



What kind of future for SNAs and their students?

2018

Education Division

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

#ourSNAs

RIU Plaza,
The Gresham, Dublin.
Thursday, 5th April 2018

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Fórsa Trade Union



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Timetable

- 10.00** **REGISTRATION**
Tea and Coffee on arrival
- 10.30** **OPENING ADDRESS**
Gina O'Brien, Divisional Cathaoirleach
- 10.40** **PRESENTATION OF SURVEY FINDINGS**
Grace Williams, Organiser
- 11.00** **'PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AS A PATH TO RECOGNITION AND RESPECT'**
Ginny Hanrahan, Chief Executive, CORU
Gary Rice, Partner, DAC Beachcroft
Joan McCrohan, Organiser
Chaired by Sean Carabini, Assistant General Secretary
- 11.40** **'SAFEGUARDING RIGHTS AND SUPPORTS IN A CHANGING SCHEME'**
Dr Emer Ring, Head of Department of Reflective Pedagogy and
Early Childhood Studies, Mary Immaculate College
Adam Harris, CEO, AsIAm
Jessica Ni Mhaolain, Author and disability rights advocate
Geraldine Delaney, Post Primary Deputy Principal
Chaired by Barry Cunningham, Assistant General Secretary
- 12.30** **MINISTERIAL ADDRESS AND RESPONSE**
Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Education and Skills
Response by Kevin Callinan, Deputy General Secretary
- 13.00** **LUNCH**
- 14.00** **POLITICAL FORUM - THE FUTURE FOR SNAs AND THEIR STUDENTS**
Facilitated by Orlaith Carmody
Thomas Byrne TD, Fianna Fáil
Finian McGrath TD and Minister of State, Independent Alliance
Louise O'Reilly TD, Sinn Féin
Senator Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, Labour
- 15.00** **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS UPDATE ON SNA ISSUES**
Sean Carabini, Assistant General Secretary
Olajide Odigan, Organiser
Dave Sexton, Organiser
- 15.30** **CLOSING REMARKS**

OPENING ADDRESS



GINA O'BRIEN
Cathaoirleach, Fórsa

Gina is currently the Industrial Relations Facilitator for the Munster Technological University Merger. She is an employee of Cork Institute of Technology where she graduated with a Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business in 2007. She has represented Fórsa members on many educational forums and is also the Chairperson of the Fórsa Institutes of Technology Branch. She is the Cathaoirleach of Fórsa's Education Divisional Executive and is also a member of the union's National Executive Committee. She represents Fórsa's educational division members on the Department of Education's Strategy and Policy Forum.

PRESENTATION OF SURVEY FINDINGS



GRACE WILLIAMS
Organiser, Fórsa

Grace is an organiser with Fórsa, working with the schools in the North Dublin North Leinster branch. In this role, she works with SNAs and school secretaries, with a focus on recruitment, retention, and training for members. Previously, Grace worked for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on their Youth Connect programme, providing workshops for students on workers' rights and trade unionism.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AS A PATH TO RECOGNITION AND RESPECT



GINNY HANRAHAN
Chief Executive, CORU

Ginny is the chief executive officer of CORU, the umbrella body that regulates health and social care professionals. Ginny trained as an occupational therapist in the mid-1980s and provided direct patient care for 17 years in Ireland, Scotland, England and Australia. She was the head of clinical services in Dublin's Beaumont hospital for seven years prior to setting up CORU in May 2008. She holds an MSc in community health from Trinity College Dublin.



GARY RICE
Partner, DAC Beachcroft

Gary is an experienced public, regulatory and disciplinary law solicitor who provides legal, strategic and consultancy services to clients. Gary prosecutes and defends regulatory and disciplinary cases for clients including statutory professional regulators, public bodies with regulatory functions, trade unions, professionals and their representative associations, and insurers. He also advises on strategic regulatory law issues including regulatory change management, legislative representation, the drafting and interpretation of legislation and regulations, the application of competition and European law to professional and public services, governance, freedom of information, and data protection.



JOAN McCROHAN
Organiser, Fórsa

Joan has been a union organiser in Fórsa's Education Division since 2011. She currently works with schools in the Munster area.

Joan is a strong advocate for enhanced CPD for special needs assistants as a path to helping children with different needs to achieve best outcomes. A trained special needs assistant, Joan supported children with different abilities before she joined the union's staff.

