

# 24/7 FRONT LINE SERVICES ALLIANCE

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## INFORMATION PACK FOR MEMBERS

*October 2009*

# 24/7 FRONT LINE SERVICES ALLIANCE

## Taking the Risk Paying Our Share

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24/7 FRONTLINE  
SERVICES ALLIANCE

[McCarthy Report cuts pose major threat to integrity of front line public services](#)

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September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

The leaders of unions and staff associations representing front line public service personnel such as nurses, paramedics, gardai, firefighters, prison officers and members of the defence forces have warned that further cutbacks along the lines proposed in the McCarthy report will force many committed professionals to resign and will further seriously undermine the quality and range of services to the public.

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The warning came at a press conference in Dublin today by the 24/365 Frontline Services Alliance. The Alliance is holding a series of meetings around the country over the coming three weeks to consult members on the most effective way to combat the cuts. It will be the first time in the history of the state that organisations representing front line personnel will have come together to defend jobs and services.

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The Chairman of the Alliance, Des Kavanagh, said, "McCarthy's recommendations seek to revert nurses and other public service workers to pre-1970 conditions of employment. We will never accept that working unsocial hours at night, weekends and bank holidays should attract no additional earnings.

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"Allowances are paid to nurses in recognition of a combination of higher qualifications, skilled practice and locations of particular challenge. Employers gave these increases in lieu of increases in basic pay. Our nurses have earned these allowances, which are now part of their core pay. We will not allow anyone to take them away from us.

"In Mental Health nearly 20% of Nursing Posts have been abolished. This year alone nearly 700 nurses will retire and not be replaced. Nurses are carrying a huge burden in trying to maintain services to patients. These cuts are damaging patients and exhausting nurses."

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The General Secretary of the Garda Representative Association, P J Stone said that, "The people represented by the garda associations are those who take real risks on behalf of society – they risk being stabbed, shot and beaten on a daily basis, 365 days a year. Gardaí risk their lives in their job of protecting members of the public and many of their names are on the Roll of Honour in Garda Headquarters as having paid the ultimate sacrifice. Gardaí are one of only two professions in this country – the other being prison officers – which routinely have to wear anti-stab vests.

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"The senior members are departing, and are not being replaced because of the recruitment ban. This is increasing the workload of the remaining gardaí; 60% of whom have less than 10 years service and are at the start of the salary scale. Many of these young members have taken on mortgages to pay for homes and transport, based on their

previous salaries. They now face real difficulties in meeting repayments. Any more cuts in their take home pay will place them in an increasingly vulnerable situation.”

Liam Doran, General Secretary of the Irish Nurses Organisation, said, “In recent months we have heard a chorus from the usual commentators, many of them economists who did not foresee this problem in the first place, calling again and again for cuts in services and pay. This unfounded, unfair and unjustified attack was then crystallised further by the McCarthy Report with its recommendations to cut the pay and allowances of essential personnel.

“Our members are not anonymous statistics but committed individuals serving all the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Commentators who want to slash and burn fail to identify what essential services they actually want to cut or acknowledge that such services are essential to any civilised society.

“I want to add that the people we represent are, like our colleagues in the other services, the real risk takers in our society, often taking the ultimate risk to their health and wellbeing to care for others. Unlike the much heralded captains of industry they have also been paying their share when it comes to income tax levies, pension levies and other deductions from their very ordinary salaries”.

The General Secretary of the Association of Garda Sergeant and Inspectors, Joe Dirwan, said, “Gardaí are now also paying more than their fair share of tax – the combination of the levies, taxation and PRSI has resulted in income being reduced by more than 12%. That fact and the possibility of further taxation of pensions and retirement lump sums has led to a growing exodus from the force, which is expected to lose more than 800 members this year. The force will continue to decline in numbers with the cessation of recruitment. Gardaí are also prohibited from taking on part-time work in many types of employment to make up their losses.

“The closure of more garda stations will accelerate the separation of the gardaí from the communities they serve and drive a wedge between communities and their garda service.”

The General Secretary of PDFORRA, Gerry Rooney, said, “Members of the Defence Forces have seen their pay cut significantly in recent months between the pension, income and health levies. This has meant deductions of approximately €4,000 per annum for a typical soldier. It has led to real pain and difficulties and it is just not credible for pay or allowances to be further cut. The increased taxes to date have seen many individuals leave the Defence Forces and, if further cuts in pay are implemented, it is clear that in some cases homes could be lost.

“Members of the Defence Forces carry out a dangerous job in difficult circumstances in places such as Chad and Kosovo, as well as at home in Ireland, and in the North Atlantic in the case of members of the Naval Service. Given the 18% reduction in Permanent Defence Force numbers that has been implemented already it is hard to see how the organisation can take further cuts without a reduction in commitments”.

SIPTU National Nursing Official Louise O’Reilly said members in frontline health and local authority sectors were “extremely angry. They feel that they have been unfairly targeted by commentators and by the McCarthy Report. Members are already paying their fair share and the recent imposition of the pension levy shows that this Government sees its own employees as a soft target to compensate for the excesses of bankers and property speculators.

