FÓRSA

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2026-2029

FAQ

This document was published on Monday 16th November 2026

Vote from Monday 16th November to 12pm Friday 4th December

Introduction

On 11th November 2026, union negotiators reached a draft public service agreement following six weeks of industrial action, including a 24-hour strike. This action powerfully demonstrated members' collective strength.

The proposed agreement contains pay increases, local bargaining arrangements, and proposed reforms with associated commitments on job protection and consultation.

What is the duration of the agreement?

The proposed agreement would run for two years and nine months, from 1st July 2026 to 31st March 2029.

What are the pay terms?

The proposal provides for pay increases totalling 10.75% between September 2026 and March 2029. Five minimum flat rate amounts mean lower-paid workers would receive greater percentage increases. There is also a threshold for defining 'lower-paid workers', which will increase from €50,000 to €60,000, meaning many more workers would benefit.

The increases are expected to exceed current inflation projections. Various institutions, including the trade union funded Nevin Economic Research Institute, are forecasting cumulative inflation of between 7.2% and 8.0% over the 33-month period of the agreement. Using a similar cumulative approach, the pay increases are worth 10.17%, or 11.27% if the second phase of local bargaining in 2029 is included.

A recent **NERI briefing note** explains these projections and includes a table of projected basic salary increases.

But we live in uncertain times. For this reason, a review clause is included. For the first time, the clause specifically references inflation and includes a time-limited, six-week review process.

The proposed annualised pay increases are:

- 1st September 2026 — a pay adjustment of 2% or a minimum payment of €1,200, whichever is the greater.
- 1st April 2027 — a pay adjustment of 1%.
- 1st August 2027 — a pay adjustment of 1% or a minimum payment of €600, whichever is the greater.
- 1st November 2027 — a pay adjustment of 1.5% or a minimum payment of €900, whichever is the greater.
- 1st March 2028 — a pay adjustment of 1%.
- 1st June 2028 — a pay adjustment of 1% or a minimum payment of €600, whichever is the greater.
- 1st October 2028 — a pay adjustment of 1%.
- 1st March 2029 — implementation of the second phase of 'local bargaining' of 1%.
- 2nd March 2029 — a pay adjustment of 1.25% or a minimum payment of €750, whichever is the greater.

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Why is the first increase in September 2026, and not July 2026?

The union sought to improve pay from July 2026, having a mandate to secure a pay increase covering the period from July to December 2026. The Government had refused to make any commitment in relation to another pay increase in 2026 beyond the two increases contained in the last agreement. Ultimately, the negotiated outcome was a first increase from September 2026.

How do lower-paid workers benefit more?

The proposed agreement prioritises higher increases for lower-paid workers, most of whom are younger workers. There are five instances in the lifetime of the agreement when lower-paid workers will receive higher increases. Because, where the flat rate amounts are greater than the percentage increases, workers who are on a salary less than €60,000 at that time will benefit more.

Who is a 'lower-paid worker'?

In this agreement, the threshold for defining 'lower-paid workers' moves from €50,000 to €60,000. This means more workers will benefit from a higher increase. More than half of public service workers fall within the new threshold and will therefore benefit from higher increases to their pay.

Are the 'flat rate' payments lump sums?

No. Whichever is greater, the flat rate increase or the percentage increase, would be added to the worker's salary point, rather than paid as a lump sum. For example, a local authority clerical officer on the first salary point of €31,935 would receive the €1,200 flat rate increase, bringing their salary to €33,135. A 2% increase would bring their salary to €32,573, so the flat rate increase is greater.

A recent **NERI briefing note** includes a table of projected basic salary increases.

You can also use this **Fórsa salary calculator** to estimate the basic pay increases that would apply to your salary, excluding local bargaining increases, incremental progression and tax and other deductions:

How is back pay calculated on the basic pay increases?

If accepted, the 2% pay increase would be calculated from 1st September until the pay period that your employer processes it in payroll. You can also use this **Fórsa salary calculator** to estimate the back pay, along with the basic pay increases that would apply to your salary, excluding local bargaining increases, incremental progression and tax and other deductions.

What about local bargaining?

If accepted, outstanding first phase claims dating from September 2025 are to be resolved by 24th November 2026, where a group wants to settle its claim in the form of a 1% increase from 1st September 2025, or where there is already an agreed proposal on the table. Back pay would be payable in these circumstances from 1st September 2025.

The second 1% increase will be implemented on 1st March 2029, and the final phase will be part of the next agreement.

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I am on a job share. Will I receive the full percentage increases on my pay, or will it be a lower percentage?

It is the same percentage increase, regardless of job share or hours of work.

What about remote work?

The draft agreement explicitly recognises that the way in which we work has changed, and that remote and hybrid work are here to stay.

It also acknowledges that remote work can support recruitment and retention, and that the State has a duty to lead the way on this issue. The agreement contains commitments to protect blended work and to ensure that established work practices cannot be changed without consultation.

What does the agreement say about artificial intelligence?

There is a firm commitment that there will be no compulsory redundancies resulting from the use of artificial intelligence in the public service.

A €150 million training fund, established to assist upskilling, will be available to help public and private sector workers adapt to changes in the world of work.

Has Fórsa taken a position on the agreement?

The elected National Executive Committee met on Wednesday 11th November 2026 and is recommending that members vote in favour of accepting the agreement.

When would I receive the pay increase dated 1st September?

