



# **NASRA**

**NATIONAL AMBULANCE SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE  
ASSOCIATION**

*Comhlachas Ionadaíoch Seirbhís Otharcharr Náisúnta*

Briefing Document

**LRC PROPOSAL**

**PUBLIC SERVICE STABILITY  
AGREEMENT 2013-2016**

*NOTE: This is a synopsis of the Agreement and does not purport to cover every aspect and provision. To examine the full terms of the Agreement please go to the NASRA website and follow the links.*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** The Labour Relations Commissions issued earlier proposals to the parties in February 2013 which were not accepted by the Trade Union side.
- 1.2** At the behest of Government the LRC met with all of the Trade Unions and Associations representing staff in the Public Service in an effort to find an agreed way forward.
- 1.3** The Commission was made aware that Government's intention to secure the identified level of payroll and pension savings remained and that if necessary the Government would legislate to achieve those savings.
- 1.4** The Government also emphasised to the Commission its preference for a collective agreement.
- 1.5** The Document captures all of the positions reached in that process of engagement and sets out the detail of potential collective agreements for consideration by the Trade Unions and representative Associations.
- 1.6** The Commission understands that the Government will conclude a collective agreement on these terms with any Trade Union or Association confirming its acceptance of the revised proposals.
- 1.7** The Commission is also clear that where a collective agreement is reached the terms of that agreement will apply to the staff covered by that agreement as opposed to any other terms which may be set out in legislation, circular or regulation designed to achieve the payroll and pension savings identified by Government.
- 1.8** The Labour Relations Commission confirms to all parties that the positions set out in these revised proposals represents the limit of what can be achieved by negotiation between the parties in all of the circumstances.
- 1.9** The Government reaffirms the commitment given under Paragraphs 1.6 and 1.15 of the Public Service Agreement in relation to pay rates of public servants and compulsory redundancy, subject to the provisions set out in this Agreement.
- 1.10** This Collective Agreement, subject to ratification by the parties, will apply for a period of 3 years from 01<sup>st</sup> July 2013. The pay and productivity provisions set out in this Agreement will be implemented with effect from 01<sup>st</sup> July 2013.
- 1.11** The Parties agree to continue to work within the framework of the Public Service Agreement and reaffirm the overall commitments provided within it, subject to the matters set out in this Agreement. The Parties will also continue to co-operate fully with change and reform measures advanced under the framework of the Public Service Agreement.
- 1.12** The Government reaffirms, that public service pay and any related issues will not be revisited over the lifetime of this Agreement but subject to, that, in the event that the commitments or assumptions reaffirmed under this Agreement must be revisited, the Parties will meet to discuss the circumstances that had arisen and the implications for the Agreement. The Government confirms, in this regard, that it will not act without prior engagement with the parties on what may be required.

## **2.0 NAS specific provisions:**

### **2.1 General**

- 2.1.1** The guideline redeployment distance will continue to be 45km from the current work location or of the home address, whichever is the shorter commute. Regard will also be had to reasonable daily commute time (i.e. as per the PSA).
- 2.1.2** Flexibility for all NAS is a feature of dynamic pre hospital emergency care provision and service delivery and contributes to efficient and effective business performance while enabling staff to balance work and personal life requirements. However, as is currently the case, management reserves the right, on reasonable business grounds and with reasonable notice, to require a person to vary their work arrangements. No change from current practice in this regard is being sought as part of a collective agreement at this time.
- 2.1.3** In the follow up to the Government's allowances review, management will follow the agreed industrial relations procedures (i.e. LRC and Labour Court) should any issue arise in the Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic area.

### **2.2 Additional Working Hours:**

- 2.2.1** The standard working week for paramedics is 39.11 hours per week. Discussions will commence immediately on how to measure all time worked by Paramedics and Advanced Paramedics to ensure all attendance hours are captured.
- 2.2.2** Extra hours worked will be deployed and may be aggregated on a daily, weekly or annual basis as best meets service demands following local consultation.
- 2.2.3** The actual implementation of these proposals will require detailed consultation at workplace level in order to maximise the capacity to accommodate issues for affected individuals.
- 2.2.4** The relevant service manager/s can seek to have maximum flexibility to deploy and assign staff resources to meet service needs, in accordance with measures set out in Chapter 2 :2.9 (12,13,14) and 2.13 – 2.21 of the Public Service Agreement.
- 2.2.5** Management will allow persons to opt to remain on their current hours with appropriate pay adjustments.