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**“We are sending a clear message to the Government on behalf of the frontline public service workers we represent – we will not stand idly by while our terms and conditions of employment are dismantled and our public services are unfairly targeted. It is long past time for the general public to see the true face of the public service and public servants. Fire fighters, nurses and other frontline workers provide essential services on a 24/7 basis and are already paying their share.”**

The Deputy General Secretary of the Prison Officers Association Eugene Dennehy said, “Our members have made a massive contribution to the safety and security of this country over many decades on behalf of the state and for the benefit of Irish society. Their work is extremely difficult and hazardous, and often involves working anti-social hours in a stressful environment.

“The Prison Service has already undergone massive reorganisation and rationalisation in recent years. The agreement on annualised hours in 2005 provided massive cost savings to the state and a significant decrease in income for individual Prison Officers. Many Prison Officers are now down in excess of another €4,000 per annum because of the pension levy introduced earlier this year.

“Some Recruit Prison Officers are applying for income supplement because take home pay is so low. The POA is also aware of members who took out mortgages based on 2008 income experiencing re-payment difficulties. Is the government set to punish members and their families even further with more cuts in take home pay?”

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### 24/7 FRONTLINE SERVICES ALLIANCE

Alliance members to mark absence of PDFORRA and pledge to continue their campaign on behalf of all frontline workers

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The 24/7 Frontline Services Alliance unions will keep an empty seat on the platform at tonight's meeting in Cork tonight for PDFORRA, which has been ordered by the Government to break its connection with the campaign. The Alliance Chairman, Des Kavanagh of the Psychiatric Nurses Association, condemned the gagging move by the Department of Defence, issued to PDFORRA only hours before the rally. PDFORRA members are still expected to attend, although they are barred from speaking.

"The 24/7 Alliance will continue to keep a place available for PDFORRA at our meetings in the hope that the Government will relent", Mr Kavanagh said. "This is a foolish and indefensible decision. By gagging PDFORRA the Government will not make the very real concerns and grievances of Defence Force personnel disappear. Rather they will fester, as the grievances of other workers in the public sector and private sector fester at the apparent inability of this Government to stand up to the powerful vested interests that created the present economic crisis, while it lashes out at those who are 'Taking the Risks and Paying our Share'."

On the wider issues affecting frontline workers, Prisoner Officers' Association President Jim Mitchell, said, "If you meet any of us in a professional capacity you are probably having a very bad day, even your worst day and often your last. Very often the people in this room are the last people many unfortunate citizens see.

"We represent workers who bring peace to war zones, patrol the most difficult streets in our cities, who tend the sick and vulnerable, willingly enter burning buildings to save lives work with some of the most vicious criminals in the state. We endure assaults, threats, contagious diseases, long absences from our families, unsocial working hours and we accept the stress of all these factors is part and parcel of the careers we chose.

"Nonetheless they provide a challenge we welcome to ensure we leave whatever incident we encounter in a better way than the way we found it. If you ask anyone here tonight what is their primary worry they will tell you that it is the bills that have to be paid, the rising mortgages and school bills that are part of our 'free' education system and all the other delights of the Celtic Tiger."

Irish Nurses Organisation General Secretary Liam Doran said the 24/7 Alliance fully backed the Irish Congress of Trade Unions campaign adopted by its executive today to protect jobs and pay. "While we welcome acknowledgement of our concerns from the

Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan, I want to make it clear to the Government that pay cuts are totally unacceptable and there will be no talks while that threat hovers over us.

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“The Government and employers are seeking to weaken the trade union movement by turning public and private sector workers on each other, in order to make them all pay for the crisis. It is time for all PAYE workers to come together and seek genuine tax reforms that will also protect essential public services.

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“Revenue returns show that PAYE workers paid 75% of all income tax in 2007 and Public Service Workers, who only representing 16% of the workforce, paid 31% of all PAYE. Figures for 2008 show PAYE workers paid 80% of income tax and the final returns will show our members once more shouldering even more of the burden.”

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The President of the Garda Representative Authority, Michael O’Boyce said, “The alliance of workers gathered here tonight serves the people of Ireland 24 hours a day 365 days of the year. At night when our politicians and bureaucrats are safely tucked up in bed in their ivory towers we are out there on the frontline dealing with whatever emergency presents, with every danger that manifests itself and with every difficulty that arises. They make split second decisions that we take responsibility for, are accountable for, and accept the consequences of.

PDFORRA



“When Government ministers make a mistake they never accept responsibility for it. Yet these same people tell us we should apologise for having a job and getting a modest salary for doing it. The members of this alliance have been badly served by those that we elected to Dáil Eireann over recent years. A powerful message was sent to them on Monday night from Sligo and another powerful message is being sent from Cork tonight.”

