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**MUNICIPAL
EMPLOYEES' DIVISION**

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' DIVISION 2017



BACK ROW: James Cole, Joey Malone, Úna Faulkner, Dessie Robinson, Michael Kieran, Eddie Smith, Derek Martin. **MIDDLE ROW:** John Gaynor, John Meehan, Thomas Kavanagh, Linda Casey, Fran McLoughlin, Shane Lambert, Declan O'Brien, Mark Crosbie. **FRONT ROW:** Peter Nolan – IMPACT National Secretary, David Greene, Shay Kavanagh, Thomas Murtagh – President and convenor, Michael Clarke, Mick McLoughlin, Mark Wynne.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The Municipal Employees Division has had another busy year. The strength of the Lansdowne Road Agreement has been used in trying to curb outsourcing and protect direct labour. This has been most prominent in Irish Water as regularisation and promotions have been negotiated. It is essential that the union fights to keep the water service within local authorities.

The second phase of the pay agreement is due on 1st April, and talks on another agreement are due to start in late May. IMPACT wants to keep flat rate pay increases on the agenda to benefit the low paid. We hope to have some good news by late summer.

The division lost two valuable members through retirement this year as both Michael Tomney and Fran McLoughlin start new lives outside of work. I would like to thank them both for their commitment and input into the division over the years.

We also remember the tragic and untimely death of Mr Trevor O'Neill while on holiday with his family.

I would like to thank all the division and also Peter Nolan, National Secretary, Dessie Robinson, Assistant General Secretary, and both Industrial Relations Officers, Shane Lambert and Úna Faulkner.

Thomas Murtagh
President of the Municipal Employees' Division of IMPACT



Fran McLoughlin:
Retired from the Divisional
Executive in 2017.



Michael Tomney:
Retired from the Divisional
Executive in 2017.

Branch/divisional executive

The Branch Executive Committee meets on the first Monday of each month and the Divisional Executive Committee meets on the third Monday of each month.

Officers

President/Convenor	Thomas Murtagh
Vice-President	Séamus Kavanagh
Secretary (Drainage Division)	David Greene
Treasurer (Executive Housing Liaison Officer)	Michael Clarke
Training Officer (Waterworks)	Eddie Smith
Equality Officer	Vacant
General Membership Officer	Thomas Kavanagh
Communications Officer	Lorcan Connolly
International Officer	Mick McLoughlin

Delegates

Vocational Education Committee	James Cole
Waste Management North	Francis McLoughlin
Housing Caretakers	Mick McLoughlin
Litter Wardens	Lorcan Connolly
Waterworks	Séamus Kavanagh
Dublin Institute of Technology	Michael Tomney
Dublin Institute of Technology	Joey Malone
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	John Gaynor
Libraries/Art Gallery	Edward Smith
Firefighters	Peter O'Neill
Traffic Department (Communications)	Michael Ross
Roads/Maintenance	Derek Martin
Waste Management	Michael Kieran
Ordinary Member	Mark Wynne
Ordinary Member	Declan O'Brien
Ordinary Member	Michael Gibson
Ordinary Member	Mark Crosbie
Retired Member	Michael Duffy

Central Executive Committee and its sub committees

President/Convenor	Thomas Murtagh
Vice-President	Séamus Kavanagh
Finance Committee	Michael Clarke
Health and Safety Committee	Mark Wynne
Membership Services Committee	Shay Kavanagh
National Equal Opportunities Committee	Vacant
Standing Orders' Committee	Thomas Kavanagh and Michael Ross
Training Committee	Eddie Smith

Staffing

Following the retirements of Stephen Lyons and Phil McFadden, a re-organisation of duties was carried out in the division. National secretary Peter Nolan is joined by assistant general secretary Dessie Robinson and industrial relations officers Úna Faulkner and Shane Lambert.

Linda Casey, John Meehan and Bríd Ruddle provide support in the IMPACT local government office. Our continued good wishes are offered to Gerry Dolan, assistant general secretary, who remains on extended sick leave following a serious illness.

