



**FÓRSA**

# BIENNIAL REPORT

**FÓRSA CONFERENCE 2022  
MAY 18 — 20, INEC KILLARNEY**

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# Foreword



This report captures the activity of FÓrsa at a particularly crucial point in the union's development. Against the background of the global pandemic, and all the related challenges of the last two years, FÓrsa has been looking to the future. In this context, a key piece of work has

been the development of FÓrsa's **strategic plan** and the work of the union's Strategic Change Project team. In building a better and stronger union that delivers for its members, FÓrsa's strategic approach is designed to futureproof the union.

In that spirit, this year's biennial delegate conference - our first fully in-person conference since 2018 - is all about looking forward. FÓrsa members throughout the country responded to the challenges of the pandemic in a way that has brought a great deal of pride to the union, and the post-pandemic period holds new opportunities as well as new challenges.

The restoration of pre-Haddington Road working hours across the public service has been a significant breakthrough for the union, reflecting the very clear desire of FÓrsa members to dispense with one of the most detested measures introduced during the austerity years. In addition, our members have provided a strong sense of leadership in the development of new ways of working and service delivery. New agreed frameworks on blended working will help to sustain revolutionary changes to the world of work, an unexpected but welcome legacy of the pandemic experience.

During the period under review in this report, one prominent issue throughout was FÓrsa's

successful defence of a €13.7m action by Ryanair for damages. The union achieved an acceptable industrial relations agreement in the legal settlement, creating conditions for more successful representation of our members working with the airline.

As we prepare to go to conference, we face a challenging set of pay negotiations with Government, precipitated both by the need to negotiate a successor to the *Building Momentum* agreement, and the activation of its review clause by unions, in response to the current soaring cost of living. This is not a short-term problem. The negotiations will be especially challenging because the right balance must be struck to avoid any unintentional negative effects on jobs and exchequer returns.

International uncertainties underpin all of this, and the continuing news of atrocities in Ukraine remain deeply shocking and disturbing. As State services mobilise to welcome refugees from that invasion, it remains a great source of pride that FÓrsa members responded so generously to the union's solidarity appeal.

As we gather to determine the policies to achieve the union's objective of building a better and stronger union for the future, let's send a strong message of solidarity to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, and look forward to a better, safer future for us all, determined by the values at the heart of the trade union movement.

**Kevin Callinan**  
General Secretary

# Introduction

The Fórsa **biennial report 2018-2020** was finalised and distributed to branches and executives in May 2020. The report covered, union events and activities in the two years prior to the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, and was adopted at the virtual national conference in November 2020. A supplementary report was

prepared for the virtual national conference in November 2020. It outlined the union's initial response to the Covid-19 crisis and workplace and related issues arising from the pandemic. It was also adopted at the virtual national conference in November 2020.

# Organisation

## Finance and administration

This report covers the financial years 2020 and 2021. During this period the union consolidated its internal financial management processes while a new firm of external auditors, Mazars, was appointed to take over the role from Grant Thornton in 2021, following a tender process by the union's trustees.

A detailed financial report was circulated to branches in advance of the national conference setting out key financial data from the audited financial statements approved by the NEC for 2020-21 (see summary at Appendix 7). These statements include consolidated branch Income and expenditure and balance sheet data for the first time, satisfying a regulatory requirement to reflect this information in the statutory AR21 statement, lodged annually before 1st June. The integration of branch financial data into the annual audit process was a significant challenge, not only for the union's finance team but for the branch treasurers.

The reduction of in-person union activity as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a significant operational surplus in both years. This exceptional change in expenditure patterns was cautiously monitored by the Finance & Risks Committee. The NEC recognised the potential for expenditure to return to normal as the pandemic abated and in-person union activity recommenced.

The period saw a gradual process of branch rationalisation, particularly within the Civil Service

division, with two new unified Executive and Clerical Officer branches being established. Several smaller branches, and some inactive branches, have come together while work is ongoing with elected representatives to reactivate some dormant branches and amalgamate smaller grade-based branches to deliver better representation and organisation for their memberships. The NEC-approved Branch Rules Template is used to ensure all grades and section of new branches are proportionally represented in any new structure proposed for ratification by the NEC.

At the same time, progress was made on streamlining branch funding. Almost 15 branches, of the legacy 5% allowance clerical branches, moved over to the default 10%-plus capitation funding model set out in rule. This change requires greater day-to-day financial management by the branch treasurer, but ensures smaller branches have better financial resources available to them than under the pre-amalgamation arrangement. Despite this welcome progress almost 60 legacy branches have yet to make the decision to switch funding model.

The maximum annual subscription for the default 0.8% rate of salary remained at the 2020 level of €387.60 (salary maximum of €48,450) in 2021 but increased in 2022 to a maximum of €399.34 (salary maximum of €49,918), reflecting increases due under the *Building Momentum* agreement. Two legacy rates continue to operate outside of this maximum subscription ceiling.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 1% Civil Service clerical officers and related grades rate (includes payment for the legacy benefits scheme for that grade) and the 0.62% subscription rate for Executive Officers and HEOs in membership prior to the amalgamation in 2018.

# The Covid-19 crisis

The first case of the Covid-19 virus in the Republic of Ireland was confirmed on 29th February 2020. By March, sweeping public health measures were in place and the Government advised people to work at home if possible. Fórsa staff contacted hundreds of employers and provided members with updates on which employments would remain open to deliver essential services, and which were implementing remote working arrangements. Tens of thousands of Fórsa members were instructed to work from home.

DPER then announced new arrangements for a public service-wide mobilisation to tackle the Covid-19 virus and maintain essential public services. These included the temporary transfer of civil and public servants to critical roles for up to three months. Following consultation with Fórsa, the measures guaranteed that staff who took on temporary roles would continue to be employed, and paid, by their existing employer, and that they would return to their existing employer and role after the temporary transfer.

From the outset of the crisis, Fórsa issued general advice to members on reducing personal risk and helping prevent the spread of the virus, along with guidance on the actions members should take if they showed symptoms. This advice was generally based on prevailing HSE guidance, though the union generally advised more caution for pregnant women and more vulnerable workers. Sectoral and workplace guidance was developed by Fórsa divisions. The union's advice was frequently updated throughout 2020 and 2021 as union officials and staff dealt with thousands of individual member queries on safety and related matters.

In early April 2020, Fórsa published specific guidance for members in health and elsewhere who were working in, or who could be asked to work in, environments where there is a higher-than-average risk of contracting the coronavirus. In mid-May, the union issued fresh advice on

worker safety as staff began to migrate back to workplaces after periods of remote working.

Working through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), Fórsa was at the forefront of the negotiation of an agreed national 'return to work safety protocol,' which was also summarised in the new Fórsa guidance. The protocol, agreed in early May 2020, required employers to implement a number of measures in advance of staff returning to workplaces. At union insistence, it included a requirement for employers to recognise at least one Covid-19 lead worker safety representative, with more in larger employments. Shortly after the publication of the protocol, Fórsa won confirmation that civil and public service employers must abide by its measures, and that it would apply equally to employees who remained in their workplace throughout the first lockdown.

The Government set out a phased timetable for the easing of Covid-19 restrictions from mid-May 2020, and Fórsa published detailed return-to-work advice to members. This was revised and reissued frequently on foot of developments. Fórsa officials also initiated detailed discussions on return-to-work arrangements and the implementation of associated safety protocols.

In early June 2020, Fórsa warned that a return to normal workplace industrial relations - where major issues are decided by agreement between managers and workers' representatives - must be a feature of the reopening of the economy. In a detailed written submission to the Oireachtas Special Committee on the Covid-19 Response, the union said workers and their unions had cooperated with huge changes, which had been introduced on an emergency basis. It said public servants and others had accepted this because of the scale and seriousness of the Covid-19 crisis, but that a return to normal negotiation and consultation was needed. The union's elected National Executive Committee (NEC) advised branches and officials that significant changes to, or departures from, agreements governing pay

and working conditions should again be negotiated through normal industrial relations procedures.

In September 2020, the Government published a new approach to coronavirus restrictions with five levels of response linked to levels of confirmed Covid-19 cases and related public health metrics. The entire country was at level two when the six-month plan was launched, but Dublin and Donegal soon entered level three. The rest of the country soon followed.

From midnight on 21st October, the entire country entered level five, the highest level of restrictions, for a six-week period. This was subsequently eased in early December, but the entire country had returned to level five restrictions by the end of 2020. Official public health restrictions on workplace attendance remained in place until April 2021, and were subsequently eased over the course of that year. At the end of August, the Cabinet signed off on a comprehensive unwinding of Covid-19 restrictions including a phased return to workplaces from 20th September, which was subsequently put back because of the emergence of the Omicron variant of the virus.

In January 2021, Fórsa issued a statement that said many public service employers were flouting official Government restrictions on workplace attendance under level five of Covid restrictions. The union said the national effort to bring the coronavirus under control could be undermined by widespread management failure to properly identify which workers need to attend their work premises to undertake essential functions. It added that guidelines issued to civil and public service managers fell short of official Government advice to employers across the economy. The intervention led to significant improvements in most sectors.

Revised official advice on Covid-related workplace safety was published following a radical relaxation of pandemic restrictions, including an end to social distancing requirements, which was announced on 21st January 2022. The 'transitional protocol' said that employers should continue to consult with unions on workplace safety issues and address staff concerns over plans for a phased return to work premises. It also recommended that arrangements for Covid-related 'lead worker representatives' should remain in place. Fórsa said any return to workplaces must be phased, that workers' safety concerns should be addressed, and that employees' longstanding arrangements for childcare, eldercare and other aspects of balancing work and family responsibilities should be taken into account by employers planning a phased return. Most employers consulted with unions and undertook a cautious and phased return to workplaces. Further relaxation in workplace Covid requirements followed as official society-wide restrictions continued to be eased in the early part of 2022.

As this report was being finalised, Fórsa was engaged with senior officials of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) after the union raised concerns over sick leave arrangements for staff who suffer from 'long Covid'. This followed changes to DPER guidance on Covid-related sick leave, which could leave some long Covid sufferers with reduced incomes.

# Review of the operation of Fórsa

On 21st May 2021, the general secretary wrote to branches to advise that the National Executive Committee had decided to initiate a review of the operation of Fórsa, noting that the following had been included in the Fórsa rule book/instrument of amalgamation:

“In the year 2021 the National Executive of the Amalgamated Trade Union shall, on its own initiative, conduct a review of the operation of the Amalgamated Trade Union, including giving consideration to the appropriate number of union officers.” The review took place throughout 2021, and a detailed paper was tabled at the December 2021 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

At its meeting in January 2022 the outcome of the review and its conclusions were adopted by the NEC, which also agreed that the report should be circulated to branches. A copy of the review can be accessed [HERE](#).

The core message from the review is that while considerable progress has been achieved since the formation of Fórsa, there is still a significant body of work which needs to be undertaken to realise the ambition which led to the creation of Fórsa in the first place.

In particular, there is a requirement that right across the union we focus our attentions on delivering the opportunities in the Fórsa strategic plan to build a better and stronger union for our members. The strategic plan commits us to be always striving to be the best at what we do.

# Strategic Change Project

A range of projects are being managed currently by the Strategic Change Project team and this report summarises current developments.

## Fórsa strategic plan

Fórsa's conference in November 2020 adopted a strategic plan for Fórsa. The plan can be accessed [HERE](#). The Strategic Plan defines what Fórsa stands for and how the union proposes to set about achieving its objectives. It reflects the nature of the membership organisation, and sets out the five core strategic objectives to which Fórsa is committed:

1. Organising to create a stronger, more powerful union
2. Delivering for members
3. Campaigning and influencing
4. Building an efficient and effective union
5. Futureproofing Fórsa for the challenges ahead.

The Project Group completed an implementation plan and this was endorsed by a Project Implementation Board led by the general secretary. The initial focus, in terms of implementing the objectives of the plan, will be recording the membership density for every workplace and location across the union. This baseline will be used to identify targets and build density across the union.

## Gender and diversity

A report with a set of recommendations for immediate action was finalised and sent to the general secretary. The report has been referred to the national secretary with responsibility for Equality & Diversity issues for consideration.

## Digital strategy/online engagement

A report, with recommendations, was considered by the general secretary. The NEC subsequently authorised recruitment to a 'director of digital' post. The role will see the development and implementation of a member-centric digital strategy, designed both listen to and amplify the diverse voices of current members, support and amplify outreach to new members, coordinate and to focus energy and digital activity from across the union, ensuring measurable impact in line with Fórsa's national strategy.

## Sustainability and climate leadership

The work of the project group is complete and a report with recommendations was adopted by the NEC.

## HR and staff development

The work of the project group is complete and a report with recommendations was adopted by the NEC. As a result, a new director of human resources was appointed by the union.

## Branch supports, development and membership engagement

Branch and staff surveys and workshops have been completed and analysed and a report containing the outcomes of the project group will be available shortly.

## Organising and density building

A mapping and organising pilot in the Local Government and Local Services division has been completed. The project group worked collaboratively with colleagues in Strategic Organising and the head of division throughout the process. A report with recommendations will be compiled. The objective involves standardising best practice, a national mapping exercise and infill organising.



Photo: Dornick Walsh

Billy Hannigan has led Fórsa's Strategic Change Project team during the period under review in this report.



# Solas related projects

## Solas CRM

Fórsa's bespoke CRM/membership database system, 'Solas', went live 29th March 2022. In anticipation of the need to provide first line support to staff, a small team and a dedicated email address has been established internally. Most support requests relate to issues such as basic functionality and user credentials. Where appropriate issues are escalated to the APT helpdesk. Work to resolve bugs is ongoing, however staff have also reported excellent results in report generation. A project plan for Phases two and three is expected imminently.

## Join online

Join online is enabled for DAS (deduction at source) employments. A review of the overall membership application process, and how to extend join online access to non-DAS applications, is ongoing.

## Membership applications

Membership applications is now a sub-project of the Solas implementation project. Following the decision to integrate four staff from Ward Consulting into the Membership department, the intention is to develop standard operating procedures pertaining to all aspects of the membership applications process.

## Premises and offices

The union holds property assets for three reasons:

- As office space for union staff and representatives
- As meeting venues and facilities for members, branches, and other committees of the union
- As an element of the union's asset portfolio.

In keeping with the recommendations of the report of the ICTU-established commission on the Irish trade union movement, and the related Fórsa motion carried at the ICTU conference in 2021, the union is working with other unions through the local trade union centres initiative. This includes exploring the acquisition of premises in appropriate locations to enhance trade union presence and services in local communities.

Fórsa's audited accounts (2021) showed that the union held assets worth a total of almost €126 million. Of these, over €33 million were accounted for by union premises. In line with standard accounting practice, this is expressed in the accounts as 'net book value,' which means the cost of the buildings at the time of purchase, minus accumulated devaluation.

Outside of Dublin, Connect and SIPTU trade unions are tenants in most Fórsa premises. Other unions are in talks with Fórsa to join as tenants and share facilities. Fórsa currently owns seven properties in Adelaide Road (Dublin), Cork, Limerick, Nerney's Court (Dublin), Sligo, and Woodford (near Dublin airport).

All Fórsa assets, including premises, are overseen by the union's Asset Management Sub-Committee. This is a sub-committee of the NEC, which makes all decisions concerning union assets.

The NEC approved substantial improvement works which were carried out in Nerney's Court, Sligo, and Woodford. The union's premises in Adelaide Road became vacant towards the end of 2019. The NEC has decided to retain this building in ownership and is examining options to lease it, or part of it, and have engaged realtors to do this. The union acquired premises adjoining our Cork premises with a view to fitting these out and joining them to our existing offices and enhancing services delivered from those offices.

In 2021, the NEC authorised refurbishment of the warehouse at rear of the existing Limerick premises. Works are scheduled to conclude in 2022 which will result in an additional investment premises, intended for housing trade unions which currently share our existing premises, and open up enhanced meeting facilities on site.

## Membership

Membership of the union stood at 81,656 at the end of December 2021, compared to 80,111 at end of December 2019. This modest increase in membership, just below two per cent, reflects the difficulty of mounting more traditional recruitment campaigns during a two-year pandemic, a period was also marked by significant levels of public service retirement. The gender breakdown for the two-year period was 74% female and 26% male.



# Training and development

The Fórsa **Skills Academy** was officially launched in September 2021. It was established following a review of the training and development programmes that existed at the time of the amalgamation of unions that created Fórsa, and officially launched in September 2021. The review recommended a restructuring of all training programmes, and the introduction of two new training courses.

These new courses, *Fórsa 101* and *Branch Executive Committee 101*, have been popular with new and emerging workplace reps since they were launched at the end of 2021. Close to 200 workplace reps applied to attend the first courses. The purpose of these courses are to de-mystify the work of the union and local branch executive committees.

In addition to these new courses, the unions central capacity building programme – the Fórsa Workplace Representative Training – has been revised and now focuses on providing a skills and knowledge base in five key areas: organising, communication, health and safety, equality and diversity and industrial relations. More than 100 Fórsa workplace representatives have attended the revised training through a combination of remote and in-person training options in the first half of 2022.

In addition, the Skills Academy completed annual branch officer training courses, which are specific to the different roles on Fórsa branch executive committees, offering an introduction to the role, and an opportunity to network with other branch officers. More than 200 branch officers took part in the 2022 training, which took place in-person and online.

## Strategic organising

A strategic organising model was introduced in 2020 throughout sections of the Fórsa divisional and membership network. This approach resulted in the implementation of project-based sectoral initiatives, initially and primarily focused on creating influence and building power at workplace level. The initial implementation of this approach was conducted in several targeted areas, subsequently creating opportunities for significant and proactive ground and membership engagement, issue consolidation and the creation of appropriate strategies to advance agreed strategic organising objectives. It's worth noting that such a model was applied during the Covid pandemic and, despite perceived obstacles to achieving positive outcomes through the utilisation of such methodologies, the application of this model has resulted in consistent density and union leadership growth at employment level, and creating opportunities to address issues that are of concern to workers.

The advancement of strategic organising will continue to broaden scope as appropriate, and in line with central organisational objectives. However, it's worth noting that where this model is applied, significant union activation and participation at ground and workplace level becomes evident, resulting in consistent increases in density, leadership and communications activity, and increased union leverage on matters important to Fórsa members. While extremely labour intensive, the investment in this process by the union, through the utilisation of a specialised group of staff, success requires the support and expertise of the union's activist and representative structure through all levels of the organisation, including, in some circumstances, divisional support. It's envisaged that this methodology will continue to be rolled out in a phased and project-based manner, as appropriate.



Photo: Dornick Walsh

Issue-based strategies have included pay, hours and leave which led to the creation of the interactive *It's about time* strategy, which directly influenced the organisation's policy at national level.

