

# HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS Workplace Survey

## YOUR RESULTS ARE IN

### Lack of resources, staffing, career progression and increased workload are key concerns

*Interim results from a recent Fórsa survey of Health and Social Care Professionals (HSCP) across a range of disciplines and sectors has identified lack of resources and staffing, lack of opportunities for career advancement and increased workloads as key concerns.*

THE SURVEY, which was initially conducted across a range of employments, asked respondents to identify the top three issues that are of concern to them, one thing that they would change, whilst also asking HSCPs to identify any concerns that they may have related to health and safety within their workplace. The average length of service amongst all respondents, to date was 13.5 years.



The screenshot shows the 'HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS CAMPAIGN Workplace Survey' form. It includes a header with the Fórsa logo and a brief introduction. The form fields include: Name, Health number, Email address, Name of service, Location, Occupation or role, and a section for 'What are the three biggest difficulties or concerns you face in your job today, in order of importance?' with a list of 1-3. There is also a section for 'If you could change one thing within your workplace today, what would it be?' and a final question about health and safety concerns.

Lack of resources, including inadequate staffing levels was the primary issue identified by respondents, with one in two of those surveyed stating that this was their key concern. Linked to this issue and ranked as the second key concern was the lack of opportunity for career advancement and progression within their profession and employments while increased workload and caseload listed as the third issue of concern.

Other key issues highlighted by the Fórsa survey, which was the first of its kind undertaken with HSCPs, included increased administrative roles across the varying professions with respondents highlighting that lack of administrative support was a continual frustration for them. Furthermore, lack of communications and concerns relating to the proposed CHO structures and general workplace structures were also a common feature of respondents.

In relation to health and safety, Health and Social Care Professionals have stated that workplaces facilities, work related stress and personal safety and security were their collective concerns, with a number of professionals stating that increased incidents of personal threats and assaults were on the increase with many stating that the lack of support afforded to them during such incidents was unacceptable.

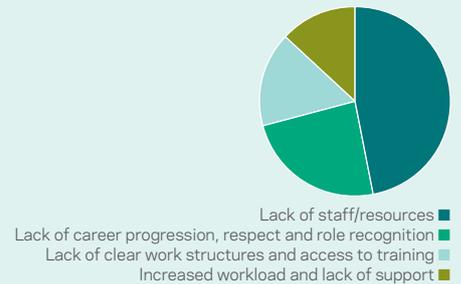
The survey, which will continue to run until March 2019, is focusing on identifying the challenges for those within the various sectors and professions with this publication only outlining the interim results. The data obtained from this initiative will continue to build and strengthen the communications and relationship that Fórsa has with its' members, with a view to further influencing potential outcomes in the various industrial relations and negotiating forums into the future. It is also worth highlighting that all data gathered is securely stored in line with GDPR guidelines and responsibility. Furthermore, it is designed to enhance the continuing work in which Fórsa is currently engaged in, on your behalf throughout various sectors and employments. Open to members and non-members alike, this survey is critical to creating awareness of issues and we would encourage all colleagues whom work within the HSCP family to complete the survey and return it to the address provided. Electronic versions of the survey will be circulated to all members of the union in the coming weeks and a printed version of same will continue to be circulated through local union structures, professional committees and branches so please engage and have your say. Further information in relation to this initiative is available from [ofawl@forসা.ie](mailto:ofawl@forসা.ie) or [kmorgan@forসা.ie](mailto:kmorgan@forসা.ie). Please note that all data from the survey is stored in line with GDPR guidelines.

# HSCP - interim survey results

## SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

With regard to the survey completed by social care workers, respondents have stated that lack of resources and staffing are their primary concern, with one in two of respondents citing this as their primary concern. Lack of respect, role recognition and career progression are also primary concerns for social care workers. Increased staffing and career progression were the issues that were identified as those whom respondents wished to have addressed while in terms of health and safety, those whom completed the survey reported that personal security was their main issue. The average length of service of respondents was 17.5 years.

