AHCPS

Proposed Public Service Agreement 2026–2029

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2026

Introduction

Following negotiations between the Public Services Committee (PSC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Government representatives, proposals for a new Public Service Agreement were concluded on 11 November 2026.

The proposals follow a period of industrial action across the public service, including action taken by AHCPS members, arising from the failure to secure an acceptable successor to the previous agreement.

The proposed agreement provides for general pay increases, further local bargaining arrangements and commitments relating to working practices, public service reform, job protection and pensions.

The AHCPS Executive Committee has considered the proposals and is recommending that members vote in favour of their acceptance.

These Frequently Asked Questions are intended to assist members in understanding the principal provisions of the proposed agreement and their implications.

Members are encouraged to read these FAQs alongside the full text of the proposed agreement and the revised salary scales accompanying this documentation.

A. The Agreement and Pay Increases

1. What period does the proposed agreement cover?

The proposed agreement would operate from 1 July 2026 to 31 March 2029, a period of two years and nine months.

It would replace the previous Public Service Agreement, which expired on 30 June 2026.

2. What pay increases are proposed?

The agreement provides for general pay increases totalling **9.75%**, together with a further provision of up to **1% under the second phase of local bargaining**.

The combined headline figure is therefore 10.75%, although the local bargaining element is subject to the relevant provisions of the agreement.

The proposed increases are:

Effective Date	Increase
1 September 2026	2%
1 April 2027	1%
1 August 2027	1%
1 November 2027	1.5%
1 March 2028	1%
1 June 2028	1%
1 October 2028	1%
1 March 2029	Up to 1% Local Bargaining
2 March 2029	1.25%

The percentage increases are cumulative, meaning that each successive increase is applied to the salary resulting from the previous increases.

The general increases of 9.75% are worth approximately **10.17% when compounded**. Including the full 1% local bargaining provision would bring the cumulative increase to approximately **11.27%**. There is a possibility that the proposed 1% Local Bargaining increase could be used a general round increase.

3. How can I establish what the proposed agreement means for my salary, and do the increases apply to all salary points?

The general percentage increases apply to all relevant salary points across the grades represented by AHCPS.

AHCPS has prepared revised salary scales showing the proposed general pay increases for the grades represented by the Association. These scales accompany this documentation and show the salary rates at the various implementation dates.

Members can identify their current grade and salary point and compare these with the proposed revised rates.

The scales reflect the proposed general pay adjustments but do not take account of individual circumstances such as incremental progression, taxation, pension contributions or other deductions.

Members who wish to estimate the impact of the proposed increases on their net (take-home) pay may find the online calculator at **www.taxcalc.ie** useful. The calculator allows individuals to estimate their net pay based on their gross salary and personal tax circumstances.

Any incremental progression to which a member is entitled is separate from the general pay increases.

4. Why is the first pay increase effective from September 2026 rather than July 2026?

A key objective of the trade union side was to secure an increase in pay from July 2026, immediately following the expiry of the previous agreement.

The Government initially resisted any further increase during 2026.

Following negotiations and industrial action, a 2% increase effective from 1 September 2026 was secured.

While this represented an improvement on the Government's initial position, it does not provide an increase for July and August 2026.

5. Will the first pay increase be paid retrospectively?

Yes.

If the agreement is accepted, the 2% increase will apply retrospectively from 1 September 2026.

Members will be entitled to arrears representing the difference between their existing salary and the revised salary for the period from 1 September until the increase is implemented through payroll.

The amount payable will depend on the member's salary and employment circumstances during the relevant period.

6. When will the first increase and arrears be paid?

Subject to acceptance of the agreement, it is anticipated that the first increase and associated arrears will be processed early in 2027.

The precise payment date will depend on the arrangements made by the relevant payroll authorities.

AHCPS will advise members when further information becomes available.

7. How do the proposed increases compare with expected inflation?

The Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) has examined the proposed agreement against expected inflation over its 33-month duration.

