

New public service deal “linked to reform” envisaged by new Government

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**A continuation of the 15-year series of multi-annual public service pay agreements is committed to in the new Programme for Government.**

On pay, the document says the Government says it will: “Negotiate a new public sector pay deal, linked to a reform agenda, to succeed the existing deal which recognises the central contribution of workers in the delivery of better public services.”

Under the heading, *‘Staffing and reforming a Public Sector for the Future’*, the Programme says that successive public pay agreements have acknowledged the contribution of public servants and “promoted stability in industrial relations”.

It continues: “In line with the future pay agreements, we will continue to focus on a reform agenda, ensuring that our public and civil service evolves to meet the needs of modern Ireland, facilitating the delivery of improved public services.

“We will continue to ensure that the civil and public service attracts and retains the best and the brightest, working for the State”.

The same section of the Programme goes on to mention issues like broadening the experience of those working in the public service “by further improving structures for talent development”; continuing to support the apprenticeship model within the civil service; and offering a paid internship programme “targeted at underrepresented groups and individuals to provide them with valuable experience in government departments.”

There is a further commitment to undertake a programme of workforce planning to identify the optimal staffing model within the public sector to meet the needs of our changing demographics.

## **BLENDED WORKING IN CIVIL SERVICE**

A *‘Review the Civil Service Blended Working Policy Framework’* is included to consider “how the implementation of this approach best delivers public services and supports the productivity of the public sector”.

The current blended working policy was criticised when it was unveiled in 2022, because of its limited scope and many restrictions, especially in light of the experience of “forced” homeworking due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is also a commitment in the Programme to the upskilling of public sector workers “to ensure that they have the digital skills to enhance service delivery, particularly in areas such as data utilisation, AI integration, and user friendly design”.