

20th November 2025

Industrial Relations Circular 11-25

2025 IR 11.25



Implementation of Chief Executive Pay Review

Council Leaders have taken the decision to implement a new pay framework for Scottish local authority Chief Executives. This new framework is based on the findings of an independent review (the Docherty report) which was commissioned jointly by COSLA and ALACE in fulfilment of a long-standing collective agreement that a review would be undertaken.

This circular provides the information councils require to implement the new Chief Executive pay framework, which is based on Option 3 within the Docherty report, with an additional islands supplement, and updated to reflect the 2025-2027 Chief Officials pay award.

Per the decision of Leaders on 31 October 2025, the new pay framework will be implemented with effect from 1 November 2025, with phasing of pay uplifts in two steps a year apart. This means that half of the uplift resulting from the review will be paid from 1 November 2025, with the second half of the uplift leading to full implementation paid from 1 November 2026. This circular provides updated salary information effective from:

- 1 November 2025 – 31 March 2026 (applying 50% of review uplift value)
- 1 April 2026 – 31 October 2026 (applying 3.5% pay award agreed in July 2025)
- 1 November 2026 – 31 March 2027 (full review salaries applied)

Please note that this circular accounts for the 2025-2027 pay award. It therefore supersedes the Chief Executive salary information contained within CO-155 Salaries Agreement 2025-27.

Appendix 1 New salaries for chief executives effective 1 November 2025, 1 April 2026, and 1 November 2026

Appendix 2 Implementation guidance

COSLA Employers' Team
November 2025

employersfunction@cosla.gov.uk

Circulated to: Chief Executives, Heads of Human Resources, Directors of Finance

Appendix 1

Chief Executives Salaries with effect from 1 November 2025 – 31 March 2026

Council	Single Point	Incremental		
		Point 1	Point 2	Point 3
Aberdeen City	£192,592	£182,583	£187,585	£192,592
Aberdeenshire	£194,842	£184,720	£189,778	£194,842
Angus	£173,798	£165,140	£169,055	£173,798
Argyll & Bute	£166,043	£157,483	£161,353	£166,043
Clackmannanshire	£149,642	£142,191	£145,918	£149,642
Dumfries & Galloway	£187,412	£177,657	£182,517	£187,412
Dundee City	£187,412	£177,657	£182,517	£187,412
East Ayrshire	£175,813	£167,054	£171,020	£175,813
East Dunbartonshire	£172,143	£163,489	£167,403	£172,143
East Lothian	£163,153	£154,593	£158,870	£163,153
East Renfrewshire	£163,153	£154,593	£158,870	£163,153
Edinburgh, City of	£220,875	£210,277	£215,572	£220,875
Eilean Siar	£149,642	£142,191	£145,918	£149,642
Falkirk	£183,282	£174,314	£178,388	£183,282
Fife	£212,632	£202,160	£207,398	£212,632
Glasgow City	£228,343	£217,621	£222,982	£228,343
Highland	£198,970	£188,865	£193,912	£198,970
Inverclyde	£161,405	£153,033	£156,806	£161,405
Midlothian	£158,331	£149,872	£153,685	£158,331
Moray	£156,676	£149,043	£152,861	£156,676
North Ayrshire	£181,176	£172,313	£176,335	£181,176
North Lanarkshire	£210,230	£199,877	£205,055	£210,230
Orkney Islands	£149,642	£142,191	£145,918	£149,642
Perth & Kinross	£177,873	£169,011	£173,028	£177,873
Renfrewshire	£189,564	£179,701	£184,615	£189,564
Scottish Borders	£172,143	£163,489	£167,403	£172,143
Shetland Islands	£149,642	£142,191	£145,918	£149,642
South Ayrshire	£173,798	£165,140	£169,055	£173,798
South Lanarkshire	£207,879	£197,644	£202,763	£207,879
Stirling	£161,225	£152,761	£156,990	£161,225
West Dunbartonshire	£168,521	£159,963	£163,830	£168,521
West Lothian	£186,258	£176,358	£181,312	£186,258

