Circular Number:	**Circular 26/2026**
Circular Title:	**Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)**
To:	HR Manager in each Department and Office

A Dhuine Uasail,

I am directed by the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation to convey the following arrangements to Departments / Offices regarding the purchase of notional service scheme ("The Purchase Scheme") for superannuation purposes.

This circular should be circulated to all Offices and Bodies under your aegis.

Date:	12 August 2026
Purpose:	This circular sets out revised rates of contribution in respect of the purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes, and the associated actuarial reduction factors applicable in certain circumstances (**Part 1**). In addition, this circular consolidates and clarifies existing arrangements and key rules governing the purchase of notional service and establishes new procedures for entering into Certified Purchase Agreements ('CPAs') (**Part 2**).
File Reference:	P018-083-2002
Application of this circular:	**Part 1** of this circular (revised rates of contribution) applies to **ALL** civil and public service bodies **from the effective date**. **Part 2** of this circular (consolidated arrangements/new procedures) applies to members of the Pension Scheme for Established Civil Servants, and the Non-Contributory Pension Scheme for Non-Established State Employees, from the **date of issue of the circular**.
Effective Date:	This circular is effective from **01 January 2027**.

Note: This circular supersedes the circulars and Letters to Personnel Officers outlined in *Appendix 3 "Circulars and LPOs…"*, in respect of all 'CPAs' commencing on or after the effective date of this circular.

Mise le meas,

Colin Menton

Deputy Secretary General

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Part 1. Revised Rates for the Purchase of Notional Service for Superannuation Purposes

It is a basic principle of the Purchase Scheme that it shall be self-financing[1]. The purchase rates were last reviewed and updated in 2005/06[2]. Actuarial analysis of these purchase rates has shown that these rates require adjustment to ensure that the Purchase Scheme continues to be self-financing.

Commencement

The tables of revised contribution rates attached to this circular in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors"* are deemed the appropriate rates from the effective date of this circular, for

a) Periodic purchase and lump sum purchase where a Certified Purchase Agreement (CPA - as defined in the Section 1 *"Definitions"* below) occurs on or after the effective date.

b) Acceptance of Transfer Values where the transfer value has not been finalised and money paid over before the effective date.

These new rates will not affect any purchase agreement already in place.

Transitional Arrangements

An eligible scheme member, who wishes to enter a Certified Purchase Agreement (CPA) – either via periodic purchase agreement or lump sum - with reference to the purchase rates as set out under Circular 04/2006 "*Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes by Established Civil Servants and by Non-Established State Employees"* may do so subject to the relevant rules and eligibility criteria applicable to that scheme, where:

For periodic purchase agreements:

i) the eligible scheme member has a signed CPA in place with the administrator of the Purchase Scheme, the National Shared Services Office (the NSSO), on or before 31 December 2026,

ii) notwithstanding that such an agreement may not commence (i.e. purchase contributions deducted from pay) until the date of their next birthday in 2027 but no later than 31 December 2027.

[1] Paragraph 7.1 of Letter to Personnel Officers dated 12 February 1990: Revised Scheme for the Purchase of Notional Service for superannuation purposes by Established Civil Servants

[2] Circular 04/2006: Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes by Established Civil Servants and by Non-Established State Employees.

For lump sum purchase agreements:

i) the eligible scheme member has a signed CPA in place with the administrator of the Purchase Scheme, the National Shared Services Office (the NSSO), on or before 31 December 2026, and

ii) the receipt of the lump sum payment in respect of that CPA is confirmed by the relevant Local HR Unit before 1 January 2027.

Scheme members who are currently on paid leave such as annual leave, maternity leave, paid sick leave or on secondment[3] are eligible to enter a CPA. However, to avail of the rates as set out under Circular 04/2006 they must exercise and finalise an option by the 31 December 2026, they must be an eligible scheme member on the commencement date of the CPA and the CPA must commence no later than year-end 2027.

Any CPA's entered into on or after 1 January 2027 shall be based on purchase rates as set out in this circular, notwithstanding that such an eligible scheme member's next birthday may also fall within 2027. **There are no exceptions to the above.**

Part 2. Consolidation of provisions of relevant circulars and Letters to Personnel Officers and establishing new procedures for entering into a CPA.

The Purchase Scheme enables an eligible scheme member to enhance their superannuation benefits at retirement by allowing them to purchase additional years of notional reckonable service. This increases the total reckonable service included in the calculation of their pension benefits, subject to maximum limits. The decision to purchase service under the scheme and enter into a CPA is a personal matter for each eligible scheme member.

Neither this department, the department/office under which an eligible scheme member is employed, nor the NSSO as administrator of the Purchase Scheme are in a position to provide an eligible scheme member with advice on whether they should, or should not, purchase service under the Purchase Scheme. Similarly, it is expected that any public service body which adopts the Purchase Scheme rules will not be in a position to provide such advice to their eligible scheme members.

Any eligible scheme member considering whether to purchase service under the Purchase Scheme is advised to seek independent financial advice before making any decision relating to the Purchase Scheme.

The provisions of the Purchase Scheme are in line with Revenue rules, which set maximum limits in respect of any purchase arrangements (see Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*).
Heretofore, the provisions in relation to the purchase of notional service were provided for in several circulars and Letters to Personnel Officers as listed in the Appendix 3 *"Circulars and LPOs…"*.

[3] As per secondment arrangements set out in DPER Circular 27/2021: Secondment Policy for the Civil Service.

This circular consolidates and supersedes all provisions in those circulars and LPOs, with the exception of the provisions in respect of purchase rates.

- The purchase rates in respect of all purchase agreements that have commenced before the effective date of this circular continue to apply in respect of those agreements.

The purchase rates in respect of all CPAs finalised on or after the effective date of this circular are contained in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors."* of this circular.

The new CPA procedures in respect of eligible scheme members entering into a CPA are effective from **the date of issue of this circular**.

These procedures as described in Section 4.3 require:

(i) An eligible scheme member entering into a CPA to engage with the relevant body responsible for processing a purchase of service application (in the case of the civil service, the NSSO); and
(ii) The relevant body to provide the eligible scheme member with a completed CPA – a sample of which is included in Appendix 4 of this circular.
(iii) The eligible scheme member must review the CPA for accuracy and is required to sign a CPA Declaration Form, a sample of which is included in Appendix 4 of this circular.

As a transitional arrangement, for CPA requests currently being processed by the relevant body (in the case of the civil service, the NSSO) the procedures may be adapted, however as a minimum, the CPA agreement must be provided to the eligible scheme member.

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this circular, the following terms have the meanings assigned below.

"Actual Pensionable Service" is defined in Article 4 of S.I. No. 582/2014 "*Rules for Pre-existing Public Service Pension Scheme Members Regulations 2014*", where reference to "Scheme Member" should be construed as a reference to scheme member of a Relevant Scheme.

"Actuarial Reduction Factor" is a percentage adjustment, as set out in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions"*, used to reduce service purchased when the pension and retirement gratuity are paid earlier than the CPA Reference Age agreed under the CPA.

"Age Next Birthday" is the age a scheme member will reach on their next birthday. For example, if the scheme member is aged 54 on the date of exercising an option, 'age next birthday' means 55. The only exception is where the date of option coincides with the scheme member's birthday. For example, if the date of option coincides with a scheme member's 54th birthday, it means age 54.

"Calendar Year" is, for the purposes of the Purchase Scheme, a period of 12 consecutive months beginning on 1 January and ending on 31 December.

“Certified Purchase Agreement (CPA)” is defined in Section 4.3 *“Conditions”* below.

“CPA Commencement Date” is the date from which the CPA is effective. For a periodic CPA, this will be the date of the eligible scheme member’s next birthday. For lump sum CPA, it is the date the lump sum payment is received, subject to Section 6.4 *“Contributions”* below.

“CPA Contributions” are all monetary contributions owed by a scheme member or deducted from a scheme member in respect of a CPA – including any periodic deductions from salary, any payment made by lump sum and any deduction from retirement lump sum in respect of a CPA where pensionable emoluments form part of a scheme member’s final pensionable remuneration.

“CPA Reference Age” is the reference age to which the eligible scheme member is purchasing service under a CPA i.e. Age 60 or 65. For example, if an eligible scheme member enters an agreement to purchase service “by reference to age 65,” the cost and duration of contributions are calculated on the assumption that the CPA remains in place until age 65 and on the basis that the pension and lump sum are not drawn down before that date, i.e. the eligible scheme member does not retire at an earlier age.

“Cost Neutral Early Retirement (CNER)” is a mechanism which allows scheme members to receive early payment of their superannuation benefits where they retire prior to their preserved pension age in accordance with Circular 10/2005 *“Public Service Pension Reform: Introduction of cost-neutral early retirement”*. The superannuation benefits are reduced for the lifetime of the pension to account for the early payment of pension. CNER and how it interacts with a CPA is explained in Section 16.2 *“Cost Neutral Early Retirement”* below.

“Death Gratuity” is a lump-sum payment payable to the estate of a scheme member, or where the relevant scheme rules permit to the spouse or civil partner of the scheme member, who has died in service under the terms of their pension scheme.

“Deferred Scheme Member” is a scheme member who has ceased employment before their minimum pension age, who has not retired on ill health grounds or CNER and who has met the vesting period.

“Eligible Scheme Member(s)” is a scheme member, of a Relevant Scheme, who is active i.e. currently serving in a pensionable position in a civil service body, is not currently on unpaid leave, on suspension from duty and has not retired or resigned and who meets the eligibility criteria defined under Section 3 *“Eligibility Criteria”*.

"Emoluments" are payments or benefits other than pensionable salary as defined below, including inter alia, overtime, travelling allowance, subsistence allowance, housing or rent allowances, other allowances, commission, gratuity, special fees and the like, the money equivalent of any emolument or benefit in kind (including motor car or other vehicle) or any payment toward or in respect of such emoluments.

"Fast Accrual Pension Scheme" is as defined in Part 4 of the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017[4].

"Final Pensionable Remuneration" is pensionable remuneration inclusive of pensionable salary and pensionable emoluments on which the pension lump sum or death gratuity and annual pension is based.

"Gross pensionable remuneration (GPR)" is the pensionable remuneration payable to a scheme member, before any statutory deductions and non-statutory deductions are taken or any offset in respect of the State Pension (Contributory).

"Integration" is as described in Circular 12/2024 "*Arrangements for Occupational Supplementary Pensions (OSP)*", Section 2 of that circular refers.

"Lump Sum Contribution" is a one-off payment made by an eligible scheme member to purchase notional service in accordance with a CPA.

"Normal Retirement Age" is the earliest age at which a scheme member may retire with immediate payment of superannuation benefits without incurring an actuarial reduction under CNER, in accordance with the provisions of the Superannuation Acts, relevant legislation and/or pension scheme rules. Also referred to as 'Minimum Pension Age' or 'Minimum Retirement Age'.

"Net salary" is 'pensionable salary', as defined below, less twice the rate of the State Pension (Contributory).

"Non-Statutory Deductions" are deductions from pay that are not required under legislation, for example, voluntary deductions such as health insurance.

"Notional service" is service credited for pension purposes which is not actual service worked e.g. ill-health added years, purchased service, or Professional Added Years.

"Occupational Supplementary Pension (OSP)" is a balancing provision payable under certain conditions to public servants who are fully insured (pay Class A PRSI). Further details are available under Circular 12/2024 "*Arrangements for Occupational Supplementary Pensions (OSP)*".

"Part-Time/ Work-sharing" (PTE) for the purpose of this circular refers to the normal hours of working required of a Part-Time Employee (PTE). The terms part-time and work-sharing are used interchangeably in this circular.

