

2024 TERMS AND CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF DIRECT ENTRY AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING OFFICERS

IMPORTANT NOTE

A person who wishes to apply for this competition should read this document carefully prior to completing the application form. An application should only be submitted if the applicant is satisfied that they fulfil all of the governing conditions detailed in this document.

The acceptance by the Chief of Staff - Defence Forces, of an application form from a person desiring to be a Defence Force Officer should not be regarded as an admission by the Chief of Staff that such a person satisfies all or any of these conditions or that they are not disqualified by law from becoming an officer of the Permanent Defence Force.

Everything contained in these conditions, notes and annexes is subject to the over-riding authority of the governing statutes, regulations and schemes, including the Defence Act, 1954 (as amended and extended) and statutory provisions made, or to be made, thereunder, and any other relevant provisions, agreements, legislation, public service policy, circulars and/or instructions and any errors which may appear herein are subject to correction at any time.

In addition, all terms and conditions outlined in this document are subject to change under the Defence Force conciliation and arbitration scheme and public service agreements as may be concluded from time to time.

Appointments are open to all eligible candidates on an equal basis.

Exceptions to the governing conditions cannot be made in individual circumstances.

Candidates, when completing their application form, will be required to confirm that they have not:

- *knowingly or recklessly provided false information*
- *canvassed any person with or without inducements*
- *impersonated a candidate at any stage of the process*
- *interfered with or compromised the process in any way*

CANVASSING WILL DISQUALIFY

Overview

The Air Corps is the military air component of the Defence Forces. The Air Corps is tasked with a multitude of operational missions, operating both at home and abroad in support of the State. Tasks include the Emergency Aeromedical Service, Maritime Defence & Security Patrols, the Ministerial Air Transport Service, Garda Air Support, inter-hospital air ambulance, Special Forces support, fire-fighting, flood and snow relief, and Army and Naval Service support. These daily operational outputs are achieved through a diverse range of specialised and intensive continuous training, with standards in all areas of training matched to or exceeding international best practice.

The current Air Corps fleet consists of eight Pilatus PC-9M fixed-wing training / light-strike aircraft, six AW139 medium-utility helicopters, a Learjet 45 ministerial transport aircraft, three Pilatus PC-12 ISR aircraft, one Pilatus PC-12 logistics aircraft, two Airbus Military C-295 aircraft, and two Airbus EC-135P2 light-utility helicopters. The Air Corps also operates two Airbus EC-135T2 helicopters and one BN Defender in support of An Garda Síochána.

Job Title

Irish Air Corps Aeronautical Engineer Officer

Why choose this career in the Air Corps?

As a technical organisation the Air Corps offers a unique opportunity for an engineer to develop and apply engineering and technical management skills in support of a complex and diverse fleet of aircraft that includes rotary and fixed wing types, capable of performing a range of missions in military and aid to the civil power/authority roles. The capability needs of the Air Corps over the next decade will require motivated professional engineers to lead and innovate in the process of transforming the current Air Corps into an Air Force with an expanded role within the air and space domains.

The Air Corps is accredited as a Continuous Professional Development organisation by Engineers Ireland. Military career development is supported by professional military education and opportunities to serve in overseas missions undertaken by the Permanent Defence Force.

Definition of the role

The Permanent Defence Force vests authority in suitable, qualified and experienced Aeronautical Engineer (AE) officers to ensure it operates in accordance with prescribed technical requirements and delivers all the elements that guarantee the airworthiness of service aircraft. Accordingly, the AE officer stream consists of individuals with diverse engineering backgrounds in Aeronautical, Mechanical, Electronic/Electrical, and Manufacturing disciplines who serve in a range of appointments in the headquarters, operational and support wings.

Upon entering the Air Corps, AE officers will be required to complete an Air Corps AE induction course, and will, within the first three years of service, undergo courses relating to specific aircraft types, and any other course of training deemed relevant for the performance of their duties.

Key responsibilities and duties

Responsibilities include airworthiness management and maintenance management, supply chain planning, technical training, technical regulation and technical safety assurance. The AE officer is also responsible the management of technical personnel and project management, and provides the General Officer Commanding the Air Corps with engineering advice in relation to aircraft planning, purchase, service and disposal.

