Strengthening Public Services

Neartú na Seirbhísí Poiblí

Public Service Agreement 2026-2029

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1. Introduction

1.1 The parties acknowledge the context for the negotiation of this Agreement was different. Negotiations concluded following a period of industrial action that included a nationwide one-day strike. This Agreement was also negotiated against a challenging backdrop of considerable geopolitical uncertainty, rapidly evolving technological developments and upward pressure on prices arising from ongoing military conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. Notwithstanding these challenges, there has been a significant period of job growth and full employment with the Irish economy continuing to demonstrate resilience. In uncertain times the Agreement seeks to provide certainty and stability for public servants. It also supports the sustainable management of the public finances and in particular the public service pay bill, as well as the delivery of ongoing workplace change to underpin the efficient delivery of quality public services.

1.2 In the lead up to negotiations, public service workers emphasised to their trade union representatives the effects of the cost of living on their daily lives, pressures at work trying to deliver public services often in the face of capacity constraints and increased demand, and, particularly in the case of younger staff, concerns about living conditions with housing featuring as an urgent concern.

1.3 This Agreement acknowledges the many economic and social challenges facing the public and workers including the cost of living. The parties to the Agreement confirm their view that effective social dialogue amongst established representative groups, through fora such as the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), is more important than ever in these times of geopolitical uncertainty. In particular, they believe there is scope in the period ahead to agree deeper shared understandings about the way forward on these challenges between Government, Employer and Trade Union representatives through the LEEF. This can build on existing subgroups in the areas of Employment and Enterprise, Housing, Health, Migration, Pensions, Shared Island, Early Years Issues, as well as the recently established forum on AI and the labour market.

1.4 Within one month of ratification of this Agreement, the members of the LEEF will be asked to consider how it will provide for deeper dialogue and understandings on the above and other relevant issues, including as they impact public servants. This will include discussion on the challenges facing the providers and recipients of public services, delivery of the ambitious goals for public services within the Programme for Government *Securing Ireland's Future* and scope to raise other relevant areas of significant shared concern. Industrial relations issues will continue to be channelled through the appropriate established procedures.

1.5 Public servants remain central to the delivery of high-quality essential public services, supporting communities and responding to changing societal needs. The parties acknowledge the significant contribution, commitment and professionalism demonstrated by public servants in maintaining and improving service delivery during a period of economic, demographic and technological change.

1.6 The parties recognise that public servants will play a central role in supporting Ireland to adapt successfully to the many challenges associated with a rapidly changing socio-economic environment. This Agreement provides the framework to support an agile, responsive and effective public service. In reaching this agreement, the parties agree to work together to maintain a skilled, motivated and adaptable workforce capable of meeting current and future service demands. The parties will work together to ensure that the public service can capitalise on the opportunities arising from technological advancement, including artificial intelligence, digital transformation and new ways of working.

1.7 The parties recognise the value of industrial peace provided by public service agreements and affirm the importance of positive industrial relations founded on respect, dialogue and collective bargaining. They acknowledge the value of established dispute-resolution mechanisms in supporting constructive engagement and maintaining industrial stability throughout the lifetime of the Agreement, supported by the initiatives set out in Chapter 5 aimed at building trust and confidence into the future.

1.8 Duration

1.8.1 This Agreement applies for the period 1 July 2026 to 31 March 2029. Provisions of the Public Service Pay Agreement 2024 - 2026 (and earlier agreements as appropriate) continue to apply, save where varied by this Agreement.

2. Workplace Change and Reform

2.1 Operating Environment

2.1.1 Civil and Public Servants and public service organisations play a critical role in providing services to help meet the needs of people through the implementation of government policy.

2.1.2 The environment in which the public service operates has seen immense change in recent times. Ireland's economic growth, supporting the highest level of employment in the history of the state, and continued strong economic performance has enabled significant investment in public services, income supports and infrastructure. The public service now comprises more than 420,000 staff delivering a wide range of public services to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. However, there are opportunities to improve the ways the public service provides services, and it is incumbent on us to ensure public services successfully meet emerging challenges.

2.2 Continued Improvement and Evolution of Public Services

2.21 The parties acknowledge that this Agreement reflects the shared determination of the parties to support a modern, responsive and high-performing public service that continues to meet the needs of the people and communities it serves.

2.2.3 The parties acknowledge that the extensive provisions of previous public service agreements provide a comprehensive enabling framework for continuous improvement of our public services. In making this Agreement, the parties re-affirm the provisions of the previous agreements, subject to the specific provisions of this agreement, including the commitments set out in Chapter 2 of the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026.

2.2.4 This Agreement reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that the public service workforce is equipped with the tools and resources necessary to allow public services to continue to evolve in response to changing societal needs of the public and emerging national and international challenges.

2.2.5 The parties recognise that sustained reform supported by training and investment in the public service workforce is necessary to support the delivery of Government priorities, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services, harness the opportunities and meet the challenges presented by digital innovation and technological change, and respond to evolving service demands. These efforts will support a public service that is adaptable, inclusive and responsive to the needs of the population, communities, businesses and society as a whole.