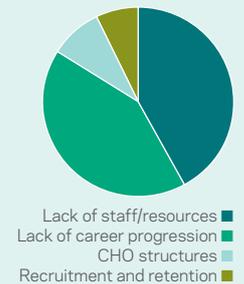
Interim results:  
Top issues for Social Care Workers



## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Occupational therapists from across the country have reported that lack of resourcing, career progression and concerns relating to CHO structures are of concern to them. Interim results of surveys returned to date further indicated that recruitment and retention of staff are a key concern. Increased work related stress was highlighted by respondents when responding to the question "Do you have any concerns relating to health and safety?" with this issue being the only issue reported under this heading. The introduction of a career path and career progression, while a need for increased staffing were the two key matters that occupational therapist have currently indicated as their preferred options for workplace improvement. The average length of service of respondents was 13 years.

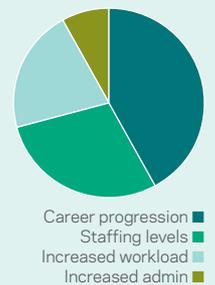
Interim results:  
Top issues for Occupational Therapists



## PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Physiotherapists have stated that lack of career progression, staffing levels and increased workload are currently the key concerns for their profession, as reflected by the current level of survey returns. Surveys were received from across the country and although this is only an interim report on data gathered to date, respondents went onto state that poor facilities and increased admin were also of concern to them. The average length of service of respondents was 15.5 years.

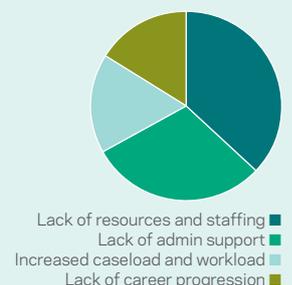
Interim results:  
Top issues for Physiotherapists



## SOCIAL WORKERS

The interim results pertaining to the responses from social workers reflects that lack of resources and staffing, increased case load and lack of administrative support are of concern to them. In addition lack of career progression opportunities were also cited by respondents as an issue with all of those surveyed were reflective of the various disciplines and grades within the social work family. Furthermore, respondents stated that increased staffing would directly contribute to a reduction in caseload. Work related stress was highlighted as their main health and safety concern. The average length of service of respondents to date was 14 years.

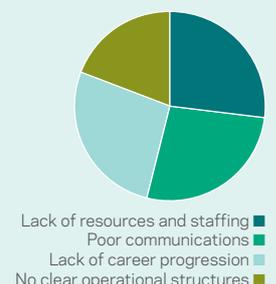
Interim results:  
Top issues for Social Workers



## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

Lack of resourcing, inadequate staffing levels, poor communications and lack of career progression opportunities are the main issues as currently outlined by speech and language therapists with the majority of respondents highlighting same. They went onto state that increased staffing levels were also a priority that they wished to see addressed while poor workplace facilities and access to services were their main concerns when it came to health and safety. The average length of service of respondents to date was nine years.

Interim results: Top issues for  
Speech and Language Therapists



# CHO structures and network managers - industrial relations

## Developments and opportunities

Further to recent collective negotiations, Fórsa has secured the introduction of the role of Network Manager across nine learning sites, one site per CHO. The identity of the learning sites will be subject to discussion and agreement between the HSE and Fórsa. Although many concerns had been voiced about the inception of the Network Manager Model, the alternative was an ad-hoc approach across all CHOs at the discretion of chief officers. This would have inevitably resulted in unsustainable inequities throughout the system. One way or another, CHO areas were going to be divided into smaller geographical cells. The Network Model concerns itself with the provision and operation of therapy services and the operation of same within a specific geographical network assigned to the appropriate CHO. At a conference held by Fórsa for HSCPs in February 2018, there was a unanimous call for HSCPs to be placed at the centre of service planning and delivery. The clinical qualification required for access to Network Manager posts creates huge opportunity for such posts to be populated by HSCPs with expert working knowledge in that professional environment. Crucially, Fórsa has negotiated the retention of the Therapy Manager structure, with the result that Therapy Manager posts vacated by successful Network Manager applicants will be backfilled.

## CPD events for HSCP professionals

### Understanding the complexities of social work - Dublin



Social workers at the “Understanding the Complexities of Social Work” CPD event.

