Over 1,000 DAA staff will have pay restored

Around 1,200 staff of the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) will receive bonuses this year, totalling €7m, in line with the company’s promise to restore pay to pre-recession levels. Individuals will see, on average, a 6% pay increase.

Pay restoration will be back-dated to January 2016, and applies to those 1,200 staff taken on in 2009. This is part of an Employee Recovery Investment Contribution (ERIC) scheme which saw the pay of staff slashed in 2009. Staff agreed, at the time, to the pay cuts, with the stipulation that their pay would be restored once agreed-upon financial targets were met.

When the DAA announced a €61m increase in profits for last year earlier this month, it came with a memo to staff and their trade unions. It read,

“We are pleased to announce that the company will commit to full, permanent and early restoration of basic pay levels from 1st July 2016, bringing an end to the pay cuts applied under the Cost Recovery Agreement for affected staff who have accepted the Labour Court Recommendation”.

It is expected that the trade unions will accept this deal early.

Staff hired after 2009 will not see the same increases, despite being brought in on a lower wage, as they were not included in the ERIC scheme.

CIE may look for comparable pay increases to Luas drivers

A leader of the National Bus and Railworkers Union has said that CIE workers will seek to match pay rises recommended by the Labour Court for Luas workers. This is not dependent on whether the Luas drivers accept the figure.

Dermot O’Leary, general secretary of the union (which represents Irish Rail, Dublin Bus, and Bus Eireann workers) has said that he expects transport workers will lodge pay claims immediately following the issue of the recommendation by the Labour Court. It is expected that this could be as early as tomorrow.

O’Leary said, “We have already put in a claim to match the previous 18 per cent recommendation on Luas, but we will look for anything that is in excess of that ... The Labour Court is an independent body and if they believe it appropriate to offer the Luas drivers X and that X is something that our members are interested in, sure of course we will go looking for it.”

The Luas dispute has already seen work stoppages on 12 separate days and has yet to reach a conclusion. The Labour Court began its investigation last week.
Carers should apply for grant, says Varadkar

Minister for Social Protection Leo Varadkar TD has urged carers who are not automatically eligible for the Carer’s Support Grant (previously known as the Respite Care Grant) to apply anyway. The grant is due to be paid this week, on Thursday 2 June. It is automatically provided to some carers. However, the newly-appointed Minister has said that more people may be eligible, and that there is still time to make an application.

The Grant has been restored to its full previous level, at €1,700; it was reduced by €325 during the crises. Those already in receipt of schemes like the Carer’s Allowance, Carer’s Benefit and Domiciliary Care Allowance will receive automatic payment of the grant money.

However, Minister Varadkar said,

“Other full-time carers who are not eligible for these schemes can also apply for the Grant, and I would urge them to make an application. Carers who provide full-time care for more than one person may also be entitled to €1,700 for each person that they are caring for.”

The grant is provided to anyone that provides full-time care to a child, elderly person, or adult with a disability, regardless of means or PRSI contribution. The grant amount is paid in respect of each individual under the Carer’s care. It is estimated that around 7,000 carers are taking care of two or more people.

Government to decide on funding for medicines

Government ministers now have the power to decide which drugs will receive funding. An exclusive report by the Sunday Business Post outlined the new controversial ministerial powers.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has decided to withdraw the power of approval of funding from the HSE. This only applies when expensive new medicines exceed a threshold of cost-effectiveness. The HSE may now only make a recommendation, but the final decision will lie with the Government.

According to Prof Michael Barry, head of the HSE’s medicines management programme, there are currently an “unprecedented” number of expensive medicines for which pharmaceutical companies are seeking reimbursement.

Doctors have spoken out about the delay in funding for drugs that could treat skin and lung cancer, heart disease, high cholesterol and cystic fibrosis, to name a few. Prof Barry estimated the cost of new medicines could be around €300m. With A HSE Medicine budget that is already under great stress, the Government will have some tough choices to make, choices that the SBP point out will be “highly-emotive”.

If and when the HSE enter into renewed talks with the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association, with whom a previous deal expired in October, a new deal could yield savings vital to the funding of the needed medicines.
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Our morning workshop will help you tackle these issues in your workplace.

It will be delivered by Keith McCarthy and Marian Byrne of Mazars Ireland.

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Shauna Nimmo
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## Tuesday 31 May

2.30 p.m.  
Questions (Taoiseach)

3.15 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform)

4.15 p.m.  
Leaders Questions

4.36 p.m.  
Order of Business

Motion re PQ Rota change  
(Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources) (Without debate)

Statements on Mental Health (resumed)

7.00 p.m.  
Private Members Business - Motion (Labour)

8.30 p.m.  
Adjournments

9.10 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

## Wednesday 1 June

10.30 a.m.  
Leaders Questions

10.51 a.m.  
Questions (Taoiseach)

11.36 a.m.  
Order of Business

Health motion (working title)

Statements on Mental Health (resumed)

1.30 p.m.  
SOS (1 hour)

2.30 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)

3.45 p.m.  
Morning business continued

7.00 p.m.  
Private Members Business - Motion (Labour)

8.30 p.m.  
Adjournments

9.10 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns

## Thursday 2 June

10.30 a.m.  
Order of Business

Motion re Election of Leas Ceann Comhairle

Energy Bill 2016 (Seanad) (Second Stage)  
(Departments of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources)

Statements re Jobs (working title)  
(Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)

Mental Health

3.30 p.m.  
Questions (Minister for Health)

4.45 p.m.  
Adjournments

5.25 p.m.  
Dáil Adjourns
Adjourned Sine Die
**Tuesday 31 May**

Housing and Homelessness (Committee)  
CR3, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)  
AGENDA: Session A: 10.30 a.m.  
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Officials from the National Treasury Management Agency; and the Department of Finance]  
Session B: 2.00 p.m.  
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from the Association of Irish Local Government]  
Session C: 3.00 p.m.  
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Dr. Ronan Lyons, Assistant Professor of Economics, Trinity College Dublin]  
Session D: 4.00 p.m.  
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Representatives from SONAS]  

Dáil Reform (Sub)  
Room 2 (off the Main Hall), Leinster House 5 p.m.  
AGENDA: Private Meeting

**Wednesday 1 June**

Arrangements for Budgetary Scrutiny (Select)  
CR3, LH 2000 11 a.m. (T)  
AGENDA:  
1. Election of Chairman  
2. Draft Work Programme of the Committee to cover the review of arrangements to enhance engagement in relation to the following issues *  
   (a). Scrutiny of revenue raising proposals  
   (b). Scrutiny of expenditure proposals and associated performance  
   (c). Review of the general fiscal position (including engagement on the Stability Programme Update)  
   (d). Establishment and role of the proposed Parliamentary Budget Office with particular reference to the issue of costing of policy proposals  
3. Any other business  

Standing Order 112 (Select)  
CR2, LH 2000 2.30 p.m. (T)  
AGENDA:  
1. Further Scrutiny of COM(2016)198  

**Thursday 2 June**

Housing and Homelessness (Committee)  
CR3, LH 2000 10.30 a.m. (T)  
AGENDA: Session A: 10.30 a.m.  
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government]  
Session B: 2.00 p.m.  
Housing and Homelessness (resumed) [Officials from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; and the County and City Management Association]