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CSQ

Civil Service Quarterly

ONLINE AUTUMN 2023



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WORKPLACE TRAUMA Report & survey results **p4/5/6**

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19184 Fórsa SPS advert 03-23

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www.brazier.media**Editorial**

Raising the bar on what we can achieve

This summer marks 50 years since the end of the marriage bar in the civil service. Ireland of 1973 operated in a very different way to the Ireland of today. Until 1973, a woman was expected, in many sectors, to give up her career on marriage. The civil service at the time went one step further. Women were compelled – by law – to give up their civil service position on marriage.

The mandatory marriage bar was then replaced with a 'voluntary' marriage bar, where women, on marriage, had the option of leaving and receiving a marriage gratuity in what, to me, appears to be no more than shutting a mandatory door but opening an incentivised window.

No matter how we look at it, the state effectively paid married women to disincentivise them from holding state employment.

It is only within our lifetimes that the marriage gratuity ended. As a trade union official, I still, to this day, receive calls from women who left under the marriage gratuity and who wish to rejoin the service only to learn that they must pay back the gratuity at today's rates and with interest.

The marriage bar should never have existed. It most certainly should not have existed post-1946, when most European countries moved to end their own marriage bars. But Ireland lagged behind.

The end of the marriage bar came about not by waiting for a benevolent government to decide that the time was right for a step towards equality. It came about as a result of pressure.

Lobby groups singled it out as an area for action. The union movement lobbied for an end to special pay rates for different genders – something that actually existed in the Irish civil service at the time.

Without the consistent lobbying for change on this issue, change would not have come. The lobbying was organised and results focussed. It knew what buttons to press to both spur and shame the political system into action – particularly focussing on Ireland's wish to join the EEC at the time and noting that the Irish government would stand out for all the wrong reasons if it was not seen to begin moving on the issue.

As I was writing the article on the end of the marriage bar for this edition of CSQ, I was struck by how effective, how organised and, ultimately, how uncompromising the actors were in 1972.

It reminded me that change can and does come when led by well-organised civil societies. And it, again, reminded me of the need for us, as Fórsa members, to invite in those who have not yet joined to work with us to help build pressure to fight social injustices.

Since becoming Fórsa, we have delivered on working hours. We have ensured pay stability for school secretaries. We have negotiated pay increases because of the inflationary crisis and will continue to fight for this at upcoming pay talks.

There are still big issues there to tackle, including the unaffordability of housing for workers, the lack of access for civil servants to employment legislation and the WRC, the unacceptability of the existence of a minimum wage below the living wage ... the list continues.

So let us take inspiration from those who delivered the end of a cruel and unjust marriage bar 50 years ago and be reminded that, with focus and determination, a big social change of this nature was possible in Ireland in 1972. In 2023, we are capable of more if we join together.

Seán Carabini
Editor



In focus...

Workplace trauma... finding help when it's most needed



Image: JASP (CC BY 3.0)

Survey flags up need for civil service psych support services

Róisín McKane

Assistant Editor, CSQ

Fórsa has called for a dramatic improvement in the provision of mental health support for civil service workers, including the introduction of full clinical psychological support services for staff who encounter trauma as part of their working life.

During the summer, the Fórsa Civil Service Division ran a survey targeted at civil service jobs where trauma is regularly encountered to understand how supported the staff in these areas currently feel.

Assistant General Secretary Seán Carabini said: "We targeted the survey at a broad range of civil service areas that are known to encounter trauma, such as the probation services, the legal professions, some of the Garda civilian areas, forensics and other parts of justice administration.

"We know anecdotally that staff in these areas have roles that are very mentally demanding. At present, the provision of mental health supports in the civil service is done centrally through the excellent Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS).

"We've always been huge advocates for the

CSEAS, but what it can offer is limited. We believe that the mental health support gap that our survey has identified would be best filled by extending the CSEAS to provide these services." The union targeted areas that are known to encounter trauma and, therefore, it was expected that the supports offered in these areas in particular would be the most robust in the civil service.

In total, 386 civil servants took part in the survey - with 294 respondents saying they had encountered trauma in their work. Significantly, only 42 claimed they had not been affected as a result, whereas far

more - 222 respondents - admitted they had been affected in the workplace. And of that number, 198 stated the trauma had further impacted on their home life.

In relation to the supports available in these areas, 117 said that they were unaware of all of the supports offered by the employer. Of those who had used the supports on offer, 105 said that they were sufficient, while 164 indicated that they were not. Additionally, 141 respondents stated that they had to seek external support privately.

Carabini told CSQ: "Respondents gave examples of the type of supports that should be offered. More than a few stated that counselling should be compulsory. Additionally, there were good suggestions for shielding people from traumatic situations that they did not need to be exposed to, including how traumatic material is stored in files, the necessity of 'mental health breaks' when repeatedly encountering difficult material, a consideration of proper peer support and team debriefing, and minimising the exposure of untrained/unprepared staff to traumatic material."

Survey was targeted at a broad range of civil service areas known to encounter trauma, such as probation services, the legal professions, some of the Garda civilian areas, forensics and other parts of justice administration



Continued on page 5

Survey flags up need for psych support services

From page 4

He continued: "The Employee Assistance Service seems like the sensible place to start to build a more robust mental health offering for civil service workers experiencing trauma and to advise organisations on development of trauma exposure reduction techniques.

"They already have an excellent reputation and are appropriately centrally placed in the civil service to be the logical provider of these services.

"It would, naturally, require additional resourcing. But given that we are talking about helping people who have been exposed to trauma, there should be no reason not to provide it."

An average of about 5,700 civil service workers currently use the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service each year. This equates to approximately 15% of civil service workers at any given time.

The CSEAS notes that people access their services for both workplace and personal reasons, with the top workplace reasons in 2022 being workplace stress, coping with work change and interpersonal conflict. In 2023, it has noted a significant increase in workers seeking their assistance in the areas of probation, career prospects, menopause and retirements.

Carabini said: "Fórsa is very clear on this. We have an excellent CSEAS,



WORKPLACE TRAUMA Current Employee Assistance Service is first rate but needs additional resources

CSO ONLINE Autumn 2023

but we believe that it needs to be resourced properly to be able to take on the challenge of being able to offer a full suite of supports for the civil service professions and areas that experience trauma.

"We believe that inherent in this should be the ability to both access full clinical psychological support and the requisite time to be able to engage with it for some acute areas, including areas dealing with criminal law, forensics and justice administration, to name but a few."

Warning that not acting on this was "not an option", he said: "Our survey of areas that experience trauma shows that the problem exists. We will take a claim to the civil service general council seeking that the CSEAS be expanded to adequately and properly be able to manage the issue.

"There are professions and areas in the civil service that deal with issues that - to put it bluntly - deal with things that live on in your mind after you've clocked off. Civil service workers are telling us that it is impacting on who they are, how they work, and how they live.

"Not acting on this could cause greater problems for the state in the future. The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, who control HR policy for civil service workers, will find a willing ally in Fórsa if they try to introduce what is required to address these issues. It is a ticking time bomb if they don't act on it."

Infographic on page 6

Not acting on this could cause greater problems in the future. The Dept of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform will find a willing ally in Fórsa if they try to address these issues. It is a ticking time bomb if they don't act on it

Infographic

Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS)

5,709

...number of users of the service in 2022

Top usage by county

Monaghan: 20%
Sligo: 19%
Louth: 14%
Leitrim: 14%
Dublin Usage: 7%



(Based on total numbers of civil service workers)

CSEAS – top trends in 2022...

