing team that have created a suit of resources, activities and groups to support our employees.**

Here are some of the fantastic opportunities already available to our employees:

- **Menopause Café** – informal information and chat sessions for women experiencing symptoms of menopause
- **Men's Wellbeing** – opportunity to talk together with other men in a confidential and safe space
- **Conversations for all** – opportunity to talk together in a confidential and safe space
- **Bitesize programme** – short training sessions to support good physical and emotional wellbeing covering a range of topics
- **Reading for wellness group** – opportunity to use your love of reading for a chance to connect with other likeminded people
- **Yoga** – Early morning and lunchtime sessions
- **Wellbeing coaching and mentoring programme** – to support you to navigate through change
- **Six-week menopause support programme** – learn more about your experiences and connect with other people
- **Meditation for wellness.**

We are always developing our programmes and welcome feedback to find out if there is more we can do for you!





# STAFF SUPPORT GROUPS

We have five staff groups, set up to provide mutual support as well as being an opportunity to comment on important issues that affect employees at the council, such as HR policies and ICT developments. Staff are given paid time off work to attend these meetings.

Our five staff groups include;

- Carers Staff Group
- Disabled Staff Group
- LGBTQ+ Staff Group
- Race Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage (REACH)
- Young Staff Forum

We are committed to developing a workforce which embraces and values diversity and fosters a welcoming culture of inclusion, ensuring all staff feel safe and valued.

Building an inclusive organisation is therefore essential, ensuring the provision of a working environment where all our staff feel safe and confident about being their 'true selves'.

The diversity of our workforce is a great strength, and fully supporting, valuing, and celebrating the differences in our working force will support the council in delivering its ambitious vision and aims.



# ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) SCHEME

As part of our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and become carbon neutral by 2030, we offer an electric vehicle scheme for all NSC employees. The scheme is offered through Tusker in partnership with CPC Drive and is a smart way for North Somerset Council employees to run a car.

## How does it work?

The scheme provides a new way to run an electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle, with no upfront deposit required.

A fixed monthly amount is taken directly from your gross salary and in return, you get the use of a brand-new electric car. The reduction to your gross salary is made before income tax and National Insurance although under the scheme you will need to pay Benefit in Kind as the car is being provided as a benefit by North Somerset Council.

**1****Choose your brand new car**

You choose the make, model, spec and any additional features you'd like in your car (or you can choose one of our cars in stock)

**2****Car gets approved by your employer**

Once you've submitted your order, we'll let your employer know. They'll review it and, hopefully, approve it.

**3****Take delivery of your new car**

We'll then arrange to get your car built and as soon as it arrives at the dealer, we'll get it delivered to your doorstep!



## What's included?

In addition to a brand-new electric car, the scheme also includes:

- no deposits
- maintenance of the vehicle including all servicing, batteries, exhausts and tyres
- fully comprehensive motor insurance including all business travel for you
- annual road tax
- roadside assistance (homestart and recovery UK and European cover)
- contactless home delivery
- relief car for when your car is off the road (if selected).

## Eligibility criteria

Your eligibility will depend on your actual gross salary taking into account any other salary sacrifice arrangements you may have in place and cannot reduce your salary below the national living wage for the duration of the salary sacrifice agreement. Tusker have set the minimum gross salary requirement at £23,500 p.a.

## Access the portal

Details of the scheme, how it works, information about the provider and the eligibility criteria for employees can all be found on the [NSC/Tusker Portal](#).

in partnership with

# Tusker.



# CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME

North Somerset Council has been running a cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme for a number of years. A cycle to work scheme allows employees to get a bike tax free, to commute (at least part of the journey) to work. The scheme that we use is the Halfords Cycle2Work.

## How does it work?

When an employee enrolls in the scheme, they are technically hiring the cycle and any equipment (appropriate clothing, helmet, child's cycle seat, bike lock) from their employer, paid for through deductions in their gross pay by salary sacrifice. Note the deductions from gross pay will amount to the full value of the cycle. The savings are made because if you were not taking part in the scheme, this element of your salary would have been taxed at your normal rate.

## Where can I get my bike and accessories?

All Halfords stores and Tredz stores are part of the scheme, but there is also a variety of independent bike shops that accept Cycle2Work vouchers. You can find stores here:

<https://www.cycle2work.info/bikes/store-locator>

## How much can I apply for?

Within the cycle to work scheme there is a maximum total spend of £2500. However, after deductions your pay should not fall below national minimum wage, so the allowance may be lower if you are an apprentice or on a parttime contract.

