FÓRSA

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2026-2029

FAQ

This document was updated on Tuesday 23rd 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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How will the pay terms benefit me?

There is no 'one size fits all' answer to this question. The combination of percentage increases, and flat rate increases, along with the range of different grades represented by Fórsa, mean that the proposed agreement will have a different impact on different workers.

That's why we have created a salary calculator to help you understand how your basic pay will change if the agreement is accepted. The calculator gives you an approximate estimate of what this means for your pay. The calculator focuses on basic pay increases and doesn't take into account the impact of local bargaining, salary increments, tax or other deductions on your take-home pay.

Access the **calculator here**.

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.

How can we be sure that the pay terms will match inflation?

We cannot predict inflation exactly. However, projections by the Nevin Economic Research Institute, forecast 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. For low paid workers the increases are higher due to the five instances where flat rate payments apply.

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

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.

What is happening with the local bargaining claims from the last agreement?

There is a commitment in this agreement that negotiations on phase one claims should be concluded by the end of November.

There is also recognition that the delays to implementing local bargaining in the previous agreement created challenges, and that the process must become more efficient in the future.

Clause 4.2.2 acknowledges the state has a "liability" in regard to bargaining units that remain unresolved "more than a year after payment was due".

The agreement defines three categories of claims from phase one of local bargaining:

- **Category one claims** are claims or proposals that dealt with sector specific issues and, following negotiation, are now progressing or have been implemented.
- **Category two claims** are claims or proposals that include local bargaining generalised pay increases, which are now progressing or have been implemented.
- **Category three claims** are claims or proposals that are outstanding and must be settled. This category includes claims referred to dispute resolution.

Engagement on category three claims is underway, and members will be informed as soon as an update is available.

Negotiations on 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 from 1st September 2025 if the agreement is accepted. This increase is part of the last agreement and is separate from the increases in the proposed agreement.

Additionally, the second 1% increase will be implemented on 1st March 2029 if accepted, 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.

Does this agreement maintain CORU fees at €100?

Yes. This agreement, like previous public service agreements, will maintain CORU registration fees at €100 per year.

How is remote and blended work protected in the agreement?

There are three clauses that deal with remote, hybrid and blended work in this agreement (2.7.4, 2.7.5 and 2.7.6).

For the first time, remote work is acknowledged as part of working life, it is described as a "feature of the Irish labour market". 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.

This is a significant step forward and is stronger than the wording in the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026, which did not explicitly reference remote work and only acknowledged that blended work was part of workplaces "changing".

The agreement contains commitments to protect blended work and to ensure that established work practices cannot be changed without consultation.

The agreement states that blended working policy frameworks will continue to operate, and matters related to remote and blended work should be negotiated locally. This means that unions will continue to be involved in discussions on remote work in all civil and public service workplaces.

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.

Why does Fórsa believe this was the best deal achievable through negotiations?

Having gone through the negotiation process, including extensive engagement with the Government Appointed Group, unions secured a pay deal worth more than the budgetary allocation for public service pay announced in October, and worth more than the initial offer from the Government side. In addition to pay, the agreement protects remote work, contains protections relating to AI, improves procurement arrangements, and gives unions an opportunity to engage in dialogue on important matters such as housing, health, and childcare.

It would have been impossible to achieve the terms of the proposed agreement without the sustained campaign of industrial action by members.

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Thanks to members' commitment to industrial action, this proposed agreement protects pay, protects jobs and brings hard-fought improvements in the public service industrial relations context.

If we were to go back to industrial action, wouldn't we get a better deal?

There can be no guarantee of what would happen if this deal is rejected. We cannot guarantee that the terms in the current proposed agreement would be on the table again, or improvements. This campaign was fought by the nineteen public service unions acting together. As a minimum, this would be requested.

Can the rationale be explained for the pay deal spanning 33 months rather than the standard 24 we have had previously?

Public service agreements usually have a two- or three-year duration. Different durations were discussed during these negotiations. The union side proposed a longer deal to the end of 2029 to provide greater scope to make up legacy losses against inflation. Ultimately the length is a compromise, and while a shorter agreement might have had benefits, the longer agreement gives members more certainty and security around their pay for a longer period of time.

Why was the strike on Thursday 12th November called off?

Negotiators were able to capitalise on the leverage created by serving notice of the strike action a week before it was due to take place to secure the terms in the proposed agreement. The moment of greatest leverage in industrial action is often just before workers withdraw labour. The planning and preparation for the second national strike day was very important because it built on the pressure created by the first national strike day and generated the current proposed agreement.

What productivity measures are in the agreement?

There are no additional or new productivity measures in this agreement beyond the issues dealt with in the reform chapter. It states that the clauses on productivity from previous agreements continue to apply.

Can Government trigger the review clause?

Yes. Both parties can trigger the review clause. The agreement provides certainty to both sides, on pay for members and on costs and industrial peace for Government. Previous experience indicates that the Government would only take such a course in the event of an economic crisis while unions sought a review in March 2022 after inflation spiked.

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 continues to be the case has now been received by the general secretary in his capacity as Chair of the ICTU Public Services Committee.

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.

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.

Can you explain the industrial peace clause?

Public service agreements in Ireland typically contain an industrial peace clause. This means that in exchange for the terms set out in the agreement, trade unions agree that they will not take industrial action in respect of pay or any other matter covered by the agreement during the period it is in effect. (Clause 5.8)

That means that unions cannot go on strike or engage in industrial action on pay or other matters covered by the agreement. The clause does not apply if the employer does not adhere to the terms of the agreement. Industrial action may be taken on issues in dispute not related to the terms of the agreement, where the appropriate process has been followed, including a ballot of members.

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.

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.

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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**.