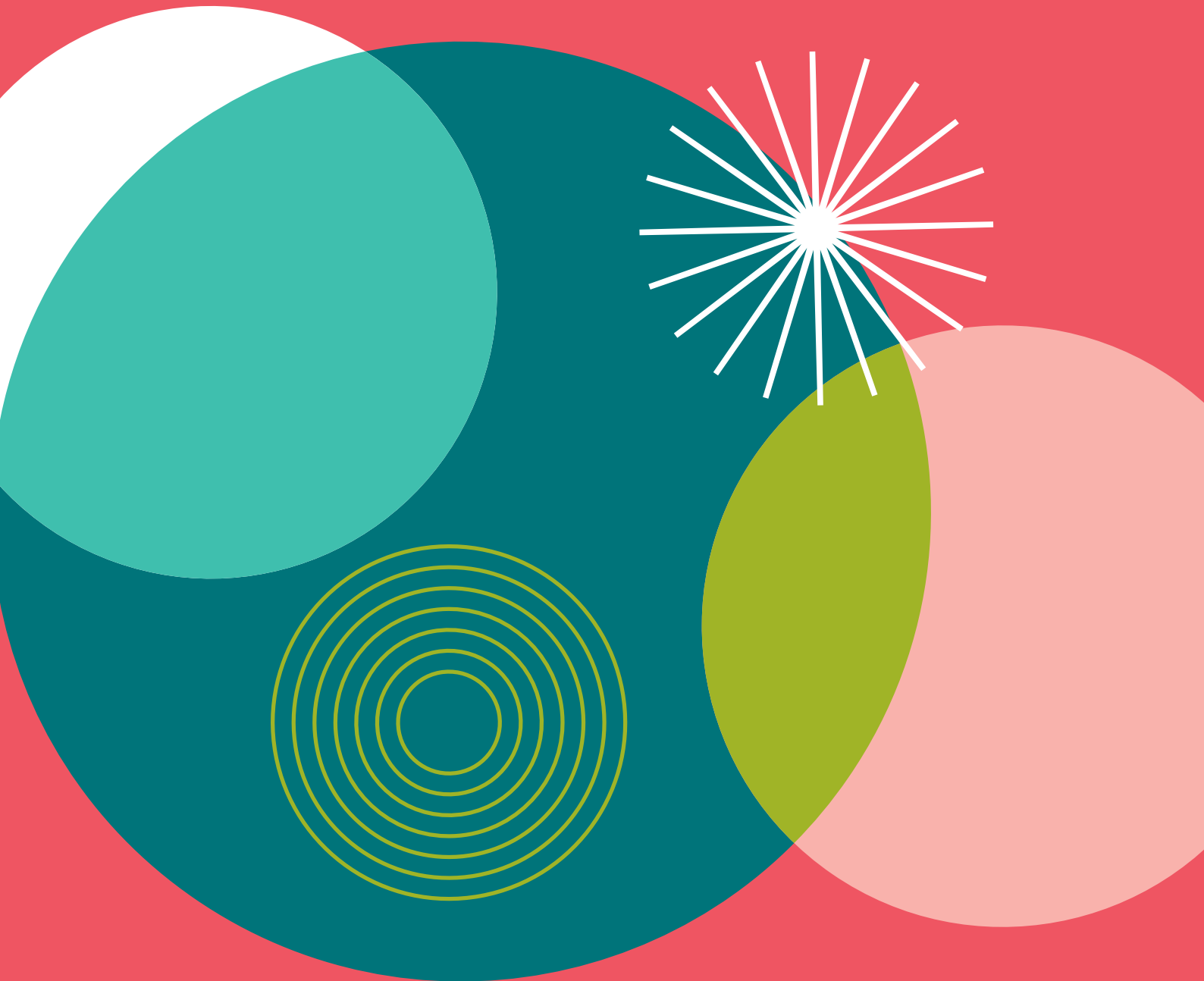


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YOUR POWER



**ACTION ON MOTIONS CARRIED AT  
FÓRSA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022  
REPORT TO NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024**

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# Introduction

This report sets out progress on the implementation of motions deemed to be in order by the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) and carried by the Fórsa Biennial Conference 2022.

## Pay and inflation

### Motion 1 – National Executive Committee

This Conference notes that:

- The rising cost of living is now the priority bargaining issue for workers, as sustained high inflation erodes spending power and living standards;
- For the most part, inflation is not currently being pulled by demand, but is being pushed by costs, particularly soaring energy prices. Workers are the victims of inflation, not the cause of it;
- Most current pay agreements, including the Building Momentum public service deal, have not kept pace with inflation largely because they were negotiated at a time of economic uncertainty and low inflation, and in the absence of any expectation of the sustained cost-of-living increases now being experienced by workers in all sectors;
- Pay adjustments achieved since 2015 have, for the most part, been aimed at restoring pay cuts imposed between 2009 and 2013, and did not adjust for (albeit relatively low) inflation during that period;
- Ireland's public finances remain buoyant, with strong economic growth forecast by the EU and others;
- High and sustained inflation now risks undermining the credibility of the current public service agreement, which is essential to sustaining certainty in the public finances and in public service delivery and industrial relations;
- Failure to address the impact of inflation on incomes will undermine efforts to recruit and retain staff in a tight labour market.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive:

- To prioritise the restoration and improvement of living standards above all other issues in the current round of pay bargaining, in the public service and elsewhere;
- To continue to seek progressive pay agreements, which favour workers on lower incomes who feel the impact of inflation most keenly;
- Through this and other means, to continue to work to close the gender pay gap;
- To take the lead in building consensus around these priorities among colleague unions;
- To work to ensure that pay agreements in the public service and elsewhere reflect the realities of the cost of living crisis, which is hurting workers regardless of what sector they work in.

Conference also calls on the Government to:

- Immediately finalise any outstanding elements of Building Momentum, including its sectoral bargaining provisions and the implementation of the recommendations of the independent body on the 'Haddington Road hours';
- Immediately begin negotiations on a successor to Building Momentum, and conclude them in time to allow Fórsa and other unions to ballot on the outcome in time for any necessary provisions to be included in the October Budget;
- Allocate sufficient funding to Section 39 and Section 56 agencies to allow them to reach agreements that mirror the public service and restore living standards.

The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers. The motion also informed the strategy adopted by the health and welfare division in relation to the Community and Voluntary Sector pay dispute.

### Review of Building Momentum 2022

By the close of Conference 2022, the officers of ICTU's Public Services Committee (PSC) had already had an initial meeting with senior Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) officials after Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform Michael McGrath TD agreed to engage with unions on pay and inflation. This came after Fórsa, and the other PSC unions triggered a review clause in the Building Momentum agreement in March 2022. Fórsa took the lead on this, proposing it to the PSC, arguing that sustained high inflation, which was not expected when Building Momentum was negotiated in December 2020, constituted grounds for a review of the agreement's pay terms.

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) facilitated the resulting negotiations between public service unions, led by Fórsa General Secretary Kevin Callinan, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) between May and June 2022. The talks broke down on 17th June 2022 after union negotiators rejected a Government offer totalling 5% (on top of existing Building Momentum pay adjustments), in the context of extending Building Momentum by another year. Talks resumed on 29th August and the Government made an improved offer, which was further improved following negotiations. On 30th August 2022, the WRC published proposals for a public service pay package aimed at resolving differences between public service unions and the Government. The package contained pay increases of 3% with effect from 2nd February 2022, 2% from 1st March 2023 and 1.5% or €750 (whichever was the greater) from 1st October 2023. These proposals, which favoured workers on lower incomes, were overwhelmingly accepted by Fórsa members with just over 91 % voting in favour of the extension to the Building Momentum agreement.

The sectoral bargaining clause of Building Momentum, worth 1%, which allowed the parties to address outstanding adjudications, recommendations, awards and claims relevant to specific grades, groups or categories has been concluded for Fórsa. Most opted for the straight 1% increase available under this clause, while a small number took the opportunity to address outstanding issues. The agreement allowed for the remaining elements of these issues to be addressed in a future sectoral bargaining fund as part of a new agreement.

With regard to the Haddington Road hours, the recommendations from the independent body established under Building Momentum, were implemented in full on 1 July 2022.

### Community and Voluntary Sector

Some progress has been made to restore pay parity for members working in Section 39, Section 56 and Section 10 agencies. Following a decision by Fórsa in early 2023, to support members in the community and voluntary sector to take indefinite strike action, the formal serving of notice of same, and a set of intense negotiations chaired by the WRC, an interim agreement was secured by Fórsa as part of the ICTU Group of Unions. This agreement addresses the core issue of pay inequality through pay raises and a commitment to developing a mechanism to align the pay of Section 39, 56 and 10 workers with public sector pay. The agreement was accepted by a significant majority of members of Fórsa and the other unions following a national ballot. This agreement brings pay parity closer than it has been for a decade. For the first time the Government, as the main funding body, acknowledged that members' pay had fallen behind equivalent and comparable grades in the public service. The agreement confirms that the funders are committed to fully deal with the issue before the end of the new Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026.

## Public Sector Pay Agreement 2024 - 2026

A challenging set of negotiations on a new public sector pay agreement concluded in January 2024. The pay terms of this new agreement are valued at 9.25% over 2.5 years. The pay provisions in each year of the agreement will deliver significantly more for lower paid workers.

Going into the negotiations the union side, led by Fórsa's General Secretary Kevin Callinan, had a clear set of priorities. These priorities were agreed in the first place by Fórsa's NEC and then later by the Public Services Committee of ICTU. They were: any new agreement would need to address the rising cost of living, especially for low-to middle- earners, contain provisions to allow for the normalisation of industrial relations, contain a measure to stabilise the agreement through the inclusion of a local bargaining clause, and address the future proofing of public services. These four priorities were directly informed by this motion. The priorities also reflected the concerns of the thousands of Fórsa members who told us directly, in a survey conducted in April 2023 by Ámarach on behalf of the union, that the cost of living was their top concern. The new agreement includes flat rate increases which means that the percentage increases are greater for those on lower incomes and significantly so for those on very low pay.

Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the agreement. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages.'

The Public Sector Agreement 2024 - 2026 was overwhelmingly accepted by 94% in a national ballot of Fórsa members in the period February 2024-March 2024 and ratified on 25th March 2024 by a meeting of the Public Services Committee of ICTU.

## Motion 2 - Dun Laoghaire Rathdown

That this Conference welcomes Fórsa's recent statements that any new national pay agreement must reflect the reality of cost of living increases. This Conference agrees that given the last ten years have been primarily about recovery of pay, this must be backed up by a pay deal that delivers substantial increases above the rate of inflation.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages.' The Public Sector Agreement 2024 - 2026 was overwhelmingly accepted by 94% in a national ballot of Fórsa members in the period February 2024 - March 2024.*

## Motion 3 – Municipal Employees

This Conference calls on NEC to agree that any further national pay agreement would ensure that the percentage increase agreed will keep pace with the rate of inflation.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages'.*

## Motion 4 – Clare Civil Service Clerical

This Conference calls on the incoming National Executive to request an increase in wages due to the rising inflation.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages'.*

## Motion 5 – Dublin Central Revenue Clerical

The Conference calls on the incoming National Executive to request an increase in wages to come in line with the rising rate of inflation.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages'.*

## Motion 6 – Dublin Central Clerical

Conference notes that talks on a successor agreement to the current Building Momentum public service pay deal are likely to get underway in the coming months against a backdrop of increasing inflation which is particularly hard on lower paid workers and their families.

