

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1483

(Meeting/s of 28 March 2007, 30 May 2007)

That the six month sick leave allowed with full pay be extended to twelve months in the case of serious illness and that the same extension be applied to the period on half pay, meaning that in a four year cycle payment could be made for up to two years.

1. At the outset, the Official Side outlined the existing civil service paid sick leave scheme as laid down in Circular 25/78, Appendix A:

- Six months (183 days) sick leave on full pay in any one year
- Twelve months (365 days) paid sick leave – between full and half pay – in any four year period.

2. After the paid sick leave entitlement had been exhausted, the Official Side said that it was the practice in Departments/Offices to continue paying pension rate of pay if illness continued. Officers who qualify for social welfare benefits keep these benefits while also receiving pension rate of pay. (Circular 6/95, para.10c), i.e. while officers are on pension rate of pay, they are not required to surrender their benefits to the Department /Office (as they normally are while on sick leave at full and half pay).

3. The Official Side referred to the enhanced sick leave scheme for officers suffering from TB – six months on full pay, followed by six months on three quarters pay and six months on half pay (Circular 7/78, Appendix A). This enhancement was introduced when TB was very prevalent in Ireland.

4. The Official Side said that civil service paid sick leave scheme was an excellent scheme that provided a high level of ongoing support to staff suffering from a serious illness. Few, if any, organisations had better. The very significant enhancement in the scheme sought in the claim – from six to twelve months on full pay, and from one year to two years paid sick leave (between full and half pay) in any four year period in the case of serious illness – was not justified.

5. The Official Side recalled that a similar claim for the enhancement of the sick leave scheme for officers suffering from cancer, was

disagreed in April 1999 (GC Report 1352).

6. The Staff Side said that in almost every case, the concomitant of serious, long-term illness was financial worry arising from loss of income. It was very important that officers suffering from serious illness should, as far as possible, be freed from financial worry and not feel pressed to return to earning before they are medically fit to do so.

7. The Official Side said that the paid sick leave scheme in operation in the Civil Service provided very strong support for staff with serious illness, on a par with the best in the country. The scheme to a very large extent eliminated financial stress and worry for most civil servants suffering serious illness.

8. Accordingly the Official side disagreed with the enhancements proposed in the Staff Panel claim

9. This report recording disagreement was adopted on 30 May 2007.

Agreed report, recording disagreement

This report was adopted on 30 May 2007