Workplace

- Workplace attributed stress
- Coping with work change
- Interpersonal conflict
- Sick leave absence
- Work-life balance

Personal

- Personal stress
- Mental health
- Family / relationships
- Physical health
- Personal change

Contact the service at:

<https://www.cseas.per.gov.ie>



Fórsa survey

Number of responses: 386

Areas targeted: Department of Justice, Probation Service, Garda Civilians, Forensic Science, Immigration, Coast Guard, Diplomatic Corps, DPP

Do you believe that you have experienced trauma, including secondary trauma, in the workplace?

- **Yes 294**
- **No 92**



Are you aware of what supports are offered by your employer?

- **Yes 269**
- **No 117**



Have you had to seek support privately?

- **Yes 141**
- **No 245**



Does it impact you?
(Select all that apply)

- **It impacts me in the workplace 222**
- **It impacts me in my home life 198**
- **It does not impact me 42**



Are the supports sufficient?

- **Yes 105**
- **No 164**



Message from the Chair

Summer was a washout but AGM season brings hope...

Hello Colleagues

I hope you are keeping well and have had a well-earned summer break, even though weather-wise it didn't resemble the summer season at all! But in saying that, I think, with all the wildfires that happened in various parts of the world, we were probably lucky that we didn't have the extreme heat conditions experienced in other countries.

Our Civil Service Divisional Conference, which took place in May at the Galmont Hotel, Galway, was a very successful event and enjoyed by the many delegates who attended. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your participation, your kindness and respect. I look forward to working with the Divisional Executive Committee for the next two years - working for and on your behalf.

Our Civil Service Divisional Strategy 2023-2025, titled 'Reclaiming Our Place', was launched at the conference and work has begun on several of the practical initiatives.

These include: the comprehensive mapping of areas to identify the potential for the recruitment of new members; and the 'ask a colleague' initiative encouraging union members to ask a non-member to join the union.

Another initiative set out in the strategy seeks to identify non-functioning branches in a bid to ensure they are given all the help and tools they need to start functioning again.

If this is not possible, then it's hoped they will be aligned with another branch to ensure all members receive the service from Fórsa they

are entitled to. Work is progressing on these areas and, when these initiatives are completed, we will then start work on the other initiatives outlined in the strategy.

Recruitment is vital as there is strength in numbers and a louder voice enables us to be heard. So, it is

An AGM is a once-a-year meeting but it gives members an opportunity to bring their voices to the table. It also allows individual members the opportunity to voice their concerns to the Fórsa official in attendance

important that we all - and when I say 'we all' I mean members and Fórsa staff alike - play a role in achieving this.

We are heading into AGM season, which is a busy time for branch committees and branch officers. There is a lot of work and time involved in organising AGMs and I encourage as many

members as possible to attend their AGM.

It is just a once-a-year meeting but it gives members an opportunity to bring their voices to the table. It also allows individual members the opportunity to voice their concerns to the Fórsa official in attendance.

And remember, branches are always looking for new people to join so don't be shy in putting your name forward for the branch committee. It is a great way to meet new people, make friends, and to see what's going on in other departments/offices.

It's great for bouncing ideas off one another and a step to becoming more involved in your union. So, please make every effort possible to attend.

Helen Linehan
Chairperson,
Civil Service Division, Fórsa

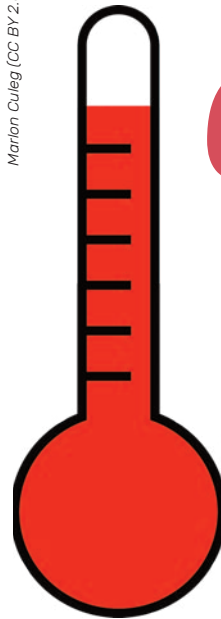


In numbers...



Number of years since the **Irish Civil Service Marriage Bar** ended in **1973**

Marion Culeg (CC BY 2.0)



The stats...

0.7°C

The increase (degrees Celsius) in **Irish temperature** over 30 years
(Source: Met Éireann Climate Averages report)



7%

Percentage increase in **Irish rainfall** in 30 years
(Source: Met Éireann Climate Averages report)



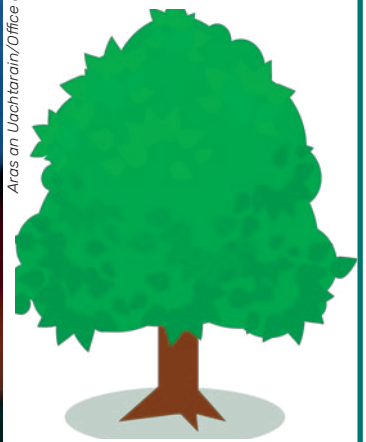
Quote UnQuote...

We require a transformation in how we think of public expenditure, of State investment, of the public sector in general, all of which is too often described pejoratively as a cost or a burden in a country which demonstrates a relatively low level of per-capita public spending compared to other European countries. Public expenditure must become regarded as an investment in our communities, our society and our economy.

Michael D Higgins, speaking at the ICTU Biennial Conference

Aras an Uachtaráin/Office of the President

11.6%



Percentage of **forestry cover** in Ireland, the highest level in **350 years**
(Source: Forest Statistics Ireland 2023)

Good news corner...

The White Tailed Eagle, why is it in the news?

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, a key civil service body, successfully released 24 White Tailed Eagle chicks into the wild in Ireland in August. The species had been extinct in Ireland and is in decline globally. However, working with their counterparts in Norway, the NPWS has now introduced more than 170 White Tailed Eagles into Ireland since the programme began in 2007. The Irish population of the species has now also reported successful breeding pairs, with one instance of triplets already recorded.

Susanne Nilsson (CC BY-SA 2.0)



Fórsa concern at 'unacceptable' proposed civil service legislation

Róisín McKane

Assistant Editor, CSQ

In 2018, Fórsa joined a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and Taoiseach on a proposed Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Bill.

Specifically, the civil service unions noted two areas of concern with the proposals:

- That the power of dismissal would be devolved from secretary general to a lower grade, and

- That it appeared that the government was attempting to legislate on an employment matter rather than negotiate.

The proposals in the new Bill sought to devolve the power to dismiss down from secretary general to an unspecified grade. If enacted, it would allow departments decide to which grade they would devolve the power to terminate a civil service employment.

Following the consultation, the Committee issued its report and nothing more was done. Now, however, the Civil Service Regulation (Amendment) Bill 2018 has reappeared unexpectedly on the government's legislative agenda.

"Let's make no bones about it. They're trying to make it easier to fire you," said Fórsa Deputy General Secretary Éamonn Donnelly.

"They're pretending that this is a move to bring the civil service in line with other sectors. That's nonsense. There are good, robust procedures in the civil service that should apply everywhere if you're thinking of taking someone's job away.

"Instead of trying to become a leader in the field, they seem to be trying to disadvantage workers further rather than the other way around."

Under current arrangements, the process outlined in the Civil Service Disciplinary Procedure clearly separates out the different parts of a procedure into fact finding and decision making. The decision to terminate



rests only with the secretary general.

Under the new arrangements, the power to make a decision to terminate a civil service employment contract could be devolved downwards. The proposed legislation, however, does not specify how low down it could be devolved.

"This is unacceptable," Assistant General Secretary Seán Carabini told CSQ. "It resides with the secretary general at the moment because of the gravity of the decision. To best

They're pretending this is a move to bring the civil service in line with other sectors. That's nonsense. There are good, robust procedures in the civil service that should apply everywhere if you're thinking of taking someone's job away

ensure consistency and objectivity, the person making the decision needs to be suitably senior.

"Devolving it down will do nothing more other than ensure inconsistency, which will generate more and more appeal cases. It is right that the decision rests with the most senior person in a department."

