

Dublin Bus agrees four-day week for maintenance craft workers

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A four-day, 39- hour week has been agreed for maintenance craft workers in Dublin Bus, with the option of remaining on five-day working.

The agreement was reached at local/WRC level between the commercial semi-state bus operator and the three unions representing over 200 workers involved: Connect, SIPTU and Unite.

While this agreement differs from the four-day week sought by some groups in recent years, in that the same number of hours as five days is concentrated into four days, the unions retain the aspiration to reduce weekly hours for the same pay at some point in the future.

The agreement states that introduction of the four-day week must be done on a cost neutral basis for the company, as well as ensuring that it meets the operational evaluation metrics in the agreement.

The pay agreement for the workers involved was similar to that for other groups in Dublin Bus, such as drivers, at 15.5% over the five years 2021-2025 inclusive. For the maintenance workers, 11% of this is cost of living increases, but the remaining 4.5% is linked to productivity and the four-day week is part of this productivity discussion.

MENTORING ALLOWANCE

The deal also provides for a new mentoring allowance of €30 per week to assist with the integration of a number of new workers recruited from abroad. This allowance is payable to all craft workers after their appointment, including the new recruits once their appointments are made permanent.

Over two-thirds of the workers involved have opted to move to the new four-day week. A mix of both four and five-day working is possible within each of the company's eight maintenance depots, with majorities opting for the new system in seven of these. It is expected that over time, more will move to the four-day system as they see their colleagues adapting to it.

Under the new system, the working day is 9.75 hours long, with a 30-minute and 15-minute break each day, with starting times adjusted locally with the agreement of the engineering manager.

TWO TEAMS

Those on the four-day week will be in two teams on a two-week cycle: Team A working Monday to Thursday and Team B working Tuesday to Friday in the first week; and for the second week, Team A works Tuesday to Friday and Team B works Monday to Thursday.

To ensure an even distribution of reliefs, there is to be an even split of junior and senior craftworkers and lead hands in each team. Swaps between teams are dependent on someone from the opposite team agreeing to do so, with one month's notice required, as well as signoff from the local engineering manager.

Those wishing to move from four-day working to five-day working, or vice versa, must make a written request to the local engineering manager, with one month's notice required if reverting to five-day working.

Annual leave reflects the four-day week pattern, with 16 days of basic leave, plus any service days and additional shift days.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

If a public holiday falls on a Monday or Friday when an employee is rostered to work, the employee takes a day of rest that day, receiving a regular day's pay for that day.

If a public holiday falls on a Monday or Friday and the employee is rostered to rest that day, the employee will take rest that day and then get an extra day of rest on either the Tuesday (for a Monday public holiday) or the Thursday (for a Friday public holiday).

If a public holiday falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday when an employee is rostered to work, the employee will take a day of rest and receive a regular day's pay for that day.

Public holidays over the Christmas period are to be discussed and agreed in November each year, to ensure enough resources are available in each depot over the Christmas period.

Training periods lasting one day are to be recognised day for day, but if the training runs over four days into the fifth day, the worker will revert to a five-day week for that week.

Apprentices also have the option of moving to a four-day week and must apply locally to the engineering manager and will be assigned to the appropriate team.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A number of key performance indicators (KPIs) will track the impact of the four-day week on operational efficiency and employee well-being. This list of KPIs is to be reviewed regularly and may be added to as necessary.

The KPIs include the following: safety incidents; compliance with depot safety inspections and audits; percentage of buses available each day; lost kilometres; driver defect reports; repeat defects; number of outstanding maintenance tasks; planned maintenance versus unplanned reactive maintenance; progress of scheduled annual maintenance programmes; financial impact assessment; tracking overtime to measure any increase in unscheduled work; employee absenteeism; and the weekly cost of any additional shift allowances.