In a briefing note dated 13 November 2026, NERI considered two possible inflation scenarios:

- **A baseline scenario**, involving cumulative inflation of approximately 7.2%.
- **A slower reduction in inflation**, resulting in cumulative inflation of approximately 8%.

The proposed general pay increases amount to 9.75%, equivalent to approximately 10.17% when compounded.

Including the full second phase of local bargaining would bring the cumulative increase to approximately 11.27%.

On that basis, NERI estimates that the agreement would deliver real wage growth (pay increases after allowing for inflation) of between **3% and 3.8%** over its lifetime.

These projections suggest that the proposed increases would exceed expected inflation. However, the actual outcome will depend on inflation over the period and the extent to which the local bargaining provision is implemented.

8. What happens if inflation is higher than currently forecast?

The proposed agreement contains a review mechanism which specifically references inflation.

It provides for a time-limited review process of six weeks.

This is intended to provide a mechanism for considering developments in economic circumstances during the lifetime of the agreement.

However, the review mechanism does not automatically provide for additional pay increases. Any outcome would depend on the process provided for in the agreement.

B. Local Bargaining

9. What does the proposed agreement provide in relation to local bargaining?

The agreement contains provisions addressing outstanding claims under the first phase of local bargaining and the implementation of the second phase.

In relation to the first phase, outstanding claims dating from September 2025 may be resolved by 24 November 2026 where the relevant group wishes to settle for a 1% increase from 1 September 2025, or where an agreed proposal is already available.

The second phase of local bargaining, providing for up to 1% of basic pay costs, is scheduled for implementation on 1 March 2029.

The final phase of local bargaining is to be addressed under the next public service agreement.

10. How was the first phase of local bargaining used for AHCPS members?

The vast majority of AHCPS members were covered by Category 1 arrangements under the first phase of local bargaining.

AHCPS used the vast majority of the available allocation to secure **additional higher salary scales** for members, providing improved salary progression and higher salary rates.

The Association also submitted local bargaining claims on behalf of members in a number of non-Civil Service employments, including the Education and Training Board (ETB) sector. These claims are being pursued through the relevant processes.

The improvements secured through the first phase of local bargaining are separate from the general pay increases proposed under the new agreement.

Any outstanding first-phase local bargaining matters will continue to be addressed through the relevant industrial relations processes.

11. How will the second phase of local bargaining operate?

The proposed agreement provides for a second phase of local bargaining worth up to 1% of basic pay costs, with an implementation date of 1 March 2029.

The arrangements will be subject to the relevant provisions and procedures governing local bargaining.

AHCPS will consult with its branches as part of the preparation and development of claims under the next phase of local bargaining, to ensure that the priorities and interests of members are reflected in the Association's approach.

The precise application of this provision will depend on the outcome of the relevant local bargaining process.

The final phase of local bargaining will be addressed under the next public service agreement.

C. Working Arrangements, Staffing and Public Service Reform

12. What does the proposed agreement mean for blended working and the protection of existing arrangements?

The agreement recognises that remote and hybrid working have become established features of working life and acknowledges their contribution to recruitment, retention and the effective delivery of public services.

It expressly provides that access to blended working and other flexible working arrangements should continue to be available where appropriate, consistent with operational requirements.

The agreement also requires consultation before substantial changes to work organisation are introduced.

While this does not provide an absolute guarantee that every individual blended working arrangement will remain unchanged, it reinforces the importance of consultation and the proper consideration of existing arrangements before changes are implemented.

AHCPS has consistently emphasised the importance of fair, reasonable and sustainable blended working arrangements and will continue to insist on meaningful engagement where changes are proposed.

13. What does the agreement mean for recruitment and staffing levels?

The agreement recognises the importance of workforce planning, recruitment, retention and skills development across the public service.

While it does not provide specific staffing commitments for individual organisations or grades, it includes measures relating to recruitment practices, training, workforce capability and retention.

