



Supporting our health branches

Protecting IMPACT members
during health service restructuring



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IMPACT branches empowered to handle HSE reorganisation

IMPACT has moved to ensure that its health service branches remain fully involved in decisions that affect their members in the new structures being implemented by the HSE.

The move follows concerns, expressed at IMPACT's Biennial Delegate Conference last May, that the establishment of six hospital groups and nine community healthcare organisations (CHOs) – which transcend IMPACT's geographical branch organisation – risks taking local branches out of the loop when important decisions are being made.

In response, the union's Health and Welfare Divisional Executive has agreed to establish panels of health branches to mirror the new HSE structures.

"The new HSE structures give management the opportunity to bypass our branches. This IMPACT initiative will empower and support branches to stop that happening."

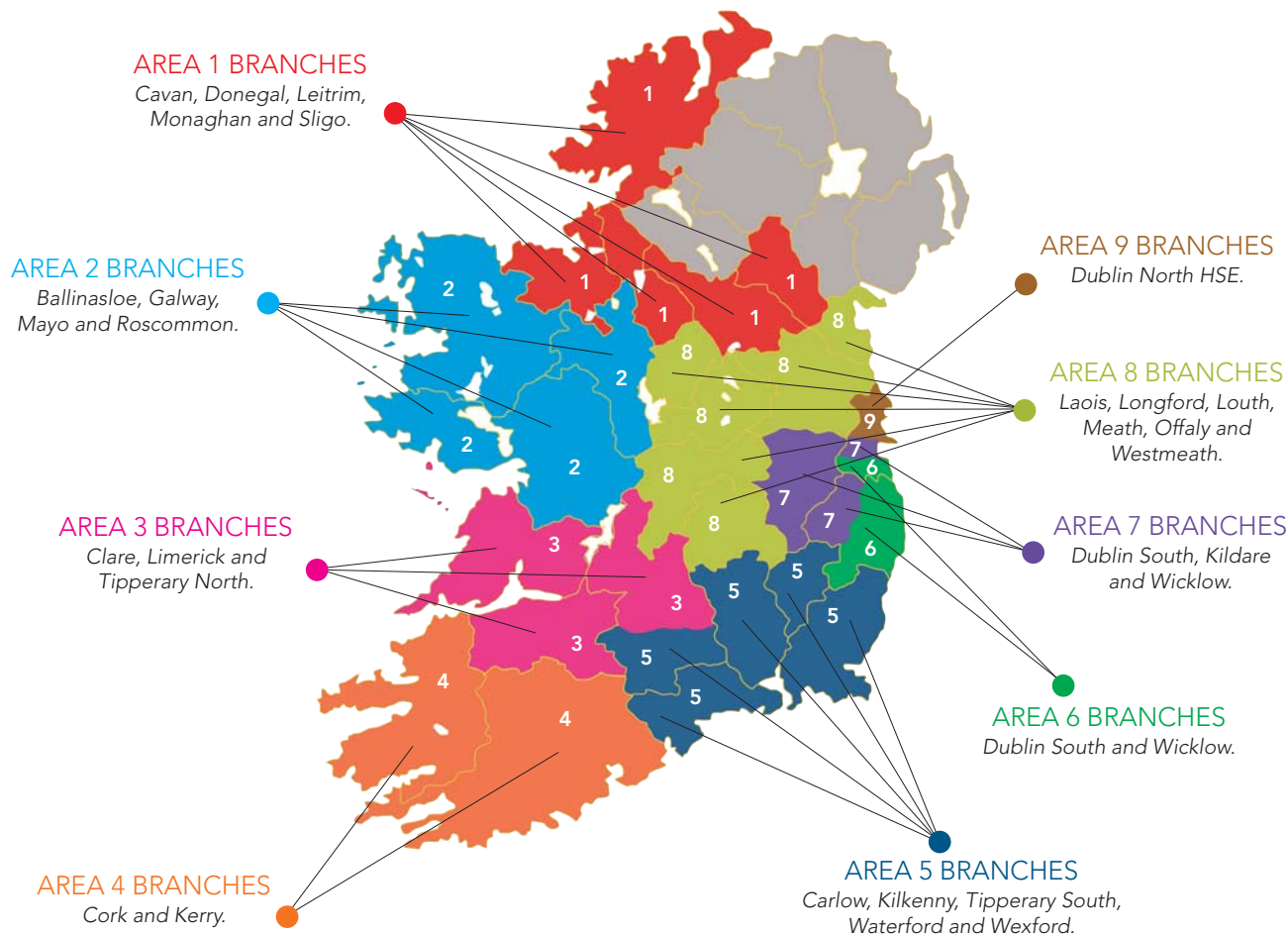
The new panels will bring together representatives of all the branches in each community healthcare area and hospital group. The IMPACT panels, which will be led by senior IMPACT officials and chaired by members of the health division executive, will meet regularly with HSE management in their area to deal with industrial relations matters, including issues that arise from the new structures.

