

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.

In addition, we have 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.

At its recent meeting, your Divisional Executive Committee unanimously decided that, in order to protect employment and promotional opportunities for our members within the managerial/administration grades, we must declare a trade dispute.

We have written to the National Director of Human Resources, HSE and all Section 38 (Voluntary Hospitals and Voluntary Agencies) employers informing them of our intention to ballot members over the coming weeks for industrial action up to and including strike action.

We recognise the seriousness of this decision and therefore provide further information in relation to this dispute.

Who will be asked to vote?

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

Background to the dispute

Breach of Collective Agreements

Early this year, we 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 of these agreements 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 this decision.

Recruitment pause

In addition to the above, we have become aware that the HSE has 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 management/administration grades pending a review. The rationale for this recruitment pause relates to projected budget overruns.

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

Is Fórsa's Health and Welfare Divisional Executive Committee recommending we support this ballot?

Yes. The union's elected Divisional Executive Committee at its recent meeting voted overwhelmingly to recommend that its members support this ballot for industrial action.

Next steps:

1. Members are being asked to update their information as a matter of urgency.
2. General meetings will be conducted over the next couple weeks, either within your workplace or online. Please look out for further information from your Branch Executive.
3. We will shortly commence an electronic ballot of all members within the managerial/administration grades on Monday 3rd July 2023.
4. A ballot helpdesk will be in operation during this time and queries can be directed to hwballot2023@forsa.ie
5. When the ballot has concluded on Thursday 27th July 2023, 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, once the electronic ballot opens on Monday 3rd July 2023.

Encourage your colleagues to stand up
and help us win a better deal. Join Fórsa.

VOTE YES

www.forsa.ie/join

