



FÓRSA

SERVICES & ENTERPRISES DIVISION

Organising to deliver for members

REPORT **2021-2023**

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Organisation

Divisional Executive Committee

The following activists were elected to the Fórsa Services and Enterprises Division Executive Committee at the 2021 divisional conference, or were subsequently co-opted:

Niall Mullally (Cabin Crew) Chairperson, Steve Pilgrim (OSI), Vice Chair, Evan Cullen (IALPA), 3rd Divisional Representative on the NEC, Joe Chaney (Communications), Gerry Clarke (Cabin Crew), Grace Conlon (Teagasc General), Cormac Craven (Marine branch), Pat Dawson (RSA), Tony Dawson (Fáilte Ireland), Pierce Dillon (An Bord Pleanála), Geraldine Hickey (IAA Exec Grades), Carmel Keogh (CE Supervisors), Ciaran Kissane (State Enterprises No.1), Des Mullally (IAESA), James O'Loughlin (ATO), David Orford (Local Enterprises), Ian Patel (Eir Executive), Leonard Sheils (An Post), Helen Sheridan (ATC).

In October 2021, following the resignation of Pat Dawson (RSA) a vacancy arose on the DEC. Under Rule 19 (e) when a vacancy arises on the DEC for an ordinary member, and if the Executive decide it should be filled, the person who in the election held at the previous Biennial Meeting of Divisional Conference most closely failed to be elected can be co-opted onto the Executive. In this case, Michael Scully (OSI) was co-opted onto the DEC.

In November 2021, following the resignation of Gerry Clarke (Cabin Crew) an election took place for a vacancy on the DEC. Following this election Dermot Mullen (Cabin Crew) was elected to the DEC.

In May 2022, following the election of Helen Sheridan as Vice President on the National Executive Committee, and subsequent resignation of the divisional executive position, a vacancy arose on the DEC. It was noted Andy Mullin, ATC branch is the next candidate who most closely failed to be elected to the DEC at the divisional conference in May 2021 and was co-opted onto the DEC.

Until March 2023, Steve Pilgrim (Vice Chairperson) and Michael Scully, both from the OSI branch were on the divisional executive, but from 1st March the OSI branch moved to the Civil Service division. The division is grateful for their many years of service for Services & Enterprises members.

Staffing

Ashley Connolly was head of division until Katie Morgan returned from maternity leave in 2022, while Carol Foster was personal assistant to the division during the period covered by this report.

A team of staff assist branches and members within the division. Assistant general secretaries Denis Keane and Lisa Connell worked with the division until July 2022. The current team includes assistant general secretaries, industrial relations officers, an organiser, a cabin crew support officer and administrative support.

Assistant general secretaries Ian McDonnell, Eugene Gargan and Derek Kelleher work on a full-time basis with the division. Assistant general secretaries Deirdre O'Connell, Tony Martin, Lynn Coffey and Thomas Cowman, and industrial relations officer Michael Kerrigan work with some branches across the division.

Since July 2022, Ruairi Creaney joined the team as an industrial relations officer across the division. Since December 2021, Amy Moran joined the team as an organiser across the division. Sarah O'Leary joined the team in February 2022 as cabin crew support officer. We also have administration support from Carol Foster, Danni Hickey, Sarah Creane and Jennifer McKenna.

In 2022, national secretary Ashley Connolly, assistant general secretary Denis Keane, cabin crew support officer Madge Daly and our administration colleague Sheena Clarke left the divisional staff team. They worked with the division for a number of years, and the division and its membership wish them well into the future.

Organising

Fórsa’s Services and Enterprises division is unique in the union as it represents members in private companies, non-commercial semi-state agencies, commercial state entities, community sector workers and public servants. The division has approximately 40 branches engaging with hundreds of employers, including multiple employers in the community sector. This brings a unique set of organising challenges. The division is working to achieve its objectives through the Divisional Strategy, designed to complement the objectives in Fórsa’s ambitious Strategic Plan.

This applies a more strategic approach to organising and recruiting, linking industrial priorities with organising initiatives in the division. Overall, our membership is growing, and our communications are reaching more and more members each week. It is important that we continue to build our density, and that our organising efforts are robust enough to meet the demands and ambitions of the division, its branches and members.

Divisional strategy

In May 2021, Fórsa’s Services and Enterprises division developed a divisional strategy, focused on embedding strategic organising and Fórsa’s strategic plan into the division. The strategy identifies the immediate objectives for the division, in line with the strategic plan.

Phase 1 of the Divisional Strategy: organising to create a stronger, more powerful union that delivers for members consists of 4 ‘focus areas’, all aligned to the Strategic Plan:

- **FOCUS AREA 1:** One pilot project that encompasses organising, the industrial agenda and communications into one strategy
- **FOCUS AREA 2:** Accurate data for effective communications and measuring density
- **FOCUS AREA 3:** A standard approach to how we organise, communicate, and deliver for members
- **FOCUS AREA 4:** Support branch development, to strengthen, diversify and grow.

FOCUS AREA 1: One pilot project that encompasses organising, the industrial agenda and communications into one strategy

The divisional executive identified the Health & Safety Authority (HSA) as the pilot employment. A lot of work has gone into the project, from the workplace representatives, the membership and the staff. Member engagement and participation is higher than before the project was launched, which has led to a positive experience for all members. There has been a significant increase of leadership at local level, and four new workplace representatives were recruited. A large mapping exercise was completed that helped identify the trade union density within the employment. 31 new members joined since the commencement of the project, which is an increase of 17% density. We have also been successful in achieving industrial relations wins for members through organising and members understand their power in the workplace. There is now one strategy for the HSA, co-led by activists from the two HSA branches. This strategy has four key objectives focused on increasing unity, growing membership and increasing membership engagement, increasing organising activity and leadership. The division developed a leaflet as a recruitment tool to help members recruit colleagues as there is a significant number of new recruits joining the HSA this year.

FOCUS AREA 2: Accurate data for effective communications and measuring density

This is an ongoing and significant piece of work, and a first step towards improving our communications with members and understanding our density. A large piece of work is underway to ensure Services & Enterprises division members data is up to date and that members are allocated correctly to the division. We are also working with branches who are considering consolidating membership to ensure communications can be effective and density can be clearly measured.