2.2.6 In implementing this Agreement, all parties are committed to promoting wellbeing, equality and inclusive working practices and arrangements throughout the public service. In support of this commitment, organisational strategies will continue to reflect these principles through their policies, practices, and objectives.

2.3 Cooperation and Consultation

2.3.1 Sectoral action plans will be developed as set out in this chapter and will form an integral part of the delivery of this agreement.

2.3.2 The parties agree that engagement and consultation, in accordance with the provisions of this agreement, undertaken as part of a process of implementing changes under this section will be carried out in good faith by all sides and with the objective of improving work practices and enhancing services to the public. Consultation is expected to comply with the Information and Consultation Act including meetings and engagement where information is provided at an appropriate time and at an appropriate level to allow for meaningful dialogue.

2.3.3 Where agreement cannot be reached, or a dispute arises, resolution will be pursued within the context of the Industrial Peace provisions of this Agreement, particularly noting the timelines in that section (commencing with a 6-week period of initial bilateral engagement). Parties will cooperate with a speedy dispute resolution process.

2.4 Delivering Better Public Services

2.4.1 The parties acknowledge that the Programme for Government 2025 - *Securing Ireland's Future* and *Better Public Services – The Public Service Transformation 2030 Strategy* remain the key platforms to achieve Public Service Reform.

2.4.2 It is recognised that significant progress has been made to date and that cooperation, engagement and prioritisation of actions under *The Public Service Transformation 2030 Strategy* and related sub strategies developed since, remain critical to achieving further public service reform and transformation.

2.4.3 As Ireland's population grows and ages it is essential that people can continue to avail of public services when they need them in a timely and efficient manner through improved access and delivery.

2.4.4 The Government has recognised the critical role the public service workforce plays in delivering essential services. It has committed to ensuring that the civil and public service attracts and retains the best and brightest.

2.4.5 The parties commit to working closely to advance the shared objective of delivering better public services. Achieving this will require active cooperation and engagement, aligned with the full breadth of the Government's Better Public Services transformation strategy. This strategy reflects public service values, and the ambition of this agreement is to recognise the commitment of our civil and public servants and to continue delivering quality outcomes for Irish society. The Better Public Services strategy is supported by the key elements of the Government reform agenda referenced in the Appendix.

2.5 A Digitally Enabled Public Service

2.5.1 The parties recognise that the public service has a critical leadership role in safely guiding, enabling, and exemplifying the responsible adoption of emerging technologies such as digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) to transform service delivery and deliver better outcomes for the public. This will include maximising the benefits of modern and emerging information technology including Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence and related technologies such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA).

2.5.2 The parties note the *Digital Public Services Plan 2030* and the national digital & AI strategy, *Digital Ireland – Connecting our People, Securing our Future* and the necessity of delivering on the objectives of these strategies. The adoption and use of AI by the public service is part of a national approach to this issue and due regard will be had to the deliberations of the newly established AI forum under the aegis of the Labour Employment Economic Forum (LEEF).

2.5.3 The parties further note the publication of the *Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Service*. The Guidelines set out seven principles for the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence including human agency and oversight, technical robustness and safety, transparency, and accountability.

2.5.4 The parties agree to work together constructively and in consultation to drive modernisation, promote innovation and ensure the effective use of technology as a key enabler of change by:

- Identifying and delivering new channels for integrated digital service provision, including across organisations and functions.
- Enhancing associated customer support for digitalised services, including in-person and phone services, in locations and at times that meet the public need to ensure equity of access and support digital inclusion.
- Cooperation and collaboration on the life events programme and the approach to be taken which is fundamental to delivery of the Digital Public Services plan and which will integrate and digitalise services, reducing complexity and improving access to services for the public.
- Commitment to using OGCIO's Digital Building Blocks to ensure consistent, accessible and efficient delivery of public services.

2.5.5 This approach to AI will include the use of shared tools, systems, frameworks, standards, and secure infrastructure across organisations, and the redesign of workflows, work practices and organisational structures necessary to achieve these outcomes.

2.5.6 In considering the wider adoption of AI across the public service, the parties note and reaffirm the commitments given under Paragraphs 1.6 of the Public Service Agreement 2010–2014 and 4.2 of The Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 that compulsory redundancy will not apply in the public service, save in the context of the limited number of exceptions set out in those agreements.

2.5.7 The parties reaffirm their commitment to supporting the development and implementation of an approach to the use of AI and automation that improves work practices for the public service workforce, enhances service delivery, supports evidence-based decision-making, and improves organisational efficiency, in line with national digital strategies, guidelines on the responsible use of AI, and relevant EU regulatory frameworks. This will include the use of shared tools, systems, frameworks, standards, and secure infrastructure across organisations. The parties agree to work together constructively and engage on how to redesign workflows, work practices, and organisational structures, where necessary, to achieve these outcomes.

2.6 Skills for a Digitally Enabled Workforce

2.6.1 The parties acknowledge the growing role of Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies in the workplace and commit to ongoing engagement on their medium and long-term implications for skills, careers, workforce development and the evolution of public service roles, while recognising the continuing importance of human judgement and accountability.