## Equivalent Grades committees

The continued development of the two existing Equivalent Grades committees (Executive/Grades IV - VII and Clerical Officer/Grade III) was also a significant contributor to the growth and influence of Fórsa in workplaces across the divisions during this timeframe. Formed under rule upon the formation of Fórsa, the Equivalent Grades committees are made up of divisional executive nominees, and meet quarterly to identify and discuss issues relevant to all concerned at the appropriate grades. This unique and proactive forum has facilitated the roll-out of several strategic organising and leverage strategies that are championed by the members of the various committees, and disseminated through their membership networks. To date such issue-based strategies have included pay, hours and leave which led to the creation of the interactive *It's about time* strategy, which directly influenced the organisation's policy at national level.

## Branch communication

Over 100 branches are now connected to the [Forsa-rep.ie](mailto:Forsa-rep.ie) communications network, set up by Fórsa's IT providers to facilitate confidential and secure email activity linking Fórsa's offices with our elected representatives on the NEC, national subcommittees, divisional executives, vocational groups, and core branch officers. Following an NEC decision in early 2022, two of these email addresses are now allocated to each branch, and must be set up on personal tablets or laptops using Microsoft 365/SharePoint. The move to this secure form of internal union communications is critical, given increased cyber security concerns and the implications of GDPR for our members' data protection rights. Increasingly, employers are beginning to restrict union access to their internal IT systems because of these same risks. While moving to the use of own IT hardware to carry out union tasks will be a challenge for many representatives, there is no alternative solution.

# Communications

A 'contact us' facility was established on the home page of the union's website at the outset of the pandemic in March 2020. Tens of thousands of member queries were dealt with by staff in the first months of the pandemic, and daily summary reports of member queries were collated to allow better targeting of staff resources and communications output.

Arrangements were put in place to enable remote meetings of the National Executive Committee, divisional executives and councils, and staff. This was facilitated by a significant investment in IT equipment. Senior divisional officials also put measures in place to ensure regular remote discussions with employer representatives, and communication between staff and branch officers and activists. A guide to organising and participating in remote meetings was produced by the Communications Unit and issued to branches in June 2020.

A number of well-attended and highly-engaged members' webinars on specific issues and challenges in the divisions was also organised over the summer of 2020. These included events for social welfare staff, library workers, health and social care professionals, members in aviation, special needs assistants and other school staff, and lead Covid-19 workplace safety reps. Most of these virtual events attracted better participation than similar physical events had in the past.

The Communications Unit normally produces five sectoral ebulletins (civil service, education, local authorities, health, and services and enterprises) each fortnight, but the output was massively increased in the early months of the pandemic. For example, in the fortnight up to 29th March 2020, the Unit issued nine members' ebulletins, each to over 56,000 members. By June 2020, the Unit had settled into a pattern of issuing ebulletins on a weekly basis, alternating between fortnightly 'all member' bulletins and fortnightly sets of five sectoral bulletins. This has since reverted to five fortnightly sectoral bulletins.

The numbers of members receiving ebulletins rose from just over 56,000 to almost 68,000 between March and September 2020. By April 2022 this had risen to over 77,000, despite the removal of some 10,000 duplicate addresses when the union's new membership system was introduced. Member engagement with the ebulletins peaked at an average of almost 50% across all divisions in March and early April 2020, and has since settled at a slightly lower level in the mid-to-high-forties.

Throughout the pandemic, the Communications Unit produced and updated information and guidance to members in the form of 'frequently-asked questions' and other formats. This was also regularly updated on the Fórsa website and, by the summer of 2020, sustained traffic to the site was running at nearly 90% above comparable 2019 figures. This has now returned to more normal levels, though with significantly more traffic than before the pandemic. The union's social media platforms were also used extensively throughout the crisis, again with substantially-increased engagement.

The Communications Unit also assisted with a wide range of union events across the divisions and campaigns, and produced a high volume of digital, video and printed material for use across the organisation.

The Unit also achieved extensive print and broadcast media coverage on a range of issues, campaigns, disputes and agreements, establishing Fórsa as the leading trade union voice on a range of issues including public service pay, remote and blended work, and working time.

## Campaigns Unit

The Campaigns Unit developed and continued to boost a number of campaigns and strategic alliances in the period under review. Fórsa commissioned a report with TASC *The Irish state post-pandemic*, published in February 2022. Fórsa is a founding member of the ICTU's Just Transition Alliance. Launched in March 2022, it's composed of trade unions and climate change groups building political support and seeking a just transition for workers in Ireland and internationally.

The #RespectForSNAs campaign continues to build support, focusing on the issue of minimum qualifications for SNAs. The campaign has completed a number of phases and hosted large events, including a seminar for over 500 SNAs in December 2021. The union's *Support Our Secretaries* campaign for fair conditions for Ireland's school. The first national school secretary strike took place in January 2020. In March 2022 members voted overwhelmingly to accept new pay and conditions (see also page 42 in Education).

The campaigns unit has also supported the work of the health and welfare division in over the last two years, building political awareness and support for priority objectives for the health and welfare. The unit facilitated regular briefings of relevant political spokespersons, briefing a wider political audience on key issues such as section 39s. The *At the heart of health and welfare* infographic, developed with the Health and Welfare division by Fórsa's Communications Unit, was launched in 2021.

Education Futures has continued to work towards a fully publicly funded model of higher education, building political support and making several submissions relating to access schemes and grants. Fórsa is also part of the ICTU *Raise the Roof* campaign and the campaign to recognise a right to housing in the constitution. The "home for all" campaign was successfully able to secure a commitment to a referendum on housing. Issues remain as to the proposed wording and purpose of the referendum. Fórsa will engage with the recently announced housing commission.



The Fórsa-led campaign for the four day working week wrote to the chief executives of every local authority asking them to take part in the national pilot being promoted by Four-Day Week Ireland in 2021, and received a significant boost when Dublin City councillors unanimously backed a **motion** seeking to introduce a four-day working week for council staff. A number of Irish companies embarked on a six-month trial of a four-day work week, in collaboration with the Four Day Week Ireland campaign, in February 2022.

The *More Power To You* campaign for enhanced local government powers and improved local services launched a second phase in 2021 and aims to address each of the 31 local authorities on the key objectives of the campaign. There's a significant focus on the issue of outsourcing and "re-municipalisation" or insourcing (see also Local Government and Local Services report on page 50). The *Hidden Heroes* social media campaign sought to highlight the work of Fórsa members engaging in essential work during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and took place in 2020.

The branch campaigns officers' network continued to meet throughout the pandemic. Training and meetings were conducted virtually throughout the year. The group will now return to provide some in-person events with the 2022 summer series set to be hosted in Fórsa's Dublin offices.

## Membership services

Fórsa members continued to have access to a wide range of union-negotiated financial and other benefits including free critical illness, death-in-service and death of spouse/partner cover, up to €5,000 personal accident insurance, and access to €5,000 illness benefit if out of work for more than 12 months, as well as repatriation cover.

Members have access to free helplines that provide counselling, legal advice on non-workplace issues, and domestic assistance. This scheme also covers free legal representation in bodily injury cases. The NEC oversees all these schemes through its membership services sub-committee who met regularly during the period covered by this report. The committee also managed the union's Gaeltacht, third level and other bursary schemes and reviewed union sponsored income continuance schemes. In 2021 agreement was reached with ARAQ who administer the union's helplines services to add a will writing and identity theft helplines to these services from 2022 onwards.

## Data protection

A number of data protection risk assessments (DPIAs) were carried out over the period in review. The union is putting policies and procedures in place, including the training of staff and activists, to ensure that its data records are fully secure, and to meet its other obligations under data protection legislation. Fórsa has established a cyber security group which meets monthly and conducted a cyber security audit. Work is now underway to implement the recommendations of the audit. See the Fórsa **data protection guide** at [forsa.ie](https://forsa.ie).

## Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Fórsa is affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and plays an active part in its various activities and committees. The union's general secretary, Kevin Callinan, was elected president of ICTU in **October 2021**, and has chaired its Public Services Committee since May 2019. Fórsa officials Bernard Harbor, Katie Morgan and Eoin Ronayne are elected members of ICTU's Executive Council, and Fórsa vice-president Betty Tyrrell Collard was re-elected to represent Ireland's trades' councils on the executive committee in October 2021. Margaret Coughlan was re-elected as chair of the ICTU Women's Committee in 2021.

## International: Affiliations

Fórsa is affiliated to, and plays an active role in, the following international trade union federations: Public Services International (PSI), the European Federation of Public Service Trade Unions (EPSU), the International Transport Federation (ITF), the European Transport Federation (ETF), and Uni Global Union.

Fórsa is also one of the active international trade union affiliates of the Justice for Colombia (JFC) campaign, and an affiliate of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFP), established by ICTU, which works within the trade union movement to educate members and highlight the injustices inflicted on the Palestinian people, to promote further policy motions to help address Israeli human rights abuses and to mobilise solidarity activity.

## International: Fórsa Ukraine appeal

In March 2022, Fórsa announced that its Ukraine Appeal had raised €500,000, which was being donated to two organisations providing humanitarian relief to people who've been displaced by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. In just three weeks, the appeal raised almost €250,000 in donations from Fórsa members and branches, and the union's National Executive decided to top up the amount from the union's Developing World Fund to bring the total raised to €500,000. The proceeds of the Fórsa appeal will be shared equally between the Irish Red Cross and a special trade union solidarity fund jointly established by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The appeal initially set a donation target of €50,000, but this was repeatedly increased as the solidarity and generosity of Fórsa members and branches exceeded expectations.

Fórsa's Communications Unit also contributed to the organisation of an ICTU solidarity protest, which marked the first month of the Russian invasion of Ukraine outside the Russian Embassy on 24th March 2022. The protest brought trade unionists together with members of Ireland's Ukrainian community, and speakers included Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan and Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland, Larysa Gerasko.

The union continues to monitor the impact of the war on the international economic and geopolitical situation.

## International: TRIPS waiver

In 2021, Fórsa wrote to Ireland's 11 MEPs urging them to support measures to give developing countries rapid access to Covid-19 vaccines. The union's general secretary Kevin Callinan called on them to put pressure on the European Commission to support a waiver of intellectual property rights, which currently restrict the local manufacture of life-saving vaccines across the globe. Fórsa said the EU's refusal to back a TRIPS (trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights) waiver, which is supported by over 100 nations, has put millions of lives at risk in the developing world. The union was active in the international 'People's Vaccine' campaign, which says pharmaceutical company control of vaccine-related intellectual property could leave countries in the global south waiting until 2023 for

widespread vaccination. The proposed waiving of intellectual property rights would allow the rapid upscaling of vaccine manufacturing by developing countries.

## Code of Service Standards

A senior official is assigned under rule to oversee the Code of Service Standards, which currently applies within the Civil Service division. This code sets down timelines for the delivery of services by Fórsa. Its extension to other divisions is linked to the phased introduction of the new Solas database. In the interim, service standards concerns are handled by the senior official on an ad-hoc basis outside of the code. A summary of activity under the Code is available at Appendix V of this report.

## Ombudsman's Report

No cases were referred to the Ombudsman as provided for in Section 28(1) of the Rules of Fórsa. A summary of activity under the Code is available at Appendix VI of this report.

## Ryanair

A legal action taken by Ryanair against Fórsa and 11 individuals was settled in the High Court in November 2021. The union strongly defended the Ryanair action in which the airline sought damages of €13.7 million, which it claimed it had incurred as a result of proposed industrial action by pilots in 2019. Fórsa welcomed the settlement, which saw the damages claim dropped and both parties enter into a non-legally binding agreement covering the conduct of industrial relations and resolution of industrial disputes.

# Pay and related

## Public service pay

Throughout 2019, Fórsa had pressed for an early engagement to shape and inform 2020 negotiations on a successor to the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA), which expired at the end of 2020. Like previous agreements, the PSSA governed pay and conditions across the civil and public service, section 38 organisations including voluntary hospitals, and non-commercial State agencies.

The 2019 engagements took place against the background of strong and improving economic performance and public finances. Fórsa argued that new talks should address the fact that public service pay movement had been slower than both inflation and economy-wide pay trends in the period since the 2008 financial crisis. It also said any new agreement must be capable of dealing with sectoral and grade issues, as well as addressing outstanding restoration issues, including working time.

However, a long hiatus in the engagement emerged before and following the general election, which took place on 8th February 2020. The election was followed by months of talks on government formation and the new coalition Government was not in place until 27th June. In the meantime, the Covid-19 crisis had radically damaged the country's economic and fiscal position, while pushing the issue of a PSSA successor down the list of public policy priorities.

Nevertheless, the programme for government, published in June, committed the new administration to seek to negotiate a new public service pay deal. It said the new Government's approach to public service pay would "be guided by the State's financial position and outlook, challenges in relation to recruitment and retention, and conditions within the broader labour market." It acknowledged the "important role" played by public servants, and pledged to ensure that "positive work practice changes" introduced during the Covid-19 emergency would

be embedded in any new pay deal. The programme for government said the Government would seek a sectoral bargaining clause in any agreement.

Following the formation of the new Government, the officers of ICTU's Public Services Committee met the incoming Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath. The minister agreed that public service unions and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) would engage in early September 2020 to explore the potential for a successor to the PSSA. Minister McGrath also confirmed that the new Government would meet its commitment to pay the final PSSA instalment - worth 2% of gross pay - on 1st October.

DPER published the revised pay scales in September, for implementation on 1st October, when cuts to fixed allowances were also reversed. The pay adjustment meant that, over its three-year lifetime, the PSSA has brought pay adjustments of more than 7% for over 70% of civil and public servants, with slightly smaller percentage adjustments for the higher-paid. Following PSSA and earlier adjustments, around 90% of civil and public servants have now had their basic pay rates restored to 2009 levels, but most of their incomes are lower than in 2009 because of other factors, including increased pension contributions.

Exploratory talks on a successor to the PSSA opened at a meeting between union leaders and senior DPER officials in September 2020, when Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan outlined the union's headline issues for the negotiations. Fórsa said the process must acknowledge the contribution of public servants, both during the pandemic and in the hard years following the 2008 banking crisis. The union also said any agreement must address outstanding restoration issues, including the additional working time introduced for lower and medium-paid workers under the 2013 Haddington Road agreement

(HRA). The union sought a mechanism for dealing with issues specific to particular grades and categories of staff, as well as an acceptable approach to public service-wide pay adjustments over the lifetime of any new agreement.

The officers of the ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC), which is chaired by Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan, lead the unions in the negotiations which, for a variety of reasons on the employers' side, were slow during the late summer and early autumn of 2020. The PSC met on 23rd October, and expressed concerns that the time available to negotiate, draft and ratify any agreement, before the end of December was running short. In a statement, the PSC outlined the real possibility that no agreement would be in place at the end of 2020. Although exploratory engagements continued, formal talks didn't resume until late in November 2020. Intensive negotiations then led to agreement on proposals for a two-year agreement, which was reached just before the Christmas break.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions on travel and assembly, Fórsa conducted a national electronic ballot on the package in early 2021. This was accompanied by many national and branch virtual information meetings and an extensive digital information campaign. The union's members in the public service subsequently voted by a margin of 94%-4% to endorse the new agreement, which was called *Building Momentum*. The outcome of Fórsa's ballot, which was announced in late February 2021, was as follows:

Ballots issued:	67,527
Ballots returned:	39,457
Votes cast in favour:	37,828
Votes cast against:	1,629
<b>Majority in favour:</b>	<b>36,199</b>

A meeting of the ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC) also overwhelmingly endorsed the agreement, where 13 of the 17 PSC affiliates supported the package. The remaining four subsequently said they would be encompassed by the agreement, which came into force with immediate effect, and runs until December 2022.

## Building Momentum provisions

*Building Momentum* allowed for two pay increases, each worth 1% of annual salary or €500 a year, whichever is the greater. This meant the deal was worth substantially more for lower paid workers in percentage terms. A third increase, worth a further 1%, was available for grade-based bargaining for all public service grades. This could either be used to deal with issues affecting particular grades, or it could be taken as a straight 1% pay award.

The agreement retained the strong protections against outsourcing that have been a feature of public service agreements since 2010. These include requirements on employers to present a 'business case' if they want to outsource a service or part of a service, and a requirement to consult with staff representatives. Crucially, employers are forbidden to include labour costs in any business case. This is a substantial safeguard because discarding the labour cost provision would effectively mean the majority of business cases would support outsourcing and lead to the privatisation of public services regardless of the impact on pay, working conditions or service quality.

*Building Momentum* also ensured the restoration, from July 2021, of overtime and premium payments that were reduced or abolished under the 2013 Haddington Road agreement. This included the abolition of the hour of unpaid overtime introduced under the HRA.

In common with all previous public service agreements, *Building Momentum* also included commitments to certain productivity measures, and set out a detailed dispute resolution process, including an "industrial peace" clause.

It also contained a provision to review the terms of the agreement "where the underlying assumptions of the agreement need to be revisited." However, the union negotiators successfully insisted that PSSA language, which linked this specifically to a worsening economic situation, was deleted. This creates the opportunity to seek a review of the package if the economic situation improves beyond expectations.

## Building Momentum: Pay at a glance

- **1st October 2021:** A general round increase worth 1% of gross pay or €500 a year, whichever is the greater. The €500 a year floor means those on lower incomes will receive a significantly larger percentage increase than higher paid staff.
- **1st February 2022:** The equivalent of a 1% increase in annualised basic salaries through a 'sectoral bargaining fund'.
- **1st October 2022:** A second general round increase worth 1% of gross pay or €500 a year, whichever is the greater.

The agreement was negotiated and accepted in ballots at a time of very low inflation, when no State or independent economic analysis was predicting significant cost-of-living increases. But by early 2022, annual inflation had topped 5%, and hopes that prices were rising temporarily as 'post-Covid' economic activity and demand resumed were fading. The economic and geopolitical fallout from the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine, which commenced on 24th February 2022, exacerbated the cost-of-living crisis, and dispelled any idea that inflation would be a short-lived phenomenon.

In early February, Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan raised the issue at the Labour-Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), which brings together the most senior Government, union and employer representatives. He outlined three urgent Government actions required to stabilise the agreement against the background of radically changed economic circumstances. These were the implementation of the recommendations of the independent body set up to examine the so-called 'Haddington Road hours' (see below), a swift conclusion to sectoral bargaining discussions (see below) and a Government commitment to enter talks on a possible successor to *Building Momentum* by May 2022. The last of these would allow discussion of the impact of inflation on living standards and measures to stabilise the public service agreement.

On 11th March, and in the absence of a substantial Government response to Fórsa's intervention, the union went to the annual general meeting of the ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC) and proposed that unions should invoke the *Building Momentum* review clause (see above). The PSC then wrote to Minister McGrath to invoke the clause on the basis that the assumptions underlying this agreement needed to be revisited. The agreement says the parties must engage in such circumstances. On 2nd April, Minister McGrath gave a TV interview, in which he said his officials would engage with the union side.

## Sectoral bargaining

*Building Momentum* saw the establishment of a 'sectoral bargaining fund', initially worth 1% of basic pensionable pay during the lifetime of the agreement, with payment due on 1st February 2022. It was established to deal with outstanding adjudications, recommendations, awards and claims relevant to specific grades, groups or categories of workers within the various sectors of the public service. Alternatively, groups could opt to use the available allocation, or part of it, as a sectoral pay round worth 1%. Following engagements at sectoral level, most Fórsa groups, grades and categories opted for a straight 1% increase, though a small but significant number opted to address outstanding adjudications or recommendations.

