

Reference No: E104/40/26 & E103/4/77; Date: 20/03/98

20/03/1998 LP:- Minimum Annual Leave Allowances and Priviledge Days

To Each Personnel Officer

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that he has accepted an agreed recommendation by the General Council under the Scheme of Conciliation and Arbitration for the Civil Service (Report no. 1327, copy enclosed for your attention) concerning an increase in the minimum annual leave allowance for certain grades comprehended by the scheme. He has also decided to revise the arrangements governing the opening arrangements for Departments/Offices* on Privilege Days.

Minimum Annual Leave Allowance of 20 Days.

2. I am to convey sanction for the implementation of the arrangements regarding new minimum annual leave allowances set out in paragraph 7 of the General Council Report. It will be noted that the new allowances should be applied with effect from the 1997/98 annual leave year (which means the annual leave year ending on 31 December 1997 in the case of Departments where the annual leave year is a calendar year). Where the 1997/98 annual leave year has already finished, any additional annual leave due for that year may be added to the annual leave allowances of the officers concerned for the 1998/99 leave year. Where the additional leave due in respect of the 1997/98 annual leave year is so added, it may be disregarded in any circumstances in which it would otherwise impact adversely on the officer (e.g. in calculating the amount of leave an officer is entitled to carryover from one leave year to the next and entitlement to additional leave on marriage).

3. You will also note, from paragraphs 8 to 11 of the enclosed General Council Report, that no agreement has been reached on the question of increasing the annual leave allowance of staff with a flat annual leave allowance of 18 days to a minimum of 20 days with effect from the 1997/98 leave year and that this issue is to be referred to adjudication for decision. The outcome of the adjudication process will be notified to Departments in due course.

* subsequent references to "Department" may be taken to mean "Department/Office"

Accordingly, apart from staff with an annual leave allowance of a flat 18 days (mainly support services staff represented by FUGE) who will be granted an annual leave allowance of 20 days with effect from the 1999/2000 annual leave year to comply with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, the position of grades with a graduated annual leave allowance with effect from the **1997/98 annual leave year** is as follows: -

Current annual leave allowance

18 days rising to 19 after five years service
19 days rising to 21 after five years service
19 days rising to 24 after five years service

Revised annual leave allowance

20 days
20 days rising to 21 after five years service
20 days rising to 24 after five years service

Privilege Days.

5. The Minister has also decided, as indicated in paragraph 6 of the General Council Report, that in addition to having sufficient staff on duty to deal with urgent work on privilege holidays at Christmas and Easter, Departments must in future ensure that sufficient staff are retained on duty to provide an adequate service, including an adequate telephone response, to members of the public on such days. It will be a matter for each Department, in the light of its own circumstances, to decide the level and nature of staffing required to ensure this. Paragraph 9 of Circular 5/84, under which Departments were given discretion to close some or all of their offices entirely on one of the alternative privilege holidays, is amended accordingly.

General

6. Any queries about this letter should be addressed to Mr Pat Fitzsimons, GTN. 7109 Extn. 5445 or direct at 604-5445 or Ms. Deirdre Hanlon, GTN. 7109 Extn. 5448 or direct at 604-5448. Please send an acknowledgement of receipt of this letter to either of the above at the following address - Conditions of Employment Section, Room 17, Ground Floor, Ballagh House, Department of Finance, 73-79 Lower Mount Street. Dublin 2.

Yours sincerely

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary