Ibec survey says pay rises will be abound in 2016

Last Wednesday, 21 October, Ibec held its HR Leadership Summit. Ahead of the day, they released a series of figures from a survey taken by 340 companies in September. The pay survey reveals that 71% of companies hope to award pay increases next year.

This means a 2% median pay increase across the board, which is comparable to both 2014 and 2015. The total pay bill will be increased in 67% of companies, when both pay rises and new hires are taken into account. Further to this, 67% will introduce rises this year, a higher figure than the 57% projected at the start of the year.

However, it is mostly SMEs that cannot afford to increase their base pay. Only 58% of companies with less than fifty employees expect to raise their basic pay in 2016.

Ibec’s Head of Industrial Relations and HR, Maeve McElwee, said that these figures provide a chance to “further cut unemployment and attract back emigrants, but we must not repeat past mistakes. If costs spiral and we lose our competitive edge we will pay for it in jobs”.

These increases do not account for the tax cuts provided for in the Budget. When these are taken into account, it is estimated that the average worker will be better off by roughly two weeks’ wages.

NAMA in better position in 2016

A report given to Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan TD, stated that the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) expects to start 2016 with only 165 debtors. The total of loans owed to them will be €10bn.

This is in anticipation of the closure of the Project Arrow deal. The total income from the deal should be €7.2bn. The operating costs for the agency in 2016 is projected to be €115m, down €26m on this year’s costs. At the beginning of 2015, NAMA had 663 debtors.

NAMA is expected to have ceased operations by 2018. In anticipation of this, it will reduce its staff numbers by nearly half; they started the year with 370 employees, and expect to have only 125 by 2016.
Modular housing approved

Last Wednesday, 21 October, Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly TD announced the approval of delivery of five-hundred new modular homes for homeless families in Dublin.

Twenty-two of these units are hoped to be in place by December. A further 128 will be acquired through a fast-track procurement process. The final 350 will be obtained through a standard procurement framework. Ministers will be using provisions made under the Planning and Development Acts mean that planning processes can be accelerated. The placement of these modular homes will be dependent on availability of community infrastructure and services.

Minister Kelly assured critics that these modular homes are simply an emergency solution whilst families wait for more permanent residences. Notably, they will remain “homeless” for statistical purposes, and will not be removed from housing lists.

This comes after a seminar on the housing crisis was held in Liberty Hall last Monday, hosted by the SIPTU Dublin District Council. David Connolly, SIPTU Dublin District Council vice-chair said that the seminar called for a number of actions, including “the need to convene a meeting of activists from all the unions in the city that have a direct roles in the provision of housing, from local government official to construction workers.” Further, “bureaucratic blocks … need to be specifically identified and overcome”.

Social Welfare Bill 2015 published

On Friday 23 October, An Tánaiste, Joan Burton TD, published the Social Welfare Bill 2015. This bill will provide for the changes made to social protection in Budget 2016.

The following changes will be introduced as of 1 January 2016:
- Increase in Child Benefit to €140, €3 increase in weekly pensions, €2 increase for adult dependents, increase of six week's payment for Carer's Allowance, new tapered PRSI credit and employer PRSI, and an increase in the Family Income Supplement thresholds.
- The Respite Care Grant's name will be changed to the Carer's Support Grant.

Several of the Budget’s changes will not be provided for in the Bill, but it is expected that An Tánaiste will make provisions for the following in the coming weeks:
- The 75% Christmas bonus, which will be paid in the first week of December, and an increase in the earnings disregard for Jobseeker’s Transition Payments from €60 to €90 per week.

The introduction of Paternity Leave will also require the introduction of new legislation, but is not provided for under this Bill.
This Week at Public Affairs Ireland

**On the Blog**

“When will we lead the Revolution?
PAI editor Shauna Nimmo
Read [here](#)

A run-down of Budget 2016
PAI editor Shauna Nimmo
Read [here](#)

IMF shows confidence in Ireland’s economic prospects
Tom Ferris
Read [here](#)

The Problem with the Bail Bill
Michael Williams
Read [here](#)

Smart Public Procurement: More flexible, more transparent, and more cost effective
PAI Editor Shauna Nimmo
Read [here](#)

**In other news**

We have launched our new website!

The new design provides for clearer navigation, better organisation, and a much more user-friendly experience. You can visit the new website at [https://pai.ie](https://pai.ie)
Tuesday 27 October
Adjourned until 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday 3 November 2015

Wednesday 28 October
Adjourned until 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday 3 November 2015

Thursday 29 October
Adjourned until 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday 3 November 2015
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**This week’s Committee Meetings**

**Tuesday 27 October**
No Committee Meetings

**Wednesday 28 October**
Transport and Communications (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 11 a.m. (T)
AGENDA: The controversy surrounding the departure of Mr Billy Walsh, Head Coach, High Performance Unit, Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) [Representatives of the IABA and Sport Ireland]

**Thursday 29 October**
No Committee Meetings