Joan has a Diploma in Learning and Development within organisations.



SEÁN CARABINI
Assistant General Secretary, Fórsa

Seán is an Assistant General Secretary in Fórsa with responsibility for Special Needs Assistants. Previously, Seán worked representing civil and public servants with the PSEU. Seán is a former Chairperson of the Irish Writers' Union.

SAFEGUARDING RIGHTS AND SUPPORTS IN A CHANGING SCHEME



DR EMER RING
Head of Department of Reflective Pedagogy and Early Childhood Studies, Mary Immaculate College

Emer is a specialist in early years and special education. She has worked as a teacher, a learning support teacher, a primary school resource teacher, and a senior inspector with the Department of Education and Skills. Emer is course leader for the

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (BAECCE) at Mary Immaculate College, which are strongly influenced by progressive international movements in early years' education. She was joint principal investigator in two national research projects: *An Evaluation of Concepts of School Readiness among Parents and Early Years Educators in Ireland*, commissioned by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and *An Evaluation of Educational Provision for Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in the Republic of Ireland*, commissioned by the National Council for Special Education. She co-leads a Level 6 special purpose award (higher education) for staff in early years settings to access the *National Higher Education Programme for Inclusion Coordinators in Early Years Settings*.



**ADAM HARRIS,
Founder-CEO of AslAm.ie**

Adam is a 23 year old social entrepreneur, Autism advocate and Founder-CEO of AslAm.ie, an organisation committed to building a more Autism-friendly society in Ireland. Adam established AslAm.ie based on his own experiences of growing up with Aspergers Syndrome, a condition on the Autism Spectrum. Today Adam addresses Autism issues in the media and at conferences, national and international. A Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awardee, Adam also sits on the Board of Specialisterne Ireland and the NCSE Consultative Forum.



**JESSICA NÍ MHAOLÁIN
Author and disability rights advocate**

Jessica is a policy consultant and public relations manager living in Cork city. She has a severe vision impairment, and completed her primary and secondary level education with the help of special education accommodations such as an SNA, and learning supports. Jessica is an advocate for those with disabilities in the education system. She completed her masters thesis on the impact of special education service provision in second level education in Cork. Jessica regularly blogs about her experiences through her Blog 'Beyond the Blonde,' and heads 'Is Mise,' an advocacy group for people with disabilities.



**GERALDINE DELANEY
Post Primary Deputy Principal**

Geraldine is deputy principal of Pobalscoil Iosolde, a large co-educational DEIS post primary school in Dublin 20. Geraldine has almost 20 years' experience in special

educational needs and as an SEN co-ordinator. She trains SNAs at certificate and diploma level, and she is passionate about the role and the need for SNAs in schools.



**BARRY CUNNINGHAM
Assistant General Secretary, Fórsa**

Barry works for Fórsa as an Assistant General Secretary. He has been an active member of Fórsa for twenty years and prior to becoming a member of staff served on the Aer Lingus Cabin Crew Branch executive and as a member of the Services and Enterprises Division.

He believes that the role of Special Needs Assistant is pivotal in the support required for children with special education needs and their families and that it is a vital part of the school community. Barry also has a Diploma in Employment Law.

MINISTERIAL ADDRESS AND RESPONSE



**RICHARD BRUTON TD
Minister for Education and Skills**

Richard is Minister for Education and Skills. A research economist by profession, he was first elected to the Dáil in 1982 and has served as Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Minister for Enterprise and Employment, and Minister of State at the Department of Industry and Commerce. He has had wide experience on the Fine Gael front bench, holding eight different portfolios including Finance, Education and Science, Employment, Economic Planning and Public Sector Reform. He chaired the European Industrial Council during Ireland's presidency in 1996. He has also held the post of Fine Gael Director of Policy.



**KEVIN CALLINAN
Deputy General Secretary, Fórsa**

Prior to his appointment as Deputy General Secretary of IMPACT in 2010, Kevin spent 12 years as the union's National Secretary for Health and Welfare. Since then he has had responsibility for the growing membership in the education sector overseeing the establishment of the Education Division within the union in 2012.

Kevin has a lead role in strategic organising and union development for Fórsa. He has been a Vice-President of ICTU since 2015 and he is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Federation of Public Service Unions. He is currently a member of the National Competitiveness Council.

