



Health & Welfare Division

**Explanatory Note and recommendation relating to WRC Agreement  
C-163055/18 dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and associated HSE Proposal:  
Hospital Pharmacy Review, Career Structure; Recruitment &  
Retention including appendices**

August 25<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Dear Member,**

In November 2011 the Review of Hospital Pharmacy was completed by Dr. Ambrose McLoughlin. This was the first such review since 1978 when the grading structure currently in place was agreed. The 2011 review and the associated 2017 Composite Report on HSE Pharmacy were originally rooted in the area management/ISA service delivery model. Two significant factors conspired to prevent meaningful progress in relation to the implementation of the McLoughlin report, namely the global economic down tum and the move away from the ISA model in favour of the Hospital Group and Community Health Organisation structures. With the advent of Sláintecare the focus has shifted again, this time to six regional integrated care areas.

Fórsa and the HPAI executive have together worked tirelessly to bring this long standing issue to a conclusion. One of the critical achievements by the negotiating team was to have the employer certify to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) that they had validated the cost savings that

would be generated by this agreement. From that point on the negotiations and subsequent agreement were immunised against rejection on the basis of being a cost increasing claim. This is noteworthy as workers are debarred under the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) from making cost increasing claims. Indeed in the lifetime of the current agreement many otherwise legitimate claims have fallen at this first hurdle.

The set of proposals that you will receive with this note are the culmination of these efforts. They represent significant and immediate gains for Hospital Pharmacists. They include:

- Removal of 3 points from the basic grade scale
- Enhanced Career Structure for the Pharmacy Profession
- Creation of 183 Advanced Pharmacy Specialist Posts
- Creation of the post of Pharmacy Executive Manager Inc. Medicines Management
- Creation of the post of Deputy Pharmacy Executive Manager Inc. Medicines Management
- Increased protection around the issue of the introduction of weekend services, out of hours and extended working days
- An independent review to ensure that the gains that Fórsa have made are implemented

Thus considering this proposal in its totality and being cognisant of the wider economic environment and subsequent risk factors, Fórsa is recommending these proposals to you.

It is also important that I advise you that rejection of this offer will render it null and void and without further status or currency.

## **Clarifications**

The aim of this part of the document is to provide Fórsa members with further detail and context on a point by point basis of the content of the Explanatory Note and recommendation relating to WRC Agreement C-163055/18 dated 10th March 2020 and associated HSE Proposal: Hospital Pharmacy Review, Career Structure; Recruitment & Retention including appendices

### **A. Background**

No further clarification needed

### **B. Recruitment & Retention Challenges**

No further clarification needed

### **C. Added Value arising from Investment**

The significance of this paragraph is that it certifies the proposals as not cost increasing, indeed it refers to robust evidence of cost savings, This removes the obstacle normally faced when seeking the final sign off from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and immunises the union from any attempt to debar the agreement under the PSSA.

### **D. Lead and Deputy role titles**

No further clarification needed

### **E. Lead Roles**

This should be read in conjunction with the attached Appendix 2 and WRC Document C-163055/18. The core of pay both the Pharmacy Executive Manager and the Deputy Pharmacy Executive Manager will be the same irrespective of whether the member is employed in a Model 3 or Model 4. There will be an additional add on payment for those working in Model 4 hospitals. The WRC agreement (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, page 2) paves the way for further negotiations on the introduction of further Deputy Managers in Model 3 hospitals.

Appendix 2 sets out the method for assimilating members on to the new scales. Due to the length of time that has passed since the publication of the 2011 Mc Loughlin report Fórsa was successfully able to argue that the usual rules for same should not apply and managed to secure assimilation on a point to point basis. This is a rarity within the public service and adds considerable monetary value to these proposals.

### **Pharmacy Manager**

As also detailed in appendix 2 the agreement establishes that the Pharmacy Manager is an integral part of the new structure in Hospital Pharmacies. Those currently in post will be paid in accordance with the pay scale as set out in the proposed agreement. **Furthermore the agreement provides for an independent review and verification mechanism of the new career structure. This gives protection to members currently operating as Pharmacy Managers. The agreement also provides for further development of roles as the regional integrated care areas take shape.** This provides the opportunity and mechanism to increase the numbers in the grade should that prove optimal.

### **F. Advanced Pharmacy Specialist Roles**

This should be read in conjunction with the attached Appendix 2 and WRC Document C-163055/18. A key concern expressed by members to Fórsa was in relation to the potential length of time that a validation process for members currently carrying out these roles could take. For this reason Forsa ensured that the WRC agreement would make specific reference to a joint process within a reasonable time frame. Appendix 2 also refers to a Joint Management/ Fórsa Advanced Pharmacy Specialist Roles Subgroup. This provides Fórsa with a defined route to ensure that this element of the agreement is a priority and furthermore is introduced in a focussed, time efficient manner

## **G. Basic Grade Roles**

This should be read in conjunction with the attached Appendix 2. As previously outlined the agreement provides for the removal of the first 3 points on the Basic Grade Scale. This is in line with developments for other professional grades within the Health Service and represents the best achievable outcome at this time.