The duties of a Wing AE Officer include:

1. Sourcing of modifications and non-standard repair schemes.
2. Assessing and recommending Concessions and Alterations.
3. Compiling and reviewing customised maintenance programs for specific aircraft types.
4. Managing compliance with all applicable mandatory Service Bulletins, Airworthiness Directives etc.
5. Ensuring that all due maintenance is completed within the prescribed timeline.
6. Ensuring that the aircraft is released to service by authorised certifying staff.
7. Approving deferred defects and certifying extensions to maintenance intervals.
8. Ensuring that comprehensive records of all maintenance undertaken and completed are filed and accessible for review.
9. Arranging contracted maintenance and acting as project manager and acceptance officer during those maintenance visits.
10. Project managing scheduled maintenance events.
11. Organising the technical training of staff.
12. Recommending aircraft technicians for advancement.
13. Ensuring the standard of the hangar facilities is maintained.
14. Ensuring aircraft parts are certified and labelled and can be appropriately segregated.
15. Ensuring all the tools and equipment necessary for performing maintenance are calibrated and available to technicians.
16. Ensuring technicians have available to them all required technical manuals and reference material, and the IT infrastructure to support same.
17. Ensuring the availability of spare parts and managing supply chain management issues.

SECTION 1

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE AWARD OF A COMMISSION IN THE PERMANENT DEFENCE FORCE

1. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for the award of a Commission as an Aeronautical Engineering Officer in the Irish Air Corps a candidate must:

(a) a citizen of the State

or

(b) have a legal entitlement to reside and work within the State for the period of any such appointment

AND

(c) be of good character and satisfy any security clearance required

AND

(d) meet the required minimum standards of medical and physical fitness.

2. AGE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must be less than 50 years of age on 31 December in the year of application.

3. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

A candidate must possess a NFQ Level 8 Honors Engineering degree, or international equivalent recognised and accredited by engineers Ireland in any of the following:

Aeronautical Engineering.
Mechanical Engineering.
Electronic Engineering
Electrical Engineering.
Mechatronics Engineering.
Aerospace/Aircraft Systems Engineering.
Manufacturing Engineering.

Note: All of the above courses must be accredited by Engineers Ireland.

4. MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL STANDARDS

Candidates will be required to undergo a detailed medical and dental examination, which may include urine and blood tests. This examination is to ensure that candidates are in good mental and bodily health and free from any condition, abnormality or history of serious illness likely to interfere with the efficient performance of military duties.

The following are the minimum requirements in respect of:

(a) Height

The minimum height requirement is 157.48cm (5ft 2ins). Physical standards and weight must be in keeping with height and age.

(b) Vision

Colour vision must be normal trichomats as determined by the Medical Officer. Both eyes must be free from disfiguring or incapacitating abnormality and free from acute or chronic disease. There must be no evidence of squint or latent squint.

The eligibility of applicants who have had previous incisional or laser treatment to correct visual acuity will be determined at the Medical Examination.

Please see ‘**Annex B**’ for further information.

Not less than 6/18 in each eye, corrected to not less than 6/6 in one eye and 6/9 in the other.

(a) Dental

Candidates must be free from any serious periodontal disease and possess teeth to a specific standard, which is not less than the equivalent of eleven over eleven natural teeth functionally opposed. In certain circumstances, artificial teeth may be acceptable.

(d) Hearing

A good standard of unaided hearing is essential. Candidates will be required to undergo an audiometric test at which:

(1) The sum of the hearing threshold at 1,2,3, 4 and 6 kHz should not exceed the age and gender related warning levels contained in the "Guidelines on Hearing Checks and Audiometry Regulations 2007", issued by the Health and Safety Authority.

(2) Candidates under 25 years of age must be able to hear all measured pure tones up to and including 8 kHz at 20dB in each ear. Candidates aged 25 and older must be able to

hear all measured pure tones up to and including 8 kHz at 25dB in each ear. Candidates must also be free from acute or chronic ear disorders.

Candidates are advised to avoid all sources of loud noise and music for a period of 48 hours prior to this examination as exposure to such noise may adversely affect the results of the examination.

5. APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT

Candidates must apply online to www.military.ie Candidates wishing to undertake the assessments through Irish must make this request known to the Defence Forces Recruitment Section at recruitment@defenceforces.ie

All correspondence with candidates will be done by e-mail for the duration of the competition. Candidates should ensure the email address given is accurate and correct.