The panels will reflect vocational as well as geographical interests. And they will come with formal communication structures to ensure that branch committees are fully informed of proposals and developments. This means branches will be empowered to participate in decisions and communicate with members about developments in their area.

The initiative is being led by Maura Cahalan, Cathaoirleach of the Health and Welfare Division, along with National Secretary Eamonn Donnelly. Maura said: "The new HSE structures give management the opportunity to bypass our branches. This IMPACT initiative will empower and support branches to stop that happening."

The union will also develop mechanisms for effective cross-stream communication among panels in both CHO and hospital groupings.

IMPACT Community Healthcare Organisation Panels*



IMPACT Hospital Grouping Panels*

EAST HOSPITAL GROUP BRANCHES:

Dublin Hospitals, Kilkenny, Meath, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow.

RCSI HOSPITAL GROUP BRANCHES:

Cavan, Dublin Hospitals, Dublin North HSE, Louth, and Monaghan.

DUBLIN MIDLANDS GROUP BRANCHES:

Dublin Hospitals, Kildare, Laois and Offaly.

UL HOSPITAL GROUP BRANCHES:

Clare, Limerick and Tipperary North.

SOUTH/SOUTH WEST HOSPITAL GROUP BRANCHES:

Cork, Kerry, Tipperary South and Waterford.

WEST/NORTH WEST HOSPITAL GROUP:

Ballinasloe, Donegal, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo.



* The Dublin Care Services Branch and the Boards and Voluntary Agencies Branch will also be consulted in areas where they represent staff in state-funded agencies.



Health panels at a glance

- IMPACT's health panels will involve all branches in the sector, and will deal directly with management on community and hospital group issues, with a particular focus on issues arising from the implementation of change.
- All branches will be consulted before the panels are established, and all branches will be represented on panels covering their geographical area.
- National issues, which impact on all staff, will still be dealt with by IMPACT's national negotiators.
- Local and hospital-level issues will continue to be handled directly by IMPACT branches and the officials assigned to them.
- Where appropriate, IMPACT will continue to meet management along with other unions at national, regional and local level.
- Each health panel will have authority to meet management in its community area or hospital group to discuss issues that affect IMPACT members.
- The health panels will reflect geographical interests by including at least one rep from each branch with members in a particular community area or hospital group. Occupational interests will be broadly represented too.
- A senior official will be assigned to work with each panel.
- It is expected that most of the panels will be chaired by a member of IMPACT'S Health and Welfare Divisional Executive Committee.
- Members of the panels will represent branch policy in meetings with management, and ensure that members are informed of important decisions and developments.
- Issues that are not resolved at 'panel level' will be referred to IMPACT's Health and Welfare Divisional Executive Committee.
- The union will develop cross-stream communications so that branches and panels know about important developments outside their area.
- IMPACT policy will continue to be set through the usual branch, divisional and national structures.

What's the issue?



"This will put IMPACT branches at the heart of decision-making to ensure fairness and consistency in the application of policies and procedures across community healthcare organisations and hospital groupings."

The new HSE structures will mean that, from now on, big decisions on staff issues will be made at community area or hospital group level. Then they'll be handed down to HR departments in individual hospitals or community facilities for implementation.

In this new situation, IMPACT's health panels will ensure that branch representatives have the inside track on discussions that affect staff across the entire community area or hospital group – before decisions are taken.

All branches in a particular community or hospital group area will be represented on the appropriate panel or panels, which will meet regularly with HSE management in their area to discuss industrial relations and HR matters.

Branch reps will be able to reflect the policies and positions of their branch at regional or hospital group level – and feed information back to their branch committees and members.

These are some of the issues that are likely to be discussed:

- Changes in reporting structures
- Changes in grading structures within directorates
- The advertisement and filling of new positions
- Job specification criteria
- Redeployment of members whose current positions are not linked to new structures
- The effect of the new structures on members who have red-circled terms and conditions.

To ensure that this brand new initiative delivers for branches and members, the union is piloting the panel in the East Hospital Group. This will involve the following branches: Dublin Hospitals, Dublin South HSE, Westmeath, Kilkenny, Meath, Wexford, Offaly and Wicklow.

The intention is to put IMPACT branches at the heart of decision making to ensure fairness and consistency in the application of policies and procedures across community healthcare areas and hospital groupings.

IMPACT

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