"Pensionable Emolument(s)" is any emolument that is deemed to be pensionable, including pensionable allowances, and is eligible for inclusion in the calculation of pension benefits. Pensionable emoluments are sometimes referred to as a "non-salary element" and are those that are specifically designated and sanctioned as pensionable by this department.

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[4] https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/act/34/enacted/en/print#part4

“Pensionable Remuneration” is the pensionable salary and pensionable emoluments held from time to time.

“Pensionable Salary” is the gross annual pensionable rate of remuneration, excluding emoluments, payable from time to time as lawfully determined or lawfully approved by this department in accordance with relevant pay circulars.

“Periodic CPA contributions” are regular percentage deductions in respect of a CPA deducted from salary on a periodic basis (by pay period) at the rate specified in the CPA.

“Potential Service” is the potential actual pensionable service (including any transferred service but excluding any notional service) to end of contract or to the CPA Reference Age whichever is earlier.

“Pre-existing Public Service Pension Scheme” is as defined in Section 5 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 (‘the 2012 Act’). The Single Scheme is not a Pre-existing Public Service Pension Scheme and is therefore not encompassed by that definition.

“Preserved Pension Age” is the earliest age at which a deferred scheme member may draw their pension benefits in accordance with the relevant legislation and/or pension scheme rules.

“Preserved Pension / Preserved Lump Sum” are benefits payable at a future date to a deferred scheme member.

“Pro-Rata” is a method of calculating an amount proportionally based on time or another relevant factor. See Section 15 ”*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation…”* for further explanation.

“Professional Added Years (PAY)” refers to PAY schemes which apply to certain members of pre-existing public service pension schemes recruited by way of open competition to professional, technical or specialist permanent posts in the civil/public service.

“Purchase Agreement” is outlined in Section 4 *“Conditions”* below.

“Purchase of Service” is the act of buying additional reckonable service for superannuation purposes under the rules of this circular, and previous relevant circulars, as listed in Appendix 3 *“Circulars and LPOs…”*.

“Purchased Notional Service (PNS)” is notional service credited for pension purposes which is not actual service worked but purchased under the “the Purchase Scheme” and the CPA. PNS may also be credited to a scheme member who has purchased service under a previous Purchase of Notional Service circular.

“Reckonable Service” is service that counts for calculating a scheme member’s superannuation benefits (occupational pension and retirement lump sum) at retirement, within the Relevant Scheme, including, inter alia, actual pensionable service and PNS.

"Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary" is the pensionable salary payable to a scheme member who, during a period of service, is not in receipt of the full-time equivalent pensionable salary**.**

"Relevant Scheme(s)" for the purpose of this circular are the Pension Scheme for Established Civil Servants and the Non-Contributory Pension Scheme for Non-Established State Employees.

"Retained Benefits" is as defined by Revenue in the pensions manual[5].

"Salary" in this document 'salary' has the same meaning as 'pensionable salary'.

"Scheme Member" is a member of a 'Relevant Scheme,' as defined above.

"Spouses' and Children's Pension Scheme" (S&C scheme) is a contributory pension scheme which provides benefits for the surviving spouse, civil partner and eligible children of a deceased member.

"State Pension (Contributory)" (SPC) means the State Pension (Contributory) payable under the Social Welfare Acts payable to a person who has no adult dependent or child dependent, on reaching State Pension Age.

"Statutory Deductions" are deductions from pay as provided under relevant legislation and include Income Tax, USC, PRSI and Additional Superannuation Contribution.

"Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR)" is a payment made during certain periods of sick leave, treated as unpaid leave for pension purposes. CPA contributions cease while a scheme member is on TRR and recommence upon resumption of work as provided in Part 5 of S.I. No. 124/2014 "*Public Service Management (Sick Leave) Regulations 2014*".

"The Purchase Scheme" is the purchase of notional service scheme as set out in this circular including the rules, conditions, contribution rates and actuarial factors governing the purchase and crediting of service by members of a relevant scheme.

"Transfer Value" is a lump-sum amount representing the actuarial value of pension rights which have been transferred from a Revenue, or appropriate regulatory authority in the country concerned, approved pension scheme, to another Revenue approved pension scheme, in accordance with the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended).

"Unpaid Leave" is any period where salary and pension contributions (including CPA contributions) cease. This includes, but is not limited to, sick leave without pay, special leave without pay, career break, periods where an officer is on suspension without pay, strike leave etc.

"Vesting period" means, for any period ending after 1 June 2002, 24 months' service as a scheme member, whether whole-time or part-time, otherwise 5 years' actual pensionable service.

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[5] https://www.revenue.ie/en/tax-professionals/tdm/pensions/d-appendix1.pdf

2. Scope

Consolidation of rules for the Purchase Scheme for superannuation purposes by members of a relevant scheme. The Purchase Scheme does not apply to members of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, members of the Permanent Defence Forces, or members of a Defined Contribution Scheme.

Service purchased under the Purchase Scheme is credited on a year-for-year basis only. For members of a fast accrual pension scheme, one year purchased equals one service year credited.

Eligible scheme members whose normal retirement age is 65 can only enter into a CPA with reference to age 65. Eligible scheme members of a Fast Accrual pension scheme with a mandatory retirement age (the age at which a scheme member is obliged to retire) of less than 65 can only enter into a CPA with reference to age 60. Similarly, eligible scheme members with a minimum retirement age of 50/55 may only purchase service with a CPA Reference Age of 60. Therefore, where an eligible scheme member ceases their CPA prior to their CPA Reference Age the service may fall to be adjusted in line with the relevant provisions of this circular.

3. Eligibility Criteria

The Purchase Scheme only applies to eligible scheme members who:

3.1. Have the potential to accrue at least 9 years' actual pensionable service in the relevant scheme by the time they reach the CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is based (60/65), as per Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors"*; and

3.2. Exercise a valid option at the appropriate time (see Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 *"Conditions"*).

3.3. **Work-sharers/part-time workers**

(a) Normal rules relating to a CPA apply to work-sharers/part-time workers, that is, their potential service shall be calculated as follows:

(i) their potential service to the CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is based would be less than 40 years if they were to take on/resume full-time duties.

However,

(ii) if, at the time they exercise an option to purchase service, they have already been work-sharing or working part-time for at least 2 consecutive years and have an established work-sharing or part-time work pattern as a proportion of full-time attendance; and/or

(iii) that they were at least 50 years of age at the time they commenced work-sharing or working part-time then their shortfall in service will be based on their part-time work pattern to their CPA Reference Age.

b) Where a eligible scheme member who is purchasing service increases their work-sharing or part-time attendance pattern, or returns to full-time attendance and, as a result, the service being purchased exceeds or will exceed the amount required to bring the eligible scheme member's potential reckonable service, by CPA Reference Age as appropriate, to 40 years, then the level of service being purchased under the CPA must be adjusted (or fully cancelled) and any excess CPA contributions (including all CPA contributions where appropriate) should be refunded through the payroll system. See Section 18.1 and 18.2 "*Adjustments to a periodic CPA*" for adjustments in respect of a periodic CPA.

An example on refunding notional service purchased in excess can be found under Example 4 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

3.4 Contract Staff

Normal rules of the Purchase Scheme apply. In relation to the maximum amount of notional service which may be purchased by contract staff the following shall apply:

(a) An eligible scheme member on a fixed-term contract (a contract of employment undertaken by a "fixed-term employee" as defined in the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003) which clearly states that it is non-renewable, or on a fixed-purpose contract which would not be expected to extend beyond a 9-year period, may not purchase service unless the eligible scheme member has prior reckonable service in the relevant scheme or has transferred service (but excluding any notional service) for superannuation purposes into the relevant scheme, which would result in potential service to the contract end date being a minimum of 9 years (see Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*);

(b) An eligible scheme member on a "contract of indefinite duration" may purchase service calculated on the basis of potential service to the CPA Reference Age.

3.5 Unpaid Leave

Where an eligible scheme member has finalised a CPA, but it later transpires that due to a period or periods of unpaid absence that they will no longer meet the service requirements as set out in see Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"* for the amount of service being purchased under that CPA, then the level of service being purchased under the CPA must be adjusted (or fully cancelled) and any excess CPA contributions (including all CPA contributions where appropriate) should be refunded through the payroll system.

3.6 **Ceasing Employment Early**

Where an eligible scheme member has finalised a CPA, but later ceases employment earlier than anticipated and as a result they will no longer meet the service requirements as set out in Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"* for the amount of service being purchased under that CPA, then the level of service being purchased under the CPA must be adjusted (or fully cancelled) and any excess CPA contributions (including all CPA contributions where appropriate) should be refunded through the payroll system.

4. Conditions

4.1 An eligible scheme member can purchase notional service under 'the Purchase Scheme' by entering into a CPA.

4.2 The service which may be purchased under the Purchase Scheme may not exceed the limits described in Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…".*

4.3 A CPA is where the eligible scheme member has completed and signed a declaration form issued from the relevant body processing the purchase of service application (the National Shared Services Office (the NSSO) in the case of the civil service, as pensions administrator) and has received confirmation that the CPA has been finalised and will be implemented with effect from the CPA commencement date. Prior to this circular, a CPA was commonly referred to as a 'Purchase Agreement'. See Appendix 4 *"Draft CPA Template"*.

4.4 An option to purchase service by either method, as set out below, must be exercised in writing while the eligible scheme member, as defined in Section 1 "*Definitions*", is still serving.

4.5 A CPA, whether by lump sum or periodic CPA contributions must be finalised **at least 6 weeks** in advance of the CPA commencing/being exercised.

4.6 In the case of part-time workers, including work-sharers, the CPA contributions will be levied on the full-time equivalent (FTE) rate of pensionable salary for the position.

4.7 All retained benefits (including other CPAs) must be declared before entering a CPA. See paragraphs 5 and 6 of Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*.

4.8 Where an eligible scheme member leaves service before accruing the reckonable service required under Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"* an appropriate refund of CPA contributions will issue as provided for under Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

4.9 An option to cancel a CPA must be exercised in writing and the CPA will be cancelled with effect from the next available payroll date (See Section 15 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation…"*).

4.10 Where an eligible scheme member exercises more than one option to purchase service, each such option will be treated as a separate CPA for the purposes of the Purchase Scheme.

5. Method of Purchase

5.1 Service may be purchased by one of two methods: (a) periodic arrangement or (b) lump sum arrangement.

5.2 (a) Periodic Arrangement

An option to purchase notional service by periodic CPA contributions may only be exercised where at least two years will elapse between the date of the eligible scheme member's next birthday and the date on which they will reach the *CPA Reference Age* on which the CPA will be based, (i.e. 58 or 63).

(b) Lump Sum Arrangements

An option to purchase service by lump sum contribution can be exercised at any time during an eligible scheme member's career subject to the following conditions:

1) Only one such option may be made in any calendar year, and
2) Subject to paragraphs 3) and 4) herein, the minimum amount of lump-sum contribution is 10% of the scheme member's FTE pensionable salary.
3) Where the total shortfall in service to 40 years which can be purchased will cost less than 10% of the eligible scheme member's FTE salary then that total shortfall must be purchased.
4) Where on return from special leave without pay, the shortfall in actual service arising as a result of the period of special leave without pay will cost less than 10% of the eligible scheme member's FTE salary, then that total shortfall may be purchased within 6 months of their return, and before retirement, based on the purchase rates applicable to them at the time they make such an option (the amount of service purchased in such a case may not exceed the duration of the period of special leave without pay).

