

## Background

DEFRA (the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) is a Government Department in the UK concerned with securing a healthy environment in which current and future generations can prosper. Specifically, DEFRA helps people to adapt to changes, deal with environmental risks and make the most of the opportunity to secure a sustainable, healthy environment as part of a low carbon, resource efficient economy. Recently, the department enlisted the help of Edenred to promote and deliver a successful and expertly managed Childcare Voucher scheme to their workforce.

## Objectives

DEFRA wanted to offer employees access to a Childcare Voucher scheme, not only to support individuals with childcare responsibilities by helping them save money, but also to send out a message that they are a family friendly organisation in line with the Department's CSR and Wellbeing strategy.

## DEFRA – in summary:

- Wanted to promote and deliver successful Childcare Voucher scheme
- Aimed to help employees save money and portray themselves as a family friendly organisation
- Scheme delivered to almost 10,000 employees across ten agencies
- Online survey, customised posters, promotional leaflets and other communication tools created in partnership with Edenred
- Heightened engagement, motivation and performance in working parents

## Launch & Implementation

Since April 2008, DEFRA has been working with Edenred to promote and deliver Childcare Vouchers to just under 10,000 employees across ten agencies.

Edenred's communications team has worked directly with DEFRA employees to raise awareness and increase understanding of the benefits of Childcare Vouchers, including producing an online employee survey. Employees were able to access the survey via regular Office Notices which also gave them the opportunity to register their interest in attending one of a series of nationwide presentations on the scheme. Employees who were unable to attend one of these sessions were subsequently given the opportunity to request further information on Childcare Vouchers.



A range of customised posters and leaflets to promote Childcare Vouchers were also created by Edenred in partnership with the DEFRA communications team. Working together in this way highlighted the organisation-wide support for the scheme and ensured that the Childcare Voucher communications remained sensitive to the Department's corporate identity.

The Childcare Voucher scheme utilised the Department's internal communications channels, such as the Intranet, to ensure employees could access all the relevant and up-to-date information on Childcare Vouchers to help them decide for themselves if they were right for them. Links were provided to the Edenred Childcare Vouchers website where employees could join the scheme and find out more about the benefits, including how to access a free and confidential telephone helpline offering support and information on a wide range of issues affecting employees and their families.

## Results

The Childcare Voucher scheme has allowed basic rate taxpayers at DEFRA to save up to £904 per year, and has also attracted widespread support from all of their working parents. To date around 5% of core employees have signed up to receive Childcare Vouchers or further information about them, and through targeted face-to-face interaction and other communication channels, DEFRA has been able to engage working parents, improve motivation and enhance performance in every department.



"Childcare vouchers are a key component of the Department's CSR and Wellbeing strategy. By offering employees access to a childcare voucher scheme we can support individuals with their childcare responsibilities.

This approach sends a clear message to employees that we're a family friendly organisation that takes employees' caring responsibilities seriously. Our childcare voucher scheme has already attracted widespread support from our working parents and to date around 5% of core DEFRA employees have signed up to receive childcare vouchers or further information about them.

Through targeted, face-to-face interaction with employees in addition to the other communication channels we are using, we are able to engage DEFRA's working parents effectively in order to help motivate them and ultimately enhance performance."

Jeanette Forder, Diversity Specialist, DEFRA

"As a working parent, any support, whether it's financial or practical, is very much appreciated. When I found out I could receive childcare vouchers I jumped at the chance. Paying the nursery via my online electronic childcare account is so straightforward. I have peace of mind while I'm at work and I'm also able to save money at the same time - that can only be a good thing!"

Emma Jackson-Dunn, Contracts Manager, DEFRA