

Issued by the Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA).
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Medical Scientists' Union rejects Public Services Pay offer

The Union for Medical Scientists has rejected the terms of 'Building Momentum', the new Public Service Pay deal offered by Government.

Terms of a new pay deal were set out before Christmas, however in a ballot 96% of members of the Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA) have voted to reject the offer.

71% of members voted in the ballot, after the MLSA's National Executive Committee had unanimously recommended rejection.

MLSA Chairperson Kevin O'Boyle welcomed the strong endorsement by the members of the Executive Committee's position.

He said a clear and strong message had come from Medical Scientists that the proposed deal does not address longstanding recruitment and retention issues in the laboratory sector and that these must be addressed urgently.

The MLSA is now seeking further engagement with the HSE, Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER).

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) is due to hold an aggregate ballot of all public service unions on February 23, to collectively accept or reject the public service pay proposal.

MLSA General Secretary Terry Casey said the union is scheduled to meet employers in the WRC before the ICTU vote. Future decisions, including how the Union would respond if the pay proposal was accepted on aggregate and its position on industrial action, would be informed by the discussions at this meeting.

Medical Scientists carry out critical diagnostic testing of patient samples in public hospitals, including urgent testing for COVID-19.

Mr Casey said: "The Medical Scientists' dispute dates back to 2002 and involves a claim for a restoration of pay parity with scientific colleagues who work in Biochemistry Laboratories. Medical Scientists carry out identical work, with the same responsibilities, and yet are paid on average 8% less.

"Public Sector health workers from Nurses, Consultants to Lab Aides have secured significant pay increases in recent years. For Medical Scientists this, combined with the advancing role of laboratory diagnostics, increased responsibility, increased workloads and the longstanding challenges in recruitment and retention mean these employment issues need to be addressed with the HSE, DOH and DPER.

"There is a significant national shortage of Medical Scientists across the public health service, with up to 130 posts unfilled – even before the additional pressures of the pandemic. The reasons for this are inferior pay and conditions, poor career structure and limited promotional opportunities," Mr Casey concluded.

Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA)

The MLSA is the Trade Union representing Medical Scientists, the scientific professionals who carry out critical diagnostic testing of patient samples (including urgent testing for Covid-19). It represents more than 1,800 Medical Scientists employed in public voluntary hospitals, HSE hospitals, private hospitals and the Irish Blood Transfusion Service. www.mlsa.ie