

Background

Members of the Irish Nursing and Midwives Organisation are comprehended by the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018 – 2020 (PSSA). As per section 3 of that agreement, the Public Sector Pay Commission examined the underlying difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff and issued its report in September 2018. Its purpose was to recommend measures to address the recruitment and retention difficulties. The proposals that emanated from the Public Service Pay Commission were considered at a Special Delegate Conference of the INMO on the 26th of September 2018 and the decision of that conference was that the recommendations would not solve the difficulties in recruitment and retention and all public sector members should be balloted.

INMO members rejected the proposals by 94%. The ballot outcome was considered by the Executive Council. The HSE/Department of Health were afforded two weeks to engage with the INMO in order to present realistic proposals to improve Recruitment and Retention. No further proposals were advanced by HSE or DOH. The Executive Council therefore decided that INMO members should be balloted for Industrial Action in pursuit of improved measures from the HSE and government to address the recruitment and retention crisis. This ballot will commence on the 19th of November 2018 and the ballot outcome will be announced by the 14th of December 2018.

Q.1 What type of action is proposed?

A: The INMO is balloting members for industrial action, including strike action, the nature of this action will be the withdrawal of labour for 24-hour periods. It is proposed that this work stoppage would span 8.00 am - 8.00 pm, and if the matter remains unresolved repeated work stoppages would follow.

Q.2 When does balloting begin and conclude?

A: The ballot will commence on the 19th of November 2018 with the announcement of the outcome on the 14th of December 2018. Information meetings, briefing sessions and balloting will be arranged, and members will be advised locally of their opportunities to attend the meetings and ballot. **It is vitally important that members attend information meetings and be fully informed prior to casting their vote.**

Q.3 What did the Public Sector Pay Commission say regarding the Recruitment and Retention Crisis and our claim to solve the problem?

A: Under their Terms of Reference, the PSPC was tasked with seeking to establish the extent and nature of any recruitment and retention difficulties in nursing and midwifery, and where they existed, to recommend measures to address them. Incomprehensibly, the Commission found that there is no generalised recruitment and retention problem in respect of nursing and midwifery. This inexplicable conclusion in turn resulted in the Commission saying that they could not recommend an increase in pay in respect of nurses and midwives. However, the Commission outlined “*significant limitations in the data available on Recruitment and Retention in the Health Service.*”

It did, however, conclude that some difficulties exist in meeting workforce requirements in specific areas, and in so doing, it could recommend several measures to address these difficulties. Also, the report outlines that the Minister of Finance met the Commission on 26th of October 2017 and instructed, “this is not a pay review, nor can it be.”

This fundamentally changed the terms of reference of the Public Service Pay Commission and we believe placed undue influence in contradiction of the Terms of Reference, which were agreed in August 2017.

Q.4 Was there any improvement for new entrants?

A: A new entrant is a public servant including a nurse or midwife who joined the public service after January 2011 as a staff nurse or midwife. These public servants suffered a lower rate of entry pay than those that came before and consequently there are proposals to address this which involves the removal of two increments (4&8) which are applied differently depending on your current point on the increment scale. The details are set out in the following tables:

New Entrant Staff Nurse/Midwife Salary Scale

Current Point	On next incremental date after 1 March 2019	1 year later on next Incremental Date	*Value	1 year later on next Incremental date	1 year later on next Incremental Date	1 year later on next Incremental Date	*Value
2 nd point €31110	3 rd point €32171	5 th point €34876 (skip Point 4)	€1509 (4.5%)	6 th point €36383	7 th point €37883	9 th point €40480 (skip point 8)	€1300- (3.3%)

*not inclusive of normal increment progression

Current Point	On next incremental date after 1 March 2019	*Value	1 year later - on next Incremental Date	1 year later -on next Incremental date	1 year later -on next Incremental Date	*Value
3 rd point €32171	5 th point €34876 (skip point 4)	*€1509 (4.5%)	6 th point €36383	7 th point – €37883	9 th point – €40480 (skip point 8)	*€1300 – (3.3%)

*not inclusive of normal increment progression

Current Point	On next incremental date after 1 March 2019	*Value	1 year later - on next Incremental Date	1 year later - on next Incremental date	*Value
4 th point - €33367	6 th point – €36383 (skip point 5)	*€1507 (4.3%)	7 th point - €37883	9 th point – €40480 (skip point 8)	*€1300 – (3.3%)
5 th point – €34876	7 th point – €37883 (skip point 6)	*€1500 (4.1%)	9 th point – €40480 (skip point 8)	10 th point -	*€1300 – (3.3%)