"Furthermore," he added, "we have expressed our extreme dissatisfaction at the threat of yet another example of legislating-rather-than-negotiating, following on from recent examples including the proposals to reclassify Garda Civilian members as non-civil servants. It's not good industrial relations practice."

Fórsa is planning an engagement with our civil service membership to measure the level of discontent or otherwise with the proposals and to clearly communicate that to the political system. We encourage all members to sign up to our e-bulletin to stay informed of developments. Members can sign up, preferably with their private email addresses,

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The signs are Irish economy is overheating, we need to change tack



Image: TradingAcademy.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

The Irish economy is in an unusual place. It's been buffeted by Brexit, by the shock and disruption of the Covid crisis, and is still working its way through an energy price shock and cost-of-living crisis.

There is a sense of winners and losers – net household wealth has reached record levels and corporate profits are healthy – yet deprivation rates among Irish households are on the rise.

The labour market has never been stronger despite an underlying sense of perma-crisis. Total employment, the employment rate, and hours worked are all at or near record highs while the unemployment rate is at a record low. We have clear capacity constraints across the economy, particularly in construction.

And yet real wages declined over the last year. Inflation remains high, albeit falling, across most of the Euro area. Fear of core inflation becoming 'sticky', will lead policymakers at the European Central Bank to increase interest rates twice more this year, and they will only start to gradually reduce rates sometime in 2024.

Tightening monetary policy will eventually start to weaken demand and growth across the Euro area including in Ireland. However, so far, the economy is holding up. Economies move in cycles and each of these cycles has its own



Nevin Economic Research Institute co-director **Dr Tom McDonnell** claims policies that amplify 'boom and bust' dynamics lead to overheating in the economy, citing the 2008 crash as an example, and argues that the Government should abandon populist tax cuts and pro-cyclical budgets



Image: Kiefer (CC BY-SA 2.0)

unique causes and characteristics. In general, we want to reduce the amplitude of the cycle and prevent boom-bust dynamics developing. Such dynamics can lead to permanent economic scarring and to a waste of human potential and physical capital. We only need to think back to the 2008 financial crash as a particularly extreme example of this.

Macroeconomists are therefore always

trying to understand where in the cycle the economy is at any point in time. A correct understanding of whether the economy is 'overheating', 'in recession', or somewhere else along the cycle matters greatly for budgetary policy and for the appropriate fiscal stance taken by government.

If the economy is in a downswing then it makes sense for government to stimulate the economy in a Keynesian fashion through higher public spending or even, where appropriate, tax cuts or direct income supports.

The opposite is true if the economy is overheating. In other words, fiscal policy should be counter-cyclical. My own view is that the economy is indeed overheating at the moment though there is some tentative evidence of weakening.

Irish governments have a long and unhappy history of pro-cyclical budgets and Budget 2024 seems likely to be the next chapter in this tradition.

The Irish Fiscal Advisory Council has already attacked the government for breaking its own

Continued on page 11



A KEY INITIATIVE We need to deal with chronic issues in housing supply and affordability...

Image: Marco Verch (CC BY 2.0)

Overheating economy... we need to change tack

From page 10

spending rules and for risking overheating, while the ESRI and the Central Bank have both cautioned against tax cuts. The Budget in its current form will modestly add to overheating and to inflation, while proposed income tax cuts will disproportionately benefit the better off. It's important that we widen the discussion beyond the fiscal stance and reflect properly on the composition of the budget.

For example, we need to protect low income households from cost-of-living pressures - not half-heartedly through once-off measures as was done last year - but through structural uplifts in working age and old age payments that adequately benchmark against wages and the cost of living.

In addition, we need to deal with the chronic issues in housing supply and affordability and, of course, ensure that we allocate adequate capital resources over the medium-term to support climate action and a 'just' green transition.

There is a long list of other public funding issues that also need addressing. From long waiting lists and chronic underfunding of men-



LONG LIST Childcare costs

tal health services, to large classroom sizes, high childcare costs and lack of public transport services.

But resources are not unlimited. The Department of Finance has identified that around €12 billion in annual corporation tax receipts is potentially transitory in nature. It would be foolish to use these receipts to fund ongoing tax cuts or day-to-day spending commitments. However, using a portion of the windfall to establish a state housing finance company and a green infrastructure fund does make sense.

We need to protect low income households from cost-of-living pressures - not half-heartedly through once-off measures - but through structural uplifts in working age and old age payments...

The state will need to increasingly invest in housing and to make significant capital investments over the next 20 years to support the green transition. Such investments need to be insulated from recession era cuts and from the vagaries of the political cycle. Experience shows that capital spending is vulnerable to cuts in downturns.

The Department of Finance is proposing to use the transitory receipts to set-up a state savings vehicle in order to part-pay for future ageing costs. There is certainly merit in this strategy. But there is scope to do this and also to set up one or more infrastructure funds.

Crucially, the fiscal rules allow us to increase spending by as much as we want each year provided that there are offsetting measures that increase taxes.

The Commission on Taxation and Welfare recommended just last year that we will have to meaningfully increase government revenue as a proportion of national income over the medium-term.

Regardless of how we use the transitory funds we will still need significant structural PRSI increases over the medium term in order to pay for future ageing costs. The government seems set on ducking this issue for a little while longer at least.

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Your CSQ guide to Professional Added Years

Most civil service professional, technical or specialist posts include a provision for 'Professional Added Years'.

These are additional years of service added on to the pension record of certain professional, technical and specialists posts in recognition of the fact that it may not have been possible to accrue full pension entitlements given the number of years of training/external professional

experience required before applying to the role in the civil service.

Examples of such civil service roles includes scientists, solicitors and accountants. It does not apply to general service grades.

This is a rough guide to understanding how it works. Full details are available from your employer directly.

Schemes

There are three schemes that may apply depending on when the person began working in their civil service role. They are:

- Those recruited before 1st April 1997.
- Those recruited between 1st April 1997 and 1st April 2005 (see Dept of Finance Circular 12/1997 and associated personnel officer letters).
- Those recruited since 1st April 2005 (See Dept of Finance Circular 8/2005).

Am I eligible?

The schemes set out a series of tests to see if you belong to one of these schemes. In general, it will ask:

- If you are an established civil service worker;
- If you were appointed to a post that was designated at the time of appointment as professional, technical or specialist and if this designation was included in the circular advertising the role;
- If the professional qualification was necessary to obtain the role; and
- If the competition had a minimum entry age of 25.

**Continued
on Page 14**



Illustration: Yeison Varon Velasquez (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Your CSQ guide to Professional Added Years

