

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1396

(Meeting/s of 25 July 2001, 31 October 2001, 12 December 2001)

That 5 days special leave with pay be granted to staff who look after children, from areas such as Chernobyl, who come to Ireland for recuperative purposes; the leave to apply in cases where staff take at least 10 days annual leave for this purpose and where the arrangement is sponsored by organisations such as the Chernobyl Children's Project.

Claim

Claim seeking to have special leave with pay of 5 days for staff who look after children, from areas such as Chernobyl, who come to Ireland for recuperative purposes; the leave to apply in cases where staff take at least 10 days annual leave for this purpose and where the arrangement is sponsored by organisations such as the Chernobyl Children's Project.

1. The Staff Side said the voluntary effort involved in operations such as the Chernobyl Children's Project is vital charitable work, which is highly regarded by the Government. The voluntary effort involved in looking after the children concerned, and particularly where people use their own leave to facilitate the effort, is worthy of support.

2. The Official Side considered the claim and responded at the meeting of 31 October 2001 by stating that:

Circular 2/76 (on Special Leave) specifies that special leave for up to 1 year may be allowed for the purpose of service in this country with voluntary organisations engaged wholly or mainly on charitable work. The special leave is unpaid.

It is accepted that caring for seriously ill children, from areas such as Chernobyl, who come to Ireland for recuperative purposes is a worthy undertaking.

Numerous applications for paid leave are received for many praiseworthy and meritorious non-official purposes. The cost of granting paid leave at State expense in all such cases could be prohibitive and accordingly, paid leave of absence is not normally granted in such cases.

Accordingly, the Official Side could not accede to the claim for special leave with pay.

3. The Staff Side were advised that special leave without pay is available under circulars 2/76 (paragraph 30.1) and 22/98 (paragraphs 3 and 4 of Annex 1) for the full period of caring for the child/children (i.e. officers would not be required to combine annual leave with the unpaid leave). The usual condition that leave would only be granted subject to the exigencies of the work situation would also apply.

4. The Staff Side accepted that paid leave would not be granted. It was agreed that a letter would issue to Personnel Officers reminding them of the availability of unpaid leave under the existing provisions.

Recorded agreement.

This report was adopted on 30 January 2002