Trevor O' Neill RIP

It was with great shock and sadness that the Municipal Employees Division learned of the killing of their friend and colleague Trevor O'Neill in Spain in August 2016. Trevor was an inspector in the drainage section and was a valued member of both Dublin City Council and the union. He was held in the highest regard amongst his colleagues and friends. The Division again wishes to extend its deepest sympathies to Trevor's partner Suzanne and his children Céadaoin, Layla and Cody. May he rest in peace.

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARY PETER NOLAN

United we bargain. Divided we beg.

Once again, I take great pleasure in presenting the report of the Municipal Employees' division of IMPACT. It has been a period of achievement and challenge since we last reported. Promotions, recruitment and a partial return of the money, which was lost during the financial crash, are back on the agenda.

The Municipal Employees' division of IMPACT will use its position in the union to build on the flat rate improvements in pay that IMPACT has secured. Flat rate pay increases have always been a policy of the division and we will continue to be the voice of low paid workers within the union.

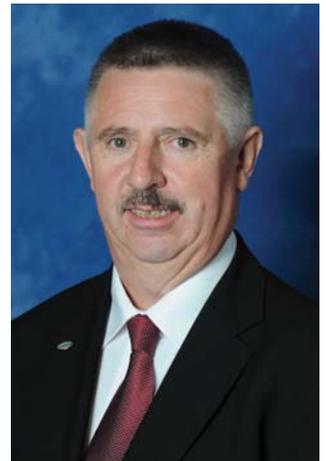
In relation to Irish Water, the division responded to attempts to casualise the local authority workforce who are operating service level agreements to Irish Water. IMPACT rejected proposals by management to regularise 86 local authority staff. The final agreement reached, which followed a massive ballot for industrial action, resulted in 300 jobs being regularised across the country. More importantly, IMPACT secured a commitment from the employers that 95% of the operational workforce would be permanent.

The union and its members remain vigilant that the current model of operation in which local authorities provide the service to Irish Water is maintained.

IMPACT also balloted members in Dublin fire brigade in defence of Dublin City Council's fire-based emergency medical services. The solidarity of the membership significantly increased our hand in achieving the appointment of an independent mediator and forcing Dublin City Council to go into talks on the matter.

Throughout the range of employments, the Municipal division has sought to keep services in public ownership and we have used the provisions of the Lansdowne Road agreement to do this. At the heart of our achievements has been a belief that when members act together, we can defend our position. To do this, we need to ensure that all workers in our area join the union.

United we bargain. Divided we beg.



Peter Nolan

Peter Nolan
National secretary

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY DESSIE ROBINSON



It is just a year since I began representing staff in the Dublin local Authorities and a couple of months since I began representing members in the Municipal Employees' Division.

Most of you will be aware that we have come out of a very difficult time. Management is continually looking for change, there have been a number of occasions where management has tried to make major changes to the conditions of employment without consultation. I am very clear if there is no consultation there should be no co-operation.

At least there is some good news on the horizon: most of you will see the beginning of pay restoration with pay scales going up by €1,000 from the 1st April 2017.

We are also seeing the ending of the moratorium on recruitment, we will see more advertisements for Dublin City Council jobs including for general operatives. I look forward to working with the branch and meeting more of you throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in orange ink that reads "Dessie Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dessie Robinson
Assistant general secretary

MESSAGE FROM INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER SHANE LAMBERT

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since the last AGM. A lot has happened in that time and we can say with some comfort and relief that the years of austerity seem to be behind us. We have seen the first steps of pay restoration through the Lansdowne Road agreement and the recently agreed accelerated payment of €1,000 on salary scales.

We've also seen the first tranches of recruitment for municipal employees for almost seven years. Even in Dublin City council, where the chief executive tends to favour outsourcing, we have seen concessions given on numbers and direct labour.