If the agreement is accepted by members, the employers will be notified, and payments should be made early in the new year.

Do the pay improvements apply to allowances?

The increases would apply to pensionable allowances.

How would the agreement affect public service pensioners?

Increases in public service pay scales are generally reflected in public service pensions that are linked to pay scales. A letter confirming this has been promised, in keeping with previous occasions.

The agreement contains provision for early engagement with the Alliance of Retired Public Servants on matters concerning public service pensioners and ongoing engagement between ICTU reps and officials from DPER and the NSSO on technical pension matters.

What happens if the agreement is rejected?

If the agreement is rejected, we remain in dispute, and the union will consider next steps.

How should I manage the work that has piled up during the work-to-rule?

All industrial action related to this dispute has now been suspended; therefore, you should resume tasks that were not being done during the industrial action.

We recognise there may be pressure from management to address the additional workload that has built up during the industrial action. Remember that you are protected by health and safety legislation. Contact your union rep if unreasonable demands are being made of you.

Will there be a change to civil service mileage rates?

The agreement commits to a prompt review of civil service mileage rates through established structures. The review will take account of the full range of current cost factors and any other relevant considerations.

What does the agreement say about the SNA Workforce Development Plan?

The draft agreement requires engagement to take place quickly ("expeditiously") on reducing the '72 hours'. This is the first time that the case for a reduction has been acknowledged by Government. It also links this to the first phase local bargaining outcome, which is currently blocked, and re-engagement with the intention of bringing a revised SNAWDP into effect from September 2027.

The clause commits the union to discussions, not to accepting the proposals which were rejected by members in a ballot earlier this year, or agreeing to their imposition.

If fresh negotiations on a revised SNAWDP offer an opportunity to improve the proposals, including reducing the 72-hour obligation, SNA members will again have an opportunity to vote on these changes.

What does the agreement say about public procurement?

The agreement includes a commitment to introduce 'further safeguards' to strengthen social and ethical considerations in procurement, as well as collective bargaining. It explicitly references human rights, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. This provision will open a route for workers and unions to ensure that public contracts and funding are only awarded to businesses that respect workers, promote collective bargaining and comply with human rights.

Given trade union activists' deep involvement in BDS campaigning over the past number of years, this is a major milestone and provides an opportunity to hold Government to account on ethical procurement.

Unions have also been advocating for stronger promotion of collective bargaining, and have achieved a pilot public procurement project, in addition to progressing further actions.

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What other agreements relate to Fórsa members?

There are a number of sector-specific provisions in the agreement. Those that relate directly to Fórsa members include commitments to:

- begin talks to reduce the 72-hour liability for Special Needs Assistants;
- implement the Labour Court recommendation on a job evaluation scheme in Tusla;
- continue to implement the McLoughlin Report relating to pharmacists in non-hospital settings;
- progress WRC agreements related to staff working in Oberstown Children's Detention Campus;
- conduct a prompt review of civil service mileage rates;
- engage with officials from DPER and the NSSO on technical pension matters.

When will the ballot open?

The ballot opens on Monday 16th November and runs until 12pm on Friday 4th December. You will be asked if you accept or reject the proposed agreement.

The ballot will take place online, through the independent third-party platform Mi-Voice. More information will be sent directly to members.

Will non-union workers benefit from the terms of the agreement?

Clause 5.7 (compliance) states that the benefits of the agreement will be confined to staff and employees represented by unions in membership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, or other unions or representative associations that have notified the WRC of their intention to comply with the agreement. Our view is that the employer is obliged to provide the benefits of the agreement only to union members. However, employers have applied the terms of previous agreements to all workers.

What does the agreement say about industrial peace?

Clause 5.8 (maintenance of industrial peace) states that all forms of industrial action are precluded in respect of remuneration or any other matter covered by the agreement.

However, if an employer does not adhere to the agreement, they cannot rely on this clause to prevent members from exercising their democratic right to engage in industrial action, provided the union adheres to the agreement and follows the appropriate dispute resolution procedure and legislation.

What happens after the vote?

The ballot outcome will be reported to Fórsa's National Executive Committee, to all members covered by the proposed agreement, and will be communicated to the Public Service Committee (PSC) of ICTU. The PSC agreed that a decision would be reached early in the week beginning 7th December 2026 following ballots in the individual affiliated unions.

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Can Fórsa members whose pay is aligned with the public service agreement, but who are not directly covered by it, vote? For example, members working in section 39 organisations?

No. Only members directly covered by the agreement will be able to vote, as the agreement is a proposal which is being put forward to resolve the trade dispute between civil and public service members and their employer. If other members' pay is aligned with the agreement and their employer puts forward the same terms, those members will be able to vote at that point.

Will members whose pay was deducted for the one-day strike be reimbursed?

No. Union negotiators proposed reimbursement of any pay deducted from members for the strike, but Government negotiators refused to agree.

How does voting on this agreement affect ongoing industrial action in separate trade disputes?

Only industrial action relating to the pay dispute has been suspended to allow members to vote on this agreement. If you are involved in another trade dispute with your employer, outside of the pay dispute, contact your local rep or official if you need further clarification.

Will pension matters be addressed if the agreement is accepted?

It is intended that there would be structured, ongoing discussions on pension matters, given the poor quality of dialogue on these issues in recent years.

What else is in the agreement?

There is much more in the full agreement, and you can find the text **here**.