Each application is acknowledged automatically by the system within 24 hours. If an acknowledgement is not received within 48 hours of applying, candidates should immediately contact the Defence Forces Recruitment Section at: 045 492553 or at recruitment@defenceforces.ie

Likewise, if an applicant's email address should change, the onus is on the applicant to make contact with the Defence Forces Recruitment Section immediately advising them of the change of e-mail.

Serving members of the PDF will be required to include their Service Number on the application form.

6. ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Candidates who meet the initial requirements of the application process as advertised will proceed to the assessment and selection element. This is a two stage process as outlined below.

Stage 1 – Online Psychometric Testing

Stage 1 of the selection procedure involves tests that measure a range of skills and qualities that are necessary in the job. These tests provide a consistent and suitable way of screening candidates at the initial stage of the selection process. These tests are designed to identify the most suitable people to go forward to the next stage of the Competition. The tests have been designed so that they are fair to all applicants and are objectively scored. Candidates will be required to complete an unsupervised psychometric test.

Candidates will be supplied with psychometric test familiarisation material in order to introduce them to the format of the tests.

Candidates will be required to complete the unsupervised online psychometric test within the timeframe specified by the Defence Force. Candidates should pay particular attention to ensuring that the contact details specified on their application are correct.

Candidates, who have attained the requisite score in the unsupervised online psychometric test at Stage 1, may be required to attend for a subsequent supervised online psychometric test at Stage 2.

Note: If a candidate fails to meet the minimum standard at Stage 1, they will not be permitted to proceed to the next stage of the competition.

Stage 2 – The Interview

Candidates who have successfully completed Stage 1 will be invited to attend a competency based interview where they will be required to demonstrate competency in a selection of the following areas:

Competency	What the candidate will have to display
Planning and Organising	The ability to plan, prioritise and organise people and other resources.
Decision Making and Problem Solving	An ability to carefully analyse problems, in order to generate appropriate solutions. A preparedness to stand by a decision and to accept responsibility for its consequences.
Information Handling	The aptitude for absorbing information; to be able to identify relevant information.
Working with Others	An aptitude for working within a team environment; to be supportive of others.
Communication	Clear, concise and effective communication skills.
Leadership and Supervising	The ability and motivation to take responsibility for others; to co-ordinate and to delegate to others.
Personal Motivation and Discipline	A commitment to the Air Corps as a career. An ability to act on own initiative.
High Stress Tolerance	The ability to think and act under pressure, to be emotionally stable.
Resilience	Calmness when faced with conflicting demands and when working under pressure.

In the competency based interview, candidates will be asked to give examples from their own experiences of life, school, university hobbies, work, pastimes, etc., to demonstrate

evidence in several of the above areas. Candidates who fail any of the competencies at interview will be deemed unsuccessful in the competition.

Feedback is available upon request. All requests for feedback must be received within 3 months of issuance of the individual's result.

Interview Board Documentation

Candidates called for interview will be required to provide the Interview Board with the following documentation:

- Original documentary evidence of Professional Qualifications
- A Passport sized Photograph (signed on the back)
- An Original copy of Long Form Birth Certificate (photo copies are not acceptable) and
- Passport

Candidates will also be requested to sign the Declaration Form accompanying the application form at the Interview.

An applicant may be required to undergo a written and verbal examination to prove s/he has a satisfactory level of English. An applicant who fails to pass this examination will be advised accordingly and the application will be refused.

7. EMPLOYEE VETTING BY AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA.

Candidates who are invited to attend before an Interview Board will be required to complete and sign a Garda Vetting Application Form. This will, pursuant to the Data Protection Act, 2018, authorise An Garda Síochána to furnish to the Military Authorities, a statement that there are no convictions recorded against the candidate, or if applicable, a statement of convictions.

8. MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

A panel will be formed from Candidates who are successful at interview. Candidates on this panel will be required to undergo and pass a detailed medical examination, which includes an audiometric test and pulmonary function tests, blood tests, an electrocardiograph and full ophthalmology review.

Candidates who do not pass the medical examination owing to a medical condition that, in the opinion of the Examining Medical Officer, is capable of being remedied by treatment, may be afforded the opportunity of having the condition rectified within one week of their examination *at their own expense*. Such candidates will be required to submit medical evidence indicating that the condition has been remedied. They may be required to undergo further medical examination, by another Medical Officer. Medical fitness will not be confirmed until the results of all tests are available to the Medical Officer.

