

Reference No: E157/39/88 ; **Date:** 02/10/90

Circular 26/1990:- Additional payments to certain Executive Officers. Higher Executive Officers and members of equivalent Departmental grades in the Information Technology area

A Dhuine Uasail

I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that he has accepted the recommendation in Report 1175 of the General Council (attached) regarding arrangements for additional payments to certain Executive Officers, Higher Executive Officers and members of equivalent Departmental grades in the Information Technology area. I am, accordingly, to convey sanction for their implementation.

2. The arrangements are set out in the Appendix to the Report. Before a payment is made in any case, it will be necessary for all six conditions in paragraph 3 of the Appendix to be satisfied.

3. Any queries relating to the application of the arrangements in individual cases, notably where a doubt may exist as to the fulfilment of any one of the six conditions, should be referred in writing to this Department.

Mise le meas
J. Fitzgerald
Assistant Secretary

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme
General Council Report 1175
(Meeting of 28 September 1988 and 25 July 1990)

Claim that a substantial allowance in the nature of pay be paid to Executive Officers and Higher Executive Officers who work in Computer Sections

1. The Staff Side said that the claimants were paid substantially less than people engaged on similar work in outside employments. As a result, considerable numbers in the claimants' grades had left the civil service to take up alternative employment. The claimants had a high level of skill and expertise which warranted remuneration over and above that paid to their grades as a whole.

2. The Official Side acknowledged that in the claimants' grades a high degree of skill and expertise was required in many instances within the IT area. In the context of ensuring, as far as possible, that such skills and expertise were developed and retained in the IT area they were prepared to consider a system of additional payments in certain circumstances. They would not accept, however, that payments for all members in the claimant grades who worked in Computer Sections would be justified.

3. It was agreed that further, direct, discussion would take place between the two sides. In these discussions, agreement was reached on a system of additional payments which is set out in the Appendix to this Report.

4. Both Sides also agreed that, in the context of the arrangements set out in the Appendix, it was desirable to establish some uniformity in the selection of staff who might be assigned to posts in the IT area in which they could qualify for additional payments. The Official Side stated, accordingly, that in view

of the fact that special high level skills/expertise are required for certain IT activities for which a scheme of additional payments was being agreed, a standard selection procedure should in future apply in all Departments/Offices for all EOs and HEOs (and equivalent Departmental grades) affected by the scheme before being assigned to the IT area. This procedure should take full account of the skills required to perform satisfactorily within a modern IT environment and include a standard selection test.

5. The Staff Side reaffirmed the commitment of the claimant grades to cooperation and flexibility in the use of new technologies and in working arrangements, particularly in relation to the management of personnel resources, covering mobility of staff, assignments within the overall IT area and training, and acknowledged their agreement to cooperate with consultants and contract staff when their employment was considered necessary by management. The Official Side stated that it was their intention that the existing recruitment/appointment procedures would continue to be followed in most instances. Contract staff would only be utilised for limited periods to deal with specific projects or exceptional work-loads which were incapable of being met satisfactorily from existing resources. In these cases management would discuss the arrangements beforehand with staff representatives. In this regard the Official Side affirmed its commitment to make every effort to take account of the Union's views and, in any event, it was stated that the use of such staff would not affect adversely the career prospects of permanent staff.

6. It was agreed to recommend that effect be given to the arrangements set out in the Appendix. These arrangements will be subject to review after three years.

7. This Report was adopted on 25 July 1990.

APPENDIX

Arrangements for additional payments to EOs and HEOs who work in computer sections

1. The Official Side acknowledge that at these grade levels "a high degree of skill and expertise" is required in many instances within the IT area. They also acknowledge the necessity of ensuring, as far as reasonably possible, that at these levels such special skills/expertise in the IT area are retained to the benefit of the service and that staff are managed and developed so that they acquire such skills and apply them in the interests of the IT area of the civil service.

2. With this in mind the Official Side are prepared to agree to a scheme of additional payments for EOs and HEOs and equivalent Departmental grades in the IT area in respect of whom it is established that they possess special high-level skills/expertise, formally acquired, in the IT area and are necessarily applying those skills to the benefit of the IT function.

3. To qualify for such additional payments, the following conditions will have to be fulfilled: The staff concerned will have to

(a) be engaged whole-time in the IT support/service delivery area

(b) possess special high-level skills/expertise essential to the IT area (these can include advanced programming, systems analysis, telecommunications, database design, and such other related specialist skills/expertise as may from time to time be considered essential by management for the smooth and effective maintenance and development of computer systems and infrastructure in the civil service)

(c) have acquired such skills through formal training/study courses and on-the-job experience

(d) be engaged whole-time on duties for the effective discharge of which possession and application of the skills/expertise in question are essential

(e) have been performing these duties to a consistently high standard, in their present grade, for two years. (This period is designated the "qualifying period".)

Management will have to be satisfied that the making of the additional payment is essential to ensure that the availability of the skills/expertise in question to the service will not be put at risk. The making of a payment in any particular case will be at the discretion of management.

4. These arrangements will come into effect on 1 July 1989. The additional payment will be paid in gratuity form annually in arrears. The first payment will be made to an officer one year after he/she has satisfied the criteria in paragraph 3 but not earlier than 1 July 1990 (the year between the end of the "qualifying period" and the first payment is designated the "earning period"). The amounts of the gratuity will be

£1,750 for Executive Officer or equivalent, and

£2,000 for Higher Executive Officer or equivalent

(These amounts will attract general round increases.) For the purpose of the "qualifying period" and the "earning period" service in each grade will be treated separately, i.e. an Executive Officer promoted to Higher Executive Officer, where both posts enable him or her to satisfy the conditions laid down in paragraph 3, will commence a new two-year "qualifying period" from the date of such promotion.

5. When an officer who was deemed to have qualified for an additional payment is promoted in the "earning period" for the first, or a subsequent, gratuity, to a post in which there is an opportunity to qualify again for an additional payment, the following arrangements will apply:

(a) for the purpose of these arrangements "marker pay" is the officer's rate of pay in his or her former grade immediately prior to promotion, plus the full Executive Officer gratuity, both adjusted by subsequent general round increases;

(b) on the date on which he or she would have been eligible to receive a gratuity in his or her former grade, the officer will receive the proportionate amount of the gratuity which had accrued by the promotion date;

(c) on the first anniversary of the officer's promotion, if his or her aggregate remuneration in the preceding twelve months, including the payment referred to at (b), was less than "marker pay", the difference will be paid;

(d) on the second anniversary of the officer's promotion, if his or her aggregate remuneration in the preceding twelve months was less than "marker pay", the difference will be paid.

6. Where an officer was deemed to have commenced the "qualifying period" from 1 July 1987, but was promoted before 1 July 1989 to a post in which there was an opportunity to qualify again for an additional payment, he or she will be treated as if paragraph 5 applied. (In such a case, of course, no payment would arise under sub-paragraph 5(b)).

7. Where an officer who is deemed to have qualified for an additional payment is promoted, in the "earning period" for the first or a subsequent gratuity, to a post in which there is not an opportunity to

qualify for an additional payment, payment may be made to him or her as provided for in (b) and (c), only of paragraph 5 with the proviso that the payment at (b) may be made immediately on promotion. Similar arrangements may be applied, at the discretion of management, where such an officer is transferred, for bona fide reasons, to a post in which there is not an opportunity to qualify for an additional payment.

8. The foregoing arrangements will be subject to review after three years.