None of our successes of the past year would have been achieved without the efforts of the executive and members on the ground. The Muno has a camaraderie that's almost unique. This was never more evident than last August, when the members stood together to mourn the loss of Trevor O'Neill. They were joined by colleagues across IMPACT and, indeed in other unions, collectively supporting us in a time of need.

I want to recognise the contribution of convenor Mr Thomas Murtagh in ensuring that we did everything we could for Trevor's family, and we continue to be there to support them into the future. I also want to thank the members of the Municipal divisional executive for their efforts and support over the last year. I look forward to continuing the good work and achievements of the past year.



Shane Lambert
Industrial relations officer

MESSAGE FROM INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER ÚNA FAULKNER



Let me take this opportunity to thank all the members of the branch executive and division for the warm welcome they have given me since I started a few months ago. Whilst it has been a very busy year so far, working with the division, I have thoroughly enjoyed representing members across the sector and I hope to continue to represent the municipal employees into the future.

I'd also like to acknowledge the work of my predecessor Phil McFadden, and to thank him for the dedication he showed to this division over the past number of years.

Throughout the division the prominent matter of pay recovery remains a key issue for all grades. While developments and progression are welcome, the continuing issue of staff shortages throughout all sectors remains a dominant problem. Such residual effects of the years of cuts have caused great stress and concern to members, and it is one of my key priorities to continue to fight for those posts lost during the moratorium.

It is also imperative that we all take responsibility to ensure that any new staff recruited become members of IMPACT to strengthen our voice and continue the hard work that has been done over the incredible history of this division.

I look forward to being part of that history and to continuing that tradition.

Úna Faulkner
Industrial relations officer

INCOMES

Public service pay restoration

In July 2015, IMPACT members voted to accept the Lansdowne Road agreement, by a margin of three-to-one, in a national ballot. The agreement was the first to deliver upward adjustments in public service incomes since 2008.

Lansdowne Road originally envisaged two changes in the pension levy threshold in 2016 – one in January (raising the threshold from €15,000 a year to €24,750) and a second in September (raising the threshold from €24,750 to €28,750). However, after it emerged that payroll systems could not implement the September 2016 change for technical reasons, it was agreed that the September change would be abandoned. Instead, the January 2016 change was larger, raising the threshold from €15,000 to €26,083. This had the effect of giving the cash benefit for those earning above the threshold faster.

The deal also saw a 2.5% restoration of pay for those earning up to €24,000, and 1% for those who earned between €24,001 and €31,000, from 1st January 2016. For some lower-paid workers, this meant salaries are now higher than before the 'Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest' (FEMPI) legislation, which introduced pay cuts and the pension levy, was put in place.

A further upward pay movement, worth €1,000 a year to all those who earn up to €65,000 was originally agreed for September 2017. However, IMPACT and other unions succeeded in bringing this forward to 1st April 2017. Together, these measures mean that, by April 2017, virtually all public servants will have experienced some pay restoration, while those earning below around €28,000 will have had full restoration of the pay and pension levy-related cuts.

Agreement to bring the September 2017 payment, which is worth €38.33 a fortnight before tax, forward to April was the result of negotiations between public service unions and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), which took place between December 2016 and January 2017. The union negotiators were led by IMPACT general secretary Shay Cody, who chairs the ICTU Public Services Committee. This followed IMPACT's earlier insistence that pay restoration be accelerated after the Government accepted Labour Court recommendations that gave Gardaí better terms than those set out in the Lansdowne Road agreement. The agreement reached in January 2017 acknowledges the unions' view that the 'Garda anomaly' is not fully resolved and allows for the issue to be revisited in talks on a successor to the LRA, which are expected to start in the first half of 2017.

In May 2016, delegates at IMPACT's biennial delegate conference backed motions calling for faster pay restoration than agreed under Lansdowne Road, to reflect the fact that the economy and public finances had improved more quickly than envisaged when the deal was signed. At that time, the Government was strongly defending the agreement, and was insisting that it should run its course until September 2018. However, in December 2016 it bowed to union demands for talks on a successor agreement, effectively conceding that pay restoration could be accelerated under a new deal.