*not inclusive of normal increment progression

Current Point	On next incremental date after 1 March 2019 (skip 2 increments)	*Value
6 th point - €36383	9 th point – €40480	*€2597 (6.9%)
7 th point - €37883	10 th point - €41775	*€2575 (6.6%)
8 th point - €39180	11 th point - €43070	*€2590 (6.4%)
9 th point - €40480	12 th point - €44343	*€2568 (6.1%)
10 th point - €41775	12 th point - €44343 plus – only two years waiting period on LSI	*€1273 (3.0%)
11 th point - €43070	12 th point €44343 Plus – only 1 year waiting period on LSI	*€1273 (+2.95%)
12 th point - €44343	LSI point - €45701	*€1358 (+3.06%)
LSI - €45701	No change	

*not inclusive of normal increment progression

Q.5 What are the Executive Council recommending?

A: The Executive Council believe that the measures proposed will not solve the Recruitment and Retention crisis in nursing and midwifery. The HSE and Department of Health has not offered any improvements. The Executive Council therefore decided to ballot members for industrial action and called for members to vote in favour.

Q.6 By what majority will the vote be deemed successful?

A: A two thirds majority of those that cast their vote must vote in favour of the action for it to proceed. Therefore, it is vitally important that members endeavour to ensure that there is a high turn out by attending meetings and casting their votes. If the members deliver a mandate of a two thirds majority in favour of industrial action, the Executive Council will meet to consider the outcome of the ballot and will decide whether to serve notice of industrial action.

Q.7 What notice period is required?

A: Under the Industrial Relations Act, the legal requirement is 7-days. However, within the Health Service, there is Framework for Dispute Resolution which requires notice of three weeks prior to the proposed strike date.

Q.8 Are there penalties for taking industrial action?

A: **Yes.** When we signed up to the PSSA, we undertook to abide by the provision that there would be no cost-increasing claims for improvements in pay or conditions of employment during the period of the Agreement. The Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017 gives legal effect to the Agreement.

The following are the range of measures and financial penalties as provide for in the public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017 in respect of those public servants who are not covered by the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020:

- Scheduled pay increases/pension levy adjustments may be delayed;
- Scheduled increments may be suspended;
- The increments lost during the period 1 January 2018 – 1st of January 2021 may never be recovered;
- PSPC proposals and new entrant proposals may not be applied.

Q. 9 How does Nurses and midwifery pay compare to other public servants?

A: The INMO has drafted comparisons of the pay of nurses and midwives with other public sector workers including, occupational therapists and other allied health professionals, radiographers, respiratory technician, teachers and gardai, please see the table below. It is the view of the INMO that unless the pay of nurses and midwives is addressed once and for all, the health service will continue in crisis, with wards left short on a continuous basis. The current salary package is not attractive to nurses and midwives, hence why we have a significant number of vacancies throughout the public healthcare system. However, this will have a significant impact on the future of the health service as it would be impossible to implement the *Slaintecare* report and the bed capacity report if we cannot recruit and retain nurses and midwives. Therefore, this issue must be addressed once and for all.

Comparisons between the Pay of Nurses and Midwives and other Public Sector Workers

Grade	After 1 year	After 5 years	After 10 years	After 15 years
Staff Nurse	€31,110	€36,383	€43,070	€45,701
O/T and other AHPs	€37,784	€42,965	€48,595	€52,059
Radiographer	€36,228	€41,259	€46,746	€50,040
Respiratory Technician	€37,423	€43,365	€49,848	€53,372
Teacher (using scale of those appointed after 1/1/2011)	€37,804	€42,684	€50,499	€58,662
* Garda (using scale post Oct 2013 scale with LRA)	€31,695	€41,909	€48,270	€50,007

Q. 10 What can I do next?

We recommend doing three things:

1. Inform yourself. That means going to information meetings, following the INMO on Facebook and Twitter (@INMO_IRL), and setting aside some time to read through the documents on our website. Information is power.
2. Talk to your colleagues. Make sure everyone you work with is in the INMO. The more nurses and midwives are together in the union, the more power we have to stand up for our professions, our patients, and for ourselves.
3. Vote! When the ballots are open, be sure to cast your vote and have your say.

United We Stand, Divided We Fall