9. EXPENSES

Candidates will be liable for all expenses incurred in connection with their participation in the competition, such as those incurred in connection with their attendance at the medical and interview boards.

10. NOMINATION FOR APPOINTMENT

The nomination of a successful candidate for appointment as an Officer of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) shall be made by the Minister for Defence, whose decision shall be final.

11. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

- a. The successful candidate will be appointed to the rank of Lieutenant on a on a short service commission of 3 years, with the opportunity for extension to a commission without limitation as to time, subject to the rank retirement ages as per Defence Force Regulations.
- b. On completion of twelve months an Aeronautical Engineering Officer inducted from this competition may apply for a commission without limitation as to time. This will be subject to a continuous satisfactory service and the recommendation of the General Officer Commanding Air Corps and the Chief of Staff. A commission without limitation as to time is subject to the approval of the Government, on the recommendation of the Minister to advise the President to make such an appointment.
- c. Applicants must be willing to undergo essential career (officer induction training), safety and professional training; for example, aircraft type courses or such courses as required by General Officer Commanding Air Corps. Failure to pass these essential courses to a satisfactory standard may result in being retired as an officer of the PDF on the direction of the Minister for Defence.
- d. An officer inducted under this scheme may be required to under-go such military training as directed by the Director of Training (DJ7). This may involve a period of training in the Defence Force Training Centre (DFTC), Curragh Camp or at the Military Training School (MTS) Air Corps College (ACC) or as directed by DJ7. This period of training will cover inter alia Military Law, Military Regulations and Governance, Basic Military Training including Weapons, Drill, Military Dress and Department, DF Values and Ethos, Flight Safety.
- e. Successful candidates will be expected to take up duty as soon as possible, allowing for reasonable notice to current employer, or reasonable expiry of current contractual obligations, but subject to the overriding requirement to fill the vacancies in the Irish Air Corps.

- f. Candidates will be required to undertake compulsory random drug testing throughout their career in the Defence Force in accordance with Defence Force Regulation A. 7.

12. BONUS MARKS.

Candidates who are members of the Defence Force and who satisfy the requirements for entry into the competition will receive a % bonus mark of the total marks at the final interview. These bonus marks are as follows:

Serving NCO in the Permanent Defence Force	8%
Serving Private in the Permanent Defence Force	6%
Serving Officer or NCO in the Reserve Defence Force	3%
Serving Private in the Reserve Defence Force	2%

The process of awarding bonus marks may be subject to review in advance of future Competitions.

13. OVERSEAS SERVICE

Under the terms of the Defence Amendment Act 2006, all Defence Force personnel, if selected, are expected to serve overseas from time to time.

14. PAY, ALLOWANCES & PRSI

The following are the current annual rates of pay payable to Officers serving as Aeronautical Engineers in the Air Corps:

RATES OF PAY W.E.F. 01 JANUARY 2024				
OFFICERS PAY-SCALE RATE 2 AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERS				
		PAY	MILITARY SERVICE ALLOWANCE (MSA)	TOTAL PAY and MSA
	Point on Scale	Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Scale (Class A)	Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Rate (Class A)	Personal Pension Contribution (PPC) Rate (Class A)
Rank on appointment;				
Lieutenant	1st	€50,702	€6,679	€57,381
	2nd	€51,425	€6,679	€58,104
	3rd	€53,530	€6,679	€60,209
Rank on Promotion;				
Captain	1st	€66,415	€6,679	€73,094
	2nd	€67,853	€6,679	€74,532
	3rd	€69,281	€6,679	€75,960
	4th	€70,712	€6,679	€77,391
	5th	€72,145	€6,679	€78,824
	6th	€73,563	€6,679	€80,242
	7th	€76,671	€6,679	€83,350
	8th	€78,177	€6,679	€84,856
	9th	€81,006	€6,679	€87,685
Commandant	1st	€78,211	€6,679	€84,890
	2nd	€78,990	€6,679	€85,669
	3rd	€81,669	€6,679	€88,348
	4th	€84,397	€6,679	€91,076
	5th	€87,117	€6,679	€93,796
Maximum Scale Point	6th	€93,825	€6,679	€100,504
1st LSI	7th	€97,074	€6,679	€103,753
2nd LSI	8th	€100,446	€6,679	€107,125

Notes:

1. The rates of remuneration including the payment of the allowances outlined above are subject to review and adjustment on an ongoing basis in accordance with changes applicable across the Public Service generally as per Government policy.
2. All new entrants to the Public Service on or after 6 April 1995, including a person appointed from this competition as a Naval Service Officer, are liable to pay PRSI contributions at the full Class A rate, in addition to employee contributions for personal and survivors *superannuation* benefits. Such persons are subject to PPC rates of remuneration (see pay scales above); and their occupational pension is subject to integration with the Social Insurance system. (See paragraph 15 following and Annex A for further information).
3. *Different rates of pay and allowance will apply where candidates appointed as Officers under this competition are not members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.
4. In line with Department of Finance instructions of 23 December 2010 starting pay will be at the minimum of the scale.

Method of Pay

All Defence Force Officers are paid on a monthly basis by means of electronic funds transfer to a designated financial institution.

15. PROMOTION

An Officer inducted from this competition may, subject to meeting the stipulated eligibility criteria, be eligible for future promotion within the Permanent Defence Force, under agreed arrangements between the Department and the Representative Association of Commissioned Officers and in accordance with the provisions of Defence Force Regulations A.15 as follows;

Lieutenant to Captain – - after 3 years in the rank of Lieutenant,

Captain to Commandant - after 9 years in the rank of Captain.

16. UNIFORM

An Air Corps Officer appointed as a result of this competition will be paid an allowance towards the cost of providing themselves with a uniform. Currently, this is:-

Male Officers - €1,324.34

Female Officers - €1,594.79

Note: The allowance provided for in the initial year shall be paid on the basis of a submission by the Officer of certified receipts up to but not exceeding the value of the initial allowance to the Finance Branch, Department of Defence, Renmore, Galway. The allowance for the initial uniform

is exempt from taxation, while the replenishment allowance paid in subsequent years is subject to taxation under the arrangements in place, currently 40% is taxable and 60% not taxable.

An allowance is currently paid to a Commissioned Officer towards the purpose of replenishing their kit as follows;

Female - €1,122.45
Male - €848.19

17. RETIREMENT AGES FOR OFFICERS

At present, the retiring ages for Officers in the Permanent Defence Force are as follows:

Rank	Age
Lieutenant	60 years
Captain	60 years
Commandant	60 years
Lieutenant Colonel	60 years
Colonel	60 years

Please note: mandatory retirement ages in the Defence Force are subject to review.

18. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

This should be read in conjunction with **Paragraph 14 (Pay, Allowances and PRSI)** and **Annex A**.

Members of the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) may qualify for retirement benefits (also called *superannuation benefits*), provided they meet certain terms and conditions. The superannuation arrangements for members of the PDF are *defined benefit* pension schemes.

The main benefits are:

- **a retirement pension,**
- **a retirement lump sum (gratuity) or death in service lump sum, and**
- **spouses'/civil partner's and children's contributory pensions.**

There is also provision for immediate retirement benefits if compulsorily retired on medical grounds, and for death in service benefits (dependents pensions and death lump sum).

Pension contributions are payable by the scheme members from their Defence Force salary towards their retirement and ‘dependents’ benefits.

Permanent Defence Force personnel are members of a fast accrual member group. Fast accrual members’ benefits generally build up at higher rates, and they are eligible for payment of retirement benefits earlier than standard accrual members. Fast accrual members may also pay employee contributions at higher rates than standard members.

In general, anyone joining pensionable public service employment on or after 1 January 2013 is a member of the **Single Public Service Pension Scheme**. This scheme applies to all military personnel who **join the Permanent Defence Force from 1 January 2013 onwards as first-time new entrants to the public service**. Those arrangements are provided under the Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 (‘the Single Scheme’).

Note: The specific pension scheme that applies to new entrant PDF personnel depends primarily on whether the person is joining the Public Service for the first time. In some limited circumstances, different pension terms may apply for personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards who are not first-time new entrants to the Public Service and/or have previously been in the public service. See Annex A for details. Any specific queries in this regard should be referred to the Department of Defence.

Membership of the relevant pension scheme is compulsory.

See Annex A below for a summary of the Single Scheme pension terms for new entrants and for details of potential other pension schemes that may apply.

As indicated in Paragraph 15 above the mandatory retirement age for officers varies depending on retiring rank.