## Haddington Road hours

Fórsa insisted that it would not recommend an agreement to members unless it addressed the additional hours introduced for many civil and public servants under the 2013 Haddington Road agreement. The additional working hours were imposed from 1st July 2013, when the standard working time of civil and public servants increased to 39 hours for those who previously worked between 35 and 37 hours, and to 37 hours for those who previously worked 35 hours or less. The hours of those working 39 hours or more per week were unchanged.

The *Building Momentum* agreement established an independent body to make recommendations to begin the process of returning to pre-Haddington Road hours. Under the agreement, the implementation of the independent body's recommendations was to begin within the lifetime of the agreement, with €150 million available to commence implementation of the outcomes during 2022. The agreement also committed



unions and management representatives to engage on measures necessary for the implementation of any remaining recommendations in the context of the 2023 budget estimates, with a view to addressing this in the talks on any successor to *Building Momentum*.

Fórsa then led the union side in its engagements with the independent body. The union drafted written submissions to the body on behalf of the ICTU Public Service Committee, including responses to management submissions, and Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan led the union side in oral submissions and other interactions with the independent body. The union also developed a media and communications strategy to support the unions' case and approach, and made numerous interventions in media and other public debates.

The independent body issued its report in January 2022. Its recommendation, that working time should be returned to the pre-July 2013 hours with a minimum working week of 35 hours, applied to all staff in the grades affected including those recruited after additional working hours were introduced in 2013.

Fórsa and other unions welcomed the recommendation which, if accepted by Government, would unwind the final element of the HRA's austerity measures. The union expressed confidence that this return to pre-austerity arrangements could be achieved without excessive cost or damage to public service quality or output.

The independent body said it had taken account of the nine-year period in which the additional hours have been worked, the strain on the staff working the hours, and the "truly committed efforts of staff during the last two years in meeting patient, healthcare, population vaccine, security needs and the requirements of delivery for existing and new social welfare and pandemic payment measures." It said the additional hours had "undoubtedly contributed significantly to the national effort to recover from the global crisis of the last decade.

The body also said that no compensatory claims should be pursued or conceded in respect of any grade arising from the implementation of its recommendations, which "effectively conclude any further negotiations to restore pay and other conditions of employment, either imposed by a combination of FEMPI legislative enactments, or agreed through a difficult series of overarching public sector agreements addressing pay, pensions, working hours and public service modernisation requirements over the last decade."

On 14th April 2022, the Government announced that it had accepted the full report of the Independent Body, which includes the implementation date of 1st July 2022. Its statement said that the health minister would engage with health sector unions “on the measures that are required to ensure safe implementation of the recommendations.”

## Private sector pay

In December 2021, the ICTU Private Sector Committee recommended that unions representing private sector workers should seek pay increases of between 2.5% and 4.5% in 2022. The advice was informed by economic analysis from the union-backed Nevin Economic and Research Institute (NERI). At that time, NERI said unemployment was expected to fall in 2022, and that Ireland would reach near-full employment in 2023. Its projections assumed that the effects of Covid-19 will have diminished or been eliminated, leading to strong economic growth in 2022. But ICTU said it would continue to monitor inflation after the consumer price index (CPI) rose by 5.5% in December.

In February 2022 ICTU revised its pay advice upwards, on foot of sustained high inflation, and advised unions to seek increases of between 2.5% and 5.5%. This was based on an updated cost of living report from NERI. ICTU advised unions to take account of the ability to pay in specific companies when framing claims, saying that some can afford a 5.5% increase – or even more – while others cannot. It also urged the Government to increase the amount of tax-free voucher payments allowable under the ‘small benefits’ scheme from €500 to €1,000 a year.

In March 2022, Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan said he anticipated another upward revision in ICTU’s pay targets. He said the high cost of services like healthcare, education and childcare, which are free or cheap in other relatively wealthy European countries, was intensifying Ireland’s cost of living crisis and would fuel demands for wage increases in the face of consistently high inflation. He called on the Government to engage in social dialogue with employers and unions to tackle rising prices, and other aspects of the economic and geopolitical impact of the war in Ukraine, and said the protection of employment would also remain a priority for unions.

In addition to pay increases, ICTU advised unions to continue to seek improvements in other conditions of employment including, working time, starting pay, annual leave, sick pay and pension benefits. Details of some private sector and non-commercial State sector wage claims and movements are included in the Services and Enterprises section of this report (page 60 to 62).

## Community and voluntary sector pay

An agreement on pay restoration in 50 large ‘section 39’ employments was made in 2018 and commenced in 2019. In December 2020, Fórsa and other unions achieved a breakthrough on pay restoration for members in a further 250 agencies, following a conciliation conference in the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). The agreement consists of a first instalment worth up to €1,000 from 1st January 2021, followed by a second instalment worth 50% of the outstanding pay restoration due. This was effective from 31st May 2021 and was to be paid in June 2021.

Further meetings took place in 2021 and 2022, to discuss pay restoration in the rest of the sector, including under the auspices of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). Fórsa also raised the issue in the talks that led to the *Building Momentum* public service pay agreement, but it was not possible to achieve an acceptable funding model for the community and voluntary sector in that forum. In 2021, Fórsa published a report by Brian Harvey, **A New Systemic Funding Model: The voluntary and community sector in the 2020s**, updating the union’s earlier ‘Caring At What Cost’ report and set out the case for multi-annual funding for the sector.

Fórsa continues to lead in the ICTU Group of Unions intensified industrial and political campaign for community and voluntary sector pay restoration. Preparations for further industrial action and a day of action were underway as this report was being finalised.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has also demanded that membership of a dialogue forum for voluntary bodies be expanded to include union representatives. Unions say this would be consistent with programme for government commitments to wider social dialogue, and that the forum could contribute to the resolution of long-term structural issues in the sector.



## Minimum wage

A February 2021 report from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) found that increases in minimum wage rates don't lead to higher labour costs or job cuts. The research found that a 2016 increase, which raised the minimum wage from €8.65 to €9.15 an hour, led to increased labour costs for just 3% of firms. The average labour costs in 90% of firms with staff on minimum pay increased in line with those of employers with no minimum wage workers.

Significantly, it also found no evidence that firms cut staff numbers in response to the minimum wage increase. Politicians and economists frequently cite job protection as a reason for suppressing low-pay protections. But the ESRI found the increase in the pay floor was effective at reducing wage inequality, particularly for younger workers.

In September 2020, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) withdrew from the Low Pay Commission, which effectively sets the minimum wage in Ireland, because of its recommendation for a paltry increase in 2021.

In a March 2021 submission to the Low Pay Commission, ICTU called for a 30 cent rise in the statutory minimum wage, to bring it to €10.50 an hour in 2022. Later in 2021, the Low Pay Commission recommended the rate of the National Minimum Wage for an adult worker be fixed at a rate of €10.50 per hour. This recommendation was accepted by the Government and came into effect on 1st January 2022.

In its 2021 submission to the Low Pay Commission, ICTU also highlighted the Government's pledge to increase the statutory minimum to 'living wage' levels over the lifetime of the current administration. The 'living wage' rate represents the average gross salary required for a full-time employed adult, without dependents, to afford a socially acceptable standard of living. It was estimated at €12.50 an hour at the time of ICTU's submission, but has since risen to €12.90 an hour.

Both Fórsa and ICTU made submissions to a Government consultation on an EU draft directive on low pay and collective bargaining in 2021.

## Gender pay gap

Ireland's gender pay gap is estimated to be an average of about 14%. Fórsa continued to campaign with ICTU, and independently, for effective legislation on gender pay gap reporting. In March 2022, the union welcomed the Government's announcement that it will, this year, introduce an obligation on employers with more than 250 staff to report on their gender pay gap. The union also called for a rapid expansion of the number of companies covered.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth also said it would publish guidance for employers on how gender pay gap calculations should be made, and said it planned to apply the reporting obligation to organisations with more than 150 employees by 2024, and to those with more than 50 employees by 2025.

In December 2021, the chief executive of An Post said trade unions had played a key role in the company's success in achieving a 'zero' gender pay gap. The commercial semi-state body reported it had become one of the very few Irish companies to reduce its gender pay gap to 0%, down from the already-low gap of 3.7% two years previously. He added that pay gap reporting had contributed to the elimination of the divide.

A 2021 survey of private sector pay and employment practices, by CIPD Ireland and Industrial Relations News, found that only a quarter of companies in Ireland had published a gender pay gap policy or action plan.

# Working conditions

## Working time

The Covid-19 crisis had a significant impact on working time and other working arrangements for tens of thousands of civil and public servants, staff in State agencies and the community and voluntary sector, and in the private sector. These included remote working, temporary reassignments to new duties, and the suspension of flexitime. Many experienced temporary changes to rosters and shift patterns, introduced to support social distancing and other public health requirements. Staff whose shift patterns were altered were generally rostered for fewer hours than normal.

In its submission to the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) consultation on remote working, Fórsa argued that these developments should be factored into broader policy debates about the scope for reducing working time, particularly in the context of the impact of artificial intelligence and other new technologies.

As part of the response to the coronavirus crisis, flexitime arrangements were suspended across the civil and public service in early April 2020. At the end of July, Fórsa sought the reinstatement of flexitime for staff who had returned to workplaces and were back on their normal hours and work patterns following periods of remote working or changed working time. The union raised the issue with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), which agreed to return to normal flexitime arrangements in late August for those based in the workplace on pre-coronavirus working time and attendance patterns. The union is now seeking the restoration of flexitime for those working remotely or in hybrid arrangements.

New flexibilities were introduced to give managers the option to cancel or postpone individual 'shorter working year' arrangements in the civil service, but only with the consent of the worker involved. The measure also allowed individuals to seek the cancellation of their shorter working year

arrangements, although their manager retains the final say. In early April 2020, Fórsa's intervention in the health sector led the HSE to agree that leave not taken because of the Covid crisis could be carried over.

When it emerged that the Government was considering an extra public holiday to commemorate those who had died of Covid-19, and to recognise the contribution of workers during the pandemic, Fórsa and other unions successfully lobbied for this to be a permanent arrangement rather than the once-off gesture first proposed.

Union progress on the restoration of additional working time introduced under the 2013 Haddington Road agreement is covered in the public service pay section above.

## Remote working

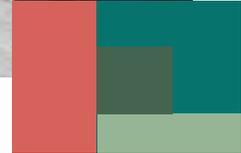
As patterns of remote working settled across large areas of the public service and wider economy because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fórsa published detailed advice on working a home in a single guide. **Working at home: Staying safe, connected, healthy and productive** contained advice on health and safety, setting up a workspace, breaks, staying in touch with managers and colleagues, and balancing work with home life and childcare. The guide also included tips on data protection, cybersecurity, and safeguarding mental health.

On 10th August, Fórsa issued the results of Ireland's largest ever employee opinion survey on the issue of remote working. The study, conducted on behalf of the union by Amárach Research, found that 86% of respondents were interested in working remotely. Over 80% of those who favoured home working expressed a preference for a hybrid arrangement.



Photo: Julien Béhal

Fórsa general secretary and ICTU president Kevin Callinan addressed representatives of the Government, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and employers' bodies to mark Workers' Memorial Day on 28th April 2022 at Dublin's Gardens of Remembrance.



Over 4,300 Fórsa members completed the survey. Seven-in-ten of those who had worked at home during the Covid-19 crisis said remote working had been a positive or very positive experience. Over two-thirds of those who had not worked at home during the crisis also expressed an interest in having access to remote working. Concerns about home working related to four broad areas: Disconnection from the workplace; work encroachment on home life; costs and the appropriateness of the home workspace; and health and safety issues. The biggest single negative aspect of home working, cited by 69% of respondents, was the lack of interaction with colleagues. Worryingly, just 28% of those who worked remotely said a manager had asked them about their home working set-up from a health and safety perspective.

Fórsa then made a detailed **submission** to the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) consultation on remote working. Informed by the union's membership survey, the submission made 20 recommendations and called on the Government to open a dialogue with unions and employers with the aim of strengthening the legal framework around remote working. It said

employers should be required to set objective criteria for determining the tasks and staff selected for home working arrangements, and that employees should have the right to refuse home working without having to give their reasons.

The submission argued that those working remotely should benefit from the same rights, guaranteed by legislation and collective agreements, as comparable staff at their employer's premises. And it called for strong safeguards on health and safety, surveillance, privacy, data protection and cyber-security. It noted that additional household costs accrue from home working.

The Fórsa survey and submission attracted substantial print and broadcast media coverage, and some 200 people participated in a Fórsa webinar on the issue in late September.

The union welcomed the January 2021 publication of the Government's remote working strategy, *Making Remote Work*, which promised legislation to establish a right to request remote working, and pledged to make remote working the norm for 20% of public sector staff.

From the autumn of 2020, Fórsa had been seeking engagement from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) on the development of an agreed long-term framework for remote and blended working in the public service. In the absence of a concrete response, the union submitted a formal claim in March 2021, seeking the negotiation of agreed and comprehensive guidelines on remote working for application across the civil and public service. The detailed claim sought agreement under 20 broad headings, including:

- The consistent application of agreed guidelines for identifying functions that can be performed remotely, and for selecting staff to be allocated to home working arrangements
- Fair access and the right to request remote work
- The principal that individual employees can decline remote work arrangements
- Compliance with health and safety legislation, including specific measures relating to mental health, pregnant women, young workers, and workers with disabilities
- Specific advice on compliance with working time legislation and the 'right to disconnect'
- Agreed guidance on flexible work arrangements, work attendance and time measurement
- The provision of management training and supports to line managers
- The promotion of regular, quality communications between line managers and their staff, and the inclusion of remote workers in collective workplace activities including business meetings and training
- Strong direction that staff who work remotely should routinely spend some time in the workplace
- Full transparency and agreement over the use of any surveillance products or practices, and a guarantee that employees' rights to privacy and a reasonable work-life balance will be protected, along with full compliance with the provisions of data protection legislation.

The union also said any agreement "should preclude individual departments, organisations or managers from opting out of some or all elements of an agreed approach unless an objective rationale is demonstrated."

The union made inputs into the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council's (NCPC) May 2021 bulletin on the competitiveness implications of increased remote working, which said enterprises could benefit from remote working arrangements by gaining access to a broader pool of talent, promoting staff retention, and improving cost-effectiveness while engaging in more sustainable ways of working. Citing both opportunities and challenges for employers, it referenced several studies that identified potential for increasing productivity through remote or blended working.

In July 2021 the Government published a new 'Blended Working Policy Statement,' which envisaged the civil service switching from pandemic-related remote working provisions to long-term 'blended working' arrangements between September 2021 and March 2022. The statement included a commitment to a consistent approach across the civil service, and to transparency and fairness on access to remote working. Fórsa again said it was ready to engage with DPER to agree detailed measures to implement the policy.

In the run-up to the October Budget, Fórsa and other unions argued for improved tax reliefs to help meet costs associated with home working. The Budget increased tax relief on vouched electricity and heating costs from 10% to 30%, while relief on broadband costs was retained at 30%.

At the end of August, the Cabinet signed off on a comprehensive unwinding of Covid-19 restrictions. This included a phased return to workplaces from 20th September, which was subsequently put back because of the emergence of the Omicron variant of the virus. By this time, early engagement on the implementation of the Government's July policy statement was underway. This developed into sustained negotiations in the civil service General Council, with the aim of agreeing a civil service framework capable of being tailored and implemented in sectors across the public service and non-commercial semi-state sector. The management side paused the talks in December, but they resumed in February 2022 and a framework agreement was reached soon after. Following some delay, the framework was published in April 2022. Fórsa divisions outside the civil service were seeking similar agreed sectoral frameworks as this report was being finalised.

The agreed framework gives all civil servants the right to apply for blended working, with workers able to have the decision reviewed if they are



turned down. It required all civil service departments and offices to develop a blended working policy and, on Fórsa's insistence, it said departmental policies should set out a decision-making process that ensures a consistent approach to assessing applications, and which ensures fairness across the organisation.

The new policy places a responsibility on managers to ensure a fair and effective system with strong supports, staff development, communications, and effective performance management. There can be no change to a worker's pay and working conditions on the basis that they have blended working arrangements. It also says employers should provide the necessary equipment to home-workers, and requires employers to conduct health and safety assessments, which should determine specific risks and outline any information or training needs.

The framework is currently silent on the question of flexitime accrual for those with blended working arrangements, and an arbitration finding in April 2022 states that civil service departments and offices should opt for one of two approaches in a pilot to be concluded by 31st December 2022 (see Civil Service section page

34). Fórsa wants staff to retain the right to accrue flexitime built up while working at home, but DPER proposals on a pilot process were not acceptable to the union as they would have resulted in inconsistencies in the approach of different departments. There is no change in flexitime accrual arrangements for staff attending workplaces.

The union decided not to seek arbitration on the issue of a home working allowance as the potential cost implications mean such an arbitration referral was certain to stall implementation of the framework for some time. DPER was adamant that it would not agree to pay an allowance and instead referred staff to the recently-enhanced tax reliefs available on energy, heating and wifi costs. Fórsa will continue to seek the payment of an allowance in future talks.

Towards the end of January 2022, the Government published its long-awaited draft legislation on workers' rights to request remote working. Fórsa, ICTU and other unions were highly critical of the proposed legislation as it cited a wider range of reasons why employers could reject such a request, and made no effective provision to appeal a negative decision from an

employer. The Tánaiste, who had brought forward the legislation, quickly indicated a willingness to discuss amendments to strengthen its provisions. Fórsa worked closely with ICTU and a group of its affiliates to lobby on the proposed legislation. At the end of February, Fórsa and ICTU jointly produced *Make Remote Work: the trade union response to the right to request remote work legislation*, which was circulated to branches and submitted to the Oireachtas committee charged with scrutinising the proposed legislation. Fórsa continues to take a leading role in the joint union lobbying campaign.

## Childcare

In a submission to the Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 Response, published in June 2021, Fórsa argued that the Covid-19 crisis had highlighted shortcomings in Ireland's system of early childcare and education. It said that the inadequacies of the State's response to Ireland's high-cost, low-pay early years system was inadequate prior to the crisis, and called for the formalising of early childcare and education as a publicly-funded and publicly-provided service. This theme was developed in the research paper *The Irish State Post-Pandemic*, which was commissioned by Fórsa and produced by TASC in February 2022.

While the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and other public service employers had agreed to a number of measures to assist staff with childcare during the pandemic period of school and crèche closures, Fórsa and other unions were critical of the Government's response, most especially on childcare provision for essential workers. An Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) report also criticised the Government's response. It said that over a fifth of the Irish workforce were essential workers, and that 100,000 of them had children under the age of 14. **Essential employees during the Covid-19 crisis** found that most essential workers were concentrated in low-paid sectors like retail and non-professional health grades, and couldn't afford extra childcare costs.