IMPACT said the talks must address the timetable for unwinding the FEMPI, and the union will push for the fastest possible pay recovery in the context of public finances and other calls on the public purse, like investment in infrastructure and public services. However, the Government will take a different view. In particular, it is expected to argue that a high value should be placed on public service pensions because private sector occupational pension provision has declined. Many business groups and media commentators are also opposed to accelerated pay restoration.

Negotiations on a successor to the LRA are now set to begin immediately after the Public Service Pay Commission (see below) makes its initial report in the second quarter of 2017. The significance of this earlier commencement date is that pay increases can be factored into the 2018 budget process if the talks are successful.

Public Service Pay Commission

In July 2016, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Paschal Donohoe announced a consultation on the terms of reference for a new Public Service Pay Commission (PSPC), which was promised in the Programme for Government. Union fears that such a body might be seen as an alternative to management-union bargaining when setting public service pay were allayed when the Minister made clear that its role would be to inform – but not replace – collective bargaining negotiations.

The ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC) made a written submission on the PSPC terms of reference, in which it stressed that the Commission should have an expert and independent chair, and include members with trade union experience. The PSC submission addressed a range of issues include the value of pensions, public-private pay comparisons, and international pay comparisons.

The Commission, which was established in October 2016, is chaired by former Labour Court chairperson Kevin Duffy, and includes two former senior trade unionists including former IMPACT general secretary Peter McLoone. The PSPC will initially address the process of unwinding the FEMPI legislation. More generally, is required to examine recruitment and retention issues, and the value of pay, pensions and security of tenure relative to the private sector. These have always been factors in public service pay determination. The Commission is also expected to make reference to comparisons between the pay of Irish public servants and their equivalents in other countries. However, this will have to “have due regard” to the cost of living in each jurisdiction.

The ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC), which represents the vast majority of the country’s public service unions, made three submissions to the Commission between November 2016 and March 2017. A fourth PSC submission, on pensions, was in preparation as this report was being prepared. The PSC officers have met with the Commission a number of times. The Commission is to report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and reform in the second quarter of 2017.

Overtime, allowances and premium pay

Overtime payments have been based on the increased pay rates since January 2016 and will, again, be based on the revised pay scales from April 2017. The same goes for allowances and premium payments that are calculated as a percentage or portion of pay. Fixed allowances are not affected.

Travel and subsistence

New travel and subsistence rates were applied in the local government sector, with effect from 1st April 2017, after the Local Government Management Agency accepted an IMPACT claim that revised civil service rates should be applied in local authorities. Details of the revised rates are available on the IMPACT website.

Pensions

Although pensions are not covered by the Lansdowne Road Agreement, a separate 2015 engagement between unions, the Alliance of Retired Public Servants and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform led to reductions in the pension related reduction (PSPR) from pensions in payment. This will result in a restoration of pension income, on a phased basis over three years. Details were published in the IMPACT 2014-2016 biennial report.

The contributory state pension was increased by €3 a week in January 2016. The Lansdowne Road Agreement extended the grace period’ during which pay cuts and increment deferrals are disregarded for pension purposes. The original grace period for staff affected by the HRA reductions ran to June 2015, but IMPACT and other unions successfully had it extended to April 2019.

The ICTU Public Services Committee (PSC), which represents virtually all public service unions, wrote to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in January 2017 to establish the implications for public service pensioners of the agreement to bring forward the 2017 pay adjustment by five months. DPER said the terms of the Garda settlements, which prompted talks that led to the deal, had no impact on pensions currently in payment. On this basis, it said there would be no benefit to pensioners once the €1,000 LRA payment for serving staff is brought forward from September 2017 to 1st April 2017. The PSC intends to pursue this in the negotiations on a successor to the Lansdowne Road agreement, which are expected to begin in the first half of 2017. In the meantime, the PSC continues to liaise with representatives of the Alliance of Retired Public Servants.