FOCUS AREA 3: A standard approach to how we organise, communicate, and deliver for members

Other areas have been identified for the development of infill organising strategies within the division. Generally, organising work continues with the Strategic Organising Department on an organising plan developed for strategically important targets, such as Pobal and the HSA. The State Enterprises No.1 branch has been focused on this work and improved its organising efforts and communications to members. A branch audit is also underway.

FOCUS AREA 4: Support branch development, to strengthen, diversify and grow

The goal is to help develop a standardised approach to branch succession planning and find ways to promote engagement with the youth network. We have been working with the Strategic Change team and officials are working closely with the youth network to help achieve these goals.

**Services & Enterprises
divisional executive and staff**



Back row (l-r): James O’Loughlin, Tony Dawson, Pierce Dillon
Second row (l-r): Mick Scully, Carmel Keogh, Helen Sheridan Ciaran Kissane,
Third row (l-r): Steve Pilgrim, Geraldine Hickey, Grace Conlon, Katie Morgan, Sarah O’Leary
Front row (l-r): Derek Kelleher, Leonard Sheils, Tony Martin, Niall Mullally, Ian Patel, Amy Moran, Denis Keane,
 Ian McDonnell, Eugene Gargan, Carol Foster and Lisa Connell.
Absent from photo: Cormac Craven, David Orford, Des Mullally, Evan Cullen, Joe Chaney.

Pay, terms and conditions

Private and commercial sector pay

Post-pandemic recovery fell unevenly across the economy. Covid saw sectors like aviation, construction and hospitality devastated, while others were either insulated or experienced unexpected growth. The recovery is much the same and some employments have not fully recovered.

Fórsa's 4,000 members in the aviation sector were put under massive strain. Members went from little to no work to working at a fast pace as aviation in Ireland fought to keep up with the rest of Europe. Now, most of our aviation members have had their pay fully restored, and many are still in the process of negotiating pay increases for 2023 onwards.

There was a more mixed picture in the broader private sector. Many of our private sector members have secured pay increases for 2022 and 2023.

These are broadly in line with the [Congress Guidance for Private Sector Unions on Pay Bargaining in 2023](#).

Public service pay - Building Momentum review

Approximately 1,500 members of Fórsa's Services and Enterprises division are employed in non-commercial state agencies where public service pay terms apply.

In early 2022, Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan called on the Government to open negotiations on a new public service pay agreement, and said the size and timing of any agreed pay adjustments would "need to reflect the realities of the cost-of-living crisis, which is hurting workers regardless of what sector they work in."

Kevin proposed seeking a review of the Building Momentum public service pay agreement at the AGM of the ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC) on 11th March 2022, as Fórsa continued its focus on cost-of-living pressures throughout the union's AGM season and its biennial delegate conference in May 2022. Inflation had exceeded what had been projected when Building Momentum was negotiated in late 2020.

Average inflation across the whole of 2021 was 2.4%. The value of Building Momentum pay improvements was 0.25% over the same period. The EU predicted that Irish inflation would rise to 4.6% for the whole of 2022. This forecast would mean the annualised value of the Building Momentum increases in the same year would not exceed 1.2%, even when sectoral bargaining was considered.

With the deal due to expire at the end of 2022, Fórsa said talks on a successor agreement would need to prioritise the restoration and improvement of living standards in the context of high inflation.

Kevin Callinan maintained his call for decisive Government action to protect living standards, and to ensure the public service could compete in a tight labour market: "We need to act now to stabilise the current public service agreement, which is essential to certainty in public service delivery, industrial relations, and public finances."

As pay talks got underway in June, the initial efforts indicated a significant distance between unions, represented by the ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC) and Government representatives.

By late June, the process had stalled. The PSC, chaired by Kevin Callinan, said the Government's initial pay offer - an additional increase of just 2.5% for the (2021-2022) period, when inflation was expected to be at least 9% over that period - could not credibly be put to ballot while low and

middle-income workers struggled with soaring prices. Unions told the WRC that an improved offer was necessary to make further talks on public service pay worthwhile.

The then Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, said the Government wanted to reengage in the WRC-brokered talks, and that it was prepared to make a further offer. However, no further developments took place until mid-August, when unions announced they were preparing industrial action ballots in a coordinated campaign for improved pay terms due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Ahead of the commencement of the planned ballots, the pay talks process resumed at the WRC after a ten-week hiatus, during which the Government said it was reflecting on its position. Unions indicated they would engage positively in the process and were prepared to be flexible. Kevin Callinan restated his position that a significantly improved pay offer from the Government side was essential to any progress.

Progress was swift. By the beginning of September, Fórsa's elected national executive (NEC) met to consider the details of new WRC pay proposals, engaging in a constructive debate that strongly acknowledged the financial realities facing working people across the economy, as well as their fears for the future. Kevin Callinan said the deal was the best that could be achieved through negotiations.

The NEC subsequently recommend the WRC-proposed public service pay package - to be known as the Review of Building Momentum Public Service Agreement - in a ballot of union members.

The main provisions of the deal are as follows:

- Increases of 3% with effect (backdated) from 2nd February 2022
- An increase of 2% increase from 1st March 2023
- An increase of 1.5% or €750 (whichever is the greater) from 1st October 2023.

These measures are in addition to 1% or €500, whichever is greater, which fell due at the beginning of October 2022 under the existing agreement.

The minimum payment of €750 a year from October 2022 meant the package is of greater value to workers on lower incomes. The payment was worth 8% to a worker earning €25,000 a year and 7% to a person on €37,500 a year.

Fórsa produced a 'frequently asked questions' document, including a facility for members to ask questions, while a series of Fórsa information meetings took place online and in person across the country.

Kevin Callinan commented that neither side achieved all it sought in the negotiations, but that the revised package was a significant improvement on the pay terms of the current agreement, and worth more to those who need it most.

The Government was set to announce the 2023 Budget while the ballot was in progress. Kevin said Government pledges to supplement pay measures with other cost-of-living supports in the Budget would influence the outcome of the vote.

In his capacity as ICTU president, Kevin led the trade union delegation at the September meeting of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) where unions made a strong case for the need for very substantial assistance to help all workers, including public servants, cope with the cost-of-living crisis. At the LEEF meeting in December 2022, Transport Minister Eamon Ryan acknowledged that union representations had had a significant influence on the Government's budgetary approach

Budget 2023 was announced on 27th September 2022, and included a series of short-term measures to help people with the cost of living, including electricity credits, increased social welfare payments and a series of once-off payments.

Fórsa members eligible to take part in the ballot, including state agency workers, backed the review of Building Momentum in an electronic ballot by a significant margin (91.3%) on a strong turnout (67%). Kevin Callinan said the result was a strong statement of support for the pay deal, worth 6.5% in addition to existing Building Momentum pay adjustments, with better increases for lower paid workers.

Fórsa's endorsement of the package meant the union supported ratification of the pay measures at a meeting of the ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC) on 7th October 2022. The revised pay deal would expire at the end of 2023, which meant that pay talks on a successor would need to take place before the end of the year.

Paid salaries averaged over 52 weeks for the first time, including the cash value of job seekers benefit, which means secretaries no longer need to sign on for unemployment benefits during school holidays. The deal also enshrined 22 days paid leave a year, as well as payment for ten public holidays, replacing ad-hoc arrangements that left many school secretaries with no paid holidays.

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).

Determination of employment status

In 2021, government established a working group on Determination of Employment Status. This group is chaired by the Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail. ICTU, Ibec, ISME and CIF attend as key stakeholders. The Departments of Social Protection, and Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and the Revenue Commissioners are also represented at the meeting by senior officials. The working group is intended to give stakeholders the opportunity to engage on the issue of “false self-employment” and to discuss the potential to improve systems by which correct employment status can be determined.

Collective bargaining

The final report of the high-level working group on collective bargaining was published in October 2022. The group was established in 2021 by the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) in advance of a new EU directive that requires each member state to take action to expand the percentage of workers covered by collective bargaining on wage setting.

Collective bargaining coverage in Ireland is currently around 34%, the new directive requires that countries achieve up to 80% coverage. Non-union employers could potentially face penalties for failing to negotiate with trade unions.

Trade unions were represented on the high-level group by then ICTU general secretary Patricia King. Following its publication, Patricia said the recommendations in the report will, through increased collective bargaining coverage, provide new opportunities to achieve decent working and living standards for hundreds of thousands of workers, and deliver improved outcomes for workers and employers, as well as for society and the economy.

The Executive Council of the ICTU endorsed the recommendations and believes them to be crucial to aligning Irish industrial relations procedures with other EU countries. The group’s recommendations will form the basis for the transposition of the directive to comply with EU law, including:

- That existing legislation relating to Joint Labour Committees (JLCs) be strengthened to enable an Employment Regulation Order to be implemented on foot of employers being afforded all reasonable opportunity to engage
- That technical assessors be appointed by the Labour Court to advise the Court in pay comparison claims with the purpose of improving on current mechanisms
- That legislation requires an employer to engage with a trade union who seeks good faith engagement where they represent at least 10% of workers in a grade group or category within the employment. Where an employer refuses such an engagement and ignores the Labour Court decisions on the matter, the trade union can seek a Circuit Court order for implementation against the employer.

The report’s recommendations illustrate the potential for radically improved collective bargaining conditions in Ireland. The crucial challenge for trade unions is to continue to build membership density.

The high-level group comprised representatives from ICTU, IBEC and Professor Bill Roche, UCD. It was chaired by Professor Michael Doherty of Maynooth University. A full copy of the report is available [here](#).

'Haddington Road' hours

Civil service circular 14/2022 was published at the end of May 2022, outlining the details of the union-negotiated restoration of pre-Haddington Road working hours, with a floor of 35 hours per week.

The circular, which then rolled out across the public service, including state agencies, implements an independent body's recommendation that public service employees' working time should be restored.

Additional 'Haddington Road' hours were introduced in 2013, but most people who saw their working time increased returned to pre-2013 levels, albeit with a floor of 35 hours per week.

The 'Haddington Road' hours ceased to be in effect from 1st July 2022, when working time was restored to pre-austerity levels.

The breakthrough was achieved following the formation of Fórsa, which brought 80,000 public servants - including thousands of activists and workplace reps - into one strong and united trade union.

The union made the restoration of the hours a top priority in the negotiations that led to the Building Momentum public service agreement in 2020, and insisted there'd be no deal unless the issue was addressed.

Fórsa's strategy won support from other unions, and Building Momentum established an independent body to resolve the issue. Its January 2022 report recommended a return to 2012 working time, with a minimum working week of 35 hours.

General secretary Kevin Callinan said the achievement was won because Fórsa had the determination, capacity, belief and collective strength to make it happen, despite dogged management resistance.

[Haddington Road hours FAQs here.](#)

Social dialogue

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions continues to engage at the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF). ICTU is led in the LEEF engagements by ICTU president and Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan. The LEEF meets approximately four times a year and brings together senior Government, trade union and employer representatives to discuss economic, employment and labour market issues.

In 2021, a LEEF aviation subgroup was established to consider the needs of the aviation industry, which had been hit especially hard during the Covid-19 pandemic. The division's national secretary was part of the subgroup, which continued to meet throughout 2021 and 2022.

As cost-of-living pressures mounted last year, unions made a strong case at the September LEEF meeting for the need for very substantial assistance to help all workers, including public servants, cope with the cost-of-living crisis (see Building Momentum review on page 16). Unions highlighted the real risk of energy poverty for workers, including those who rely on social welfare benefits.

Employer representatives at the LEEF also supported very significant government intervention to assist households and businesses, and called for a huge fiscal response utilising buoyant exchequer finances. Unions noted that the Government was moving toward a similar viewpoint, indicating its intention to introduce a further range of 'cost-of-living' measures, which were introduced in Budget 2023 last September.

Fórsa continues to advocate for the State to strengthen its support for social dialogue between Government, unions, employers, communities and civil society organisations, in order to meet the range of challenges facing the country, including the housing crisis, climate response, childcare and education.

Childcare

Responding to the Budget in September 2022, Fórsa said the future of the Irish workplace is being shaped by how working families with young children are forced to weigh the cost of childcare against entering or returning to the workplace.