## Economic and recovery measures

At the outset of the pandemic, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) wrote to An Taoiseach setting out concerns about eligibility for sick pay for thousands of workers with no occupational sick pay scheme. On foot of this, the Government agreed to improved provisions including higher levels of sick pay from their first day of illness regardless of the number of PRSI contributions made. ICTU was also working with employer groups and the Government to develop what became the pandemic unemployment payment (PUP), which was introduced on 16th March 2020, with enhanced State benefits for workers who lost their jobs because of the pandemic.

On 26th March, and following further discussions with ICTU and employers' representatives, the Government introduced its Covid-19 temporary wage subsidy scheme (TWSS). Initially intended to run for 12 weeks, the scheme gave publicly-funded wage supports to businesses that temporarily closed or lost business because of the pandemic. Designed to keep staff on their employer's payroll, the scheme gave employers up to 70% of pay for worker's earning up to €76,000 a year, capped at a net €350 per week. A significant number of employers in aviation and elsewhere adopted the scheme, which was subsequently modified on a number of occasions.

In May 2020, the scheme was improved on foot of trade union lobbying. The improvements, which included increased payments for some, ensured that workers who remained on payroll were eligible for the subsidy even if they were working reduced hours or were temporarily furloughed. By this time, over 40,000 companies had registered for the scheme, which had come under fire for encouraging part-time and low-paid workers to leave their jobs because they could get higher payments under the PUP scheme.

By mid-May 2020, well over 1.2 million workers had become dependent on State income supports, with more than 580,000 receiving the PUP, 205,000 on Jobseekers Benefit, and over 450,000 being supported through the TWSS. Fórsa members in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and their counterparts in the Revenue Commissioners were widely and rightly applauded for the rapid, flexible and effective rollout of these vital supports to working people and the economy.

Prompted by union demands, the Government moved in June to close loopholes in the temporary wage subsidy scheme, which had disqualified some women returning from maternity or adoptive leave.

Fórsa, ICTU and the union-sponsored Nevin Economic Research Institute continued to call for enhanced supports to workers, businesses and communities. In late April, a joint *Irish Times* **opinion article** by the general secretaries of Fórsa and Siptu argued that the crisis has demonstrated what can be achieved when the State mobilises financial, organisational and human resources for the common good, when people work together collectively, and when citizens have equal access to essential goods and services. Calling for a fundamentally different approach to economic reconstruction to that adopted during the 2008-2010 banking crisis, the article helped shape the public policy debate to ensure a more progressive fiscal response to the employment and economic impact of the crisis.

Fórsa and Siptu jointly drew up detailed proposals, which were submitted to ICTU as it developed its demands for a massive fiscal stimulus, with public investment across a range of public service and infrastructure projects, as part of a plan for Ireland's recovery from the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The ICTU programme was published in late May as **No going back: a new deal towards a safe and secure future for all** which also called for universal free public health care, a massive programme of public house building, a cap on the price of childcare, increased investment in education, and the scrapping of plans to increase the State pension qualification age to 67.

The paper outlined proposals for a 'green new deal' to tackle climate change and included environmental taxes among measures to fund its ambitious programme. It also called for higher taxes on wealth - including inheritance and gifts - as well as higher social contributions from employers. No going back also set out demands for stronger social dialogue and collective bargaining rights.

Building its earlier interventions, Fórsa developed its approach to economic recovery. This was published in a detailed Fórsa submission on **Reopening the economy: The State's response and support for businesses**, which was presented to the Oireachtas Special Committee on Covid-19 Response in early June. The submission called for business supports to be made conditional on employers' support for jobs that can sustain a decent income. It also covered a range of economic and workplace issues including the need for Government to continue to support incomes and demand, EU policy requirements, safety issues related to the return to workplaces, childcare issues, remote working and the organisation of working time, industrial relations and social dialogue, and Brexit.

The union continued to make detailed inputs into ICTU submissions and representations on the subject, and did the same at a European level through the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) and other international trade union confederations. Throughout the period, its general secretary, Kevin Callinan, published several blogs and made high-level representations as a member of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), the Government-union-employer social dialogue vehicle.

In February 2022, Fórsa published a major new report on **The Irish State Post-Pandemic**, which was commissioned by the union and produced by the TASC think-tank. Drawing on macro-economic analysis, case studies, and stakeholder interviews, the research explored the political and economic space for enhancing the role of the State post-Covid to improve public services, increase social mobility, reduce inequality, and integrate climate action into economic development.

It called for the retirement age to be kept at 66 and for spending on eldercare supports to increase by 0.4% of national income, or just under €900 million, in the coming years. It also recommended a €1.5 billion increase in funding for the early years sector to bring it up to 1% of national income, as recommended by UNICEF, and called for a trebling of public funding for renewable energy research and development. The report said that State spending on higher education should be returned to 2000s levels of around 1% of national income, with 0.1% of this spending allocated to research.

The report said the single biggest cause of the shortfall in State revenue compared to high income European countries is low social insurance contributions, particularly on the employer side. It called for employers' and self-employed PRSI to be increased to at least 1% of national income to fund maintaining retirement at 66 and expanding the social wage. It also called for the phasing out capital gains tax (CGT) relief, the updating of property values used to calculate local property tax, and the phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. It added that revised EU fiscal rules should be based on the cost of servicing debt rather than the level of deficit or debt itself.

# Pensions

Developments in the period under review include the full removal of the Public Service Pension Reduction (PSPR) from those still subject to it, with effect from 1st July 2021.

As a consequence of the restoration of fixed allowances on 1st October 2020, some pensioners qualified for a pension increase.

Due to the deferral of an increase in the state pension age, the increase of the Normal Retirement Age (NRA) for members in the single scheme was deferred.

Employees will have a range of four retirement savings funds to choose from. People moving between jobs will not have to change pension scheme or join a new scheme. They will remain members of the auto-enrolment scheme with their pension pot following them. This long-awaited development will mean that thousands of workers who currently have no access to an occupational pension will finally have access.

## Auto-enrolment scheme

In March 2022, the Government approved the detail of the much-delayed auto-enrolment pension scheme. Under the plan it will be mandatory for employees between the ages of 23 and 60 to enrol in a pension scheme if they earn more than €20,000. Initially, employees will be expected to contribute 1.5% of salary, increasing every three years by 1.5% until they eventually reach 6% by Year 10 (2034).

Employers will match employee contributions up to a maximum of €80,000 of earnings. In addition, the State will top up contributions by €1 for every €3 saved by the employee, up to a maximum of €80,000 of earnings. This is in addition to the €3 that will also be contributed by the employer. Between the State contributions and employer contributions, for every €3 saved by a worker, a further €4 will be credited to their pension pot. It's expected contributions will begin to be paid from January 2024.

# Civil Service Division

## Building Momentum: sectoral bargaining

All grades in general service and professional and technical roles opted to convert the sectoral bargaining clause of *Building Momentum* into a 1% general round increase. While there are several pay claims among our professional and technical grades, agreement could not be reached on establishing an appropriate bargaining group to settle departmental claims. Outstanding business will need to be addressed as part of any discussions on a successor agreement. This includes a review of pay for conservation rangers, pay parity for solicitors in the Legal Aid Board and increments for statisticians in the CSO.

## Civil Service Action Plan

The Civil Service action plan, arising from the reform terms set out in *Building Momentum*, has been signed off with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and can be viewed in full [HERE](#).

The key actions in the plan are set out under four priorities:

- Improving access to services and increased flexibility in resourcing models to deliver better services
- The potential for technology to transform service delivery
- Flexibility and strengthening capacity
- Business/operational/ policy changes leading to internal efficiencies

Central to the action plan is the immediate experience of the pandemic period, with agreement in principle to work with departments on revised or new flexible working arrangements, following normal consultation processes, taking into account the current agreement on flexible working, and including blended working policies across the civil service. This includes consideration of reconfigured office spaces,

designated workstations, single occupancy offices, and working towards more agile open plan offices.

Digital and automation proposals in the plan will present challenges, though there is agreement on language which will ensure continued consultation and cooperation with intelligent automation, aimed at redesigning and improving services, staff upskilling and retraining as jobs/roles/related processes change, ensuring better career opportunities for all staff.

A key issue will be the consideration of extended opening services. The plan states that parties will engage on amending/extending opening arrangements, with a view to providing optimal service to customers, taking account of growing online service use.

## Blended working

Blended working refers to a combination of working from the employer's work premises and working remotely. There are several drivers for the introduction of blended working across the civil service, including supporting policies and commitments set out in the current Programme for Government.

They also include supporting the Civil Service Renewal 2030 strategy by ensuring the civil service remains an employer of choice, promoting a diverse, innovative and progressive work environment that offers flexibility and values work-life balance.

The new policy, announced in April 2022, gives all civil servants the right to apply for remote or blended working under a new framework agreed between unions and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). Fórsa wants the framework to be quickly rolled out across the entire civil and public service.

While the framework does not guarantee blended work arrangements for all who apply, workers will be able to have the decision reviewed if they are turned down, with a view to resolving the issues that led to the refusal to facilitate remote work. It's envisaged that the framework, which requires all civil service departments and offices to develop a blended working policy, will provide a template for the roll-out of agreed blended work policies across the entire civil and public service.

The framework requires departments to set out a decision-making process that ensures a consistent approach to assessing applications, and which ensures fairness across the organisation, and places a responsibility on managers to ensure a "fair and effective" system with strong supports, staff development, communications, and effective performance management. There can be no change to a worker's pay and working conditions on the basis that they have blended working arrangements.

It also requires employers to conduct health and safety assessments, which should determine specific risks and outline any information or training needs, and for employers to provide the necessary equipment to home-workers.

It envisages three-months to six-months of 'initial trials' once an individual is approved for blended working and says individual remote work arrangements should be regularly reviewed.

The framework insists that customer service, standards and performance "must never be compromised in order to facilitate remote working." An individual's performance standards, timekeeping and attendance will be among the criteria considered when deciding if blended working will be facilitated. If refused, an employee can seek a review of the process. The framework is currently silent on the question of flexitime accrual for those with blended working arrangements. This issue has been referred to arbitration to ensure that the current disagreement between Fórsa and management doesn't hold up implementation of the framework.

Fórsa wants staff to retain the right to accrue flexitime worked up while working at home; however, proposed pilots on flexi accrual were not acceptable and the matter went to the Arbitration Board on 22nd March 2022. The finding by the Arbitration Board, published in April 2022, is that

civil service departments and offices should opt for one or other only of the two approaches in a pilot to be concluded by 31st December 2022. The approaches are:

- Flexitime accrual to be allowed for all employees in eligible grades, irrespective of work location
- Flexitime accrual to be allowed for all blended working employees in eligible grades while in the office only.

It states the pilot should operate in all applicable work locations, and should be as far reaching as possible, and not restricted to a sample.

There is no change in flexitime accrual arrangements for staff attending workplaces. Fórsa decided not to seek arbitration on the issue of a home-working allowance as the potential cost implications mean such an arbitration referral was certain to stall implementation of the framework for some time.

DPER won't agree to pay an allowance for remote working. The policy refers staff to the recently enhanced tax reliefs available on energy, heating and wi-fi costs. Fórsa will continue to seek the payment of an allowance in future talks.

Read the framework [HERE](#).

# General Council and central matters

## Covid-19 response

Throughout the pandemic Fórsa members in the civil service continued to display agility, flexibility, productivity and importantly compassion in the delivery of important services to vulnerable citizens. The effort was enormous and clearly visible in the work of DSP and Revenue. Other departments played a vital role throughout the crisis, proving beyond doubt the commitment of members to providing those important services, whatever the circumstances.

## Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

Discussions continue at a General Council sub-committee on the transition of Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme to the State's industrial relations machinery, following a delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Discussions are addressing the drafting of an internal dispute resolution mechanism, incorporating aspects of the current scheme, including General and Departmental Councils, and any further legislative requirements.

## Promotion sequences

The civil service continues to grow, with over 40,000 staff, while promotions continue apace across departments. The purpose of promotion sequences is to ensure balance between the various promotion strands, open recruitment, interdepartmental and departmental promotion. Restrictions on access to promotion to certain grades was lifted following agreement on cross-stream promotion in 2014.

## Executive officer

A short-term increase of internal promotions at EO level expired in 2020, reverting to 50% open recruitment and 50% internal promotion. Internal promotions are split evenly between interdepartmental and departmental promotions as follows:

- 50% open recruitment
- 50% interdepartmental promotion
- 50% departmental promotion

## Higher executive officer

These positions are not subject to open recruitment, though there is an agreement which allows no more than one in six posts with special requirements to be filled openly.

HEO posts are generally filled in accordance with the provisions of the "Sustaining Progress" national agreement,

- 50% of all promotions are made from Departmental selection processes
- The remaining 50% is divided between interdepartmental appointments
- The first appointment in each department/office will be a departmental appointment.

## Assistant principal officer and principal officer

Posts at assistant principal and principal officer are sequenced as follows;

- One third through open competition
- One third through interdepartmental competition
- One third through departmental competition.

## Parental Leave

Fórsa has lodged a claim seeking the extension of the age limit within which a parent can avail of parental leave. Currently parental leave is only available up to the child's thirteenth birthday. This claim seeks an adjustment to the fifteenth birthday.

## Annual Leave

TA review of the 2003 Annual Leave circular is underway in the second quarter of 2022. Issues arose over the taking of leave during the pandemic period and a request for a third rollover for those in the third year of the cycle was refused. There is some local provision for carryover, to be taken during a specific timescale.

## Mobility in the civil service

Following the completion of mobility schemes for general service grades, the union is now finalising an important addition which will see professional and technical posts having access to a mobility scheme for the first time. Details are being finalised and expected to be in operation shortly.

## Incremental credit

Discussions are ongoing regarding a revision of the incremental credit arrangements in the civil service.

## Outsourcing

The union has committed to using all of the protections set down in national agreements to secure the work of our members. A review of outsourcing in the civil service is underway and includes Fórsa's input on the return of previously outsourced work, including that of service grades, Local Property Tax helpline (Revenue) and other helplines such as Department of Social Protection.

## Pension issues

The pensionability of certain allowances remains under discussion, including the calculation of Sunday premia. A proposal has been received on its inclusion, and discussion continues on the question of retrospective allocation.

## Centralisation of desktop services

Agreement was reached between Fórsa and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), on 'Build to Share' (BTS) managed desktop service, which delivers the standard range of common core ICT desktop services used by every organisation and aims to bring an end to the current level of outsourcing for such services.

## Administrative Officer (AO) network

Following outreach to AO members in 2021, Fórsa has established an AO network, comprising a committee from 15 departments, which meets regularly to examine issues identified in the 2021 AO survey. The committee is drafting its report which will guide Fórsa on the resolution of AO issues.

# Departmental matters

## Department of Social Protection

Work automation and Covid-related unemployment led to unprecedented workplace change in the Department of Social Protection (DSP) during the pandemic, bringing significant industrial relations challenges. DSP staff worked long hours to ensure that more than 600,000 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) applications were speedily processed and put into payment in the first two months of the pandemic. DSP and other departmental staff were redeployed into the necessary services.

## Regional Division Review proposals

Fórsa opposed any proposals that would downgrade services provided at Intreo centres, particularly walk-in services. Fórsa had sought and supported the restricted walk-in services on health and safety grounds specifically related to the pandemic. The union is now seeking that customers will have full access again to all services in their community Intreo centres. In response to DSP proposals that front offices are to operate self-service, Fórsa has indicated concerns in relation to any downgrading of services through the loss of local walk-in services.

Fórsa has also sought intensive consultation and agreement on restructuring proposals to establish cross divisional back-office teams. Similarly, the union has raised concerns that the restructuring of community welfare services will reduce access for vulnerable customers and that some clinics could close. Fórsa has supported the DSP policy of 'digital by desire' where customers with reading, writing and numerical difficulties or who do not have fluency in English or Irish, or who prefer a face-to-face service are dealt with by DSP in person.

## Department of Justice

The equality and direct provision sections were transferred from Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) in 2020, following a change of Government. The change affected staff participating in the internal competitions. Fórsa secured agreement allowing people to progress to the panel stage of the competition, and that successful applicants transferred to DCEDIY would have access to promotion in Justice until end of June 2021.

Staff carried out self-ergonomic assessments in their remote working locations, and a survey identified equipment requirements for remote workers. A sub-committee of Departmental Council was also established to oversee the pandemic response in the department, which continues to meet. An agreed maximum of 30% of staff, on a rota basis, were in attendance at any one time in circumstances where a workplace attendance was required. Many union activists took on lead worker safety representative roles.

## An Garda Síochána

Fórsa represents some two thousand civil servants in An Garda Síochána including clerical, admin, technical and services grades and we welcomed the opportunity in early 2022 to make a submission to the Dáil Oireachtas sub-committee on Justice setting out concerns over the implications of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill, arising from the report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (COFPI).

Published in 2018, the COFPI report went some way in identifying the shortcomings in the organisation and the draft heads of Bill has been put together with the intention of moving towards implementing the recommendations. Fórsa's concern is the lack of consultation as a representative of the staff most affected by the proposed legislation, and the failure to recognise members as key stakeholders in the legislative process.

The legislation would also effectively strip civilian members of their civil service employee status, making them direct employees of An Garda Síochána, and bringing civilian staff come under the remit of a new policing complaints body to replace GSOC.

## Revenue Commissioners

Revenue offices closed at the outset of the pandemic, along with all public helplines, except the employer's wages subsidy scheme helpline. Within a short period of time, around 80% of Revenue staff were working remotely. The Revenue Commissioners were tasked with the administration of the Covid-19 temporary wage subsidy scheme (TWSS) and, within the first six weeks of the pandemic, Revenue staff had processed over €30 million in payments.

The national telephone helpline in the PAYE area experienced numerous peaks in contact over the past number of months, following the reopening of economic activity. However, the number of staff in this area has reduced due to the assignment of new staff to the Customs division, arising from additional work due to Brexit. Additional clerical officer recruitment will take some pressure off existing helpline staff, and an extension of opening hours is expected. This will be closely monitored and, as demand declines, the morning-only service will resume. Additional helpline staff are expected to be recruited this year.

## Department of Education

The Department of Education and Skills was renamed the Department of Education In October 2020, and a new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science was established. The new department is responsible for policy, funding and governance of the higher and further education and research sectors, and for the oversight of the work of State agencies and public institutions operating in those areas. The union has engaged on the transfer of functions. Industrial relations and human resource roles will continue to be provided by staff in the Department of Education.

Substantial work was undertaken to establish the calculated grades executive office, which was decommissioned towards the end of 2020. Government decisions on the 2021 Leaving Certificate required a legislative change to facilitate work handled directly by the State Examinations Commission, rather than by seconded staff.

# Fórsa Legal Professionals

## Office of the Chief State Solicitor

Following an attempt to introduce formal time recording for all staff in the CSSO in 2022, Fórsa referred the CSSO to adjudication under Section 1.24 of the Croke Park Agreement. Specifically, Fórsa noted that once formal time recording is introduced, there will need to be mechanisms in place to compensate staff for additional attendances as, at present, there are no such mechanisms in place other than by local arrangement.