Chief Executives Salaries with effect from 1 April 2026 – 31 October 2026

Council	Single Point	Incremental		
		Point 1	Point 2	Point 3
Aberdeen City	£199,333	£188,973	£194,151	£199,333
Aberdeenshire	£201,661	£191,185	£196,421	£201,661
Angus	£179,881	£170,920	£174,972	£179,881
Argyll & Bute	£171,855	£162,994	£167,000	£171,855
Clackmannanshire	£154,880	£147,168	£151,025	£154,880
Dumfries & Galloway	£193,971	£183,875	£188,905	£193,971
Dundee City	£193,971	£183,875	£188,905	£193,971
East Ayrshire	£181,967	£172,901	£177,005	£181,967
East Dunbartonshire	£178,168	£169,211	£173,262	£178,168
East Lothian	£168,864	£160,004	£164,430	£168,864
East Renfrewshire	£168,864	£160,004	£164,430	£168,864
Edinburgh, City of	£228,606	£217,637	£223,117	£228,606
Eilean Siar	£154,880	£147,168	£151,025	£154,880
Falkirk	£189,697	£180,415	£184,632	£189,697
Fife	£220,075	£209,235	£214,657	£220,075
Glasgow City	£236,334	£225,238	£230,786	£236,334
Highland	£205,934	£195,475	£200,699	£205,934
Inverclyde	£167,054	£158,389	£162,294	£167,054
Midlothian	£163,872	£155,117	£159,064	£163,872
Moray	£162,160	£154,259	£158,211	£162,160
North Ayrshire	£187,518	£178,344	£182,507	£187,518
North Lanarkshire	£217,588	£206,873	£212,232	£217,588
Orkney Islands	£154,880	£147,168	£151,025	£154,880
Perth & Kinross	£184,098	£174,926	£179,084	£184,098
Renfrewshire	£196,199	£185,991	£191,077	£196,199
Scottish Borders	£178,168	£169,211	£173,262	£178,168
Shetland Islands	£154,880	£147,168	£151,025	£154,880
South Ayrshire	£179,881	£170,920	£174,972	£179,881
South Lanarkshire	£215,155	£204,562	£209,860	£215,155
Stirling	£166,868	£158,108	£162,485	£166,868
West Dunbartonshire	£174,419	£165,561	£169,564	£174,419
West Lothian	£192,777	£182,531	£187,658	£192,777

Chief Executive Salaries with effect from 1 November 2026 – 31 March 2027

Council	Single point	Incremental		
		Point 1	Point 2	Point 3
Aberdeen City	£209,153	£198,696	£203,925	£209,153
Aberdeenshire	£213,809	£203,119	£208,464	£213,809
Angus	£187,350	£177,983	£182,667	£187,350
Argyll & Bute	£183,270	£174,107	£178,689	£183,270
Clackmannanshire	£171,556	£162,978	£167,267	£171,556
Dumfries & Galloway	£200,143	£190,136	£195,140	£200,143
Dundee City	£200,143	£190,136	£195,140	£200,143
East Ayrshire	£191,521	£181,945	£186,733	£191,521
East Dunbartonshire	£187,350	£177,983	£182,667	£187,350
East Lothian	£183,270	£174,107	£178,689	£183,270
East Renfrewshire	£183,270	£174,107	£178,689	£183,270
Edinburgh, City of	£233,494	£221,819	£227,656	£233,494
Eilean Siar	£171,556	£162,978	£167,267	£171,556
Falkirk	£200,143	£190,136	£195,140	£200,143
Fife	£228,409	£216,989	£222,699	£228,409
Glasgow City	£238,692	£226,757	£232,724	£238,692
Highland	£213,809	£203,119	£208,464	£213,809
Inverclyde	£175,375	£166,606	£170,991	£175,375
Midlothian	£179,279	£170,315	£174,797	£179,279
Moray	£179,279	£170,315	£174,797	£179,279
North Ayrshire	£195,785	£185,995	£190,890	£195,785
North Lanarkshire	£223,435	£212,263	£217,849	£223,435
Orkney Islands	£171,556	£162,978	£167,267	£171,556
Perth & Kinross	£195,785	£185,995	£190,890	£195,785
Renfrewshire	£204,599	£194,369	£199,484	£204,599
Scottish Borders	£187,350	£177,983	£182,667	£187,350
Shetland Islands	£171,556	£162,978	£167,267	£171,556
South Ayrshire	£187,350	£177,983	£182,667	£187,350
South Lanarkshire	£218,569	£207,641	£213,105	£218,569
Stirling	£179,279	£170,315	£174,797	£179,279
West Dunbartonshire	£183,270	£174,107	£178,689	£183,270
West Lothian	£204,599	£194,369	£199,484	£204,599

