

Annex E: Special Civil Service Incentive Career Break Scheme and Shorter Working Year Scheme

The Government has decided to offer civil servants two new work-life balance schemes, as detailed below.

Special Civil Service Incentive Career Break scheme

- As a once off measure, under a *Special Civil Service Incentive Career Break scheme*, civil servants who take a career break for 3 years will be paid an incentive payment of 33% of gross pay to a maximum of €12,500 per year (for a person working full time, reduced *pro rata* for any person on reduced working hours).
- The payment will be payable quarterly in arrears for 3 years.
- The career break will have to start by 1 September 2009, with limited exceptions (e.g. for those on maternity leave or where for business needs a later starting date is required).
- A career break may be allowed for family reasons, other domestic purposes (e.g. care of a relative), travel abroad, self-employment and educational purposes.

Shorter Working Year scheme

- In addition, the existing scheme permitting civil servants to take unpaid leave to balance their working arrangements with outside commitments, including the holidays of their children, ('Term Time') is being revised and will now be called the *Shorter Working Year Scheme*.
- Under the terms of the scheme, *unpaid* special leave will available for periods of 2 to 13 consecutive weeks to any civil servant.
- If requested, administrative arrangements can be made to have the reduced salary spread over 52 weeks.

Departments will be taking action to minimise the effect of these schemes on service delivery as far as practicable.

Consideration is being given to the early extension of these measures (or their equivalent) to other appropriate areas of the public service.