The CSSO has written to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to advise them that they are not agreeable to a third-party referral. The union has written to the oversight body to cite the CSSO for a breach of the agreement clauses that commit all sides to engage in dispute resolution mechanisms.

## Property Registration Authority of Ireland

Fórsa and the AHCPs have engaged in a productive conciliation conference with PRAI management on the issue of return to work and the roll out of blended working. A conciliator has been appointed. Continuing engagement will be required in order to establish appropriate blended working given the nature of the work and records involved.

## Director of Public Prosecutions

Fórsa has requested the establishment of a Departmental Council structure in the office of the DPP to address the introduction of wide-reaching policies, including blended working. While issues have usually been resolved through bilateral discussion, the DPP has no formal structure for industrial relations matters.

## Legal Aid Board

Fórsa is continuing to highlight a number of pay-related issues for legal professionals working in the Legal Aid Board (LAB). A departmental council structure has recently been established and is seeking a national platform to raise the issues centrally.

## Department of Foreign Affairs

Fórsa presented a case, seeking to restore traditional pay parity between the Assistant Legal Advisor (ALA) and AP grades at the department, to the Civil Service Arbitration Board on behalf of the ALA grades. The union believes the link was broken in error during the austerity years.

## Legal Staff Officer

Fórsa has lodged a case with the Civil Service Arbitration Board to seek to have the grade of legal staff officer linked to the executive officer (EO) pay grade, instead of the current link to the staff officer (SO) pay grade. The general service SO pay grade was amalgamated with the EO pay grade in 2017. Fórsa has argued that professional and technical staff should benefit in the same manner.

## Passport Office

A six-hour-shift working pattern was introduced in the Passport Office, following substantial engagement, in response to the spread of the Omicron variant of Covid-19. All staff have now returned to normal working arrangements with substantial overtime availability as well as flexi arrangements now fully restored.

## Houses of the Oireachtas

The Houses of the Oireachtas have remained open throughout the public health emergency. Covid safety reps were elected to ensure compliance with safety regulations in the workplace and the return to the work safety protocol. The union wrote to management on several occasions to highlight staff concerns about compliance with safety measures. The union is also seeking to progress matters under the Duffy review which is aimed at normalising industrial relations in the area.

## Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Fórsa maintained a comprehensive engagement with management at Departmental Council and central partnership level during the pandemic. DAFM also appointed up to 180 general service grades to work in the ports as the impact of Brexit fell on imports and exports to the United Kingdom. These are mainly clerical officer-level posts assigned the title of portal inspectors. An

organising initiative to develop union structures was put in place at Dublin Port, where additional hires were largely new to the civil service. Discussions also continued in relation to some professional and technical staff claims.

## Support to refugees from Ukraine

A number of departments and agencies have worked together to establish Ukraine support centres, providing one-stop-shop services to families and individuals arriving in Ireland from Ukraine in the wake of the illegal Russian invasion.

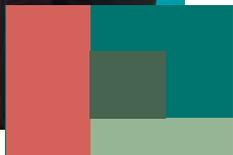
The centres are in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, providing in-person meetings, 'temporary permission' status, processing applications for PPS numbers and income supports, and providing referrals to other services

Public servants are again showing exceptional flexibility to support people fleeing from war-torn Ukraine with the centres providing excellent representation by cross-Government agencies working together.



Photo: Dominick Walsh

Fórsa president Michael Smyth presented a distinguished service award to long-time Fórsa activist and officer Margaret Coughlan at the union's Special Consultative Council event in November 2021.



# Education Division

## Sectoral overview

The industrial relations climate was governed by the provisions of *Building Momentum a New Public Service Agreement 2021-2022*. The Education Oversight Body, which monitors the implementation of national agreements in the sector, was chaired by Mairead Daly of the Workplace Relations Commission. It meets three times each year. Fórsa is also part of the industrial council comprised of management and union representatives in the ETB sector. Issues affecting members in higher education were generally dealt with on a bilateral basis through meetings with departments or employer bodies. Regular contact with the Department of Education takes place regarding strategic and operational issues. These include the negotiation of departmental circulars covering terms and conditions of employment from incremental credit, changes to parental leave and other issues.

In 2019 Fórsa secured the establishment of a national industrial relations forum for special needs assistants (SNAs). This forum consists of representatives from the four SNA branches, staff and representatives from school management bodies and the Department of Education. The Government established the new Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in 2021. Engagement with the new department takes place through a joint trade union consultative forum.

## Job evaluation

Fórsa secured an agreement on the introduction of job evaluation in the higher education sector in November 2018, following a successful campaign of industrial action by clerical, admin, library and professional staff at the Institutes of Technology, TU Dublin and Mary Immaculate College. The design phase of the process has been completed with the assistance of facilitator, Mr Sean McHugh, and the job evaluation scheme is now being tested across four institutions prior to implementation later in 2022.

The agreement provides for 10% of posts in grades III to VI being subject to job evaluation each year. This means that over half the staff in those grades will have had the opportunity to have their job evaluated, using a fair and transparent mechanism, within the first five years. The agreement also provides for a robust appeals process and for joint union management engagement in conducting evaluations.

## Technological Universities

Since the introduction of the Technological Universities Act (2018) the division has welcomed subsequent progress on establishing technological universities. The first to be created was the Technological University Dublin (TUD), which was formerly established in January 2019 under the legislation, which sets out a process whereby consortia may apply for TU designation. There are currently five technological universities, Technological University Dublin; Munster Technological University (MTU), established January 2021; Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, established October 2021; Atlantic Technological University, established in April 2022; South East Technological University will be established in May 2022, merging Waterford Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Carlow.

## Education & Training Boards (ETBs)

Agreement on new recruitment and promotion arrangements within ETBs was concluded in 2018, and this continues to operate on the basis of a common recruitment pool. The failure of ETBs to implement new staffing structures has continued to cause problems for members.



Photo: Conor Healy

Pupils and past pupils working with the School Completion Programme (SCP) attended Fórsa's SCP branch special symposium, marking 20 years of SCP service, in March 2022. An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, was among the guest speakers at the event.

While senior-level ETB posts have been filled, and an organisation and design structure is in place, no progress has yet been made on an organisational design or workforce planning for other posts. Despite pressure from Fórsa and SIPTU very little progress has been made to establish viable structures for most staff working within each ETB. The two unions referred the issue as a dispute to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and an agreement on workforce planning and filling of posts is still under discussion.

In 2021, an additional €5m in new funding was provided to SCPs to facilitate continuing professional development. This was the first increase in funding in a decade. Programmes continue to be administered through Tusla. Fórsa organised a highly successful national symposium in March 2022, marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the SCP. Fórsa has again requested consultation with the Department of Education on the need for a viable governance structure for the SCP, and a resolution to the question of public service status for staff.

## School completion programme

Fórsa continues to raise the employment status, pay, pensions and working conditions of school completion programme (SCP) staff who, for the most part, are not considered to be public servants. The majority are employed by voluntary organisations with local boards of management. Throughout 2020 and 2021 the union continued to lobby for the SCP to be put on a proper statutory footing. This work culminated in the Government decision to transfer administrative responsibility for the SCP back to the Department of Education, which has now been implemented.

## School secretaries and caretakers' dispute

The long-standing injustice affecting many school secretaries and caretakers, employed through the ancillary grant system, prompted Fórsa to launch the Support our Secretaries (SOS) national campaign in January 2019. The campaign aimed to secure agreement on the transfer of school secretaries and caretakers to public service conditions. Members campaigned throughout the past three years, including two days of industrial action. Protracted discussions with the Department of Education took place under the auspices of the WRC in an effort to reach agreement.

In February 2022 an agreement was reached on a package of measures which meet some elements of the Fórsa claim. This agreement was endorsed by over 95% of school secretary members in a ballot in March 2022. The agreement will be implemented before the start of school year commencing September 2022. The agreement provides for the transfer of secretaries to a new scale, aligned with the public service clerical officer scale, which will increase in line with public sector pay awards. Secretaries will – for the first time – receive annual increments, enabling them to progress up the scale on 1st September each year. Secretaries paid on the national minimum rate, of €13p/h, with 20 years’ service will transfer to point seven on the scale and, by 1st October 2022, will see an increase in pay of over 24%. Those with 10 years’ service paid on the national minimum rate will transfer to point 5 on the scale, and will see a pay increase of over 19% by 1st October 2022. The benefits of the agreement are backdated to September 2021.

The agreement effectively ends the practice of laying off secretaries without pay during weeks of school closure. Staff can choose to build into salary the actual value of any benefits they are entitled to claim from the Department of Social Protection (DSP), with the resulting annual salary being paid over 52 weeks. This is the first time that one government department has agreed to pay staff the value of benefits currently provided by a different department. The provision of 22 days paid annual leave, and payment for 10 public holidays, will also significantly reduce weeks of lay off for many secretaries. Once implemented, the agreement will provide an option for all year round employment.

Centralised pay arrangements will mean that secretaries will be paid through the Department of Education payroll system, bringing secretaries into line with special needs assistants (SNAs) and teachers who are also employed by local schools but paid centrally. This element of the agreement will be implemented either in January 2023 or, at the very latest, January 2024.

The agreement is silent on the issue of pension provision, and Fórsa intends to continue the campaign for access to public service pensions for secretaries, once staff have been transferred to the new scale later this year. Work will now commence on negotiations for school caretakers to deliver a similar agreement based on the same principles.

## Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

SNAs were at the forefront of the effort across our schools to deliver services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The difficulties caused by the pandemic disrupted normal industrial relations. Notwithstanding those problems, the division successfully utilised the sectoral bargaining provisions of the *Building Momentum* pay agreement to negotiate a new pay scale for SNAs, with a maximum salary set at €1,100 higher than previously. SNAs are now paid on their own pay scale demonstrating that, under certain circumstances, pay levels for SNAs can be adjusted in isolation.

The *Building Momentum* agreement contains provision for a review of the national SNA contract of employment, and a review of the obligation for SNAs to be available for an additional 72 hours per annum. Those talks are due to commence in the spring of 2022, and must conclude by October.

The #RespectForSNAs campaign was launched in 2021, seeking to secure a new minimum professional qualification for SNAs at QQI Level 6. A national seminar took place on 4th December 2021, attended by more than 450 people, including leading academics and representatives from across the schools sector. Some 500 SNAs have now graduated from the first national training programme at University College Dublin (UCD), funded by the Department of Education. Fórsa continues to demand that students receive an accredited qualification for completing this programme. The Department of Education’s position is that the minimum essential qualification can be reviewed once the negotiation on the national contract has been completed. The Fórsa position is that the qualification is a significant term of contract and must be included within the scope of the negotiations.

Fórsa secured the establishment of a national industrial relations forum for SNAs in 2019. Subsequently, agreement has been reached on a number of claims, including the provision of enhanced breastfeeding breaks for working mothers in schools, changes to the career break scheme, and adjustments to parental leave arrangements. Several other claims have now progressed to the WRC, including disparities in special leave entitlements between SNAs and other education colleagues; improvements in the quantity of health and safety leave available for pregnant SNAs; taking parental leave in blocks of less than a week; and the abolition of fees required to lodge appeals to the Occupational Health Service. Fórsa has also sought the recommencement of discussions on enhanced

bereavement leave, to bring it in line with existing Civil Service provisions. Fórsa has also made progress on establishing the standard working week for SNAs as the same as for teachers, depending on the length of the school day. Fórsa has been proactive in opposing instances where a 32-hour working week has been imposed, and on occasion this has required the use of legal action. The Department of Education has now confirmed to schools that the correct working week is 28 hours, or a 'bell to bell' day, with a short period of time before and after class to assist students. The 32-hour working week should now finally only apply as the basis for employing substitute SNAs.

Government policy on rolling out the schools inclusion model (SIM) to all regions is still uncertain. This policy seeks to implement components of the 2018 NCSE Review of the Statutory SNA Scheme including a new frontloading allocation model, additional allied health professional posts, a national SNA training program, and a new national nursing service for

schools. To date the SIM has been piloted in one region and the evaluation of the pilot has not yet been published. SNA allocations in mainstream classes were frozen in 2020 and 2021. It's expected that the new frontloading allocation model may be implemented either in 2022 or 2023. This model would provide an allocation of SNA posts to mainstream classes on a three-year rolling cycle, improving job security. The model would also end the problem of fragmented SNA posts, as new positions would be created either on a full-time basis, or as 0.5 WTE (whole time equivalent) positions. Due to the transition away from individual assessments of need - to a more local framework for assessing additional care needs - Fórsa will conduct a consultation ballot once the final form of any new allocation system is decided. The division remains concerned that under any new system SNAs could be allocated work which is not related to students with additional care needs, has relayed those concerns to both the department and to ministers.



Photo: Dornick Walsh

Fórsa president Michael Smyth presented a distinguished service award to long-time Fórsa activist and officer Don Gibney at the union's Special Consultative Council event in November 2021.

# Health and Welfare Division

## Building Momentum: sectoral bargaining fund

The sectoral bargaining fund provision in the *Building Momentum* agreement amounts to 1% of sectoral payroll costs, which could either be negotiated as an across-the-board 1% pay increase or used as a mechanism to assist in resolving outstanding claims. The increases agreed from this mechanism are effective from 1st February 2022. However, discussions on its application in the health sector continued into the spring and details of an agreed approach are expected shortly.

## Covid-19 recognition payment

Across the health sector, workers went to extraordinary lengths on behalf of people of Ireland during the pandemic. These include re-deployment at immediate notice to areas of need, working long and unorthodox hours and in high-risk environments. The response was sustained during a cyber-attack on the HSE. In summer 2021, the staff panel group of health sector unions lodged a claim for Covid recognition, an unspecified claim of monetary value or compensatory leave. The claim was processed through the WRC but the employers refused to negotiate on the basis that there would be a government-led proposal. In January 2022, that proposal was a provision for a tax-free payment of €1000 to certain healthcare workers. Unions met with officials from both the department and the HSE on several occasions to clarify who would qualify for payment. In April 2022, the health minister said the payment would be paid to eligible frontline healthcare workers in their next available payroll. Unions subsequently sought that the payment be extended to individuals employed in section 39 agencies and in the private sector.

## Redeployment

The Covid re-deployment policy agreed in December 2020 continued into 2022, offering protections maintained throughout successive public service agreements.

## SláinteCare: Community Health Networks and primary care

The nine CHN learning sites are due to be evaluated in late spring/early summer 2022. There are two evaluations to take place. An overall evaluation of the learning sites is being carried out by CES, the findings of which will be the subject of discussions between the HSE and health sector unions. A dedicated Fórsa/HSE evaluation, focused solely on issues arising from the separation of clinical management from operational line management in the networks, is also taking place. A further 87 Enhanced Community Care Networks (ECCN) were created on a temporary basis, pending discussion on more durable structures when the learning exercise from the nine learning sites has been completed.

## HSCP career pathway review

The first few hundred conversions from staff grade to senior grade therapist took place in the primary care area in early 2022. Because of the large number of newly created senior posts in the ECCNs, a combination of existing panels, and validated five years competent service, were used as criteria. Conversions continue across the primary care area. Discussions are set to commence for expansion of the staff to senior grade conversion in other areas of the health services beyond primary care, and on other aspects of the career pathway process such as application of clinical specialist and advanced practitioner posts.

## Clerical/administrative job evaluation scheme

The scheme continues to function, and almost 1,500 posts have been evaluated since the scheme re-opened in 2018.

## Civil registration service

Discussions on the findings of the McHugh Report and related matters re-commenced at the WRC in October 2021, confirming there was no impediment to filling vacancies within the service, and that a medium-term exercise should be carried out to assess resourcing needs. Service demand has increased due to the introduction of more complex legislation dealing with so-called 'marriages of convenience.'

## Permanent higher appointments

The exercise for regularisation of posts, for which the HSE had an approval derogation (Grades III to VII) for workers in the higher-level post since 1st January 2019 took place in the latter half of 2021. Discussions advanced on the process to apply, in respect of Grade VIII and above, who have been on long-term specified purpose contracts in posts at the higher level.

## Compensatory rest: Grade VIII and above

Partial agreement was reached in respect of the provision of compensatory rest for managerial grades which do not attract overtime payments, as a result of continuous breaches of the Organisation of Working Time Act. An issue over the maximum amount of rest applicable remains, and will be processed through the WRC.

## HSCP policy advisor at the Department of Health

Fórsa has continue to lobby for the appointment of an autonomous HSCP policy advisor at the Department of Health.

## Health and Welfare DEC strategy

The HWDEC strategy is being finalised, concentrating on areas such as recruitment and organising, HSCP strategy and the Section 39/56 funding model campaign and strategy. The approach includes the development and roll-out of the **At the Heart of Health and Welfare** campaign, developed with Fórsa's Campaigns and Communications units, including direct discussion with politicians across all parties.

## National Investigations Unit

The National Joint Council (NJC) agreed a review of the National Investigations Unit to be commissioned. Fórsa highlighted the significant delays, of more than 12 months on occasion, from commissioning an investigation to the actual commencement of the investigation, borne out in individual cases taken by Fórsa to the adjudication services of the WRC. A number of meetings took place during 2021 between HSE management and the staff side with a view to finalising a process to implement the key recommendations of the report by Kevin Duffy.

# Pay restoration: Section 39 and Section 56 agencies

## Section 39

As reported last year an agreement was negotiated through the WRC to extend pay restoration terms to those remaining Section 39 agencies not comprehended by the first phase of pay restoration. This process of pay restoration commenced in January 2021. As part of that agreement all parties signed up to returning to the WRC at the beginning of the second quarter of 2021 to discuss the outstanding issue of retrospection for these members. Unfortunately, despite numerous engagements under the auspices of the WRC throughout 2021 neither the Department of Health nor the HSE are willing to fund the retrospective element of the pay restoration agreement. Fórsa and other ICTU-affiliated unions are in dispute with the funders on this matter, and the *Valuing Care, Recognising Work* campaign launched in 2021. See also page 65 - community/voluntary.

## Section 56

Fórsa served a claim on Tusla in February 2021 for pay restoration in Section 56 agencies, in line with the agreements reached for Section 39 agencies and seeking the application of same. Fórsa continues to campaign to secure pay restoration in these agencies.

## A New Systemic Funding Model: The voluntary and community sector in the 2020s

Fórsa raised the issue in the talks that led to the *Building Momentum* public service pay agreement, but it was not possible to achieve an acceptable

funding model for the community and voluntary sector in that forum. In 2021, Fórsa published a report by Brian Harvey, *A New Systemic Funding Model: The voluntary and community sector in the 2020s*, updating the union's earlier 'Caring At What Cost' report and set out the case for multi-annual funding for the sector. See also page 23 - community/voluntary.

## Valuing Care, Recognising Work campaign

On 9th November the ICTU campaign 'Valuing Care, Recognising Work' was launched in conjunction with Fórsa, INMO and SIPTU. The aims of the campaign are to:

- Secure an increase in pay of 3% for workers in line with pay awards in the public sector
- Establish a meaningful pay determination mechanism for workers in the community and voluntary sector
- Establish a forum for structured social dialogue in the sector in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government.

