



Campaign for Job Evaluation in the Local Authority Sector

BALLOT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Information for Fórsa members

Introduction: Strength in unity

Fórsa has decided to ballot members working in local authorities. The national employer's organisation, the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) are refusing to negotiate at all on this longstanding issue. The inequity of the local government sector refusing job evaluation is unfair and unsustainable. We want the work in the sector to be fair, open, and transparent. Work should be grade appropriate.

What is job evaluation?

Job evaluation is a process for working out the relative worth of posts in an organisation based on the work a post-holder is doing, or is expected to do. It is carried out so that fair levels of pay for different jobs can be set, rather than be based on subjective criteria or assumptions.

Why are we balloting?

Fórsa argues that almost 10,000 council jobs were lost following the financial crisis. Services were only maintained because staff took on additional responsibilities above their pay grades. In the public service, local authorities suffered the greatest reduction of employees during the austerity era, resulting in significant grade drift in the sector.

This matter has been ongoing in the local government sector for many years, without progress. Most recently on the 26th January 2023, talks ended at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) before they even started. The LGMA refused to enter into a joint session and made it clear that they did not intend to negotiate or conciliate.

What happens elsewhere?

Fórsa grades represented in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Higher Education also have access to job evaluation. Local authority workers in Northern Ireland and right across Britain have had access to job evaluation for decades. It is also commonplace across much of Europe.

Our sister union, Unison say:

"We at UNISON are proud to offer our full support to Fórsa's job evaluation campaign. Job evaluation has been a core element of local government pay in the UK for many years now. It isn't enough for employers simply to say that nobody is working above their grade. Job evaluation provides an analytical system, with full trade union involvement, to ensure that you're getting the pay you deserve for the job you do. So, it's one important part of our continuing campaign to ensure equal pay."

Fórsa believes that workers should have the right to have their post evaluated. All we want is equity in local government, in line with other large parts of the public and private sector.

Encourage your colleagues to stand up and help us win a better deal. Ask everyone in your office or department to join Fórsa.

Vote YES

www.forsa.ie/join



Will I automatically get regraded if job evaluation is introduced?

The short answer is no but workers should have the right to request job evaluation. Over time, the demands and responsibilities associated with a post can change. If the post holder is of the view that their post needs to be evaluated, they can apply for an evaluation of the post, subject to satisfying the agreed criteria for evaluation.

IHREC (Irish Equality & Human Rights Commission) has published a Code of Conduct for Employers stating *"a pay review - incorporating, as part of the process, a rational and objective job evaluation model - is the most effective way of achieving pay equality"*.

What if I currently do not want job evaluation?

Then that's ok. Embedding a culture of job evaluation will equalise employment in the public sector for now and the times ahead. Regardless of where you are in your career, we can all agree that people should be paid the rate for the job, comparative to the skills, requirements and responsibilities.

When will the ballot take place?

Preparations are now underway for the Fórsa ballot, which is expected to begin on the 30th March 2023.

Who gets to vote?

Fórsa members directly employed in City and County Councils.

What form will industrial action take?

Union members will be asked to sanction industrial action up to and including strike action. This will give a mandate to take strike action and/or more limited forms of action such as a work to rule, a ban on overtime, or other forms of non-co-operation.

The precise nature and timing of industrial action will be decided by the Fórsa Local Government and Local Services Divisional Executive Committee.

How will industrial action impact public services?

Our members only ever consider industrial action as a last resort because we know it means inconvenience for the people who depend on the important and valued services we provide.

This campaign has developed because of the blanket refusal of the LGMA to negotiate or even conciliate under the auspices of the WRC.

If there is industrial action, the union and our members will ensure that emergency cover is in place so that the safety and dignity of service users is maintained and protected across the public services.

Fórsa's preference is still to negotiate a solution with the employer, that means that industrial action isn't necessary. We have made this clear to the LGMA and we are still awaiting and open to meaningful engagement.

What can I do to win a better deal at work?

Vote **YES** in the ballot!

We know that many staff working in local government are frustrated and want equity and fair treatment, similar to other large parts of the public sector.

Encourage your colleagues to stand up and help us win a better deal. Ask everyone in your office or department to join Fórsa.

If you're not yet a member don't leave yourself out in the cold - join Fórsa today and stick together with your colleagues and workmates!

What happens if the ballot rejects industrial action?

Then it will severely weaken our campaign to ensure that members have access to job evaluation. It will lead to the local government being the poor relation to large parts of the public sector who already have access to job evaluation. It will hold the sector behind as being a progressive employer into the future that values openness, transparency and rewards people for the work that they're actually doing.

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