The union acknowledged that the 25% cut in childcare costs announced in the Budget 2023 would help many families but said many would still be left with "near impossible" choices about the offset of childcare costs against work.

The existing deficit in childcare, a problem which the State has lagged on for several decades, needs more than a temporary crisis intervention. It demands a permanent and radical solution, such as a fully publicly funded universal system.

Failure to tackle childcare comprehensively means a significant block remains to many parents, usually mothers, hoping to enter the workforce or to return to work after having children.

Statutory sick pay

The Commencement Order for the Sick Leave Act 2022 was signed in November 2022, creating a new entitlement to paid sick leave from an employer and which came into effect on 1st January 2023. The legislation followed a campaign by the ICTU for legislation to make sick pay mandatory, which won cross-party support and widespread public support.

Previously, no legal right existed to be paid while someone is on sick leave from work, meaning that half of the workforce, over one million workers, were not covered for paid sick leave in their terms and conditions.

Most Fórsa members are already covered by the public service sick pay scheme, while the new scheme will see many Fórsa members working in the private sector afforded greater protection.

From 1st January 2023, workers have a right to:

- Paid sick leave for up to three sick days per year, increasing to five days in 2024, seven days in 2025 and 10 days in 2026
- A rate of payment for statutory sick leave of 70% of normal wages to be paid by employers (up to a maximum €110 per day)
- Take a complaint to the WRC where they are not provided with a company sick pay scheme.

To be entitled to paid sick leave under the new scheme, an employee must be working for an employer for at least 13 weeks and will also need to be certified by a GP as unfit to work.

The legislation sets out the minimum standard that an employer must provide but does not prevent employers having superior sick pay schemes of their own to attract and retain staff, or on foot of an agreement with a trade union.

Travel and subsistence

Revised civil service rates for work-related travel and subsistence took effect from 1st September 2022. They include changes to the standard domestic subsistence rates, overnight and day subsistence rates. Full details are available on the Fórsa website [here](#) and Revenue website [here](#).

Minimum wage

In September 2022, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions described the Low Pay Commission's recommended increase of 80c as 'inadequate'. ICTU and its affiliate unions called for a more significant rise in response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

ICTU said the 80c increase "fails the test of protecting the living standards of those on the lowest wage and fails the test of setting a sustainable foundation for progressing to a living wage." Consequently, ICTU's two nominees to the Commission opposed its recommendation and submitted a minority report to provide the Government an alternative recommendation for the increase in the minimum wage in 2023.

Congress General Secretary Patricia King acknowledged that businesses face challenges 'but so do workers trying to live on a minimum wage and there are many employers that can afford to pay'.

Since 1st January 2023, the national minimum wage is €11.30 per hour.

A social wage

Income protection for workers is exceptionally weak in Ireland compared to the rest of the EU, and Ireland is the only country in the OECD not to require employers to contribute to a worker's pension. It is also one of the last of the EU's 27 member states to make sick pay mandatory.

In response to the Government's publication of a proposed overhaul of the jobseeker's benefit system - which could change the payment structure to make it directly proportional to the recipient's previous earnings - the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) published its position paper, *The Social Wage*, in March 2023.

The social wage plan proposes a move from a flat-rate to a pay-related benefit payment for workers, linking a person's jobseeker's payment to their previous earnings and work history. It's designed to soften the income shock that a person may face if they suddenly lose their job.

Speaking at the policy paper launch, Fórsa general secretary and ICTU president Kevin Callinan said that there is now a "heightened public demand to strengthen our frayed social safety net" in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A full copy of the position paper is available [here](#).

Domestic violence leave

Fórsa's conference in May 2022 unanimously backed a conference motion for statutory leave for victims of domestic violence. The conference motion committed the union to actively campaign for an effective statutory entitlement.

As the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (2022), which included provision for domestic violence leave, made its way through the legislative process, Fórsa supported the call by Womens' Aid to include ten days of fully paid leave. This is widely considered to be best practice.

However, the legislation only provides for five days of domestic violence leave. Fórsa wrote directly to the Minister in February 2023, urging him to consider positions on this expressed by several senators at the Seanad Committee Stage debate in January. Fórsa has committed to working with other trade unions to collectively bargain to secure 10 days paid leave for workers who need to avail of domestic violence leave.

Work Life Balance Bill

The Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (2022) was passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas on 29th March 2023. The Government's draft legislation, published in June 2022, attracted huge criticism from Fórsa and other unions, as well as labour law experts and others.

The revised legislation followed extensive work by the cross-union 'Make Remote Work!' campaigning group. Congress welcomed the Government delivering on its commitment to a new workers' right to request remote work.

The Bill introduces a new workers' right to paid leave for victims of domestic violence (see Domestic violence leave above) and new rights for workers requesting remote work, both of which ICTU and affiliated unions campaigned for. The legislation includes improvements to support working parents and carers balance paid work with family care, necessitated to give effect to EU law.

Aviation

The aviation sector was amongst the hardest hit by the pandemic and has had a turbulent recovery. Fórsa has thousands of members in airlines, airports, aviation regulation and services.

As a result, most Fórsa members in the sector continue to experience the negative impact of the recovery, such as base closures and delayed recovery in some areas of employment.

At a February 2021 meeting of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF), a high-level forum for economic dialogue between the Government, unions and employers, Fórsa general secretary Kevin Callinan pressed the Government to establish an aviation-specific LEEF sub-group under the Department of Transport. This was established with representation from the industry and its unions, including Fórsa.

Fórsa aviation sub-group

The Services & Enterprises Division has an aviation sub-group, which brings together the national secretary and officials assigned to the area with divisional executive committee representatives from the aviation sector. The group meets regularly with a focus on protecting employment within the sector, and on developing and supporting campaign initiatives.

Airports

Dublin Airport Authority

In 2022, Fórsa negotiated a pay increase for our members which was accepted by ballot. The terms of which provide for 3.75% from the 3rd of April 2022 and 3.5% from the 2nd of April 2023 for a further 12 months.

Shannon Airport Authority

In early 2023, Fórsa negotiated a pay deal that would cover members until the end of 2025. The deal provides for a €1,000 tax free voucher in respect of 2022, 3.75% to apply from January 2023, 3.5% from January 2024 and 3% in January 2025. This was the first pay rise many members saw in more than ten years.