5.3 Where the amount of service being purchased is less than one year it must be purchased by lump sum method.

6. Contributions

Subject to Section 7 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"* and 8 *"…Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary"* below:

6.1 The new contribution rates are applicable from the effective date of this circular and will be calculated in line with the appropriate tables outlined in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors"*.

6.2 The rate of contribution will be calculated by reference to the eligible scheme member's age next birthday.

6.3 For lump sum purchases the contribution will be levied on the eligible scheme member's FTE pensionable salary at the date the CPA is finalised.

6.4 For all lump sum payments (except those referenced in Section 5.2 (b) 4) *"Method Purchase"*) above, payment must be received within 3 months of the actual date of finalising the CPA or before the date of retirement, whichever is the earlier, or the option will be invalidated.

6.5 For periodic CPA contributions, the contributions in respect of a periodic arrangement will be levied on the FTE pensionable salary, as uprated to take account of changes in pensionable salary during the CPA and payable from the date of the eligible scheme member's next birthday until the date they reach the CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is based.

6.6 **For all CPA's, additional CPA contributions shall be due at retirement in respect of pensionable emoluments** held at retirement and which are included in the scheme member's final pensionable remuneration for the purpose of calculating superannuation benefits (see Section 7 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"*).

6.7 The revised contribution rates are set out in the tables in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors"*. The relevant table is determined by a number of factors as follows:

(a) Relevant Scheme.

(b) Whether the eligible scheme member's pension is integrated (generally, those who pay full insurance (pay Class A PRSI)) or not integrated (generally, those who pay modified insurance (pay Class B/D PRSI)).

(c) The relevant CPA Reference Age - 60 or 65.

(d) Whether the eligible scheme member is a member of the Spouses' and Children's scheme.

In addition, Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions…"* contains the actuarial reduction factors which may apply to CPAs.

7. Contributions and Treatment of Pensionable Emoluments

7.1 Where the scheme member's final pensionable remuneration or death-in-service benefits includes a pensionable emolument, the scheme member shall be liable for additional contributions in respect of such pensionable emoluments and such liability will be taken from scheme member's retirement lump sum or death gratuity, in respect of any such CPA.

7.2 The additional contributions due will be based on the value of the pensionable emolument used in the calculation of the final pensionable remuneration.

7.3 The purchase rates which will apply, in respect of paragraph 7.1 above, are the rates that would apply as if a lump sum CPA is being exercised at the time the CPA was being entered into with reference to the value of the pensionable emolument taking the place of pensionable salary.

7.4 If the case of deferred scheme members, where an additional contribution under Section 7.1 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"* falls to be deducted from a preserved lump sum or preserved death gratuity, the pensionable remuneration on which the preserved pension benefits are based is uprated to take account of any changes in pensionable salary or pensionable emoluments at time of calculation of those benefits.

7.5 To calculate the additional contribution due on the pensionable emoluments, the lump sum purchase calculation formula is used, with the value of the pensionable emolument(s) element replacing the pensionable salary, as set out below:

The amount owed is calculated as **A x B x C**, where:

a. **A** is the period of service purchased,
b. **B** is the relevant purchase rate – % (according to age next birthday and the relevant CPA Reference Age), and
c. **C** is the total value of the pensionable emoluments which will be included in the final pensionable remuneration.

An example can be found under Example 5 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

7.6 Where an eligible scheme member has purchased service with reference to a set of purchase rates which predate those set out under Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*", it remains appropriate to reference those earlier set of rates in determining the deduction to be applied to the eligible scheme member's retirement lump sum in respect of allowances, where related to service purchased with reference to those earlier set of rates.

8. Contributions Required During Periods of Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary

From time to time, an eligible scheme member may be on a reduced rate of salary for a number of reasons, for example; sick leave on half pay, work-sharing, Shorter Working Year, etc. The following provisions shall apply:

8.1 Sick leave at half pay
Where an eligible scheme member is absent on sick leave and, having exhausted their full pay sick leave entitlement, they are placed on half pay, the CPA contributions in respect of that period will be calculated by reference to the FTE pensionable salary.

8.2 Work-sharing/part-time
Where an eligible scheme member works part-time (or work-shares), the CPA contributions in respect of the part-time or work-sharing period will be calculated by reference to the FTE pensionable salary. Note, one full year of service is credited for each purchased, irrespective of part time work or work-sharing.

8.3 Shorter Working Year
Where an eligible scheme member is availing of a Shorter Working Year through an administrative arrangement the pro-rata pensionable salary (paid service) is spread over the calendar year. CPA contributions are based on the FTE pensionable salary however no purchase contributions are taken during the period of unpaid leave. Notwithstanding that the period of pay is spread over the year, as with other unpaid leave this will give rise to shortfalls as outlined in Paragraph 9.3.

Example details can be found under Example 7 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

9. Treatment of Unpaid Leave

9.1 No CPA contributions may be made during periods of unpaid leave from employment – save for in scenarios outlined in Section 8 *"…Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary"* –and the service credited in respect of a CPA will be proportionately reduced in any such case.

9.2 **Unpaid leave taken as a pattern**
In the case of unpaid leave taken as a pattern for a set period, e.g. parental leave taken for a set number of day/s per week over a set period, the above arrangement for work-sharers at Section 8.2 *"Work-sharing/part-time"*, where CPA contributions in respect of the leave period will be calculated by reference to the FTE pensionable salary, will apply to ensure no shortfall in service being purchased shall arise. Note: the period of leave is not pensionable and will give rise to a separate shortfall in pensionable service (i.e. as referenced in Section 9.3(b) below).

9.3 **Unpaid leave taken in a block**
In this circular, unpaid leave taken in a block ("block leave without pay") refers to any unpaid leave taken on a once-off basis over a consecutive period and includes, but is not restricted to: Special Leave, Career Break, Shorter Working Year, Block Parental Leave, periods of TRR, etc.

Where an eligible scheme member avails of block leave without pay, they are paused or ceased on the payroll during the relevant period. Where the eligible scheme member has a periodic CPA in place at the time of absence there are two potential shortfalls which will occur:

(a) **Shortfall 1 (CPA Contributions)**: A period of unpaid leave will result in a contributions shortfall due to missed purchase contributions (while off the payroll) in respect of the CPA, reducing the amount of notional service purchased to the CPA Reference Age. Note: the CPA assumes the agreement will be completed in full (with no breaks in paid service) to the CPA Reference Age.

(b) **Shortfall 2 (Service)**: A new shortfall in actual service arising as a result of the unpaid leave itself.

In respect of Shortfall 1 – to avoid missed contributions impacting on the service being purchased under an existing periodic CPA, an eligible scheme member can:

(i) In respect of each individual CPA, make a single lump sum payment within 6 months of the date of return to service from the period of unpaid leave.

The payment due under this option is the amount calculated by

a) applying the purchase rate(s) the eligible scheme member is paying under the CPA to the annual FTE pensionable salary applicable on the date the eligible scheme member returns to duty, and

b) multiplying the result at a) by the number of days on unpaid leave divided by 365.

(ii) "Double up" on the periodic CPA contributions when the eligible scheme member recommences payment of such contributions on their return from unpaid leave, for a period equivalent to that period of unpaid leave.

If the period from date of return to work to the CPA Reference Age is shorter than the period of unpaid leave, then additional multiples of periodic CPA contributions may be made (e.g. "tripling up" on CPA contributions) otherwise the amount of purchased service shall fall to be adjusted in accordance with Section 15 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*" below.

Where an eligible scheme member, having returned to work, does not choose (i) or (ii) above the period of purchased service shall fall to be adjusted in accordance with Section 15 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*" below.

In respect of Shortfall 2, an additional shortfall of service may arise as a result of the period of unpaid leave itself. In such circumstances, an eligible scheme member can:

(i) Purchase a period of service equivalent to the length of the unpaid leave by lump sum payment subject to the Purchase Scheme rules. This must be done within 6 months of return from the special leave.

(ii) At any point after the 6-month period, an eligible scheme member may instead purchase service in respect of the additional shortfall in service under a separate CPA, subject to the Purchase Scheme rules.

Example details can be found under Example 7 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

9.4 It should be noted that TRR (Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration) is a sick leave payment that is deemed to be **unpaid leave** for pension purposes and as such, is treated in the same manner as other forms of unpaid leave with respect to the Purchase Scheme. That is, the period of unpaid leave is not reckonable, and CPA contributions cease during a period on TRR as the scheme member is no longer receiving pensionable salary or contributing to their pension scheme. On resumption of work, or paid sick leave, the contributions in respect of any CPA in place must recommence at the rate set out in that CPA. It should be noted that absence on TRR, like other periods of unpaid leave, will result in two potential shortfalls as described at 9.3 *"Unpaid Leave taken in a block"* above.

9.5 Where an eligible scheme member who is partaking of a CPA, takes unpaid leave and does not avail of the options at 9.3 *"Unpaid Leave taken in a block"* above to make good any shortfall then the purchased service shall fall to adjusted in line with Section 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"* below.

9.6 All eligible scheme members considering taking up a period of unpaid leave should be aware that there may be pension implications as a result of taking the unpaid leave and to contact their relevant pensions team to discuss any impact.

10. Additional Provisions

10.1 Reckoning of a Career Break Period

Further to the above Section 9.3(b), there is an additional facility for eligible scheme members to reckon a period of career break for superannuation purposes via the Purchase Scheme during their career break. **This arrangement must be applied for in advance of the career break commencing.**

(a) Any eligible scheme member who wishes to avail of this arrangement, must do so prior to taking up the career break and will be required to make lump sum contributions during the course of their career break, on a quarterly basis with the final quarterly payment due 3 months after returning to work.

(b) While the lump sum contributions are due quarterly for the duration of the career break, this facility is deemed to be one CPA for the purpose of the Purchase Scheme.

(c) The purchase rate to be applied is the normal lump-sum purchase rate applicable to the eligible scheme member concerned under this circular, determined by their age next birthday at the time the quarterly payment due is being calculated and with reference to the uprated equivalent of the eligible scheme member's salary on their last day of paid service prior to commencement of their career break.

(d) Failure to pay all quarterly contributions in respect of the career break will result in a shortfall in service purchased relative to the period of career break and outstanding contributions and, in such circumstances, the purchased service shall fall to adjusted in line with Section 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"* below.

(e) The requests for payment shall issue from the scheme member's local HR Unit to the scheme member and should include instructions on how and where the payments may be made.

(f) Notwithstanding that Local HR shall request the quarterly payment, it is the responsibility of the scheme member to ensure quarterly payments are made as and when due.

(g) Normal Purchase Scheme rules govern these arrangements, in particular those in relation to:

(i) crediting of service (see Section 12 "*Crediting of Purchased Service*")

(ii) refunds of CPA contributions (see Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*), and

(iii) limits on the amount of service which may be purchased (see Section 11 "*Limits on Purchasing Service*").

10.2 **EU Severance (Circular 33/91)**

Paragraph 23 of Circular 33/1991 "*Special leave without pay to take up an appointment with an institution of the European Communities or other international organisation of which Ireland is a member*" provides that a person who has returned to the civil service may:

23(a) receive the EC pension or severance grant, in which case the period with the EC will not reckon for civil service superannuation. The service, if any, which such an officer may purchase under the Scheme for Purchase of Notional Service will be reduced by the length of the period of EC service in respect of which the pension or severance grant will be or has been paid. Prior and subsequent service in the Civil Service will be aggregated for superannuation purposes; or

23(b) request the EC to make a direct payment….in respect of the superannuation rights earned by service with the EC, in which case the officer will be treated for the purposes of civil service superannuation as if s/he had never left the Civil Service. The direct payment will be regarded as discharging liability for contributions under the Spouses' and Children's scheme during the period of service with the EC."