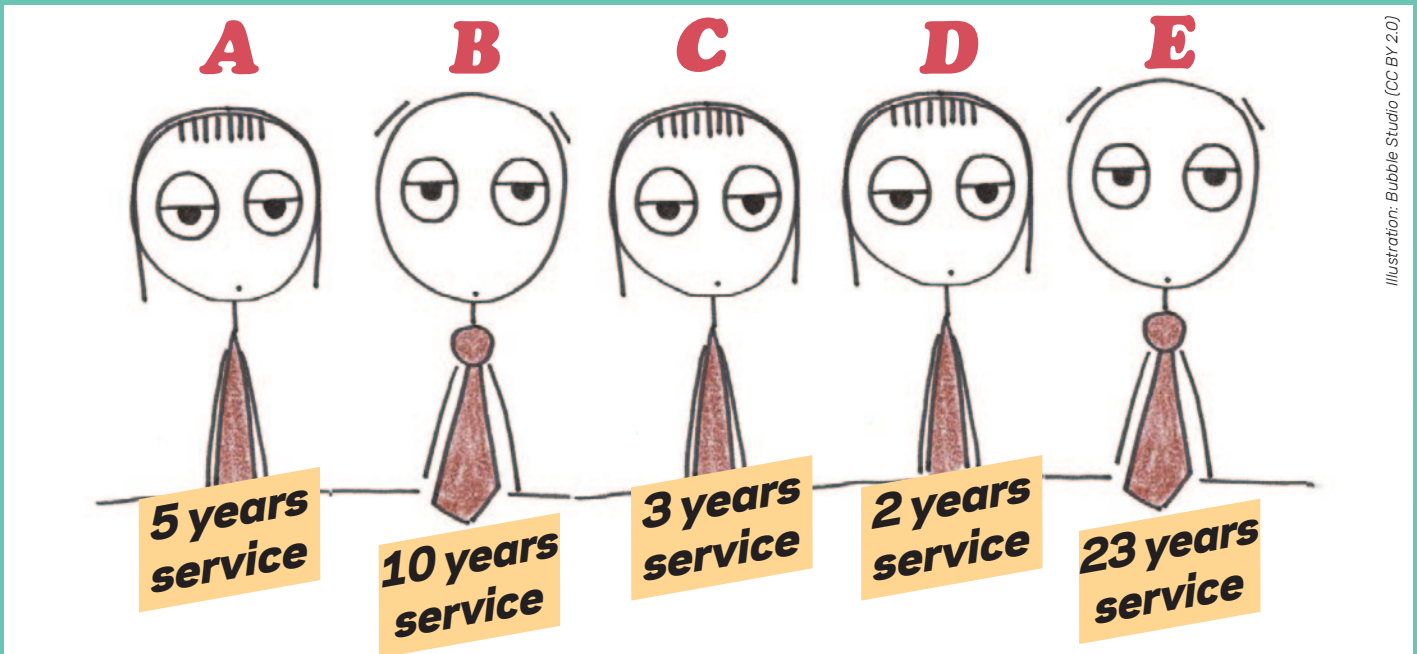


Illustration: Bubble Studio (CC BY 2.0)

From page 13

Calculation of Professional Added Years

There are formulas used to calculate the award. They are based on the years required to gain the qualification and the years of professional experience necessary.

Under the pre-1997 model, the basic formula is a sum of necessary years plus time required to qualify.

Under the post-1997 model, the formula is a little more complicated.

The formula is:

19 years plus years necessary for qualification (Q) plus years of professional experience (E) - 25 years.

How to calculate years of qualification necessary (Q)

This number is based on the years necessary to gain the specified qualification and will take into account the duration of a standard PhD, Masters or other necessary qualification to become eligible for the role.

How to calculate years of professional experience necessary (E)

Experience is not based on the years of experience that a person has, in most cases. It is, rather, the years of experience necessary to be eligible for the competition.

Many competitions will specify the number of years of experience that a candidate would be expected to have for eligibility.

In these cases, the number of years specified generally becomes the number of years of service that will be added to a person's service record for pension purposes.

Therefore, if a competition circular states that a minimum of 3 years is necessary for the competition, 'E' is '3' in this calculation.

If, however, the competition **did not** include a specific number of years of experience, the years will be calculated with reference to the lowest number of years of experience that a **successful** candidate held in that particular competition.

Example:

Five successful candidates were appointed to the post of State Solicitor following a competition, and they each had the following years of experience:

- Candidate A - 5 years;
- Candidate B - 10 years;
- Candidate C - 3 years;
- Candidate D - 2 years;
- Candidate E - 23 years.

The competition did not specify a minimum level of experience needed for a candidate to be eligible.

In this scenario, the lowest years of experience in this competition will apply to all candidates.

Therefore, all candidates gain two years of Professional Added Years.



Picture: Cal Injury Lawyer (Public Domain)

Continued on page 15



Image: Money (CC BY-SA 2.0)

From page 14

Maximum Award

Maximum award under the pre-1997 scheme is 10 years. Maximum award under the post-1997 scheme is 5 years. The maximum award will not exceed the number of years a person has worked.

Gross v net

Your employer will look at other

factors which may impact the award, including periods of career break, other pensionable remuneration that may impact the award, retirement age, etc. This may impact on the final award of years.

When should I apply for Professional Added Years?


At present, the final calculation of


the award of Professional Added Years award be applied for no later than six months before the intended date of retirement.


PLEASE NOTE: This publication is intended for guidance purposes only. Full details of the calculation and eligibility requirements for Professional Added Years are determined by your employer.

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16

News

Fórsa ramps up drive to change PSCS Bill over staff civil service status

Fórsa has been engaged in an intensive campaign to seek to change the proposed introduction of the new Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill 2023 as the Bill would transfer all Garda Civilian members out of the civil service.

There have been a number of new developments over the summer, including confirmation that the Bill will be sent to the Seanad for the next legislative phase. The Seanad is due to meet next in late September. Fórsa is working with reps on the ground to reach out to Senators to explain members' concerns.

The Minister has put on Dáil record that no terms and conditions of members will change if they lose their civil service status should the Act successfully pass.

However, Fórsa does not believe that all terms and conditions have been considered, including, for example, the right to participate in interdepartmental promotion competitions.

In an update to members, Fórsa Assistant General Secretary Jim Mitchell said: "In order to allow us the space to act on your behalf we are seeking that the Seanad support a pause in the Bill to afford time for engagement and negotiation between the parties."

At a meeting with the managements of both an Garda Síochána and the Department of Justice, Fórsa asked whether or not the loss of civil service status would mean that Garda Civilian members would be able to take grievances to the WRC in line with all other non-civil service employment categories.

However, the response indicated that this would not be favoured by the Department at present.

Fórsa has also held a meeting with Garda Commissioner Drew Harris to outline concerns at the proposed legislative changes.



Comm Drew Harris

After representations from Fórsa, the union received correspondence from Dept of Justice Secretary General

Oonagh McPhilips. In the communication, it was noted that "while it remains the intention of the Minister that the PSCS Bill will be enacted before the end of 2023, given the need for consultation with the unions, the Minister does not envisage making an order under section 54(5) of the Bill designating existing staff who have civil service status as members of Garda staff until at least 1st January 2025."

It continued: "However, staff joining An Garda Síochána post-commencement of the Bill will be public servants."

Assistant General Secretary Jim Mitchell again appealed for non-members to join Fórsa to ensure the union can continue to lobby with the strongest possible voice.

He told CSQ: "We are the loudest voice lobbying to hold on to our employment status as civil servants. As things stand, if you're not a civil servant, you won't have access to mobility."

"If you're not a civil servant, you won't have access to interdepartmental competitions. If you're not a civil servant, you're not automatically covered by civil service policies."

He added: "Every person who doesn't join with the voices of their colleagues on this matter

weakens the argument. The more people who are members, the more authority we speak with on this matter. It's that simple."

Fórsa is continuing to coordinate branch and activist action at a local level on this matter.

'JOIN US' PLEA AGS Jim Mitchell





Here for you.

