

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION – MANAGING EARLY DEPARTURES FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SECTOR:

Key Point/Checklist/ Recommendation	Council Position Yes/No	Action/Response:	Date for Implementation	Lead Officer
The main principles of good practice for early departure schemes				
Workforce planning				
Are early departure schemes driven by the needs of the Council and not the wishes of individuals?	Yes	This has been done up to now through the Service Review Programme and in future will be considered as part of the new Service Prioritisation process.		
Are workforce and service plans used to help shape proposals for early departure schemes, identifying parts of the organisation or particular grades where there is greatest need for reducing the number of employees?	Yes	As above		
Does the Council ensure that they retain sufficient skills and experience before authorising individual early departures?	No	The Council is currently piloting workforce planning and will be introduced throughout the Council. Workforce planning will be integrated with the Service Prioritisation process to ensure relevant skills and experience are retained.	Ongoing - TBC	Lynn Finlay
Option appraisal				
Does the Council consider alternatives to early departures in order to avoid unnecessary costs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural turnover Vacancy management Reducing overtime levels Reducing the use of agency or contract staff 	Yes	Council considers all of the stated methods of avoiding early departures to avoid unnecessary costs.		
Policies and procedures				
Are policies and procedures for early departure schemes regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of the Council, results of earlier schemes and relevant guidance?	Yes	Policies and procedures are reviewed annually and agreed with Trades Unions. The Policy on Discretions applied is reviewed in line with changes to the statutory redundancy provision and Pension Scheme Regulations.	In place	Lynn Finlay
Do Policies and procedures cover issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives, such as 'added years', that might be available Criteria for the use of ill-health retirals Restrictions on any return to employment within the Council 	Yes	Policy on Pension Discretions details incentives/enhancements. Criteria for the use of ill health retirals is driven by an Occupational Health Doctor approved by the pension scheme.		

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		There is no restriction on any return to employment within the Council other than employees who have received a redundancy payment cannot return, in any capacity, within a 4 week period		
Does the Council consult with trade unions or staff representatives to help ensure that they are seen as fair and reasonable?	Yes	Trades union representatives are invited to take part in the service review process and are part of the project team examining options.		
Are policies and procedures clearly communicated to all staff and transparent to the public?	Yes	Displayed on the Council's Hub which can be accessed via Council PCs. The Redundancy Policy and Pension Discretions policy will be made available on the Council's website.	Implemented 30 June 2013	Aileen McCosh
Are policies and procedures consistently applied to all staff, except where the Council's programme is being targeted at specific grades or business areas?	Yes	Policies clearly state that they apply to all employees of the Council.		
Business Cases				
Are proposals supported by clear business cases, showing the full additional costs of early departures and their anticipated savings?	Yes	Service Review Process states business case and costs/savings are considered before approval by the Head of Strategic Finance/Executive Director.		
Are there restrictions on staff who have accepted an early departure package from being re-employed by their previous employer?	No	If they start back within 4 weeks of their termination date then they have to pay back the redundancy payment. Otherwise no restrictions.		
Do business cases included 'strain on the fund' and 'added years' costs, borne by pension funds and recharged to employers, not just those costs directly charged to the Council's budget?	No	The business case only includes the employee post saving.		
Do business cases take into account the costs of any replacement staff employed at lower pay scales?	Yes	Service Review Process states business case and costs/savings are considered before approval by the Head of Strategic Finance/Executive Director.		
Does the Council ensure they are using appropriate and justifiable payback periods?	Yes	Policy on pension discretions states that payback period is 3 years.		
Compromise agreements				
Is the Council clear about which	Yes	All compromise agreements are		

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employment rights they expect individuals to waive in return for <i>ex gratia</i> payments?		dealt with by the council's legal department.		
Are compromise agreements used to help silence whistleblowers and limit public accountability?	No	There is a confidentiality clause but not to silence whistleblowers and limit public accountability.		
Independent scrutiny				
Do Councillors oversee early departure schemes, ensuring that proposals represent value for money?	Yes	Council approves the Policy and any departure needs to be approved by Council		
While there may be some need for confidentiality, are proposals affecting senior managers subject to detailed formal scrutiny by Councillors?	No	Same process as all other employees as detailed within this document.		
Do costs presented to Councillors detail separately the costs borne by the Council as a result of offering 'added years' (the added years' lump sum and capitalised 'added year' costs)?	No	Where they do not meet the 3 year payback it would require the full council approval.		
Monitoring				
Do Senior managers monitor progress to help ensure that planned savings are realised and review future proposals accordingly?	Yes	Implementation is reported via the Corporate Improvement Board.		
Do Senior managers report regularly to Councillors, detailing the cost of early departure schemes, and providing assurance that business cases are accurate and that value for money has been achieved?	Yes	Where the cost or saving has been inaccurate or undeliverable then this will be reported to Council, otherwise it is assumed that business cases were accurate, savings have been removed and value for money achieved.		
Openness				
Is the Council open in their annual reports and accounts about the costs of early departures and the savings they have generated?	Yes	There is an exit packages note within the annual accounts which details the cost of early departures and the number of FTE. As part of the budget pack, the savings and FTE reduction are noted.		