Proposed Public Service Stability Agreement

FAQ

Click here to download a copy of the proposed agreement, and here to download tables showing the impact on pay and pensions.

Why is this agreement being negotiated now, and until when will it run?

The proposed agreement was negotiated to succeed the Lansdowne Road Agreement concluded in 2015, which was due to expire in 2018. This proposal, if agreed, will extend the LRA to the end of 2020.

What impact will the agreement have on my overall income?

- By 2020, over 90% of public servants will be out of FEMPI pay provisions, and almost a quarter will have exited the pension levy in full and will not be subjected to increased pension contributions
- Those workers who are not fully out of the FEMPI pay cuts by the end of this proposed agreement, in 2020, will have their pay fully restored during 2021/2022
- 73% of public servants gain more than 7% by 2020
- 1st January 2018: 1% pay adjustment
- 1st October 2018: 1% pay adjustment
- 1st January 2019: Pension levy threshold up from €28,750 to €32,000 (worth €325 p.a.)
- 1st January 2019: 1% pay adjustment for those earning less than €30,000
- 1st September 2019: 1.75% pay adjustment
- 1st January 2020: Pension levy threshold increased to €34,500 (worth €250 p.a.)
- 1st October 2020: 2% pay adjustment

I’ll be exiting the pension levy – but will I have to pay additional contributions?

Between 2018 and 2019 the pension levy ceiling will be increased from €28,750 to €34,500 for everybody except those who benefit from ‘fast accrual’ pension arrangements. This will be worth a total of €575 per year. The remainder will remain as an additional pension contribution.

Staff who joined the public service on or after 1st January 2013 will pay a smaller additional contribution. This reflects the fact that their pension benefits are less favourable than staff who joined before that date.

Staff who currently enjoy ‘fast accrual’ pension arrangements (ie, where it takes fewer years’ service to accrue full pension benefits) will pay most, with no adjustment to their existing pension levy contribution.
What about the ‘Croke Park hours’?

Unite has consistently argued that the so-called ‘Croke Park Hours’ were introduced as a cost-saving measure rather than a productivity measure. It has not been possible to negotiate a general return to pre-Haddington Road working hours. However, staff will have two windows (January-April 2018 and January-April 2021) during which they can revert to their previous working hours with their pay being reduced commensurately on a pro-rata basis.

What about outsourcing and agency staffing?

Unions succeeded in defending the outsourcing protections won during the Croke Park and Haddington Road negotiations: management cannot cite labour costs when making the case for ‘external service delivery’, or outsourcing.

With regard to agency staffing, management will be required to engage with unions to minimise the use of agency workers.

What about Saturday working?

Although the proposals allow for rostering reviews subject to service or operational needs, they acknowledge the need for rosters to ensure ‘predictability of attendance’, and no roster changes will be able to be introduced without agreement.

There will be no change to existing Saturday premium payments.

What do the proposals say about new entrants, recruitment and retention?

New entrant pay scales were introduced by the Government in 2011, without agreement. In 2013, secured an agreement to merge new entrant pay scales with existing pay scales: i.e. new entrants were placed on the old rates albeit with two additional incremental points.

The proposed Public Service Stability Agreement provides for a 12-month process in which the Public Service Pay Commission would explore how best to improve scales that were lengthened.

Under the proposals, unions can also make submissions to the Public Service Pay Commission on recruitment and retention issues identified in its report. The Commission will then do an analysis of the causes of the problems in each specific area and recommend options to deal with them by the end of 2018; these recommendations will then be considered by unions and management.

The proposals also commit the parties “to discuss” more open recruitment “where this is appropriate to meet particular organisational needs.”

The proposals include some safeguards regarding the use of internships, clinical placements, work experience and job activation measures.
What happens now?

Unite will convene a General Meeting of our public sector workplace representatives in the late summer, with a view to deciding what recommendation, if any, will accompany the subsequent ballot, and the arrangements and timeline for that ballot.

In the meantime, representatives and members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the terms of the proposed agreement, and to discuss its implications at branch meetings, industrial sector committees and in their workplaces.

In the event of any queries please contact Janet Murphy (janet.murphy@unitetheunion.org).