Fórsa members can avail of counselling, legal advice and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, at no additional cost to the member, through the following helplines:

- At no additional cost to the member, legal help in bodily injury cases **0818 776644**
- At no additional cost to the member, 24/7 legal advice helpline **0818 776644**
- At no additional cost to the member, 24/7 confidential counselling helpline **1800 776655**
- At no additional cost to the member, 24/7 domestic assistance helpline **091 545928**

Health and medical information service – **0818 254164**

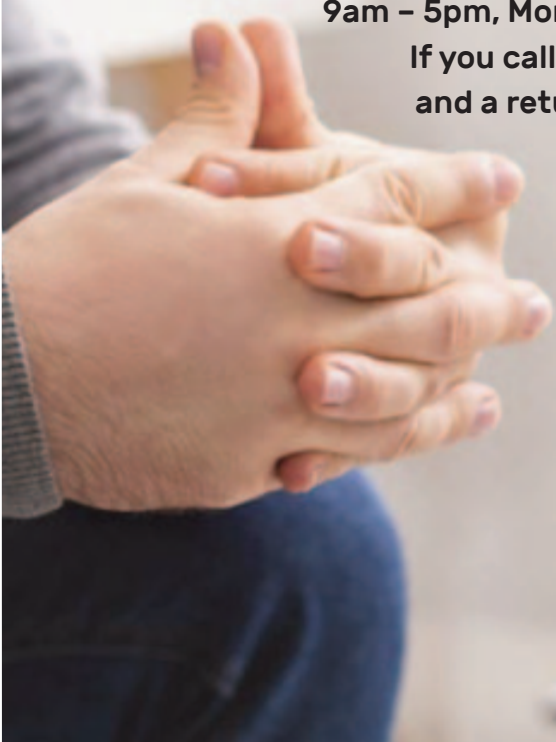
Another service exclusive to Fórsa members is an information service on health and fitness, and non-diagnostic advice on medical matters.

Advice on allergies, the side effects of drugs and how to improve general fitness are also available as part of this service.

Health and medical information is provided by qualified nurses 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public and bank holidays.

If you call outside these times, a message will be taken and a return call arranged within the operating hours.

Call **0818 254164**



News

Fórsa invited to join initiative aimed at transforming reasonable accommodations for disabled people

Pat Ennis

Assistant General Secretary

Following a number of recent cases involving members with disabilities across several departments, Fórsa has engaged with HR in a bid to address deficiencies in policies and facilities, particularly on career path development as well as the allocation of duties following promotion.

This has resulted in an invitation to join with PAS to help co-design the reasonable accommodations process. A range of departments, public sector organisations and local government bodies have been now confirmed as partners in the process along with Fórsa.

PAS has collated a comprehensive (though not exhaustive) evidence base on the experiences of disabled candidates; challenges faced by clients, candidates and recruitment teams; good practice; and what works and what doesn't work. This body of information will be provided to the project committee.

Picture: One Click Group (CC BY 2.0)



LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Civil servants can now seek up to five days of unpaid leave to care for relative

Seán Carabini

Assistant General Secretary, CSQ Editor

With the enactment of Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 during the summer, all civil servants are now entitled to claim up to five days of unpaid leave a year to assist with the medical care of a specified relative.

The categories of relative listed in the Act include:

- Child (including those children

who have been adopted),

- Spouse or civil partner,
- Cohabitant,
- Parent or grandparent,
- Sibling.

"The introduction of this leave is welcome as it creates a space for people to be able to take care of those that are close to them in their lives without having to worry about it impinging on their own sick leave or annual leave balance. It's a big step forward," said Fórsa Assistant General Secretary Paul

Picture: Claudia van Zyl at Unsplash



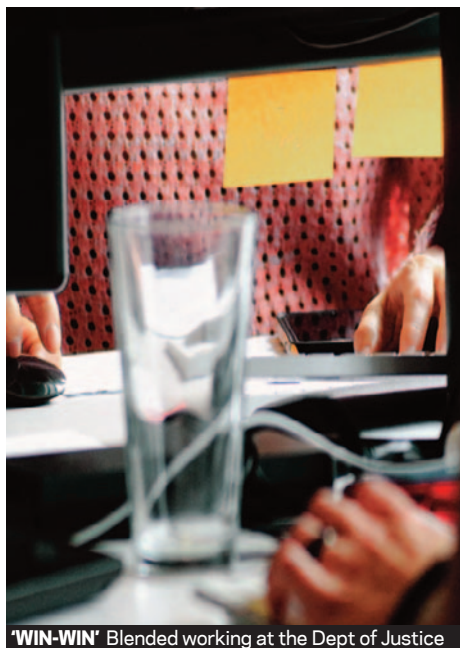
ELDER CARE Unpaid leave when it matters...

MacSweeney. This policy is something that the unions have long sought and predates the foundation of Fórsa as an issue.

The Act also enshrines a number of other provisions, including the extension of breast-feeding breaks for up to two years post-

birth, a provision already negotiated into existence in the civil service sector.

The Act also allows for the eventual introduction of Domestic Violence Leave, an issue that Fórsa has campaigned on for many years.



'WIN-WIN' Blended working at the Dept of Justice

Department of Justice

Fórsa seeks access to full blended working at the DoJ

Róisín McKane

Assistant Editor, CSQ

Fórsa has lodged a claim for full access to blended working in the Department of Justice. Until now, blended working has been available with the caveat that flexi-time accrual would not be available to staff while they were working away from the office – an option that the civil service Arbitration Board made available to departments.

"We were disappointed to see Justice initially opt to not allow their staff accrue flexi-time when they were working from home," Assistant General Secretary Seán Carabini told CSQ. "Now is the time to seek to persuade the department to adopt a blended-working policy

that benefits everyone."

"The Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform's review of blended-working flexi accrual has clearly shown that there is no downside to it whatsoever and gives staff more flexibility in maintaining their work-life balance while also simultaneously maintaining productivity levels. It's a win-win."

He continued: "This is a very important issue for our members working in Justice. We need to see this one through. Our claim has been lodged and the department is now considering it. We expect an answer back in Q3. In reality, however, there is only one answer that will be acceptable to our members and we hope that this issue will be resolved successfully."

Picture: Sigmund at Unsplash

Third party referral for prison chaplains' case

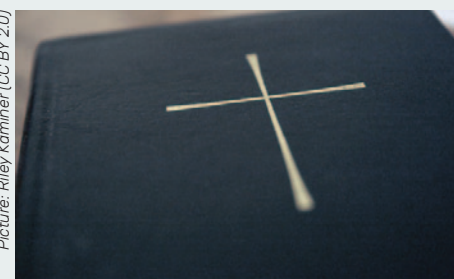
Fórsa and the Department of Justice were unable to reach agreement on prison chaplains' pay.

The pay scales were changed unilaterally in 2015 and have been in dispute since then. Fórsa estimates that chaplains hired

since are on pay scales that potentially disadvantage them by about €18,000 a year. Assistant General Secretary Paul Moyer told CSQ: "HR have written to me and indicated they cannot resolve the matter so it will be referred to a third party."

Details formally recording the nature of the disagreement, a prerequisite for advancing a case to a third party, were finalised over the summer.

Picture: Riley Kammer (CC BY 2.0)



Institute of Public Administration

DPER staff transfer to IPA now in dispute

Pat Ennis

Assistant General Secretary

AHPCS and Fórsa have jointly put the involuntary transfer of OneLearning/SPS staff from DPER to the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) into dispute, having completed the six weeks of local negotiation as required under the *Building Momentum* dispute resolution procedures.

The next step is to refer the matter to the sectoral oversight body.

Meanwhile, Fórsa and the AHPCS have been actively engaged with DPER HR on a series of related issues:

- Current staffing levels,
- Civil service pay and non-pay conditions,
- Extension of temporary deployment,
- Termination of temporary deployment,

● Flexi-time/HR records,
● Deployment of roles.
And the unions have engaged with management on a number of other issues, including:

- Confirmation of where staff will be located.
- Further confirmation on reporting structures required – i.e. will civil servants ever be reporting to non-civil servants? Or will civil

servants be managing non-civil servants? – and the various implications such developments would have.

● Uncertainty as to how OneLearning will be integrated into IPA as part of the wider restructuring of the IPA.

