

Key workers deserve cash or extra leave post-pandemic – Varadkar

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A tangible tribute for the efforts of key workers during the pandemic “could take the form of cash payment like in other countries or maybe extra leave,” the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise and Employment Leo Varadkar has said.

Speaking to the *Irish Times* this week, Mr Varadkar said that for personnel in the public service, any measures would have to be negotiated in the context of the new public service agreement, which looks set to be formally accepted next week.

“I know from my point of view, for the private sector, as Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, part of the legacy of this pandemic is going to be better terms, conditions and security for all workers including the introduction of sick pay for all, more parental leave, the right to request remote working, the move to a living wage and access to an occupational pension for all,” the Tánaiste said.

The *Times* reports that the trade unions raised the issue with Mr Varadkar at a meeting of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) last week.

Mr Varadkar said the details could be worked out when the pandemic ends. He added that the term ‘frontline worker’ or ‘essential worker’ has taken on a new meaning, adding, “I don’t think we can thank them enough for what they have done, their dedication and selflessness”.