IMPACT has welcomed the establishment of the interdepartmental group to examine the issues arising from retirement ages for workers in both the public and private sectors. The 2014 increase in the state pension age, from 65 to 66, and plans to increase the age to 67 in 2021 and to 68 in 2028, raises issues for workers who must retire at 65. The union has called for a coherent policy to deal with the gap between contractual retirement ages and eligibility for the state pension.

Outsourcing

The Lansdowne Road agreement reaffirmed a commitment to maximise the use of direct labour in the delivery of local authority services and other public services, as well as a process for dealing with disputes over proposed outsourcing. Significantly, the agreement requires consultation and evaluation prior to the outsourcing of an existing service and rules out the use of labour cost savings in making a case for outsourcing.

Sick leave

A Labour Court recommendation required that revised sick leave arrangements, implemented on foot of the Haddington Road agreement, should be reviewed after a year. The review was delayed by a legal challenge by the Garda Representative Association, which was defeated in the High Court and Court of Appeal. It has been referred to the Supreme Court and delays in concluding the review are likely to continue while the legal process plays out.

Nevertheless, IMPACT and other unions have achieved some progress in the review. Restricted eligibility to 'temporary rehabilitation remuneration' (which kicks in after half pay is exhausted) is to be expanded to cover all public servants with two years' service, instead of those with five years' pensionable service. Clarified medical criteria for the 'critical illness protocol' (CIP) are expected to allow greater flexibility, with chronic conditions being eligible for consideration against the criteria. And guidelines for management discretion on CIP are also to be introduced to encourage managers to use their discretion.

The CIP 'protective' year, which allows those who return to work after a CIP absence to take sick leave within a year without going straight to TRR, will commence on the date of a return to work rather than the commencement of an illness. Provisions regarding 'reasonable accommodation' of people with disabilities will be strengthened, and sectoral schemes for living kidney donors are to be introduced. And there will be no amendment to regulations that calculate sick leave in working days, as opposed to working hours.

Further work is underway on increasing awareness of CIP and including CIP data in statistical returns, preventing 'look back' being extended beyond four years for absences of less than four months, clarifying the legal position on pregnancy-related sick leave to managers, and establishing a working group to consider illness benefit and recoupment for 'Class A' social welfare contributors.

Agreement has not yet been reached on the introduction of a single rate of TRR to overcome administrative difficulties. Management has proposed a single rate of 30%, but, while IMPACT is open to streamlining TRR administration, they have rejected this low rate. There is no agreement on a management proposal to standardise the commencement of TRR at 28 days.

Neither is there agreement on the issue of counting all sick leave in the four-year look back. Practices vary across the public service with all sick leave – including full pay, half pay, TRR and unpaid leave – counted in some cases. IMPACT is arguing that unpaid leave should not count. Finally, there is no agreement on the issue of personal injury cases where the employer is compensated for absences. The union says that such leave shouldn't be reckonable because there they involve no loss to the employer.

Bereavement leave

IMPACT has secured an increase in bereavement leave for workers whose spouses or partners have passed away. The leave has increased from five to 20 days. The full details are available on the IMPACT website.

Collective bargaining legislation

The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act became law in July 2015, allowing trade unions to represent members in the Labour Court to secure legally-binding benefits for workers in cases where employers refuse to recognise unions and pay below the going rate. Trade unions have welcomed a number of significant Labour Court recommendations that have followed the change in the law.

Equality

IMPACT campaigned strongly in 2015's successful marriage equality referendum on foot of a motion that was passed unanimously at the unions' 2014 biennial delegate conference. The 62% vote in favour of marriage equality brought to a successful end to a decade-long campaign.