AHCPS recognises that staffing shortages and difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced personnel can place significant additional pressures on managers and their teams.

The Association will continue to press employers and Government to address staffing shortages, excessive workloads and the need to ensure that public service organisations have the capacity and resources necessary to deliver their responsibilities effectively.

14. Does the agreement provide for mobility or redeployment without prior consultation?

No new mobility or redeployment provisions are created by the proposed agreement.

The agreement reaffirms existing provisions concerning mobility, redeployment and workforce flexibility contained in previous public service agreements.

Any proposals affecting staff mobility or redeployment remain subject to established consultation and industrial relations procedures.

AHCPS will continue to insist that any proposed changes affecting members are dealt with through the appropriate consultation processes and that the implications for individual members and grades are properly considered.

15. What protections does the agreement provide in relation to artificial intelligence?

The agreement contains a commitment that the introduction or use of artificial intelligence will not result in compulsory redundancies in the public service.

It also recognises the importance of training and upskilling as technology changes the nature of work.

A €150 million training fund has been established to support workers in adapting to changes in working practices and technology.

AHCPS recognises that AI will have significant implications for the management and delivery of public services.

The Association will continue to engage on the impact of these developments on members' responsibilities, roles and working conditions.

16. What does the agreement mean for public service reform and productivity?

The proposed agreement includes commitments relating to public service reform, organisational change and productivity.

As managers, many AHCPS members will have responsibilities for implementing change and delivering improvements in public services.

However, the implementation of reform must also take account of appropriate staffing, resources, workloads and the responsibilities placed on individual managers.

The agreement's provisions concerning consultation, industrial relations procedures and job protection remain relevant to the implementation of change.

AHCPS will continue to represent members' interests in relation to the practical implications of reform and productivity measures.

D. Pensions, ASC and Allowances

17. Does the agreement provide for changes to the Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)?

The Additional Superannuation Contribution was among the pension-related matters raised during the negotiations.

The proposed agreement provides for further structured engagement on pension matters.

However, it does not provide for an immediate general reduction in ASC rates or an adjustment to the existing thresholds.

AHCPS recognises the significance of ASC for members and will continue to pursue this issue through the appropriate structures.

18. What does the agreement mean for members approaching retirement?

The proposed general pay increases will affect pensionable salary in accordance with the applicable public service pension arrangements.

For members approaching retirement, the timing of pay increases may be relevant to the calculation of retirement benefits.

The precise implications will depend on the pension scheme to which the member belongs, the retirement date and individual circumstances.

Members approaching retirement should seek an individual pension estimate from their employer or pension administrator before making decisions based on the proposed increases.

19. Will retired public servants benefit from the proposed increases?

Increases in public service pay scales are generally reflected in public service pensions that are linked to those scales.

Formal confirmation of the application of the proposed increases to relevant public service pensions has been received.

The agreement also provides for engagement with the Alliance of Retired Public Servants and ongoing discussions on technical pension matters.

The precise impact on an individual pension will depend on the applicable pension arrangements.

20. Will the increases apply to allowances?

The proposed general pay increases will apply to pensionable allowances.

21. Will members who work reduced hours receive the same percentage increases?

Yes.

The same percentage increases apply to members irrespective of whether they work full-time, job-share or work other reduced-hours arrangements.

The monetary value of the increase will reflect the salary payable in respect of the member's working hours.

E. Industrial Action and Industrial Relations

22. What is the current position regarding the industrial action?

Industrial action relating to the national public service pay dispute has been suspended to facilitate consideration of the proposed agreement.

This includes the work-to-rule and strike action undertaken as part of the dispute.

Members should therefore resume their normal duties and working arrangements.

The suspension relates to the national pay dispute and does not automatically affect separate industrial relations disputes.

23. What happens to work that accumulated during the work-to-rule?

Members should resume their normal duties following the suspension of industrial action.

