

# BRIEFING FOR INMO MEMBERS

## EMPLOYED IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE ON THE 2024 - 2026 PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT



### Have talks on public sector pay concluded?

A new public sector pay agreement has been negotiated. The proposed agreement was published on 26th January 2024, following two months of challenging negotiations.

Going into the negotiations the union side had a clear set of priorities agreed by the Public Services Committee of ICTU on 27th September 2023: that any new agreement would address the rising cost of living, especially for low-to middle- earners, that it would contain provisions which would allow industrial relations claims to be pursued in the normal manner and it would contain a measure to stabilise the agreement through the inclusion of a new local bargaining clause.

The talks adjourned on 10th January after union negotiators rejected a Government offer totalling 8.5%. It is the view of the negotiators that the agreement reached on Friday 26th represents the “maximum achievable through negotiation at this moment.”

The pay terms of the new agreement are valued at 10.25% over 2.5 years.

The improvements in the pay adjustments due in 2024 – valued at 4.25% for the year – would mean that public service workers would receive more money in the first year than originally envisaged in the Government’s initial pay offer, providing a noticeable difference in pay this year at a time when workers are still feeling the impact of three consecutive years of inflation.

The pay provisions in each year of the agreement will deliver more for lower paid workers.

### What are the pay terms?

The proposed Public Sector Pay adjustments for the period 1st January 2024 to 30th June 2026 are as follows:

#### 2024

- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 2.25% or €1,125, whichever is greater, from 1st January 2024
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% on 1st June 2024
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% or €500, whichever is greater, on 1st October 2024.

#### 2025

- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 2% or €1,000, whichever is greater, on 1st March 2025
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% on 1st August 2025
- The first phase of local bargaining of 1% on 1st September 2025

#### 2026

- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% or €500, whichever is greater, on 1st February 2026
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of 1% on 1st June 2026.
- As per previous agreements, there are restrictions on unions lodging any ‘cost-increasing’ claims for improvements in pay or conditions during the lifetime of the agreement, if accepted. However, there are specific exceptions to this including the local bargaining clause.



## How do lower paid workers benefit more?

In percentage terms, the package is worth an additional 10.25% between January 2024 and June 2026. However, the flat rate increase of €1125 in January 2024; €500 in October 2024; €1000 in March 2025 and €500 in February 2026 means a higher percentage increase for workers who earn below €50,000.

This includes 4th year students, most Staff Nurses and Midwives and many Enhanced Practice Nurses and Midwives.

## What is meant by Local Bargaining?

A local bargaining clause is different to the sectoral bargaining arrangements that were included in Building Momentum. Local bargaining terms included in the agreement would allow trade unions to negotiate up to an additional 3% of payroll costs, inclusive of allowances, for particular grades, groups or categories of employee.

Detailed arrangements for local bargaining are to be agreed by the 30th of June this year. Local negotiations could then take place between July 2024 and June 2025. To the greatest extent possible agreements would be secured through direct negotiations.

This process will provide opportunities for specific groups, grades and categories to deal with issues of particular concern, including structural changes, and to have those addressed through the additional 3% secured under the terms of the new agreement.

The first phase of local bargaining is due on 1st September 2025, equivalent to 1% of payroll costs. The remaining balance, equivalent to 2% of payroll costs, will be due to be implemented during the term of a successor agreement.

## What is the duration of the proposed agreement?

If the agreement is ratified by union members in a ballot, the agreement would cover the period from 1st January 2024 to 30th June 2026.

## What does the INMO recommend?

The INMO Executive Council met on 29th January and after considering the proposals in full, they are recommending that members vote in favour of the proposals.

## Will INMO members vote on the proposed deal?

Yes. The INMO will commence an in-person ballot of members employed in the public sector from the 7th of February alongside an information campaign. The ballot will close on March 15th. The ballot count will take place in INMO HQ on Tuesday 19th March.

## What about premium pay and allowances?

Premium pay (for night, weekend, or public holiday work) is based on your basic hourly salary. Each time your basic salary increases, so too will the premium pay.

Fixed pensionable allowances in the nature of pay (e.g. location and qualification allowances) will also increase by the above proposed percentage increases for 2024, 2025 and 2026.



### **What about part-time workers, job-sharers, etc?**

If the proposed agreement is accepted, pay adjustments will be delivered through revised pay scales. Part-time workers and others who don't work full-time hours will get pro-rata adjustments based on the number of hours they work.