Irish Aviation Authority (IAA)

Pre-covid pay levels were fully restored at IAA during December 2021, and a claim was lodged with the IDRb for restoration of the 10% pay cut in for the nine months of 2021. A pay increase of 3.5% for 2022 was accepted by our members.

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 and Transport Act](#), which was signed into law in December 2022.

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 will remain with IAA, in addition to 150 staff. Pension provision and continuance of the present industrial relations structures are under discussion. Vesting day is scheduled for Sunday 30th April 2023. The staff panel has written to the minister seeking the deferral of vesting day until the outstanding issues are addressed.

Cabin crew

Since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, airlines have seen a significant increase in demand for air travel. While this is for the most part welcome, it has highlighted the gap between current pay and inflation.

Ryanair

In Ryanair, our membership continues to grow and our local reps have presented a broad range of industrial and welfare issues to the company. Engagement is good and we secured a Base Transfer Agreement which was broadly welcomed by all members.

Aer Lingus

At the time of writing, we are engaged in pay negotiations under the aegis of the WRC Conciliation service.

Regrettably, this year Aer Lingus closed its Belfast base. Most of our members transferred to Dublin but some availed of a voluntary severance offer from the company. The closure was blamed on the effects of Brexit.

Concerns about the viability of Aer Lingus' Cork base are now the focus of Fórsa members at Cork Airport. The union has sought assurances from the company but little has been said that provides comfort. We will remain vigilant on developments here.

A number of IR issues were escalated to the WRC, in an effort to resolve the matters for members.

Organising activity has occurred in 2023 within this employment. Fórsa is rolling out training and organising workshops facilitated by the Director of Strategic Organising to assist committee members with strategising and organising around a complexity of IR matters.

Pilots

Aer Lingus

Pilot pay has been the priority for members. At a 2022 IDRb, pay was restored for pilots by way of 'allowance' where pay had been reduced during the pandemic. The industrial strategy is focused on resolving pay for members. A pilot pay tribunal is presently in continuance. Aer Lingus pilots via the IALPA executive have made detailed submissions covering claims for improvements in pay, terms and conditions inclusive of allowances. At the time of writing the pay tribunal has convened on three occasions, and a further sitting is due in May. Substantive proposals are yet to emerge from the tribunal for our members to consider.

Ryanair

Fórsa and Ryanair concluded a new industrial relations agreement in December 2022, which was ratified and accepted by pilot members as we entered 2023. This industrial relations agreement will run until end of March 2027 and includes the consolidation of variable allowances onto the pilot pay scale proper, as well as on scale pay increases over the duration of the agreement. Crucially, if the parties cannot resolve collective issues (e.g., a new collective labour agreement) in direct negotiations, the parties have agreed to use the state dispute resolution procedures (Workplace Relations Commission).

CHC

A new Collective Labour/Industrial Relations agreement has been accepted by pilots at CHC/Search & Rescue covering the period May 2022 to May 2026. This includes 10.5% compound pay increases and 5% increase in employer pension contributions over the lifetime of the agreement.

Emerald Airlines

Organising activity continues in 2023 within this employment.

Search and Rescue technical crew

Fórsa established negotiations on pay and allowances at the end of 2022. Unfortunately, agreement was not secured so that has been escalated to the Labour Court.

The state contract for SAR is up for tender this year and the winning bid is expected to be announced in mid-2023. From a continuity perspective, Fórsa remains concerned about the prospect of a change in operator.

Non-commercial state agencies

An Bord Pleanála

The **Maritime Area Planning Act** was signed into law in December 2021, and 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. Regular meetings are in continuance between senior management and the union to discuss how best new resources may be allocated. To date over 40 new posts have been approved connected to new work that ABP members must take on connected to the new legislation and other planning areas. The union is focused on ensuring that there are enough inspectors, administration, and IT roles in situ.

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. 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.

Commission for the Regulation of Utilities

There has been an ongoing dispute within Energy Safety that has went to mediation. The mediation has assisted with the resolution of a number of IR issues, and further progress has been made on others. Union density has increased significantly within the CRU, and we have four new workplace representatives that has helped increase leadership at local level.

Fáilte Ireland

In 2022, members saw the benefit of the Building Momentum pay increase schedule. Issues with Welfare, Health and Safety are ongoing and a number of concerns regarding changes being sought to employment terms and conditions are being dealt with.

Health and Safety Authority

Staff in the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) continue to play an important role throughout the recovery of the pandemic. This has led to benefits for Fórsa members in the workplace and beyond, but has also led to significant recruitment in the authority to keep up with the demand.

In 2022, the Health & Safety Authority was selected as the divisional pilot project, to encompass organising, the industrial agenda and communications into one strategy.

In mid-2022, our members within the HSA inspectorate were forced into dispute on the proposed implementation of a pilot project on out of hours work. Fórsa's position was that the offer of remuneration proposed by management for doing out of hours work was insufficient and

there were a number of other matters identified by the membership. Fórsa held a series of online member engagements, in addition to in-person and survey engagements. As a result, a position paper was put to management that reflected the views of the membership, and the parties came to an agreed outcome for resolution.

During the course of 2022, Fórsa has helped build capacity of members to identify issues, map their workplace and escalate and resolve collective issues. Fórsa has increased the number of workplace representatives and have clean and accurate data on the HSA membership within the system.

A key outcome of the pilot project is that Fórsa reps from both the Admin and the Professional branch have come together to develop a cross branch strategy. The branch strategy subgroup – comprising reps from across both branches meets once a month to monitor progress of the strategy. The branches recently launched a membership benefits leaflet to assist with recruitment, which can be utilised in the staff inductions that reps attend to promote the union to new recruits.

During the course of this work, Fórsa's density has grown from 51% to 64%, representing a 13% density increase overall.

The Housing Agency

Fórsa began organising members in The Housing Agency in late 2022, following member engagement conducted within the State Enterprises No.1 branch.

Workplace reps held a number of 'Introduction to Fórsa' sessions for existing and potential members, and launched an issue-identification survey to assist with the development of the industrial strategy for the membership. As the Agency is due to grow in the coming years, Fórsa reps have been working on mapping and identifying areas of potential membership growth.

Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)

On behalf of members, Fórsa has been engaging with IIEA management to negotiate pay increases for members. This has resulted in a 5% increase from 1st January 2023.

Marine Institute

Management is pressing for lab analyst members to go to sea to collect samples on a compulsory basis. This is a long-term target for management. The union has raised objections on industrial relations, insurance and health and safety grounds. Good progress has been made on custom and practice and those members that may be excused from same. The union sanctioned an independent risk assessment to be carried out around sea sampling work and we are presently engaging with management on what needs to be addressed following same.

The union is also addressing the issues of fixed-purpose and fixed-term contracts. This may be an issue at other non-commercial semi states where such contracts are in long-term use, effectively demonstrating that a number of roles should be permanent and regularized.

National Library

The blended working policy has been negotiated and is in place which also encompasses access to flexi for grades who have access to same.

National Museum

Fórsa secured agreement on the consolidation of overtime and weekend working into basic pay, which had been a long-standing claim by museum attendants. The outstanding issue of pension has progressed and been agreed, and outstanding matters have been referred to the WRC. Delays on increases due to retired members was rectified. Engagements continue on the regrading of staff and contract issues in the Museum Shop.

Ordinance Survey Ireland

The Property Registration Authority and Ordinance Survey Ireland (OSI) have been dissolved by the [Tailte Éireann Act 2022](#), which provides for the establishment of a body to be known as Tailte Éireann. The functions of the Property Registration Authority and OSI transferred to the new body with effect from 1st March 2023. The legislation also transfers the functions of the Commissioner of Valuation and the Boundary Surveyor to Tailte Éireann. Fórsa's national executive took a decision that members of the affected bodies should be represented by Fórsa's Civil Service division and have transferred thus.

Pobal

Pobal is one of the pilot employments identified for organising activities as part of the State Enterprises No. 1 Branch strategy. As a result of this activity, Fórsa gained 56 new members in Pobal since May 2021. Fórsa has also increased Pobal's activist base, with a number of members in the Early Years' Service (EYS) stepping forward to become workplace representatives.

When the pre-Haddington Road Agreement hours were restored on 1st July 2022, Pobal management refused to implement it until 1st January 2023 on the basis that the initial increase in working time was introduced six months later in Pobal than in public services. However, Fórsa successfully negotiated the restoration of the pre-Haddington Road hours from 10th October 2022 - along with an extra two days leave for staff in recognition of their hard work and commitment.

Fórsa is currently campaigning to achieve enhanced pay for workers in Better Start - Pobal's early years service - to properly reflect the skills and responsibilities of these employees. The union is currently in dispute with management over their refusal to implement the recommendations of an independent review carried out by HR firm Talbot Pierce which suggested that Better Start workers should receive an extra five points at the top of their pay scale.

As part of this campaign, 112 Fórsa members working in better start (around 90% of the staff) signed a petition demanding the implementation of the extra salary increments. The petition was submitted to both management and Minister for Children Roderic O'Gorman. Fórsa has been engaged in negotiations in the WRC and will continue to campaign on this issue until our members achieve the pay they deserve.

Fórsa and ICTU will lobby the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to ensure that a trade union representative is included in the Programme Board which is overseeing the planning for a dedicated state agency for Early Learning Care and School-Age Childcare.

Road Safety Authority

A remote working policy is currently being reviewed with flexitime-from-home to be included for administration staff. Current discussions to ensure that all members will be entitled to apply for remote working, regardless of grade, are ongoing.

A number of longstanding issues for vehicle inspectors have been raised locally with a new HR manager including unsociable hours, on call arrangements, CPD, pension disparity and untrained staff at roadside checkpoints.

Driver tester recruitment has been an ongoing issue in 2022 and 2023. Permanent driver tester contracts have been issued and staff commenced employment in February. Following requests from Fórsa, management has advertised temporary driver testers positions (approx. 70). Fórsa has also requested that additional permanent positions be created as the backlog for tests continues.

A health and safety issue for driver testers was resolved in March 2023 with the assistance of the union following confirmation that all cars presented for a test have a valid NCT as was the case pre-Covid and covered by management's NCT policies.

Sea Fisheries Protection Authority

Industrial action took place during 2022 due to SFPA management's refusal to maintain its commitment to jointly implementing the recommendations of a PWC report to resolve problems with the operation of the organisation.

The WRC and Labour Court intervened, culminating in a Labour Court recommendation (LCR 22569) in March 2022. This took 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. Joint Council meetings with the senior management team are now occurring on a six-weekly basis.

Special EU Programmes Body

Fórsa, alongside our colleagues in NIPSA, are in the process of negotiating a collective agreement with the Special EU Programmes Body. As part of this agreement, Fórsa is seeking improved remote working arrangements. In recent months, the union has gained two new workplace representatives in the organisation.

Teagasc

Fórsa is in the process of reviewing partnership structures and is currently negotiating with management around blended working arrangements.

Waterways Ireland

In 2022, Fórsa reps negotiated and improved a number of policies including flexible working, menopause and parental leave.

Fórsa continues to deal with a number of issues affecting members in Waterways Ireland. In particular, the union remains in dispute with management in relation to a proposed new 'Out-of-Hours' policy which would force new staff to be on-call, undermining the voluntary arrangement which currently exists. The union is also raising members' concerns regarding the terms of reference for an upcoming organisational review.

Commercial state agencies and private sector employments

An Post

Management intends to move to a new head office during 2023, but the majority of Fórsa members will not move to the Exo building and will remain in the GPO for the foreseeable future. Management has sent out details of a VS package to staff in the relevant sections. Following a LRC hearing, a pensions agreement was secured which benefits Fórsa members and reduces the company's payment to the fund with a review due in 2025. The fund is over €800 million in surplus and growing.

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.

In addition to this, the union secured significant off-scale payments to members at the turn of the year 2022/2023 to assist members combat inflationary increases.

Drogheda Port Company

In late 2022, Fórsa concluded a pay agreement in Drogheda Port Company. A two-and-a-half-year agreement commenced in March 2022 with a 3% pay increase from 1st March and a 3% pay increase from 1st September 2023.

Eir

A three-year pay deal worth 2% per annum is coming to a conclusion and engagement with the company is due in the coming months. Fórsa 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.

