

From mountain to sea

Voluntary Severance FAQ

1. What is Voluntary Severance?

This Scheme will provide for a voluntary severance package of pay and/or benefits to allow you to leave Aberdeenshire Council voluntarily.

The purpose of the Scheme is to assist Aberdeenshire Council in addressing the budgetary constraints and potential reduction in staffing levels. The Scheme operates on the basis that the need for reductions in staffing levels must be set against the continuing demand for high quality service delivery. All applications for this Scheme will therefore be considered along with the needs of the Service.

2. What are the eligibility criteria?

You will require to have 2 years or more continuous service and be a permanent member of staff.

3. What benefits will I receive?

This will depend on several factors including-

- a. your age
- b. length of service on your leaving date
- c. your rate of pay and
- d. whether you are a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) or SPPA (Teacher) scheme.

Subject to fulfilling the relevant criteria and review of the future requirements for the post, those taking voluntary severance may receive a redundancy or compensation payment, and/or pension benefits.

Any redundancy payment would consist of a certain number of weeks' pay, dependent on your age and length of continuous service at your leaving date. The basic number of weeks' pay for your age and service can be found [here](#).

If you are not a member of the LGPS, SPPA scheme or are not eligible to receive benefits immediately, the number of weeks' pay would be multiplied by 1.7.



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At point c. above, if your average weekly basic pay exceeds the statutory maximum payment (£643 per week), the redundancy payment will be calculated as the statutory maximum plus 50% of the difference between the statutory maximum payment and your actual basic weekly pay.

Within the Pension scheme, early access to pension benefits may be available without actuarial reduction. We would encourage members to obtain an estimate of their basic pension benefits at:

[North East Scotland Pension Fund](#) for LGPS members OR
[SPPA](#), Teachers' calculators for SPPA members

At this stage you are being asked to express an interest in the scheme. If your notification of interest is approved the benefits which would be available to you will be clearly set out in an estimate which is sent out to you. The estimate will explain in some detail the various parts of the package and how they have been calculated.

4. Within the pension scheme, is Compensation Added Years (CAY) available to me?

No, CAY is no longer available in line with other local authorities.

5. Do I need to let my line manager know I am interested in applying?

No, at this stage you are being asked to apply with an expression of interest in voluntary severance and are not required to inform your line manager of this. However, if you do apply your Service will be informed of your application for this to be considered.

6. Will I be eligible for the same benefits if I am a part-time employee?

Generally, yes. If applicable you would be entitled to any standard redundancy or compensation payment in the same way as a full-time employee which is based on age, length of service and weekly pay.

If access to your pension applies, pro-rating is applied in calculation of, but not qualification for, benefits. The way in which your pension entitlement has been calculated will be explained in the notes accompanying your estimate.



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7. I am a cash conserved teacher; will my cash conservation be included within my redundancy calculations?

Yes, cash conservation amounts will be taken into account.

8. What Income Tax and National Insurance will I have to pay?

You will pay Income Tax and National Insurance on any contractual entitlement, for example, payment in lieu of outstanding annual holiday.

The lump sum retirement grant based on previous service is generally made without any deduction.

The annual pension will be subject to the normal deduction of Income Tax based on your own tax allowances but will not be liable for National Insurance contributions.

Normally the redundancy/compensation payment and any enhancement to your pension lump sum will also be paid without deduction of Income Tax or National Insurance. However, should the value of these two payments when taken together exceed £30,000, that excess will be liable to Income Tax at the appropriate marginal rate depending on your circumstances.

9. What impact will any future employment have on my pension that I receive following voluntary severance?

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have published guidance for those retiring on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency between the ages of 50 and 54. If applicable to you, please refer to the guidance and review any implications of this directly with HMRC.

Please contact your Pension Provider for further information regarding any future employment.

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10. How will the decision be made on who can leave under this Voluntary Severance Scheme?

All requests will be considered against several factors to ensure that there is demonstrable benefit to Aberdeenshire Council. These factors will include –

- Potential impact on service delivery
- Retaining the required balance of future skills and experience
- Affordability

11. If I am successful, when would my last date of employment be?

Your leaving date would be on or before Sunday, 31 March 2024 in line with your notice period or unless an earlier leaving date is agreed with your Service. Please see question 12 for details on how your notice period is calculated.

