

RECRUITMENT PAUSE CLERICAL ADMIN/ MANAGERIAL GRADES

Ballot for Industrial Action

Why is there a ballot for industrial action?

The reason for balloting all clerical admin and management grades relates to the recent memos issued by the Head of Acute Services and the CEO of the HSE. These memos have instructed all managers throughout the HSE and Section 38s to pause recruitment across the managerial/administration grades.

On 24th July management escalated this further and put in place a **FULL RECRUITMENT PAUSE** from Grade III and above. They have stated this was due to their concerns over the number of clerical admin / managerial grades recruited in the last six months.

The only departments that will be allowed fill posts from Grade III and above are those considered to be below their agreed headcount.

Yet again the HSE is targeting clerical admin grades – no other grade or category across the HSE will suffer these arbitrary measures.

In addition, Fórsa has been raising serious concerns in recent months with HSE senior management over their failure to adhere to our collective agreements on the filling of promotional positions. We have also raised with management, their over reliance on agency workers and external private consultants.

In light of this the Divisional Executive Committee held a meeting on the 25th July 2023 and unanimously decided that in order to protect employment and promotional opportunities for our members we must extend the deadline for members to cast their votes.

Who can vote?

All members of the clerical administrative and managerial grades within the HSE and Section 38 employers.

Background to the dispute: Use of agency workers/procured services

Earlier this year, Fórsa wrote to the HSE expressing our concern that the HSE and Section 38 employers continually ignored our collective agreements and were choosing to fill positions via agency workers or through procured services. This was particularly obvious when we continually observed positions at level of Grade V to Grade VII being filled via external competitions or agency workers.

The terms of our collective agreements are clear. The principal points are:

- Grade V to Grade VII positions should be advertised within the health family in the first instance. Management continues to breach this agreement.
- Should the employer fail to fill the position internally it is only then that it should be advertised externally for filling through direct employment.
- The employers should only use agency workers on rare occasions and only following engagement with Fórsa.

Despite engagement with senior management of the HSE earlier this year regarding these issues, we continued to see a blatant disregard for our agreements across the country.

Therefore, the Health and Welfare Divisional Executive took the decision in late April to declare a trade dispute and we wrote to senior management informing them of same

Recruitment pause

In addition to this, Fórsa become aware that the HSE had issued a recruitment pause across the system on the filling of all Grade VII positions and above. Furthermore, the Head of Acute Services issued a recruitment pause on all management/administration grades pending a review. The rationale for this recruitment pause relates to projected budget overruns.

On 24th July this progressed further when management in the HSE informed Fórsa that due to their concerns in relation to the number of clerical admin/managerial grades recruited in the last six months they are now putting in place **a full pause on recruitment** in the clerical admin stream (from Grade III above). The only departments that will be allowed fill posts from Grade III and above are those considered to be below their agreed headcount.

Senior management have taken the decision to only target managerial/administration grades to carry this financial burden. This is against the backdrop of the HSE and Section 38 employers continuing to pay millions of euros on external private consultants to offer advice. Funds that would be best served investing in their own employees.

No other grade or category across the HSE or Section 38s is subject to these harsh measures, which are reminiscent of the recruitment moratorium of the austerity years. This is completely unacceptable.

Our members have told us of the pressures they are under in trying to provide public facing/critical services across the organisation. They already feel over stretched and under resourced and to implement a recruitment pause, solely focused on managerial/administration grades, without any form of consultation, is the final straw.

We cannot see a return to vacant posts emerging and our members being asked to carry out these duties. We need to protect the vital role of the clerical admin/ managerial grades.

Is Fórsa's Health and Welfare DEC recommending support of this ballot?

Yes. The union's elected Divisional Executive Committee is calling on members to support this ballot to **VOTE YES** for industrial action, up to and including strike action.

Next steps:

1. The ballot is now open, and members are encouraged to vote as soon as possible.
2. General meetings will continue to take place, either within your workplace or online. Please look out for further information from your Branch Executive.
3. A ballot helpdesk is in operation during this time and queries can be directed to hwballot2023@forsa.ie
4. The ballot will close at **12.00pm on Thursday 10th August 2023**, after which we will inform members of the outcome before writing to employers.

Members should note that if the result of the ballot is in favour of taking industrial action up to and including strike action, we are obliged to serve three weeks' notice upon the employer of our intention to commence any form of industrial action.

What can you do?

- Participate in any workplace information meetings arranged by your Branch Executive.
- Encourage your colleagues to participate also.
- Ensure you cast your vote as early as possible. The ballot will close at **noon on Thursday 10th August.**

Encourage your colleagues to stand up and help us win a better deal.
Ask everyone in your office or department to join Fórsa.

VOTE YES

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