2.6.2 The parties commit to prioritisation and participation in building digital competency and capability throughout the public service. This will involve:

- equipping staff at all levels with a foundational understanding of AI, its applications, limitations, and associated risks.
- supporting the development of specialist skills and expertise in key areas.
- embedding continuous learning and upskilling opportunities to ensure the workforce can effectively engage with and adapt to emerging technologies.
- engagement on streamlined and modernised work practices, including supporting the simplification, automation and redesign of processes to support new and existing systems and services and the continued expansion of digitally enabled service delivery.

2.6.3 The parties note that in addition to sectoral employers providing funding for training, in Budget 2027 the Government committed that €150 million from the National Training Fund (NTF) will be invested over three years to support AI skills resilience across the entire public and private workforce. Whilst supporting broader skills responses to AI-driven change in non-AI related roles and professions, the funding will also support workers, learners, educators and employers to develop the skills needed to work with artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

2.7 An Agile Workforce

2.7.1 The parties recognise the ongoing drive, commitment and contribution of public servants across all areas of the public service.

2.7.2 The parties note and reaffirm commitments to new ways of working as set out in previous Agreements, including Section 2.5.1 of the Public Service Agreement 2024 -2026.

2.7.3 Acknowledging ongoing changes to Irish society, including the transformation agenda to deliver better, more seamless and more digitally enabled service delivery, the public service workforce will continue to be highly skilled, agile and flexible, embracing diversity, new and improved ways of working, including cost-effective and innovative approaches, new models of service delivery such as collaborative workplaces and enhanced digitalisation to improve outcomes for the public.

2.7.4 Noting that remote and hybrid blended work is a feature of the Irish labour market, including the optimisation of staff recruitment and retention, the State, as the largest employer, has a duty to ensure that it plays a leading role.

2.7.5 The parties agree that access to work-life balance and inclusive work arrangements, including flexible working, blended working, and other working arrangements should be available where appropriate across the public service consistent with business needs, service delivery and local implementation.

2.7.6 The parties will continue to operate in accordance with the Blended Working Policy Frameworks. Remote and blended working arrangements will remain subject to ongoing review to ensure they align with organisational priorities, service delivery requirements and relevant legislative provisions. The parties agree that matters relating to remote and blended working arrangements should, wherever possible, be addressed at local level through established industrial relations mechanisms.

2.7.8 These arrangements will be underpinned by effective workforce planning and by a shared commitment to ensuring that flexible working continues to deliver access to public services, and cost effectiveness over the lifetime of this Agreement in addition to promoting positive work-life balance.

2.8 Workforce Policies and Practices

2.8.1 The parties confirm that the public service workforce of the future will be supported by improved, modern, standardised and accessible HR policies and procedures that actively enable effective people management practices and that enhance workplace flexibility and inclusive working practices and arrangements.

2.8.2 The parties will fully support the streamlining and standardisation of HR policies, subject to engagement, including exploring common terms and conditions where necessary, across the public service with a view to promoting greater levels of workplace flexibility and will support the implementation of new HR policies.

2.8.3 Recruitment policies and practices will continue to be reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose and to support organisational needs and career development opportunities. This will include consideration of existing structures, pathways and processes with a view to identifying and removing unnecessary barriers to recruitment, mobility and

advancement, following engagement with the relevant representative Trade Unions and associations.

2.9 Workforce Capability, Skills and Apprenticeships

2.9.1 The Parties agree that sustaining high quality public services will require a proactive and coordinated approach to skills development over the lifetime of this Agreement. To ensure the public service has the capability to meet the evolving societal, technological and service delivery demands, the parties commit to strengthening workforce skills by:

- Building on the commitments in paragraph 2.4.3 of the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026 including the target of at least 750 annual registrations in apprenticeships across all public service organisations. This includes specific targets in relation to craft apprenticeships.
- Noting the forthcoming Apprenticeship and Traineeship Strategy 2026-2030 planned for launch later this year will put a strong emphasis on continuing to grow and embed apprenticeships across the public service to support workforce requirements for national priorities.
- Agreeing that an increase in apprenticeship numbers, including in the traditional trades, will be promoted and is appropriate.
- Accessing upskilling and reskilling, ensuring employees develop the capabilities needed to meet evolving workforce demands, support flexible ways of working and adapt to new service delivery models.
- Prioritising the development and application of digital skills across all grades to support workforce modernisation, enhance service quality, and enable the effective delivery of digital-first public services.
- Supporting the delivery of training and practice placement capacity, aligned to projected service demand which will promote continuous professional development, upskilling and reskilling to equip staff with the skills required in a changing service environment, including digital and data capabilities.

2.10 Supporting a Flexible and Responsive Workforce for Better Public Services

2.10.1 The parties note and reaffirm commitments to redeployment and public service mobility as set out in previous Agreements, including Section 1.7 of the Croke Park Agreement, Section 2.8 of the PSSA 2018 – 2020, Section 1.5.3 of Building Momentum and Section 2.6.1 of the Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026.

