

Care workers plan strike action over funding and pay



(5 February 2018) Workers in the not-for-profit care sector in Ireland are planning industrial action on 14 February over funding and pay. Around 10000 workers, providing a range of care services in hospices, community hospitals and rehabilitation facilities, are employed by so-called Section 39 organisations that are dependent on government funding for their operations. In 2010, while public sector workers were seeing their pay cut, funding for Section 39 bodies was slashed with the result that workers' pay was reduced.

Negotiations in the public sector last year lead to a new three-year agreement which will ensure that most lower paid workers will see their pay restored by 2020. However, the government has so far refused to increase funding to Section 39 organisations meaning that these bodies don't have the resources to increase their employees' pay, restore the cuts imposed under austerity and help reduce the trend of workers quitting the sector.

The workers' union, SIPTU, has been arguing the case for increased funding for several months and organised the ballot for strike action in December to put pressure on the government to act. It is made clear that it is willing to negotiate a solution and is urging the government to respond quickly and positively to avert the strike.

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