Unions commenced the process of lodging the 3% pay claims on individual Section 39 and Section 56 employers to reflect the pay terms set out in *Building Momentum*. This campaign represents an important opportunity for Fórsa to recruit and organise in a targeted and focussed way in the sector.

## National pharmacy review

Agreement was reached at the WRC, in March 2020, on a set of proposals to implement a new hospital pharmacy career structure. A ballot of members in September 2020 was overwhelmingly in favour. The agreement, in the first instance, applied to hospital pharmacists working in an acute hospital setting. A follow-on claim for hospital pharmacists in a community setting was lodged in September 2020, and Fórsa sought immediate talks on an implementation process for the agreed proposals. Fórsa sought to future-proof the pharmacy agreement through the sectoral bargaining clause of *Building Momentum*, as employer-verified savings were valued at €55m.

In the absence of any progress, a ballot for industrial action in January 2022 was approved by more than 90%. Planned industrial action was suspended in February following confirmation by the Public Sector Agreement Group (PSAG) that the dispute could be referred to the Labour Court. At the time of writing the Labour Court hearing is scheduled to take place on 30th June 2022.

## Home Support Services

An initial evaluation of Home Help Coordinator grade VI posts, under the clerical administration job evaluation scheme, took place on 9th October 2019 and resulted in an upgrade to grade VII for home help coordinators from that date. Throughout 2021, Fórsa has pursued the appropriate title for the grade VII role to properly reflect its managerial nature, the development of a deputy home help coordinator post, and the introduction of a national IT system. A new job description is expected to be agreed in early 2022.

## Audiology

A dispute on the imposed career structure for our audiology grades has been ongoing since 2012, and a formal engagement with the employer has commenced. The employer brought preliminary proposals that audiology grades be aligned with the existing career structure for other Health and Social Care Professionals comprehended by the original McHugh Doran report. On that basis it is proposed that Fórsa's Audiology professional committee make a submission to the HSCP career pathway review.

## Assessment of Need Protocol

Fórsa reached agreement with the HSE in 2020 on the introduction of the Assessment of Need (AON) protocol, outlining the process by which a child's needs are assessed, under the terms of the Disability Act 2005, and designed to guide the assessment of potential service needs for children who have, or may have, a disability.

The agreement provided for a independently chaired joint review group, composed of Fórsa and HSE management nominees, and met on a number of occasions in 2021 and 2022. In April 2022 the High Court ruled that the HSE's AON process did not comply with disability legislation. The ruling also found the HSE's standard operating procedures did not fulfil the requirements set out in the 2005 Disability Act. Fórsa nominees are scheduled to take part in a workshop by HSE management to develop clinical guidance on assessment of need in the context of the High Court ruling.

Roísín Coffey-Duff, Chris Cully, Pádraig Mulligan, Dublin Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland, Lynn Coffey and Catherine Keogh at the 'Valuing Community' rally on 3rd May.



Photo: Niall Shanahan

# Tusla

## Job Evaluation scheme

In January 2020, the union secured agreement for the reopening of the clerical and administrative job evaluation scheme to Tusla employees, Grade III to VI. In October 2020, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DECDIY) issued an instruction to Tusla to formally withdraw the scheme as DPER would not sanction it, on the grounds that would be a cost-increasing claim. Fórsa has argued the scheme is not a cost-increasing claim, and that it is a condition of employment protected under the Framework Agreement for Clerical & Administrative grades upon transfer to Tusla from the HSE. All policies and agreements in existence at the time of transfer were transitioned as Tusla policy.

Fórsa referred the matter to conciliation at the WRC. Tusla declined to attend under instruction from the DCEDIY. The union referred the matter to the Labour Court under Section 20 of the Industrial Relations Act. The Court hearing took place on 9th September 2021. The Court referred the parties back to conciliation to attempt to resolve the matter.

That WRC conciliation took place on 12th January 2022. No progress could be made as the parties representing the employer side confirmed that they're not mandated by DPER to enter into an agreement on job evaluation. The next step available to the union is to utilise the dispute resolution process set out under *Building Momentum*. The union has referred the matter to the oversight body.

## Structural reform programme

The Tusla Structural reform programme will happen in two phases during 2022. This will see Tusla structures being re-organised from 17 regions into six and mapped to mirror the six integrated regional structures planned for the HSE, and an agreement was reached on a number of phase 1 senior and regional posts.

Consultation with the union on the design and implementation of phase 2, considering the structure below senior and regional level posts commenced in early 2022 with a view to implementation by the end of the year.

## Career pathway review

The union has sought application of the terms of the career pathway review to relevant grades employed in Tusla, e.g. social workers, social care workers, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.

## Workforce stability measures

Following agreement with Fórsa for a conversion from agency to direct hire in 2019/2020, Tusla agency staff received 12-month fixed-term contracts. In late 2020, when the contracts were due to expire, the union sought that these 450 posts be converted to permanent, and these are now in the permanent direct employment of Tusla.

## Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) policy

A national standardised TOIL policy was agreed with Tusla in late 2021. And has been operational since December 2021.

# Local Government and Local Services Division

## Industrial Relations and Related

### Local Authority National Council (LANC)

Fórsa national secretary Dessie Robinson is the union side secretary to the Local Authority National Council (LANC), the negotiating forum made up of recognised trade unions and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). The group is chaired by the WRC's Damien Cannon. A revised forum for partnership was agreed by the LANC. Fórsa's insistence that the process be overseen at national level by a union-management steering group was eventually agreed by the employers. The local authority oversight group reviews the implementation of the sectoral elements of the *Building Momentum* national pay agreement.

### Future of local government services

Fórsa, Siptu and Connect, representing over 30,000 local authority workers, continued to mobilise the **More Power to You** campaign for increased revenue and powers for local authorities. The campaign sought commitments from political parties and candidates in the council elections on a range of local government reforms covering waste, water, housing and energy services. The campaign received pledges of

support from a number of political parties, and more than 1,100 local election candidates supported the campaign's local power pledge. Dublin City Council (DCC) has established a cross-party group to remunicipalise domestic waste management collection in the city. The group has secured funding of €70,000 to enable a research project on the matter.

### Remunicipalisation of domestic waste services

Fórsa wrote to all 31 local authorities seeking an opportunity to make a presentation at their council meetings, and several facilitated a virtual presentation, which was well received by all parties. Most expressed interest in the outcome of the research on the remunicipalisation of domestic waste.

In September 2021, a working group involving the unions commissioned the research division of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), to submit a proposal in respect of this research. The request covered two key areas for the research as follows:

1. A comparative analysis that reviews DCC's waste collection system to other comparable European cities, with specified criteria including coverage, cost of service, quality of service, public satisfaction, terms and conditions of employment and environmental impact.
2. Consideration of evidence in the context of waste management arrangements Dublin city and Ireland, including a description of the current legal and regulatory context. It's intended that the research will draw attention to legislative and other changes required to enable DCC re-enter the domestic waste collection service.

The research team indicated that the work be carried out in two phases. Phase one to be completed by the end of February 2022, reviewing the available data. The initial report is to be discussed with the SPC sub-committee to enable an informed decision on the approach to be taken in phase two, which is expected to be available toward the end of summer 2022.

## Key finding – phase one

In general terms, it has been challenging to identify directly comparable data from the cities chosen for this project. Within each location there are varying administrative structures. There are also variances in how and why data is collected, making it difficult to establish uniformity across the agreed criteria for a comparative analysis. In addition, there are significant variances in terms of population, population density, and housing types, all of which influence how waste collection methodologies are determined.

There are also important historical, cultural, political and economic reasons why waste management has evolved the way it has in the various jurisdictions. Notwithstanding these limitations, the research has identified some key findings and data to inform discussions on a more detailed phase two analysis. These are:

- A kerbside waste collection service is availed of by 82% of households in the DCC administrative area. This compares with 100% of households for the other cities assessed
- The proportion of households living in apartments, rather than houses, in the comparative cities is very high, almost the reverse of the situation in Dublin. This has a significant impact on waste collection

- The average volume of waste produced by households in Dublin appears to be higher than in other cities studied
- All households in the other cities examined are required to pay for waste collection, with those on low incomes supported through social security
- Transition to a more environmentally friendly approach to waste collection is of moderate priority in the comparator cities. For example, in Stockholm, the extent to which potential contractors use environmentally friendly vehicles is taken into consideration in the evaluation process
- Data on traffic congestion attributable to waste collection vehicles is not monitored by any of the cities. Early starts are a tacit acknowledgement that waste collection does cause some traffic challenges and that having streets free of traffic allows for more efficient collection. However, early starts may also suit employees
- Data from two operators suggest that householders in Dublin city pay on average €243 per annum in waste collection costs. In Copenhagen the average is €284, in Oslo €258, and in Salzburg €232. Average annual waste costs in Stockholm are significantly lower (€88), though the 10% of households living in houses it's €205
- Average salary figures are significantly higher in all of the comparator cities. Data on the cost of living shows that Stockholm and Dublin are very similar, with Copenhagen somewhat higher and Oslo is about 20% higher. When rent is factored in, Dublin is on a par with Copenhagen and much closer to Oslo.

## Confined recruitment

The new system of confined competitions for promotions for local authority, grades IV to VII, was introduced in January 2021 and will be fully operational when all current panels have been exhausted. The agreement provides that 20% of promotion posts are confined to eligible candidates in their own local authority, while 50% of promotion posts are confined to eligible candidates in the local authority sector nationwide, and 30% of promotion posts are open to public competition. The agreement increases the percentage of grade IV posts to be filled by confined competition from 50 to 70%. The union



Photo: Darrick Walsh

Fórsa president Michael Smyth presented a distinguished service award to long-time Fórsa activist, officer and school secretary Kathleen O'Doherty at the union's Special Consultative Council event in November 2021.

is seeking to have the same application of a confined competition operate for the positions of senior executive officer in local authorities. Fórsa is going to conciliation for an initial hearing in the WRC. The LGMA is reluctant to consider the claim, and it's likely that the Labour Court will decide the outcome.

## Flexitime

Fórsa lodged a claim for a nationwide scheme of flexitime, similar to the civil service scheme, which has 1.5 day's flexi-leave per flexi period. The LGMA rejected the union's claim. As flexitime was suspended during the covid period and the likely introduction of blended working, it was decided not to pursue the matter at this point. If local authority staff are treated less favourably regarding flexible working, following the introduction of the blended working policy, Fórsa will pursue the claim through the WRC.

## Job evaluation

Fórsa has sought an independent job evaluation scheme for the local government sector. Similar schemes exist in health and higher education. Following a Labour Court recommendation that the union side present a business case on the matter, an independent business case was commissioned from Resource Employee Relations. The LGMA refused to attend a reconvened Labour Court hearing. The union wrote to the public services agreement committee. Following its intervention, the LGMA agreed to go back to the Labour Court. Due to the time lapse, the Labour Court requested Fórsa to resubmit the claim. Fórsa is awaiting a new date for a conciliation hearing.

## Outstanding awards

Fórsa had sought a review of the mechanism for outstanding awards to senior executive officers under the public service stability agreement (PSSA). Sectoral bargaining measures in the *Building Momentum* agreement provide a mechanism allowing the senior executive officer pay scale to be adjusted to ensure the outstanding benchmarking award could be pursued in a future public service agreement.

## Libraries

Members accepted the national libraries agreement which covered staffing, amalgamated libraries, library management systems, 'my open library', promotions, flexitime, health and safety, qualifications, non-professional grade V posts and branch librarians. The agreement ensured that 'my open library' would not be used to reduce staffing levels, and a joint union-management review of the scheme took place between June and August 2020. A review of four open libraries from around the country took place. Management and staff interviews indicated that, apart from some health and safety issues, it was running well, and it was agreed that other proposed schemes could proceed. However, the pandemic halted any progress and the union understands that management now intends to proceed. There will be a significant staff consultation process. The feedback in all areas reviewed was positive. The advanced engagement between staff and management provided good foundations for the implementation of 'my open library'. Staff advised that while technology supported open libraries, it changed the nature of the work, but did not reduce the level of work.

## Fire services

The Fire Services National Oversight Implementation Group (FSNOIG) continues. Fórsa represents firefighters and senior officers in Dublin Fire Brigade and senior officers outside Dublin on FSNOIG. The group agreed to separate the retained firefighters and the full-time firefighters. The retained firefighters' group is chaired by David Begg, and the full-time group is chaired by Kevin Duffy. Fórsa has representation on both these groups, and continues to represent members on issues including the review of internal organisational fire service structures.

## Remunicipalisation of services

Fórsa has continued its involvement with the international trade union federation Public Services International's (PSI) global campaign on remunicipalisation of local authority services. The aim of the campaign is to bring privatised services back into public control. To date, over 1,000 local services have been brought back under the control of local authorities worldwide. The union held several meetings with the group and play an active part by highlighting the need to keep local authority employees in all aspects of public services.

## IT/ICT

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued new qualifications for IT/ICT grades. A representative working group was established and presented a paper to the LGMA. The union is seeking to have a joint management-union working group established to review the role, function and skills necessary to provide a world class service in IT departments throughout the local authority sector. A number of meetings have taken place with the LGMA.

## Grade claims

Fórsa had taken a claim to the WRC and the Labour Court on behalf of tenant liaison officers. The claim was to have an independent evaluation, as the union was aware that officers in other local authorities were being paid at a higher grade. The Labour Court rejected the union's claim on the basis that Fórsa submitted a national claim to have a job evaluation scheme introduced in the local authority sector. The union recognised that there are groups of employees carrying out roles and functions throughout the sector, but in some cases are paid two grades below their counterparts elsewhere. Based on the Labour Court recommendation, the union has established a working group representing several analogous grades. The aim of the working group is to collate information that will support the claim to have a local authority job evaluation scheme.

## Irish Water

The union has been involved in discussions with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the LGMA and Irish Water following the proposals by Irish Water to transfer 3,500 local authority staff to a new single entity. Prior to entering negotiations, Fórsa sought and secured a commitment from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage that no legal measures would be used to compulsorily transfer staff to the new entity.

Following a number of meetings in early 2021, six days were set aside by the WRC in July 2021 to deal with the industrial relations strand on pay, pensions and related. No real progress was made. Talks adjourned until November 2021. Irish Water produced a working document in November 2021 implying the transfer of staff would take place despite the union side's insistence that talks had only taken place on the basis that there would be no forced transfer of staff to Irish Water. The document contained a provision that Irish Water would take complete control of staffing by 2026. Management made a number of presentations on the pay structure currently operating for staff working directly for Irish Water. The union side outlined its concerns around timelines etc. The management side is to review its document and revert.

A meeting was arranged with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien to discuss the various strands of the transformation process. Following that meeting, unions received a paper from the department which commented on each strand as follows:

- **Strand one:**  
**Constitutional referendum**  
The Minister committed to holding a referendum. Preference is to hold a referendum in conjunction with a referendum on the right to housing. No timeline as yet.
- **Strand two:**  
**The future of local government**  
No response to key union asks but acknowledgement that numbers employed have not recovered to 2009 levels.

- **Strand three:**  
**Status and governance of the new entity**

The entity will be publicly owned with oversight by a board and accountable to the Oireachtas and the comptroller and auditor general. Defining the new entity as an "authority". Composition of the board is under consideration, and it is expected to have a worker representative on the board.

On the basis that the department document made clear that local authority workers would not be required to transfer to the new entity, and could remain in the employment of their local authority, the union side agreed to resume discussions on strand four, the industrial relations element of the negotiations. At the time of writing this report, a number of meetings have been arranged with the WRC with no real progress to date.

## Local Authority Veterinary Services

A dispute arose in 2020 regarding the continued provision of services by the local authority veterinary inspectors under a service level agreement. The union had raised concerns regarding the failure of the Food Safety Authority Ireland (FSAI) and the County and City Management Association (CCMA) to agree the renewal of the existing service level agreement beyond September 2020. The intention was to redeploy staff under transfer of undertakings legislation.

Following a ballot of members to take industrial action, up to and including strike action, an agreement providing funding for the service level agreement to continue throughout 2021 was achieved. Discussion would continue on seeking an alternative to the service level agreement. The LGMA has proposed that the staff would be redeployed to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. A number of meetings have taken place with the staff, the LGMA and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

# Municipal Employees' Division

## Industrial relations and related

### Dublin Fire Brigade

Fórsa and other unions representing firefighters/paramedics in Dublin have been in dispute with Dublin Fire Brigade and Dublin City Council management in relation to staffing levels. Vehicles have been left under-manned or off the road due to staff shortages on numerous occasions. Following intense negotiations unions secured agreement on a number of recruit classes which should see almost 100 new firefighter/paramedics join Dublin Fire Brigade in 2022. Agreement was also reached on staffing levels in the control room.

### Technological University Dublin (TUD)

Discussion is ongoing on the organisation and design of the new university structure, which will have implications for members in the future. Engagement will resume when management presents the approved design. Negotiations will commence regarding Fórsa members' terms and conditions as one organisation, with various claims to be addressed. Conciliation was adjourned on the Tallaght caretakers shift claim, pending the outcome of the operational design process. There are a number of ongoing dignity at work investigations, with an external company still investigating claims against Fórsa members.

### Dublin City Council (DCC)

Dublin City Council's housing partnership forum continues, covering return to the office, apprenticeships/traineeships, and recruitment issues.

### North City Operations Depot

Discussions are ongoing in relation to the north city operations depot (or 'super depot'). A significant project of DCC, it presents a unique opportunity for management and unions to engage from design to completion, ensure the building is fit for purpose, and address any potential challenges. When complete, the depot will house stores, waste management services, electrical services/public lighting, housing, road maintenance, traffic, drainage (surface water maintenance unit) and administrative staff.

Meetings have taken place in 2021 further engagement is scheduled in 2022. The building is to be completed in November 2022 and expected to be operational in March 2023.

### Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Discussions regarding career path and promotional outlets for general operatives are ongoing.

### City of Dublin ETB

The union is addressing a number of individual cases.

## South Dublin County Council

There has been a serious breakdown in industrial relations engagement and processes in South Dublin County Council. Fórsa has contacted the WRC mediation/conciliation and advisory service to assist both parties to address this. SDCC has, however, refused to engage in a process with the WRC, and the issue has been brought to the Local Authority National Council (LANC) with a view to persuading management to engage properly with Fórsa.

## Outsourcing

Fórsa and other local authority unions submitted a claim requesting that local authorities give notice of outsourced contracts that are due to expire. Agreement was reached at the LGMA, ensuring that direct labour is used to the greatest possible extent, as provided for in the public service stability agreement (PSSA).

## Housing

Fórsa will continue to highlight the acute housing and homelessness crisis. Its local government division continues to seek additional staffing to enable a more efficient turnaround of vacant local authority housing and the approval of additional housing. The division has been critical of elements of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's new housing approval process.

