



Purchase of Six Months Service

Colleagues,

The Association is in receipt of several queries/communications regarding the purchase of service of 6 months service in respect of the on-the-job training completed by members recruited between 1989 and 2013. I am to inform you that the current position is that the GRA has referred the matter to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) for determination. A date for hearing of this Labour Court recommendation is expected shortly. As soon as the WRC deals with this case, the GRA will advise its members accordingly.

By way of background, I can confirm that in negotiations with the Garda Representative Association (GRA) in September 2016 the Official Side acknowledged that the foundation training programme for new entrants between 1989 and 2013 required them to complete a period of 6 months on-the-job training in Garda stations prior to attesting as members. This contrasts with the new foundation training programme under which entrants attest before being assigned to stations and accordingly move onto the incremental salary scale with the period of in-station training being reckonable for pension purposes.

On the 23rd of September 2016 it was agreed in principle that the period of 6 months on-the-job training completed by members recruited between 1989 and 2013 should be recognised for the calculation of pension entitlements in the case of members who reach 19.5 years' service subject to the payment of a contribution by an eligible member commensurate with the contribution that would have been payable at the time had the service been reckonable. This service can be purchased at any time thereafter.

The application of the previous paragraph is limited to persons who are members of An Garda Síochána on the date of ratification of the Agreement (the 5th December 2016).

During the course of the negotiations the GRA set out that any such purchase of service would be based on what members would have paid at the time had they been given to opportunity to do so. It was on this basis that the Official Side indicated to the GRA that the cost of purchasing the six months service would be between €250 and €1,000 gross. This is what we recorded in good faith and informed our membership.

It is the GRA's position that the principle outlined at paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of the September 23rd document (which is an integral part of the Labour Court recommendation) to purchase this service by an eligible member commensurate with the contribution that would be payable at the time had the service been reckonable, stands on its merits.

The entitlement to purchase the service is established and not in question. What is in question however is the cost of the purchase. The Department of Justice & Equality and the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform do not agree with the method for calculation of the contribution to be paid by eligible members. They are of the view that the contribution rate applicable should be at

19.5 years' service. This makes a substantial difference in the cost to our membership of purchasing the relevant service.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat Ennis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'P' and 'E'.

Pat Ennis
General Secretary
15th March 2018