This document is designed to answer some of the frequently asked questions in relation to the Severance Policy. If you have any queries that do not appear on this document then you can contact Human Resources via email on hrhelpdesk@falkirk.gov.uk or by telephone on 01324 506222.

**Section 1 – General Information**

**Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy covers all employees of the Council, irrespective of age. Your age affects any entitlement to pension benefits as part of this process.

**Section 2 – Application and Offer Process**

**If I apply, when will I find out?**

Each case requires very careful assessment and detailed calculations. This may take a number of weeks but will be done as quickly as possible. There are no timescales on this process.

**How long is any offer open for?**

There will be a response date on any letter sent to you and you must respond by this date to indicate whether you wish to take up any offer made to you. The offer will be time limited and there can be no guarantee that a similar offer may be made in the future. Depending on the circumstances, there can be very tight deadlines on returning paperwork.

**What if me and my colleague both apply - who gets to go?**

Applications for severance will be assessed by the Service Director in consultation with other relevant Chief Officers. The financial impact and replacement strategy will be considered and if necessary the selection criteria noted in the policy will be used. Severance proposals will be made on the basis of financial benefit, operational improvements and service delivery implications for the Council.

**What if I’ve applied before?**

If you have applied before and have not been made an offer, you can apply again however there is no guarantee that an offer will be made in the future. Your case will still be reconsidered.

**Will the Council think I lack commitment if I apply?**

Absolutely not. If you may be interested, please do not let any concerns such as this stop you from applying. Your details will be registered and forwarded on to your Service Director for consideration. This will in no way impact on any decisions taken at a later date in relation to continued employment with Falkirk Council and there is no requirement for you to accept any offer made to you.
Section 3 – What Benefits Will I Receive?

What options are available under the scheme?

- Voluntary severance of pension scheme members
- Voluntary severance of non-scheme members

For the options above, Severance is where an employee leaves the Council’s service by agreement with the Council, through business efficiency and is awarded compensation for loss of future employment. Any termination is by agreement and may be in response to a corporate exercise or to an individual expression of interest.

- Voluntary redundancy
- Compulsory redundancy

The scheme allows for termination on voluntary and compulsory redundancy.

How much will I get?

This depends on your age, length of service, salary and whether the arrangement is voluntary or on a compulsory basis.

There is a matrix attached as Appendix 4 of the policy which will assist you in identifying the number of weeks pay you may be entitled to. This is based on your age and service.

You should then refer to section 3.2 and 3.3 of the policy.

If the arrangement is on a voluntary basis, you should multiply the number of weeks by 1.5.

If however, you have been notified that your job is at risk of redundancy, and due to a lack of volunteers or other options available this needs to be a compulsory redundancy exercise, then you should multiply the number of weeks from appendix 4 by 1.2.

The resulting number of weeks should be multiplied by your current contractual weekly salary. This should provide you with a general indication of the compensatory payment that you may be awarded. On the grounds of affordability, services can reduce the lump sum offered as long as this does not reduce below the level of statutory redundancy pay (in redundancy situations only).

In addition to the above, if you are over 50 and a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme, you may also be entitled to receive your pension benefits.
What about my pension?

**Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme**

Accrued pension benefits will be released if you retire on redundancy or efficiency grounds and:

- have attained age 50, having been an active member of the Scottish LGPS on 5th April 2006, or
- have attained age 55, and
  - have at least 2 years' scheme membership, or
  - have completed less than 2 years' membership but have transferred in previous pension rights from outwith the Scottish LGPS.

Pension benefits are dependent on scheme membership. There is the opportunity to take a smaller pension in return for a larger lump sum.

Members of the scheme, who neither qualify for retirement benefits nor a refund, can leave their rights deferred in the pension fund for payment at retirement age. Alternatively, you can elect to transfer them to a new pension arrangement.

You are encouraged to contact the Pensions Section for further information where appropriate, before making any decision.

**Scottish Teachers’ Pension Scheme**

The STPS does not allow payment of a compensatory lump sum and payment of mandatory compensation for the early release of pension. Teachers awarded a compensatory lump sum may still elect to access their pension benefits (where eligible) of their own accord but the benefits may be actuarially reduced where the teacher has not reached normal pensionable age.

**Section 4 – What If I Accept/Have Accepted**

**Do I get paid notice?**

If the arrangement is voluntary and by agreement, then no notice will be payable. This is because the reason you are leaving is by mutual agreement and therefore no notice period nor notice pay need be given as the leaving date itself will be agreed by both parties.

This would not be the case in compulsory redundancy situations. Should the Council require to make compulsory redundancies, then in most cases, employees will be required to work their notice.

**Can I accept Severance and apply to work for Falkirk Council in the future?/Can I apply for posts with the Council in the future?**

If you receive a benefit under the Severance Policy, you cannot be re-employed by Falkirk Council, including as a casual worker or on a consultancy basis for Falkirk Council.