

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **1. Why is this being suggested now?**

The Union secured the option in the last pay agreement of using one of the three increases due to settle outstanding claims. SNAs at their Divisional Union Conferences over past years have voted to try and increase or improve the SNA pay scale. Therefore the elected Divisional Executive Committee resolved to try and deliver on that commitment by negotiating to use the money available (€6.5m) to improve pay at the top of the SNA scale. They also decided that members would be able to choose to accept this option or to accept the general 1% increase in a consultation ballot.

### **2. What is the cash value of each option?**

You can see the difference in annual salary under each option by looking at the table above. This shows you the current SNA pay scale, what changes would happen if members accept the 1% increase and what changes would happen if the new Long Service Increment is accepted. We cannot accurately calculate the net take home figure for you due to the differences in individual tax entitlements and liabilities. At the top of the scale a 1% increase is worth an additional €411 per annum, the new increment is worth an additional €1,100 per annum or an extra €689 per year on top of the 1% pay increase.

### **3. How is the proposed new Long Service Increment calculated?**

The money required to increase the SNA pay bill by 1% is just under €6.5 million per year. The number of staff at the top of the scale on the existing long service increment is 5,300. Providing all of them with access to the more valuable new long service increment then works out as a benefit of €1,100 each.

### **4. Why not just add another point to the top of the SNA Scale?**

Fórsa explored this option in detail during negotiations. If an additional long service increment was added to the pay scale SNAs would only be able to access this increase after they serve 3 years in the 1<sup>st</sup> long service increment. It would mean SNAs who reach Point 14 on the scale waiting for 6 years before they can access the full benefit of the increase. We wanted to ensure that if this option was accepted our members could access the increase as soon as possible. Therefore staff already in receipt of the existing long service increment would receive the increase immediately and those on point 14 wait for only 3 years not the 6 years necessary had we agreed to add a second long service increment to the scale.

### **5. Will the new increment be available to me when I reach the top of the scale?**

Yes the fact that we have kept within the overall €6.5m cost limit means that the increment will be available to all SNAs when they reach the top of scale and

have spent 3 years on point 14, it would be a permanent change to the SNA scale.

**6. How long will I wait for the new increment when I reach the top of the Scale?**

When you reach point 14 which is the last automatic increment on the scale you will wait for 3 years before progressing to the new long service increment the same amount of time as at present.

**7. Why has Fórsa only asked for this additional pay point and not more?**

The reason for negotiating the option of a new increment at the top of scale and not securing much more generous increases is that the money available for this particular negotiation was the equivalent of 1% of the SNA pay bill. That limit was set within the Building Momentum Pay Agreement and Unions cannot negotiate changes that cost more than 1% of the pay bill for any grade, group or category of public servants. Where sectoral bargaining is taking place with other grades or groups the same rules apply to everyone.

**8. Does this mean SNA pay is now separate from the pay of Clerical Officers?**

Yes for this exercise under the current Agreement, SNA pay can be adjusted or increased without increasing the value of the Clerical Officer pay scale. It would establish a limited precedent that SNA pay can be assessed separately from the pay of Clerical staff, such a precedent may be very useful for the future, if the long service increment is accepted, then SNAs would for the first time have a higher maximum salary than Clerical Officers.

**9. Why should I give up my 1% increase so those at the top of the Scale can benefit?**

You can choose to reject the sectoral bargaining offer of a new long service increment and instead accept the general 1% increase. However when you reach the top of the pay scale yourself the maximum salary will not be as high. There is a further 1% or €500 increase to the pay scale due to take effect from this October that increase will be worth an additional €500 per annum for all members and will not be affected should the sectoral bargaining offer be accepted.

**10. Will there be other opportunities to increase SNA pay like this one?**

Not under the current Agreement, it is too early to say if future pay agreement will also allow this type of sectoral bargaining to take place.

**11. Will the new increment be permanent and pensionable?**

Yes the new increment would be a permanent change to the scale and would be included in pension calculations so it would be permanent and pensionable.

**12. Are other grades or groups also negotiating claims under this sectoral bargaining clause and how much are they getting?**

Yes, Unions are seeking to negotiate similar deals for some other grades and groups in the wider public service. The Post Primary Teaching Unions are trying to negotiate the restoration of post qualification allowances for new Teachers, the INTO may seek to negotiate on allowances for Principals and Deputy Principals, the INMO is seeking the implementation of recommended increases for Clinical Nurse Managers and Fórsa is negotiating a similar deal in Local Government for some management staff (SEOs) whereby their long service increment would increase by the equivalent of 1% of the pay bill. All those discussions, if successful, will be funded by a sum equivalent to 1% of the payroll bill for the grade or group affected as is the case for the proposal that SNAs will now consider.

**13. What are the increment skips on the SNA scale at points 4 and 8 shown in the salary scale tables above?**

Under an agreement reached in 2018 SNAs employed after 2011 on the pay scale that is 2 increments longer than the old pay scale can progress to the top of the scale in the same amount of time. This is achieved by them skipping increments 4 and 8 on the scale to ensure they reach the top of the pay scale in the same amount of time as SNAs employed before 2011. The agreement effectively ended the two tier pay scale for SNA members. This agreement is still in operation so if you did not skip those increments on the pay scale please contact Fórsa directly so we can advise on your entitlements.