2.10.2 As part of the commitment to strengthening workforce agility, there will be a continued focus through engagement on evolving policies that support workforce mobility and flexibility with all parties supporting the following measures:

- The alignment of existing and new lateral movement policies to public service delivery needs (e.g. mobility, secondment, redeployment, temporary assignment, temporary deployment).

- Agility within organisations to allow unions and management to engage on optimised rostering across the week and the alignment of working hours with patterns of service demand, with due consideration to family-friendly and inclusive approaches to rostering and service-based redeployment across sites (within the agreed 45 KM radius).
- Supporting service-based redeployment across sites in line with existing agreements as well as maximising the efficient use of the State's property portfolio.

2.10.3 The Parties acknowledge the necessity of ensuring that the full capacity of the public service workforce is utilised in a manner that is balanced, flexible, responsive and aligned to service need. This will be supported by the use of improved workforce planning, including the alignment of staffing resources to priority service demands, following engagement, which aims to reduce reliance on overtime and agency staffing through improved rostering, mobility and the effective use of available technologies.

2.11 Flexible Approaches to Service Delivery

2.11.1 The parties reaffirm that in order to respond to the unpredictable and fast-moving environment that we now operate in, public service management require flexible approaches to service delivery, with a focus on outcomes for the public.

2.11.1 The parties reaffirm their commitment to the use of direct labour, where consistent with efficient and effective public service delivery.

2.11.3 In relation to external service delivery, the provisions of recent public service agreements, including the commitments given in Chapter 1: Appendix Service Delivery Options, Public Service Agreement 2010-2014; paragraph 3.19 of the Public Service Agreement 2013-2016 The Haddington Road Agreement; Clause 3.3.5 of the Public Service Agreement 2013 - 2018 Lansdowne Road; Building Momentum Agreements 2021-2023, and paragraph 2.7 of the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026 will continue to apply so as to guarantee that a mutually-acceptable process remains in place.

2.11.5 As set out in the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014, all public service bodies must undertake prior engagement with relevant public service unions and representative associations regarding the development of a service delivery plan. In respect of this plan, appropriate consultation will take place prior to the outsourcing of a service.

2.11.6 The parties agree that where consideration is being given to outsourcing existing services, the business case evaluations will not take unit labour costs into account but will instead focus on quality-of-service effectiveness and the public interest.

2.11.7 Where any dispute arises on the application of this section, the parties shall seek to resolve any matter through direct dialogue. Where this fails to resolve the issue, the parties shall use the dispute resolution mechanism set out in this Agreement.

2.12 Public Services and Procurement

2.12.1 The parties affirm their commitment to national and EU public procurement priorities, namely a future for public procurement that is transparent and socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

2.12.2 The parties agree that in addition to Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) and Green Public Procurement (GPP), further safeguards will be introduced that strengthen social and ethical considerations in support of socially responsible public procurement (SRPP).

2.12.3 SRPP can also promote fair working conditions and social dialogue as a guiding principle of public procurement.

2.12.4 The introduction of EPP promotes respect for human rights, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Public buyers must meet obligations under EU and national law in relation to human rights when procuring for Government contracts.

2.12.5 The parties further note the government's strong commitment to the promotion of collective bargaining as provided for *In Ireland's Action Plan to Promote Collective Bargaining 2026-2030*. The parties specifically note the commitment contained in Action point 6 regarding a pilot public procurement project. Accordingly, during the lifetime of this agreement the parties will formulate a plan to progress this action.

2.13 Regulatory and Operational Efficiency

2.13.1 The parties recognise that ensuring cost effectiveness remains a central consideration in the delivery of public services. The parties further note the strong emphasis that has been placed on regulatory and operational simplification to promote economic growth and, particularly, to facilitate the delivery of vital infrastructure including housing.

2.13.2 In this context, the parties commit to supporting enhanced cooperation within and between organisations to remove barriers to delivery. In particular, the parties commit to maximising the use of digital tools and processes as set out in this agreement to support improved outcomes.

2.14 Sectoral Action Plans and Progress Reports

2.14.1 Building on processes developed in previous agreements, sectoral management in consultation with unions and representative associations will develop, and report on Sectoral Action Plans linked to the Public Service Transformation programme. These plans will set out objectives, deliverables, and timelines that will be measured and tracked via Progress Reports.

2.14.2 Sectoral Action Plans will assist in delivering measurable efficiencies, improved service access and quality outcomes over the lifetime of the Agreement.

2.14.3 Sectoral Action Plans will be developed by sectoral management in consultation with unions and representative associations in each of the relevant oversight or equivalent sectoral IR structures. These plans will be submitted to the Secretary General of the relevant Department by 1 March 2027 and will then be published by the relevant Department.

2.14.4 In consultation with unions and representative associations in relevant oversight or equivalent sectoral IR structures, sectoral management will subsequently report on:

- delivery on the Sectoral Action Plan, giving detailed information on progress delivery; and
- compliance with the industrial peace provisions of this Agreement.