(a) In the case of 23 (a) the restriction on purchasing notional service in respect of the EU period of service no longer applies.

(b) Subject to the normal rules of the Purchase Scheme, an eligible scheme member:

- who has returned to the Civil Service from a period of special leave without pay to work in an EU institution,
- having qualified for that EU pension or severance grant, and
- who has opted to receive the pension or retain the severance grant,

may avail of the option to purchase service by lump sum CPA, in respect of that period of special leave without pay to work in an EU institution. As with CPA in respect of other special leave without pay, the CPA must be completed **within 6 months of the date of return to the civil service** as per Section 5.2 (b) 4) *"Method Purchase"* and Section 9.3 "Unpaid leave taken in a block".

(c) Where an eligible scheme member uses part of the severance grant to purchase within the time limits at (b) above, any remaining balance of the severance grant will not be treated as a retained benefit in connection with that specific purchase option.

(d) In any case where an eligible scheme member does not exercise an option to purchase within the time limits at (b) above and

- is entitled to an EU pension and opts to retain that entitlement, or
- has received an EU severance grant

and subsequently wishes to purchase notional service, then the EU pension entitlement or severance grant will be treated as a retained benefit in the normal way, i.e. the full period of EU service will be deemed to be a retained benefit.

10.3 **Foreign Aid Leave - Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO)**

A scheme for reckoning service given with Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO) was introduced in 1995. Those who volunteered with the APSO were able to reckon their service, subject to strict eligibility conditions being met[6].

Where a scheme member was not eligible for those arrangements, they could seek to avail of the purchase of notional service scheme, subject to meeting the rules and eligibility criteria as set out in in this Circular.

[6] These arrangements are set out in Appendix II of Letter to Personnel Officers 4 November 1997 – "*Arrangements for Public Service Volunteers on Special Leave with Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO) and the Establishment of a Rapid Response Unit*".

11. Limits on Purchasing Service

The Revenue Commissioners set out, inter alia, that an eligible scheme member must have the potential for a minimum of 9 years actual pensionable service within the relevant scheme to purchase service in that relevant scheme. Full details on the limits on maximum purchase of service are derived from Revenue rules. See Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*.

An eligible scheme member should familiarise themselves with the Revenue rules and ensure that they continue to be eligible in circumstances where they cease employment earlier than the CPA reference age or where the eligible scheme member takes unpaid leave which results in them no longer meeting the Revenue requirement as this can impact on the amount of purchased service (if any) which can be credited.

12. Crediting of Purchased Service

12.1 If a scheme member who is purchasing or has purchased service under the relevant scheme does not qualify for a superannuation benefit, and is not eligible to transfer the purchased service to another organisation, the CPA is **null and void** and all CPA contributions paid under the Purchase Scheme will be refunded, in accordance with Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"* with the purchased service reduced to zero and no service credited.

12.2 If a scheme member does not have the requisite minimum actual pensionable service in the relevant scheme (excluding purchased service or other notional service) to qualify for the full or partial benefit in respect of the CPA in question (See Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*) then, in accordance with Revenue rules, the purchased service shall be adjusted or cancelled in full (see Section 13 "*Adjustment to Service to be Credited"*) and a refund of CPA contributions will be made in accordance with Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*. The revised period of purchase will be credited.

12.3 Subject to Section 13 *"Adjustment to Service to be Credited"* below, for the purpose of this circular where an eligible scheme member completes their lump sum or periodic CPA and

- (a) they continue to serve up to or beyond the CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is based, and
- (b) provided they meet all eligibility criteria and conditions for purchase set out in this circular and
- (c) they have had no periods of unpaid leave and
- (d) they have not cancelled or ceased the *CPA* earlier than the CPA Reference age and
- (e) subject to paying any required additional CPA contributions as detailed in Sections 6 *"Contributions"*, 7 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"* and 8 "*…Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary*" above,

the full amount of notional service purchased under the lump sum or periodic CPA will count as reckonable service for the purpose of calculating superannuation benefits subject to a maximum of 40 years' service. It will not count towards determining eligibility for other benefits. Where excess service is deemed to have been purchased, a refund of CPA contributions will apply in line with Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

12.4 Superannuation Prison Officers Act

Subject to Section 14.3 *"Treatment of purchased service in other circumstances"* below, where an eligible scheme member to whom the Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act 1919 applies, exercises a purchase option under the Purchase Scheme, the exercise of the option shall only have the effect of increasing the reckonable service by the amount of actual service purchased.

This means one year purchased accrues as one-year credited service i.e. purchased service is not 'doubled'.

13. Adjustment to Service to be Credited

13.1 For the purpose of this circular, where an eligible scheme member takes unpaid leave and does not avail of any of the options at Section 9 *"Treatment of Unpaid Leave"* above then the amount of purchased service to be credited shall fall to be adjusted in accordance with Section 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"* below.

13.2 Where an eligible scheme member purchases service that results in an excess of 40 years' service in the relevant scheme at retirement then any service in excess of 40 years shall be adjusted and an appropriate refund of CPA contributions will take place in line with the provisions of Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

13.3 Where a scheme member is entitled to an award of notional service (e.g. Professional Added Years) which results in some or all of the purchased service not being necessary to attain 40 years' service or equivalent under the pension scheme of which the scheme member is a member, an appropriate refund of CPA contributions and adjustment in service to be credited may take place in line with the provisions of Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

13.4 The limit of the amount of service that can be purchased under the Purchase Scheme must have regard to any pensionable service in a previous public service pension scheme. Therefore, civil servants who come within the scope of the Benefit Cap rule are not permitted to purchase additional service.

"Benefit Cap" for the purpose of this circular is defined in Circular 13/2020 '*Guidance on the application of the Pensions Benefit Cap under section 52 (6) and (7) of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012*', and broadly applies to public servants who have an excess of 40 years' accrued service across multiple public service pension schemes.

Where an eligible scheme member purchases service under the Purchase Scheme that results in an excess of 40 years' service across multiple public service pension schemes then any purchased service in excess of 40 years shall be adjusted and an appropriate refund of CPA contributions will take place in line with the provisions of Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

13.5 Adjustments for cancelling or ceasing service early are detailed in Section 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"*.

14. Treatment of Purchased Service in Other Circumstances

14.1 Where an award of notional added service falls to be calculated by reference to a scheme member's reckonable service (e.g. in the case of retirement on grounds of ill-health, Professional Added Years etc), purchased service will not be taken into account for the purposes of the calculation or assessing eligibility for those schemes.

14.2 Purchased service will not reckon in the calculation of marriage gratuities. If a scheme member who has purchased service is awarded a marriage gratuity, the CPA is **null and void** and all CPA contributions paid under the Purchase Scheme will be refunded in accordance with Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

14.3 In the case of fast accrual grades, purchased service does not count towards reaching the "20-year requirement" for doubling of service.

14.4 Purchased service will not be reckonable for the purpose of calculating a scheme member's award of an Occupational Supplementary Pension (OSP).

Note: The purchase rates for fully insured scheme members takes account of the fact that the annual pension benefit is integrated with the SPC. The cost of purchasing service reflects such integration, with CPA purchase rates calculated on a combination of net and gross pensionable remuneration (as defined in Section 1 "Definitions").
Accordingly, in keeping with the cost neutrality principals of the Purchase Scheme, as the purchase rates are in part, levied on net pensionable remuneration (gross pensionable remuneration less twice the rate of the State Pension (Contributory) to take account of an entitlement to the SPC, purchased service is excluded when calculating any OSP benefits. It should be noted that OSP benefits cannot be purchased by way of a CPA.

An example of a CPA where an OSP is payable can be found at Example 6 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

15. Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions

15.1 In the case of a periodic CPA, an eligible scheme member may, if they so wish, instruct their pensions administrator (the NSSO, in the case of the civil service) that they wish to cease paying CPA contributions with effect from the next available pay period.

In such cases, the amount of notional service to be credited under the Purchase Scheme to date of cessation of the CPA shall fall to be adjusted on a pro-rata basis. For the purpose of this circular, a pro-rata adjustment is used to determine service actually purchased by an eligible scheme member where that eligible scheme member ceases their periodic CPA prior to their CPA Reference Age through either cessation of their employment or cessation of their agreement prior to their 60th or 65th birthday (whichever is applicable), or to account for any unpaid leave taken where appropriate[7].

The following formula should be used:

$$\frac{A \times B}{C}$$

where: -

A is the total period of service agreed under the CPA.

B is the period[8] during which periodic CPA contributions have actually been paid, and

C is the original duration of the CPA i.e. from CPA Commencement Date to CPA Reference Age.

An example can be found under Example 1(a) of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

15.2 Resignation or retirement will automatically cease a periodic CPA. In such cases, the same adjustment as described in Section 14.1 *"Treatment of Purchased Service in Other Circumstances"* above shall apply to determine the amount of service purchased to date of cessation of the CPA arising from such resignation or retirement.

15.3 The Purchase Scheme does not provide an option to revoke a CPA paid by lump sum option.

15.4 Where the payment of a scheme member's superannuation benefits commences before the CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is based, including in the case of ill-health retirement, there shall be adjustments as follows:

[7] In instances where a scheme member has opted to reckon unpaid leave under Section 9.3 such unpaid leave will not be discounted.

[8] The period is generally from the CPA Commencement date, up to the date that the last periodic contribution was made. Any periods of unpaid leave not reckoned under Section 9.3 shall be deducted.

(i) For a periodic CPA - a pro-rata adjustment due to early cessation of the periodic CPA in line with Section 15.1 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*" above. This is to take account of the early cessation of the purchase contract (and therefore non-payment of the requisite CPA contributions over the full contract term). No such adjustment is required in the case of completed lump sum CPA.

(ii) In addition, for periodic and lump sum CPA, the purchased service will then be actuarially reduced in line with the actuarial reduction factors in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors"* with reference to the current age of the eligible scheme member[9] to account for the payment of purchased service prior to the CPA Reference Age. This is to take account of the payment of pension and lump sum from an earlier age than that assumed under the CPA.

(iii) Examples on how to apply actuarial reductions in periodic and lump sum purchase contexts can be found under Examples 1(b) and 1(c) respectively of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

(iv) For guidance where an eligible scheme member is also availing of Cost Neutral Early Retirement (CNER), see Section 16.2 *"Cost Neutral Early Retirement"* below.

15.5 When an eligible scheme member who is purchasing notional service dies in service before their CPA Reference Age, Section 15.4(i) above shall apply. In all cases of death in service the adjustment as described in Section 15.4(ii) will not apply.

15.6 Where an eligible scheme member's periodic CPA ceases by any means before the age at which they contracted to purchase, a confirmation of early cessation of purchase agreement must issue to them. A template confirmation form can be found under Appendix 5. In the case of death in service, the template may be amended as appropriate to address the estate or legal representative of the deceased.

16. Miscellaneous

16.1 Professional Added Years (PAY)

(a) A net PAY award is not confirmed until retirement, therefore it is not possible to establish that an excess of service will arise based on the presumption of a PAY award alone. **"**Net PAY Award**"** is the actual number of notional added years granted at retirement under the PAY provisions, after applying any adjustments or offsets required by the rules of that scheme. The net PAY award represents the confirmed additional notional service credited for pension purposes, which cannot be determined until retirement. In calculating an eligible scheme member's service shortfall to their CPA Reference Age, any presumed award of PAY should therefore not be considered.

