

CEC urges 'NO' to Lansdowne Road proposals

A ballot on the proposed Lansdowne Road Agreement (Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2018) will be conducted in September.

ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) is recommending that members reject the proposed Agreement.

The Lansdowne Road Agreement (LRA) emerged following an invitation to talks from the Government to public sector unions. The talks involved discussions on the pay restoration commitments contained in the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) and on union demands for additional improvements to pay and pensions due to the improvement in State finances.

The LRA extends the demands and commitments of the HRA until September 2018.

The ASTI is a party to the HRA due to end in June 2016.

Reasons to vote NO to the Lansdowne Road Agreement

ASTI Central Executive Council (CEC) elected a sub-committee to draw up a list of reasons why members should vote NO to the Lansdowne Road Agreement. The members of the sub-committee are the President, Vice-President, Donal McCarthy, Richie Bell, Noelle Moran, Mark Walshe and Michael McGrath.

Reasons to vote 'NO' to the LRA

As drawn up by the CEC Sub-Committee

- The LRA will mean a continuation of all the unpalatable aspects of the Haddington Road and the Croke Park Agreements.

Pay

- The document is silent on the restoration of the common basic salary scale, particularly in the context of the non-payment of qualifications allowances to newly appointed teachers.
- No teacher will benefit from the proposed 1st January 2016 2.5% pay increase because it's based on annualised salaries of less than €24,000. This has the effect of excluding part-time teachers even though they may be earning less than €24,000 per annum.

The Lansdowne Road Agreement extends the demands and commitments of the Haddington Road Agreement until September 2018

Warning

The closing date for receipt of returned ballot papers on the proposed Lansdowne Road Agreement is **Tuesday, October 6th.**

To ensure that your ballot papers reach us on time, please post them before **Thursday, October 1st.**

Please post your Lansdowne Road Agreement ballot paper before Thursday, October 1st in order to ensure it arrives on time

Read the full proposed Lansdowne Road Agreement document

ASTI Central Executive Council elected a sub-committee to draw up reasons to vote 'NO'

Reasons to vote 'NO' to the LRA (Cont.)

- The pay restoration proposed is of little or no benefit to part-time teachers e.g. a part-time teacher earning €21,600 per year does not qualify for the 1st January 2016 2.5% pay increase payable to those with annualised salaries of up to €24,000.
- The proposed pay increases and PRD deductions are totally inadequate:
In 2016 the net benefit of the PRD changes will be approximately €8.44 per week (assuming top rate tax payer).

In 2017 the net benefit of the €1,000 salary increase and the PRD changes will be approximately €19.95 per week (assuming top rate tax payer).

Working Conditions

- Par 3.1 extends the Haddington Road Agreement for a further 2 years until September 2018 thereby retaining the 33 Croke Park hours and the current Supervision and Substitution scheme.
- ASTI Annual Convention 2015 called for the abolition of the 33 Croke Park hours and for an 'opt-out' arrangement for all teachers from the S&S scheme. The LRA is therefore in conflict with ASTI policy.

Reform

- Par 1.2 of the LRA accepts that change is now a 'constant part of employment in the Public Service'.
- Par 3.2 of the LRA requires teachers to 'recommit to effective engagement' with the Government's change agenda including curricular reform. This requirement is ambiguous and could tie our hands in future curricular negotiations which could impact on teachers' working conditions.
- Par 3.4.5 of the LRA seeks assurances that "the performance and accountability of organisations and individuals is maximised"; the introduction of such a performance model could have serious implications for teachers and schools.
- Par 4.1.5 requires cooperation with the implementation of change pending the outcome of industrial relations processes. This implies that we could be required to implement unacceptable changes to our working conditions pending external arbitration.

General

- Strikes or other forms of industrial action are precluded in respect of matters covered by the Lansdowne Road Agreement.
- Par 4.1.6 would commit teacher unions to an arbitration process which is binding and final.
- While teachers had no choice but to deliver on all their commitments in the HRA, the supplementary panel for non-permanent teachers, which was to be provided by September 2014 as part of the HRA, has not yet been established.
- The LRA does not remove all aspects of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Acts (FEMPI). ICTU supports the removal of FEMPI legislation.
- Some teachers will continue to earn net salaries less than they earned in 2008 as a result of – USC, PRD, Incremental Pay Freezes, Pay Cuts and loss of S&S allowance.

LRA Pay Proposals

The key pay restoration commitments contained in the Lansdowne Road Agreement are as follows:

2016

- January 1st: Increase in pension related deduction (PRD) exemption threshold from €15,000 to €24,750. **LRA**
- January 1st: Salaries up to €24,000 increase by 2.5% through a partial reversal of the 2010 public service pay cut. **LRA**
- January 1st: Salaries between €24,001 and €31,000 increase by 1% via the same mechanism. **LRA**
- September 1st: Increase in pension related deduction (PRD) exemption threshold to €28,750. **LRA**

2017

- September 1st: All salaries up to €65,000 will increase by €1,000 per annum (flat increase). This applies to all points of the salary scale as Post, Principal and Deputy allowances are not included in the calculation of the €65,000. **LRA**

HRA Pay Commitments

The ASTI has honoured its HRA commitments and expects the Government to honour its HRA pay commitments.

2017

- April 1st: Pensionable payment of €796 added to all salaries in lieu of S&S payment. **HRA**
- April 1st: Restoration of half of the 2014 pay cut to those earning above €65,000. **HRA**

2018

- January 1st: Restoration of remainder of the 2014 pay cut to those earning above €65,000. **HRA**
- April 1st: Second pensionable payment of €796 added to all salaries in lieu of S&S payment. **HRA**

As these increases are based on annualised salaries, they will apply on a pro-rata basis where teachers are eligible for an increase.

Grace period

For most teachers retiring over the next few years, their pensions and lump sums are based on their salary on their date of retirement. However, a grace period was introduced whereby pension and lump sum are based on salaries prior to the 2008 pay cuts. Under the Haddington Road Agreement this grace period ends on the 30th June 2016.

Under the Lansdowne Road Agreement the grace period for retirement based on pre-cut salary is extended from 30th June 2016 to September 2018.

This means that under the Lansdowne Road Agreement teachers who retire from June 30th 2016 to September 2018 will have their pension payments and lump sum calculated on their 2008 (pre pay cuts) salary.

Retired teachers

The Lansdowne Road discussions led to a separate commitment to increase the liability threshold for the Public Service Pension Reduction (the levy imposed on retired public sector workers' pensions) in 2016 and 2017, so that by the end of 2017, approximately 80,000 of the 140,000 on public sector pensions will have no liability for PSPR. The remaining, higher paid pensions, will receive relief on the PSPR up to a cap of €900 by the end of 2017.

Who votes?

All ASTI members, including Emeritus members, are entitled to vote in the ASTI ballot on the Lansdowne Road proposals.

Get the facts

- Read official ASTI information
- Read the document Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2018
- Visit the ASTI website
- Got a question? Email info@asti.ie

Ballot on Lansdowne Road Proposals

Ballot papers will issue to members' home addresses from September 21st. Returned ballot papers must reach ASTI Head Office by **5.30p.m.** on **Tuesday, October 6th.**

Each ballot paper will be accompanied by a copy of the Public Sector Stability Agreement 2013-2018.

Members will be asked the following question:

Do you accept the proposed Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2018 (the Lansdowne Road Agreement)?

CEC is recommending that members vote NO

It is vital that ASTI members read the full proposed Lansdowne Road Agreement document.

This document is being distributed to all members with their ballot papers. It is also available on the ASTI website.