- In general, those joining the PDF as new entrant commissioned Officers may, subject to having the required vesting period¹ and to satisfying certain other conditions, qualify for payment of retirement benefits from age 50 (*minimum pension age*).
- Retirement pension (but not lump sum) is integrated with the Social Insurance system – see paragraph (a) of Annex A below.
- There is no cap on the length of time over which members can build pension benefits under the Single Scheme.
- Benefits under the Single Scheme are adjusted in line with increases in inflation

¹ The *vesting period* for the Single Scheme is 2 years, the minimum length of time you must pay employee contributions into the scheme before becoming eligible for retirement benefits.

19. ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

Department of Health and Children Circular 7/2010:

The Department of Health Circular 7/2010 of 1 November 2010 introduced a Targeted Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) and Voluntary Redundancy Schemes (VRS). It is a condition of the VER scheme that persons availing of the scheme will not be eligible for re-employment in the public health sector or in the wider Public Service or in a body wholly or mainly funded from public moneys. The same prohibition on re-employment applies under the redundancy scheme also, except that the prohibition is for a period of 7 years, after which time any re-employment will require the approval of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. People who availed of either of these schemes are not eligible to compete in this competition.

20. COURSES

In order to ensure that they will be competent to carry out the duties of higher rank to which s/he may be promoted, an Officer will be required to undergo such courses as may be laid down from time to time.

An officer inducted under this competition may be required to under-go such military training as directed by the Director of Training (DJ7). This may involve a period of training in the Defence Force Training Centre (DFTC), Curragh Camp or at the Military Training School (MTS) Air Corps College (ACC) or as directed by DJ7. This period of training will cover inter alia Military Law, Military Regulations and Governance, Basic Military Training including Weapons, Drill, Military Dress and Deportment, DF Values and Ethos, Flight Safety.

In the case of certain courses which are undertaken at public expense an Officer appointed under these conditions may be required to subscribe to an undertaking (or undertakings) that, in the event of his/her leaving the Permanent Defence Force voluntarily within a specified period from the date of termination of the course, s/he will refund the cost of such training to the Minister for Defence. Such costs may include pay and allowances paid to him/her during the period of attendance at the course.

Payment of the amount involved, including the cost of any pay and allowances paid to them during the attendance at the course, must be made in full and up-front i.e. before the actual date of their retirement. However, in every case, the granting of permission to a Commissioned Officer to retire or resign from the Defence Force is a matter for the appropriate authority in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Defence Act.

21. ANNUAL LEAVE

Subject to the exigencies of the service, an Air Corps Officer in the rank of Lieutenant, may be granted 31 days leave with full pay and allowances (where issuable) in any one leave year in accordance with the provisions of Defence Force Regulations A.11.

It should be noted that this annual leave provision is currently calculated on a 7 day basis. This is currently being reviewed as part of a wider review and standardisation of the number of days of annual leave and holidays in the Public Service generally and in that regard may be subject to adjustment on an ongoing basis in accordance with changes applicable across the Public Service as per Government policy.

22. SICK LEAVE

Sick Leave may be granted in accordance with the provisions of Defence Force Regulation A.12 (Medical Treatment) and Defence Force Regulation S.3 (Pay and Allowances).

It should be noted that the sick leave provision is currently being reviewed as part of a wider review and standardisation of sick leave in the Public Service generally and in that regard may be subject to adjustment on an ongoing basis in accordance with changes applicable across the Public Service as per Government policy.

23. MEDICAL ATTENDANCE AND HOSPITAL TREATMENT

Primary health care i.e. medical attendance at and treatment by a doctor or primary care medical team in the Defence Force including e.g. physiotherapy, routine dental treatment etc., some limited in-house secondary care and the provision of medication prescribed by a Medical Officer are provided without charge, subject to any limitations as required by law.

In accordance with Defence Force Administrative Instructions, referral for secondary treatment as a private patient to a consultant or for private treatment in hospital may be made by the Defence Force Medical Officer or the attending doctor subject to financial sanction and any other limitations as required by law. The medical service provided to members of the Defence Force is by nature an occupational medical service and as such, services such as cosmetic surgery (where such does not arise from occupational injury), etc. are not provided.

24. MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

Statutory provisions in relation to Maternity/Paternity leave apply in the Permanent Defence Force. Officers claiming maternity/paternity benefit payments from the Department of Social Protection will be required to sign over these payments to the Department, which will then refund the tax, PRSI, and Pension related deduction on these amounts to the Officer.

