



Circular Letter LG (P) 01/2024

1 February 2024

To: Each Chief Executive
Each Human Resources/Corporate Services Director

Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for Local Authority Water Services Staff

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to refer to the introduction of a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for local authority water services staff.

Purpose of the Scheme

2. The purpose of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme is to enable the exit of eligible local authority staff from public water services delivery roles as local authorities withdraw from direct involvement in the public water services system, which is being fully integrated into Uisce Éireann in line with the Government Policy Paper on Water Sector Transformation (February 2021).

Eligibility

3. The Scheme is available to local authority water services staff, as defined in the Master Co-Operation Agreement¹. In accordance with the Framework for Future Delivery of Water Services, all such staff should now be operating under the management and direction of Uisce Éireann on the commencement date of this voluntary redundancy scheme.
4. Local authority water services who wish to avail this Scheme must be members of any of the following superannuation schemes:
 - Local Government Superannuation Scheme (LGSS), or
 - Single Pension Scheme.
5. The Scheme applies to those local authority water services staff who are under preserved pension age at 30 June 2024, and who have already accrued entitlement to preserved superannuation benefits under a local government scheme (2 calendar years' reckonable service) at that date.

¹ The Master Co-Operation Agreement is the agreement between Uisce Éireann and the Local Authority Sector that replaces the previous Service Level Agreements.

6. There will be no automatic right to redundancy; all applications will be considered in the context of the Framework.
7. Employees currently on a career break will not be eligible to apply, however those who are due to resume duty before 30 June 2024 following a career break may apply.

Terms

8. The terms of the Scheme are set out in detail in Appendix A and there is an application form at Appendix B1, with an acceptance form at Appendix B2. This circular including Appendices A, B1 and B2 should be made available to all persons who are eligible to avail of the Scheme. In all cases an offer of acceptance cannot be finalised until a duly completed acceptance form (at Appendix B2) has been signed and submitted by the applicant.
9. The terms of the Scheme provide for the payment of:
 - a) A severance payment of 3 weeks' pay per year of actual service plus statutory entitlement under the Redundancy Payments Acts, or the equivalent, subject to an overall limit of:
 - (i) 2 years pay; or, if less,
 - (ii) one-half of the salary payable to preserved pension age.
 - b) Preserved pension and lump sum payable on attaining preserved pension age (60 or 65, as appropriate).
10. Employees who pay modified PRSI rates (Class D) will receive the equivalent terms to those with statutory entitlements.
11. The scheme will be open to applications from 6 February 2024 to 30 June 2024. Decisions on applications will be made after the closing date with departure dates to be arranged to take place by 30 September 2024.
12. In order to ensure operational stability, an individual's departure date shall be at least 3 months from the date of application for voluntary redundancy. In exceptional circumstances, and only where an early departure may prove incompatible with the safe operation of water services, the departure date of the individual concerned may be necessarily delayed by three months but shall be no later than 31 December 2024.

Decision making process/Oversight arrangements

13. In implementing the Scheme, local authorities shall have regard to the effective discharge of their responsibilities under Section 159 of the Local Government Act 2001 as well as to the Master Co-Operation Agreements signed with Uisce Éireann, in particular to the continued security of supply and safe operation of water services.
14. Each local authority shall keep Uisce Éireann informed regarding applications received and decisions about departure dates in order to allow Uisce Éireann to plan, recruit and train replacement water services staff as required. Local authorities shall engage with Uisce Éireann when selecting the order in which applicants seeking to avail of this Scheme should depart their local authority
15. A decision on an application to avail of the Scheme should be made by a Director of Services as soon as practicable after the closing date with departure dates to be arranged to take place by 30 September 2024.

16. In the event of a decision to refuse an application, the applicant may then appeal, within two weeks, to the Chief Executive to reconsider the decision. The Chief Executive decision, which shall be binding in all cases, must be made within three weeks of the referral.
17. In all cases applicants must be given a decision by 30 September 2024 (*at the latest*).

Filling of vacancies

18. Any vacancy which arises in water services as a result of a person availing of this scheme shall be a matter for Uisce Éireann to address by way of redeployment or recruitment. A local authority shall not have any responsibility in the filling of such vacancies.

Record Keeping/Registrar

19. Local authorities should bring this Circular to the notice of all eligible staff in water services.
20. Queries from local authorities in relation to this Circular should be addressed to Ruth Byrne, Local Government HR, at ruth.byrne@housing.gov.ie
21. Staff should address queries in relation to this Circular to the HR Section of their local authority.

Mise le meas,



**Principal
Local Government HR**