Conference instructs the NEC and the general secretary to seek to ensure that any deal reached follows the positive example set in previous agreements and is based on applying a flat rate increase to income below a set threshold to help lower paid workers cope with the huge increases in the cost of living since the current agreement was negotiated.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). Both agreements resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including an enhanced outcome for lower paid workers. This included flat rate increases which means that the percentage increases are greater for those on lower incomes and significantly so for those on very low pay. This continued the approach successfully taken during the negotiation of Building Momentum.*

## Motion 7 – FGE

That this Conference addresses as a matter of urgency the effects of inflation on the take home pay of low paid workers in the public service. In particular, the disproportionate effects on non-discretionary spending of these low paid workers, that the National Executive make this a priority in the current emergency and that any national pay agreement have a positive bias towards those on low pay.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). Both agreements resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including an enhanced outcome for lower paid workers. This included flat rate increases which means that the percentage increases are greater for those on lower incomes and significantly so for those on very low pay. This continued the approach successfully taken during the negotiation of Building Momentum.*

## Motion 8 – Longford Health and Local Government

Conference calls on the NEC to ensure that any talks on a successor pay agreement to Building Momentum will reference the rising costs of inflation when negotiating pay increases for the public sector.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). Both agreements resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including an enhanced outcome for lower paid workers. This included flat rate increases which means that the percentage increases are greater for those on lower incomes and significantly so for those on very low pay. This continued the approach successfully taken during the negotiation of Building Momentum.*

## Motion 9 – Longford Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on the NEC to seek pay increases for its members, especially the lower paid, to keep in line with inflation.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). Both agreements resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including an enhanced outcome for lower paid workers. This included flat rate increases which means that the percentage increases are greater for those on lower incomes and significantly so for those on very low pay. This continued the approach successfully taken during the negotiation of Building Momentum.*

## Motion 10 – Community Employment Supervisors

That this Conference recognise the European Commission’s prediction in February 2022, that Irish inflation will rise by 4.6% this year, we call on the union to negotiate realistic pay increases to reflect the rise in the cost of living.

*Fórsa successfully negotiated a 5% pay increase in two phases in 2023 for Community Employment Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors. Fórsa also achieved a new mechanism for engagement on future pay determination. The pay agreement was accepted in a ballot of members of the Community Employment Supervisors branch.*

## Motion 11 – Community Employment Supervisors

That this Conference recognise that some sector roles have had no cost of living increases in almost 15 years, we call on Fórsa to negotiate the lifting of caps on pay scale roles that are affecting the pay progression opportunities of some of our members.

*Fórsa successfully negotiated a 5% pay increase in two phases in 2023 for Community Employment Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors. Fórsa also achieved a new mechanism for engagement on future pay determination. The pay agreement was accepted in a ballot of members of the Community Employment Supervisors branch.*

## Motion 12 – Revenue Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to ensure that the expected rise in costs to members, due on foot of the climate crisis, becomes a factor in future pay agreements and that they seek to ensure measures, which may alleviate some of these additional charges, are included in the pay agreements.

*The terms of the motion informed the union’s approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). Both agreements resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections and the existing cost-of-living crisis.*

## Motion 13 – Cork General Clerical

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee that when entering the next pay talks that the agreement takes into account the high rising rate of inflation and that pay increases are linked thereto.

*The terms of the motion informed the union’s approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in ‘real wages.’*



## Motion 14 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to seek that Fórsa seek and obtain pay increases greater than the current rate of inflation for its members in the next round of pay negotiations.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages'.*

## Motion 17 – Cork Health and Local Government

Given the current level of inflation of 5.1%, and the further steep cost of living increases, driven by rising energy, housing and childcare costs, which are not reflected in the Consumer Price Index, it is crucial that Fórsa begins preparing for a pay claim to reflect the increased cost of living. Furthermore, this Conference calls on Fórsa to begin a media campaign that challenges recent public commentary, that seeks to blame inflation on pay rises when the opposite is the case.

*The terms of the motion informed the union's approach to the negotiation of both the extension to Building Momentum (August 22) and the new Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 (January 24). The negotiations resulted in pay increases in the context of prevailing inflation projections, including a significantly enhanced outcome for lower paid workers.*

*Whilst it is impossible to be definitive about future inflation, there is a large level of consensus among institutional forecasters, including our own advisors in the NERI, that price inflation will be in the range of 6.0% to 6.5% over the course of the 30 months of the Public Service Agreement 2024. If this turns out to be the case the pay increases will make good losses incurred during 2022 and 2023. Thus, this agreement has the potential to restore living standards for workers after a period of high inflation even before the benefits arising from personal taxation changes are taken into account. For lower paid workers the agreement should mean significant gains in 'real wages'.*

*Fórsa continues to be the leading union voice on the issue, achieving frequent and prominent media coverage.*

## Motion 19 – FGE

That the Fórsa National Conference supports the principle that no worker in the public service be employed on a salary less than the relevant living wage. To this end this, Conference instructs Fórsa to take immediate action to address this where cases have been identified and that the National Executive make this a priority.

*In 2023, Government confirmed its intention to set the living wage at 60 % of median earnings by January 2026. This is in line with the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission. The Commission also recommended that the National Minimum Wage be increased to €12.70 with effect from January 1, 2024. This was confirmed in Budget 2024. The implication of these increases in relation to wages in the public sector featured as a factor in the public sector pay talks in early 2024. However, as a result of push back from employers' organisations there is some uncertainty surrounding Government's commitment to delivering a living wage by 2026. The union will need to consider all of the implications of this possibility and to lobby political parties in relation to removal of lower entry points introduced in 2011. The union will also need to take this evolving situation into account in pay bargaining from this year onwards.*

# Pay agreements

## Motion 19 A – Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to ensure that cost of living pay increases should not be conditional. Only pay increases in real terms should be conditional on productivity.

*There were no additional productivity measures contained in the extension of Building Momentum. It reaffirmed the measures in the original Building Momentum agreement.*

## Motion 20 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee that, as part of any follow-on national agreement to Building Momentum, provision must be made that when an employer tries to introduce change management practices or policies, if there is no agreement between the employer and the union regarding the change management or practice, then it is the employer who must take the matter to a third party for adjudication. If the employer introduces the change without seeking third party intervention, then the union has the right to take appropriate industrial action up to and including all out strike.

*While it was not possible to achieve this specific change, the Public Sector Agreement 2024 - 2026 contains a simplified dispute resolution process compared to Building Momentum, with clearer roles for the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court or Conciliation and Arbitration schemes (where appropriate).*

## Motion 21 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference requests the incoming national committee of Fórsa to ensure that there is a clause in any extension or successor to the current public sector stability agreement whereby any disagreed reform, change or alteration to the public sector organisational structures, pay and conditions or any subject encompassed by the aforesaid public sector stability agreement successor or extension, shall be suspended and placed in abeyance until the conclusion of any dispute mechanism or third party referral contained in any such successor or extension of the aforesaid agreement.

*While it was not possible to achieve this specific change the Public Sector Agreement 2024 - 2026 contains a simplified dispute resolution process compared to Building Momentum with clearer roles for the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court or Conciliation and Arbitration schemes (where appropriate).*

## Motion 21 A – Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to negotiate that pay increases should be conferred automatically to members. Non-members should have to apply to their line manager in a similar way whereby Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID) employees automatically get pay increments but Specific Purpose Contracts (SPCs) have to apply each year via line manager.

*Whilst it would be desirable to achieve the position as set out in this motion the current legislative landscape doesn't allow for it. In the absence of a legislative imperative to give effect to this motion the NEC decided that the best course of action lay in prioritising recruitment and organising in workplaces in order to increase union density and power.*

# Public policy

## Motion 22 - National Executive Committee

Conference believes that the Covid experience has demonstrated what can be achieved when the State mobilises financial, organisational and human resources for the common good, when people work together collectively, and when citizens have equal and easy access to essential goods and services.

Conference endorses the Fórsa/TASC report, called The Irish State Post-Pandemic, and the union's campaign to embed these principles into our economic, social and business models in order to build a more secure, more equal, more robust and more united country as we exit the pandemic.

The pandemic exposed the structural weaknesses of our public services and the inadequacy of worker protections on this island, particularly when compared to other wealthy European nations. It laid bare the shortcomings of our low-tax, light touch, fiscal and regulatory regimes. Yet workers, communities, and public services stepped up to extraordinary challenges in 2020 and 2021.

Against a background of strong employment recovery and public finances, conference calls for a genuinely 'new' normal, with an expanded role for the State in public service delivery, innovation, economic management, and climate action.

Conference believes that Ireland needs, deserves, and is capable of delivering, a State-led response to the massive civic and economic challenges ahead of us. Conference calls on the National Executive to build on The Irish State Post-Pandemic with a campaign to achieve expanded State service provision and a best-of-class social wage, supported by a competitive, environmentally-robust economy founded on secure and well-paid work.

This should include free health care at the point of delivery, access to free or affordable childcare and early years' education, social housing worthy of the name, enhanced local services and democracy, and the opportunity for our children and economy to benefit and grow through accessible high-quality education and investment in R&D.

In the economic sphere, Conference supports the development of a long-term economic and industrial strategy that reduces Ireland's dependence on foreign direct investment by developing parallel indigenous enterprise.

Conference endorses the proposals set out in The Irish State Post-Pandemic, that this vision of a strong and progressive State providing decent public services worthy of a wealthy European nation should be funded by an expansion of employer PRSI contributions, increased tax on wealth, and a phasing out of subsidies for environmentally damaging fossil fuels, accompanied by a trebling of R&D spending on renewables.

*Fórsa's Campaigns Unit continues to work on utilising the Fórsa/TASC report, The Irish State Post-Pandemic, as a basis for a campaign to strengthen public services highlighting the shortcomings of our low-tax, light touch, fiscal and regulatory regimes to build a more secure, more equal, more robust and more united country post pandemic. This includes developing a general election manifesto package for political party manifesto writers and policy committees to consider, with a focus on "larger state" initiatives. A general election must be held by March 2025 however the Campaigns Unit have commenced preliminary preparations in the event of a "snap" general election focussing on the narrative of expanded public services. As part of this work the Campaigns Unit is supporting initiatives relating to remunicipalisation of services such as waste and has successfully secured the establishment of the Oireachtas subcommittee on remunicipalisation. To further give effect to this motion the NEC decided in November 2023 to commission a follow-on report to the Fórsa/TASC report, The Irish State Post-Pandemic.*

## Motion 23 – IALPA

That this Conference acknowledges the support given to many through the Department of Social Protection. During the Covid pandemic, many workers found themselves reliant on Social Welfare supports for the first time in their working lives. Experience with the system has shown that the Social Welfare supports no longer reflect the reality of modern working life in Ireland. This Conference therefore instructs the incoming NEC to engage with ICTU and the Minister for Social Protection to seek an overhaul to workers' supports to ensure they reflect the modern nature of employment in Ireland.

*In line with this motion Fórsa and ICTU strongly supported the reforms of the PRSI system in moving from flat-rate to pay-related social welfare benefits for PAYE workers. The NEC through ICTU is engaging with Government to get the design of this significant social policy reform right for workers and their families.*

## Motion 24 – Boards and Voluntary Agencies

The climate emergency: Conference notes with concern the inadequate response of governments across the world to the global climate and biodiversity emergency.

Conference notes the unique nature of the climate and biodiversity emergency on the island of Ireland and asserts that an all-island approach to the emergency is required to protect workers, families, and communities; the climate emergency does not recognise borders here or anywhere else.

Conference notes the need for an all-island approach was recognised when the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network (AICBRN) was launched in November 2021 by An Taoiseach and the deputy first minister. The launch of the network was characterised by leading politicians and researchers emphasising the climate crisis and loss of biodiversity is one of the biggest threats facing humanity, one shared by all on this island; which will require collaboration, research and innovation across all sectors of public, private and civil society.

Conference welcomes and endorses the commitments within the Strategic Plan to reduce our own climate footprint however the scale of the emergency requires us to be more ambitious in our aims.

Conference therefore further instructs the National Executive Committee to:

- (a) Collaborate with sister unions across the island of Ireland to develop a shared policy platform to address the climate and biodiversity emergency; and,
- (b) Advocate for an all-island approach to tackling emergent threats to our climate and biodiversity.

Conference authorises the National Executive Committee to establish a standing committee to meet regularly to retain oversight of implementing the actions listed above and to report on the relevant activities at the 2024 National Conference.

