

Ten reasons for members to vote YES to proposals



1 Safe staffing framework – funding guaranteed

The government will commit to €5 million extra funding in 2019, and more funding in the service plans for 2020 and 2021 to roll out the Framework for Safe Staffing. The framework, for the first time in Ireland sets scientific staff to patient ratios based on the number and dependency of patients. It also sets a ratio of 80:20 (or 85:15 in urgent care areas) for nurses to healthcare assistants. When tested in three Irish hospitals, it saw:

- Better patient outcomes
- Reduced patient length of stay and mortality
- Increase in staff morale
- A 95% reduction in reliance on agencies
- Increase in overall staffing levels.

2 Independent expert group to examine professions and pay

Experts – including an INMO nominee – will examine how our professions have changed and how that should be reflected in pay, especially in light of the new improved salary scale for enhanced staff nurses and midwives. There will be a specific focus on pay for CNMs/CMMs (1, 2 and 3), CNS/CMS, ANP/AMPs, PHNs, and directors/assistant directors of nursing or midwifery. This will conclude before the next national public pay agreement negotiations commence in the first quarter of 2020. No other public sector group has secured this.

3 A new enhanced salary scale

Staff nurses and midwives will be able to achieve a new, higher salary scale – up to €2,439 higher in every year in

their career. You can join the new pay scale at your next increment date (from March 1, 2019 on). According to the HSE census, there are over 25,000 staff nurses and midwives. This would mean, for example, a pay increase of around €1,500 or more for senior staff nurses/midwives, or those on the long service increment.

4 A shorter and faster scale

The new 'enhanced practice' scale is shorter, meaning you can get to the maximum point or long service increment faster, leading to higher earnings over the course of a career.

You will also qualify for the senior staff nurse/midwife grade after 17 years, not 20. This will benefit around 1,500 members this year and around 500 the year after.

5 New nurses and midwives get speedier salary boost

New nurses and midwives will be able to skip the second point on the salary scale, accelerating their salary faster, to aid with recruitment of new staff. This means a new graduate would:

- Spend 16 weeks on the first point
- Skip the second point
- Spend a year on the third point
- Move to the new enhanced practice scale.

After a year and 16 weeks, with a location allowance, you could be on €38,036 – 18% more than the current system's €32,171. Without an allowance, it would be €35,806 (11% higher).

6 Higher allowances

Allowances will go up by 20%. The location allowance

will be worth €2,230 (an extra €372) and the qualification allowance will be worth €3,350 (an extra €559).

7 Expansion in those getting allowances

Nurses and midwives (including CNM/CMM1 & 2) in acute surgical and medical areas will get the location allowance (€2,230) for the first time, as will nurses and midwives working in maternity services (including in the community). There will also be extra opportunities to get the qualification allowance (€3,350) in these areas.

8 Allowances for all public health nurses

All PHNs working with maternity services will now get the location allowance (€2,330). If you currently get the qualification allowance instead, that'll go up by €558 (20%) to €3,350.

9 More promotion opportunities

2% of the nursing/midwifery workforce will be advanced practitioners (ANP/AMP) – an increase of roughly 500.

Staff nurses working in ID services alongside social care workers can be regraded as CNM1s.

10 Keep the benefits of the Public Service Stability Agreement

We've negotiated to avoid pay penalties, by making our arguments within the agreement. That means nurses and midwives' salaries – in addition to everything above – will increase by 1.75% this September and by 2% in October 2020. Those paying the pension levy also get additional pension relief.

Top questions

What about the changes to the contract?

The government proposed an enhanced practice contract which was completely unacceptable. The INMO rejected it, negotiated and went back to the Labour Court.

The government's contentious proposals such as moving your workplace location midway through a shift, or cutting shift lengths to four hours with no notice, have been removed.

The full contract will be available online, and the nurses and midwives on your Executive Council are recommending accepting it. The new contract recognises that nursing and midwifery should be "put in a position to lead on (healthcare) reforms".

Signing the contract will be optional, but you will not be able to access the new enhanced salary scale without it.

What happens if we vote no?

If we vote no, we do not get the benefits listed above. Your Executive Council will have to look at other ways to progress our claim. If we lodge a pay claim with the government or go on strike, there is a strong risk that we will incur the penalties, which include:

- Suspension of increments until the end of 2020
- A nine month delay in annual pay increases
- Reduced pension relief due in January 2020 – postponed.

An estimate cost of these penalties could be as high as €4,000 over two years for a staff nurse on the ninth point on the scale.

How much is the deal worth to me?

Check the INMO website and social media for a calculator to show just how much the pay proposals are worth to you.