

# Croke Park – Revised proposals

AS WE went to press, revised proposals were emerging for nurses, midwives and all public servants, following a new round of discussions under the auspices of the LRC. Full information, with regard to these revised proposals is detailed in a special insert in this journal. The arrangements for workplace information meetings, combined with balloting opportunities, will be finalised, locally, and made known to members in every workplace/community care area.

There is no doubt that the previous rejection, of the first proposals on extending the Croke Park agreement, has led to improvements/changes being brought forward. This reality confirms the success of the NO campaign, led by the INMO, which created the opportunity to secure changes to the previous proposals. The new proposals contain many significant changes which now fall to be examined by every member.

The government side insisted that the working week, for all public servants, must be increased. Therefore the new proposals still include a requirement for a 39-hour week for nurses/midwives. Details of how we have sought to mitigate this demand are covered in the insert. This includes the possibility, through further discussions, of agreeing how all hours, worked by nurses and midwives, are recorded and counted so that the day of unpaid work, at the end of a shift or through a missed meal break, would be over. All flexible working is maintained and there is also a review clause which allows for a re-examination of this increase in 2016.

The revised proposals include the maintenance of double pay, on Sundays/Public Holidays, which prevents the permanent pay cut, of up to 7.5%, for nurses/midwives working 5/7, that was contained in the rejected set of proposals. This was one of the fundamental reasons why we sought a no vote, in the previous ballot. The maintenance of double pay must be perceived as positive as it maintains income in these difficult times.

Another issue that was the subject of intense negotiations was the government proposal to introduce a nurse/midwife graduate placement programme at 80% of the staff nurse scale. In the revised proposals the salary has been increased to 85% and 90% and all participants can undertake a certificate level qualification during the two years. This improvement, although welcome, is not what we had sought but it is better than what was previously proposed.

The new proposals also include positive developments on the Senior Staff Nurse and long term actors issues. However the temporary pay cut, for all public servants earning over €65,000, remains with some measures to alleviate same.

The government has also confirmed that it is bringing forward legislation that will provide, in the absence of acceptance of these revised measures, for the following:

- Permanent pay cuts for all public servants earning more than €65,000
- A three-year freeze on all increments for all public servants



- The power for individual Ministers to bring into law, by circular letter, increases in working hours and reductions in non-core pay, eg. premiums/night duty without recourse to discussion or consultation.

A detailed summary, of the revised proposals, is inserted in this journal. I must recommend to every member that they read and study this insert, attend the information meetings in your workplace before casting your ballot in the coming weeks.

Members must now make a very difficult choice between these proposals and the reality that if they are rejected permanent cuts will be introduced and we will have to go into dispute possibly by ourselves.

All I can say to every member, as you read the revised proposals and cast your ballot, is that the INMO was the last to leave the negotiating table. We sincerely believe that any possible improvement that could be made, on the previous proposals by negotiation, have been made at this time.

**Liam Doran**  
General Secretary, INMO



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**WIN,**  
MedMedia Publications,  
25 Adelaide Street,  
Dun Laoghaire,  
Co Dublin.  
Tel: 01-280 3967  
Fax: 01-280 7076  
Email: [nursing@medmedia.ie](mailto:nursing@medmedia.ie)  
Website: [www.medmedia.ie](http://www.medmedia.ie)

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**INMO Journal Co-ordinator:** Ann Keating,  
Tel: 046-954 9315 Email [annkeating@eircom.net](mailto:annkeating@eircom.net)

#### INMO correspondence to:

Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation,  
Whitworth Building,  
North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.  
Tel: 01-664 0600  
Fax: 01-661 0466

Email: [inmo@inmo.ie](mailto:inmo@inmo.ie) Website: [www.inmo.ie](http://www.inmo.ie)