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. After exhausting local negotiations Fórsa referred the Grade 2 job evaluation to the WRC and the state agencies oversight group. This process is still ongoing.

Irish Water

The Ervia group of unions secured a pay improvement for members - on top of the current pay agreement - following negotiations with management in the context of cost-of-living pressures. An extra 1.5% on base pay, backdated to January 2022, in addition to a €500 gift voucher for staff for lower paid staff (Grade D and below).

2023 pay negotiations continued in December 2022, securing agreement on a further 2.5% base pay increase.

The first Uisce Eireann group of unions meeting took place in January to discuss the setting up of the Irish Water Group of unions following separation from Gas Networks Ireland.

Transfer of Local Authority staff has commenced and Fórsa plans to focus on improving union structures within Uisce Eireann to focus on recruitment.

Premier Lotteries Ireland

The three-year pay deal of 2.5% per annum concludes this year and Fórsa will be entering renegotiations at the end of the year for a replacement agreement.

P&O Maritime

A new collective labour agreement was accepted in a ballot, with pay increases totaling 6.75% over its lifetime, and will run until 2024. Discussions are due to commence around increments and allowances.

Vodafone

The performance bonus system is still in place, with Fórsa and the CWU engaging with the company to progress the cost-of-living issue within the context of the current pay agreement.

Voluntary and community sector

Community employment supervisors

A ballot on the proposed 'gratuity' for the resolution of the longstanding pension issue secured overwhelming support in December 2021. Fórsa confirmed acceptance of the proposal and met the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in February 2022 to discuss its implementation. Legislation was required to ensure the gratuity was tax-free.

The union also secured the reinstatement of the CE Supervisor Operations Forum with the DSP after several years. This is a vital forum at which multiple operational issues are discussed with the DSP.

In October 2022, the union lodged a pay claim with the DSP on behalf of CE supervisors and assistant supervisors. The parties met under the auspices of the Workplace Relations Commission Conciliation Services in February 2023.

The DSP outlined an offer which included pay and a collective bargaining agreement. The parties reconvened in March 2023 where the DSP tabled an improved offer which again included pay and a collective bargaining element.

The Branch Executive met and decided to put the proposal to a ballot of members with a recommendation of acceptance. The ballot is due to close on Friday the 28th of April.

Local enterprises

Changes to the tendering processes for the provision of Public Employment Services were introduced in 2021, providing access to non-community and for-profit companies to bid for Local Employment Services (LES) 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 the Local Employment Service continue to be maintained in its current format. Ignoring the recommendation, the DSP proceeded to put forward a request for tender on green sites at the end of 2021. At the request of unions, the second phase of the tendering process, where LES was provided by Local Partnership Companies, was deferred from January to June 2022. This allowed for further engagements with the department and individual partnerships around any proposed restructuring and staff concerns.

The contracts were, in the main, secured by previous providers of the services. Redundancies were kept to a minimum, TUPE arrangements in some cases were applied. The intervention of the unions allowed the contracts to be developed to allow Local Enterprise companies a real chance of securing the contracts over larger commercial entities. The service is renamed to Local Area Employment Services (LAES) and today remains within local partnership companies, albeit under a different method of payment from the department.

Fórsa continues to seek engagements around the return of incremental progression and other elements of pay and conditions that ceased within the services, some as far back as 2008.

Some workers have sought representation to allow them to work beyond age 65. Fórsa has had some successes in a 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' campaign. This joint ICTU-led campaign includes Fórsa, the INMO and SIPTU working across community groups, section 39, section 56 and section 10 agencies. Workers in these employments provide services with lesser terms and conditions to workers providing the same services in state-run bodies.

Communications

Fórsa's head of communications Bernard Harbor retired from the union at the end of 2022. Under the union's programme of Strategic Change, a number of changes are underway to the configuration of the union's communications activity. There are four main areas of activity: campaigns, digital, membership communications and media relations.

Communications officer Niall Shanahan has assumed responsibilities for media relations. Kate O'Sullivan, formerly of Amnesty International and Save the Children, took up the post of director of digital in July 2022. Kevin Donoghue was appointed to the role of director of campaigns in September 2022, and a new post, director of membership communications, was created in 2023.

Media relations

The union continues to develop its position in national media as an authoritative voice on industrial relations, public services, collective bargaining and a wide range of social issues. Aligning with Fórsa's strategic plan, the union plans to continue the development of boosting local media relations activity, working with branches regionally to create media content and establish local representative voices in the media.

Membership communications

The new post of director of member communications will provide capacity for the union to lead in the direction and delivery of a diverse spectrum of events, outreach, media, and other practical supports and activities to inform and empower Fórsa's membership. The director of member communications will collaborate closely with the directors of media relations, digital, and campaigns teams to coordinate, reinforce, and amplify their work.

Digital strategy

Fórsa's Digital Strategy for 2023-2025 focuses on five main areas:

Recruitment

Driving membership recruitment through increased digital traffic, supporting and improving the Join Online process, and showcasing the value of Fórsa through social media.

Membership retention

Utilising data and digital tools to help retain existing members. This includes data modelling, showcasing Fórsa achievements, and increasing digital communications on membership benefits.

Membership information and services

Enhancing accessibility of Fórsa's digital presence and offering valuable resources to members. This includes redeveloping forsa.ie based on user analytics and tailoring social media content.

Digital campaigning

Fostering online activism, increasing digital activism through strategic planning, and using paid digital ads.

Digital trade unionism

Fórsa aims to embrace best practices from global partners, explore digital opportunities and use analytics to track member experiences and identify growth potential in online trade unionism.

Campaigns unit

Campaigns unit research officer Juliette Cooper started working with the unit in 2022. The role enables the campaigns unit to contribute more broadly to research within the union. Juliette has made significant contributions to the research capacity of the unit since joining the team.

TASC report

The campaigns unit arranged meetings with political parties and officials in relation to the content of the TASC report throughout 2022. Work will continue over the summer of 2023 to meet political parties about the role of the state. Supplemental research to the TASC report is currently underway to examine the physical operating capacity of the public service and civil service in Ireland, compared to other European countries similar in population size.

