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The Leading Public Service Union

Brian Campfield General Secretary

To:- HSC Branch Secretaries (3SS)
HSC Central Panel (4XY)
PO Group EC (6EE)
PO Group Officials

18 January 2012

Dear Colleague

HSC PENSION SCHEME CONSULTATION EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION INCREASES

I refer to my earlier circular of 21 October in respect of the above matter.

The DHSSPS launched a formal Northern Ireland consultation on the 24 October 2011 with regard to additional employee pension contributions effective from 1 April 2012 for the 2012/13 year. NIPSA has responded (see attached) reiterating the comments made to the Department of Health (England/Wales) in our submission of 19 October and pointing out that NIPSA does not consider subsequent proposals from Government to be an acceptable resolution of the public sector pensions dispute.

NIPSA also considers the consultation to be flawed as DHSSPS has failed to withdraw or amend the consultation to take account of the raised ceiling for the NHS pension scheme in 2012/13 of £26,557. Furthermore, NIPSA does not accept the use of such public consultations as a means of properly negotiating with the trade unions.

Yours sincerely



BUMPER GRAHAM
Assistant General Secretary

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The Leading Public Service Union

Brian Campfield General Secretary

DHSSPS Pension Policy Team
Room G33
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
LONDONDERRY
BT47 6FP

16 January 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

HSC PENSION SCHEME CONSULTATION EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION INCREASES

This response is made on behalf of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA), the largest trade union in Northern Ireland with over 46,000 members and representing circa 9,000 members employed in various HSC bodies.

NIPSA previously responded to the DOH consultation on proposed employee pension contribution increases and I attach a copy of that response. The content of that response remains valid.

Since the DOH consultation there have been a number of public service pension developments eg heads of agreement proposals, Autumn statement and the RPI v CPI Judicial review. NIPSA does not consider that any of these developments provide a solution to the dispute on public sector pensions and therefore NIPSA continues to oppose the reforms and remains in dispute with the Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and public sector employers including HSC employers.

In addition to the points made in the letter of 19 October, 2011 to the DOH, NIPSA would add the following comments to the DHSSPS consultation:-

- Pensions are a matter for negotiation as an integral aspect of terms and conditions of employment and therefore a public consultation is a wholly inappropriate means of engaging with the trade unions.
- NIPSA rejects the basis of the Hutton assumptions both for long term reform and in particular the proposed introduction of immediate additional employee contributions.
- The 2008/9 reforms of public service pensions resulted in enhanced levels of employee contributions which more than accounts for issues such as longevity.

- The Northern Ireland Executive announcement 6 October 2011 totally failed to address a number of issues; including the right for trade unions to be engaged in negotiation and was a kneejerk reaction to HMT blackmail.
- NIPSA disputes the accuracy of GADs work.

The consultation process of DHSSPS as per the 24 October circular is fundamentally flawed and should be withdrawn, as it does not take account of the heads of agreement and in particular the 2012/13 single ceiling of £26,557. This renders in NIPSA's view the consultation process null and void given the content of the DHSSPS document. NIPSA requires an urgent response to this point.

Yours sincerely

BUMPER GRAHAM

Assistant General Secretary

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