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To: All Personnel Officers and Decentralisation Liaison Officers

Circular 19/2007: Decentralisation Training Allowance (DTA):

Ex-gratia payments to officers from existing locations outside Dublin who are required to come to Dublin (or another suitable provincial location) for an initial training period prior to taking up duty at new decentralised locations

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to say that, following discussions with the staff associations, agreement has been reached on arrangements for the making of ex-gratia payments of a Decentralisation Training Allowance (DTA), subject to certain conditions, to officers serving and living in existing regional locations who volunteer for decentralisation and who are required to take up duty in a Department/Office in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) for an initial training period prior to assignment to a new decentralised location.

Amount of the payment

2. Departments/Offices may pay the DTA subject to the usual delegation provisions contained in their respective Administrative Budget agreements with this Department and the eligibility provisions below:

- An ex-gratia taxable payment of €3,000 may be made to each officer who satisfies the conditions and provided he or she is required to be in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) for up to 8 weeks.
- Where an officer is obliged to remain in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) for any period of between 9 and 14 weeks a further taxable ex-gratia payment of €2,000 may be made.

Eligibility for the Allowance (DTA)

3. Payment may be made in the above circumstances provided that the officer's existing work location or residence is not within 35 miles (56.32 km) of where the officer is training in Dublin (or relevant provincial location).

4. The payment should take account of any interim DTA payment and be reduced by the payment made previously.

5. While there is no minimum qualifying period for receipt of the DTA, Departments/Offices should reduce the payment where an officer does not attend the prescribed training course e.g. due to a period of sick leave.

6. The payment will be made on the completion of the training period and following receipt of written applications from the staff concerned.

7. Payments should be made through the payroll system and be subject to PAYE and PRSI deductions.

Minimising relocation for training.

8. Every effort should be made by Departments/Offices to make direct transfers of staff in existing regional locations to new decentralised locations. In particular, it is considered that where training periods of less than two weeks are required a transfer to another location for training should not normally be necessary. Where initial training periods elsewhere are necessary, they should be kept to the minimum possible. While Departments/Offices are in the best position to determine the training needs of staff, every effort should be made to ensure that training periods in excess of 8 weeks for staff to whom the terms of this Circular will apply are avoided.

9. Departments and Offices should take particular care to ensure that unnecessary costs are not incurred by training periods marginally exceeding the eight or fourteen week trigger periods.

10. Departments/Offices should note that the cost of ex-gratia payments incurred must be met from existing resources.

Payments where the Period of Training Exceeds 14 Weeks

11. Where Departments/Offices are of the view that there are exceptional reasons for keeping staff in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) for training for periods in excess of 14 weeks; they will need to make a strong business case for doing so to this Department. Departments/Offices should ensure that any such requests are made well in advance of staff being required to stay in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) beyond 14 weeks.

12. The case should contain the following details in respect of each specific location (if more than one) to which staff of the Department will be decentralising;

- a) The exceptional reasons why the Department/Office considers that their staff require training beyond a 14 week period,
- b) the number of staff from existing regional locations required to come to Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) and the proportion that this represents of total staff numbers moving to that location, the timetable for bringing regionally based staff to Dublin (or other suitable provincial locations) and the length of time they will be required to stay in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) prior to relocation,
- c) the alternative arrangements that have been considered (e.g. direct transfer to the new location, training in the new location, importation of Dublin based staff prior to transfer of staff based in existing regional locations) and why such alternatives were not deemed appropriate, and

d) the expected number and cost of proposed ex-gratia payments.

Travel and Subsistence Regulations

13. Departments/Offices are reminded that paragraph 13 of the Appendix to Circular 11/82, Travel and Subsistence Regulations, states that travelling expenses will not be paid in respect of any portion of a journey which covers all or part of an officer's usual route between home and headquarters. The location in Dublin (or other suitable provincial location) to which officers covered by this Circular are assigned is their headquarters for the period of that assignment. Accordingly, such officers would not qualify for travel or subsistence under Circular 11/82 in respect of travel between their home and that location.

14. Any enquiries from Departments/Offices about this letter should be emailed to Travel.Policy@finance.gov.ie; Requests for sanction under paragraph 10 and 11 of this circular should be submitted by email to Nicholas.Meehan@finance.gov.ie; **Personal enquiries from individual officers should be addressed to the Personnel Unit of the employing Department/Office.** This letter is also available on the Department's website at www.finance.gov.ie;

Mise le meas

Ciarán Connolly
Assistant Secretary
Personnel and Remuneration Division