POLITICAL FORUM - THE FUTURE FOR SNAs AND THEIR STUDENTS



ORLAITH CARMODY, Facilitator

The author of *Perform As A Leader*, Orlaith is managing director of Gavin Duffy and Associates, which specialises in communications training and leadership development. She has addressed Ireland's most influential business people, networks and political groups and has presented at conferences in the USA, UAE, Canada and Europe. She regularly contributes in the media to a variety of programmes and publications. Following a career as an RTÉ journalist, Orlaith became a serial entrepreneur, and is a director of a number of SMEs in media, recruitment, production and education. She served on the board of RTÉ from 2010 to 2015. She is a founder member and former president of the Irish Chapter of EO, the Entrepreneurs' Organisation.



THOMAS BYRNE TD Fianna Fáil

Thomas is Fianna Fáil's spokesperson on education and skills, and is a member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills. He has been a TD for the Meath East constituency since 2016, and also served as a TD from 2007 to 2011.



FINIAN McGRATH TD Independent Alliance

Finian is Minister of State at the departments of social protection, justice and equality, and health where he has special responsibility for disabilities. He has served in Dáil Éireann as an independent TD since he was first elected in 2002. He was formerly a Dublin City councillor.



LOUISE O'REILLY TD Sinn Féin

Louise is Sinn Féin's health spokesperson. A former Siptu official, Louise is a lifelong trade union activist. She was a member of ICTU's Public Services Committee and has extensive experience negotiating on behalf of workers in both the public and private sector.



SENATOR AODHÁN Ó RÍORDÁIN Labour

Aodhán is a Labour Party senator based in Dublin Bay North. He is his party's spokesperson on education and skills, Gaeilge and the Gaeltacht. Between 2014 and 2016, Aodhán was Minister of State for Equality, New Communities, Culture and the National Drugs Strategy. He previously served as vice chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection. Twice elected to Dublin City Council, Aodhán also worked as a teacher and principal in Sheriff Street in Dublin Inner City for 11 years. He is a founding member of Irish Stand, a grassroots movement devoted to civil rights protection for all immigrants.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS UPDATE ON SNA ISSUES



OLAJIDE ODIGAN Organiser, Fórsa

Olajide was appointed as an IMPACT organiser in 2015 and has responsibility for South Dublin South Leinster SNA Branch. Previously he worked in St Vincent's Hospital and became a union representative when he was co-opted onto the Dublin Hospital branch executive in 2004. Olajide holds a masters in equality studies from UCD in 2015. He was also previously elected as the students' union official in the University of Lagos, from which he graduated with a first in philosophy.



DAVE SEXTON Organiser, Fórsa

Dave is Fórsa's regional organiser for education in the Connacht/Ulster area, where his responsibilities include support, recruitment and retention of members in the non-teaching sector. Prior to becoming an organiser, Dave worked as an SNA for over 20 years. In his time in the trade union movement he has been a branch chairperson, and was elected to the union's national Education Division Executive Committee and the IMPACT Central Executive Committee.

You're better off in Fórsa

FÓRSA

Fórsa members can save a lot of money with our enhanced package of financial benefits provided or negotiated by the union. Some of these are free to all Fórsa members. Others are optional benefits, available only to Fórsa members, which can mean savings on insurance, salary protection, additional pension coverage and more.

Fórsa members are entitled to*

- €5,000 illness benefit when out of work for more than 12 months
- €5,000 personal accident insurance
- €5,000 critical illness or death benefit
- €5,000 death of a spouse or qualifying partner
- Evacuation or repatriation expenses of up to €250,000 for members who die or are seriously ill abroad, including emergency medical expenses incurred for members temporarily abroad as a result of death/illness
- Free legal help in bodily injury cases
- Free 24/7 legal advice helpline
- Free 24/7 confidential counselling helpline
- Free 24/7 domestic assistance helpline.

Members can opt in to Fórsa-facilitated financial benefits

- Car insurance
- Home insurance
- Travel insurance
- Additional pension benefits
- Salary protection and life cover.

Fórsa members can also apply for

- Gaeltacht scholarships for their school-age children
- Industrial relations scholarships
- Benevolent grants for members in financial distress.

*Six months continuous membership is required to avail of services. Financial benefits are strictly subject to policy, terms, conditions and exclusions. See www.forsa.ie for details.