*The NEC decided that the best course of action to give effect to this motion lay, in the first instance, in contributing to the efforts of ICTU to develop its' Just Transition Strategy. Now that this has been established it is timely for the NEC to look at setting up a Fórsa Climate Change working group who will be tasked with considering how best to implement this motion.*

## Motion 25 - Kildare Health

Conference calls on the NEC to formulate an ambitious action plan to help achieve climate-friendly civil and public services in Ireland. The plan should include a target date by which the sectors should become zero carbon. Decarbonising the civil and public sectors can be done in a way that protects employment and creates quality green jobs in line with the objectives of a just transition. The Fórsa climate action plan can then be utilised for campaigning, negotiation with central government and engagement with public sector employers.

*The NEC decided that the best course of action to give effect to this motion lay, in the first instance, in contributing to the efforts of ICTU to develop its' Just Transition Strategy. Now that this has been established it is timely for the NEC to look at setting up a Fórsa Climate Change working group who will be tasked with considering how best to implement this motion.*

## Motion 26 - IAPLA

That this Conference recognises the outsize effect of the Covid-19 on workers in particular sectors of the Irish economy, especially those in hospitality, travel and tourism. The support of the TWSS and EWSS in keeping people employed is to be welcomed. However, employers were given an effective PRSI holiday while workers were given income tax bills. Therefore, this Conference directs the incoming NEC to engage immediately with Government to seek ways to remove the tax burden on workers as a result of Covid supports.

*The matter of tax burdens on workers as a result of Covid supports was raised with ICTU and the detail of the motion served as background information in the development of ICTU Budget Submission in September 2022.*

## Motion 27 - Defence Executive Grades

That this Conference requests the National Executive Committee to investigate the number of public and civil servants in receipt of a Working Family Payment (formerly known as Family Income Supplement) and to campaign for better pay conditions for staff coming within the threshold of social welfare allowances.

*The NEC considered the spirit of this motion to be comprehended by the union's pursuit of better outcomes for lower paid workers through the public services pay talks. Those members, whose incomes brought them within the eligibility threshold for social welfare payments, were prioritised during both the talks on the extension to Building Momentum and the recently agreed Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026.*

# Social policy

## Motion 28 - Kildare Health

Conference calls on the NEC to highlight the challenges faced by renters in applying for mortgages. Renters are often refused mortgages despite being able to pay significantly higher rents than the proposed levels of mortgage repayment.

*This motion was used by the NEC to inform Fórsa's policy on the housing crisis and to highlight this issue it was included as part of Fórsa's input into the 'A New Deal for Housing' paper released by Raise the Roof November 2022.*

## Motion 29 – SNAs North Dublin/North Leinster

We call on Fórsa to publicly support the creation of protest exclusion zones outside of medical facilities for people accessing essential healthcare.

*In line with this motion Fórsa has publicly backed the Safe Access Zones legislation.*

## Motion 30 – SNAs North Dublin/North Leinster

We call on Fórsa to fully support the survivors of mother and baby homes and to promote the campaign to give redress to all inmates of these facilities regardless of their length of incarceration.

*This motion supports the existing Fórsa policy in relation to publicly supporting the survivors of mother and baby homes.*

## Defence policy

### Motion 32 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive of Fórsa to explore the possibility of a public consultation on the subject of a green paper on defence.

*In late May 2022, just over a week after the close of Fórsa's conference PDFORRA, the representatives of the rank and file defence forces, concluded a settlement at the High Court that allowed them to affiliate with ICTU for the first time in their history. In light of this development the NEC considered that the best course of action lay in supporting the efforts of ICTU and PDFORRA to advocate for workers in the defence forces in the first instance. In February 2024 ICTU and PDFORRA appeared in front of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence to provide trade union input into the pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Heads of the Defence (Amendment) Bill 2023.*

## Conditions of service

### Motion 35 – National Executive Committee

Conference recognises that Fórsa had taken a leading role in the debate about remote and blended working since the outbreak of the pandemic and notes the union's 2020 membership survey, detailed submissions to Government consultations, its detailed claim for, and negotiations on, a public service remote working framework, and its lobbying and leadership on Government legislation for a right to request remote work including in the public media.

Conference believes that the normalisation of remote and blended working in the organisation of working time will bring benefits for workers, employers and service users, while contributing to climate action, spatial policy and town and rural development.

Conference condemns the weak draft legislation brought forward by the Government in early 2022, and calls on the union to continue to work through ICTU for legislative amendments to ensure a genuine right to request work, an obligation on employers to demonstrate objective reasons for refusing remote work arrangements, a fair and robust appeals mechanism, and strong worker protections covering health and safety, privacy and the right to disconnect.

Conference believes that the State should be the driver of best practice in this area, and calls on the union to continue to press for the implementation of the January 2021 national remote working strategy, Making Remote Work, including its commitment that 20% of public service jobs will be worked remotely. Fórsa considers this to be a floor rather than a ceiling, and commits to seek to negotiate comprehensive guidelines on remote working in all appropriate employments and work settings with the objective of securing:

- Fair access and the right to request remote work;
- A consistent approach to identifying functions that can be performed remotely, and for selecting staff to be allocated to home working arrangements;
- The principle that individual employees can decline remote work arrangements;
- Compliance with health and safety legislation, including specific measures relating to mental health, pregnant women, young workers, and workers with disabilities;
- Specific advice on compliance with working time legislation and the 'right to disconnect';
- Agreed guidance on flexible work arrangements, work attendance and time measurement;
- The provision of management training and supports to line managers;
- The inclusion of remote workers in collective workplace activities including business meetings and training and fair access to career advancement for all workers regardless of their work location;
- Full transparency and agreement over the use of any surveillance products or practices, and a guarantee that employees' rights to privacy and a reasonable work-life balance will be protected, along with full compliance with the provisions of data protection legislation;
- Other measures set out in the union's existing remote work policy and guidelines.

Conference also calls on the National Executive to continue to seek flexitime accrual for civil and public servants working remotely, along with measures to ensure that staff working remotely do not have to bear work-related financial costs that should be met by their employers.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The matter of flexitime accrual is going through the Civil Service Arbitration Board. The Staff side have submitted their statement to the board and await developments. The Blended Working Framework will need to be revisited in light of the Workplace Relations Commissions (WRC) Code of Practice for Employers and Employees Right to Request Flexible Working and Right to Request Remote Working which was published in March 2024. This remains a live issue for the union.*

## Motion 36 – Defence Executive Grades

That this Conference requests the National Executive Committee to make representations to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for a standardised allowance to cover the utility costs of working from home in line with the Government's blended work strategy.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The issue has been raised and discussed at General Council. The civil service division is currently examining the potential and the risks associated with lodging a claim in the context of Section 11 and Section 12 of the Workplace Relations Commissions (WRC) Code of Practice for Employers and Employees Right to Request Flexible Working and Right to Request Remote Working that deals with set up costs and expenses and tax relief for utilities.*

## Motion 37 – Defence Executive Grades

That this Conference requests the National Executive Committee to make representations to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for a standardised allowance or vouched expenses to be introduced to cover the cost of office furniture, along with any ergonomic equipment, required by staff working from home in line with the Government's blended work strategy, and that such allowance or expenses would also be retrospectively granted to staff who bought such equipment since 2020.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The Blended Working Framework sets out the position in relation to the provision of necessary equipment. This will need to be revisited in light of Section 11 of the Workplace Relations Commissions (WRC) Code of Practice for Employers and Employees Right to Request Flexible Working and Right to Request Remote Working that deals with set up costs and expenses.*

## Working time

### Motion 38 – National Executive Committee

Conference recognises that the pandemic has provided further evidence that working time and working patterns across the economy can and should be fundamentally reviewed and reformed. Conference also believes that reduced working time can be an important mechanism for maintaining employment as new technologies replace or change traditional jobs, and for sharing the benefits of improved productivity that flow from automation and other technological developments, while also helping to address challenges like the climate crisis, increasing caring demands, and demographic shifts including longer life expectancy.

Conference recognised that the union has shown leadership in the national and international campaign for a four-day week, the expansion of remote working opportunities, and in the long-overdue resolution of the 'Haddington Road hours' injustice.

Conference welcomes the recommendation of the Independent Body chaired by Kieran Mulvey to restore working time in the civil and public service to pre-austerity levels from 1st July 2022, and demands that the Government accept the recommendation in full, which can be achieved without excessive cost or damage to public service quality or output.

Conference welcomes the Government's decision, on foot of trade union representations, to implement a permanent additional public holiday, but notes that Ireland still lags behind other advanced European economies in this regard.

Conference therefore calls on the union's National Executive Committee and senior officials to continue to work for a steady and managed transition to a shorter working week for all employees in the private, public and community sectors, and to include in this work the short-term goals of:

1. Continuing to increase the number of public holidays from Ireland's internationally-low number of nine;
2. Securing four-day week pilots in appropriate public and private/commercial employments;
3. Developing, promoting and negotiating the implementation of remote-working and other arrangements that can improve work-time flexibility to the benefit of workers, employers and the economy;
4. Developing and promoting mechanisms for work-time flexibility for workers approaching retirement, in light of increased life expectancy and other demographic trends.

*The introduction of the February public holiday has increased the number of public holidays in Ireland to ten, however this is still below the EU average of twelve. The NEC is in full support of ICTU's calls to introduce a further two public holidays to bring Ireland in line with the EU average and continues to lobby for same.*



*The Campaigns Unit continues to work towards the introduction of a four day week for all workers. This work includes a general election campaign supporting the establishment of public and private sector trials, a survey and subsequent analysis in the civil service Revenue branches atypical working and inclusion of this topic in the Local Government and Local Services division survey of workplace attitudes to the four-day week, scheduling political party meetings in support of the four-day week and the development of a model policy for a four-day week pilot programme.*

## Motion 39 – Central Statistics Office Executive Grades

That this Conference calls on the incoming Fórsa National Executive Committee to seek changes in the starting hours of remote working time only from the current standard start time of 8.00am to an earlier starting time of 7.00am. This would provide more choice to many of our members and offer a better work/life balance to a cohort of our members which has grown since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for consideration and potential action. The civil service division decided to seek further clarification from the branch on the mandatory nature of the change to the starting time prescribed in the motion.*

## Annual leave

### Motion 40 – National Education and Training Board

This Conference calls on the NEC to seek parity for all new entrants and align annual leave entitlements to those of their colleagues.

*This motion was referred to the Equivalent Grades Committees for inclusion in its current work programme.*

### Motion 41 – Kildare Local Government

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to seek to have the current sick pay scheme reviewed and the terms prior to 2014 reinstated to allow for greater compassion for those on sick leave.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It was not possible to make progress on the issue during the public service pay discussions. However, now that the public service pay talks have concluded a formal review has been requested of the application of both Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) and Critical Illness Protocol (CIP). The requested review will also consider the effect of the reduced availability of sick leave on workers.*

## Motion 45 – Sligo Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on the incoming executive to ensure that a revised streamlined process is put in place across the public service for dealing with TRR and injury at work claims. And that the practice which appears to be creeping in across certain sections of the public service of requesting members to pay the cost of medical reports for TRR and injury at work is quickly brought to an end.

*Similarly to Motion 44, this motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It was not possible to make progress on the issue during the public service pay discussions. However, now that the public service pay talks have concluded a formal review has been requested of the application of both Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) and Critical Illness Protocol (CIP). The review will also consider the effect of the reduced availability of sick leave on workers.*

## Motion 47 – Waterford Revenue Clerical

Conference calls on the incoming National Executive to request that post-natal depression be recognised as a pregnancy related illness. It is gender-based discrimination for this illness to be used in calculating sick-leave for promotion and sick-pay purposes.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim that post-natal depression be recognised as a pregnancy related illness has been lodged with the General Council.*

## Motion 48 – Dublin Central Revenue Clerical

The Conference calls on the incoming National Executive to ensure that the four-year look back rule for eligibility for promotion is reduced to two years.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim that the four-year look back rule for eligibility for promotion is reduced to two years has been lodged with the General Council.*

## Motion 49 – Clare Civil Service Clerical

This Conference requests the incoming executive to consider the look back for sick leave be reduced to two years instead of the current four years.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim that the four-year look back rule for eligibility for promotion is reduced to two years has been lodged with the General Council.*

## Motion 51 – Dublin Central Revenue Clerical

The Conference calls on the incoming National Executive to ensure that pregnancy-related sick leave is discounted for pay purposes as well as promotional purposes regardless of sick pay limits having being reached, once they are certified as being pregnancy related by a GP/Medical professional.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim was lodged and successfully won with the General Council. We have secured an agreement with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform that will see all maternity-related illness automatically discounted when a person is being considered for promotion. With this now secured in the civil service, the potential for improving pregnancy related sick leave policies in other employments is enhanced.*

## Other

### Motion 52 – Waterford Revenue Clerical

Conference calls on the incoming National Executive Committee to request that DPER introduce a minimum of ten days' paid bereavement leave for all women who experience spontaneous miscarriage or are required to terminate a pregnancy for medical reasons before the 24th week of pregnancy.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A working group of the Civil Service Divisional Executive was established to formulate a claim to give effect to this motion. This claim was lodged at General Council in April 2023.*

### Motion 56 – Cork Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on Fórsa to instigate a campaign to pursue special paid leave, outside the normal sick pay scheme for "living donors."