● Confirmation that the management of probation for any impacted staff will be managed under the Civil Service Probation Guidelines and relevant Circulars.

● Clarity over all roles in the IPA – i.e. will staff be continuing to work in their current roles, such as course content development etc.

Management has appointed liaison officers with the Staff Panel and agreed the setting up of a working group of all stakeholders to identify and work through related issues and concerns.



Keeping you in the loop...

@forsa_union



@forsaunion



Fórsa Trade Union



Fórsa trade union



forsa_union

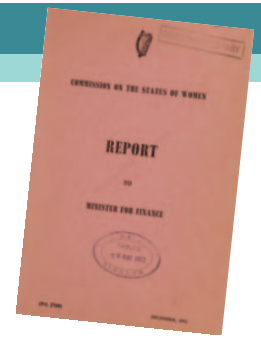


FÓRSA.ie

In focus...

'A woman should be allowed to continue in her job irrespective of any change in her marital status.'

- **Commission on the Status of Women report, 1972, paragraph 255**



It's half a century since the marriage bar in the Irish civil service was ended

Seán Carabini
CSQ Editor

Until 1973, a woman had to forfeit her job upon marriage in the Irish civil service. Unfortunately, what may seem socially abhorrent today, was considered a social norm at the time. The 1966 census showed that just 6% of married women recorded themselves as being in employment.

What was known as the 'marriage bar' differed across employments in 1972. Some employments had already abolished it. Others had a written marriage bar policy, but did not operate it. There was some flexibility to challenge it.

It was, however, different in the civil service as, unlike other sectors, the marriage bar was enshrined in the 1956 Civil Service Act. The handful of married women who did work in the civil service were there only on ad hoc or temporary arrangements, usually in areas experiencing recruitment difficulties.

The Commission was established by an Taoiseach Jack Lynch in 1968 following pressure from a number of organisations, including the Irish Housewives Association and the Business and Professional Women's Clubs. They were responding to UN pressure on governments to address instances of workplace gender inequality. Indeed, many countries began to address this issue in the immediate post-war years. Ireland, therefore, lagged behind.

"Marriage bars fell out of fashion after World War II across Europe, including in the British civil marriage bar on working women," noted Dr Orla Bambrick, ICTU, in comments to mark the 50th anniversary.

In 1972, the lobby groups knew that addressing gender inequalities



CHANGES Gender inequality at work was seen as hindrance to EEC membership



Dr Orla Bambrick

could hinder Ireland's application to join the European Economic Community. This is something that hadn't escaped the Commission or their chairperson, Thekla Beeke, the first woman to serve as the Secretary General to a government department. In their 1972 report, there is constant reference to practices in other European countries as a way to highlight the issue.

In a series of recommendations in the report, the Commission pulled no punches in recommend-

ing the end to gender discrimination in workplaces.

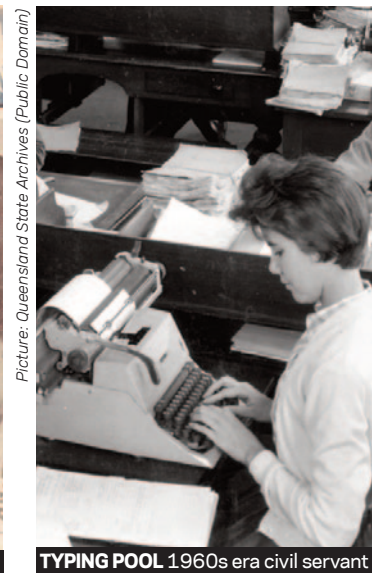
They stated: "In our opinion, the compulsory retirement of women from employment because of their marriage is discriminatory and wasteful of their talents, training and experience and we recommend that a woman should be allowed to continue in her job irrespective of any change in her marital status."

In the early 1970s, the trade union movement was fully engaged in the fight for pay equality. In-

COMMISSION Taoiseach Jack Lynch

Picture: Evers Joost/Anefo (CC BY-SA 3.0)

In its report, the Commission pulled no punches. They stated: 'In our opinion, the compulsory retirement of women from employment because of their marriage is discriminatory and wasteful of their talents, training and experience...'



TYPING POOL 1960s era civil servant

deed, for most civil service jobs, separate pay scales existed for the same job for men and women. In its submission to the Commission, ICTU noted that the removal of the marriage bar in the public service should be accepted.

Indeed, the Irish Local Government Officials' Union, representing some 2,000 women workers at the time, adopted a resolution at its 1971 annual conference seeking that the marriage bar be removed. There was, however, some resistance in some areas where the marriage ban effectively created vacancies and potential promotion paths for some. These issues were carefully navigated at the time.

Acknowledging some of these difficulties, Dr Bambrick noted that though the marriage bar was the most blatant form of gender discrimination in the history of women's employment it had "almost universal public support - including among women".

She pointed out that "only the

Continued on page 21

In focus...

The report was published in December 1972. By the end of 1973, the government finally moved to address the situation and ended the civil service marriage bar

Ending the civil service marriage bar

From page 20

rare few women in senior positions" were likely to resent it.

The report was published in December 1972. By the end of 1973, the government finally moved to address the situation and ended the civil service marriage bar.

Dr Bambrick said: "The Commission on the Status of Women pointed out that any practices of systematic downgrading of women workers would be incompatible with the requirements for EEC membership after Ireland joined in 1973. The marriage bar in the civil service ended in 1973 and in the wider public sector the following year."

There was, of course, many other issues to resolve as part of this. For example, the pension entitlements of those forced to leave because of the marriage bar was never adequately addressed.

On leaving the civil service under the terms of the marriage bar, women were paid a gratuity equivalent to one month's pay for each year of service. This was continued under what could be termed a "voluntary" marriage bar, introduced in 1975. This allowed women to leave the civil service with a gratuity within two years of becoming married.

Those seeking to rejoin the civil service at a later date fell liable to repaying the full value of the gratuity with interest. Indeed, although the marriage gratuity is now gone, Fórsa still receives enquiries to this day from people considering rejoining the civil service workforce.

Dr Bambrick added: "This was too good an offer to turn down for most young brides starting out married life. But it came at a high cost in terms of their future pension entitlements which is still felt today."



Picture: Queensland State Archives (Public Domain)

Infographic on page 22

Groundbreaking 1972 Report

Summary of the 49 recommendations...

Finance

Financial institutions shouldn't discriminate on basis of gender for loans

Equal Pay

Equal pay for equal work. No special rates for married men

Politics

Encourage greater equality of participation

Social Welfare

Allowances introduced/improved for widows, deserted wives, unmarried mothers

In the home

Marriage counselling and family planning services should be provided

Taxation

Married women should receive the same income tax allowance as a single person

Women in Employment

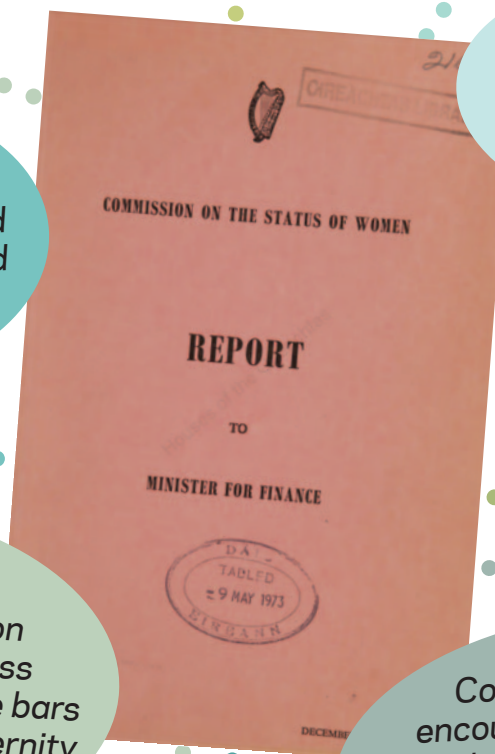
Women should serve on interview boards, access apprenticeships, marriage bars should be lifted, paid Maternity Leave should be introduced

Education

Co-education should be encouraged. Encouragement should be offered for full participation in maths and science. Subjects should link to future employment opportunities

Law

Both partners should have equal legal obligations to support their family. Co-ownership of homes should be encouraged. Gender barriers to jury service should be abolished



QR code

Read the 1972 Report on the Commission on the Status of Women



Join Fórsa 'to show our strength' plea as recruitment pause hits HSE grades

Róisín McKane

Assistant Editor, CSQ

Fórsa members have commenced a work-to-rule action across the HSE in an effort to try to reverse a recently-announced recruitment embargo that will have a direct impact on the working lives of members.

