

SHELFORCE

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I am a bit confused as to how long we will get on priority movers. Managers have been briefing us in our one to ones and some are saying we will get 3 months and others are saying it will be 6 months, I would be grateful if I could get this information as it will have an effect on me regarding my VR?

Ans. To support Shelforce staff further, it has been agreed for disabled employees to be registered with Priority Movers for up to 6 months (on a case by case basis) if they are unsuccessful in securing a post within the new structure - please note, this is in addition to the current support that staff are receiving from the In-Source Team.

Q. Will the new consultation process, give more guidance, suitable opportunities, support to staff?

Ans. We are working with the Insource Team, EDO's, the Employment Service as well as a number of other external agencies to offer as much support as possible to employees of Shelforce. It is our intention to arrange for regular one to ones with staff as this proved to be very helpful for both staff and their carers who were able to ask questions based on their own personal circumstances.

We are also working with a number of internal departments and external organisations to provide a package of enhanced support for individuals who may be affected by these proposed changes.

To date we have held the following:

- sessions with In-Source who manage the Priority Movers process, which staff have been registered with for approximately 12 months
- sessions with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- Bridge organising mock interview sessions with AMEY for those staff wishing to take part
- benefits advice sessions with Job Centre Plus
- Independent financial advice sessions with the Money Advice Service.
- We have also planned for the following sessions to be held in the coming weeks should staff wish to take advantage of them:
 - Managing Change
 - Stress – Keeping the balance
 - Confidence and assertiveness training

We are also in consultation with the unions and we have regular meetings set up over the next few months.

A suggestion box has also been set up for staff to add comments to, around the service redesign, which is kept in the reception area of Shelforce. You and your family or carer can post any questions, comments or concerns you may have.

Staffcare are also available to employees. Employees can refer themselves to Staffcare for a variety of reasons: because of work problems, home problems, alcohol/drug

problems, stress management, traumatic experiences at work or home, relationship problems.

StaffCare has recently introduced Stress and Anxiety management groups, this is because group work has been proven to be a very effective clinical intervention (more groups are being developed to help clients to manage specific issues). Referral is through the normal route 0121 464 0999. Clients who wish to participate in a group will be asked to attend for an Initial Consultation to ensure that this is the right intervention for them. All participants in the group are expected to attend for all five sessions; sessions are one and a half hours long.

We have also explained that should you feel it necessary, your GP should also be available to advise you on your own personal circumstances and any particular concerns you may have that relates to your personal circumstance or disability. Please contact your GP direct with any concerns you may have.

Q. If a job goes through Priority Movers, is there a break in service?

Ans. Should you be successful in securing an alternative role via Priority Movers there will be no break in service and your employment with BCC will be counted as continuous.

Q. When will the selection process start?

Ans. We are currently consulting with the Trade Unions as to how staff will be selected for a post in the new structure (assessment and selection process). Further information will be shared with all staff once consultation has ended and a decision is made by BCC's Cabinet on the service redesign of Shelforce.

Q. When will the clock start on the Priority Movers period that all non-selected employees will have?

Ans. Following the assessment/selection process, each employee will have a meeting with a manager to advise them on whether they have been successful or not. For those who are not successful, a date for a further meeting will be set and it is at this meeting that they will be issued with notice of redundancy and will be advised of their end date on Priority Movers.

Q. When will notice of redundancy be given? Does an employee's notice period run concurrently with their time on Priority Movers? i.e. do they get a period of Priority Movers and then notice period or is the notice period within the time on Priority Movers?

Ans. Notice of redundancy will be issued following the selection process and at individual meetings for those staff who have been unsuccessful in securing a post in the new structure. The notice period will begin to run from the date of the meeting. During the notice period we will be working with you to try and find you another job in either BCC or a partner organisation.

Q. Who are “In-Source”?

Ans. In-Source are a team within HR, who support managers and employees with recruitment, career transition, redeployment and placements. They support employees who are at risk of redundancy to find suitable alternative employment.

Q. If you get selected for a GR2 position and don’t want it, do you still get PM status?

Ans. It is unusual for an employee to turn down an opportunity that has been offered to them during a service redesign but should someone decide they don’t want a position, we would meet with them to explore this further e.g. are they anxious as they haven’t done this role before. We would offer training to employees moving into new roles to ensure that they have the support they need. We would look at each situation on a case by case basis and would support the employee in making the best decision based on their individual circumstances. Should you accept a new alternative role your registration with Priority Movers will come to an end.

Q. PDR as part of the selection is unfair because it was not managed properly. People were done as a group and there was no feedback.

Ans. Along with your Trade Union representatives, we are looking at an alternative to PDR scores, having taken on board comments from Shelforce employees.

