

Public service terms won't add to inflation, says Minister

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Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform, Paschal Donohoe, described the proposed public service pay agreement as striking the right balance “between helping workers with the cost of living but also not adding to inflation this year and next year and making things even worse for all of us”.

Welcoming Government approval for the new public service deal, Minister Donohoe said he believed that it “seeks to achieve a balanced approach to public service pay that rewards the ongoing efforts of public servants, while ensuring the responsible management of public finances”.

Mr Donohoe said that over the lifetime of the 30-month deal, it will see cumulative benefits of up to 17.3% for lower paid public servants, inclusive of its local bargaining provision.

The agreement is “progressive” and “fair,” Minister Donohoe said, noting that the terms – costing €3.6 billion – were “the outcome of a complex and difficult negotiation process”.

In total, the pay agreement provides for increases of 10.25% over a two and a half year period. This is made up of general round increases totalling 9.25%, as well as a provision for a Local Bargaining mechanism equivalent to 1% of the basic pay cost.

“A key element of the Agreement is that industrial peace will be maintained and that there will be no additional cost increasing claims, other than those provided for in the Local Bargaining Mechanism,” the Minister said, following a Cabinet meeting.

He thanked the Director General and staff at the Workplace Relations Commission “for their assistance in co-ordinating this challenging process”.

The Minister continued: “Public service transformation remains a key priority for Government. The Agreement will underpin the ongoing transformation of our public services, allowing reform to continue in a collaborative and cooperative way.

“As public servants engage in ballots in the coming weeks on acceptance of these proposals, I hope they will consider all elements in the Agreement, which offers security and reward for their continued commitment to serving the people of Ireland.”

Public service unions and associations are expected to ballot on the proposals in the coming weeks, the outcome of this ballot should be known by March 25, Minister Donohoe said.

BACKING FOR DEAL

Already, the national executives of the four key unions whose general secretaries led the public service unions in pay talks, have recommended their members back the deal. These unions – SIPTU, FORSA, INTO and INMO – have more than enough delegates between them to ensure the aggregate ballot result will be a ‘Yes’ vote.

This week, in a not unexpected move, the executives of two teacher unions, ASTI and TUI, revealed they would be putting the terms before their members without any recommendation, for or against. Last time out, when balloting on the extension to Building Momentum, members of both unions voted by large margins in favour of that agreement.