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[9] Consistent with paragraph 10 of Circular 10/2005: Public Service Pension Reform: Introduction of cost neutral early retirement, exact age is used.

(b) In cases where it transpires that, after the grant of PAY at retirement, a scheme member has purchased an amount of service which would bring them over the maximum permitted reckonable service in the relevant scheme, a refund of excess CPA contributions paid may be granted in line with the PAY scheme rules. Refund of CPA contributions is dealt with in Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*.

16.2 Cost Neutral Early Retirement

CNER is available to scheme members in accordance with Circular 10/2005 *'Public Service Pension Reform: Introduction of cost-neutral early retirement*' and the revised CNER factors set under Letter to HR Managers dated 12 August 2026.

(a) Where an eligible scheme member who is purchasing, or has purchased, retires on a CNER basis there will be an adjustment to their CPA in accordance with Section 15.4 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"* above to determine the amount of service to be credited.

This adjustment occurs prior to the actuarial reduction required under Circular 10/2005. Thereafter, the actuarial reduction required under Circular 10/2005 shall be applied to the scheme member's pension and lump sum at retirement in accordance with that circular.

Examples on the interaction of CNER with the Purchase Scheme can be found under Example 2(a), (b), (c) and (d) of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

(b) Where an eligible scheme member is purchasing or has purchased service and avails of CNER, and where availing of CNER results in the scheme member no longer meeting the eligibility criteria for purchasing service, the CPA shall be **null and void** and all CPA contributions shall be refunded (see Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*).

16.3 Secondment

Circular 27/2021 "*Secondment Policy for the Civil Service*" outlines policy rules in relation to secondment in the Civil Service. Where a civil servant avails of secondment, they are temporarily assigned to carry out work in another body but they remain an employee of their parent organisation.

(a) The secondee continues to be a member of their parent organisation's pension scheme, and their pension arrangements remain unchanged. This means that the secondee pays all pension contributions, including any related to a CPA, on the basis of membership of their parent organisation's pension scheme and based on their substantive grade/salary.

(b) Therefore, in the case of a scheme member, a service shortfall will not arise as a result of the period spent on secondment.

(c) In addition, it should be noted that any pension benefits payable will be based on the pensionable remuneration of their substantive grade at retirement, that is, the grade at which the secondee is employed in their parent organisation.

(d) An eligible scheme member, while on secondment may, in the normal course, seek to enter a CPA where it is determined a shortfall of service exists to age 60/65 for reasons other than as a result of the secondment.

16.4 Interaction with the Transfer Scheme

Under the transfer scheme and associated Public Sector Transfer Network (PSTN), an individual may seek to transfer their service with one PSTN participant organisation to another, subject to the rules and eligibility criteria of that scheme.[10]

A transfer between a "non-network organisation"[11] and a PSTN participant organisation is not possible. However, it may be possible to take a Transfer Value from a non-network organisation to purchase service under the Purchase Scheme, using the relevant purchase rates and relevant purchase reference age at the time of such transfer as set out in Appendix 1 *"Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors"* of this circular and subject to Revenue limits.

A scheme member should be advised to seek independent financial advice before making any decision regarding the transfer of pension benefits, including advice on any Revenue limits which may apply.

Further information - can be found at Transfer of Service and the Public Sector Transfer Network (PSTN).

17. Refund of CPA Contributions

17.1 A deduction in respect of tax will be made from all refunds of contributions in accordance with Section 780 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended). Please refer to the Section 19 *"Tax relief"* below.

17.2 Excess Service

Where it is established at retirement that a scheme member has purchased an amount of notional service for which they cannot benefit, e.g. because they have purchased an excess of service, a refund of CPA contributions paid in respect of the excess service may be made.

The refund is calculated via the formula (A/B) x C, where:

A is the amount of excess service,

B is the total period of service agreed under the CPA.*

C is the total value of the contributions paid under the CPA

[10] The transfer scheme/PSTN rules are primarily set out in Letter to Personnel Officers 24 April 1979 *"Draft Transfer Scheme"*, and Letter to Personnel Officers 30 January 1981, *"Transfer of Service for Superannuation Purposes"*.

[11] An organisation that does not participate in the PSTN

*as adjusted, where

(i) *The eligible scheme member has had periods of unpaid leave reducing the amount of service purchased under their CPA as set out in Section 13 "Adjustment to Service to be Credited*" or

(ii) *The eligible scheme member ceases or cancels a CPA early as set out in Section 15 "Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions".*

As with all refunds of pension contributions, refunds should be processed through the payroll system in the normal way and are subject to appropriate statutory deductions.

An example on refunding notional service purchased in excess can be found under Example 4 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

Please Note: the full extent of excess service purchased will only be fully realised at retirement. Excess service purchased can arise in a number of circumstances, for example, where an eligible scheme member continues in employment past the CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is/was based or where an eligible scheme member may have an entitlement to PAY, which can only be calculated at retirement, etc.

In such cases refunds should be calculated at point of retirement in relation to excess CPA contributions paid, as this is when the level of excess purchased service can be definitively confirmed.

However, if it becomes clear while an eligible scheme member is purchasing service by periodic CPA, that they would not qualify for a superannuation benefit in respect of all of the service which they have contracted to purchase, then the service being purchased may fall to be adjusted in line with Section 18 "*Adjustments to a Periodic CPA*".

17.3 Original Spouses' and Children's Pension Scheme Members

(a) A scheme member who is a member of the Original Spouses' and Children's Pension (S&C) Scheme and who qualifies for a refund of contributions under that scheme shall also be entitled to a refund of the S&C element of their CPA.

(b) The rate of contribution in respect of the S&C Scheme is the rate obtained by subtracting the rate of contribution which would have been paid if the scheme member had not been a member of the S&C Scheme from the rate of contribution actually paid, the refund is obtained by multiplying the result by the value of contributions actually made.

Further information can be found at Spouses' and Children's Pension Scheme

An example can be found under Example 8 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

18. Adjustments to a Periodic CPA

18.1 Where it becomes clear while an eligible scheme member is purchasing service by periodic CPA contributions that they would not qualify for a superannuation benefit in respect of all of the service which they have contracted to purchase, a revised rate of periodic CPA contributions can be calculated based on the amount of service the eligible scheme member is actually able to benefit from, and the eligible scheme member's age next birthday as applied to their original CPA. CPA contributions at the revised rate will commence as soon as possible but any excess CPA contributions paid under the former option will be offset against CPA contributions due under the revised purchase option.

18.2 Excess CPA contributions paid under the former CPA are determined by employing the same formula as for refunds under 17.2 *"Excess Service"* above, that is, to the proportion of A/B of all CPA contributions paid to date under the former CPA where:

A is amount of excess service
B is the total period of service agreed under the CPA

Such an adjustment cannot take place on the basis of a gross PAY award. This is because a gross PAY award may be abated resulting in a net PAY award, which can only be confirmed at retirement. See Section 16.1 *"Professional Added Years (PAY)"* above.

18.3 Should an eligible scheme member be purchasing a lesser period of service than the maximum permitted in their case and later wish to purchase some or all of that maximum, they may seek to enter a separate CPA in respect of that period of service. Their existing agreement cannot be amended to allow for an increased period of service to be purchased under that CPA.

18.4 Should an eligible scheme member be due a refund of CPA contributions at retirement, a refund of CPA contributions in respect of the service purchased in excess should be calculated using the formula outlined at Section 17.2 *"Excess Service"* above.

19. Tax Relief

19.1 All pension contributions, including periodic CPA contributions but not including lump sum contributions, attract relevant tax relief at source based on a scheme member's marginal rate in accordance with Revenue rules.

19.2 For contributions in respect of a lump sum purchase, an eligible scheme member is required to apply directly to Revenue to claim any tax relief they may be due.

19.3 Refunds in respect of any, and all, pension contributions are subject to statutory deductions, including tax, in accordance with Section 780 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended) Including such cases where: -

(a) it is deemed at retirement that service has been purchased in excess (see Sections 3.5 *"Unpaid Leave"*, 3.6 *"Ceasing Employment Early"*, 12.3 & 12.4 *"Crediting of Purchased*

(b) *Service"*, 13.2 & 13.4 *"Adjustment to Service to be Credited"*, 16.1(b) *"Professional Added Years (PAY)"* and 17.2 *"Excess Service"*, or

(c) early cessation of a CPA results in the scheme member having less than 9 years' actual service in the scheme, in accordance with Revenue rules, to date of cessation or purchasing in excess of that allowed under Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*.

(d) a partial refund is due for purchase deductions made in respect of S&C scheme under the Original Spouses and Children Pension Scheme (see Section 17.3*"Original Spouses and Children Pension Scheme Members"*).

(e) the excess contributions are to be refunded through the payroll system, that is, less appropriate tax. Section 780 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended) refers.

20. Important Note: Responsibilities of the Scheme Member and Payroll Administrator/Pension Administrator and Local HR

20.1 Responsibility of a scheme member who is entering or has entered into a CPA.

(a) It is the responsibility of an eligible scheme member undertaking a CPA to review their payslips regularly to ensure that any agreed CPA contributions are deducted as and when due (e.g. per payslip for a periodic CPA).

(b) This is particularly important in the following circumstances:

(i) When a change of employment occurs within the same relevant scheme e.g. where an eligible scheme member has a change of grade or moves from one civil service department to another.

(ii) Where an eligible scheme member takes unpaid leave, on return to work the CPA will re-commence. It is the responsibility of the eligible scheme member to ensure that the appropriate CPA contributions recommence on resumption of work.

(iii) Where an eligible scheme member holds a pensionable emolument during the course of their CPA, they must ensure periodic CPA contributions are based on basic pensionable salary only. However, if the eligible scheme member holds any pensionable emolument which forms part of their pensionable remuneration at retirement, they will owe further contributions from their lump sum in respect of that emolument as outlined in Section 7 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"*.

(iv) When employment ceases - active membership of the relevant scheme ceases and as such, a periodic CPA which is not complete also ceases at the same time.

(c) The scheme member should retain

(i) a copy of the statement of the CPA they have undertaken

(ii) details of any changes made to the CPA

(iii) details of periods of unpaid leave which impact on the CPA.

20.2 <u>Responsibility of the Payroll Administrator/Pension Administrator/Local HR</u>

a) The body responsible for the processing of a CPA - the NSSO, in the case of the civil service - has a responsibility for the following;

(i) to ensure that the rules of the Purchase Scheme are followed.

(ii) to ensure that the CPA as finalised is correctly implemented.

(iii) to provide an accurate statement of the CPA undertaken by the eligible scheme member as outlined in the draft CPA template provided in Appendix 4 *"Draft CPA Template"*. The information shall include the method of purchase, the rate of contribution, the start date of the CPA, the end date of the CPA for periodic CPAs, the CPA Reference Age and the amount of service being purchased.

(iv) to keep accurate records as outlined in Section 21 *"Record-Keeping/Accounting for CPA Arrangements"* below.

b) It should be noted that a CPA is not considered finalised until the eligible scheme member has completed and signed a CPA form from the body responsible for the processing of a CPA - the NSSO, in the case of the civil service - and has received confirmation that the agreement is finalised and will be implemented with effect from the CPA commencement date.

c) It is important that all three areas (Local HR, payroll administrators and pension administrators) liaise with each other to ensure timely implementation of a CPA and or any changes arising.