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim to introduce special paid leave, outside the normal sick pay scheme for "living donors." has been lodged with the General Council.*

## Organising for increased membership density and strength

### Motion 57 – National Executive Committee

This Conference notes that Fórsa's strategic plan, which was ratified at the 2020 national conference, establishes organising as the union's top priority. In order to give effect to this, Conference instructs the National Executive and general secretary to:

1. Ensure that each Fórsa division prioritises organising and recruitment, maps priority areas for action in this regard, and establishes an implantation plan to address the issue methodically;
2. Establish a consistent mechanism for industrial and organising staff to embed and implement organising and recruitment priorities into practical work programmes, and to account for their activities in this regard;
3. Conduct a phased audit of union organising activity at branch and divisional level;
4. Ask the union's strategic organising unit to investigate the potential for establishing organising champions at divisional level;
5. Establish mechanisms for tracking the union's recruitment, organising and leadership-building activities;
6. Continue to develop mapping, organising and leadership-development capacity at branch level;
7. Establish a membership retention policy, including at the point of members' promotion and retirement; and
8. Promote the development of strategic organising plans at divisional, branch and workplace levels.

*Organising has become the union's key priority and the Strategic Plan target of 100k members has been broken down by division and yearly net targets set. All-staff briefings have been held to contextualise this priority initiative and requirement. The centrality of organising has been the core message delivered at various union fora and to staff groups beyond those engaged in industrial relations work. Each division has developed their own strategy to engage with the objectives of the plan.*

*Our ability to consistently track and analyse organising progress and membership retention has been enhanced by the implementation of the Solas membership database and the creation of a new Director of Membership position. New member reports are now compiled and circulated weekly and detailed presentations are regularly provided to DEC's, the NEC and Consultative Councils.*

*There are 50,000 workers in grades and employments where Fórsa organises who have yet to get organised. To reach them, we have we have developed a methodical, structured organising model which aims for high worker participation. Understanding how to convince workers to build their power in their workplace relies on tried and tested techniques which focus on how we identify new workplace leaders, the words we use, understanding where our power lies and how to build more power, so workers win. Leader identification, language, structured organising conversations, charting and structure tests are all part of the methodology which has been developed and this bespoke methodology will be available for branches to avail of.*

## Motion 58 - Boards and Voluntary Agencies

Conference commends the success of the Boards and Voluntary Agencies and Dublin Care Services branches in their endeavours to implement the provisions of the national strategic plan and develop their capacity for autonomously organising their membership. Conference notes the successes of the branches in their recruitment of new members and retention of serving members, by:

- Expanding collective bargaining coverage
- Securing pay rises for members not covered by national agreements
- Defending and extending workplace pension provision, and
- Delivering high-quality and consistent member care.

Conference asserts that when members pay subscriptions to the union, they are entitled to expect branches will spend money on activities that will improve their lives at work.

Conference calls on the national executive to urgently establish arrangements to support branches that invest in branch development and organising their members by:

- Regularising arrangements to secure the release of branch officers from their substantive employment to conduct branch business
- Incentivising branches to invest in initiatives that improve our capacity to deliver for members through organising, collective bargaining or which enhance the quality of our member care; and,
- Establishing arrangements to discourage branches from the retrenchment of expenditure that might otherwise positively contribute to implementing objectives contained within the national strategic plan.

Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to prioritise the implementation of protocols that affect the actions listed above.

*The Strategic Change Team as part of their work on the Branch Supports Project are, in conjunction with the six pilot branches, developing and testing the protocols to give effect to this motion. This includes meeting bi-monthly with activists from the pilot branches to develop concrete branch supports to assist in increasing branch activism and density across the union. These include the Workplace Rep Charter, a Branch Capacity Building guide and a Branch AGM toolkit. Currently in development are a toolkit for producing Branch Newsletters, structured branch incentives around increasing branch density and identifying and securing workplace leaders and reps.*

# Domestic abuse and gender-based violence

## Motion 60 - National Executive Committee

Conference notes that the Programme for Government conceded that Ireland is experiencing an epidemic of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and that this was exacerbated during the pandemic when many victims were unable to escape their perpetrators. Yet the Government's February announcement of legislative proposals for the establishment of a statutory entitlement to paid domestic violence leave has not progressed.

Conference believes that Ireland is failing to provide a safe place for victims of domestic and gender-based violence and believe that such abuse should not be tolerated in our society. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive to:

- Actively campaign with other stakeholders to ensure that the Government moves quickly to legislate to provide an effective statutory entitlement to paid leave for victims of domestic violence;
- Encourage Fórsa divisions to raise the issue of workplace supports for victims and survivors of domestic violence with employers in their sectors; and
- Investigate the potential of extending the union's counselling service to include a dedicated confidential service for victims of domestic abuse and gender-based violence.

*Post 2022 Biennial Conference, and in order to give the strongest possible support to this motion and others related to domestic violence, the NEC prioritised having the issue of domestic violence leave be placed on the industrial agenda across all divisions. In September 2022, Fórsa welcomed a government commitment to introduce paid leave for survivors of domestic violence under the new Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2022. The union also met with Women's Aid to discuss the need for the introduction of a workplace policy to include supports and ten days fully paid domestic violence leave, as is best practice. The issue of the development of an awareness campaign was also discussed. Women's Aid provided Fórsa with templates for best practice, highlighted examples of employers who were leaders on this front and agreed to provide training and guidance as we needed. They also highlighted the need for Fórsa to develop policies internally for staff. In October 2022, Fórsa conducted a cross-divisional membership survey to garner a better understanding of domestic abuse amongst our membership. The study set out to establish attitudes towards domestic violence and evaluate supports available in workplaces. The Communications Unit developed this survey in consultation with Women's Aid.*

*The results of this survey were presented at the 2022 Equality Network Seminar that took place in November that year. At this time, Government had committed to enacting a policy under the Work Life Balance Bill, but the duration and rate of pay was still being discussed. Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD attended the seminar and gave an address to our members on the matter. Fórsa called on the Minister to enact ten days fully paid leave under the new legislation, alongside the development of workplace supports and an awareness campaign and called on employers to develop policies.*

*In March 2023, Fórsa wrote to Minister Roderic O'Gorman, criticising the failure to legislate to ensure that domestic and gender-based violence leave be paid at the full rate of pay. Fórsa expressed the union's 'grave concerns' on the proposed rate of pay allocated for domestic violence leave, under the provisions of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (2022). At that time, the Bill proposed a sick leave rate, which capped payment at 70% of salary, or €110 per day. Due to the intervention of Fórsa and other stakeholders, this was increased to the worker's normal daily rate of pay. However, the number of days remained at five. Thus, in April and May 2023 motions were brought to each divisional conference calling for ten days paid domestic violence leave. In September 2023, the Civil Service formally adopted a domestic violence policy.*

*On 27th November 2023, domestic violence leave was formally brought into law. While Fórsa welcomed this, the union expressed disappointment at the five-day limit. The union has committed to continue to work with other unions and to collectively bargain to provide for ten days paid leave in line with best practice.*

## Motion 61 – Community Employment Supervisors

That this Conference welcomes the proposed amendment to the Organisation of Working Time Act to provide for Domestic Violence Leave. We call on the union to keep pressure on the Government to have this important legislation enacted as quickly as possible.

*Please see the report on Motion 60 above.*

## Motion 62 – Boards and Voluntary Agencies

Conference notes the significant personal and professional costs endured by workers suffering domestic violence or abuse. Conference asserts that employers have a social responsibility to support workers who disclose suffering domestic violence or abuse.

Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to:

- Develop a model policy dealing with workers' rights in domestic violence situations
- Direct union negotiators to prioritise the implementation of that policy nationally in negotiations with employers and
- Establish training for lay officers and full-time officials to enhance the union's capacity to support members experiencing domestic violence or abuse.

*The Director of Membership Training and Development is developing a co-ordinated approach with the Director of HR and Staff Development in relation to the training required to give effect to Motion 62. This will include input and guidance from Women's Aid on the appropriate pathways for both members, reps and staff to understand the issues and referral processes. There is a Live Lunch and Learn on the topic, scheduled to take place on Friday 31st May 1-2pm. Following that, a further meeting will take place between Fórsa and Women's Aid to examine the range of staff training and identify some workshops for branch officers and workplace representatives.*

## Motion 64 – SNAs North Dublin/North Leinster

We call on Fórsa to promote the work of domestic violence charities and to secure access to domestic violence leave for its members. It is unacceptable for members experiencing domestic violence to have to resort to sick leave in such situations when this is not the case. Domestic violence leave would make a huge difference to those already in hardship but would be of minimal cost to the employers.

*Please see the report on Motion 60 above.*

## Motion 65 – Kildare Health

Conference calls on the NEC to involve the union in practical measures at grassroots level to help tackle the issue of gender-based violence in Irish society. Fórsa should investigate opportunities to collaborate with, and support, organisations working in communities to improve understanding of the root causes of gender-based violence and encourage attitude and behavioural changes.

*Please see the report on Motion 61 above.*

# Health and safety

## Motion 66 - Leitrim Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls upon the union to set up a dedicated bullying and harassment conference for its members nationally taking into account its prevalence across all sectors, and which has caused immense mental anguish to our members. There is evidence available to note the international experts on workplace bullying have indicated in principle their availability to be invited to provide this specialist training to union personnel, which they have already carried out for unions in other EU countries (Nordic specialists in particular). They have also referenced the role of the new EU Directive on Protected Disclosures, as many members suffer repercussions also for being 'Whistle-blowers' and are often subjected to workplace bullying and intimidation.

*This motion directly led to the decision by the NEC to hold a major seminar on 'Your Right to Dignity in the Workplace' on 16th November 2023. The seminar followed a large-scale consultation of members on this topic. Almost 5,000 members took part in the survey, with over 68% of members surveyed indicating that they had personally experienced workplace bullying. The results of the survey informed the discussions at the seminar, which provided members with a valuable opportunity to exchange on this vital topic. After hearing from a panel discussion, participants joined working groups which looked at how to better address workplace bullying and harassment in health and safety policy.*

## Motion 67 - Cork Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on Fórsa to campaign actively for the Workplace Ventilation Bill 2021 to be passed into law as soon as possible. The bill seeks to give workers the 'right to clean air' by imposing minimum ventilation standards in workplaces based on CO2 levels. It effectively creates minimum fresh air standards and would give employees the ability to request health and safety inspections. The Bill defines clean air as having fewer than 700ppm of CO2 and puts the onus on employers to achieve that by whatever means possible and/or to install HEPA air filtration. Employers would still also be subject to existing health and safety laws on minimum standards of heating for a comfortable workplace. The Bill also empowers the Health and Safety Authority to measure clean air in the workplace and to issue improvement or prohibition notices as appropriate, similar to what happens to restaurants that breach food safety rules.

It empowers workers to request that the HSA carry out an inspection of the air in their workplaces. This aims to address a major flaw in existing health and safety legislation, that it is solely up to the HSA which workplaces it chooses to inspect. This Bill is currently at committee, second stage in the legislative process. However, we simply can't let this Bill sit on a shelf gathering dust. It must be progressed and implemented rapidly. We can't and will not be able to get on top of this pandemic, without urgent action to make sure that schools and workplaces are properly ventilated.