The Workplace Relations Act, which came into effect in 2015, reforms the employment law machinery, including that covering workplace equality legislation. It consolidated five different statutory bodies, including the Equality Tribunal, into two. This means that workers with multiple complaints no longer have to lodge their complaints with five separate bodies.

The Paternity Leave and Benefit Act took effect from 1st September 2016, giving rights to two weeks' paternity leave following the birth or adoption of a child. This can be taken at any time within the first six months following the birth or adoption. Employers are not obliged to pay staff who take paternity leave, but those with sufficient PRSI contributions qualify for paternity benefit from the Department of Social Protection.

The union's workplace representatives training programme was amended to include a module on equality and equal opportunities from early 2017. In November 2016, the union also ran a successful and well-attended one day 'Inspire' training day aimed at empowering women activists to progress in the union.

Health and safety

A review of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act is currently in progress. IMPACT official Dessie Robinson is a member of the ICTU health and safety committee, which is working on a code of practice for trade unions dealing with mental health issues in the workplace. This is due to be published by July 2017. The IMPACT health and safety committee is also developing a seminar on the issue. IMPACT ran a two-day safety representatives training course in March 2017.

YOUR WORKPLACE

Water services

IMPACT has continued to monitor the collective agreement on the provision of services by local authorities to Irish Water. The Irish Water Consultative Group (IWCG), which oversees the operation of the agreement, is independently chaired by the head of conciliation at the Workplace Relations Commission. IMPACT is represented on the IWCG by Peter Nolan, Shane Lambert, Shay Kavanagh, and Paul O'Halloran (of the Local Government and Local Services Division).

In October 2015, the union vigorously resisted Irish Water's unilateral announcement of a reduction of the annual headcount. Following a ballot for industrial action, the union engaged in talks at the Workplace Relations Commission. In January 2016, an agreement was reached which ultimately resulted in commitments by Irish Water to regularise 95% of the operational workforce. An independent adjudicator was appointed to deal with a number of disputed posts. Up to 300 posts were regularised in local authorities as a result of the agreement.

It was also agreed to recruit up to 100 additional local authority staff on a temporary basis as part of an agreement to control water leakage. IMPACT continues to work to ensure that Irish Water, the Local Government Management Agency, and local authorities continue to operate the service level agreements and the collective agreement that underpins them.

IMPACT's biennial conference considered the issue of water charges in 2015 and 2016. The conferences voted not to support campaigns opposing water charges. IMPACT has made a submission to the expert commission on water charges, reflecting the policy position established at the conferences.

Dublin City Council waste management

The waste management review was formally proposed to the unions in January 2016. It focussed on three core items: shift arrangements, staffing structures, and clocking in. The original proposals said clocking in should be implemented by 23rd March 2016. IMPACT has managed to hold its implementation until there is agreement or a decision from adjudication on the proposals as a whole.

A number of engagements over the past year have seen many of the issues associated with the proposals resolved. We continue to engage under the auspices of the WRC on 5th April. We have made it absolutely clear to management that any restructuring proposals must be accompanied by a commitment to direct labour and minimum numbers in the section and recruitment.

Parks

The reorganisation of the parks is almost complete and is awaiting formal sign off. Competitions have been run for all senior positions and competitions for gardeners and group four GOs are imminent. When the competitions are complete they are expected to create vacancies at GO level. The union has commitments to fill these, which will add to the recruitment numbers this year.

Housing caretakers

A review of the service was presented to the union in November 2016. It contained aspects of outsourcing and a reduction of numbers over time. We rejected the document, and stated that we would not engage on any proposal that was contrary to the provisions and protections of the national public service agreement, which were strengthened by the Lansdowne Road agreement. As a result the proposal has been placed on hold. A meeting with management is due to discuss potential retirements and minimum numbers in this area, notwithstanding the proposal being on hold.