21. Record-Keeping/Accounting for CPA Arrangements

21.1 The body responsible for the processing of a CPA - in the case of the civil service, the NSSO - should keep a record of all individual CPA's undertaken by an eligible scheme member including the signed CPA and details of the following:

(a) CPA Commencement date,
(b) The age next birthday,
(c) Period of service being purchased,
(d) Purchase rate applicable,
(e) Grade and grade point applicable to an eligible scheme member at the start date of their CPA contributions,
(f) CPA Reference Age,
(g) End date of CPA contributions,
(h) Details of missed contributions (if any),
(i) Details of early cessation or cancellation of agreement

21.2 The body responsible for the processing of a CPA - the NSSO, in the case of the civil service - has a responsibility for the following;

a. to keep a record of all CPA contributions deducted from the payroll of the eligible scheme members in respect of each CPA.
b. to keep a record of any refunds made to a scheme member and the reason for such refunds in respect of each CPA.
c. to advise scheme members who are undertaking unpaid leave, the impact that unpaid leave may have on their pension or CPA, if applicable, and the process to purchase any shortfall in service arising from that unpaid leave.
d. to hold accurate records on an **individual CPA basis** of the commencement date of deduction of CPA contributions, any periods of unpaid leave, any payroll periods during a periodic CPA where CPA contributions were not deducted and the reasons for those breaks, the cessation date or commencement of deductions of CPA contributions.
e. to hold accurate records, **on an individual CPA basis**, per scheme member. In addition, record aggregate numbers of CPA in place, broken down by age on entry into agreements/ length of agreement and number of agreement cancellations for each scheme member.

21.3 In respect of civil servants, all CPA contributions, similar to other pension contributions, are recorded as Appropriations-in-Aid (AinAs) in the Superannuation and Retired Allowances Vote (Vote 12).

22. General

22.1 The rates of contribution and the actuarial reduction factors applicable from time to time under the Purchase Scheme will be such as to ensure that the Purchase Scheme is self-financing. Where necessary, revised rates and factors will be set following actuarial review and consultation between the Official and Staff Sides at General Council under the Scheme of Conciliation and Arbitration for the civil service.

22.2 The decision of the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation in any exceptional case or on any question of interpretation will be final.

23. Queries

23.1 Scheme members who have queries in relation to the application of this circular should raise their query in the first instance with their relevant local HR Unit.

23.2 Scheme members who wish to purchase notional service should contact the NSSO at pensions@nsso.gov.ie.

In addition to completing relevant forms provided by the NSSO the scheme member will need to furnish the NSSO with:

(i) any public service or civil service positions held before entry to the civil service (if any such service is reckonable for superannuation purposes, it could impact the amount of notional service which may be purchased per Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"*) and

(ii) any retained benefits in respect of those positions - such benefits could reduce the service which can be purchased. Cases involving retained benefits of the type specified in paragraph 6 of Appendix 2 *"Revenue limits…"* of the Purchase Scheme should be referred to this department.

23.3 Civil Service departments who experience difficulties that arise in the application of this circular should raise the matter with this department by contacting pensions@per.gov.ie and shall use the following in the subject line "Purchase of Notional Service Circular 26/2026".

24. Circulation

(i) This circular is a public domain document, which can be accessed from https://www.gov.ie/en/circulars/

(ii) HR Managers in Government Departments/Offices receiving this circular are asked to bring this circular to the attention of **all** officers, including officers who are currently on any form of leave.

(iii) HR Managers in Government Departments/Offices receiving this circular are also asked to circulate it in the normal way to all civil service bodies operating under the aegis of their Department/Office.

(iv) All Departments and Offices in the Civil **and** public service bodies should adopt the revised rates of contributions as per Part 1 of this circular in relation to all staff who wish to enter into a CPA.

(v) Public service bodies may adopt these Purchase Scheme rules if they so wish.

Appendix 1

Rates of Contributions and Actuarial Reduction Factors

INDEX TO TABLES

Note: S&C Scheme = Spouses' & Children's Scheme

Note: Rates of Contributions

1. For an eligible scheme member who opts to purchase service by periodic contributions, *Tables 1/3/5/7and 9* (as appropriate) show the rates of contribution - for each year of service being purchased - which will be levied on the FTE pensionable salary from the CPA commencement date to the CPA Reference Age.

2. For an eligible scheme member who opts to purchase service by a lump sum contribution, *Tables 2/4/6/8 and 10* (as appropriate) show the rates of contribution - for each year of notional service being purchased - which will be levied on FTE pensionable salary on the CPA commencement date.

3. Where the service to be purchased is not a whole number, the contribution will be calculated by multiplying the period of service to be purchased over the agreement by the relevant rate.

4. Please Note: In the case of fully insured scheme members (PRSI Class A) the rate of contribution comprises of two elements, a percentage of pensionable salary and a percentage of net salary:

   i. The percentage of pensionable salary is in respect of the notional service being purchased which increases the pension lump sum payable and is calculated on a non-integrated basis.
   ii. The percentage of net salary is in respect of the notional service being purchased which increases the annual pension and is calculated on an integrated basis.

   The requirement for separate tables in respect of pension and lump-sum arises because pensions will be payable on a basis which involves "integration" with the social insurance system, while lump-sums are calculated on a separate basis.

Note: Calculation of Actuarially Reduced Equivalent of Notional Service

Where payment of a superannuation benefit, other than a death gratuity or a benefit under the S&C scheme, which takes account of purchased service commences before the CPA Purchase Reference Age (e.g. ill-health retirement or cost neutral early retirement) *Tables 11 and 12* show the factors to be used in calculating the actuarially reduced equivalent of the proportionate service purchased at that date.

Table 1: PERIODIC contribution rates for ESTABLISHED staff for purchase by reference to age 65 - MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	Integrated (PPC scales)		Non-integrated (modified PRSI)
	% of net salary	% of pensionable salary	% of pensionable salary
26	0.84%	0.10%	0.83%
27	0.85%	0.10%	0.84%
28	0.86%	0.10%	0.86%
29	0.88%	0.10%	0.87%
30	0.90%	0.10%	0.89%
31	0.91%	0.11%	0.91%
32	0.93%	0.11%	0.93%
33	0.95%	0.11%	0.95%
34	0.98%	0.12%	0.97%
35	1.00%	0.12%	0.99%
36	1.03%	0.12%	1.02%
37	1.06%	0.13%	1.05%
38	1.09%	0.13%	1.08%
39	1.12%	0.13%	1.12%
40	1.15%	0.14%	1.15%
41	1.19%	0.14%	1.20%
42	1.24%	0.15%	1.24%
43	1.28%	0.16%	1.29%
44	1.33%	0.16%	1.35%
45	1.39%	0.17%	1.41%
46	1.46%	0.18%	1.48%
47	1.53%	0.19%	1.56%
48	1.61%	0.20%	1.65%
49	1.70%	0.22%	1.75%
50	1.80%	0.23%	1.86%
51	1.92%	0.25%	1.99%
52	2.06%	0.27%	2.15%
53	2.23%	0.29%	2.33%
54	2.42%	0.32%	2.54%
55	2.66%	0.35%	2.80%
56	2.95%	0.39%	3.12%
57	3.31%	0.44%	3.52%
58	3.78%	0.51%	4.03%
59	4.42%	0.60%	4.72%
60	5.31%	0.72%	5.69%
61	6.66%	0.91%	7.14%
62	8.91%	1.22%	9.57%
63	13.44%	1.84%	14.44%

Table 2: LUMP-SUM contribution rates for ESTABLISHED staff for purchase by reference to age 65 – MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	Integrated (PPC scales)	Non-integrated (modified PRSI)
	% of pensionable salary	% of pensionable salary
26	36.73%	48.04%
27	37.29%	48.77%
28	37.69%	49.34%
29	38.09%	49.91%
30	38.32%	50.32%
31	38.55%	50.73%
32	38.61%	50.96%
33	38.65%	51.19%
34	38.69%	51.41%
35	38.53%	51.44%
36	38.36%	51.46%
37	38.18%	51.47%
38	37.78%	51.27%
39	37.37%	51.06%
40	36.93%	50.82%
41	36.27%	50.37%
42	35.58%	49.89%
43	34.86%	49.38%
44	34.12%	48.85%
45	33.34%	48.29%
46	32.31%	47.48%
47	31.46%	46.86%
48	30.36%	45.98%
49	29.21%	45.06%
50	28.03%	44.11%
51	27.03%	43.36%
52	25.76%	42.33%
53	25.68%	41.26%
54	25.76%	40.15%
55	25.84%	38.99%
56	25.91%	38.05%
57	25.99%	36.81%
58	26.06%	35.79%
59	26.13%	34.73%
60	26.21%	33.90%
61	25.96%	32.76%
62	25.89%	31.86%
63	25.99%	30.92%
64	26.09%	30.24%
65	26.20%	29.23%

Table 3: PERIODIC contribution rates for ESTABLISHED non-integrated (modified PRSI) staff for purchase by reference to age 65– NON-MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme

Age next birthday	% of pensionable salary
26	0.76%
27	0.77%
28	0.78%
29	0.80%
30	0.81%
31	0.83%
32	0.85%
33	0.87%
34	0.89%
35	0.91%
36	0.93%
37	0.96%
38	0.99%
39	1.02%
40	1.05%
41	1.09%
42	1.13%
43	1.18%
44	1.23%
45	1.29%
46	1.35%
47	1.43%
48	1.51%
49	1.60%
50	1.70%
51	1.82%
52	1.96%
53	2.13%
54	2.33%
55	2.56%
56	2.85%
57	3.22%
58	3.69%
59	4.32%
60	5.20%
61	6.53%
62	8.76%
63	13.21%

Table 4: LUMP-SUM contribution rates for ESTABLISHED non-integrated (modified PRSI) staff for purchase by reference to age 65– NON-MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	% of pensionable salary
26	43.91%
27	44.57%
28	45.09%
29	45.62%
30	45.99%
31	46.37%
32	46.58%
33	46.79%
34	46.99%
35	47.02%
36	47.04%
37	47.05%
38	46.87%
39	46.68%
40	46.47%
41	46.05%
42	45.61%
43	45.15%
44	44.67%
45	44.15%
46	43.42%
47	42.85%
48	42.05%
49	41.21%
50	40.34%
51	39.65%
52	38.71%
53	37.74%
54	36.72%
55	35.67%
56	34.81%
57	33.68%
58	32.74%
59	31.77%
60	31.01%
61	29.97%
62	29.15%
63	28.29%
64	27.67%
65	26.75%

Table 5: PERIODIC contribution rates for ESTABLISHED staff for purchase by reference to age 60 - MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	Integrated (PPC scales)		Non-integrated (modified PRSI)
	% of net salary	% of pensionable salary	% of pensionable salary
21	0.95%	0.10%	0.93%
22	0.97%	0.10%	0.95%
23	0.98%	0.10%	0.96%
24	1.00%	0.10%	0.98%
25	1.02%	0.10%	1.00%
26	1.04%	0.11%	1.02%
27	1.06%	0.11%	1.04%
28	1.09%	0.11%	1.06%
29	1.11%	0.12%	1.09%
30	1.14%	0.12%	1.12%
31	1.17%	0.12%	1.15%
32	1.20%	0.13%	1.18%
33	1.24%	0.13%	1.22%
34	1.27%	0.13%	1.25%
35	1.31%	0.14%	1.30%
36	1.36%	0.14%	1.34%
37	1.41%	0.15%	1.40%
38	1.46%	0.16%	1.45%
39	1.52%	0.16%	1.52%
40	1.58%	0.17%	1.59%
41	1.65%	0.18%	1.66%
42	1.73%	0.19%	1.75%
43	1.82%	0.20%	1.85%
44	1.93%	0.22%	1.96%
45	2.05%	0.23%	2.09%
46	2.18%	0.25%	2.24%
47	2.34%	0.27%	2.41%
48	2.52%	0.29%	2.62%
49	2.74%	0.32%	2.86%
50	3.01%	0.35%	3.15%
51	3.34%	0.39%	3.50%
52	3.75%	0.44%	3.95%
53	4.29%	0.51%	4.53%
54	5.00%	0.60%	5.30%
55	6.02%	0.72%	6.39%
56	7.54%	0.91%	8.02%
57	10.09%	1.22%	10.75%
58	15.22%	1.84%	16.22%

