



10th November 2021

To: Health & Welfare DEC
Branch secretaries
Social Work NPC chairperson/secretary
All Health staff

Important memo regarding Social Work grade progression in Primary Care

***** Please bring this to the attention of all basic grade Social Workers in Primary Care *****

Dear Colleague,

I'm writing to you to advise on the current situation with regards to our negotiations with the HSE in relation to progression of basic grade social workers to senior grade as provided for under the career pathway interim report.

In relation to application of this in primary care - the proposal from HSE was that basic grade social workers would progress to senior social work practitioner grade. The union has not accepted that senior practitioner should be the appropriate grade to progress to and is seeking that progression is to Team Leader or Senior Social Worker (medical). The matter is still under discussion with the HSE.

I'm aware that in CHOs that local management are proceeding to appoint/upgrade social workers under the career progression process to Senior Practitioner and that contracts have been issued for signing. As you will be aware, Fórsa's national health office team meet with Primary Care management on a weekly basis. I raised the matter again with HSE national primary and employee relations and advised them that contracts are being issued to individuals despite the fact that the grade issue for social workers is not yet resolved or agreed with Fórsa. Furthermore, I'm aware that local CHO management are advising members that this has been agreed with the union. Please note, this is not agreed with Fórsa.

HSE management agreed last Wednesday 3rd November to pause the social work grade progression pending further discussion and agreement with this union. They also agreed to advise the CHO's of this and that this is not yet agreed.

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I'm receiving countless emails from individual social workers who find themselves in this situation and who are seeking advice from the union. I'd be grateful if you would advise relevant social work members in your region of the current situation as set out above. I hope to have a resolution to the matter in the coming few weeks. I will of course update you on developments. In the meantime, senior practitioner contracts should not be signed.

Many thanks for your assistance in this matter.

Kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

Chris Cully
Assistant General Secretary
National Health Office