People Before Profit, who are proposing the Bill, have welcomed the news that the Government will not oppose it. However, they are calling on the Government to fast track the bill and legislate for a right to clean air in workplaces.

It is vital that Fórsa comes out strongly in favour of the fast tracking of this bill. The right to clean air in the workplace is a central concern of Fórsa members. Employers must provide safe workplaces and Fórsa can lead the campaign.

*At the time of writing this report, the Workplace Ventilation Bill 2021 remains before Dáil Éireann and has not progressed beyond the third stage. Fórsa continues to work with ICTU in relation to the Bill, where we have repeatedly argued that enhanced regulation is required to ensure the proper and adequate ventilation of all workplaces. Fórsa has also used the appropriate fora with the HSA to ensure that all queries and concerns for Fórsa members have been addressed in the interim.*

## Motion 69 – Revenue Executive Grades

Purchasing 'full-service years' is prohibitively expensive for many members, especially female members and lower grades who use non-pensionable 'family friendly' schemes such as career breaks/shorter working years/work sharing patterns. This Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to investigate a facility for pension schemes which allows members to contribute, and/or purchase service for, the pension pay only, and not contribute to the shortfall in the lump sum payment (the lump sum portion of buying service accounts for the huge cost required).

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The issue has been raised at General Council.*

## Motion 70 – Revenue Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee and relevant full-time officials to seek work-sharer pension entitlements. The majority of people that avail of work-sharing do so for caring purposes, either to care for children or elderly parents. This time is not recognised for pension purposes which results in very poor pension entitlements. We were asking that time taken off work-sharing to care for family be recognised for pension purposes.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The issue has been raised at General Council.*

## Motion 71 – Boards and Voluntary Agencies

Conference recognises the successful industrial strategy adopted by the Irish Youth Justice Branch in their campaign to secure a normal retirement age of 55 for residential social care workers in Oberstown. Conference asserts that pension provision is a core component of compensation for the Irish workforce and condemns the Irish Government for their continued failure to introduce a statutory entitlement to workplace pension provision. Conference notes the lack of pension coverage for workers in Section 39 funded agencies and thousands of Fórsa members and potential members. Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to:

- Map workplace pension provision for Fórsa members
- Take strategic, collective action to expand the coverage of workplace pension provision
- Prioritise improvements to the present public sector pension scheme in prospective public sector pay settlements, and
- Campaign for the right to choose to retire at 60, without actuarial reduction in entitlements, for workers throughout the public sector and state-funded agencies.

*The General Secretary requested that all Heads of Divisions carry out a mapping exercise to establish pension coverage in their respective divisions, and to consider taking collective action should it be deemed appropriate in the pursuit of the expansion of workplace pension provisions. The elements of the motion that seek to achieve improvements in the present public sector pension scheme were referred to the civil service division for possible action. It is currently being considered by the Civil Service Divisional Executive and a claim may be lodged with the General Council. The issue could also be raised with DPENDPDR (formally DPER) as a matter of public policy, but resistance can be expected.*



## Motion 72 - FGE

That this Conference calls on the NEC to act to address the reality of pension poverty of low-paid public servants, in particular, those established public servants employed prior to 1995, who have no access to the state pension and are at a chronic disadvantage in comparison to their peers.

*Similar to the approach taken by the NEC to Motion 71, the motion was referred to the civil service division for possible action. It is currently being considered by the Civil Service Divisional Executive and a claim may be lodged with the General Council. The issue could also be raised with DPENDPDR as a matter of public policy, but resistance can be expected.*

## Rules and related

### Motion 75 - National Executive Committee

Rule 41: In order to comply with the Trade Union Acts as required by the Registrar of Friendly Societies this Conference agrees to adopt a new sub clause, Rule 41 (iii) – Alteration of Rules to read:

- (iii) ‘These Rules are subject to the Trade Unions Acts of the State, as amended from time to time. Any changes to the Rules of Fórsa must be notified to and registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies following ratification by a duly convened National Conference.’

*As per the decision of Conference Rule 41 was duly amended. The amended and updated Rule Book was uploaded to the Fórsa website in July 2022 and hard copies of the amended and updated Rule Book were printed for circulation in August 2022.*

### Motion 76 - National Executive Committee

Amendment to Rule 26 (xii) – Strikes and industrial action: Conference notes the impact of the Covid restrictions on the ability of Fórsa to carry out membership ballots at workplace, branch and national levels in the last two years. Conference further notes that in these exceptional circumstances and following legal advice, an interim amendment to Rule 26 (xii), which provided for the option of electronic ballots until the union’s 2022 national conference was adopted by decision of the NEC.

Conference recognises that the option of holding electronic ballots should continue to be available to Fórsa and therefore agrees to amend Rule 26 (xii) instructs the NEC and the general secretary to amend Rule 26 (xii) as follows:

In the last sentence delete: “Until the end of Conference 2022...”

The current text as amended by the NEC and registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies reads:

“The ballot papers for a strike or other industrial action ballot may be issued to the appropriate members by post to members’ home or work addresses or may be distributed in the workplace or at meetings called in connection with or to consider the proposed strike or other industrial action. Members may return the completed ballot papers to the union’s registered office or to the appropriate union branch by post or may place the completed ballot papers in secure ballot boxes in the workplace or at the meetings of members called in connection with the dispute. Until the end of Conference 2022, in the alternative or in addition to the above arrangements, a ballot may be conducted by secure electronic means.”

The amended text of Rule 26 (xii) to read:

“The ballot papers for a strike or other industrial action ballot may be issued to the appropriate members by post to members’ home or work addresses or may be distributed in the workplace or at meetings called in connection with or to consider the proposed strike or other industrial action. Members may return the completed ballot papers to the union’s registered office or to the appropriate union branch by post or may place the completed ballot papers in secure ballot boxes in the workplace or at the meetings of members called in connection with the dispute. In the alternative or in addition to the above arrangements, a ballot may be conducted by secure electronic means.”

*As per the decision of Conference, Rule 26 was duly amended. The amended and updated Rule Book was uploaded to the Fórsa website in July 2022 and hard copies of the amended and updated Rule Book were printed for circulation in August 2022.*

## Union finances

### Motion 77 - National Executive Committee

That this Conference appoints Mary McPartlan, Gerry Monaghan and Tara Robertson as union trustees from the close of this 2022 National Conference until the close of Conference 2024 and appoints the following to the panel provided for in Rule 32 (iii); Gina O'Brien, Paul Carey, and Pierce Dillon.

*As per the decision of Conference, adopted motion 77 was actioned in May 2022.*

## Other internal matters

### Motion 78 - Dublin City - Local Government

That this Conference call on Fórsa to review the current mileage rate of €0.38 paid to delegates/volunteers when travelling in respect of union business in light of the increase in costs/inflation.

*As per the decision of Conference, adopted motion 78 was actioned. The relevant circular and updated new forms have been issued and are in use since November 2022.*

### Motion 80 A - Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to fully review the current honoraria structure that is in place for officers of branch executives. The maximum gross honoraria payable per annum/by branch has not been increased since 2013. However, subscriptions income and cost of living has gone up.

*The NEC is currently reviewing arrangements for honoraria. This review is being carried out in the context of the recent changes to taxation policy whereby the amount that can be given in gift vouchers without incurring a tax liability has increased from five hundred euro to one thousand euro. The NEC is considering the implications of this change on the current honoraria structure.*

# Motions not requiring a decision unless opposed

## Motion 81 – Sligo Health and Local Government

That this Conference instructs the incoming executive to ensure that all future end of year fillable pdf branch return forms include calculated fields in the following sections. Section 1 (i), 2 (n), 3, 16, 17.

*The NEC has requested that the Accounts Section take appropriate steps to give effect to this motion.*

## Motion 82 – SNA South Dublin South Leinster

That this Conference mandates to ensure any employees that are front line staff be afforded the opportunity to avail freely of Hep, flu and tetanus vacancies should they need or want them.

*The NEC notes that this has been the policy of Fórsa since a similar motion from the SNA South Dublin South Leinster was adopted in 2018. The NEC has not been able to make progress on this motion, in part due to a worldwide shortage of some vaccines. However, it remains a live issue and will continue to be pursued.*

## Motion 83 – Kildare Health

Conference requests that the NEC provide branches with support and information regarding options for branch expenditure on behalf of members. There are currently a wide variety of interpretations as to what Branch finances should be used for and a tendency to save and invest funds. Fórsa should produce a resource advising of a range of initiatives available to branches to further member needs in their areas. Content should include information on potential activities, their approximate costs and the benefits for members. Areas of focus should include organising, industrial relations support, campaigns, training and other measures employed to achieve the objectives set out in Fórsa's strategic plan.

*The Strategic Change Team as part of their work on the Branch Supports Project are, in conjunction with the six pilot branches, developing and testing the protocols to give effect to this motion. This includes meeting bi-monthly with activists from the pilot branches to develop concrete branch supports to assist in increasing branch activism and density across the union. These include the Workplace Rep Charter, a Branch Capacity Building guide and a Branch AGM toolkit. Currently in development are a toolkit for producing Branch Newsletters, structured branch incentives around increasing branch density and identifying and securing workplace leaders and reps.*

## Motion 84 – Dun Laoghaire Rathdown

That this Conference notes that many of our members experience difficulties during their working lives as a result of menstruation and menopause. This Conference notes the stigma that continues to exist around these issues.

This Conference agrees that access to remote working brought some relief to many of our members when faced with difficult periods, menstrual health conditions and the effects of menopause. This Conference agrees that flexible working arrangements can form part of period and menopause-friendly policies.

This Conference agrees that employers must do more to address issues around menstrual health and menopause, and agrees that the NEC, working with Fórsa's Equality Committee and the ICTU, will consider the best way to progress this.

*Following the adoption of this motion, Fórsa established a campaign in late 2022 to further menopause and menstrual policies in the workplaces, and all Fórsa divisions committed to placing them on the industrial agenda. In June 2023, the #StopTheStigma campaign was formally launched. Under this umbrella Fórsa provided sample policies and educational*

materials to workplaces and employers on what menstrual and menopausal workplace-friendly policies should contain. The campaign saw Fórsa partner with a coalition of trade unions to develop policy and build an awareness campaign around menstrual and menopause workplace policies. The menopause and menstrual hub was launched on the Fórsa website. This was followed, in September 2023, by a Fórsa's Skills Academy Lunch & Learn for members on menopause health. On October 24th, 2023, the Stop the Stigma coalition launched its policy paper "Menstruation and Menopause: Workplace Policy Reform for a Modern Labour Force – A Trade Union Led Initiative" at the Oireachtas. Also, in October 2023 Fórsa welcomed the Department of Public Expenditure's Menopause Policy framework which mandates all civil service organisations to implement a menopause policy by early 2024. Furthermore, as part of the work by the NEC to give effect to this motion, Fórsa representatives met with Minister Roderic O'Gorman TD to discuss the union's campaign and survey, and he expressed his intention to commission research in a bid to "make the workplace a better place for those who are experiencing menopause or experiencing significant menstrual symptoms." The Minister has also publicly credited Fórsa for its work in this area.

## Motion 85 – Higher Education

That this Conference calls on the NEC to seek additional supports for employees with elder care responsibilities similar to the extended non-paid parental leave.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The Civil Service Divisional Executive is considering how best to advance this motion and may lodge a claim with the General Council.*

## Motion 85 A – Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to support parental leave schemes applying to all children (under 18) and not just younger children in its application.

*The NEC decided, in the first instance, that the objective of this motion should be pursued by the civil service division. The civil service division brought the matter to General Council. In 2023, Government decided to set the maximum age of the child in respect of whom employees may take parental leave at sixteen years in all cases, including for parents of children with a disability or long-term illness and in the case of adoption. While this is an improvement on the previous maximum age of 13, Fórsa will continue to campaign for the maximum age to be increased to 18.*

## Motion 86 – Higher Education

That this Conference calls on the NEC to address the negative effect that long Covid illness will have on paid sick leave entitlement and loss of earning going forward.