2.14.5 Secretaries General will submit these reports to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation at least one month before any scheduled pay increase under this Agreement, save for the first scheduled pay increase. Reports will be published by the relevant Departments.

3. Pay

3.1 Pay Adjustments

3.1.1 This Chapter sets out the agreed approach to public service pay for the period 1 July 2026 to 31 March 2029.

3.1.2 The following pay adjustments will apply over the lifetime of this agreement:

2026

- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **2% or €1,200, whichever is greater, on 1 September 2026**.

2027

- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1% on 1 April 2027**.
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1% or €600, whichever is greater, on 1 August 2027**.
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1.5% or €900, whichever is greater, on 1 November 2027**.

2028

- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1% on 1 March 2028**.
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1% or €600, whichever is greater, on 1 June 2028**.
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1% on 1 October 2028**.

2029

- A payment of up to 1% of basic pay costs for Local Bargaining **on 1 March 2029**.
- A general round increase in annualised basic salary for all public servants of **1.25% or €750, whichever is greater, on 2 March 2029**.

3.2 Review Clause

3.2.1 The parties agree that, should the basic assumptions underpinning the Agreement, including assumptions as regards the rate of inflation or other economic parameters into the future, change significantly over the lifetime of the agreement, either party will be able to trigger a review which will be engaged upon jointly as soon as possible and in any event will be concluded within six weeks of the initiation of the review by either party.

4. Local Bargaining: Employee Grade, Group or Category Claims/Proposals

4.1 Local Bargaining Framework

4.1.1 The Local Bargaining chapter of the Public Service Agreement 2024-26 was intended to provide a way of addressing issues affecting organisations and workers who were part of agreed bargaining units within a sustainable, cost-controlled context. Therefore, it has a key role in the maintenance of industrial peace.

4.1.2 This Agreement reaffirms the principles and bargaining and implementation arrangements set out in Chapter 4 of the previous agreement.

4.1.3 As the concept was new, it took some time for the parties to develop a full appreciation of its potential and to differentiate it from the sectoral bargaining clause contained in the *Building Momentum* Agreement. For instance, it was not intended, as a rule, that the clause would be used to achieve a general pay increase.

4.1.4 Delays in agreeing the list of bargaining units, as well as capacity issues, meant that timelines were missed. However, there is now a better understanding of the process and the bargaining units have been agreed.

4.1.5 Nevertheless, the parties agree that it is necessary to address the fact that the first phase of Local Bargaining has not yet been concluded for many bargaining units, notwithstanding that payments were due from 1 September 2025.

4.2 Categories

4.2.1 There are three categories of claims/proposals:

- Category One - Claims/proposals that were negotiated in the manner envisaged under the Agreement and have been progressed, with the first phase having been, or currently being, implemented.
- Category Two - Claims/proposals that were negotiated and agreed, including the application of local bargaining pay increases of a generalised nature, with the first phase having been, or currently being, implemented.
- Category Three - Claims/proposals that remain outstanding and have not been settled or implemented, including cases where discussions have not concluded and/or cases that have been referred to dispute-resolution procedures following a failure to reach agreement.

4.2.2 To expedite the process, it is necessary to make a special arrangement to realign the categories above and to address the fact that the State has an ongoing liability in respect of unresolved bargaining units more than a year after payment was due.

4.2.3 All outstanding matters relating to the first phase increase, with effect from 1 September 2025, must be resolved in accordance with Chapter 4 of the PSA 2024-2026 by 24 November 2026, including claims already referred for dispute resolution.

4.2.4 To rebalance matters and to ensure fairness, bargaining units in Category One above may opt to settle either the second 1% phase or the third 1% phase as a Local Bargaining pay increase of a generalised nature. Category Two bargaining units will not have that option. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not affect the full implementation of the 3% Local Bargaining agreement for post-primary teachers in respect of cooperation with senior cycle reform.

4.3 Remaining Instalments

4.3.1 The second instalment, equivalent to 1% of the basic pay cost, will be implemented on 1 March 2029.

4.3.2 The final phase of Local Bargaining will be implemented during the lifetime of the successor agreement to this agreement.

4.3.3 Arrangements for a future iteration of Local Bargaining will be considered by the parties in negotiations on the successor pay agreement.

4.3.4 Public service management will continue to be required to verify the costings of proposals with the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation (DPER) ahead of finalisation. It is intended that the process will, in future, be more dynamic and sector-focused.

4.3.5 Claims/proposals remain subject to section 4.2.6 of the PSA 2024-2026. Furthermore, pursuant to section 4.2.5 of the previous Agreement, no further cost-increasing claims for improvements in pay and conditions outside those advanced under this provision will be initiated or implemented during the period of this Agreement.

4.3.6 Consistent with agreements already reached, negotiations on pay arrangements under the Local Bargaining provision must be contingent upon agreement with proportionate management priorities which align and build on those set out in this Agreement.

4.3.7 The parties agree that, where a proposal agreed under this clause results in the breaking of an existing linkage between grades, no consequential or knock-on claims shall arise on the basis of any previous linkage, relativity or relationship between grades.

