National Pay Agreement 2015

Agreement has been reached on pay restoration for 2016-2018

Following intensive discussions, a draft agreement has been reached to begin the process of pay restoration.

The Agreement will be known as the “Lansdowne Road Agreement”.

While more detail will issue shortly, the following are the main points of interest to members:

**Haddington Road Agreement**

- The Haddington Road Agreement, including its protections, will be extended to cover 1st July 2016 to September 2018.

**Pension Levy and Pay Increases (those earning up to €65,000)**

- The Pension Related Deduction on Pension Levy will be adjusted twice in 2016. Each adjustment will reduce the levy – and therefore increase pay – by €1000 over the course of the year. These reductions will happen on 1st January 2016 (worth €600) and 1st September 2016 (worth €400). This will be done by increasing the earnings exempt from the levy from
€15,000 per annum currently to €24,750 on 1st January 2016 and to €28,750 on 1st September 2016. All earnings below these amounts will, from these dates, be exempt from the levy. The effect is an increase in pay in 2016 of €1,000 per person.

- The elimination of the levy for people who earn no more than €31,000 (Full Time) would deliver less than €1,000. Therefore, staff earning less than this amount will receive an additional 2.5% increase in salaries up to €24,000 and 1% on amounts between €24,001 and €31,000. This will be effective from 1st January 2016 and, again, will apply only to staff who are full time who are earning less than €31,000.

- To continue to deliver increases in income through reductions in the Pension Levy in 2017 would result in practically every work-sharer, nearly all of whom in the entire Public Service earn less than €28,750, receiving no increase. Therefore, the increase for all Public Servants in 2017 will be delivered in the form of a pro-rata flat-rate increase on all full-time pay rates of €1,000 on all pay rates up to €65,000 from 1st September 2017.

- As a consequence, Public Servants will increase their Full Time equivalent earnings by €1,000 in both 2016 (via Pension Levy adjustments) and 2017 (via flat-rate increase for those earning up to €65,000). The increase in 2017 will be pro rata to ensure that worksharers are also guaranteed a pro-rata increase.

**Pension Levy and Pay Increases (Those earning €65,000+)**

- Those earning €65,000+ will receive the benefit of the aforementioned Pension Levy adjustments (totalling €1,000) during 2016.

- Additionally, the restoration dates in the Haddington Road Agreement (in respect of the third pay cut) of half on 1st April 2017 and half on 1st January 2018 remain unchanged.

**Working Time & Flexi Time**

- The question of restoring working time was raised in discussions. Due to the cost involved and the limited money available, it was not possible to progress the matter. However, the issue of Flexi Carry Over will be referred back to General Council. That body will agree a six-month review exercise, within which time staff will be allowed to take 1.5 days Flexi Leave per Flexi-period. Following the six-month pilot, the outcome of the exercise will be reviewed. If, as expected, no major operational issues arise, it is anticipated that this facility will be restored in full.

- The removal of the Flexi Time facility for new APs since 2013 is an issue of interest to this union and was discussed. While it was not possible to get agreement to re-instate it, the impact on people applying for such posts is to be reassessed, following which the matter will be discussed further.

**Community Welfare Officers/Combat Poverty Staff**

- The pay anomaly affecting former Community Welfare Officers and former Combat Poverty staff will be resolved with effect from 1st January 2016.
Promotions and Competitions

There are no proposed changes to terms and conditions of employment in the Agreement. However, the union raised an issue of major concern in the talks. Since ‘Towards 2016’ it is agreed that 20% of AP posts (and one-sixth of HEO posts) may be filled by public competition. The Civil Service Renewal Plan speaks of moving to 100% such recruitment – i.e., no internal promotion to AP within the Civil Service. A suggestion in late 2014, by the Official Side, of commencing with 50% open AP competition was rejected by the Executive Committee. The Civil Service Management Board (of Secretaries General) is understood to have rejected this figure also for the opposite reason - they believe apparently that it is inadequate (they are understood to wish to open 60% of AP posts to open competition). While this draft agreement commits parties to cooperate with the Government’s various reform plans, the text includes provision for negotiation and arbitration on any Industrial Relations issue. Accordingly, this Union is referring the issue of promotion to AP to arbitration immediately. A ballot of members on the outcome of these negotiations will be delayed until the result of this arbitration is known.

What happens next?

A meeting with Branch Officers will take place shortly. Once the arbitration on AP competitions has been held, the Executive Committee will organise a ballot of members on the matter of the acceptance of this new pay deal. The PSEU will endeavour to ensure that each member has the information they need to make an informed decision. We will meet with as many members as possible to answer questions and to explain the details of the Agreement in the run-up to the ballot.

The full text of the agreement can be found here.

We encourage members to send in their questions and queries to questions@pseu.ie assist us in developing a list of FAQ’s for all members. While we may not be able to respond directly, we will include answers to the most commonly asked questions on our website.

Tom Geraghty

General Secretary

Please note that the PSEU will endeavour to keep you up to date by issuing further newsletters up to the conclusion of the ballot.