



## INTRODUCTION

This leaflet is intended to equip you to ask candidates in the general election questions concerning you and your union. The focus of this is on Fórsa's core national objectives, as well as some issues that may be more specific to the sector / division in which you work.

The union is not affiliated to any political party. But, on behalf of its members, the union is and will be putting these questions to all political parties participating the 2020 general election. Fórsa will publish the responses and circulate them to its branches and members in advance of polling day on 8th February.

## How do I use it?

Keep it near the door for use when canvassers come to the door, or at your desk to help inform your colleagues. Realistically you won't get to ask all of these questions, so just focus on the ones that matter the most to you. If you need more information, please go to the Fórsa website and check out the manifesto.

## Support our secretaries

For over 40 years, school secretaries have suffered a two-tier pay system, which leaves most earning just €12,500 a year with short-term contracts which force them to sign on during the summer holidays and other school breaks. All political parties have expressed support for Fórsa's campaign for pay justice, but none has acted, in government, to regularise school secretaries' pay and conditions.

## Talking points

- Most school secretaries have to sign on for benefits at Christmas, Easter and the long summer months.
- Most don't qualify for pensions, sick pay or paid leave.
- The cost of introducing pay justice would be as little as €5-7 million according to official figures.
- Fórsa has said that it is willing to re-enter the WRC if the Government can demonstrate that it will introduce a proper pay scale, put an end to end-of-term lay-offs, and introduce basic conditions like paid leave and sick leave.

## What to ask your candidates:

- If in Government, will you (and your party) ensure a rapid resolution to this 40-year-long injustice?
- Will you (and your party) end the two-tier system by negotiating a new pay model using the existing Department of Education clerical officer pay scale as a starting point?
- Will you (and your party) end the lay-off of school secretaries at the end of each school term, and introduce basic employment rights like paid holidays and sick leave?

## Public service champions charter:

- Ask candidates in your area if their parties have signed up to Fórsa's Public Service Champions Charter.



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- Will you (and your party) end the lay-off of school secretaries at the end of each school term, and introduce basic employment rights like paid holidays and sick leave?
- Has your party signed up to the Public Service Champions Charter?  
[www.forsa.ie/championscharter](http://www.forsa.ie/championscharter)