Appendix 2

Implementation Guidance

Explanation of salary calculations

The Chief Executive salaries contained within this circular should be implemented by councils effective from the dates specified. An explanation of the calculations for each set of salaries is provided in the table below:

Revised salaries effective date	Explanation
1 November 2025 – 31 March 2026	<p>These salaries have been calculated by adding half of the total uplift value resulting from the review for each salary, to the existing salary (existing salary effective from 1 April 2025, reflecting the 4% pay award).</p> <p>This is in line with the Leaders agreement that the new framework should be implemented from 1 November 2025, in two phases one year apart. This is the first phase of the review implementation.</p>
1 April 2026 – 31 October 2026	<p>These salaries have been calculated by applying the 3.5% pay award to the new salaries effective 1 November 2025 (as a result of the first phase of the review implementation).</p> <p>This is to reflect the agreed Chief Officials pay award effective 1 April 2026 which Chief Executives are contractually entitled to receive.</p>
1 November 2026 – 31 March 2027	<p>These salaries have been calculated by applying the 3.5% pay award value to the total target salaries for 2025/26 resulting from the review (i.e. the salaries set by the new pay framework, with full uplifts applied).</p> <p>This means that the final new salaries from 1 November 2026 are set as per the new pay framework (with full uplift implemented), with the agreed pay award effective 1 April 2026 applied to the new salary values. This completes the second and final phase of the review implementation.</p>

Incremental progression

Across councils, as of 31 October 2025, some current Chief Executive post-holders are on the single point salary, whilst others are on one of the increments. For those

post-holders who are currently on the single point salary (at 31 October 2025), revised salary levels resulting from this review should be based on the single point across each phase of implementation.

For those post-holders who are currently on one of the increments (i.e., point 2), it is advised that implementation of the review should commence from that same increment in the revised salaries (i.e., point 2), with progression through the increments per council policy.

As decided by council Leaders, for future appointments to the Chief Executive role the default position will be to use incremental progression and appoint to point 1 of the scale (with progression through the increments in line with council policy) except where the circumstances of the successful candidate justify appointing at a higher increment.

If a Chief Executive is appointed during the period of this review being phased in (i.e. between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2027), the appointee should be appointed at point 1 of the salary scale currently in place at that stage of the phasing, except where the circumstances of the successful candidate justify appointing at a higher increment.

Future reviews

Council Leaders agreed that a 5 yearly cycle of review of Chief Executive remuneration would be put in place effective from the date of implementation.

This will consist of a simple review process which takes account of any changes in the underlying source data used to develop the new Chief Executive Pay Framework (i.e. any change in relativities as a result in changes to Total Estimated Expenditure and changes in the benchmark baseline pay point derived from the Head Teacher pay scale).

Leaders agreed that putting in place a 5 yearly cycle would not preclude an earlier review in response to, for example, recruitment and retention issues. The next review cycle will be undertaken in advance of 1 April 2030 (unless an earlier review is agreed) with the intention of applying any changes at the same time as the annual pay uplift.

Impact on other Chief Officials salaries

COSLA has no authority to set or issue directions about salaries for other senior managers below the Chief Executive. Whilst Chief Executive salaries are agreed at national level, salaries for all other Chief Officials are developed at council level in line with local pay and grading arrangements.

A small number of councils have arrangements in place whereby there is a local contractual agreement to link the salaries of a small number of senior roles to the pay of the Chief Executive. In such cases the council should determine how their contractual agreement should be fulfilled in line with their local obligations.

All decisions about pay review arrangements for other Chief Official roles are for councils to consider at local level. As a minimum any considerations should include equality issues.

It should be noted that the differential used in the Docherty report between Directors of Education and Head Teachers is nominal, for the sole purpose of setting the lowest Chief Executive scale point (the same approach as was used in the McIntosh report, which was the basis for the previous Chief Executive pay framework in place since 2001). As noted above, COSLA does not have authority to decide the pay level of locally agreed senior manager roles. For example, the figures in the report are not intended to determine that a role such as Director of Education should be 10% above that of the best paid Head Teacher in the council.