### **2.3 Utilisation of Additional Hours**

**2.3.1** At a general level, the following are among the ways in which additional hours may be used:

- To compensate for reductions in staff numbers.
- To replace overtime working.
- To extend the working week to 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Saturday, as appropriate to a particular service.
- To increase productivity.
- To enable extended opening hours, e.g. intermediate care services
- "Banking" of additional hours for application in different ways.
  
- To enable redeployment in line with the health service including establishment of hospital group structures, expansion of primary care and other service reform measures.

**2.3.2** For an individual Paramedic / Advanced Paramedic the following are expected to be the main effects:

- Revision of rosters.
- Longer shifts where necessary/appropriate.
- Longer working day.
- Focused working of additional hours at peak periods or to provide additional cover

## **2.4 Pay Measures**

**2.4.1** The following pay measures will apply, in addition to any central measures in relation to higher pay and increments:

- Sunday Premium and public holiday: maintain at double time, including when overtime is worked on Sunday or Public Holiday and Saturday as currently applicable.
- Twilight Payments will no longer be payable.

## **2.5. Overtime**

- For those on salaries of up to €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay), overtime will be paid at time and a half at the first point of the appropriate scale.
- For those on salaries (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) of €35,000 or greater, overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a quarter at the individual's scale point.
- Divisors for the calculation of overtime will be adjusted to take account of any additional hours provided for above.

## **2.6 Conversion of Long Term Actors:**

**2.6.1** That the original LRC document dealing with the regularisation of acting should be amended to include all staff who meet the relevant criteria, i.e. the salary cap set out in the original document does not now apply and effective date for calculating service is 31.12.12, all the other aspects of the original document do apply. The amended document should then be implemented as an agreement between the parties to this agreement. This proposal is made in the context of the conclusion of this Public Service agreement on the basis that the agreement facilitates its implementation in a cost neutral manner.

## **2.7 Concessions Days:**

**2.7.1** That the HSE will issue a new circular setting out that concession days should be re-structured in a standard way across the system, i.e. that the arrangements applying to clerical/admin grades will be extended to individuals in other grades who have been in receipt of this heretofore and who had it removed by the issuance of the recent circular.

## **2.8.Training:**

**2.8.1** That the HSE should prioritise resources to maximise non-medical and nursing training with particular regard to statutory requirements, Health and Safety and the academic study scheme.

### **3. Sunday Staffing and other reforms:**

- 3.1** Sunday staffing and other reforms: Management will actively seek to reduce the overall numbers of staff rostered for duty on Sundays. At the same time, all staff will co-operate with measures to achieve the most cost-effective skill-mix and staffing ratios to meet service needs. An intensive engagement process will begin immediately to review existing skill mix and staffing ratios to ensure that these identified needs are met. Co-operation will be forthcoming for other measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness of hospital services, in particular concentrating as much care provision as possible into the Monday to Saturday period.

### **4. Pay: Across the Public Sector.**

#### **4.1 Increments and Related Balancing Measures:**

- 4.1.1** For those on salaries below €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay), a three month increment freeze will apply during the Agreement. This freeze will take effect after the next increment is paid with the following increment being awarded in fifteen months rather than twelve.
- 4.1.2** For those on salaries between €35,000 and €65,000, inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay, two three-month increment freezes will apply (total of a six month freeze) during the Agreement. As above, this would take effect after the next increment is paid but for two consecutive years there would be a fifteen month period between increment dates.
- 4.1.3** For those on salaries above €65,000 two six month increment freezes will apply. These freezes will take effect after the payment of the next due increment with the following two increments being awarded in 18 months rather than 12 months.
- 4.1.4** For those currently on the final point on the incremental scale and with salaries between €35,000 and €65,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay).
- A total reduction of annual leave entitlement over the period of the Agreement of 6 days:  
**Or**
  - A cash deduction from salary of an equivalent amount to the value of the 6 annual leave days or a half of the most recent increment, whichever is the lesser.

## 5.1 Cuts to Higher Pay:

5.1.1 The Government intends to enact legislation to apply a reduction in pay for those on salaries of € 65,000 and greater and have, since the LRC Proposals, published a bill “*Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2013*” which they state will go before both houses of the Oireachtas before end of May. This bill provides for the following reductions:

Annualised amount of Remuneration	Reduction
Any amount up to €80,000	5.5%
Any amount over €80,000 but not over €150,000	8%

5.2.2 The reduction in pay above will be restored to the pay rate that they would have had, but for the pay reduction, within a maximum of 18 months of the end of this 3 year Agreement between the parties which is intended to commence with effect from 1st July 2013. The restoration will be in two equal phases – the first after 9 months and the second 9 months later. This provision will not apply to those on salaries above € 100,000.

