

WRC Proposals – Section 39, 56 and 10 Organisations

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Last updated: 20th October 2023

Read the full text of the proposed agreement [HERE](#).

Introduction

On Tuesday 17th of October unions secured an agreement at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) in relation to the long-running pay dispute between workers in Section 39 (health and disability services) Section 56 (services to children), Section 10 (homeless and addiction services), in community services and their counterparts employed directly by the state.

A proposal was agreed that acknowledges workers in Section 39, 10 and 56 agencies deserve pay equality.

This proposal is a significant step forwards for workers in Section 39, 10 and 56 organisations, and brings us closer to pay parity than we have been in a decade. It sets out a clear path for pay increases and there is a clear commitment to restoration of the link with public sector pay.

Earlier talks between unions and management broke down on 30th July 2023. The offer then was a 5% payment in two segments, consisting of a 3% increase from 1st of April 2023 and a 2% pay increase from the 1st of November 2023. A commitment to have further talks about future pay arrangements following any future successor agreement to the current (Building Momentum) agreement was also proposed as part of the package.

That proposal was rejected because it fell far short of the union position, which sought the full terms of the Building Momentum agreement (9.5%) and a process that would ultimately seek to restore the link to public service pay in the future.

Following a consultation period with members, it was agreed that union members in a number of these organisations would be balloted for strike and industrial action. The ballot concluded on September 19th 2023 with overwhelming support from union members for taking industrial and strike action in pursuit of pay equality. A comprehensive media strategy was put in place, and indefinite strike action was due to commence on October 17th 2023. Extensive preparations were made for the strike action to go ahead.

On the afternoon of Monday October 16th, unions were invited to attend the WRC. Following lengthy talks unions secured an interim agreement, which is subject to members' approval.

At that point, unions felt the proposals were worth taking back to members to ballot, and the strike was suspended to allow for consultation on the new set of WRC proposals.

What are the pay proposals?

If accepted, the proposals would mean members will receive the following pay adjustments:

- An Increase of 3% backdated to 1st April 2023
- An Increase of 2% from 1st November 2023
- An Increase of 3% from 1st March 2024

These measures will result in a pay increase for members worth more than 8% within less than 12 months.

Is this a final agreement?

This is an interim agreement to ensure our members receive pay increases in advance of next public service agreement. It has been agreed we will engage further on or before the 1st December 2023.

Will I receive the increase due from April before the end of the year?

If accepted, the aim is for members to receive the first increase to their salary, backdated to 1st April 2023, before the end of the year.

Will we receive the additional 1.5% outstanding from the terms of Building Momentum?

This proposal states the parties will re-engage before 1st December 2023 to agree further adjustment in funding to these organisations, giving regard to the terms of Building Momentum and any successor of Public Service Agreement.

What do the proposals mean for pay parity with the public service?

The proposals specifically provide for the parties to reconvene under the auspices of the WRC no later than 1st December 2023. The purpose of this engagement will be to agree further adjustments in funding, for organisations and their staff, that will have regard to the terms of Building Momentum and the terms of any successor agreement.

What do the proposals mean for the future funding of the community and voluntary sector?

For the first time the Government has acknowledged the need for sustainable funding in the sector, that the lack of funding has led to a recruitment and retention crisis, and that the pay of workers in Section 39, 10 and 56 organisations has fallen behind equivalent and comparable grades in public service organisations.

Why wait until the 1st December 2023?

The Public Service Committee of Congress has yet to engage with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), to negotiate a successor to Building Momentum. It remains unknown at this stage when - or if - they will reach agreement on a successor before the end of the year.

Therefore, once a new public service pay agreement is in place, unions will engage with the funding bodies to secure similar terms and implementation for those working in Section 56, 10 and 39 organisations.

Will our pay be realigned with the public service?

For the first time the Government, as the main funding body, has acknowledged that our members' pay has fallen behind equivalent and comparable grades in the public service. This proposal confirms that the funders are committed to fully deal with the issue before the end of the successor agreement to Building Momentum.

Why not deal with it now?

It was important that we got a commitment from the funding bodies that any agreement must include the terms of a successor Public Service Pay Agreement. This was vital to ensure that members working in section 39, 56 and 10 organisations receive similar pay increases to those working in the public service into the future.

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

If the proposed agreement is accepted, pay adjustments will be applied to the hourly rate of pay. This will mean that part-time workers, job sharers etc. will also benefit from the package.

Will my twilight rates, overtime rates and allowances increase also?

All rates of pay linked to your basic salary would also increase.

Who would the package apply to?

The package would apply to workers currently employed in Section 39, 56 and 10 employments.

I do not work in one of the organisations who balloted for strike action, will I receive the same increases?

This campaign covers all union members who work in Section 39, 56 and 10 organisations. The INMO, Fórsa and SIPTU chose key locations to ballot for industrial action, but the trade unions were clear this claim was on behalf of **all** our members working in this sector and must apply to all organisations.

Are there any productivity measures in the package?

There are no additional productivity measures in the WRC-proposed package.

What happens if the proposals are accepted?

If the proposals are accepted by a majority of members across the three participating unions, we will advise the WRC immediately. The proposals will then become a formal agreement between the parties, made under the auspices of the WRC.

What happens if the proposals are rejected?

If the proposals are rejected by the majority of members across the three participating unions, the proposals are deemed to be withdrawn and without status. There will be no onus on the employer side to engage with the unions if this happens, and a return to industrial action would be likely.

Your union has recommended acceptance of these proposals.

It is a matter for each member to decide how to vote. If the proposals are rejected, we believe it would not be possible to achieve a better negotiated outcome that provides our members with pay increases and the opportunity to realign pay in line with the next public service pay agreement.

What about planned industrial action ballots?

The participating unions have recommended that planned industrial action ballots be suspended while unions consult on the WRC package.

BALLOT ARRANGEMENTS

All members who are directly affected are entitled to vote on these proposals. Each union will make their own arrangements for consulting and balloting members over the next number of weeks.

In the meantime, there will be workplace meetings and other communications to explain the contents of the package, and to respond to members' questions about what it means for them.

[ASK A QUESTION](#)

Read the full text of the proposed agreement [HERE](#).