

## Benefits of working for us

### Salary

Ashford Borough Council has a graded pay structure, and the salary advertised is normally the **top of the grade** for a fully qualified and experienced person and shows the possible salary level available to you in the future. As a rule, new appointments are made at an appropriate level below the salary advertised. All salaries are reviewed annually and any pay award takes effect on 1 April.

### Hours of work/flexible working/job sharing

We have around 430 staff all working in a wide range of full and part time jobs. The authority has a flexible-working scheme based on a 37-hour five-day week and works on the following basis:

- Offices are open between 7am and 7pm
- Core time (the hours during which you must be at work) is 10am – 12noon and 2pm - 4pm
- Flexible periods during which employees have some discretion in starting and finishing times

Some jobs require specific hours to be worked, which may include evenings or weekends, but it is our policy to allow flexibility where possible to help staff meet the demands of their home life.

For suitable posts, some working from home may also be an option.

The council supports the concept of job sharing as a means of creating and extending more flexible employment opportunities and consideration will be given to applicants who would benefit from job sharing which is a formal arrangement where two people voluntarily share the responsibilities of one full-time post, on a pro-rata basis, subject to the approval of the employing service. Should you wish to apply for a post on a job share basis then please indicate this on your application.

### Annual leave

The basic annual leave entitlement is 20 days, (pro-rata for part-time posts), plus bank holidays, plus two extra statutory days. The basic entitlement will rise according to the grade of the post. After five years' continuous local government service, an extra five days is added (pro-rata for part time posts).

### Pension/life assurance

All employees will automatically become members of the Local Government Pension Scheme from the day they start, unless they opt out. The scheme gives you the option of tax-free cash on retirement, plus an index-linked annual pension. The employee's contribution is between 5.5% and 12.5% of gross salary, depending on gross earnings, and the council contributes to this amount. We also have a separate life assurance scheme for our staff.

### Essential car user

Where a car is necessary to carry out the duties of the job, the position will be classed as an **essential car user**, the post holder will be entitled to a subsidised lease car or can opt for the cash alternative. If the job you have applied for is in this category, it will be clearly shown on the advertisement and the job description. You should be aware that there are personal income tax implications if you have a lease car.

We also pay business mileage where appropriate.

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### Training and development opportunities

Ashford Borough Council is committed to the training and development of all staff.

The focus is on continuous improvement and when you start with us your manager will discuss your work objectives and development needs, which provide the basis for training. These will be reviewed regularly in personal development discussions as part of the council's staff appraisal system.

### Childcare vouchers

Employees can opt to take part of their salary in child care vouchers and take the advantage of tax and national insurance savings

### Cycle to work scheme

This is a salary sacrifice scheme. This means employees have the option of giving part of their gross salary in exchange for hiring a bike and safety equipment over 12 months. As money is taken from gross salary (before tax) rather than net pay (after tax), employees pay less income tax and national insurance.

### My Ashford Rewards

My Ashford Rewards is our employee benefits website. On this site employees will find thousands of discounts and offers to help save money on just about anything, from food to fashion, holidays to healthcare, and DIY to days out.

### Employee Assistance Programme

Ashford Borough Council values the health and wellbeing of all employees and as such has an employee assistance programme that can greatly assist employees to achieve a positive balance in their lives. This service offers unlimited access to a range of specialist support and advice on:

- Health and wellbeing information
- Stress at home or at work
- Financial issues including debt
- Relationships and family matters
- Consumer issues

### Offices

The Civic Centre is a single modern block situated within easy reach of the town centre and the station, and next to the Stour Centre fitness and leisure facilities.

The offices are open plan, and a no-smoking policy applies. A spacious staff room is available with a pool table and kitchen facilities, including a microwave. Cold food such as salads and sandwiches can be purchased from a mobile sandwich trolley, which comes into the offices in the morning.