4.3.8 A central coordinating role will be required of the parties in respect of cross-sectoral claims.

4.3.9 Upon ratification of this Agreement, DPER officials and the officers of the ICTU Public Services Committee will confirm with senior Workplace Relations Commission management, the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons of the Labour Court, and the Chairs of the relevant Arbitration Boards, the shared intent of the parties in relation to the operation of this Local Bargaining provision, as these bodies will continue to have a role in the event of disagreement on claims.

4.4 Other Matters

4.4.1 The parties commit to:

- Continued implementation of the following matters that were provided for in section 4.4.2 of PSA 2024 – 2024:
    - the National Ambulance Service – LCR23254,
    - job evaluation in the Local Authority sector, and
    - the work of the Implementation Action Group in relation to recommendations 41-43 of the Expert Review Body on Nursing and Midwifery including implementation of LCR23341.
- It is agreed to engage expeditiously in relation to the reduction of the 72-hour component of the SNA contract, in the context of evolving role of the SNA, and within the framework of Local Bargaining as set out in Chapter 4, taking account of school community time and learning and development time of the SNAs. In this context, the parties will re-engage as soon as possible with the intention of bringing the matter of the SNA Workforce Development Plan into effect from September 2027.
- Progressing the implementation of LCR 23194 with a view to the introduction of a job evaluation arrangement on a cost-neutral basis in Tusla.
- Implementing LCR 23309 in relation to Haemovigilance Officers and LCR 23262 regarding Public Laboratory Analysts and to implement any subsequent Labour Court recommendations as they relate to Executive Chemists and Genetic Technologists.
- Continue ongoing engagement to progress provisions of the McLoughlin report to pharmacists in non-hospital settings.
- Remaining in process on CAM-102813-26 and CAM-102510-25 pertaining to Oberstown with a view to promptly resolving the matter through Local Bargaining where appropriate.
- The parties commit to engage on the implementation of certain agreements referenced in CAM-102569-25 on the basis that those agreements will then be reviewed.
- Implementing LCR 23314 concerning doctors working in sexual assault trauma units.

4.4.2 In addition, the parties commit to:

- Promptly commencing a review of Civil Service Mileage Rates through established structures which will take account of the full range of current cost factors and other relevant considerations.
- Arrangement of early engagement with the Alliance of Retired Public Servants on matters concerning public service pensioners and commencing an early and ongoing engagement between ICTU representatives and officials from DPER and the NSSO on technical pension matters.

4.4.3 All other claims for improvement in pay and conditions of a cost increasing nature, including third party recommendations, fall to be implemented exclusively under the Local Bargaining Clause set out in this Agreement.

4.4.4 Having regard to the above, the parties note that certain further sectoral matters were raised during the negotiation of this agreement and they agreed that these matters should be progressed through the appropriate sectoral IR and dispute resolution fora in the first instance.

5. Confidence Building, Oversight and Industrial Peace

5.1 Confidence Building

5.1.1 The parties agree that there is a need to rebuild trust and confidence in the industrial relations process in the public service. In any industrial relations context, confidence and trust are built through mutual respect and shared commitment to finding workable solutions.

5.1.2 Chapter 4 on local bargaining and Chapter 2 on Workplace Change & Reform clearly and unambiguously set out the steps on how agreed processes should take place and the parameters safeguarding those processes.

5.1.3 To further build confidence in how parties engage on any matters, a clear and shared understanding of what consultation means is provided as follows:

- Consultation with representative trade unions and associations should take place in advance of any decisions likely to lead to substantial changes in work organisation or impacts on public servants' terms and conditions.
- Consultation is expected to comply with the Information and Consultation Act including meetings and engagement where information is provided at an appropriate time and at an appropriate level to allow for meaningful dialogue.
- Consultation should be time bound and have a shared understanding on the start and end time of that consultation process.
- At the conclusion of the agreed, time-bound consultation process, if areas of disagreement exist, the dispute resolution procedures set out in this chapter shall be utilised.

5.2 FEMPI

5.2.1 Prior to the commencement of the formal negotiations that led to the *Public Service Agreement 2024-26,* a commitment was given to progress the repeal of section 4 of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act (No 2) 2009. This is still outstanding.

5.2.2 In line with this commitment, the matter has been prioritised in the Autumn of 2026 Legislative Programme. Every effort will be made to ensure that the Bill is published by the end of November 2026 and prioritised for consideration by the Dáil and the Seanad immediately.

5.2.3 The parties agree that the repeal of Section 4 of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No. 2) Act 2009 reflects the fact that the exceptional circumstances which gave rise to its introduction no longer apply. Following repeal, public service pay governance will transition to the normal statutory, governance and industrial relations arrangements.

5.3 Local Bargaining

5.3.1 Delays in progressing the first phase of Local Bargaining, as provided for in the 'Public Service Agreement 2024-26' created challenges for both parties. In the spirit of maintaining the stability and integrity of the Local Bargaining process the parties will work together to improve the effectiveness of this process.