12. How is my notice period calculated?

You will be entitled to notice calculated by one week's notice for each complete year of service, up to a total of 12 weeks, or your contractual notice period, whichever is the greater. The notice period should be worked, and this will start on 8 January 2024.

However, there may be circumstances where you wish to waive your notice period and associated pay to leave at an earlier date. This would have to be agreed with your Service depending on service need. You will be required to confirm your wish to waive your notice in writing.

13. I have multiple posts; how will my continuous service date be calculated for each individual post?

Continuous service cannot be double counted. Generally, service from your start date will be attributed to a current post which is the closest match to your first post with the Local Authority. Other posts will be attributed with the start date for that post only.



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14. At what stage in the process will my last date of employment be confirmed?

Your last date of employment will be confirmed when the approval and acceptance process is complete. Further details regarding this process will be provided along with your estimate should your notification of interest be approved.

15. What will happen if I cannot take all my annual leave due to me before I leave?

Normally arrangements should be made for you to take any leave you have accrued prior to your leave date. However, it is appreciated that this is not always possible therefore a payment will be made in lieu of holidays not taken.

16. When would I receive any benefits due to me?

You will receive any compensation/redundancy payment or payments in lieu of holiday accrued with your final salary into your nominated bank account. If applicable you will receive your pension lump sum the month after you leave and your annual pension will be paid in monthly instalments on the 15th of each month, beginning the month after your leaving date.

17. I have less than two years continuous service – does this opportunity apply to me?

No. This opportunity is only applicable to employees with 2 or more years continuous service. “Continuous service” includes all other previous continuous local authority service and service with certain other public bodies. If you are currently employed in more than one post within Aberdeenshire Council, then only the continuous service in the post for which you are applying will be counted.

18. What if I am currently on a secondment?

Your notification of interest will be considered against your substantive post only. If your substantive post is not within an Aberdeenshire Council Service, then this opportunity is not available to you currently.

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19. I have a temporary contract – does this apply to me?

This opportunity is normally available to employees with a permanent contract only. However, if you have a temporary contract of over two years then you may wish to express an interest. The individual circumstances of every application will be considered.

20. I am a Relief/Supply member of staff – does this apply to me?

No, relief/supply staff are not eligible for Voluntary Severance.

21. I have accepted Voluntary Severance for my post. I also have a relief/supply post – do I need to resign from my relief/supply post separately?

This will depend on the nature of the work in the post that you are leaving through voluntary severance and your relief/supply post, including whether the latter is in an area of short supply.

22. Is there an Age Limit for applications?

No - the Voluntary Severance Scheme is open to employees of all age groups. However, your age may affect what access you have to pension benefits based on your pension scheme regulations. If approved, you will be provided with the Voluntary Severance benefits that would apply in your individual circumstance.

23. If I don't express an interest now, what opportunities may there be in the future?

This current voluntary severance exercise is being run to address the budget considerations in this financial year, April 2023 to March 2024. There may also be future exercises in which you can express an interest as and when these happen. Nevertheless, the council is always open to considering whether an individual employee's voluntary severance from the organisation is beneficial taking into account the potential impact on service delivery; retaining the required balance of future skills and experience; and affordability.

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24. Have Trade Unions been involved?

Yes – the Trade Unions have been advised of the Voluntary Severance Scheme and are supportive of this scheme.

25. Where can I get advice on whether I should accept a Voluntary Severance package?

You should obtain advice and consult with an Independent Financial Advisor.

26. Can I re-apply for another role with Aberdeenshire Council after I leave on Voluntary Severance?

Re-employment would be in exceptional circumstances only, i.e., where employment is in a recognised area of short supply and where there has been the appropriate statutory break in service as detailed in the Redundancy Modification Order.

27. What is the Redundancy Modification Order?

The Redundancy Modification Order is the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc) (Modification) Order 1999 (as amended), which stipulates that any offer of future employment would be made after the current post terminates and the new post commences after 4 weeks of that date.

28. What if I still have unanswered questions about Voluntary Severance?

For further information email askHR (please ensure you add in the subject line - Voluntary Severance) or phone 01467 534400. Details can also be found on the employee [askHR Portal](#).

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29. Where can I access the Voluntary Severance application form?

You can find the application by clicking the following link: [Voluntary Severance Application](#)

Alternatively, if you are not on a computer you can scan the QR code below by using the camera on your mobile phone.



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