## **H. Workforce Planning Into the future**

No further clarification needed

## **I. Pharmacy Regional Leads**

This paragraph of the proposed agreement provides an opportunity for Fórsa to seek further improvements to the new grading structure in the future in relation to the pursuit of a Pharmacy Regional Lead post.

## **J. Proposed Revised Pay Scales**

This paragraph should be read in conjunction with Appendix 1.

## **K. Recruitment Process (Lead Roles)**

This paragraph should be read in conjunction with Appendix 2. This is a significant achievement by Fórsa. Due to the unique nature of the length of the gap between the publishing and implementation of this report it is agreed that for the lead roles, any member in post for 3 years on the date of agreement will not have to compete for those posts but instead will be appointed by designation.

## **L. Medication Safety**

No further clarification needed

## **M. Weekend Clinical Pharmacy Services**

This paragraph should be read in conjunction with WRC Document C-163055/18. Previous public service agreements, voted on and accepted by the Fórsa membership, provided for the introduction of weekend services. This liability already exists for all public servants. This proposed agreement delivers extra protections for Hospital Pharmacists over and above those enjoyed by other public servants. The WRC agreement explicitly states that any implementation of weekend services must have regard to adequate resourcing and any emerging issues may be referred to conciliation for assistance. In practical terms this means before any employer can move to introduce weekend services they must provide additional resources. Furthermore the WRC is available to intervene if necessary.

## **N. Out of Hours pharmacy Service**

This paragraph should be read in conjunction with WRC Document C-163055/18. Previous public service agreements, voted on and accepted by the Fórsa membership, provided for the introduction of an Out of Hours Pharmacy Service. This liability already exists for all public servants. This proposed agreement delivers extra protections for Hospital Pharmacists over and above those enjoyed by other public servants. The WRC agreement explicitly states that any implementation of Out of Hours services must have regard to adequate resourcing and any emerging issues may be referred to conciliation for assistance. In practical terms this means before any employer can move to introduce out of hours services they must provide additional resources. Furthermore the WRC is available to intervene if necessary.

## **O. Extended Working Day**

Similarly the paragraph on an extended working day should be read in conjunction with WRC Document C-163055/18. Previous public service agreements, voted on and accepted by the Fórsa membership, provided for the introduction of an extended working day. This liability already exists for all public servants. This proposed agreement delivers extra protections for Hospital Pharmacists over and above those enjoyed by other public servants. The WRC

agreement explicitly states that any implementation of an extended working day must have regard to adequate resourcing and any emerging issues may be referred to conciliation for assistance. In practical terms this means before any employer can move to introduce an extended working day they must provide additional resources. Furthermore the WRC is available to intervene if necessary.

#### **P. Implementation**

This paragraph should be read as two distinct and separate paragraphs. ie: The new framework will be implemented immediately upon agreement and receipt of sanction from the Department of Health and DPER.

Following this management will engage with the Hospital Groups and CHOs around their needs in terms of service provision. It is this process, and only this process, that may take 3 to 5 years to implement. In any event the advancement of Sláintecare may very well overtake this process.

#### **Q. Independent Review**

No further clarification needed

#### **R. Collaboration**

No further clarification needed

It is on the basis of the same information provided to you in this explanatory note and accompanying documents that the Health and Welfare Divisional Executive of Fórsa and the HPAI Executive at its recent meeting voted to endorse the views of the negotiating team and recommend acceptance of these proposals to you.

Yours sincerely,

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## **Seven reasons to vote YES!**

- 1. This final offer represents the best available outcome for Fórsa members***
- 2. As is the established norm in industrial relations and as specified in the WRC document rejection of this offer means that the offer is immediately withdrawn and has no further status***
- 3. Voting yes will lead to the creation of a minimum of 183 Advanced Pharmacy Specialist roles through a jointly owned process***
- 4. This new model will create enhanced structures and improved career progression options for all pharmacists including the removal of the first three points from the Basic Grade Scale***
- 5. The agreement links all new Pharmacy Executive Managers to the CHO Head of Service which will be beneficial for future pay alignment while also still providing space for negotiations to increase the number of Deputy Pharmacy Executive Managers in Model 3 hospitals***
- 6. The addition of the clause in relation to adequate resourcing of weekend services, out of hours and extended working days provides substantial protection for all members***
- 7. On March 10th when Fórsa/HPAI negotiators reached agreement on this set of proposals none of us could have foreseen the extent of the economic pressure that the COVID-19 pandemic would place on the Health Service and the wider public sector in such a short space of time.***

***It is clear to this union that further advances in pay across grades will be extremely difficult to achieve in the short to medium term. We were very satisfied in March that these proposals should be recommended to you. In these ever uncertain times we are unequivocal in our recommendation to you.***