Employee Benefits Update

As you will be aware, the MRC offers its employees a variety of benefits from different providers including:

- MRC Rewards benefits website (provided by Asperity)
- Childcare Vouchers (provided by Corporate Childcare Solutions Group)
- Cycle to Work scheme (provided by CycleScheme)
- Employee Assistance Programme (provided by First Assist)

The MRC Rewards benefits website was launched in June 2009 as a pilot to assess whether staff would find it valuable. Overall the uptake has been higher than expected and we have received good feedback.

The success of the scheme has led to interest from the other Research Councils and in Spring of this year the RCUK procurement team went out to tender for a provider for the whole package of employee benefits for all of the Research Councils combined. As a result of the tender, P&MM have been awarded the contract to provide a benefits package to all Research Councils. This contract will commence on 08th October 2012.

A key benefit of the revised benefits package provided by P&MM is that all new and existing benefits including childcare vouchers, cycle to work and the employee assistance programme will now be brought together and managed under one contract, with the added bonus of it all being in one place.

Logging on for the first time

The new RCUK Employee Benefits website will be launched on 8th October 2012, when you will receive an introductory email giving you a link for the new platform and details of how to get started.

Through the RCUK Employee Benefits website you will be able to access the following benefits:

1. Lifestyle – Employee discounts

MRC benefits and discounts offered via MRC Rewards will now be provided through P&MM by Lifestyle.

The new RCUK Employee Benefits website will be launched on 8th October 2012, when you will receive an introductory email giving you a link for the new platform and details of how to get started.
Lifestyle is a discount Scheme with an award winning website covering over 7000 different offers, preferential discounts and savings from a long list of high street brands. This will replace the current MRC Rewards website that is provided by Asperity.

The MRC contract with the current MRC Rewards provider Asperity will remain in place until August 2013. Therefore if you have already registered with Asperity you will still be able to use their website and discounts until that time. You will be reminded to use up/withdraw any cash balances before the contract with Asperity comes to an end, i.e. late Spring 2013.

All new employees will be registered for the Lifestyle website only.

2. Childcare vouchers:

MRC childcare vouchers will now be provided through P&MM by childcareplus. Childcare vouchers are a means by which parents and guardians can make Tax and National Insurance savings if paying for registered or approved childcare.

If you are currently in receipt of childcare vouchers provided by CCSG (the MRC’s current provider) you will need to change over to childcareplus. Changing is quick and simple and you should have already received an email and a letter informing you of the change and asking you to register with the new scheme.

All employees wishing to continue receipt of childcare vouchers must change their provider to childcareplus before the 8th November in order to meet payroll deadline.

With regards to any funds left in your existing account with CCSG, you can continue to use up these vouchers as they will remain valid up until the 1st September following your child’s 15th birthday, or 16th birthday if your child is registered with a disability.

If you currently receive childcare vouchers and have not received an email or a letter please contact P&MM on 0845 272 8713 or email: benefits@p-mm.co.uk

3. Cycle to work

The Cycle to Work scheme will now be provided through P&MM by cycle-plus and cycle2work. This scheme offers bicycles at reduced cost to employees when used to commute to work.

If you are currently under a hire agreement with our current provider CycleScheme your scheme will continue with the old provider until it is finished. You will not experience any changes.

All new requests for cycle scheme funding with the MRC will be now go through the RCUK Employee Discounts website for Cycle to Work agreements.

4. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The MRC EAP will now be provided through P&MM by lifestyleaction. EAP provides employees with a confidential phone support line answering all sorts of questions that employees have and providing advice about relationships, disputes, legal concerns etc. In some circumstances it also provides face to face counselling support, for example following bereavement.

The helpline number for lifestyleaction is 0800 116 4368.
The current contract with First Assist will cease at midnight on 7th October, with the new provider commencing with immediate effect thereafter.

If you are currently using the services of First Assist (e.g. telephone/face-to-face counselling) then these will continue with First Assist until they are complete.

5. Additional benefits

The changeover to P&MM also provides the MRC the opportunity to introduce new employee benefits over the next couple of months. These will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Green Car Scheme** – a salary sacrifice car scheme.
- **DentalCare** – Dental Health Plan.
- **Income protection** – Income Protection Plan.

Details about these benefits will be made available on the RCUK Employee Benefits website when they become available.

Personal consultation sessions will take place in November for anyone who is interested in finding out more about the benefits on offer to them. These sessions will be held onsite and are open for all employees. Further details as to how to arrange these one-to-one sessions will be provided closer to the time.

If you have any questions please contact your local HR team.