*The NEC decided that in the first instance the issues relating to Long Covid should continue to be pursued by the Health Division. At the time of writing this report, Fórsa's Health Division, alongside the other ICTU health unions are currently engaged in a conciliation process with representatives from the HSE, the Department of Health and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform under the auspices of the WRC. Once this process is concluded, the NEC will reflect on the outcome and consider the next steps for all other Fórsa divisions.*

## Motion 87 – Higher Education

That this Conference calls on the NEC to pursue the development of a domestic violence leave policy for all staff across the civil and public sector.

*Please refer to the report on Motion 60.*

## Motion 88 – Higher Education

That this Conference calls on the NEC to seek changes to the maternity ante-natal legislation by requesting that the term “father/partner” be changed to “birthing partner” in legislation and policies relating to maternity care and leave, as a woman has a right to choose a birthing partner.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The civil service division considered the motion and length and felt it was prudent to await the outcome of referenda that were carried out in March 2024. Now that the result of both referenda are known the Civil Service Divisional Executive is considering how best to give effect to this motion.*

## Motion 89 – Higher Education

That this Conference calls on the NEC to pursue an amendment to the career break circular by extending career break opportunities for all staff in the civil and public service to reflect the fact that the age of retirement has been increased to age 70.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim to pursue an amendment to the career break circular by extending career break opportunities for all staff in the civil and public service to reflect the fact that the age of retirement has been increased to age 70 has been lodged with the General Council.*

## Motion 90 – Higher Education

Conference calls on the NEC to pursue the introduction of a menopause policy to educate staff and support women to work safely through the menopause.

*Following the adoption of this motion, Fórsa established a campaign in late 2022 to further menopause and menstrual policies in the workplaces, and all Fórsa divisions committed to placing them on the industrial agenda. In June 2023, the #StopTheStigma campaign was formally launched. Under this umbrella Fórsa provided sample policies and educational materials to workplaces and employers on what menstrual and menopausal workplace-friendly policies should contain. The campaign saw Fórsa partner with a coalition of trade unions to develop policy and build an awareness campaign around menstrual and menopause workplace policies. The menopause and menstrual hub was launched on the Fórsa website. This was followed, in September 2023, by a Fórsa’s Skills Academy Lunch & Learn for members on menopause health. On October 24th 2023, the Stop the Stigma coalition launched its policy paper “Menstruation and Menopause: Workplace Policy Reform for a Modern Labour Force – A Trade Union Led Initiative” at the Oireachtas. Also, in October 2023 Fórsa welcomed the Department of Public Expenditure’s Menopause Policy framework which mandates all civil service organisations to implement a menopause policy by early 2024. Furthermore, as part of the work by the NEC to give effect to this motion, Fórsa representatives met with Minister Roderic O’Gorman TD to discuss the union’s campaign and survey, and he expressed his intention to commission research in a bid to “make the workplace a better place for those who are experiencing menopause or experiencing significant menstrual symptoms.” The Minister has also publicly credited Fórsa for its work in this area.*

## Motion 91 – Injuries Board Executive Grades

That this Conference calls on the NEC to promote a policy of digital decentralisation, where appropriate, via remote working, within both the public and private sector.

The success of remote working during the pandemic, together with the continued roll out of the National Broadband Plan and Government investment in remote hubs, offers an unprecedented opportunity to revolutionise the way we work in this country and potentially revitalise rural communities. This, in turn, will relieve pressure on our urban centres, decrease our carbon footprint, via reduced commutes, and assist greatly in tackling the ongoing housing crisis.

The only way to achieve this goal will be access to full time remote working for those in suitable roles. This could greatly enhance the quality of life of those employees with disabilities or caring responsibilities towards young children or elderly or disabled relatives. It would also benefit those who wish to live in regions of the country far removed from their office locations whilst remaining in their current roles.

Fórsa could seek to work in partnership with the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Western Development Commission and any other relevant bodies in this regard. Fórsa can be at the forefront of these developments and help set the standards for remote working protocols going forward.

*The NEC decided that the best course of action to give effect to this motion lay, in the first instance, in contributing to the efforts of ICTU to develop its Just Transition Strategy. Now that this has been established, it is timely for the NEC to look at setting up a Fórsa Climate Change working group who will be tasked with considering how best to implement this motion.*

## Motion 92 – Dublin South Health and Welfare

That this Conference calls on the NEC to call for an end of gender-based violence in Ireland.

*Please refer to the report on Motion 60.*

## Motion 93 – Legal Professional

That this Conference instructs Fórsa to campaign for all employers to adopt a health and safety and wellbeing policy in their workplace that requires them to engage appropriate professionals to risk assess both the physical and psychological risks to workers in the workplace from burnout, and where relevant secondary trauma. Employers will properly resource such areas.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A claim in relation to this motion is being prepared for lodgement with the General Council.*

## Motion 94 – Legal Professional

That this Conference instructs Fórsa to campaign for all employers to adopt a menopause policy in their workplace that requires them to put in place steps to aid workers who are suffering from the debilitating effects of the menopause.

*Following the adoption of this motion, Fórsa established a campaign in late 2022 to further menopause and menstrual policies in the workplaces, and all Fórsa divisions committed to placing them on the industrial agenda. In June 2023, the #StopTheStigma campaign was formally launched. Under this umbrella Fórsa provided sample policies and educational materials to workplaces and employers on what menstrual and menopausal workplace-friendly policies should contain. The campaign saw Fórsa partner with a coalition of trade unions to develop policy and build an awareness campaign around menstrual and menopause workplace policies. The menopause and menstrual hub was launched on the Fórsa website. This was followed, in September 2023, by a Fórsa's Skills Academy Lunch & Learn for members on menopause health. On October 24th, 2023, the Stop the Stigma coalition launched its policy*

*paper "Menstruation and Menopause: Workplace Policy Reform for a Modern Labour Force - A Trade Union Led Initiative" at the Oireachtas. Also, in October 2023 Fórsa welcomed the Department of Public Expenditure's Menopause Policy framework which mandates all civil service organisations to implement a menopause policy by early 2024. Furthermore, as part of the work by the NEC to give effect to this motion, Fórsa representatives met with Minister Roderic O'Gorman TD to discuss the union's campaign and survey, and he expressed his intention to commission research in a bid to "make the workplace a better place for those who are experiencing menopause or experiencing significant menstrual symptoms." The Minister has also publicly credited Fórsa for its work in this area.*

## Motion 95 - Boards and Voluntary Agencies

Conference expresses solidarity with international affiliates in island nations including New Zealand, Vietnam, Cuba, and Australia in their endeavours to prioritise the interests of public health in the context of the pandemic. Conference notes the success of the governing administrations of these island nations in combatting Covid-19. Conference applauds the government's Shared Island initiative which aims to harness the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding on the island and engage with all communities and traditions to build consensus around a shared future.

Within the framework of all-island initiatives, conference calls on the National Executive Committee to:

- Collaborate with sister unions across the island of Ireland to develop a shared policy platform to address emergent threats to public health
- Campaign for an all-island approach to public health, and
- Advocate for workers' rights in discourse about the future of public health throughout the island.

Conference directs the National Executive Committee to report on the relevant activities at the 2024 National Conference.

*In January 2024, Fórsa and UNISON co-hosted a conference examining The State of Healthcare on the Island of Ireland. Supported by the Shared Island Unit of the Department of the Taoiseach, the event saw experts from both north and south of the border discuss the often-common issues facing both services, and the opportunities presented by North-South cooperation for building services for members, communities, and the public.*

## Motion 96 - Boards and Voluntary Agencies

Conference recognises the importance of foster care provision in looking after and assuring kinship for some of Irish society's most vulnerable young people. Conference notes that foster carers are accountable to the State in discharging their duty of care. However, foster carers do not benefit from many of the statutory entitlements available to other workers and remain unorganised and without a trade union. Foster carers work 365 days a year.

Conference notes that foster carers are not organised by any trade union and acknowledges the efforts of the Boards and Voluntary Agencies Branch in tackling the injustice experienced by foster carers in discharging their obligations to the State. Conference further notes that, as the union for everyone, we should seek to recruit these unorganised workers.

Conference calls on the national executive committee to take immediate steps to:

- Agree to interim arrangements which authorise the Boards and Voluntary Agencies branch to accept foster carers into a special category of union membership, to be agreed upon between the branch and national officers, and to start the process of organising foster carers into branch membership
- Conduct research on the potential to establish an employment relationship between foster carers and the State, acknowledging international models of foster care provision, and
- Publicly advocate on behalf of foster carers and provide a voice for their profession.

Conference also calls on the National Executive to engage with stakeholders about a pathway to a prospective rule-change that might enable foster carers to join the union as full-members by 2025 and to report to the 2024 National Conference about progress towards this goal.

*Following examination, it was found that foster carers did not meet the requirements for union membership and thus could not be accepted into membership by Fórsa. Notwithstanding this, it was agreed to provide support where possible to Foster Care Ireland as they continue to advocate on behalf of foster carers.*

## Motion 97 – Civil Service No.1

Conference calls on the NEC to lead by example in promoting the three R's (reuse, recycle, reduce). Examples at this Conference:

- Reuse lanyard neck straps and ID badges
- Facilitate the recycling of all Conference material by providing on-site shredding facilities
- Reduce waste creation by avoiding single use items like coffee cups and plastic water containers where possible.

*In line with the union's Strategic Plan there is now a greater awareness of the need to reduce our carbon footprint and live up to our public position on a Just Transition. The University of Freiburg has calculated that each event participant generates an average of 0.5 to 1.5 tonnes CO2 equivalents in a three day conference. On average, events create 2.5 pounds of landfill bound waste, per person, per day.*

*The core Conference Team are therefore aiming to minimise our environmental impact by:*

*Conserving Resources – using energy efficient equipment and maximising accessibility*

*Reducing Waste – using compostable materials, such as events signage and packaging where possible*

*Managing carbon emissions – seeking to neutralise the event's carbon footprint*

*Partnering with responsible supply chain – working with suppliers and sponsors with shared values to create a stronger environmental impact.*

## Motion 98 – An Post

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to support the National Homelessness and Housing Action Coalition (NHHAC) campaign. This Executive should endorse and support any peaceful demonstrations supported by the NHHAC. This motion also requests our members support NHHAC campaigns as we continue to strive to reverse the worsening housing/homelessness national crisis.

*Both Fórsa and the National Homelessness and Housing Action Coalition are supporters of the trade union-led campaign network, Raise the Roof, which comprises a wide range of civil society bodies and political parties working for a radical change of housing policy to ensure the delivery of secure affordable homes for all.*



## Motion 99 – SNAs Munster

We remain concerned at the lack of support for young people experiencing mental health issues. In the current environment it has become ever more apparent that what limited recourses that have been available in the past are not at a level that is meeting the significant needs of our young people today. We are asking Fórsa to engage with the Government and pro-actively seek to invest heavily in this sector as a matter of urgency. Incentives should be sought that will motivate people to seek the necessary qualifications to work in this area.

*In October 2022, Fórsa appeared before the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to demand that Special Needs Assistants should have access to appropriate training and supports, to enable them to support the mental health needs of the students they work with. The health and welfare division also continues to lobby for increased investment in the area of Child & Adolescent Mental Health.*

## Motion 100 – Eir Clerical

Conference notes the recent appalling attacks on women particularly over the last year. Conference calls on the incoming executive to work with the ICTU to seek to ensure that no woman feels fear in their workplace. The unions should seek to ensure that all employers work in tandem with unions in seeking safe workspaces. We should also seek to influence this debate in wider society.

*Please refer to report on Motion 60.*

## Motion 101 – Eir Executive Grades

Conference calls on the incoming executive to highlight the role Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations TUPE plays in protecting workers rights on transfer from employment to employment. Conference also calls on the incoming executive to seek to improve upon these safeguards as transfers of employments happen on a regular basis.