Recent memos issued by the Head of Acute Services and the CEO of the HSE instructed all managers throughout the HSE and Section 38s to pause recruitment across the managerial/administration grades.

On 24th July management escalated this further and put in place a full recruitment pause from Grade III and above.

They have stated this was due to their concerns over the number of clerical admin/managerial grades recruited in the last six months. Yet again the HSE is targeting clerical admin grades - no other grade or category across the HSE will suffer these arbitrary measures.

In addition, Fórsa has been raising serious concerns in recent months with HSE senior management over their failure to adhere to our collective agreements on the filling of promotional positions. The union has also raised with management their over-reliance on agency workers and external private consultants.

In light of these developments a ballot was called, and members voted in favour of industrial action.

Detailed instructions about what is and is

not included in the work-to-rule have been issued to the members affected. The Fórsa Civil Service Division would like to express solidarity with our HSE members.

Fórsa Assistant General Secretary Seán Carabini said: "This dispute is very simple. They have implemented an unwarranted recruitment pause that will directly affect our members. The Fórsa Civil Service Division and our members stand behind our HSE colleagues.

"We also ask anyone that hasn't joined the union yet to do so in order to demonstrate our strength to management. This matters. It matters a lot more than some non-members believe."

If you have a friend or family member working in the affected grades in the HSE, please encourage them to join Fórsa immediately. In industrial relations, the higher the membership density, the greater the membership power.

● **Join us, scan the QR Code below**

We ask anyone that hasn't joined the union yet to do so in order to demonstrate our strength to management. This matters. It matters a lot more than some non-members believe



FORSA Join a trade union that wins...



Q&A

A guide to new annual leave protocols in the civil service

In June, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 08/2023 was introduced, revising and updating the management of annual leave in the civil service. This provides a brief overview of the circular.

How is my annual leave calculated?

Annual leave consists of two different parts: statutory and non-statutory leave.

Statutory leave is the leave that you are entitled to by law. This equates to 20 days for a full-time worker per annum.

Non-statutory leave is the additional leave that unions have negotiated over the years that is added on to your statutory leave.

This means that, for example, an EO with a leave allowance of 26 days has, in effect, a statutory allowance of 20 days plus a non-statutory allowance of six days.

What are the allowances for each grade?

There have been no changes to this. However, members should note that many grades see an increase in annual leave depending on length of service. It is always advisable to check your HR record when you are due a leave increase to make sure that it was added to your allowance as there have been instances of this not being done automatically.

EXAMPLES OF LEAVE ALLOWANCES (note: full leave allowances for all grades are published in the circular). Annual leave applying to all officers appointed/promoted to their current grade **ON OR AFTER 14th December 2011**:

Higher Executive Officer	29	30			
Administrative Officer	25	29	30		
Executive Officer	23	24	25	26	27
Clerical Officer	22	23	24	25	26
Service Officer	22	23	24	25	26

Carry over of leave...

The new arrangements for carry over of untaken leave are as follows:

All non-statutory leave can be carried over and used up within the next year's annual leave cycle.

Statutory leave is different. The Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 states

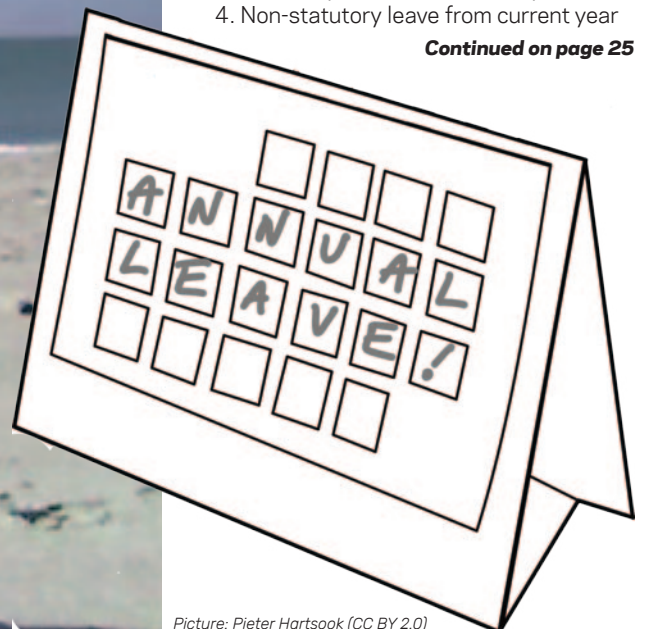
that all statutory leave must be used up within the annual leave year.

In exceptional circumstances, a facility has been arranged to allow an officer who could not avail of their statutory leave allowance due to business reasons to carry it forward and use it within the first six months of the following leave year.

If leave is carried forward into a new year, the sequence in which it must be taken is:

1. Statutory leave from previous year
2. Non-statutory leave from previous year
3. Statutory leave from current year
4. Non-statutory leave from current year

Continued on page 25



Picture: Pieter Hartsook (CC BY 2.0)



Picture: Kaj Schmidt (CC BY 2.0)

Does annual leave circular refer to Time Off In Lieu worked up as overtime?

No. This leave is separate to annual leave.

Do I continue to accrue annual leave when I'm on sick leave?

When you are on sick leave for full or half pay, normal annual leave continues to accrue. However, if you move onto TRR rate of sick pay, non-statutory sick leave does not accrue.

Can I be paid for untaken leave?

No. However, in a circumstance where a person's employment comes to an end and they have untaken leave, payment may be made by their employer for the untaken leave.

What is 'anticipated' annual leave?

A new facility has been negotiated to allow people to 'borrow' or 'anticipate' up to two days of their next year's allowance in circumstances where they have no leave left but an unforeseen event requiring leave arises.

Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

If I am promoted within the civil service, do I retain my leave?

Generally, there is a commitment to making sure nobody ends up with less leave. The arrangements for this are outlined in Part 9 of the circular.

However, this is subject to the overall maximum not being breached.

QR code

Full details can be found in the circular. Scan here...



In conversation...

With the continuing inflationary crisis and financial difficulties that members can encounter, we spoke with **Karen Martin**, Director of the **Public Service Friendly Society (PSFS)**, about their work, their ethos and the kinds of assistance that they can offer to public servants experiencing financial difficulty

Being there to help public servants facing problems

Tell me about the history of the society.

Founded in 1927, it was formerly known as the Civil Service Benevolent Fund. Its ethos is of public servants helping public servants. The organisation has evolved over the years and an Executive Director was appointed in the 1990s.

The ethos has stayed the same: to help those who are in need. The subscriptions fund those who run into difficulty.

What situations do you help PSFS members with?

