



Case Number: REPS-2020 -23245

Your reference: M07/1020

11/12/2020

Dear Ms Reilly

Minister Heather Humphreys T.D., has asked me to respond to your correspondence in relation to a pension provision for Community Employment (CE) Supervisors.

CE is a labour market activation programme designed to provide eligible long-term unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a temporary, fixed term basis.

CE sponsor organisations provide a valuable and dedicated service in running CE Schemes all over the country. CE supervisors, assistant supervisors and CE participants as employees of these organisations, are an integral part of that good work.

As you are aware, although the State is not the employer in this instance, CE supervisors and assistant supervisors have been seeking for several years, through their union representatives, the allocation of Exchequer funding to enable CE sponsoring authorities, who are their employers, contribute to funding pension arrangements.

This issue was examined by a Community Sector High Level Forum, chaired by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. A number of Departments, including this Department, were represented on this group, as were the unions and Pobal.

As part of this process a detailed scoping exercise was carried out with input from the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) on the potential costs of providing Exchequer support for the establishment of such a pension scheme for employees across the Community and Voluntary sector in Ireland. This exercise estimated a potential cost to the State of between €188 million and €347 million per annum depending on the numbers involved. This excluded any provision for an immediate ex-gratia lump sum payment of pension as sought, which could entail a further Exchequer cost of up to €318 million.

In its findings, the High-level Group stated that while CE supervisors and assistant supervisors represented only a very small part of the wider community and voluntary sector, any explicit provision of State funding for such a scheme in respect of CE supervisors could potentially give rise to claims for funding for employees of similar schemes in the broader sector. The Department of Public Expenditure and



Reform stated that it had to have regard to the full potential Exchequer exposure associated with setting such a precedent.

Funding of any potential pension provision for CE supervisors will be a matter for the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and will need to be considered in the wider economic and budgetary context in which any proposed scheme would need to operate.

The current position is that officials from this Department, officials from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and the Unions continue to engage in discussions on the matter in the hope that with goodwill and flexibility on all sides, a resolution can be found in the near future.

Yours sincerely


Findla Dowd
Executive Officer

*The Minister is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015
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