Please note: The cycle to work voucher can only cover the whole cost of a product, so it is not possible to pay for part of a bike or accessory on the scheme.

**cycle2work** 





# CSSC SCHEME

All employees at North Somerset Council are now eligible to join the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC) scheme which entitles you to thousands of fantastic deals, offers and everyday savings.

## What's included?

The scheme gives staff the opportunity to easily obtain cashback on a wide range of high street retailers and supermarkets, discounts on cinemas, family days out, sport and leisure activities and many more.

- Free family days out to all English Heritage and Cadw sites
- Unlimited, year-round entry to Kew Gardens and Wakehurst
- Discounted trips and days out to local and national cultural and environmental sites
- Huge savings at restaurants, cinemas, gyms, theme parks and attractions
- Over 40 sports and communities to join and stay active
- Free health and wellbeing portal for courses, classes and content
- Up to 70% off shopping with thousands of online and high street retailers
- Plus, save on household bills, utilities, broadband and mobile tariffs.

 Kew  
Royal Botanic Gardens cineworld  
CINEMAS COSTA  
COFFEE JUST EAT ENGLISH HERITAGE Sainsbury's SEA LIFE

## Cost

Membership costs £4.99 per month paid individually by direct debit.

More details can be found by visiting:

[www.cssc.co.uk](http://www.cssc.co.uk)



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

## Avon Pension fund

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a great way to save for your future. All new starters are automatically opted into the LGPS.

## Benefits of the pension scheme

- A secure pension when you retire – You'll get a pension for life that increases with the cost of living
- Your employer shares the cost and pays contributions into your pension
- You get tax relief on all your contributions
- You can boost your pension by paying more contributions which you would get tax relief on
- You can draw your pension anytime from age 55 to 75
- Life cover of three times your pay from the day you join the scheme and there's no medical (unlike other forms of life insurance)
- Flexible retirement available from age 55 if you reduce your hours, or move to a less senior position

## Further information

For more information about the scheme visit the Avon Pension Fund website; [Avon Pension Fund](#)

**Avon  
Pension  
Fund**



# CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The council is committed to making the most effective use of employee's skills and knowledge and to supporting individuals to achieve their full potential.

## **It's all about you!**

The council expects employees to take advantage of development opportunities and to maximise their skills and abilities to be the best they can be in their role. To engage in the process of identifying personal development needs in the context of service and personal performance objectives through the appraisal process.

## **What's available?**

The Learning and Development service provides a range of opportunities to council staff such as;

- Apprenticeships (up to degree level)
- Coaching and mentoring
- Community learning - our service supporting vulnerable learners
- iLearn - arrange training and access online learning opportunities through our online portal
- Managers - learning and development opportunities for managers
- Mandatory training - learning and development opportunities available for all staff, particularly relevant for new starters



## OTHER GREAT BENEFITS

### ENHANCED SICK PAY

Generous sick pay, increasing in line with length of service. Further details are provided in your Statement of Particulars.

### ENHANCED MATERNITY PAY

12 weeks of half pay after one years' service, conditional upon returning to work for a period of at least 3 months.

### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Family-friendly policies and flexible working options, including a flexi-time scheme.

### ANNUAL LEAVE

Generous annual leave entitlement, increasing with length of service – up to 34 days, plus Bank holidays and an extra day at Christmas.

### ANNUAL LEAVE PURCHASE SCHEME

Option to purchase additional two weeks annual leave on completion of probationary period. The booking windows are open twice a year in March and September.

### DISABILITY LEAVE SCHEME

All disabled employees who have self-identified as a disabled person and used for disability related absence. This can be up to a maximum of ten working days (pro-rata).

### RESERVE FORCES SPECIAL LEAVE

Two weeks additional paid leave to attend summer camp.

### STAFF AWARDS

The council acknowledges excellence and contribution with annual awards.

### FREE EYE TESTS

Claim back the cost of your eye tests. If you require glasses solely for visual display screen unit use, the basic cost will be met by the council.

### PAY PROGRESSION

Incremental pay increases awarded annually to all employees to the top of their pay range.

### PROFESSIONAL SUBSCRIPTION FEE FUNDING

Reimbursement of professional subscriptions to a maximum of £45 per year.

### FREE CAR PARKING

Parking is available at the two main council sites, Castlewood in Clevedon and the Town Hall in Weston-super-Mare. Some staff may, as a result of a disability or medical issue, be eligible for a parking space that is closer to the Town Hall subject to availability.

### RELOCATION ALLOWANCE

Up to £8k to help with relocation and removal expenses.