*The European Communities (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 131 of 2003) apply to any transfer of an undertaking, business or part of a business from one employer to another employer as a result of a legal transfer or merger. The NEC provides support to members comprehended by this legislation through the relevant divisions. For example, when Tech Mahindra lost its contract with Eir and was replaced by a multinational company, Fórsa's Services and Enterprises Division entered into discussions with the new company on Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE). These talks ended with members transferring back to Eir, the majority transferring to the new company and some leaving on incentivised redundancy terms.*

## Motion 102 – Probation Officers

In light of the urgent and immediate need for reform, and adequate resourcing to be undertaken within mental health services, Fórsa will campaign to have these issues addressed as a priority.

*See report on Motion 99.*

## Motion 103 – Leitrim Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on the NEC to seek to have training and awareness offered to its members and members workplaces to increase the inclusion and support of the neurodiverse/autism/ADHD community at work. After listening to the discussion on Live Line on RTÉ Radio 1 on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd February 2022, it was concerning to hear of the difficulties facing this community in the workplace.

*Fórsa's Lunch and Learn has featured neurodiversity as a topic. The Director of Membership Training and Development is in the process of identifying organisations who can run training for members regarding neurodiversity. There is also planned training for the Director and Fórsa tutors to understand how to best to deliver our training programmes to suit participants, both those who are neurodivergent and those who are neurotypical. Separately, the civil service division has exchanged correspondence with DPER on this matter.*

## Motion 104 – Revenue Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to ensure that training requirements for psychometrics, e-tray and other shortlisting training and testing tools to help members get familiar with the technology of new shortlisting processes are made available by management.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division and has been successfully actioned with training available to members.*

## Motion 105 – Revenue Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to seek to have the maximum tax-free daily expense allowance for staff working from home increased to a level commensurate with increases in fuel and energy bills.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. The issue has been raised and discussed at General Council. The civil service division is currently examining the potential and the risks associated with lodging a claim in the context of Section 11 and Section 12 of the Workplace Relations Commissions (WRC) Code of Practice for Employers and Employees Right to Request Flexible Working and Right to Request Remote Working, that deals with set up costs and expenses and tax relief for utilities.*

## Motion 106 – Revenue Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to support 100% redress for those whose homes have been affected by Mica/Pyrite problems.

*The NEC continues to support full redress and has backed calls for full compensation for affected homeowners.*

## Motion 107 – Revenue Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs National Executive Committee to seek a review of the rules for eligibility for children's allowance in Ireland as part of its 2023 budget submission. At present, eligibility for children's allowance ends at the age of 18 regardless of whether the child is in full time education or not. We seek to extend the age eligibility to include the period for which the child remains in full time second level education.

*Budget 2024 introduced the extension of the payment of Child Benefit to anyone who is 18 and in full-time education, or who has a disability, up until their 19th birthday. This came into effect on May 1st 2024.*

## Motion 108 – Clare Civil Service Clerical

This Conference requests the incoming executive to reconsider the demarcation of CO and EO roles in light of continued overlap with work.

*As this matter is particular to the civil service division, the NEC referred the motion to that division for action. The motion is in line with existing civil service division policy. A number of cases have arisen since Conference 2022, and they have been dealt with on a case-by-case basis.*

## Motion 109 – Wexford Health and Local Government

Conference notes the experiences of the Traveller community and the deep-rooted structural inequalities experienced by the Traveller community. Fórsa acknowledges that members of the Traveller community face grave disadvantages in terms of being able to access decent employment opportunities and that unemployment among the Traveller community is on an enormous scale with 80% of the Traveller population unemployed.

Conference calls on the equality committee of Fórsa to explore and to engage directly with senior management in the public and civil service to ensure that all areas of the public and civil service have active employment strategies targeted specifically at the Traveller community. It is well understood that the public and civil service offer decent, permanent, and pensionable employment opportunities and that this best practice in terms of employment should be pursued actively by Fórsa on behalf of a group who experience significant disadvantage.

*The 2021 report, Travellers in the Mainstream Labour Market, states that government departments, local authorities and state agencies are pivotal to efforts to boost employment opportunities for Travellers. This report was welcomed by Fórsa's NEC and the Equality Committee. Furthermore in 2022, the then Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris announced the roll-out of €450,000 in funding to support members of the Traveller community to access apprenticeships. To support the work of the Equality Committee in giving effect to this motion, the Head of the civil service division has written to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science seeking a progress update.*

## Motion 110 – Wexford Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on the incoming National Executive Committee to campaign for the introduction of standardised pension payment dates for our members. A significant number of low paid members, employed in the public sector arbitrarily move from fortnightly salary (26 payments) to a monthly (12 payments) pension on retirement. Standardised weekly pension should be sought to give parity with social welfare pension recipients.

*The National Secretary with delegated responsibility in relation to the coordination of action on Union Conference decisions wrote to the Retired Members Group to ascertain their views in relation to this issue, and with a view to collaboratively developing an appropriate strategy.*

## Motion 111 – Cork General Clerical

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to be a leading voice within the trade union movement in association with ICTU and to work with affiliate unions and other representatives and advocacy organisations to set out a new vision for the role of the Irish state in ensuring the protection and safety of women in our communities. Women need to feel safe in every walk of life and the union movement needs to be involved in the developing of a new approach to achieve this safety for all women on the island of Ireland.

*Please refer to the report on Motion 60.*

## Motion 112 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive of Fórsa to ensure that the employee occupational pensions of Fórsa members are not subject to negative alteration or downward adjustment.

*The Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 contains a commitment that the pay increases would be applied to public service pensions for the duration of the agreement. In the main, this means that pension payments will be adjusted in line with pay adjustments for serving staff. Pensions are adjusted in line with inflation (the Consumer Price Index, or CPI) in the case of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, which applies to all civil and public servants who entered public service employment on or after 1st January 2013. This means that the pensions of members of this scheme are not affected by pay movements, including those in the proposed agreement.*

## Motion 113 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming NEC to protect all public services and public service jobs by not allowing any further outsourcing of jobs or services to the private sector.

*The Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 contains strong protections against outsourcing, consistent with other public sector pay agreements dating back to 2010. All public service bodies are required to engage with unions and representative associations in the development of any service delivery plan and must consult prior to the outsourcing of any service. The new agreement reaffirms the employer’s commitment to the use of direct labour “where consistent with efficient and effective public service delivery.”*

## Motion 114 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive of Fórsa to oppose the dismantling of government services through outsourcing, privatisation, and digitalisation by compulsion of government functions.

*The Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026 contains strong protections against outsourcing, consistent with other public sector pay agreements dating back to 2010. All public service bodies are required to engage with unions and representative associations in the development of any service delivery plan and must consult prior to the outsourcing of any service. The new agreement reaffirms the employer’s commitment to the use of direct labour “where consistent with efficient and effective public service delivery.”*

## Motion 115 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive of Fórsa to campaign for the reintroduction of the tax credit for trade union membership.

*Fórsa is continuing to work with ICTU to achieve this objective. The General Secretary, in his capacity as ICTU President, exchanged correspondence with Minister McGrath on this matter ahead of last year’s budget.*

## Motion 115 A – Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to restore tax credits for union subscriptions.

*Fórsa is continuing to work with ICTU to achieve this objective. The General Secretary, in his capacity as ICTU President, exchanged correspondence with Minister McGrath on this matter ahead of last year’s budget.*

## Motion 116 – DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming National Executive of Fórsa to seek an urgent review of energy policy in Ireland with a view to ensuring that energy is affordable for households.

*The NEC decided that the best course of action to give effect to impacted by Climate Change and the Just Transition lay, in the first instance, in contributing to the efforts of ICTU to develop its Just Transition Strategy. Now that this has been established it is timely for the NEC to look at setting up a Fórsa Climate Change working group who will be tasked with considering how best to implement this motion.*

## Motion 116 A – Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to liaise with the French public sectors' unions to establish terms and conditions in place and to learn and put in practice in an Irish context.

*Fórsa engages with colleagues from across Europe and the world through our active participation in the European Public Service Union (EPSU), the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), and Public Services International (PSI).*

## Motion 116 B – Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to seek to introduce a fully functioning mobility transfer scheme across the public and civil service for all grades, managed by an independent body.

*Exploratory discussions indicated that there was no appetite on behalf of public service employers for such a scheme. It may be possible to revisit in future public service pay talks.*

## Motion 205A – Kerry Health and Local Government

Molann an chomhdhail seo go ndéanfadh Fórsa Stratéis a chur a bhfeidhm chun usáid na Gaeilge agus an dátheangachas a brú ar aghaidh san eagraíocht agus go ndéanfaí tuarascáil agus athbreithniú go rialta ar an dul chun cinn.

That this Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to put a strategy in place for the promotion of Irish and bilingualism throughout the organisation and provide regular reviews and reports on progress.

*Bilingual signage will be used at the 2024 Biennial Delegate Conference. Videos that will be shown at the Biennial Delegate Conference will incorporate the use of Irish. In conjunction with these developments, an ad hoc staff group has commenced work on a draft strategy for consideration by the NEC.*

## Emergency Motions

### Emergency motion 1 - National Executive Committee

#### Ukraine

This conference condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the horrific war that continues as a result of that illegal and unprovoked hostile act, which amounts to an attack on democracy across Europe.

Conference salutes the inspiring determination and bravery of the Ukrainian people in the face of the destruction, injury, hardship, killings and bereavement inflicted on them.

Conference condemns the many war crimes and human rights abuses committed by the invading forces, which include torture, rape and the bombardment of civilians including children.

Conference supports strong and united European and global action against Russia for as long as its illegal invasion continues.

Conference reaffirms its commitment to peace, democracy and national self-determination in Ukraine and elsewhere, and commits to continue working with national and international trade union federations, human rights organisations and NGOs - including representatives of the Ukrainian community in Ireland - to resist this and other attacks on our democracies, and to support a just and peaceful resolution in Ukraine.

Conference salutes the public servants, airport workers, port staff and others who pulled out all the stops to help and welcome refugees from the war, as well as the generous response of Fórsa members and branches to the union's Ukraine appeal.

Conference pledges to continue to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine and surrounding allied countries.

Conference also applauds the State's rapid and welcoming response to the refugee crisis caused by the war and calls on the Government and opposition parties to make this a model for Ireland's future treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers regardless of what country or continent they set out from before they reach our shores.

*The NEC continues to support and express solidarity with the people of Ukraine who have endured over 2 years of illegal war and occupation.*

## Emergency Motion 2 - Cork Health and Local Government

This Conference calls on Fórsa to respond urgently to the failure of the Government to respond to the findings of the Judicial Review that was published on March 11th, 2022. Justice Siobhan Phelan's Judicial Review found that the HSE's Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) and use of a Preliminary Team Assessment (PTA) for the Assessment of Need (AON) process was in breach of the Disability Act and unlawful. The continued failure of the Government to ensure that people with disabilities have access to services that meet their needs is an issue that affects thousands of Irish families.

Unfortunately, the lack of a Government response to the findings of the Judicial Review is in line with a continued failure by the State to deliver quality public services - as outlined in the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRC). The purpose of the UNCRC is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Under international law, Ireland must abide by several legal obligations created by UNCRC and one of its many principles include:

- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Since its launch in 2020, it is estimated that over 10,000 unlawful PTAs were conducted. The completion of these PTAs has not resolved the issue of 34,000 children on waiting lists for assessment and interventions: i.e. psychology, occupational therapy, dietetics, speech and language therapy, social work, etc.

Failure to implement adequate resourcing, has left the most vulnerable waiting too long. Prolonged delays place barriers at every turn, leaving children unable to fulfil their potential. Adherence to the principles of UNCRC is a minimum for a modern Ireland. The passing of this motion is of crucial importance. The issue of unlawful PTAs must be addressed by the Government.

Fórsa must be at the forefront of calls for the issue to be addressed. Furthermore, there must be full implementation and adherence to the principles of the UNCRC. It is time that this objective becomes a core campaign of Fórsa by giving voice to people with disabilities and their families.