Health and safety officers

The union had been pursuing a new structure that would see the professionalisation of this area. As it stands, health and safety officers span two grades and are paid on administrative scales. This does not take into account the professional nature of the role or the legal responsibilities and obligations that go with it. Management has maintained that the existing structure is adequate. However, following many discussions over the past two years, IMPACT finally received proposals for a new structure in February 2016. This would see three new health and safety posts at SEE level filled by open competition, with nine grade six health and safety officers below. Whilst the union welcomed the creation of three promotional posts, we argued that that the competition should be confined. We also told management that the proposal did not go far enough in addressing the professionalisation of the structure. Management conceded that the competition for the SEE posts would be confined and we commenced a process under the WRC conciliation service to seek further discussions on the professionalisation of the structure.

Following discussions both locally and with the WRC, a further proposal was put to the union. This would see the creation of 11 new executive health and safety officer posts. We have also gained a commitment that the posts will be filled by internal confined competition. This represents a significant shift from management's original position and sees a greater quantity of promotional posts than there are existing health and safety officers.

Cleaners

A proposal on restructuring of the cleaning service has now been implemented. Throughout the process IMPACT sought management commitments to the minimum staffing numbers and the maintenance of the service by direct labour. A monitoring group was established, which allows concerns on the ground to be dealt with. A review of the proposal is due to commence in the coming months. Emergency recruitment to fill vacancies took place in March, in advance of the review.

Libraries

Since early 2017 there have been numerous meetings with management on the roll-out of the national inter library loans scheme, and how this will affect members in Dublin. These negotiations have enabled the union to secure the back-filling of a post for library drivers and address staffing levels for library attendants.

Dublin fire brigade

An ambulance forum was set up to consider how the ambulance services could best be provided to the citizens of Dublin. The forum included union and management representatives. An independent expert issued findings and the forum was working through them. However, in January 2017 management pulled out of the forum and threatened to transfer the Dublin fire brigade ambulance services to Tallaght. A ballot was held following unsuccessful talks. The firefighters voted overwhelmingly in favour of taking industrial action and two 24-hour stoppages were announced. Following an intervention from the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the action was postponed to allow for an independent facilitator to begin talks with both sides.

Fire service national oversight and implementation group

IMPACT is represented on the fire service national oversight and implementation group, which was established by then-minister Alan Kelly. The Dublin Fire Brigade Section Committee has participated in some of its working groups. Issues under consideration include outstanding rent allowance, six block annual leave, winter and rotary leave and overtime rates.

The Dublin firefighters section committee is made up of Peter O'Neill, Paul Lavelle, Stephen McNally, Aiden McGrath, Maria Markey, Teresa Hudson and Mark Finnerty.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

The union has had a number of successes in individual disciplinary cases in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, where we secured almost all positions through the workforce planning/long-term acting process. We have timelines for competitions to be held in the coming months and indications are that there will be external recruitment to the general operative stream within the first half of this year.

Dublin Institute of Technology

The union succeeded in getting promotional posts for our Fit2Go members who were originally on fixed term contracts. We also had them assimilated onto a higher scale point when we successfully argued that an allowance should be treated as pay for the purpose of calculating pay on promotion. We achieved agreement that the new rate would also be applied retrospectively.

The convenor for DIT, Joey Malone, represented members in relation to sub standard uniforms and PPE. The union obtained a firm commitment from both management and the contactor that standards would be upheld. There is also a new system in place that should make it easier to order items. IMPACT will be monitoring this in the coming months.

The union got a significant number of posts advertised in DIT within the last year. However a further delay in the move to Grangegorman has created uncertainty over staffing requirements in some areas.

City of Dublin Educational and Training Board

IMPACT continues to hold the chair of the group of unions of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The central issue for members in the many education centres across the city is the loss of posts over the past decade. This is a fight that will have to be escalated to the Department of Education and Skills.

Leisure centres

The moratorium of the past decade has been felt throughout the city's sports and leisure centres. This has had repercussions for local industrial relations issues.

Health Service Executive

The union was approached by members in the pest control service who had serious concerns about its future viability as vacancies were not being filled. Representations were made to management, seeking assurances on the long term future of the service and the filling of vacancies. An agreement was reached that would see the service maintained as a public service into the future. A national panel for pest controller operatives will be formed in the first half of this year. We also managed to get members extensions to their retirement age as a result. A process has also been established to deal with an issue surrounding the non-payment of subsistence, which arose during the discussions.

The amalgamation of the new Dublin City University, which was completed in late 2016, saw the merger of the Church of Ireland College of Education, St Patrick's College, All Hallows College and Mater Dei with DCU. This issue has affected IMPACT grades both in IMPACT's municipal and education divisions.

Individual issues

The division dealt with a significant quantity of individual issues and had a number of successes at the WRC over the past year. As a result, there appears to be a significant reduction in individual issues arising and certainly a reduction in cases being referred to the WRC. The union will continue to monitor this trend to ensure that it continues.

ORGANISATION

New union project

Delegates at the 2016 IMPACT biennial delegate conference voted overwhelmingly to continue talks on a possible merger with the Civil, Public and Services Union (CPSU) and Public Service Executive Union (PSEU). If successful, this New Union Project will create a new 80,000-strong organisation representing workers in the public service, commercial organisations, and state agencies. Identical conference motions were passed by large majorities at the conferences of the PSEU and CPSU. A document called New Union Project, which sets out the broad structure of a new union, was circulated at each of the conferences.

The conferences authorised the executives of the three unions to continue and conclude negotiations on the shape of a new union before putting final proposals to separate ballots of members of the three unions in 2017.

As this report was concluded, the three organisations were finalising the text of a rule book and associated documentation, which will set out the objectives, structure and procedures of a new union. The proposed structure would ensure that a new union will be democratically accountable and better able to defend and advance members' interests. The benefits of a new union would include:

- The creation of a single, strong negotiating force representing more than 80,000 members
- A single articulate voice speaking, in the media and elsewhere, on behalf of public services and the people that provide them
- Substantially enhanced services to members and future members and activists – delivered by economies of scale and enhanced bargaining power
- A foundation for enhancing trade union membership and organisation in the public service and beyond
- Strong safeguards to ensure an effective voice for every grade, and preserve the best traditions of each constituent union.

The proposed merger is expected to be put to members of each of the unions in separate ballots later in 2017.

Lobbying activity

Lobbying

IMPACT has registered as a lobbying organisation, as required under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, which became law in 2015. The union made 57 returns to the lobby register for 2016. The union lobbied on a number of issues including proposals to privatise Dublin City Council street cleaning and road and housing maintenance, the need to recognise water and sanitation as a human right, funding for the Dublin fire brigade emergency rescue service, proposed library shared services and staffless libraries, and proposed amalgamations of fire and library services.

Training

The Municipal Employees' branch organised a successful training course in conjunction with the Dublin City branch in Waterford in October 2016. The course included modules on the Workplace Relations Commission, wellbeing in the workplace, and future branch strategy. Branch members also participated in national IMPACT training courses. More than 600 activists have now graduated from IMPACT's training courses for emerging and experienced activists since the workplace representative training programme was introduced in 2011. The programme was revised and refreshed during the summer of 2016.

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' MUNICIPAL



CORK

Father Matthew Quay, Cork.
Ph: 021-425-5210 • Email: impactcork@impact.ie

DUBLIN

Nerney's Court, Dublin 1.
Ph: 01-817-1500 • Email: info@impact.ie

GALWAY

Unit 23, Sean Mulvoy Business Park, Sean Mulvoy Road, Galway.
Ph: 091-778-031 • Email: impactgalway@impact.ie

LIMERICK

Roxborough Road, Limerick.
Ph: 061-319-177 • Email: aodonoghue@impact.ie

SLIGO

Ice House, Fish Quay, Sligo.
Ph: 071-914-2400 • Email: impactsligo@impact.ie

WWW.IMPACT.IE



IMPACT Trade Union



@IMPACTTU