## Housing caretakers

Discussions had taken place in relation to DCC's proposal, under the PSSA, to have housing caretakers moved to a "quad-based" pilot scheme, whereby caretakers would be part of a team, travelling to several areas, rather than looking after a single complex. The pilot was due to start on several occasions, and has been suspended due to the pandemic.

## Pensions

Discussions are ongoing regarding the deduction of additional superannuation contributions. DCC has been deducting ASCs on all overtime, when it should have been deducted only on overtime that is pensionable. Following the Council's examination of pensionable overtime pay, it's expected that employees are made aware what they are likely to receive upon retirement.

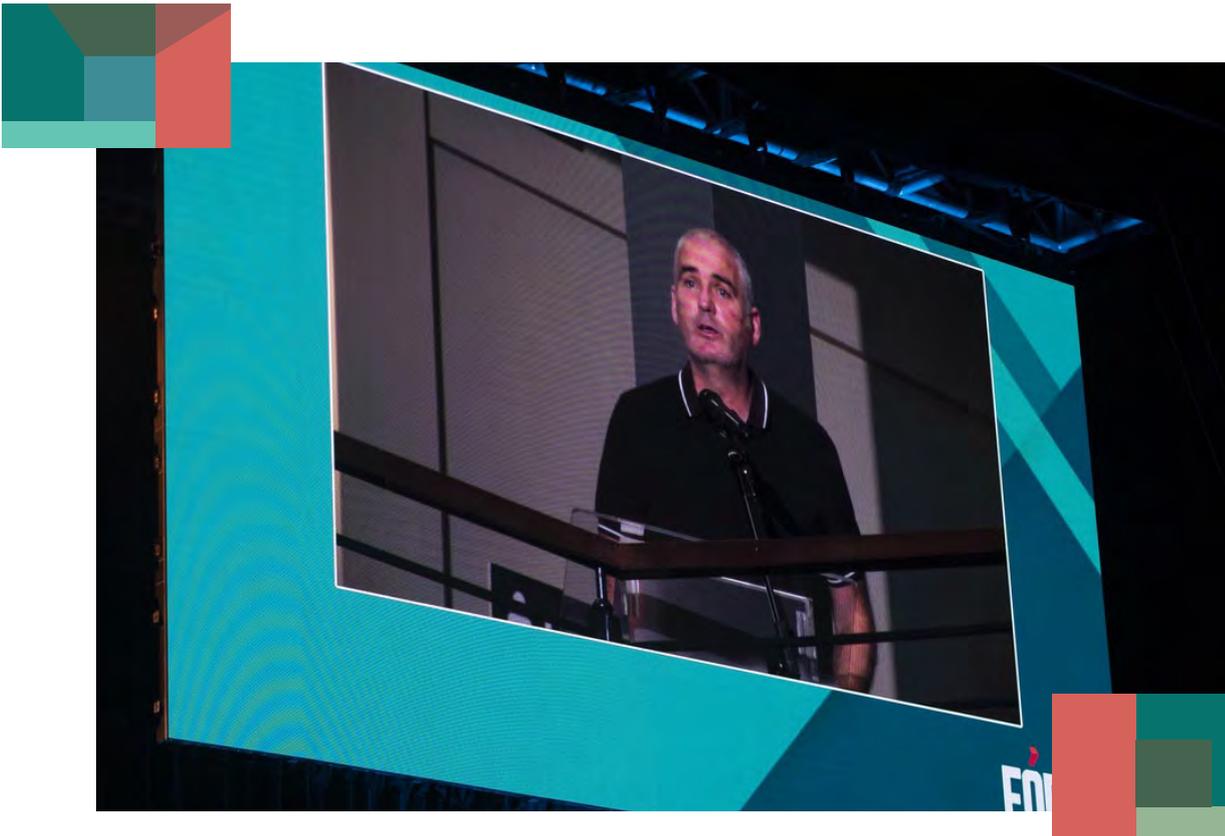
A number of members promoted to officer grade changed from an A stamp to a D stamp, and these employees have been notified this was incorrect, and may have serious financial implications for those involved. More recently, Fórsa met with the Council's human resources management to outline its responsibilities to staff. The union will also represent members at appeal hearings with the Department of Social Protection.

## Libraries

Members accepted the national libraries agreement which covered staffing, amalgamated libraries, library management systems, 'my open library', promotions, flexitime, health and safety, qualifications, non-professional grade V posts and branch librarians. The agreement ensured that 'my open library' would not be used to reduced staffing levels, and a joint union-management review of the scheme took place between June and August 2020. A review of four open libraries from around the country took place. Management and staff interviews indicated that, apart from some health and safety issues, it was running well, and it was agreed that other proposed schemes could proceed. However, the pandemic halted any progress and the union understands that management now intends to proceed. There will be a significant staff consultation process. The feedback in all areas reviewed was positive. The advanced engagement between staff and management provided good foundations for the implementation of 'my open library'. Staff advised that while technology supported open libraries, it changed the nature of the work, but did not reduce the level of work.

## Local Authority National Council (LANC)

Fórsa national secretary Dessie Robinson is the union side secretary to the Local Authority National Council (LANC), the negotiating forum made up of recognised trade unions and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). The group is chaired by the WRC's Damien Cannon. A revised forum for partnership was agreed by the LANC. Fórsa's insistence that the process be overseen at national level by a union-management steering group was eventually agreed by the employers. The local authority oversight group reviews the implementation of the sectoral elements of the *Building Momentum* national pay agreement.



## Future of local government services

Fórsa, Siptu and Connect, representing over 30,000 local authority workers, continued to mobilise the **More Power to You** campaign for increased revenue and powers for local authorities. The campaign sought commitments from political parties and candidates in the council elections on a range of local government reforms covering waste, water, housing and energy services. The campaign received pledges of support from a number of political parties, and more than 1,100 local election candidates supported the campaign's local power pledge. Dublin City Council (DCC) has established a cross-party group to remunicipalise domestic waste management collection in the city. The group has secured funding of €70,000 to enable a research project on the matter.

## Remunicipalisation of domestic waste services

Fórsa wrote to all 31 local authorities seeking an opportunity to make a presentation at their council meetings, and several facilitated a virtual presentation, which was well received by all parties. Most expressed interest in the outcome of the research on the remunicipalisation of domestic waste.

In September 2021, a working group involving the unions commissioned the research division of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), to submit a proposal in respect of this research. The request covered two key areas for the research as follows:

1. A comparative analysis that reviews DCC's waste collection system to other comparable European cities, with specified criteria including coverage, cost of service, quality of service, public satisfaction, terms and conditions of employment and environmental impact.
2. Consideration of evidence in the context of waste management arrangements Dublin city and Ireland, including a description of the current legal and regulatory context. It's intended that the research will draw attention to legislative and other changes required to enable DCC re-enter the domestic waste collection service.

The research team indicated that the work be carried out in two phases. Phase one to be completed by the end of February 2022, reviewing the available data. The initial report is to be discussed with the SPC sub-committee to enable an informed decision on the approach to be taken in phase two, which is expected to be available toward the end of summer 2022.

## Key finding - phase one

In general terms, it has been challenging to identify directly comparable data from the cities chosen for this project. Within each location there are varying administrative structures. There are also variances in how and why data is collected, making it difficult to establish uniformity across the agreed criteria for a comparative analysis. In addition, there are significant variances in terms of population, population density, and housing types, all of which influence how waste collection methodologies are determined.

There are also important historical, cultural, political and economic reasons why waste management has evolved the way it has in the various jurisdictions. Notwithstanding these limitations, the research has identified some key findings and data to inform discussions on a more detailed phase two analysis. These are:

- A kerbside waste collection service is availed of by 82% of households in the DCC administrative area. This compares with 100% of households for the other cities assessed
- The proportion of households living in apartments, rather than houses, in the comparative cities is very high, almost the reverse of the situation in Dublin. This has a significant impact on waste collection
- The average volume of waste produced by households in Dublin appears to be higher than in other cities studied
- All households in the other cities examined are required to pay for waste collection, with those on low incomes supported through social security
- Transition to a more environmentally friendly approach to waste collection is of moderate priority in the comparator cities. For example, in Stockholm, the extent to which potential contractors use environmentally friendly vehicles is taken into consideration in the evaluation process
- Data on traffic congestion attributable to waste collection vehicles is not monitored by any of the cities. Early starts are a tacit acknowledgement that waste collection does cause some traffic challenges and that having streets free of traffic allows for more efficient collection. However, early starts may also suit employees

- Data from two operators suggest that householders in Dublin city pay on average €243 per annum in waste collection costs. In Copenhagen the average is €284, in Oslo €258, and in Salzburg €232. Average annual waste costs in Stockholm are significantly lower (€88), though the 10% of households living in houses it's €205
- Average salary figures are significantly higher in all of the comparator cities. Data on the cost of living shows that Stockholm and Dublin are very similar, with Copenhagen somewhat higher and Oslo is about 20% higher. When rent is factored in, Dublin is on a par with Copenhagen and much closer to Oslo.

## Irish Water

The union has been involved in discussions with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the LGMA and Irish Water following the proposals by Irish Water to transfer 3,500 local authority staff to a new single entity. Prior to entering negotiations, Fórsa sought and secured a commitment from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage that no legal measures would be used to compulsorily transfer staff to the new entity.

Following a number of meetings in early 2021, six days were set aside by the WRC in July 2021 to deal with the industrial relations strand on pay, pensions and related. No real progress was made. Talks adjourned until November 2021. Irish Water produced a working document in November 2021 implying the transfer of staff would take place despite the union side's insistence that talks had only taken place on the basis that there would be no forced transfer of staff to Irish Water. The document contained a provision that Irish Water would take complete control of staffing by 2026. Management made a number of presentations on the pay structure currently operating for staff working directly for Irish Water. The union side outlined its concerns around timelines etc. The management side is to review its document and revert.

A meeting was arranged with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien to discuss the various strands of the transformation process. Following that meeting, unions received a paper from the department which commented on each strand as follows:

- **Strand one:**  
**Constitutional referendum**  
 The Minister committed to holding a referendum. Preference is to hold a referendum in conjunction with a referendum on the right to housing. No timeline as yet.
- **Strand two:**  
**The future of local government**  
 No response to key union asks but acknowledgement that numbers employed have not recovered to 2009 levels.
- **Strand three:**  
**Status and governance of the new entity**  
 The entity will be publicly owned with oversight by a board and accountable to the Oireachtas and the comptroller and auditor general. Defining the new entity as an "authority". Composition of the board is under consideration, and it is expected to have a worker representative on the board.

On the basis that the department document made clear that local authority workers would not be required to transfer to the new entity, and could remain in the employment of their local authority, the union side agreed to resume discussions on strand four, the industrial relations element of the negotiations. At the time of writing this report, a number of meetings have been arranged with the WRC with no real progress to date.



Photo: Dominick Wajls

Distinguished service award recipients 2021.

# Services and Enterprises Division

The division is made up of members across the non-commercial semi-state agencies, commercial bodies, community sector, private sector, and aviation. The divisional executive comprises of elected representatives from across the various entities and works collaboratively in the interest of its members. This report outlines work from April 2020 until February 2022. The division has recently embarked on the development of a divisional strategic plan, in line with Fórsa's national strategy, and is a key focus for the remainder of its term.

## Private sector pay

Fórsa has concluded pay agreements in employments across the private and non-commercial semi-state sector, which have generally been in line with, or just above the economy-wide average. However, some employments have been hit harder by the economic landscape faced following covid. We continue to negotiate pay agreements and strive to frontload wage increases to help offset the financial pressures workers face in the current climate. There is more information on the outcomes below. See also page 23.

## Aviation

### Cabin crew

The industrial relations landscape was radically altered from early 2020, following the catastrophic impact of the Covid pandemic across the aviation sector. It's widely accepted that the aviation sector was one of the worst affected during this period and will take longer to recover.

During the pandemic, various emergency schemes were established to assist workers, such as the TWSS and EWSS. While welcome, these did not alleviate the burden on Fórsa members as they struggled with significantly reduced salaries and reduced working hours for nearly two years, in addition to a genuine fear for their future.

Fórsa lobbied extensively, engaging with representatives across all political parties, calling for a bespoke scheme for aviation workers to prevent the loss of thousands of jobs. Members wrote to their elected representatives and played a significant part in keeping the aviation industry to the fore in high level discussions.

Fórsa attended the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communications Networks on three occasions during this period, representing the concerns of members. Fórsa was instrumental in the establishment of the LEEF Aviation Subgroup, chaired by Minister Hildegard Naughton.

Members in Ryanair, Crewlink and Workforce agreed an Emergency Covid Agreement to secure employment, and agreed to cuts to core salaries. Contained within this agreement was a review clause. Facing significant inflation and challenges to the workforce, the union will enter discussions to claw back some of these cuts.

Members in Aer Lingus have experienced substantial pay reductions since April 2020 (at times as low as 30% of basic salary) and have only returned to full salary since December 2021, following a WRC-brokered agreement. Structural changes were also agreed. In the summer of 2021, Aer Lingus announced its decision to permanently close its Shannon base, despite extensive lobbying and campaigning by Fórsa and other unions against the decision. This has been devastating for long-serving members.

In July 2020 CityJet discontinued its operation from Dublin, and cabin crew members at the airline lost their jobs. Further job losses occurred in June 2021 as Stobart Air went into liquidation. Members had provided decades of service at both airlines, and these job losses occurred with little warning.

Fórsa remains the sole representative body for cabin crew across all airlines in the Republic of Ireland and will continue to work alongside its elected membership to meet the challenges as the industry recovers from the impact of the pandemic.

## Pilots

### Aer Lingus

Pilot pay has returned to 90% of pre-Covid figures. However, other airlines around Europe have fully restored pre-covid pay levels and are now in the territory of agreeing pay increases for 2022. The industrial strategy is focused on resolving this for members.

### Ryanair

Fórsa and Ryanair concluded a new industrial relations agreement during November 2021. This includes the utilisation of the state dispute resolution if the parties can't resolve collective issues (e.g., a new collective labour agreement) in direct negotiations.

### CHC pilots

Loss of licence payments and company pension contribution increases are two outstanding issues now close to a conclusion for CHC pilots. Fórsa is also in the early stages of engagement on a new collective labour agreement for pilots and winch technical crew.

## Irish Aviation Authority

Pre-covid pay levels were fully restored at IAA during December 2021, and the level of pay increase for 2022 will be determined by an independent verification board. Management has offered 2.4% and the union is seeking 4.2%.

The key issue for members in the six Fórsa branches at IAA is the separation of the company into two separate organisations, as a result of provisions in the Air Navigation & Transport Bill 2020. The legislation will lead to the transfer of IAA's air navigation services to AirNav Ireland, including air traffic control and air marine radio services. Aviation regulatory functions and 150 staff will remain with IAA. Pension provision and continuance of the present industrial relations structures are under discussion. Vesting day is yet to be confirmed at the time of writing.

## Dublin Airport Authority

Fórsa reached agreement on new ways of working at the daa in March 2021, fully restoring the Covid-related reduction of working hours. Issues remained around a range of previously agreed payments such as PRP, pay progression and increments. A Labour Court hearing followed conciliation under the WRC. A recommendation is expected to issue shortly.

In December 2021, branch chair Des Mullally was successful in his campaign for the position of Worker Director.

## Shannon Airport Authority

The SAA imposed 20% pay cuts across all staffing grades in September 2020. Following a WRC process the issue was referred to the Labour Court. Labour Court recommendation LCR22351 (January 2021) recommended that the parties engage to see if an alternative solution can be found to achieve savings that would remove the need for the pay cut. After extensive discussions between the parties, some matters have been agreed, including an agreement that no further pay cuts are unilaterally imposed now or in the future. There is also agreement on retrospection of pay, a review on pension deficits and a roadmap to return to normal working. The group of unions continue to engage on these and other issues including pay, training, organisational restructuring and career advancement opportunities.

# Commercial and private sectors

## Pay

The period covered by this report has seen average pay rises of 2.5% p.a. in employments, details of some of these agreements is outlined further in the report. There were exceptions, as some sectors will take longer to recover from Covid while some employers are relying on the detrimental impact of Covid, and other defences, to offer lower than average wage increases, which is causing difficulties in these negotiations as workers are facing higher living costs.

## An Post

Pay rises of 2.5% p.a. have been negotiated at An Post. Management continues to propose to move, from its current Head Office in Dublin's GPO, to a site on Dublin's quays. Progress was slowed considerably due to Covid. The company will likely seek to have the move concluded by the end of 2022. Fórsa has raised concerns about the financial viability of the move.

## Eir

A three-year pay deal worth 2% p.a. is at its mid-point. There has been a series of voluntary redundancy schemes in Eir since the company was taken over by its French owner in 2017. The most recent arose from a review of the IT area following discussions between the union and management. During these negotiations Fórsa has achieved the introduction of additional Sunday payments for members working on shift for the first time.

Tech Mahindra lost its contract with Eir and was replaced by a multinational company. Fórsa and the CWU entered discussions with the new

company on Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE). These talks ended with members transferring back to Eir, the majority transferring to the new company and some leaving on incentivised redundancy terms.

## Ervia

The group of unions has agreed a pay deal which is a mixture of pay rises and performance-related bonus.

## Premier Lotteries Ireland

In early 2021 the union secured a three-year pay deal of 2.5% per annum.

## Vodafone

The performance bonus system is still in place, and Fórsa is to lodge a joint pay claim with the CWU.

## Coillte

A new collective labour agreement, with pay increases of between 4% and 10% over its lifetime, was accepted in a ballot and will run to 2024. Higher increases are targeted at the lower pay grades, and there are year-on-year lump sum payments for each grade.

## P&O Marine

A new collective labour agreement was accepted in a ballot, with pay increases totalling 6.75% over its lifetime, and will run until 2024.

# Non-commercial sector

## Sectoral oversight body

A joint union-management oversight body, established under the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA), deals with issues relating to interpretation and implementation of the agreement in the sector. Under section 5 of the agreement, issues should first be dealt with locally. If agreement is not reached locally, issues may be referred to the oversight body. If this does not resolve the issue, it may then be referred to either the WRC or the Public Service Agreement Group (PSAG).

## Pay

Staff in non-commercial state bodies benefit from the pay provisions negotiated by Fórsa under the PSSA.

## Sea Fisheries Protection Authority

Industrial action took place in early 2022 due to SFPFA management's refusal to maintain its commitment to enter binding arbitration at the Labour Court in June 2021. Following two periods of work stoppage, management agreed to revert to its original commitments. The Labour Court issued LCR 22569 on 25th March, taking a very conservative view on the wider application of the Lateral Transfer Agreement (LTA) in that it recommended that the LTA only apply to the two grades it explicitly refers to. In addressing the implementation of change the Court recommended that Fórsa follow the procedures within *Building Momentum*. In relation to improving the IR relationship, the Court gave a detailed local process of six weekly meetings, between the union and management, to devolve into more regular contact between workplace representatives and management after six months.