### **What happens if there are further changes to the economy or the cost-of-living crisis worsens?**

Like the previous agreement, Building Momentum, the proposed new agreement contains the same provision to review the terms of the agreement "where the underlying assumptions of the agreement need to be revisited." This provision, for example, enabled unions to seek review of Building Momentum in 2022 because of high and sustained inflation, which was not anticipated when that agreement was negotiated in 2020.

### **What are the implications for public service pensioners?**

The negotiators secured a commitment that the pay increases would be applied to public service pensions for the duration of the agreement. In the main, this means that pension payments will be adjusted in line with pay adjustments for serving staff.

Pensions are adjusted in line with inflation (the Consumer Price Index, or CPI) in the case of the single public service pension scheme, which applies to all civil and public servants who entered public service employment on or after 1st January 2013. This means that the pensions of members of this scheme are not affected by pay movements, including those in the proposed agreement.

### **Who can vote on this proposed agreement?**

INMO members, who are employed by the public service (HSE & Section 38 agencies) and are affected by the terms, including 4th year student nurses on 36-week clinical work placement, will be balloted.

### **I am an agency worker, what does this mean for me?**

As agency workers are not directly employed by the public service, they would not be eligible to vote on the proposed deal. However, they are entitled to receive the same basic employment conditions, including pay, as their directly employed counterparts by virtue of the Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Act 2012. That being so, agency nurses and midwives when working in the public health service would stand to benefit if this deal is accepted.

### **Will these proposals directly apply in the private sector and section 39 organisations?**

No, unless there is a specific agreement in place stating that any adjustment will apply. The INMO will meet with members in the private sector on conclusion of the public service ballot, and lodge corresponding claims with these employers. There is a separate process agreed in respect of the Section 39s, 56 and Section 10 employment's between the Government and trade unions. In the event of these proposals being agreed, the unions will re-engage with these employers and the relevant government departments, on same to ensure parity of pay for members working in these employments under the auspices of the WRC.

### **How will a decision on accepting or rejecting the package be reached?**

Individual ICTU affiliated unions representing public servants are now consulting with their members and/or arranging ballots. The unions will meet again to take a collective decision on whether to accept or reject the package on 25th March. Voting at that meeting will be weighted to reflect the number of public servants that each union represents.



### **What about the annual registration renewal fee?**

All nurses and midwives are registered professionals and must pay an annual retention fee to the NMBI to stay registered. This is currently €100 a year. The ICTU Public Service Committee secured agreement at the talks that the fee would be capped at €100 and no increases will be permitted for the duration of the agreement, should it be accepted by members

### **What does the proposed agreement say about outsourcing?**

Strong protections against outsourcing are in this agreement, consistent with other public sector pay agreements dating back to 2010. All public service bodies are required to engage with unions and representative associations in the development of any service delivery plan and must consult prior to the outsourcing of any service.

The new agreement reaffirms the employer's commitment to the use of direct labour "where consistent with efficient and effective public service delivery."

### **When will the Recommendations of the Expert Review Body on Nursing and Midwifery which contain a pay element be Implemented?**

It was agreed at the public sector talks that the three recommendations of the Expert Review Body which were the subject of a Labour Court hearing would be implemented with effect from the date recommended by the Labour Court 30th September 2023.

Those recommendations provide for an extra two incremental points on the top of the CNM/CMM2 scale (new 10th point and LSI) and the merging of the Public Health Nurse scale with the adjusted CNM/CMM2 scales leading to a salary increase for all PHN's. The recommendations also provide that the CNM/CMM3 grade would receive a location allowance or a specialist qualification allowance, if appropriate, which heretofore has only been available up to the CNM/CMM2 level. These recommendations now stand to be implemented from 30th September 2023.

The proposals also provide that the ongoing work under the auspices of the Implementation Group in relation to recommendations 41-43 of the Expert Review Body on Nursing and Midwifery (pay and banding of ADON's; DON's and other related grades) be implemented once implementation groups work is completed.

### **What else is in the proposed agreement for Nurses and Midwives?**

At the INMO's insistence, the agreement also contains specific commitments relating to the nursing and midwifery workforce.

Commitments in relation to safe staffing in accordance with the Framework on Safe Staffing and Skill Mix, the National Maternity Strategy and the continued implementation of advanced practice for nursing and midwifery were affirmed during the talks and are set out in the appendix of the proposals.

**Please attend your local information meeting and cast your vote.**

**A full list of information meetings and balloting arrangements  
will be available on [www.inmo.ie](http://www.inmo.ie)**

**INMO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS ACCEPTANCE**