25. PAY AND ALLOWANCES – BENEFIT IN KIND

Certain pay and allowances, are currently the subject of a review by the Revenue Commissioners. The tax status and taxation of any benefit, payment or allowance paid to members of the Defence Force as may be determined by the Revenue Commissioners from time to time is a matter, between the individual taxpayer and the Revenue Commissioners and must be disclosed by the individual to the Revenue Commissioners.

The Department will not be liable for the financial impact, positive or negative, of any change in the tax status of any current payment, allowance or benefit paid or made available to members of the Defence Force, or any determination of their tax status, as may be directed by the Revenue Commissioners from time to time.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Introduction

(A) Single Public Service Pension Scheme

In general, anyone joining pensionable public service employment on or after 1 January 2013 is a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme. This Scheme applies to all military personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards as first-time new entrants to the Public Service. The Single Scheme also applies if you are a former pensionable public servant who re-joins the Public Service in a pensionable position on or after 1 January 2013, with a break of more than 26 weeks between public service employments. These arrangements are provided under the *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* ('the Single Scheme').

Note: In some limited circumstances, different pension terms may apply for personnel who join the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) from 1 January 2013 onwards who are not first-time new entrants to the Public Service and/or have previously been in the public service. Some details are given below but any queries in this regard should be referred to the Department of Defence.

(B) 'Post-April 2004' Defence Force Pension Schemes

In some cases, the 'post-April 2004' Defence Force pension scheme arrangements may apply. This Scheme generally applies to military personnel who joined the PDF **between 1 April 2004 and 31 December 2012**. Those arrangements are governed by the *Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004*.

These 'post-April 2004' pension scheme arrangements may apply to anyone who has worked or is working in other Irish public service pensionable employment, and who is not a *new entrant* as defined under the Single Scheme. For example, if you joined the Public Service before 1 January 2013 and have either, (i) been working continuously there, or (ii) left that public service employment and return after a break of less than 26 weeks, you will be a member of a relevant 'post-April 2004' Defence Force pension scheme.

(C) 'Pre-April 2004' Defence Force Pension Schemes

In certain very limited circumstances, the 'pre-April 2004' pension scheme arrangements may apply.

Where a person joining the PDF is not a *new entrant* as defined:

- under the 2012 Act (see paragraph (a) above); or
- under the 2004 Act (see paragraph (b) above),

the pre-April 2004 Defence Force superannuation arrangements may apply.

Single Scheme – summary of main elements for PDF members

- It is a *defined benefit* scheme based on *Career-Average Earnings*.
- Retirement benefits – pension and lump sum – are primarily based on % of *pensionable earnings* throughout your public service career as a Single Scheme member.
- PDF members pay a 7.5% employee contribution from salary towards their Single Scheme benefits, as well as an *Additional Superannuation Contribution (ASC)* – see **Notes 1 and 2 below**.
- Each year of your PDF Single Scheme membership, you build up money amounts on a *fast accrual* basis towards your Single Scheme retirement benefits. The total of these amounts at retirement, with adjustments for increases in inflation (as measured by increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) produced by the Central Statistics Office), determines what your retirement benefits will be.
- Single Scheme retirement benefits are payable immediately on retirement from the PDF if you serve to the *minimum pension age* of 50, and have the required *vesting period of 2 years*².

² The *vesting period* for the Single Scheme is 2 years, the minimum length of time you must pay employee contributions into the scheme before becoming eligible for retirement benefits.

- If you finish employment with the PDF before age 50 and have the required vesting period, payment of your retirement benefits is normally *deferred* to the qualifying age for *Contributory State Pension* (CSP)³ from the Department of Social Protection.
- Retirement pension (but not lump sum) is *integrated* with the Social Insurance system – see paragraph (a) below.
- There is no cap on the length of time over which members can build pension benefits under the Single Scheme.
- Transferring retirement benefits to Single Scheme from other employments:
 - The option for a member of the Single Scheme to transfer-in benefits from private sector pension schemes is generally available, subject to certain terms and conditions.
 - If, before joining the Single Scheme, you hold deferred retirement benefits from previous employments under a ‘pre-2013’ Public Service pension scheme, you cannot transfer those benefits to the Single Scheme. Those benefits remain to be administered under your earlier pre-2013 pension scheme.
 - If you hold deferred benefits under the Single Scheme from an earlier Single Scheme employment, you do not need to arrange for their “transfer” because it is the same Single Scheme in place across the Public Service.
- There is provision for immediate retirement benefits if compulsorily retired on medical grounds, and for death in service benefits (dependents pensions and death lump sum).
- Following retirement, increases to Single Scheme pension are linked to inflation.

