

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1462

(Meeting/s of 28 September 2005, 30 November 2005)

This is a claim sponsored by the Civil Public & Services Union which seeks to increase the number of force majeure days from 5 to 10 days over three years.

1. The Staff Side said that taking account of the demands of work-life balance, 5 days *force majeure* leave over a 36 month period was not adequate in terms of dealing with family emergencies. This was especially true considering that absence for part of a day is counted as one day for the purposes of *force majeure* leave (Circular 22/98, Annex 1, para. 2a).
2. The Official Side responded that the Parental Leave Act 1998 allowed a maximum of 3 days force majeure leave in any period of 12 consecutive months or 5 days in any period of 36 consecutive months. The Parental Leave (Amendment) Bill, currently being considered by the legislature, does not provide for any increase in the number of *force majeure* days.
3. The Official Side referred also to the availability (by civil servants who have less than 26 days annual leave) of a number of days paid leave in the event of the serious and unforeseen illness or injury of an officer's immediate relative. This leave was more or less identical to, and additional to, the statutory entitlement to *force majeure* leave (Circular 22/98, Annex 1, para.2b).
4. The Official Side also drew attention to the various special leave arrangements in the civil service which assist in maintaining work-life balance, e.g. paid bereavement leave (Circular 22/98, Annex 1, para. 1), unpaid leave for domestic reasons (Circular 28/91, para. 5), up to two paid days off in context of marital separation or breakdown (Letter to Personnel Officers, April 2001).
5. An increase in *force majeure* leave (beyond the statutory number of days) would have significant cost implications.
6. In view of these considerations, it was decided not to allow the claim. This report, recording disagreement, was adopted on 30 November 2005.

Official Side Secretary
Eric Gargan

Staff Side Secretary
Joan Byrne

Agreed report, recording disagreement.

This report was adopted on 30 November 2005