5.3.2 A revised approach to deal with outstanding elements of the first phase, along with the second phase, is set out in Chapter 4 of this Agreement.

5.4 Principles for Resolving Disagreements

5.4.1 The parties commit to ensuring that problems in respect of matters covered by the Agreement, where they arise, are addressed in an effective and timely way and to participate in the dispute resolution procedures set out in this Chapter.

5.4.2 In this regard, the parties reaffirm their commitments under previous public service agreements which oblige all parties to:

- maintain a well-managed, stable industrial relations environment which achieves industrial peace;
- ensure that they have well-developed communication channels, including compliance with the statutory information and consultation obligations and observing the agreed consultation process outlined earlier in this chapter;
- seek to resolve problems by engaging in meaningful dialogue prior to escalation into industrial disputes;
- resolve disagreements where they arise via local engagement to the greatest extent possible;
- cooperate with normal on-going change pending the outcome of the industrial relations process;
- the parties agree to make every effort in good faith to resolve disputes at the earliest point in this process; and
- to achieve the above objectives, the parties agree to the following dispute resolution process.

5.5 Overview

5.5.1 With a view to ensuring timely resolution of disagreements on matters covered by this Agreement, it is agreed, where the parties involved cannot reach agreement within 6 weeks, to refer disputes by either side to the WRC and if necessary to the Labour Court (or, where such apply, to agreed machinery). Where a Conciliation or Arbitration Scheme applies, the issue will be referred within 6 weeks to the Conciliation machinery under the Scheme and, if unresolved, to the Adjudicator or Arbitration Board as appropriate.

5.6 Process

5.6.1 Where disputes arise, they will be subject to a 6-week period of initial bilateral engagement at local level between the parties to the dispute.

5.6.2 To underpin the smooth functioning of industrial relations, sectoral management/union forums with the assistance of independent chairs nominated by the WRC will meet regularly to oversee IR issues arising in the sector, including those which may have a bearing on the Agreement. Following consultation between the parties, each sector will nominate the relevant forum which will perform this function.

5.6.3 The sectoral forums will bring to the attention of the Joint Implementation Committee charged with overseeing the Agreement (see 5.9 below) any matters that would likely impact on the stability of the Agreement or affect the wider public service.

5.6.4 If no agreement is reached at the relevant conciliation stage, the parties agree to refer the dispute to the Labour Court or Adjudicator/Arbitration Board, as appropriate, for recommendation.

5.6.5 In considering any dispute referred to it under this Agreement, the Labour Court or Adjudicator/Arbitration Board, where appropriate, will have due regard to the provisions and stability of the Agreement and any impact on the wider public service.

5.6.6 The Labour Court or C&A Arbitration mechanism, as appropriate, continues to be the final stage in the dispute resolution process.

5.7 Compliance

5.7.1 The benefits of the Agreement will be confined to those staff and employees represented by unions in membership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions or other unions or representative associations which have notified the WRC of their intention to comply with the Agreement.

5.7.2 Where such a union or association fails to adhere to the provisions of the Agreement, the benefits of the Agreement will not apply to the relevant staff cohort.

5.7.3 As stated in section 5.5.3 of the PSA 2024-2026, cooperation with normal ongoing change including as set out in Chapter 2 will be a prerequisite for availing of the benefits of this Agreement. Equally, appropriate consultation in line with process set out in this chapter will be a prerequisite for the employer.

5.8 Maintenance of Industrial Peace

5.8.1 The delivery of industrial peace is an essential requirement of this Agreement. Accordingly, all forms of industrial action are precluded in respect of any matters relating to remuneration or to any matter covered by this Agreement.

5.9 Oversight of the Agreement

5.9.1 As in previous agreements, a Joint Implementation Committee, with an independent chair, to be agreed between the parties, will be established comprising employee representatives nominated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and representatives of public service employers nominated by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

5.9.2 The Joint Implementation Committee will meet quarterly, or as and when required to:

- address any matters of implementation, interpretation or any anomalies that arise under the terms of this Agreement;
- consider how best it can assist the parties, including the need for further discussions, or;
- address issues relating to the interpretation and implementation of Local Bargaining arrangements in line with Chapter 4 of this Agreement.

5.9.3 Only matters which have been fully considered by the relevant oversight forum nominated by the parties in each sector (in line with 5.6 above) are appropriate for referral to the Joint Implementation Committee. However, the Joint Implementation Committee may intervene in relation to significant industrial disputes which threaten to destabilise this Agreement.

5.10 Training and Support

5.10.1 To better support the smooth delivery of the commitments in this agreement and maintain industrial peace, the parties will promote and support the professionalisation of industrial relations and dispute resolution.

5.10.2 This will be provided through training programmes to build up necessary capacity and expertise in the public service.

5.11 Trade Union Access

5.11.1 The parties respect the objective benefits of Collective Bargaining and trade union membership for workers and employers. In keeping with the Government's stated aim of promoting Collective Bargaining, employers will facilitate workplace access for trade unions to explain to new employees, including at the point of induction, the benefits of trade union membership.

