



LOCAL GOVERNMENT & LOCAL SERVICES DIVISION

AND

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' DIVISION

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
IMPACT'S BALLOT ON INDUSTRIAL ACTION ON WATER SERVICES**

**Q WHY IS IMPACT HOLDING INDUSTRIAL ACTION BALLOTS
RELATING TO WATER SERVICES IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES?**

A Irish Water recently announced the loss of 1,500 jobs among local authority staff who work on service level agreements for Irish Water. The union wants to protect the jobs, terms and conditions of employment of the workers and wants to ensure the service can continue to operate viably.

Q WHO WILL BE BALLOTTED?

A In the first instance, IMPACT members who work in posts that form part of the service level agreement with Irish Water and IMPACT members who work in non-domestic water billing and water metering. The union will ballot other members if it proves necessary. Members who are substantially working on a service level agreement with Irish Water or in non-domestic water billing or

metering will be balloted. It is not envisaged that members who work less than two days per week will ordinarily be included in the ballot.

Q WHY ARE THE UNION NOT BALLOTING ALL LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS FROM THE BEGINNING?

A While members are employed by local authorities, the dispute has been caused by Irish Water's proposal. In the first instance, it would be counter-productive to bring all local authority services into dispute.

Q WHY ARE MEMBERS IN NON-DOMESTIC WATER BILLING AND WATER METERING BEING BALLOTTED?

A Irish Water has signalled its intention to transfer this service from local authorities to Irish Water. It is necessary to protect the jobs and employment conditions of these members also.

Q ARE OTHER UNIONS INVOLVED IN THIS DISPUTE?

A Yes. The Irish Congress of Trade Union's group of unions including SIPTU, SIPTU/LAPO, TEEU, UNITE and the other craft unions are all balloting their members.

Q WILL ICTU UNIONS' VOTES BE AGGREGATED?

A No. While the unions will co-ordinate their action, each union will conduct its own ballot and run the dispute in accordance with its own rules and procedures.

Q WILL IMPACT'S VOTES BE AGGREGATED?

A Yes, IMPACT members votes in affected branches and Divisions will be aggregated.

Q WHAT FORM WILL THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION TAKE?

A The industrial action could take the form of a work to rule, a ban on certain activities, the withdrawal of goodwill and ultimately, the withdrawal of labour.

Q WHAT WILL TRIGGER A DISPUTE?

A The ballot is **precautionary**. A dispute will only occur if Irish Water disregards the collective agreements underpinning the service level agreements with the local authorities and/or the Lansdowne Road Agreement.

Q WHAT ASSURANCES DO THESE AGREEMENTS PROVIDE FOR WORKERS?

A [I] The service level agreement provides that there will be annual discussions between local authorities, Irish Water and the unions regarding staffing levels in the following year.

[II] The Lansdowne Road Agreement provides for no compulsory redundancy **AND** that direct labour be the preference for undertaking public service projects.

Q ARE THE JOBS NOT SAFE SO?

A The protections in the Lansdowne Road Agreement continue only to 2018. The Irish Water proposals run until 2021. In addition, while posts may revert to local authorities, there will be no funding attached. This is likely to lead to an erosion of employment conditions, unless protections are established.

Q WILL THE PROPOSALS LEAD TO PRIVATISATION OF WATER SERVICES?

A Not immediately, but creating circumstances where there are not enough staff to maintain viable services will play into the hands of the forces who continue to seek to privatise our public water services.

Q DOES THE UNION BELIEVE THERE CAN BE NO JOB LOSSES?

A We are open to consideration of proposals where efficiencies can reduce the total number of jobs in a planned and verifiable manner. This is what the service level agreements are supposed to achieve. However, there must be agreement in the required grades and numbers of staff in each county.