Table 6: LUMP-SUM contribution rates for ESTABLISHED staff for purchase to reference age 60– MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	Integrated (PPC scales)	Non-integrated (modified PRSI)
	% of pensionable salary	% of pensionable salary
21	42.07%	54.04%
22	42.71%	54.85%
23	43.17%	55.49%
24	43.63%	56.14%
25	43.90%	56.59%
26	44.17%	57.05%
27	44.24%	57.31%
28	44.30%	57.56%
29	44.35%	57.81%
30	44.18%	57.84%
31	44.00%	57.86%
32	43.81%	57.87%
33	43.37%	57.65%
34	42.92%	57.40%
35	42.44%	57.14%
36	41.71%	56.62%
37	40.95%	56.08%
38	40.15%	55.51%
39	39.32%	54.91%
40	38.46%	54.27%
41	37.31%	53.36%
42	36.38%	52.66%
43	35.15%	51.68%
44	33.87%	50.65%
45	32.55%	49.57%
46	31.45%	48.72%
47	30.04%	47.57%
48	28.72%	46.36%
49	28.80%	45.11%
50	28.89%	43.81%
51	28.97%	42.75%
52	29.05%	41.36%
53	29.13%	40.21%
54	29.21%	39.02%
55	29.29%	38.08%
56	29.01%	36.80%
57	29.00%	35.79%
58	29.12%	34.73%
59	29.23%	33.96%
60	29.34%	32.83%

Table 7: PERIODIC contribution rates for ESTABLISHED non-integrated (modified PRSI) staff for purchase by reference to age 60– NON-MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	% of pensionable salary
21	0.86%
22	0.88%
23	0.89%
24	0.91%
25	0.92%
26	0.94%
27	0.96%
28	0.98%
29	1.01%
30	1.03%
31	1.06%
32	1.09%
33	1.12%
34	1.16%
35	1.20%
36	1.24%
37	1.29%
38	1.34%
39	1.40%
40	1.47%
41	1.54%
42	1.62%
43	1.71%
44	1.81%
45	1.93%
46	2.07%
47	2.23%
48	2.42%
49	2.64%
50	2.91%
51	3.24%
52	3.65%
53	4.19%
54	4.90%
55	5.91%
56	7.42%
57	9.94%
58	15.00%

Table 8: LUMP-SUM contribution rates for ESTABLISHED non-integrated (modified PRSI) staff for purchase by reference to age 60– NON-MEMBERS of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	% of pensionable salary
21	49.92%
22	50.67%
23	51.26%
24	51.86%
25	52.28%
26	52.70%
27	52.94%
28	53.18%
29	53.41%
30	53.44%
31	53.46%
32	53.47%
33	53.26%
34	53.04%
35	52.80%
36	52.32%
37	51.82%
38	51.29%
39	50.74%
40	50.16%
41	49.32%
42	48.67%
43	47.76%
44	46.81%
45	45.82%
46	45.03%
47	43.96%
48	42.85%
49	41.70%
50	40.50%
51	39.52%
52	38.23%
53	37.17%
54	36.07%
55	35.20%
56	34.02%
57	33.08%
58	32.11%
59	31.40%
60	30.36%

Table 9: PERIODIC contribution rates for NON-ESTABLISHED staff (retirement age of 65) – Members and Non-members of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	Members		Non-Members	
	% of Pensionable Salary	% of Net Salary	% of Pensionable Salary	% of Net Salary
26	0.10%	0.83%	0.10%	0.75%
27	0.10%	0.84%	0.10%	0.76%
28	0.10%	0.85%	0.10%	0.77%
29	0.10%	0.87%	0.10%	0.78%
30	0.10%	0.88%	0.10%	0.80%
31	0.11%	0.90%	0.11%	0.81%
32	0.11%	0.92%	0.11%	0.83%
33	0.11%	0.94%	0.11%	0.85%
34	0.12%	0.96%	0.12%	0.86%
35	0.12%	0.98%	0.12%	0.88%
36	0.12%	1.00%	0.12%	0.91%
37	0.13%	1.03%	0.13%	0.93%
38	0.13%	1.06%	0.13%	0.96%
39	0.13%	1.09%	0.13%	0.98%
40	0.14%	1.12%	0.14%	1.01%
41	0.14%	1.16%	0.14%	1.05%
42	0.15%	1.20%	0.15%	1.08%
43	0.16%	1.24%	0.16%	1.12%
44	0.16%	1.29%	0.16%	1.16%
45	0.17%	1.34%	0.17%	1.21%
46	0.18%	1.40%	0.18%	1.26%
47	0.19%	1.47%	0.19%	1.32%
48	0.20%	1.54%	0.20%	1.39%
49	0.22%	1.62%	0.22%	1.47%
50	0.23%	1.72%	0.23%	1.55%
51	0.25%	1.83%	0.25%	1.65%
52	0.27%	1.96%	0.27%	1.77%
53	0.29%	2.11%	0.29%	1.91%
54	0.32%	2.29%	0.32%	2.07%
55	0.35%	2.51%	0.35%	2.27%
56	0.39%	2.78%	0.39%	2.51%
57	0.44%	3.12%	0.44%	2.82%
58	0.51%	3.56%	0.51%	3.21%
59	0.60%	4.15%	0.60%	3.75%
60	0.72%	4.99%	0.72%	4.50%
61	0.91%	6.25%	0.91%	5.64%
62	1.22%	8.36%	1.22%	7.54%
63	1.84%	12.60%	1.84%	11.37%

Table 10: LUMP SUM contribution rates for NON-ESTABLISHED staff (retirement age of 65) - Members and Non-Members of the Spouses' and Children's Scheme.

Age next birthday	Members	Non- Members
	% of Pensionable Salary	% of Pensionable Salary
26	36.15%	33.17%
27	36.70%	33.68%
28	37.09%	34.04%
29	37.48%	34.40%
30	37.71%	34.61%
31	37.93%	34.82%
32	37.97%	34.86%
33	38.01%	34.90%
34	38.04%	34.92%
35	37.87%	34.78%
36	37.69%	34.62%
37	37.49%	34.44%
38	37.09%	34.08%
39	36.67%	33.69%
40	36.22%	33.29%
41	35.55%	32.68%
42	34.85%	32.04%
43	34.12%	31.38%
44	33.36%	30.69%
45	32.57%	29.97%
46	31.53%	29.02%
47	30.67%	28.24%
48	29.56%	27.23%
49	28.40%	26.17%
50	27.20%	25.08%
51	26.20%	24.17%
52	25.33%	23.23%
53	25.40%	23.30%
54	25.47%	23.37%
55	25.54%	23.44%
56	25.61%	23.50%
57	25.68%	23.57%
58	25.75%	23.64%
59	25.82%	23.70%
60	25.89%	23.77%
61	25.64%	23.54%
62	25.74%	23.58%
63	25.84%	23.68%
64	25.94%	23.77%
65	26.04%	23.87%

Table 11: Actuarial Reduction Factors for purchase by reference to age 65

Age last birthday	Pension	Lump Sum
30	29.5%	54.4%
31	30.3%	55.3%
32	31.2%	56.3%
33	32.1%	57.3%
34	33.0%	58.3%
35	34.0%	59.3%
36	35.0%	60.4%
37	36.0%	61.4%
38	37.1%	62.5%
39	38.2%	63.6%
40	39.4%	64.7%
41	40.7%	65.8%
42	42.0%	67.0%
43	43.3%	68.2%
44	44.7%	69.4%
45	46.2%	70.6%
46	47.7%	71.8%
47	49.3%	73.1%
48	51.0%	74.4%
49	52.8%	75.7%
50	54.7%	77.0%
51	56.7%	78.4%
52	58.7%	79.7%
53	60.9%	81.1%
54	63.2%	82.6%
55	65.7%	84.0%
56	68.3%	85.5%
57	71.0%	87.0%
58	73.9%	88.5%
59	77.0%	90.1%
60	80.2%	91.7%
61	83.7%	93.3%
62	87.4%	94.9%
63	91.3%	96.6%
64	95.5%	98.3%
65	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Actuarial Reduction Factors for purchase by reference to age 60

Age last birthday	Pension	Lump Sum
30	36.8%	59.3%
31	37.8%	60.4%
32	38.9%	61.4%
33	40.0%	62.5%
34	41.2%	63.6%
35	42.4%	64.7%
36	43.6%	65.8%
37	44.9%	67.0%
38	46.3%	68.2%
39	47.7%	69.4%
40	49.2%	70.6%
41	50.7%	71.8%
42	52.3%	73.1%
43	54.0%	74.4%
44	55.7%	75.7%
45	57.6%	77.0%
46	59.5%	78.4%
47	61.5%	79.7%
48	63.6%	81.1%
49	65.9%	82.6%
50	68.2%	84.0%
51	70.6%	85.5%
52	73.2%	87.0%
53	76.0%	88.5%
54	78.8%	90.1%
55	81.9%	91.7%
56	85.1%	93.3%
57	88.5%	94.9%
58	92.1%	96.6%
59	95.9%	98.3%
60	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix 2

Revenue limits on the amount of service which may be purchased.

1. The maximum amount of service which may be purchased depends on a scheme member's prospective pensionable service to their CPA Reference Age and any retained benefits (as defined in Section 1 *"Definitions"*) received or receivable by virtue of earlier service under another public service occupational pension scheme.
2. For an eligible scheme member who would have at least 9 years' actual pensionable service, within the relevant pension scheme, to the CPA Reference Age and who is not entitled to retained benefits from a previous pension scheme, the maximum amount of notional service which may be purchased is as follows: -

Table 1: Table of Limits

Actual pensionable service (including transferred service) but excluding any purchased service and/or any other form of notional added service which the eligible scheme member would have if s/he remains in service until their CPA Reference Age	**Maximum Service which can be purchased**
20 years or more	Difference between 40 years and reckonable service by the age of the member's CPA Reference Age
19 years	17 years
18 years	15 years
17 years	13 years
16 years	11 years
15 years	9 years
14 years	7 years
13 years	5 years
12 years	4 years
11 years	3 years
10 years	2 years
9 years	1 year

3. The limits outlined in the Table of Limits above are subject to the overriding restriction that the amount of service which may be purchased together with service which is otherwise reckonable shall not in any case exceed 40 years. Thus, for example, a scheme member who would have 18 years actual pensionable service at age 65, and who is eligible for an award of 10 added years under a Professional Added Years Scheme, may not purchase more than 12 years' service under the Purchase Scheme.

4. Where the potential actual pensionable service to an eligible scheme member's CPA Reference Age is less than 20 years but includes days of service in excess of a complete number of years, a number of days equal to 365 less the excess days in question may be purchased in addition to the appropriate number of years in the second column of the Table, e.g. an eligible scheme member who will have 9 years 182 actual days' service to their CPA Reference Age may purchase 1 year service plus an additional 365 – 182 days – i.e. 1 year 183 days' service.
5. Where an eligible scheme member is entitled to retained benefits for earlier service under another occupational pension scheme, and those benefits are identical to the benefits which would be payable under the Superannuation Acts for an equivalent period of service, the maximum period of service which may be purchased will be the smaller of

    (1) the maximum specified in paragraph 2; and
    (2) 40 - A - B,

    where A is the reckonable service which the eligible scheme member would have at their CPA Reference Age and B is the length of the eligible scheme member's pensionable service in the previous scheme.

