**New Entrants**

Resolving the issue of the pay of new entrants is a key priority of the Teachers’ Union of Ireland. The union has been to the forefront in having the issue prioritised and brought to public attention. We also addressed the issue in the talks that have just concluded. The Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, while acknowledging that the matter needs to be resolved, advised that, as it is broad-based and affects a number of grades across the public Service, they did not have a remit to discuss it in the forum of the talks and that it would require an appropriate forum.

Through the Public Services Committee of the ICTU, the TUI has liaised with our sister teacher unions and other unions such as IMPACT and SIPTU that represent other grades affected, to have the issue resolved as a matter of urgency. Progress has been made in recent days in regard to the Fire Service (represented by SIPTU and IMPACT). There is agreement in principle (authorised by the then Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform) that the allowance that was discontinued by decision of government in 2012 will be consolidated into the relevant pay scale. The mechanism to give effect to this is currently under discussion. This advance was secured within the context of the LRA.

The DPER acknowledges that this development has clear precedent value for other affected grades – Prison Officers, Gardaí and teachers. The teacher unions welcome the development with regard to new entrant pay for firefighters and have informed the DPER and the DES that they consider this a helpful precedent that can assist in the resolution of new entrant teacher pay.

It is now a matter for the unions representing those grades – including the teacher unions – to use the precedent that has been set. To do so a union needs to be covered by a collective agreement.

It is noteworthy that the matter of addressing pay inequality is included in the programme for government. Regarding this, the ICTU has committed to achieving pay parity as a matter of priority. The General Secretary of the ICTU, Patricia King, recently put on the public record her view that the multiplicity of pay levels in respect of the same employment/s is untenable and must be resolved through collective agreements. Throughout the recent talks, the TUI had the assistance, as required, of the ICTU and specifically of the General Secretary, Vice-President and the Chair of the Public Services Committee.

In this regard, the position set out above has the full endorsement of Patricia King, General Secretary of the ICTU.