*The Fórsa Health & Welfare Division has had significant engagement with the HSE following the High Court ruling setting aside the AON Preliminary Team Assessment. An updated guidance was issued to staff in 2023. This is now under review by the National Clinical Care Programme and Fórsa has a nominated representative on the review group. In addition, concerns from members in relation to the provision of AON and emerging pilots of autism assessments have been raised with the employer. This has been an area of focus in response to the publication of the Roadmap for Children's Disability Services.*

## Emergency Motion 3 - Westmeath Health and Welfare

In light of the sudden and severe increase in fuel prices, the Westmeath Health and Welfare branch directs the NEC to seek the temporary abolition of Band 1 of the Civil Service travel rates so that any travel claims start at Band 2 (i.e. Band 2 rates should be applied from 0-5,500km). Failing this, the Westmeath Health and Welfare branch direct the NEC to seek an alternative solution to alleviate the direct impact of the increase on our valuable public and third-sector members who are required to travel to provide services to the people of Ireland.

*Revised rates for work-related travel and subsistence took effect from 1st September 2022. They include changes to the standard domestic subsistence rates, overnight and day subsistence rates.*

## Emergency Motion 4

This Conference instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to seek that Forsa urgently deal with the instances of outsourcing of the cyber defence and other ICT infrastructure work across the public sector.

For example, and in particular the proposal to outsource two major roles within the HSE to a consultancy company within the last week,

These roles are:

- A Chief Technology Transformation Officer (CTTO) and a Chief Information
- Security Officer (CISO) without adequate consultation with Fórsa.

These actions are intended to build an ICT Service to a level that it will be suitable for outsourcing with a Management Backbone built on private sector consultants to make any take over appealing to the private sector.

If these actions are allowed to succeed without proper controls and sunset clauses being agreed with Forsa, then this model will become a blueprint for outsourcing ICT services across all areas of the public service.

*As a result of this Emergency motion, each Fórsa division increased its vigilance in relation to potential outsourcing initiatives across the public sector. The health and welfare division raised the specific issues in the motion with Health Sector management.*

## Motions remitted

### Motion 15 - Defence Executive Grades

That this Conference requests the National Executive Committee, as a matter of priority, to seek the permanent removal of two extra increment points imposed on post-2011 entrants. It is noted that the Public Service Stability Agreement 2018-2020 only provided for these increment points to be skipped and these increment points remain in place because the relevant FEMPI legislation is still in place.

*Please refer to the report on Motion 1.*

### Motion 18 - DSP Executive Grades

That this Conference instructs the incoming national committee of Fórsa to seek pay increases of at least 5% per annum as part of any extension or successor agreement to the current public sector stability agreement.

*Please refer to the report on Motion 1.*

### Motion 31 - SNA South Dublin South Leinster

To further our support for the boycott divest sanction campaign, Fórsa should fund a delegation visit from Palestinian schools for a speaking tour of union branches also involving other contract and engagement with the wider trade union movement, north and south.

*The NEC decided, due to the practical constraints of the proposal, to work with the branch to prioritise effective ways of advancing the intent behind the motion. In October 2023, the NEC, in response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where almost half the population are children, donated €100,000 to the UNICEF Gaza Crisis Emergency Appeal.*

### Motion 38 A - Limerick Health

That this Conference instructs the NEC to support workers with red circled hours of work prior to implementation of the Haddington Road Agreement (HRA), to be fully restored to those hours when HRA measures are reversed.

*The NEC was unable to make progress on this motion as the independent body report on the HRA hours effectively concluded the issue, and precluded any further negotiations to restore pay and other conditions of employment.*

### Motion 42 - Dublin Central Revenue Clerical

Conference calls on the incoming National Executive Committee to seek to secure to have Saturday/Sunday/public holiday excluded in the calculation of sick leave.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It was not possible to make progress on the issue during the public service pay discussions. However, now that the public service pay talks have concluded, a formal review has been requested of the application of both Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) and Critical Illness Protocol (CIP). The review will also consider the effect of the reduced availability of sick leave on workers.*



## Motion 43 – Probation Officers

That this Conference instructs that Fórsa will seek to commence negotiations on full restoration of sick leave arrangements back to what they were prior to the Croke Park agreement.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It was not possible to make progress on the issue during the public service pay discussions. However, now that the public service pay talks have concluded, a formal review has been requested of the application of both Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) and Critical Illness Protocol (CIP). The review will also consider the effect of the reduced availability of sick leave on workers.*

## Motion 44 – Probation Officers

That this Conference instructs that Fórsa will seek to commence negotiations for the restoration of sick pay to levels that they were prior to the recent economic crash. Restoration will be to the benefit of all workers. However as sick leave often impacts more on women this is also an equality issue and restoration of sick pay entitlements will help to address the gender pay gap.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It was not possible to make progress on the issue during the public service pay discussions. However, now that the public service pay talks have concluded, a formal review has been requested of the application of both Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) and Critical Illness Protocol (CIP). The review will also consider the effect of the reduced availability of sick leave on workers.*

## Motion 46 – Sligo Health and Local Government

That this Conference calls on the incoming executive to work with other unions to ensure that the current sick leave scheme which was implemented under the Public Service Management (Sick Leave) Regulations 2014 is changed to reflect the number of days in the following sections of the Act to 184 days from the current 92 days in Section 3 and 4 of the regulations/Act.

- (3) Subject to paragraph (4), sick leave remuneration at the half rate may be paid in respect of any period of sick leave, in the 12 month reference period, following on, or occurring after, the period of 92 days sick leave referred to in paragraph (2).
- (4) Payment of sick leave remuneration at the half rate shall be limited to 91 days of sick leave.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It was not possible to make progress on the issue during the public service pay discussions. However, now that the public service pay talks have concluded, a formal review has been requested of the application of both Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) and Critical Illness Protocol (CIP). The review will also consider the effect of the reduced availability of sick leave on workers.*

## Motion 54 – Finance, PER and Associated Organisations

That this Conference instructs the National Executive of Fórsa to seek to secure a right to three days' leave for fathers or other relevant parent in the event of a miscarriage/still birth between 16 and 23 weeks pregnancy, including:

- in the case of the civil service through negotiations in General Council
- in the case of other parts of the public sector through equivalent or similar structures, and
- in the case of the private sector, to consider the feasibility of seeking legislation to secure.

Such a right for all workers, and in considering it, to examine whether the current entitlement for civil servants in the case of miscarriage after 24 weeks needs to be sought for workers in other sectors, and to explore the feasibility and appropriateness of working with other unions jointly on this overall matter.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. A working group of the Civil Service Divisional Executive has been established to formulate a claim for leave in the event of miscarriage based on comparator evidence and best practice. This work is ongoing.*

## Motion 55 – Third Secretaries

That this Conference calls for a review of civil service mileage rates, taking into account the public health and environmental benefits of cycling, and for the rates paid to cyclists to be increased to the same as those paid to drivers to incentivise a modal shift in transport choices.

*This motion was referred to the civil service division for action. It has been raised at the General Council and a review sought. The staff side are awaiting a response to same from the official side.*

## Motion 59 – SNA South Dublin South Leinster

That this Conference seeks that Fórsa use its voice and influence to address the inequality that exists for adults with learning difficulties. Children with additional needs progress through an education system where supports are generally in place to ensure that they can maximise their potential. However, once they have completed their second level education they are expected to embark on a working life or to attend third level education with little or no support available. This is not acceptable in a modern world and can prevent those with additional needs, pursuing their educational goals or making as full a contribution to society as they would wish to. We call on Fórsa to urgently highlight the lack of supports for those leaving second level education and to ensure that access to third level education is attainable and that suitable pathways and PA supports are available to them as required, when taking up meaningful employment.

*In April 2023, Fórsa’s education division published a position paper “Equity and Inclusivity for all: A Position Paper for a National Progression Framework for students with additional care needs in Ireland”. The National Access Plan is designed to target and support students who are socio-economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and students from the Irish Traveller community. In the position paper, Fórsa called for the recommendations contained in the National Access Plan to be actioned immediately, including the development of policies and implementation plans to promote meaningful participation of students with intellectual disabilities.*

## Motion 63 – Boards and Voluntary Agencies

Conference asserts zero tolerance of all forms of gender-based violence. Conference recognises male violence against women as a distinct challenge in Irish society. Conference commends the Government’s “still here” campaign which aims to:

- Increase the awareness of domestic and sexual violence
- Bring about a change in long-established societal behaviours and attitudes and
- Activate bystanders with the aim of decreasing and preventing this violence.

Conference further commends the decision of Minister McEntee to establish a new statutory agency to oversee the State’s response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. In the context of this challenge, and to ensure Fórsa plays our part, Conference calls on the national executive committee to:

- Develop and deliver trade union education that deals with male violence against women, the forms it might take, and strategies to support women in the workplace and the trade union community
- Develop and deliver mandatory training for elected officers and full-time officials so that they might recognise and respond to male violence against women in a meaningful way
- Advocate on behalf of women who might encounter male violence and
- Campaign for social change by calling for greater funding for intervention and education on behalf of women who might encounter male violence.

*Please see report on Motion 60.*

## Motion 68 – Defence Executive Grades

That this Conference requests the National Executive Committee to make representations to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to alter the single pension scheme in order to reverse the loss of entitlements received for post-2013 entrants.

*The NEC considered this motion and noted that the 'career average' scheme represented a better option for workers than unilateral action by the Government. The overall position in relation to occupational pensions has not improved and calling for its reversal is only likely to lead to a worsening of the position. It should also be noted that staff contributions to the new single pension scheme are lower, and that the scheme also allows members to accrue more service and in some cases, staff in the post-2013 scheme can produce better benefits, particularly if they have no changes of grade. Thus, it was not possible to make progress on this motion in the manner prescribed.*

## Motion 73 – Central Statistics Office Executive Grades

That this Conference calls on the incoming Fórsa National Executive Committee to seek a half year of added years included in the calculation of retirement years for those yet to retire and who endured the full duration of austerity time of increased hours from July 2013 to the present and which is scheduled to finally cease this summer, in July 2022. There should be similar pro-rata claims for retirees and others who endured shorter periods. There will have been nine years of austerity time of increased hours imposed on most members amounting to 0.5 years worked. Adding 0.5 added years to the calculation of retirement years is one feasible solution.

*The NEC was unable to make progress on this motion as the independent body report on the HRA hours effectively concluded the issue, and precluded any further negotiations to restore pay and other conditions of employment.*

## Motion 79 – Architectural, Engineering and Heritage Services

That this Conference instructs the NEC to take the position that the work email addresses of members should be used for all Fórsa HQ and branch correspondence, rather than personal email addresses for reasons of data security and personal privacy.

In terms of data security, Fórsa HQ's current policy of preferring member's personal over work email addresses, leads to this personal information being stored on branch officers' work laptops and other devices, which presents a risk of a serious data breach, as happened recently in the HSE, whereas if work email addresses were used exclusively, there would be no such security risk due to the highly regulated firewalls of the civil service, public bodies, and private organisations.

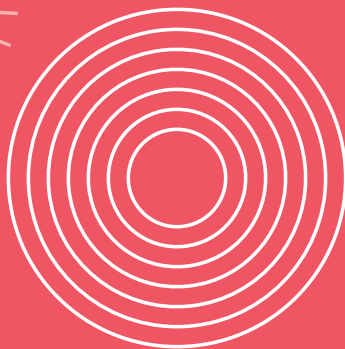
Then in terms of personal privacy, since Fórsa introduced this policy in 2019, our branch has received dozens of complaints from members, who feel awkward about being contacted at their personal email addresses, by branch executives, who also happen to be their work colleagues, whereas the simple switch back to work email addresses for branch correspondence would be viewed as less invasive of personal privacy and be seen as far more professional.

*The NEC, with the assistance of the Data Protection Officer, considered the remitted motion. The NEC concluded that it should not alter its position in terms of preferring members' personal email addresses over work email addresses for the following reasons:*

*The union is fully compliant with GDPR requirements, including providing the facility to unsubscribe from receiving emails from the union, members are able to choose the email address that Fórsa uses for union communications, the recently-introduced Solas system will allow members to do this directly online, many Fórsa members do not have work email facilities, many employers (including large employers of Fórsa members) block emails from the union, and total reliance on employer email addresses gives employers the power to block union communications to reduce the effectiveness of union services and organisation.*



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