5.2.3 In relation to impacts at the margin, salaries will not fall below €65,000 as a result of the application of this reduction.

5.2.4 Section 9 of the Financial Emergency measures in the Public Interest Bill 2013 provides that persons retiring before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014, or a later date that may be ordered by the Minister, will be entitled to have their pensions calculated as if the Pay Reduction and any increment pause or freeze had not applied to them.

## 5.3 Other Pay Related Matters:

5.3.1 **Allowances:** There will be full co-operation by the Parties with the follow up to the Government’s Allowances Review.

5.3.2 **Travel and Subsistence:** The Parties note that the Government intends to review Travel and Subsistence arrangements. There will be full co-operation by the Parties with the review and the implementation of a standardised system of Travel and Subsistence across the Public Service.

**5.3.3 Reduction in Pension Levy:** The present rates and bands of the Pension Related Deduction are as follows:

<b>Bands and Rates</b>	
€15,000	Exempt
€15,000 - €20,000	5.0%
€20,000 - €60,000	10.0%
Above €60,000	10.5%

**5.3.4** As part of the Agreement, it is agreed to reduce the €15,000-€20,000 band rate to 2.5% from 5%, this will produce a saving of € 125.00 per annum. This will take effect on 01<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

## **6. Performance Management:**

**6.1** During the lifetime of this Agreement, the introduction of performance management systems will be accelerated at the level of the individual in all areas of the Public Service where they do not currently exist.

**6.2** Where necessary, existing arrangements will be revised to ensure that:

- Managers are held to account for managing the performance and development of their staff.
- This must be a key goal for all managers and taken account of in their own performance reviews.
- Procedures to deal with underperformance will be streamlined to be more effective.
- The performance of individual public servants is managed and assessed against agreed objectives.
- Performance improvement action plans will be developed for individuals identified as having performance issues clearly setting out the performance issues that need to be addressed over a defined timeframe.

## 7. Pensions

7.1 The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2013 provides for pensions in payment to be reduced for those whose pensions are greater than € 32,500. For those who retired before 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 a reduction already applies. The graph below outlines the proposed increase in the reduction applicable.

Annualised Amount of Public Service Pension	Reduction
Up to € 12,000	Exempt
Any Amount over € 12,000 but not over € 24,000	8% - Increased from 6%
Any Amount over € 24,000 but not over € 60,000	12% - Increased from 9%

7.2 A reduction for those who retired after 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 on the cut pay currently have no reduction applied but it is now proposed to introduce a reduction for those on pensions above € 32,500 as follows:

Annualised amount of Public Service Pension	Reduction
Up to € 12,000	Exempt
Any amount over € 12,000 but not over € 24,000	2 %
Any Amount over € 24,000 but not over € 60,000	3%

7.3 The Legislation provides that no Public Service Pension will be reduced to below € 32,500 by virtue of these amendments.

7.4 It should be noted that those on pensions below € 32,500 will **Not** be affected by this new reduction for those who retired either before or after February 2012.



## 8. Carrot and Stick Approach

8.1 The threat to introduce legislation no longer exists the Legislation has been published and will go through both houses of the Oireachtas before the end of May.

8.2 This Legislation provides for:

- Reduction in salary for those earning over € 65,000.
- Reduction in pension for those in receipt of pensions over € 32,500.
- Suspension of Incremental Credit for three years for all Public Servants.
- Clarifications that the powers of relevant Employer or Minister to adjust Terms & Conditions of Employment of Public Servants is set out in a new section 2B, to be inserted into the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No.2) Act 2009. This provides that an existing power to fix terms and conditions may be exercised by the relevant employer or Minister of the Government so as to result in less favourable remuneration, other than core salary, or in increased hours for the public servants concerned, notwithstanding any of the terms of any enactment, contract or otherwise provided for.

8.3 The carrot approach is that these powers will not be exercised if Public Servants are covered by a collective agreement which is registered by the Labour Relations Commission. (Section 7.(5) of the Bill)

*A collective agreement is defined as “an agreement by or on behalf of a Public Service body on the one hand, and by or on behalf of a body or bodies representatives of the Public Servants to whom the agreement relates on the other hand”*

8.4 The Collective Agreement provides for in particular:

- Modifies the term of the incremental suspension
- Restores the pay cut to those earning over € 65,000 at end of agreement.
- Guarantees that Sunday Premium will remain at Double Time.
- Any individual can maintain their current working week but subject to pay adjustment.
- The maintenance of existing flexible working arrangements for nurses.
- Restoration of Senior Staff Nurses Grade.
- Regularisation of Long Term Actors.

ENDS: