

Mr Kevin Duffy
Chairman
Public Service Pay Commission
29th November 2017

Dear Mr Duffy

The CPSU represents primarily the Clerical Officer Grade (CO) in the Civil Service. We also represent even lower paid grades in the National Museum, namely the Science and Arts Attendants.

Previously we made a submission to the Commission along with other Trade Unions in advance of the Public Service Pay talks in which we addressed low pay as a factor particularly in terms of the retention of CO's in the Civil Service. Attached at **Appendix 1**.

I have examined the template which the Commission sent us to make submissions in relation to the current examination of recruitment and retention, however we have not been able to use it appropriately as we do not have all of the relevant staffing data available to us, particularly in relation to retention levels.

We believe that such data is available both departmentally and from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

We have received some data centrally but it is insufficient to fully answer the questions posed in parts 2 and 3 of the template.

While we are not arguing any issues in relation to recruitment as sought in part 1 of the template, we would strongly argue that there are retention issues for the CO grade.

It is clear from our ongoing discussions with both the employer and members that there is significant churn in the CO grade, which is attributable to a number of factors, namely;

- Starting pay levels
- Loss to promotion
- Wider labour market opportunities.

In terms of pay levels we would point to the evidence adduced in our original submission in particular the remaining two new starting points on the scale, which are a hangover from the scale introduced for new entrants in 2011, which was an effective 10% cut at each point. This cut scale was merged with the original scale as part of the Haddington Road discussions but we haven't managed to abolish the two new entry points.

In our original submission we also produced evidence based on the gross working week to determine hourly pay, which is a legitimate approach given that it is used for overtime. A CO

on the new scale is below the living wage, set at €11.50, up to the 5th point of the scale at the 1st January 2016.

Point	Annual	Weekly	Hourly*
1	€21,879	€419.29	€9.69
2	€23,275	€447.97	€10.36
3	€23,756	€455.28	€10.53
4	€24,498	€469.48	€10.86
5	€25,592	€490.46	€11.34

Since our submission we have finalised the PSSA and we have also seen the earlier payment of increases due under the Lansdowne Road Agreement which will see us reach the current living wage level but only at the end of the PSSA in 2020, and only from the 2nd point of the scale. Post 1995 standard CO scale taking account of increases under PSSA attached at **Appendix 2**.

In discussions with our own members there is clearly significant financial challenges to taking up employment as a CO in the Civil Service.

There is no doubt that rising costs in rental accommodation, insurance and public transport mean that taking a job at €22,879, the current starting point, is clearly a huge difficulty for anyone just wishing to survive on an income, never mind getting on with such matters as house purchase or providing for families.

Arising from this we can see that staff are leaving for other jobs in the private sector or indeed according to many Departments are literally not arriving following appointment by PAS. We are aware that there may be figures available from PAS and departmentally on this question. We are attaching at **Appendix 3** the staffing statistics that have been made available to us for the years 2014 to 2016. We are awaiting details in relation to 2017. Clearly there is a ramping up of CO recruitment following the moratorium with considerable numbers being employed in 2015 and 2016 but the real detail which DPER should make available is the retention rate.

There are other factors arising in relation to CO recruitment in particular the loss of new recruits to early promotion either internally or through open appointment competitions. Employers in the Civil Service have told us that many who apply for CO are doing so with very high qualifications and they are moving through the system much more quickly. That does beg the question about educational standards for CO Competitions, an issue some Departments, such as the Revenue Commissioners, are examining for the future.

Overall though we believe the lower starting points are the key issue in terms of retention, coupled with a very long incremental pay scale, the longest in the Civil Service, taking 20 years to reach the maximum point, means that the job is not paid in a way that would encourage higher retention levels.

The CO grade is still predominantly female and the grade still hasn't totally lost its historical baggage in terms of being considered a second household salary. The issues affecting the grade that are dealt with here and in our original submission to the Commission only fuel the gender pay gap further.

If it is possible at a future point we will make further submissions taking account of the details sought in the template as soon full statistics are made available to us.

Yours sincerely

Derek Mullen
Deputy General Secretary