(a) Integration of retirement pension with the Social Insurance system:

New entrants to the Public Service on or after 6 April 1995, including Commissioned Officers in the PDF, are insurable for full PRSI. For this reason, public service retirement (or spouse's / civil partner's) pensions are subject to *integration* with the State Social Insurance system in accordance with standard Public Service arrangements.

³ The current qualifying age for all State Pensions is 66.

This means that a person's entitlement to the range of Social Insurance benefits (including the Contributory State Pension) is taken into account when calculating the amount of retirement pension payable. In an integrated pension scheme, the Contributory State Pension (CSP) is regarded as part of the employee's total pension package. Under standard Public Service arrangements, this integration of retirement pension with the Social Insurance system applies from the time the retirement (or spouse's / civil partner's) pension commences payment.

This means the retirement pension is adjusted (reduced) from the start by a Social Insurance State Pension *offset*⁴, regardless of whether the person has reached Contributory State Pension age. Integration applies to retirement pension and also to employee contributions, but not to retirement lump sum.

A Contributory State Pension becomes payable upon reaching the qualifying age. The *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* (the 2012 Act), does not provide for the payment of a 'supplementary retirement pension' in the period between Defence Force mandatory retirement age and State Pension qualifying age.

(b) Employee pension contributions:

- **Note 1** – The 7.5% Single Scheme contribution is comprised of 4.2% of *net pensionable remuneration* (which means pensionable remuneration less twice the maximum rate of State Pension Contributory payable from time to time to a person who has no adult or child dependants) plus 3.3% of pensionable remuneration.
- **Note 2** – Subject to certain exemption thresholds, all Public Servants who are in pensionable employment – including members of the PDF – are also liable to pay an *Additional Superannuation Contribution* (ASC). The ASC is separate from the standard employee pension contributions mentioned above. No additional superannuation benefits are earned as a result of the ASC. The ASC applies to pensionable earnings above certain thresholds at different bands and % rates depending on the pension scheme applicable to the member. From 1 January 2020, the ASC bands / rates are as follows:

⁴ The current value of the Contributory State Pension (CSP) reduction is €265.30 per week / €13,795.6 Annually

Additional Superannuation Contributions
All Public Servants who are members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme
First €34,500 of pensionable earnings – exempt
Next €25,500 @ 3.33%
Balance @ 3.5%

(c) Declarations:

Under the *Public Service (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012* (the 2012 Act), candidates are required to declare:

- any prior Public Service employment, or
- any pre-existing entitlements to a Public Service retirement benefit (whether already paid, in payment or deferred), or
- any existing remuneration from any other Public Service employment, or
- any such employment in which they received a payment-in-lieu of pension for that service.

Pension abatement:

If a person was employed previously in the Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Public Service, the 2012 Act provides for the *abatement* (i.e. reduction / suspension) of any Public Service pension on re-employment within the Public Service, even where the new employment is in a different area of the Public Service. The outcome will depend on factors such as a person's ongoing overall earnings from the Public Service by way of salary plus pension.

(d) Further information:

Further information on pension arrangements for Defence Force members of the Single Pension Scheme can be found on the Department of Defence website

at; <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/f65fb1-defence-forces-pension-information/>

and <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/2a3969-pension-schemes/> see officers Single Scheme booklet

See also Department of Public Expenditure and Reform website;

<https://singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/> and,

<https://singlepensionscheme.gov.ie/for-members/scheme-information/scheme-booklet/#>

(for booklet on the 'fast accrual' scheme)

Laser Eye Surgery

Applicants, for whom any one or more of the following criteria apply, will be deemed unfit to join the Permanent Defence Force:

- (a) Applicants who have had their visual acuity corrected by non-laser surgery or laser surgery involving the raising of a corneal flap
- (b) Applicants who have had corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, within 12 months of the advertised closing date for receipt of applications
- (c) Where there continues to exist, beyond one year of corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, significant visual impairment or side effects related to the surgery, or both
- (d) Where, following corrective laser surgery not involving the raising of a corneal flap, the residual corneal stromal thickness is less than 300 microns.