This autumn, a CPD event specific to the area of social work entitled “Understanding the Complexities of Social Work”, took place in Fórsa head office in central Dublin. Hosted by Fórsa’s, Social Work Vocational Group this event featured guest lecturers from a number of third level institutes whilst facilitating contributions from a number of key note speakers providing attendees with a keener understanding of the complexities of the profession from both a practitioner and service user perspective. An interactive session, topics included “Health Social Work in a Contested World” by Helen Cleak, PHD, Associate Professor in the School of Public Health and Social Work at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane to “Mapping the Information that Informs Social Work - A Pragmatic Model to Capture a Complex Practice”, by Dr. Niamh Flanagan, Lecturer in Social Policy, NUI Maynooth.

Additional insight into the “Invisible Value of Social Work”, was provided by Clara O’Shea Collins, a third level student of the discipline whom had benefited from the support provided by the profession historically, to Kerry Cuskelly, herself a social worker and Secretary of the Vocational Group, whom outlined “A practitioner’s Perspective”. Other contributors included Fórsa Health and Welfare Division head, Éamonn Donnelly.



Éamonn Donnelly, Head, Fórsa Health and Welfare Division addressing the “Understanding the Complexities of Social Work” CPD event.

## Conflict management - Limerick

During the month of November, a second CPD event took place for Fórsa physiotherapy members, in the mid-west region. The subject matter was "Conflict Management" and specialist training was provided and delivered on among other things, how to manage conflict within a working environment. Funded by the Limerick Health and Welfare Branch, Tipperary Health and Community and Clare Health branches, with additional support provided by the Health and Welfare Division and the Strategic Organising Department, it is envisaged that a programme of such events will be scheduled for Fórsa HSCP members through 2019. Attendees received a CPD certificate upon completion of this programme.



Documentation relating to "Conflict Resolution" from the Conflict Management CPD programme in Limerick.

## Fórsa Health and Welfare Division - your union organising to win

Representing over 30,000 health workers including health and social care professionals; clerical, administrative and management staff and technical staff, Fórsa's Health and Welfare Division, its branches, vocation groups and professional committees work to ensure that the issues and challenges that you face in your respective roles and professions are responded to and organised in a professional and effective manner through a strong unionised voice... both within the workplace and beyond.

The division itself is constructed of 34 geographically based branches whom are made up of representatives from across the health and welfare sector. In addition there are a number of vocational groups and professional committees whom advise the union on matters that relate specifically to their profession for example social workers, social care workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, dietitians, psychologists, chiropodists and podiatrists, orthoptists and counsellors.

Fórsa trade union is the national representative voice for Health and Social Care Professions (HSCPs) and your union is working with HSCPs on matters that affect the various professions at both local and national level. We continue to need a strong organised voice in order to progress issues and through joining with colleagues across this sector we can continue to drive change. So if you aren't currently a member of this union, start by joining your colleagues in becoming a member of Fórsa, and for existing members why not consider becoming more active and assist your union in influencing and winning better outcomes for HSCPs. Why? Well simply put, a union is after all, a group of workers supporting each other to win respect, justice and better conditions - at work and beyond.

### What makes a union strong?

Members make a trade union strong. Our union is stronger when we have members who are actively working with us to resolve issues and face challenges together. As individuals, it is easier to be divided and to feel alone when facing a problem. As part of the union collective, we work together to ensure that we have one strong consistent and well organised voice. Our ability to negotiate on issues and influence outcomes increases when there is a more organised active trade union.

*In essence, you are stronger in your union - but your union is stronger with you in it! So if you are aware of colleagues whom may not be members of Fórsa, encourage them to join, consider inviting the union to speak to you and your colleagues about Fórsa, attend local meetings and engage with union communications and even consider becoming active in your local branch, vocational group or professional committee.*

We want you to help build your union - so that we can achieve these wins together.

**For further information in relation to your local branch please visit [www.forsa.ie](http://www.forsa.ie).  
For information relating to membership, the HSCP survey, vocational groups and professional committees please email [ofawl@forsa.ie](mailto:ofawl@forsa.ie) or [kmorgan@forsa.ie](mailto:kmorgan@forsa.ie).**



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