6. Where the value of the retained benefits paid or payable is not identical to the value of the superannuation benefits which would be payable under the Superannuation Acts in respect of an equivalent period, the case should be referred to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation for a decision as to the amount of service which may be purchased.
7. The foregoing provisions will be appropriately modified in their application to scheme members whose maximum retiring age is 62 (i.e. scheme members to whom the Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act, 1919 applies).
8. Treatment of cases of purchase under the Purchase Scheme where insufficient service arises:

    a) Less than 9 years.

       Where a scheme member ceases the employment linked to the relevant pension scheme before attaining the minimum requirement of 9 years actual pensionable service as set out in the table above, (including transferred service but excluding any notional service), the CPA shall be **null, and void** and all CPA contributions must be refunded. In other cases, it may be necessary to make partial refunds of CPA contributions.

    b) Over 9 years' service but insufficient for the CPA.
       Where a scheme member is purchasing service but has insufficient actual service relative to the amount of service being purchased, in accordance with the table above, it will be necessary to adjust the amount of service being purchased (Section 18 *"Adjustments to a periodic CPA"*) and/or make partial refunds of CPA contributions (Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"*).

9. Where a scheme member who is purchasing service ceases the employment linked to the relevant pension scheme having attained 9 years' reckonable actual service (including transferred service) but before attaining their CPA Reference Age on which the CPA is based, the service purchased by the date of leaving (which may require adjusting on a pro-rata basis per Section 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"*) must be cross-referenced against the Table of Limits above. If it is the case that a scheme member has purchased service in excess of the maximum allowed under the Table of Limits, an appropriate refund of CPA contributions must be made so that the amount of service actually purchased concurs with the relevant limit in the Table of Limits.

   An example on referencing the Table of Limits can be found under Example 3 of the accompanying "*Examples Document - Circular 26/2026 "Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

Appendix 3

Circulars and LPOs which this circular supersedes in respect of all CPAs commencing on or after the effective date of this circular.

Circulars

- Circular 16/1979 - Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes
- Circular 24/1988 – Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes by Non-Established State Employees
- Circular 01/1990 - Revised Purchase Scheme for Established Scheme members
- Circular 04/2006 - Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes by Established Civil Servants and by Non-Established State Employees

LPOs

- Letter to Personnel Officers 27 April 1979 - Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes
- Letter to Personnel Officers 28 September 1979 - Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes
- Letter to Personnel Officers 31 December 1988 - Purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes by non-established State employees
- Letter to Personnel Officers 12 February 1990 - Revised scheme for the purchase of notional service for superannuation purposes by established civil servants
- Letter to Personnel Officers 14 March 1990 - Reckoning of career break period for Superannuation Purposes
- Letter to Personnel Officer of 17 June 1994 - Purchase of service for Superannuation Purposes by job-sharers
- Letter to Personnel Officers of 31 July 1997 - Revised contribution rates for purchase of notional service by persons appointed to established civil service positions on or after 6 April 1995 covered by Class A insurance
- Letter to Personnel Officers 28 October 1998: Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme and refund in cases of excess purchase of notional year for pension purchases
- Letter to Personnel Officers of 3 May 2005 and 5 May 2005: Revised Contribution Rates for Purchase of Notional Service

Appendix 4- Draft CPA Template

Private and Confidential
Name: XXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXX
Relevant Bodies Required Reference Number: XXXXXXXX

Date: DD/MM/YYYY

RE: Certified Purchase Agreement ('CPA')

Dear XXXXXX,

I refer to your request to purchase notional service under the purchase rates and rules set out under Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*" (*insert link)*.
You have confirmed you wish to purchase XX years & XX days (XXX years) service by periodic deduction/ lump sum with reference to age 60/65. The figures below are based on the service and salary details recorded on the HR self-service records we have on file for you. You should therefore verify that the details on the HR self-service system are correct and up to date before proceeding.

On the basis that you will be XX years of age on your next birthday DD/MM/YYYY, the purchase rates(s) on which contributions that would be deducted from your salary are as follows:

- To purchase one year, a deduction of XX% would be payable from your pensionable salary and XX% from your net salary*.
- The deduction in respect of XX years & XX days (XX years) would therefore be XX% payable from your pensionable salary and XX% from your net salary.
- This would total €XX per week on the basis of your salary at the date of this letter.
- This amount will increase in line with any future increases in your salary.
- Contributions will commence from your next birthday and continue until your 60th/65th birthday.

*"Net Salary" = pensionable salary less twice the rate of State Pension (Contributory) payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependent or qualified children.

You must confirm **within 5 working days** if you wish to proceed with this purchase. This is to ensure the *<insert relevant pension administrator>* can implement your purchase in line with your next birthday.

Confirmation of your decision to proceed with the purchase of notional service should be advised by returning the below 'Certified Purchase Agreement' to XXXX@XXXXX.gov.ie, quoting the above case/reference number.

Important Information:
For treatment of periodic CPA contributions during periods of unpaid leave without pay, including staff availing of the Shorter Working Year Pro-Rata scheme, please refer to Sections 8 *"…Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary"* and 9 *"Treatment of Unpaid Leave"* of Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)"*, noting that the period of unpaid leave itself is a further loss of service.

If you cease your periodic payments early, either by early cessation of your CPA or by cessation of your employment, the amount of purchased service to be granted will be calculated on **a *pro-rata basis***. If you receive retirement benefits in advance of age 65/60, the period of service purchased will be ***actuarially reduced***. Please refer to Section 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"* of Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

Purchase of service deductions are always levied against pensionable salary. If on retirement your pensionable remuneration includes a non-salary element e.g. a pensionable allowance or other pensionable emolument, you will owe additional purchase contributions which will be deducted from your retirement lump sum in respect of the purchased service, even if your CPA ceased pre-retirement. Please refer to Section 7 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"* of Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

Please note that the onus is on you to ensure the correct amount is being deducted from your salary. For further information on the purchasing of notional service, please refer to Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*"

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us at XXXXX@XXXX.gov.ie, quoting the case/ reference number above.

The above provides general information in relation to purchasing notional service; it does not purport to be a legal interpretation of the governing statutes and regulations or to be exhaustive. Care has been taken to ensure the above is accurate, but nothing can override the rules of the Purchase Scheme as set out under Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*", *the rules of the Civil Service Superannuation Scheme, as set out in the relevant Statutes, Regulations or other official documents.*

Kind regards,

XXXXXXXX
Pension Services Team

Certified Purchase Agreement (CPA) Declaration Form

I, Name of officer, agree to proceed with the purchase of XX years and XX days (XX.XXXXXX years) notional service by periodic/lump sum deductions with reference to age 60/65.

I agree to the necessary deductions at a rate of X.XX% of pensionable salary and X.XX% of net salary. I understand that purchase contributions will commence on my next birthday DD/MM/YYYY and continue until I reach age 60/65.

I confirm that I have read and agree to all rules of the purchase scheme as set out in Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*" and that I have sought any relevant clarification(s) on those rules where necessary prior to entering this CPA.

I also agree to be bound by the rules of the purchase scheme in respect of my CPA and confirm that I understand those rules, including:

- if a non-salary element e.g. a pensionable allowance or other pensionable emolument, forms part of my pensionable remuneration at retirement a further purchase deduction will be taken from my retirement lump sum (Section 7 *"…Pensionable Emoluments"* of Circular 26/2026),
- the treatment of purchase contributions during periods of reduced rate of pensionable salary and the effects of leave without pay on my CPA and reckonable service (Sections 8 *"…Reduced Rate of Pensionable Salary"* and 9 *"Treatment of Unpaid Leave"* of Circular 26/2026),
- the effects of early cessation of my CPA either via my cancellation of my CPA or cancellation on foot of cessation of my employment (Sections 15 *"Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions"* and 16.2 *"Cost Neutral Early Retirement"* of Circular 26/2026),
- the rules relating to refunds of purchase contributions (Section 17 *"Refund of CPA Contributions"* of Circular 26/2026), and
- my responsibilities in respect of my CPA (Section 20 *"Responsibilities of the Scheme Member and Payroll Administrator/ Pension Administrator and Local HR"* of Circular 26/2026).

I confirm that the details as set out in the Summary table below are complete and accurate.

Summary - for periodic CPAs [INSERT for Periodic CPA]

CPA Reference Age:	Choose age 60/65
CPA Commencement Date:	Insert date of next birthday
CPA Completion Date:	Insert date of reaching age 60/65
Contribution Rates to apply:	X.XX% of pensionable salary and X.XX% of net salary (where applicable)

OR

Summary - for lump sum CPAs [INSERT for Lump Sum CPA]

CPA Reference Age:	Choose age 60/65
CPA Commencement Date:	Payment to be received within 3 months of the date of signing this CPA, or this CPA Is null and void.
CPA Completion Date:	This CPA will be deemed complete upon receipt of lump sum payment within 3 months from date of signing this CPA.
Contribution Rates to apply:	X.XX% of pensionable salary

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 5

Confirmation of early cessation of CPA

Private and Confidential
Name: XXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXX
Relevant Bodies Required Reference Number**:** XXXXXXXX

Date: DD/MM/YYYY

RE: Cessation of Certified Purchase Agreement ('CPA')

Dear XXXXXX,

I refer to the attached Certified Purchase Agreement (CPA) whereby you agreed to purchase XX years and XX days (XX.XXXXXX years) notional service under the purchase rates and rules set out under Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)"* (*insert link).*

The table below sets out a summary of your periodic CPA.

Summary – your periodic CPA

CPA Reference Age:	Choose age 60/65
CPA Commencement Date:	Insert date of next birthday
CPA Completion Date:	Insert date of reaching age 60/65
Contribution Rates to apply:	X.XX% of pensionable salary and X.XX% of net salary (where applicable)

Section 15 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*" of the above Circular allows for a CPA to be cancelled prior to the CPA Reference Age. This can occur on request from the relevant scheme member with effect from the next available pay day (per Section 15.1 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*") or automatically on resignation or retirement (per Section 15.2 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*") or on death in service (per Section 15.5 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*").

Reason for cancellation – tick appropriate option

- ☐ a. You wish to cancel your CPA from the next available pay day on request.
- ☐ b. Your CPA is cancelling automatically due to resignation.
- ☐ c. Your CPA is cancelling automatically due to retirement.
- ☐ d. Due to the death in service of Mr./Ms./Mrs/etc.

As a result, the amount of notional service to be credited under the Purchase Scheme to date of cessation of the CPA falls to be adjusted on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the formula as set out in Section 15.1 "*Cancelling a CPA/Cessation of CPA Contributions*" of Circular 26/2026.

This formula has now been applied to the attached CPA, and I can advise that you have been deemed to have purchased XX years and XX days (XX.XXXXXX years) to date of cessation of the attached CPA.

Please note:
1. Further adjustments may take place in respect of the above amount of service purchased should your pension come into payment prior to your CPA Reference Age.
2. Separately, if it is established at retirement that you have purchased an amount of notional service for which you cannot benefit, a refund/partial refund of contributions may take place.
Any such adjustments or refunds will be carried out in line with the provisions of Circular 26/2026 "*Purchase of Notional Service Scheme (Revised Rates and Scope)*".

For further queries, please contact Insert pensions administrator body name at: insert pensions administrator contact details.

Yours sincerely,
Insert Pensions Administrator Details