Assessment and Selection criteria is being discussed with Trade Unions as part of the formal consultation process and will also be shared with all employees prior to any assessment/selection taking place.

Q. Can an employee apply for a promotion within the restructure?

Ans. If there are vacancies within the service redesign for a higher grade, an employee who is at risk of redundancy can apply.

The promotional opportunities will be ring fenced to that particular service to help mitigate compulsory redundancies.

Q. What if the number of positions in a grade are not at risk of being reduced, can an employee still apply for a promotion at the higher grade?

Ans: No. If no employee is at risk in the roles/service area that is being restructured, vacancies will be made available to Priority Movers across the Council who are at the same grade as the vacant post instead, as a way of mitigating compulsory redundancies across the City Council.

Q. Why can’t we start the assessment process now, employees are anxious to know if they have a job or not?

Ans. We are currently in consultation with the Trade Unions and as part of this, we will consult on the assessment and selection process.

Once we have finalised the process, we will share this with all staff, prior to any assessments or selection taking place and it is for these reasons, that we are not in a position to start the assessments now.

Q. Where can I get financial advice or advice on any benefits that I would be entitled to once I've left employment?

Ans. You can speak to your local benefit advisor or BCCs employee benefit advisor on 303 4189. We are also working closely with Job Centre Plus, Advance Housing (DWP Work Choice Prime Contractor) and the Money Advice Service in order to provide additional support for affected employees. We have also arranged for the Local Government Pension Scheme representatives to visit Shelforce for those staff who wish to discuss any matters relating to their pensions.

Q. What is the new Voluntary Redundancy Package?

Ans. Voluntary redundancy entitlement for all approved applications will be three weeks normal pay for each complete year of continuous service for the first 10 years and statutory entitlement for each year of continuous service thereafter, capped at a maximum of 10 years continuous service.

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| • 1 year service | 3 weeks pay |
| • 2 years service | 6 weeks pay |
| • 5 years service | 15 weeks pay |
| • 7 years service | 21 weeks pay |
| • 10 years service | 30 weeks pay |

Q. How much notice will I have to work?

Ans. All employees who are being made redundant must be served their notice period, either contractual or statutory (whichever is the greatest). The contractual and statutory notice periods are...

Contractual notice period is:

- Grade 1 -3 = 1 month (4.345 weeks)
- Grades 4 -5 = 2 months (8.69 weeks)
- Grade 6 and above = 3 months (13.035 weeks)

Statutory notice period is:

- 1 week per completed year of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks

Q. What is the approval process for VR?

Ans. The process for those that have submitted a VR request is as follows. Your manager has gathered a list of applicants and completed a business case to ask for these applications to be agreed. An assessment of the applications has been made

against information contained within the business case and a meeting has been held to approve these applications.

Q. What will happen to my pension?

Ans. If you are 55 or over then you will be automatically entitled to your pension payments. You can access what your benefits will be on-line at www.wmpfonline.com. If you are not entitled to your pension payments then these will be deferred until retirement age.

Q. Could you tell me please, if a person is made redundant and they are over 55, would they be made to take their pension or could they freeze it and take it later?

Ans. Having checked with the Pension Team, they have advised that the pension regulations in cases of redundancy state that early payment will be made therefore the pension cannot be deferred.

Q. Can I still apply for VR?

Ans. The deadline for VR applications was set for 20/3/13 and no further applications for VR can be processed at the moment. This situation is being reviewed and staff have been asked that if they are interested in leaving on VR then they should submit a signed VR request application form to their manager or supervisor which will be held on file. There is no guarantee that there will be any further opportunity for VR application to be considered.

Q. If you sign VR you have a 2 day cooling off period, when I mentioned this to our Union Rep he did not think that this was true. Can you please confirm whether there is a 2 day cooling off period or not.

Ans. Employees can decline the opportunity to take VR up to the point of signing the paperwork. Once the VR paperwork has been signed by the employee and the manager, then the employee will have agreed to leave by way of voluntary redundancy. There is no '2 day cooling off' period.

Q. I spoke to the parent of one of our shop floor staff yesterday. She thought the only option available to her daughter was to take VR as she felt her job at Shelforce was at risk. Would it be wise to set up some sort of chart to evidence that Carers have been provided with detailed explanation of what Priority Movers is and that they understand what it means to ensure that no one has been missed?

Ans. In Source are looking to set up a session for Carers to explain what Priority Movers does - it will be at the discretion of each Carer as to whether or not they wish to attend. If a member of staff is subject to compulsory redundancy, every effort will be made to identify suitable alternative or alternative employment. A stakeholder group has been set up to identify support opportunities both within and outside BCC.