AHCPS recognises that work may have accumulated during the period of industrial action and that members may face additional demands as a result.

Members should not be expected to address significant backlogs through unreasonable workloads or by disregarding established working arrangements.

Where difficulties arise, members should raise them with their AHCPS representative or the Association's office.

24. Will members be reimbursed for pay deducted during strike action?

No.

The trade union side sought reimbursement of salary deducted from members who participated in strike action.

However, Government negotiators did not agree to this proposal.

25. What does the agreement say about industrial peace?

The proposed agreement contains an industrial peace provision.

Under this provision, industrial action concerning remuneration or other matters covered by the agreement is precluded during its lifetime.

This represents a significant commitment by the trade union side and must be considered as part of the overall agreement.

However, employers remain obliged to comply with the agreement, and the relevant industrial relations and dispute resolution procedures continue to apply.

Where an employer fails to honour its obligations, the position concerning industrial action must be considered in accordance with the agreement and applicable legislation.

26. Will AHCPS still be able to pursue issues affecting members during the agreement?

Yes, subject to the terms of the agreement.

The industrial peace provisions do not remove the Association's responsibility to represent members in relation to individual employment matters, grievances, the interpretation and application of agreements or other issues arising in the workplace.

However, the agreement places restrictions on industrial action concerning matters covered by its provisions.

The Association will continue to pursue issues affecting members through the appropriate industrial relations structures.

F. Other Provisions

27. Does the agreement provide for a review of civil service mileage rates?

Yes.

The agreement provides for a prompt review of civil service mileage rates through established structures.

The review is to take account of current cost factors and other relevant considerations.

The agreement does not itself specify revised mileage rates.

28. Will the terms of the agreement apply to employees who are not members of a trade union?

The agreement contains a compliance provision which states that its benefits are confined to employees represented by unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, or other unions or representative associations that have notified the Workplace Relations Commission of their intention to comply with the agreement.

However, in practice, employers have generally applied the terms of previous public service agreements to eligible employees irrespective of trade union membership.

G. Ballot and Next Steps

29. Has AHCPS recommended acceptance of the proposed agreement?

Yes.

The AHCPS Executive Committee has considered the terms of the proposed Public Service Agreement 2026–2029 and is **recommending that members vote in favour of acceptance**.

The Executive Committee's recommendation reflects its assessment of the overall package, including the proposed pay increases, local bargaining provisions and other commitments secured through the negotiations.

The final decision rests with members through the ballot process.

30. When and how will members vote?

The AHCPS ballot will open on **Wednesday, 18 November 2026**, and close on **Friday, 4 December 2026**.

Voting will take place through an online process.

Members will receive information on how to access the ballot and cast their vote.

Members will be asked whether they accept or reject the proposed Public Service Agreement 2026–2029.

31. What happens following the ballot?

The outcome of the AHCPS ballot will be considered in accordance with the Association's procedures and communicated to the Public Services Committee of ICTU.

The PSC is expected to determine the overall trade union position early in the week commencing 7 December 2026, following completion of the ballots conducted by affiliated unions.

If the agreement is accepted and ratified, the implementation process will commence.

32. What happens if the agreement is rejected?

If the proposed agreement is rejected, the national public service pay dispute will remain unresolved.

The implications will depend on the outcome of the ballots across the unions represented on the PSC.

AHCPS will consider the position and determine the appropriate next steps through its established structures.

33. Where can I find further information?

Members are encouraged to consult the following documents accompanying these FAQs:

- The full text of the proposed Public Service Agreement 2026–2029.
- The AHCPS revised salary scales showing the proposed general pay increases.

- Any further explanatory material issued by AHCPS during the ballot period.

Members with queries concerning the proposed agreement or the ballot arrangements may contact the AHCPS office at **info@ahcps.ie**.

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This document is intended to provide members with an overview of the principal provisions of the proposed agreement. In the event of any uncertainty or difference of interpretation, the terms of the agreement itself will apply.