## Marine Institute

Management is pressing for lab analyst members to go to sea to collect sea samples on a compulsory basis. This is a long-term target for management. The union has raised objections on industrial relations, insurance and health & safety grounds. It's likely the matter will be referred to the WRC.

## An Bord Pleanála

The Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 represents a significant increase in workload for An Bord Pleanála as planning applications, associated with offshore developments, will fall within the Bord's scope of responsibility. Management has sought approval for a significant increase in resources and new posts to properly cover this new work.

## Chester Beatty Library

Conditions agreed under the attendant grade review are now fully implemented. New on-call arrangements and red weather protocols have also been agreed with management.

## Institute of Public Administration

Fórsa participated in a job evaluation scheme which led to a job upgrade for many members. Discussions continue to resolve a small number of cases arising from the process. Fórsa is seeking a similar scheme for more senior management grades, the issue will be referred to the oversight body in the absence of a local agreement.

## National Library

Flexi-leave arrangements are now in place in the National Library following a sustained union effort, and discussions have commenced on blended working.

## National Museum

Following agreement from the long-standing attendants claim, on the consolidation of overtime and weekend working into basic pay, the outstanding issue of pension has progressed and been agreed, and outstanding matters have been referred to the WRC. Delays with percentage increases being passed on to retired members has now been rectified. Engagements continue on the regrading of staff and contract issues in the museum ahop.

## Ordnance Survey Ireland

Fórsa continues to monitor the progress of legislation to create Tailte (the Government body to be formed through a merger of Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI), the Property Registration Authority of Ireland (PRA) and the Valuation Office (VO)), tabled for springtime 2022. Fórsa's Ordnance Survey branch is re-engaging with the other Fórsa branches in scope for the merger.

OSI has moved to bring people back to office-based work. Fórsa has pressed the position that gains for people working remotely are not lost. OSI will retain two office days per-week until discussions on a framework for remote working policy commence. The OSI confirmed that this pattern will not impinge on any member applying for remote working once the new framework is in place.

## Road Safety Authority

Fórsa had previously agreed to the recruitment of contracted driver testers to deal with a demand surge, and sought to cease the use of contract staff and increase the number of full-time testers. The issue was referred under section 5 of the PSSA, then to the oversight body and on to conciliation at the WRC. The parties have agreed a document, that would see full-time posts replace the contract posts. The agreement also seeks that an internal competition be run to fill these new full-time posts. The RSA has submitted a request for an additional 30 full-time driver tester posts, on top of the current 100, to facilitate this. Fórsa is awaiting sanction from the Department of Transport and DPER.

## Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

The government announced the establishment of the new Media Commission, tasked with regulating editorially-controlled audio-visual services (broadcasting and video on-demand), as well as video-sharing platform services. Members in BAI will transfer into the new organisation and will be essential to ensuring its success, and a large amount of new staff will be needed. Fórsa will be seeking to retain the current terms and conditions of members and seek to agree a collective agreement for all staff in the commission.

# Community sector

## Community employment supervisors

A ballot on the proposed 'gratuity' for the resolution of the longstanding pension issue was carried overwhelmingly in December 2021. Fórsa confirmed acceptance of the proposal, and met the DSP in February 2022 to discuss its implementation. The DSP is advanced on necessary data about retired staff and waiting on payment, which 640 retired supervisors and assistants are due. A further 80 to 90 are due to retire in 2022 and a similar number in 2023. Legislation will be required to ensure the gratuity is tax-free. The DSP is currently engaged in linking to a Department of Finance bill, and estimates payments will commence in June.

Fórsa has also raised concerns on terms and conditions, pay and operations, and the union is currently drafting a pay claim on behalf of supervisors and assistants who have not had a pay rise in 14 years.

## Local enterprises

Changes to the tendering processes for the provision of Public Employment Services were introduced in 2021, allowing non-community, for-profit companies to bid for contracts. Fórsa and Siptu launched the 'Our Communities Not for Sale' campaign in summer 2021, and in September the unions made a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development, and the Islands.

The committee's report on the examination of employment services made nine recommendations and concurred with the union's submission that Local Employment Service continue to be maintained in its current format.

Ignoring the recommendation, the DSP proceeded to put forward a request for tender at the end of 2021. At the request of unions, the second phase of the tendering process was deferred from January to June 2022, to allow for further engagements with the department and individual partnerships around any proposed restructuring and staff concerns. These engagements are ongoing.

Fórsa is seeking engagements around the return of incremental progression and other elements of pay and conditions that ceased within the services as far back as 2008.

Some workers have sought representation to allow them to work beyond age 65, and has been secured in a very small number of partnerships. Engagements around staff handbooks are also taking place in several partnership employments.

November 2021 saw the launch of the ongoing 'Valuing Care/Recognising Work' campaign. This joint ICTU-led campaign includes Fórsa, the INMO and SIPTU working across community groups, section 39 and section 56 agencies. Workers in these employments provide services with lesser terms and conditions to workers providing the same services in state run bodies.

# Appendices

# Appendix I

*The following link to pay scale information at [forsa.ie](https://forsa.ie):*

## Salary Scales

[Civil Service Salary Scales](#)

[Education Salary Scales](#)

[Health Sector Consolidated Salary Scales](#)

[Local Government Salary Scales](#)

# Appendix II

*The following links to travel and subsistence information at [forsa.ie](https://forsa.ie):*

[Travel and subsistence](#)

[Travel and subsistence](#)

# Appendix III

## National Executive Committee (NEC) membership

### NEC January 2020

#### President

Ann McGee

#### Senior Vice President

Michael Smyth

#### Vice Presidents

Margaret Coughlan (from March 2019)

Eugene Gargan

#### Treasurer

Kevin O'Malley

#### Civil Service

Debbie Brennan (co-opted June 2020)

Melissa Brennan (co-opted February 2020)

Michael Crowe

Cormac Donoghue

Alan Hanlon

Sue Kelly

Rhona McEleney (to May 2020)

Kathleen McGee (to August 2020)

Helen Linehan (co-opted September 2020)

John O'Flanagan

Jean Taylor

Betty Tyrrell Collard

#### Education

Kathleen O'Doherty

Noreen O'Mahony

Antoinette Mullen

#### Health and Welfare

Clodagh Kavanagh

Don Gibney

Jarlath O'Connor

Corrine Phelan

Michelle Spearman Geraghty

Martin Walsh

#### Local Government and Local Services

Gerry O'Quigley

Julie Flood

Seán Reid (Cathaoirleach)

#### Municipal Employees

Seamus Kavanagh

Thomas Murtagh

#### Service and Enterprises

Evan Cullen

Niall Mullally

Steve Pilgrim

## NEC November 2020

### President

Michael Smyth

### Senior Vice President

Martin Walsh

### Vice Presidents

Ann McGee (to July 2021)  
Eugene Gargan

### Treasurer

Kevin O'Malley

### Civil Service

Michael Crowe  
Cormac Donoghue  
Alan Hanlon  
Sue Kelly  
Don Deane (from April 2021)  
Helen Linehan,  
Jean Taylor  
Betty Tyrrell Collard  
John O'Flanagan

### Education

Kathleen O'Doherty  
Noreen O'Mahony  
Antoinette Mullen

### Health and Welfare

Clodagh Kavanagh  
Don Gibney  
Jarlath O'Connor  
Corrine Phelan  
Michelle Spearman Geraghty  
Andy Meaney (from December 2020)  
Martin Walsh

### Local Government and Local Services

Gerry O'Quigley  
Julie Flood  
Seán Reid (Cathaoirleach)

### Municipal Employees

Seamus Kavanagh  
Thomas Murtagh

### Service and Enterprises

Evan Cullen  
Niall Mullally  
Steve Pilgrim

## NEC July 2021

### President

Michael Smyth

### Senior Vice President

Martin Walsh

### Vice Presidents

Eugene Gargan  
Betty Tyrrell Collard

### Treasurer

Kevin O'Malley

### Civil Service

Melissa Brennan  
Michael Crowe  
Cormac Donoghue  
Darragh Fox  
Alan Hanlon  
Seán Lowde  
Majella Murphy  
Jean Taylor  
Gerry Wilson

### Education

Eilise McGarrell  
Kathleen O'Doherty  
Noreen O'Mahony

### Health and Welfare

Clodagh Kavanagh  
Jarlath O'Connor  
Andy Meaney  
Chris Harrison  
Bernadette Mooney  
Daniel Sweeney

### Local Government and Local Services

Julie Flood  
Pádraig McGiveney  
Michael Whyms

### Municipal Employees

Seamus Kavanagh  
Thomas Murtagh

### Service and Enterprises

Evan Cullen  
Niall Mullally  
Steve Pilgrim

# Appendix IV

## Fórsa staff

See the Fórsa [staff page](#) at [forsa.ie](#)

# Appendix V

## Code of Service Standards – report to Conference 2022

### Introduction

Rule 28 and Appendix 2 of the Fórsa Instrument of Amalgamation and rule book provide that the senior official charged with overseeing the application of the Code of Service Standards should make a report to the biennial union conference (S.13). Deputy General Secretary Eoin Ronayne was assigned this responsibility and this report covers the period 2020-2021.

In line with Appendix C, Transitional Provisions, Section 3.10 the provisions of the Code were accessible to members in the Civil Service division. It is anticipated that the scope of the Code will extend to all Divisions following a successful roll out of the new Solas CRM system during the period up to union conference 2024. An informal process outside the provisions of the Code applied to complaints arising in those Divisions during the period of this report.

In the case of complaints by individual members, the Code sets out a series of criteria in Sections 4-6 which must be established by the complainant if an investigation by the senior official is to uphold the complaint.

Section 10 provides that complaints beyond those criteria may only be submitted by a Branch to the General Secretary.

### Cases in the Civil Services Division

Two complaints were addressed under the Code. The issue of concern in one case was referred to the division for renewed interaction between officials and the individual member as the matter raised fell outside the criteria set down in section

4-6 of the code. The second case was investigated by the senior official who found that the complaint did not substantiate a failure to deliver the service standards covered by the criteria in section 4-6.

### Other divisions

Two individual complaints were addressed regarding service standards in the Health division, but these were closed as it became clear that changed circumstances made it impossible to complete any investigation. A third case by a group of members was investigated by the senior official and a series of recommendations to address the issues raised was issued and accepted.

### External

During the period, a number of complaints about service delivery by 'the union', or its former constituent unions prior to amalgamation, were raised through third parties by former members. These fall outside the provisions of the code while there is no provision within the rules of the union for any formal right of a former member to lodge such a complaint. The cases were addressed by the senior official notwithstanding the absence of a formal process and the difficulties faced in reviewing matters which arose some years previously.

# Appendix VI

## Report of the Fórsa Ombudsman 2019-2021

The provisions relating to the Fórsa Ombudsman are contained at Rule 28(ii) to (v) of the Fórsa Instrument of Amalgamation. Appendix Two of the Instrument of Amalgamation, although not part of the Rules, contains the Code of Service Standards. The process for referring a complaint to the Ombudsman is detailed at section 9 of this Appendix.

I can report that, since the last Report of the Fórsa Ombudsman for the period 2018-2019, no complaints have been referred to the Ombudsman for consideration or adjudication.

**Brian Campfield**  
Fórsa Ombudsman

# Appendix VII

## Union - statement of income and expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription income	4	24,270,710	23,658,610
Amalgamation refund		-	117,556
Rental income		572,884	625,181
Interest on deposits, government stocks and dividend income		646,341	852,825
Loss on disposal of investment properties		-	(250,000)
Fair value gain/(loss) on investments		3,009,288	(632,927)
Profit/(loss) on disposal of investments		27,323	(31,362)
Other income		91,021	139,264
		<b>28,617,567</b>	<b>24,479,147</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
General and other administration expenditure		(22,088,353)	(20,923,791)
Surplus for the year before tax		6,529,214	3,555,356
Tax	8	(228,002)	(233,137)
Surplus for the year after tax		<b>6,301,212</b>	<b>3,322,219</b>

## Union - statement of total comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus for the year after tax		6,301,212	3,322,219
Remeasurement of defined benefit plans	16	6,135,000	(4,738,000)
Fixed assets revaluation reserve	9	242,066	416,708
Total comprehensive surplus/(deficit) for the year		<b>12,678,278</b>	<b>(999,073)</b>

## General Fund – statement of income and expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription income	4	18,563,184	18,036,203
Amalgamation refund		-	117,556
Investment income			
- Staff loan interest		356	1,185
- Interest on deposits, government stocks and dividend income		30,796	10,034
- Fair value (loss)/gain on investments		(81,144)	46,746
		<b>18,513,192</b>	<b>18,211,724</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration, establishment and general expenses		(16,679,669)	(16,437,957)
Depreciation on office equipment	9	(231,058)	(230,110)
Net other finance income /(expense)	5	8,000	73,000
Surplus for the year before tax	6	1,610,465	1,616,657
Tax	8	(7,063)	(2,802)
Surplus for the year after tax		<b>1,603,402</b>	<b>1,613,855</b>

## General Fund – statement of total comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2021

General Fund – Statement of total comprehensive income For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus for the year after tax		1,603,402	1,613,855
Remeasurement of defined benefit plans	16	6,135,000	(4,738,000)
Total comprehensive surplus / (deficit) for the year		<b>7,738,402</b>	<b>(3,124,145)</b>

## Developing World Fund – statement of income and expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription income	4	694,444	675,139
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Projects		(433,796)	(633,861)
Surplus for the year before tax	6	260,648	41,278
Tax	8	-	-
Surplus for the year after tax		<b>260,648</b>	<b>41,278</b>

## Developing World Fund – statement of total comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus for the year after tax		260,648	41,278
Total comprehensive surplus for the year		<b>260,648</b>	<b>41,278</b>

## Contingency Fund – statement of income and expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription income	4	1,157,407	1,125,232
Investment income			
- Interest on deposits, government stocks and dividend income		613,346	838,869
- Profit/(loss) on disposal of investments		27,323	(31,362)
- Fair value gain/(loss) on investments		3,090,432	(679,673)
- Rental income		572,884	625,181
- Loss on disposal of investment properties		-	(250,000)
		<b>5,461,392</b>	<b>1,628,247</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Strike pay and other expenses		-	(15,800)
Investment consultancy fees		(120,411)	(126,565)
Depreciation on buildings & refurbishment		(749,381)	(586,708)
Legal costs of disputes		(492,459)	(248,623)
Property management charges		(104,275)	(70,344)
Impairment loss on fixed assets and investment properties		(1,197,919)	(424,997)
		<b>(2,664,445)</b>	<b>(1,473,037)</b>
Surplus for the year before tax	6	2,796,947	155,210
Tax	8	(220,939)	(211,052)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year after tax		<b>2,576,008</b>	<b>(55,842)</b>

## Contingency Fund – statement of total comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus/(deficit) for the year after tax		2,576,008	(55,842)
Fixed assets revaluation reserve	9	242,066	416,708
Total comprehensive surplus for the year		<b>2,818,074</b>	<b>360,866</b>

## Benefit Fund – statement of income and expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription income	4	541,235	530,287
Investment income		2,199	3,921
		<b>543,434</b>	<b>534,208</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Benefit expenses		(290,329)	(282,964)
Overhead expenses		(53,696)	(54,720)
Surplus for the year before tax		199,409	196,524
Tax		-	-
Surplus for the year after tax		<b>199,409</b>	<b>196,524</b>

## Benefit Fund – statement of total comprehensive

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus for the year after tax		199,409	196,524
Total comprehensive surplus for the year		<b>199,409</b>	<b>196,524</b>

## Branch Fund – statement of income and expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription income	4	3,314,440	3,291,749
Investment and other income		90,665	138,080
		<b>3,405,105</b>	<b>3,429,829</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration and general expenses		(1,743,360)	(1,884,142)
Surplus for the year before tax		1,661,745	1,545,687
Tax		-	(19,283)
Surplus for the year after tax		<b>1,661,745</b>	<b>1,526,404</b>

## Branch Fund – statement of total comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus for the year after tax		1,661,745	1,526,404
Total comprehensive surplus for the year		<b>1,661,745</b>	<b>1,526,404</b>

## Union – statement of financial position

As at 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Tangible fixed assets	9	19,406,379	25,769,804
Investment properties	9	13,237,500	7,632,500
Intangible assets	10	458,426	-
Investments	11	42,975,207	40,019,622
Pension asset - net	16	6,510,629	802,629
		<b>82,588,141</b>	<b>74,224,556</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Investments	11	2,182,255	638,532
Debtors	12	3,270,040	3,569,735
Cash and cash equivalents	13	40,406,869	36,865,839
		<b>45,859,164</b>	<b>41,074,106</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(1,833,050)	(1,283,484)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>44,026,114</b>	<b>39,790,623</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>126,614,255</b>	<b>114,015,177</b>
Provision for liabilities and charges	15	(638,700)	(717,900)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>125,975,555</b>	<b>113,297,277</b>
<b>Funds</b>			
Accumulated funds excluding other reserves		121,026,805	114,419,987
Other reserves:			
Remeasurement of defined benefit plans		3,567,000	(2,568,000)
Revaluation reserve		1,381,750	1,445,290
<b>Total fund balances</b>		<b>125,975,555</b>	<b>113,297,277</b>

## Union – statement of cash flows

As at 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Surplus for the financial period before tax		6,529,214	3,555,356
<b>Non cash adjustments</b>			
- Fair value adjustment on investments	11	(3,166,312)	649,975
- Fair value decrease/(increase) on investment properties	9	895,000	405,000
- Impairment loss on fixed assets	9	302,919	19,998
- Depreciation of property and equipment	9	980,439	816,818
- Interest and dividend income		(646,341)	(852,825)
- Charges on defined benefit pensions	16	427,000	376,000
- Movement in provisions	15	(79,200)	(150,100)
- Loss/(gain) on sale of fixed asset	9	-	250,000
Total non-cash adjustments		<b>(1,286,495)</b>	<b>1,514,886</b>
<b>Net changes in working capital</b>			
- Increase in debtors		355,961	213,812
- Increase/(decrease) in creditors		588,189	(157,928)
Net changes in working capital		944,150	55,884
Income taxes paid		(322,892)	(278,103)
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>		<b>5,863,977</b>	<b>4,848,003</b>
<b>Investing Activities</b>			
- Purchase of property and equipment	9	(1,177,867)	(3,089,000)
- Purchase of intangible assets	10	(458,426)	-
- Purchase of investments	11	(4,771,607)	(2,512,500)
- Proceeds from sale of property and investment properties		-	500,000
- Proceeds from sale of investments	11	2,933,340	3,022,694
- Interest and dividends received		646,341	852,825
- Investments transferred to cash	11	505,272	1,449,583
<b>Net cash generated from investing activities</b>		<b>(2,322,947)</b>	<b>223,602</b>
<b>Net change in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>3,541,030</b>	<b>5,071,605</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	13	36,865,839	31,794,234
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>40,406,869</b>	<b>36,865,839</b>

Fórsa has no borrowings, loans and other finance related transactions which requires disclosures of net debt reconciliation as part of the statement of cash flows.



**FÓRSA**

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