The needs have changed since 1927 to now, but the basis is the same. People come, explain their situation and a cases committee makes a decision.

We would have people who are on long-term sick leave who have no way to pay their bills. We help people who run into overpayments.

We have people that are categorised as working poor – people who have steady incomes but who can't make ends meet.

For example, we could have two clerical officers married to each other who can barely afford the rent, the creche fees and the cost of keeping a car on the road. If their washing machine breaks and needs replacing, they simply may not be able to afford it.

What are the more typical types of help PSFS members seek?

We respond to anyone in difficulty.

For example, funeral grants for members or their spouses. We would help depending on the financial need.

We can also assist with refund of fees education schemes for people who can't afford to pay up-front. They repay in full when they get their fees refunded. After that, it

could be anyone. For example, someone who can't afford legal advice going through a neighbour dispute or a divorce/separation. We have also begun to partner with some financial institutions to offer reduced rates on some financial products to help people too.

Are there new trends emerging?

We hear from men going through separations that have to leave the house. Many can't afford to pay rent in the private sector and maintenance but who are just above the threshold for housing assistance. They are often living by sofa surfing. And these can be people who are at the top of their salary scales.

Who makes a decision about whether or not to grant assistance?

The PSFS is run by civil servants for civil servants. We are all civil servants here. All of our members and our committees are made up of serving or retired civil servants. Decisions are made by a cases committee who are members of the PSFS Committee.

How do you join?

The easiest way to join is to go to www.psfs.ie/benefits/membership. The deduction comes out of our salary. The cost is currently 25c per €100 of wages. There is a calculator on our website to show you the cost based on your wages.

We have people that are categorised as working poor – people who have steady incomes but who can't make ends meet

PSFS
QR Code



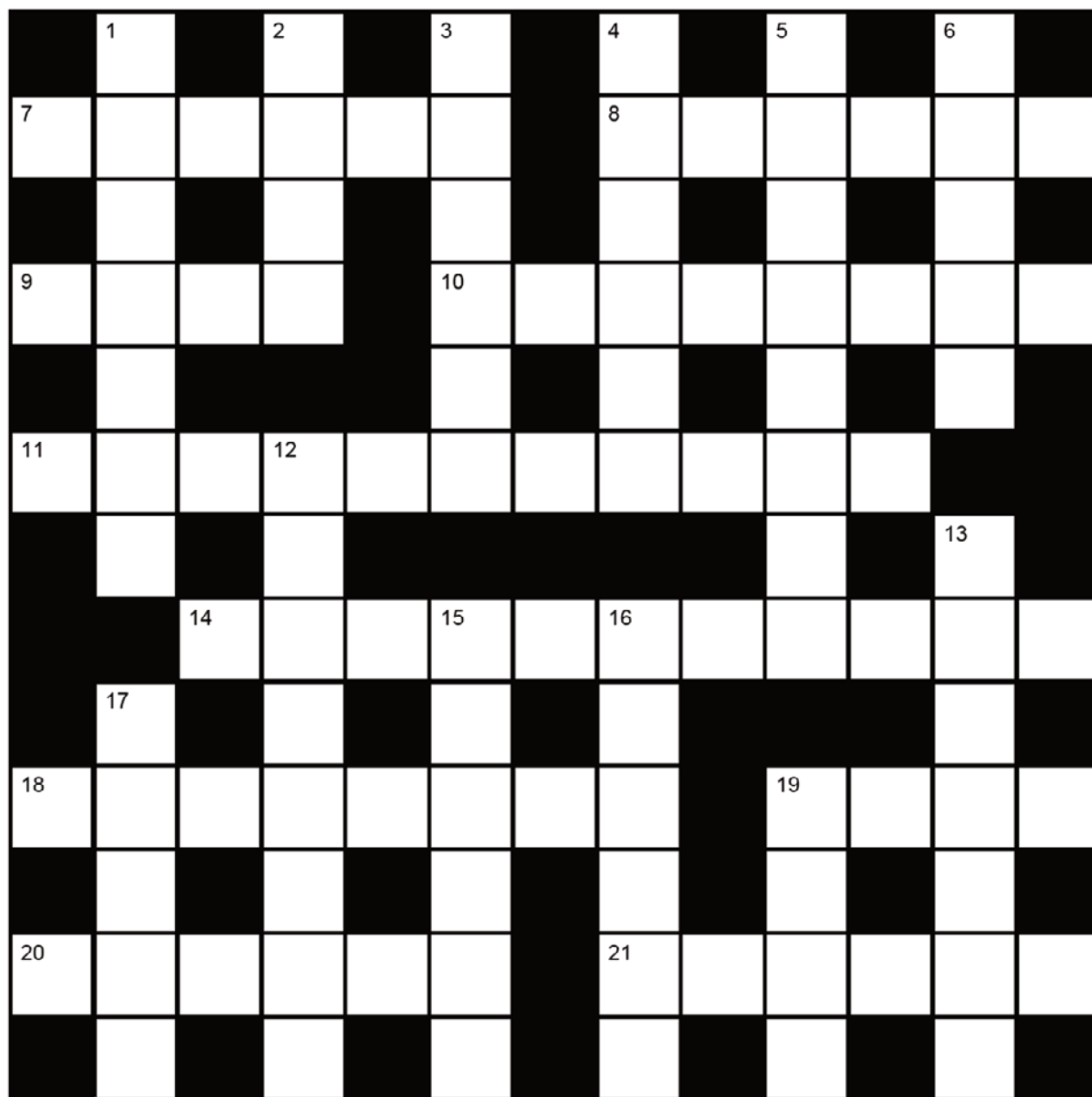
In conversation...



AT YOUR SERVICE Karen is keen to emphasise that the PSFS is 'run by civil servants for civil servants'

Crossword

As **CSQ** is currently being published **online only**, we have decided to end the competitive element to the crossword as it is more difficult to track returned entries to Head Office. However, the crossword will continue to run in CSQ.



Crossword set by Peter Connaughton

Across

7. Italy's third largest city (6)
8. Chinese sauce made with fermented soybean paste (6)
9. Small musical instrument - found in Dunfermline or Kirkcaldy (4)
10. Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta (4, 4)
11. Kingsbridge Station was renamed after him in 1966 (4, 7)
14. She was born Isabella Augusta Persse (4, 7)
18. Omni - A situation, especially in politics, that has been badly mismanaged (8)
19. Quick, to the seaside town in Fingal (4)
20. See 21 across (6)
21. And 20 across - 1997 crime drama starring Al Pacino and Johnny Depp (6)

Down

1. Dog teeth? (7)
2. This band before Tones, Nile, In Heaven (4)
3. Tristan and Wagner opera (6)
4. Literary ghosts and sunglasses (6)
5. Monster movie from 1933, remade in 1976 and 2005 (4, 4)
6. Zodiac sign between Leo and Libra (5)
12. A close call (4, 4)
13. TV comedy set in the fictional town of Hawley (7)
15. The colour between green and orange on the spectrum of light (6)
16. To have one's permanent home in a particular place. (6)
17. The tallest building in the UK, designed by Renzo Piano (5)
19. Telephoned the Irish class (4)

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS CSQ spring 2023

ACROSS: 7. Tunnel; 8. London; 9. Vita; 10. Audience; 11. Fontaines D.C.; 14. Sean T. O'Kelly; 18. Tallaght; 19. Mack; 20. Hansen; 21. Radish
 DOWN: 1. Rubicon; 2. Inca; 3. Alkali; 4. Pledge; 5. Entendre; 6. Dolce; 12. The Clash; 13. Glucose; 15. Nagano; 16. Oxters; 17. Canal; 19. Mods