5.12 No Cost-Increasing Claims

5.12.1 The parties agree that no cost-increasing claims for improvements in pay and conditions of employment will be initiated or implemented for the duration of the Agreement other than in accordance with the provisions of the Local Bargaining clause.

5.13 Review of Agreement

5.13.1 The parties affirm that public service pay terms and conditions and any related issues shall not be revisited over the lifetime of this Agreement, save where expressly stated elsewhere or where the assumptions underlying this Agreement referenced in Chapter 3 need to be revisited.

Appendix: Key Elements of the Government's Reform Agenda

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The initiatives outlined in this Appendix represent key Government reform priorities currently being progressed. Where the implementation of new or existing initiatives gives rise to proposals that have implications for employees' terms and conditions of employment, work practices or organisational arrangements, such matters will be addressed through the appropriate engagement, consultation and industrial relations mechanisms and as outlined in Sectoral Action Plans.

Public and Civil Service - Better Public Services – Public Service Transformation 2030 Strategy, Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy, the digital plans listed in Chapter 2 of this agreement, the Public Service Apprenticeship Plan.

Higher and Further Education Sector - Funding the Future - the funding and reform framework for higher education, OECD Ireland Skills Strategy Report, The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, Adult Literacy for Life Strategy, Impact 2030, the National Research and Innovation Strategy, The National Access Plan 2022-2028, The Tertiary Education Strategy 2026-2031, The Global Citizens 2030 Strategy, Horizon Europe Action Plan, Creating Futures Further Education & Training Strategy 2026-30, and ongoing initiatives, including in relation to governance and the implementation of the Higher Education Authority Act 2022; the further development of the technological university sector; apprenticeship delivery; and the continued development of the FET College model.

Education Sector - Senior Cycle and Junior Cycle Reform within Schools; Curricular and assessment reform including Primary curriculum; Literacy and Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy (2024-2033); Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027; DEIS Strategy, Traveller and Roma Education Strategy. Irish Language strategies for Irish and English medium schools and schools in Gaeltacht, Gaeltacht Education Strategy; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Policy Statement 2017-2026; Modern Foreign Language Strategy "Languages Connect" 2017-2026; Cineáltas Implementation Plan 2023-2027; Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development to 2030. Engagement on the following: Policy Advice on Inclusive Education, Review of the EPSEN act and SNA Workforce Development Plan.

Irish Prison Service - The Irish Prison Service Strategy 2023-2027; engage on projects and initiatives aimed at increasing capacity; facilitation of digital technology advances for employee tools and the prisoner journey, where they do not impact on staff rosters and detailing of staff. Continued development and embedding of Regime Management Planning to ensure prioritisation of structured activities for prisoners while maintaining safe systems of work for staff.

Department of Children, Disability and Equality - Shaping the Future – Early Years Action Plan; National Policy Framework for Alternative Care; National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030; a Vision and Strategy for Specialist Disability Services; National Strategy for Women and Girls 2025–2030; National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028; National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028.

Justice Sector - Ongoing policing reforms for An Garda Síochána associated with A Policing Service for our Future (APSFF) and the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024,

including secondary legislation arising from it, National Cyber Security Strategy 2030, Garda Síochána (Powers) Bill and the Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) (Amendment) Act 2026, The Criminal Law, Civil Law and Defence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2026, The Courts Service Modernisation programme, Planning for transition from Temporary Protection, Implementation of the Judicial Planning Working Group report recommendations, Zero Tolerance: The Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Strategy, National Migration and Integration Strategy, Civil Reform Bill, Irish Prison Service Bill, Retail Crime Strategy, National Strategy for Improving Community Safety, Enhanced Digitalisation across the Justice Sector.

Defence Sector - Strategic Framework – Transformation of the Defence Forces – February 2026. Report of the Independent Review Group on Dignity and Equality issues in the Defence Forces (IRG Report), Defence Policy Review (2024), Update to Detailed Implementation Plan for the Report of the Commission of the Defence Forces (2026), Department of Defence and Defence Forces Strategy Statement 2025-2028.

Local Government Sector - Local Authority Digital and ICT Strategy 2030, the Local Authority People Strategy 2026-2030, the Government Action Plan: Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030, the National Public Library Strategy 2023 – 2027, the implementation of the Local Democracy, the Taskforce Report and through continued cooperation with the ongoing change and reform in the retained and full-time fire services.

Health Sector Reform - Continued implementation of Sláintecare, wider health service reform, Health Regions, integrated models of care and the Public Only Consultant Contract; progression and implementation of Digital for Care; improving access, including in community settings and new services such as surgical hubs; reducing reliance on agency staff; better utilisation of existing facilities and equipment, extended service delivery, implementing priority national strategies and reforms across acute, primary, community, mental health, maternity, children's and disability services, including the National Cancer Strategy, the National Oral Health Policy, the operationalisation of the National Children's Hospital Ireland and implementation of the Paediatric Model of Care, the framework for safe nurse staffing and skill mix, continued implementation of the Healthcare Assistants Programme, advanced practice and sustainable workforce development. Continued implementation of WRC staffing agreements.

