



## **Ballot on proposed amalgamation of IMPACT with the Civil, Public and Services Union (CPSU) and the Public Service Executive Union (PSEU) to form the Fórsa Trade Union.**

Dear IMPACT member,

This letter accompanies your ballot paper for the IMPACT vote on the proposed amalgamation of IMPACT with the Civil, Public and Services Union (CPSU) and the Public Service Executive Union (PSEU) to form the Fórsa Trade Union. Please mark clearly the box of your choice and return your ballot paper to your branch secretary (or directly to IMPACT if you have received a pre-paid envelope with this letter and ballot paper) to arrive not later than **12 noon on Friday 17th November 2017**.

This ballot is being held following over three years of discussions between the three unions. If it goes ahead, the new union would have over 80,000 members. This would make it Ireland's second largest union and by far the largest trade union voice in the Irish civil and public service.

National conferences of each of the three unions voted in favour of the ballot. The IMPACT central executive committee and the executives of the other two unions – which are made up of representatives elected by union branches – has recommended that you vote YES to the proposed merger.

You will have received an information leaflet, with this letter, which is being issued to the members of all three unions. The draft rules and instrument of amalgamation are available at [impact.ie](http://impact.ie) or from your local branch secretary. The IMPACT website (see [impact.ie](http://impact.ie)) also carries a 'frequently asked questions' document which is regularly updated and includes a facility for members to ask questions about the proposal.

From the outset the negotiators working on the New Union Project believed it should be possible to greatly enhance the existing benefits of each of the existing unions by using the combined purchasing power of the larger and better resourced new organisation. A single product containing a suite of benefits for all Fórsa members has been approved. Details are contained in the information leaflet. No single union on its own could secure this cover.

The executives of all three unions believe that a larger, stronger and more powerful organisation would be able to deliver better outcomes for members in pay negotiations, workplace representation, individual membership benefits, and services to branches and activists, through the creation of:

- One strong negotiating block representing over 80,000 members in the public service, civil service, semi-state sector, community and voluntary organisations, and also some prominent private companies
- One articulate and expert voice speaking for public servants and public services across the country
- Substantially enhanced services to existing and future members through the pooling of talents and economies of scale, and
- A strong foundation for enhancing trade union organisation and campaigning in the public service and beyond.

Negotiators from the three unions (CPSU, IMPACT and PSEU) have worked together to agree a rule book and transitional arrangements that maintain or enhance members' entitlements, preserving the identity and autonomy of grades and branches (however small or large) and preventing any grade or sector dominating the others. Smaller specialist groups will continue to receive dedicated representation on issues specific to their members.

All existing branches in the three unions will transfer to the new union as they are. The new union will have members in six distinct sectors – the civil service, education, health & welfare, local government, municipal employees, and 'services and enterprises,' which includes staff in commercial and non-commercial semi-states and in the private sector. The agreed structures will ensure that each of these retains autonomy over issues that are unique to their sector.

All-union policies on national issues, or issues that affect members of more than one division, will be determined at a biennial all-union conference. This conference will also elect national union officers and the number of divisional representatives on the new national executive committee will be broadly proportionate to membership strength in the six divisions.

In order to ease the transition to new structures, there are six-year transitional arrangements, which are mainly (but not exclusively) applicable to the most directly affected sectors – the civil service and services & enterprises sectors.

There will be tangible advantages for members and branches in the civil service, state agencies and companies where the three unions currently operate independently. These include the potential for greater influence through co-operation on the ground, the ability to act as one union, with one voice and more straightforward recruitment of new members at local level.

All current staff will transfer to the new union. Existing staff will continue to be assigned to branches and functions as of now. The new organisation will retain the spread and range of assignments for industrial, communications, organising, training, finance and administrative staff.

The three unions believe that the enhanced strength and visibility of the new union will make it a focal point for workers – including young workers – who want to become part of an active and effective trade union. There would be huge potential to increase union influence – and outcomes for members – through strategic organisation, recruitment and campaigning on workplace and social issues include housing, health, equality, taxation, and international solidarity.

I urge you to read the proposals and information leaflet, cast your vote, and return your ballot paper before the deadline so that your voice is heard in this important ballot.

Finally, I draw your attention to the recommendation of the IMPACT Central Executive Committee that you vote YES to the proposed amalgamation.

Yours sincerely,



**Seamus Cody**  
**General Secretary**