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12th November 2019

PROMOTIONS TO GRADES IV TO VII [FIELDS OF COMPETITION]

To: Each Fórsa Local Authority and Regional Assembly Member eligible to compete for promotion to Grades IV to VII

Dear Member,

BACKGROUND – EXPLANATORY NOTE

In November 2016, local government employers' represented by the Local Government Management Agency, notified the union that it intended abolishing the common recruitment pool and open all promotional posts to public competition. The common recruitment pool, is an agreement between Fórsa and the employers on the field of competition for promotions to Grades IV – VII. The agreement covers the Health Service Executive [formerly 11 regional health boards], 16 Educational Training Boards [formerly Vocational Educational Committees], Institutes of Technology and Technological Universities, together with a number of other employers in the general health, education and local government sectors.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Fórsa responded immediately by balloting members to take industrial action to oppose the attempts by the employers to greatly reduce the prospects of promotion of our members. You voted by a massive majority of 90% to take industrial action.

The industrial action secured an immediate agreement with the employers that the "status quo" would remain until the union and employers reached agreement on a new field of competition for promotion to Grades IV to VII.

NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE

It was clear to the union's Divisional Executive Committee that the existing common recruitment pool was not fit for purpose.

The Education and Health sectors had devised new agreements and practices which did not provide for access to promotions for local government workers, whereas the "status quo" agreement allowed confined access of health and education workers to promotions in local government.

WRC PROPOSALS

Following extensive and protracted negotiations under the auspices of the Workplace Relations Commission, a radically revised draft agreement on the field of competition for promotions to local authority Grade IV to VII positions has been considered by the Local Government & Local Services Divisional Executive Committee. The agreement provides for the following:-

- 50% of all promotions to Grades IV to VII to be confined to the local authority sectors*
- 20% of all promotions to Grade IV to VII to be confined to one's employing local authority**
- 30% of all promotions to Grades IV to VII to be open to public competition.

- Any post which is not generic [ie. requires a special qualification], will have to be filled from the public competition and will not reduce the number of posts available for confined competition.
- The percentage of posts to be filled at Grade IV level by confined competition will increase from 50% to 70%.

* The creation of competitions confined to one's own local authority has been a longstanding aspiration of the union. We have, previously, only been able to achieve this in very limited circumstances. In future, 1 in 5 promotions to Grades IV to VII will be confined to the eligible staff of that local authority.

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** The establishment of a local authority sectoral pool to replace the common recruitment pool. These organisations employ close to 200,000 staff. By comparison, local authorities employ in the range of 30,000 posts. It is clear this change greatly enhances the opportunities of those who want to develop their career in local government.

Agreement has also been reached on the sequence of filling of posts as follows:-

CSPCSPSSS

Where

C = Competition, confined to one's own local authority,
S = Competition, confined to the local authority sector,
P = Public competition.

Example - the first and fourth posts to be filled in a local authority shall be filled by a competition confined to the authority.

EXISTING ARRANGEMENT [Common Recruitment Pool]	EXISTING ARRANGEMENT		PROPOSAL		
	CRP	Public	Confined	Sectoral	Public
Promotion to Grade IV	50%	50%	20%	50%	30%
Promotion to Grade V	80%	20%	20%	50%	30%
Promotion to Grade VI	80%	20%	20%	50%	30%
Promotion to Grade VII	80%	20%	20%	50%	30%

UNION RECOMMENDATION

The Divisional Executive Committee has recommended acceptance of the proposals on the basis that they significantly improve the opportunity for promotion in local authorities and that they have achieved the objective of establishing an opportunity for promotional competition, to be confined to one's employing authority. A ballot paper containing the WRC proposal is attached.

Yours sincerely



Peter Nolan
National Secretary
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