

## **FAQs – Local Government Job Evaluation Dispute**

Fórsa members in local authorities will take industrial action as part of our dispute to achieve job evaluation in the sector. Members working in the local authority sector voted for action by over 85% to give Fórsa a mandate.

This follows the abject failure of the sector management to engage meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute, despite having committed to doing so in the joint referral to the Workplace Relations Commission, which stated:

*Both the LGMA and Fórsa request that the WRC urgently reconvene conciliation on the issue of job evaluation in the local government sector. The employer and union are committed to engaging meaningfully and constructively to resolve this issue over the coming weeks. To that end, we respectfully request that the WRC arrange urgent conciliation with both parties as a matter of urgency.*

**The initial industrial action will commence with an indefinite ban on engagement on all non-statutory political representations (verbal, email and written) from the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

### **What is job evaluation?**

Job evaluation is a process for working out the relative worth (grade for the job) of posts in an organisation based on what the post-holder is doing or is expected to do. It is carried out so that fair levels of pay for different jobs can be set rather than be based on subjective criteria or assumptions.

### **What is the problem in the Local Government sector?**

Fórsa argues that almost 10,000 council jobs were lost following the financial crisis. Services were only maintained because staff had taken on additional responsibilities above their pay grades. In the public sector, Local Authorities suffered the greatest reduction of numbers of employees during the austerity era, which has resulted in significant grade drift in the sector. This means that many workers are carrying out the duties at a higher level.

### **What happens elsewhere?**

Local Authority workers in the North and right across Britain have had access to job evaluation for decades. It is also commonplace across much of Europe. In Ireland, many Fórsa grades represented in the HSE and higher education have access to job evaluation.

### **So, what's the problem?**

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) maintains that everyone working in the Local Authority sector is paid the appropriate rate for the job. They reject that people are working above grade. Fórsa believes that the only way to deal with this matter is through an independent job evaluation exercise. Local Authorities

were once the employer of choice but that is no longer the case. There is a recruitment and retention crisis in the sector that is getting worse. Addressing this issue will help.

### **Fórsa industrial action ban on political representations**

Engaging with politicians can be a routine part of the job of workers in Local Government. Whilst we are not in conflict with public representatives, banning such work is a legitimate activity aimed at pressurising the employer to resolve our dispute.

### **Who does this cover?**

All public representatives; Councillors, Senators, TDs (including Ministers) and MEPs.

### **What is covered?**

Members are instructed not to undertake the following tasks:

- Emails, telephone calls, texts, letters, with Councillors, Senators, TDs (including Ministers) and MEPs.
- Assistance with Councillor queries/parliamentary questions
- Face-to-face discussions about work queries from public elected reps.
- Routine updates provided from the Council centrally and at Municipal District level on issues such road closures, water, street cleaning etc.

### **What is allowed ?**

Currently the following is allowed , though may be reviewed at a later stage as part of any escalation exercise:

- Should you regularly attend Council/MD/SPC, this can continue.
- Assistance with agendas, papers etc, should that currently form part of your job, this can continue.

Fol requests submitted in the normal fashion via the dedicated Fol Officer/liaison

### **What should members say to public reps?**

We would encourage members to explain/reiterate the legitimacy and necessity of the action. Advise elected representatives to contact the Chief Executive to resolve the dispute.

We have written to public representatives outlining our dispute.

### **Will there be further action?**

Yes. There will be further escalation of the industrial action if the employer fails to engage with us in order to resolve the dispute.

## **I'm not a member of Fórsa, what should I do during the dispute?**

Have you thought about joining the union? Your colleagues are fighting hard for your rights. The more people who join, the more strength we have. It's never been [easier to join Fórsa](#).

Once your membership has been ratified, you must follow the work to rule instruction.

## **I have some more questions, not answered above. Who do I contact?**

You should contact your local branch. If you are unsure of who to contact, please contact your closest Fórsa office:

- Cork 021 4255 210 [forsacork@forsa.ie](mailto:forsacork@forsa.ie)
- Limerick 061 319 177 [forsalimerick@forsa.ie](mailto:forsalimerick@forsa.ie)
- Galway 091 778 031 [forsagalway@forsa.ie](mailto:forsagalway@forsa.ie)
- Sligo 071 914 2400 [forsasligo@forsa.ie](mailto:forsasligo@forsa.ie)
- Dublin Head Office: 01 8171500 [lgaction2023@forsa.ie](mailto:lgaction2023@forsa.ie)