Just Transition Alliance and climate change

Fórsa is a founding member of ICTU's Just Transition Alliance. Launched in March 2022, the alliance is composed of trade unions and climate change groups seeking a just transition for workers and continues to build political support.

Housing

Fórsa is a member of the steering groups of Raise the Roof, a trade union coalition campaign, and Home for Good, a campaign to have the right to housing recognised in the Constitution. Lobbying for a referendum on the right to housing to be held within the next Government term. The campaign is hosting regional meetings to prepare for a referendum.

Four-day week

The four-day week campaign continues to build support in Ireland and across the globe. A report published in November 2022 provided insights into the experience of Irish companies and workers that took on the four-day week trial. Results were incredibly positive. Workers reported reduced stress and higher levels of satisfaction in their lives and careers. Employers rated their experience of the trial at 9.2/10. The Irish campaign will launch another round of trials in 2023.

Stop the Stigma: Menstruation and Menopause

After members in Fórsa raised concerns about workplace supports for menstruation and menopause in a motion passed at the union's policy-setting national conference in May of 2022, Fórsa launched a survey to gauge member experiences with periods and menstruation in the workplace.

The stark findings from the research regarding the prevalence of diagnosis with a severe condition and the need to take sick leave from work during menstruation and menopause affirmed the union's position that this is a priority to address in the workplace, both as a negotiating agenda and as a public awareness campaign.

Which is why Fórsa has been working to launch the 'Stop the Stigma' campaign.

Built to support trade unions and employees in advocating for menstrual and menopause policies in workplaces, the new campaign aims to empower workers with the resources they need to ask for supports in the workplace, as well as informing workers about these policies generally so they know to ask for them.

Fórsa is also rallying support for the campaign by partnering with trade unions who are already or beginning to undertake advocacy and organising around these policies and raising it through the industrial relations forums with employers.

Ireland for All

Fórsa joined up with Le Chéile - a cross-sectoral alliance working together to challenge the far right in Ireland - and the NWCi for the #IrelandForAll rally in February. The union's elected officers formally backed Fórsa joining the alliance, and to support its anti-racism rally in Dublin on 18th February 2023.

Participation in the rally is an important statement to oppose attempts by far-right organisations to spread hate, fear and misinformation about refugees and asylum seekers. Far right groups have been targeting working-class communities stoking unwarranted fear and resentment.

The trade union movement has a central role to play in facing down those attempts to frighten and intimidate people who have come to Ireland seeking sanctuary from hunger, poverty, climate catastrophe and war. Fórsa's participation in the rally continues the trade union movement's proud history of opposing racism, bigotry and sectarianism.

Skills Academy training

Fórsa's director of Membership Training and Development is Fiona Dunne.

Since October 2022, Skills Academy has returned to delivering most courses and programmes in person, providing a welcome change for tutors and students alike.

The first of the 5-module Expanded Workplace Representatives Training (November - April 2023) was rescheduled to accommodate a high ballot return and delivered 30 modules across multiple locations to approximately 80 workplace representatives during the period. Two Annual Branch Returns workshops, in December 2022 and January 2023, were ably delivered by finance staff who also assisted participants in the practical exercise of completing the returns. Other popular courses included *Preparing for the AGM* for novices, along with one-day courses for newly elected chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers, which was delivered this year in Cork.

Since January 2023, the *Fórsa101* online course, which provides an introductory overview of the union, was opened to all members and will be a permanent feature of our programme running twice on the second Wednesday of every month.

Another new addition is the online *Lunch and Learn* series, again open to all members running on the last Friday of every month and dealing with a different topic each month. This series complements our extensive programme of current courses with previous topics including *Writing a motion*, *Quick guide to public speaking*, *Protecting your data*, and *Menstrual and menopausal welfare at work*, all of which were recorded and are saved to the Skills Academy YouTube channel.

A six-member union learning group, comprising Connect, CWU, Fórsa, FSU, MANDATE and SIPTU, was informally established in November 2022 to develop new training opportunities, share resources, and deliver courses collaboratively across partners.

External bodies provided courses during the year including a mock conciliation by the WRC, a guide to procedures and submissions by the Labour Court, understanding the Public Sector Duty by IHREC, and public speaking for conference delegates and representatives presented by Montague Communications.

A new programme, *Foundational Workplace Representatives Training*, is currently being developed with the support of all tutors, for a launch in September. This will form an essential part of our core package of programmes and will be delivered in every location during the next academic year.

Following a series of extensive consultations and discussions with tutors, officials and senior representatives, a permanent calendar of training has been agreed for delivery of core programmes. This will mean that both tutors and branches will be aware of when training programmes are scheduled to take place every year. A printed version of the calendar was published in April 2023 and has been circulated through branches via training officers and at divisional conferences.

Stand-alone tailored branch training days have also been developed throughout the year in collaboration with the branch executive and with the full consultation of the assigned officials.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our students and tutors for their dedication to building capacity and developing new skills to represent our membership to the best of their ability. We would also like to thank all Fórsa staff across the country for their support and help to deliver our programmes successfully and look forward to working with everyone into the future.

For a more detailed explanation of our courses and programmes, please contact the Fórsa Skills Academy [here](#).

Strategic organising

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, growth 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, whom have considerable experience in creating effective and sustainable union change within workplaces. However, such 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. This methodology will continue to be rolled out in a phased and project-based manner, as appropriate.

Equivalent Grades committees

The continued development and advancement of the existing Equivalent Grades committees (Executive/Grades IV - VII and Clerical Officer/Grade III) is one example of 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, leave and job evaluation which led to the creating organisational influence on specific national issues which has directly contributed to effecting positive change for clerical and executive officers, not just within their workplaces but beyond. Targeted work progresses for these committees as this cross-union forum continues to influence and amplify the voice of clerical and executive officers through the utilisation of a strategic organising model.

The Equivalent Grades committees form one constituent piece of numerous strategic organising projects that are currently operational in a number of sectors.



 [forsa_union_ie](https://twitter.com/forsa_union_ie)

 [forsaunionie](https://www.facebook.com/forsaunionie)

 [Fórsa Trade Union](https://www.youtube.com/ForsaTradeUnion)

 [Fórsa trade union](https://www.soundcloud.com/ForsaTradeUnion)

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