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AGSI Deputy General Secretary John Redmond said, “The increased burden of the levies led to a growing exodus from the force, which is expected to lose more than 800 members this year. It will continue to decline in numbers with the cessation of recruitment

“The more mature members are departing, leaving behind a growing proportion of younger and inexperienced members. Forty per cent of the force now has less than five years service and 60% less than 10. Many of these young members are facing real difficulties meeting repayments on mortgages and transport.”

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SIPTU National Nursing Official Louise O’Reilly said members in frontline health and local authority sectors were “extremely angry. They feel that they have been unfairly targeted by commentators and by the McCarthy Report. Members are already paying their fair share and the recent imposition of the pension levy shows that this Government sees its own employees as a soft target to compensate for the excesses of bankers and property speculators.

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“But we are having an impact already – apparently the Tánaiste has had another look at the McCarthy report and she, like us, can see that it doesn’t make sense! It is clear now that this government understands that we are taking their threats to pay and services seriously and that they are facing a sustained campaign of resistance from frontline public service workers who will take no more.”

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### FACT SHEET 1

#### ALL PAYE WORKERS CARRYING THE BURDEN OF RECOVERY PUBLIC SERVANTS MORE THAN PAYING THEIR SHARE

The impact of the additional taxes/levies imposed on PAYE workers (which include public servants) in the Supplementary Budget of April 2009 on the stated incomes were as follows:

	PAYE Workers	Public Servants
Example 1		
<b>Salary</b> €31,500 pa	<b>€945 pa or</b> <b>€79 per month</b>	<b>€2,345 pa or</b> <b>€195 per month</b>
Example 2		
<b>Salary</b> €45,000 pa	<b>€1,350 pa</b> <b>or €112 per month</b>	<b>€4,100 pa or</b> <b>€342 per month</b>

#### Points to Note

1. These figures confirm the burden being placed on all workers, on very ordinary incomes, towards the nation's recovery from a recession they did not cause.
2. The figures show the dramatic impact of the additional levies, particularly the pension levy equal to 7.5% of all income, on all public servants.
3. These figures exclude the impact of the public service recruitment embargo which is resulting, for example, in a loss of 300 jobs per month in the health sector.

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### FACT SHEET 2

#### Shift Work

Research demonstrates the following potential risks associated with night working and rotating shift patterns.

The physiological disruption and psychological strain of continuous shift working can have serious detrimental effects on workers' health. Studies have shown the following:

- Greater risks of suffering from duodenal and peptic ulcers;
- Increased risk of work/family conflict, social and family isolation;
- Increased risk of MI (Myocardial Infarction) if on shift work for 11 - 15 years;
- Shift workers have a 66% higher chance of suffering from coronary heart disease;
- Potential negative effects on fertility;
- Long Term night duty presents a risk for certain cancers;
- Chronic fatigue even on rest days;
- Greater recorded incidence of Depressive illness.

Premiums do not offset these risk, they merely recognise that they exist.

Some public servants must work unsocial hours and shift work to protect and care for us - they deserve to be paid for that commitment.

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### FACT SHEET 3

#### Exploding the myth of the cost of Public Service Pensions

Public Service Pensions are paid from current revenue. Contributions paid by public servants are added to current revenue. Exchequer returns for the years 2003 to 2008 demonstrate the following:

Year	Pensions Paid Out	Contributions from Serving Staff	Nett Employer Cost
2003	8.6% of total pay bill	6.5%	2.1%
2004	9.13% of total pay bill	6.5%	2.63%
2005	10.15% of total pay bill	6.5%	3.65%
2006	9.97% of total pay bill	6.5%	3.47%
2007	9.63% of total pay bill	6.5%	3.13%
2008	10.00% of total pay bill	6.5%	3.5%

#### Points to Note:

1. The actual cost of the employer contribution (general taxation) ranged from a low, in 2003, of 2.1% to a high, in 2005, of 3.65%.
2. Employer contributions to private sector pension schemes are normally expected to be twice the employee contribution. Given the contribution rate for public servants (*which is compulsory*) the employer contribution could be 13%. The actual contribution falls well short of that.
3. Serving staff therefore fund the majority of the cost of public service pensions.

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### FACT SHEET 4

#### FLEXIBILITY/PRODUCTIVITY RECENT INITIATIVES/MEASURES INTRODUCED BY/AGREED WITH 24/7 STAFF IN THE FRONTLINE

##### Health:

- Extension of the working day
- Expansion of roles– nursing/midwifery/paramedics
- Commencement of nurse/midwifery led services
- Revised skill mix involving Level 5 FETAC training and expansion of the role of the health care assistant
- National Cancer control programme involving redeployment
- Co-operation with reconfiguration of acute services (Mid-West/North East)
- Development of Primary Care Teams and Networks

##### Justice:

###### 1. Garda Personnel:

- Co-operation with PULSE (new IT system);
- Greater levels of accountability and responsibility (on and off duty) under the Garda Siochana Act 2005;
- Co-operation with ongoing change arising from significant changes in criminal law and methods of enforcement;
- Cooperation with introduction of specialised policing units/training (ie. introduction of cab/rapid response units).
- Ongoing introduction of “Court Presenting System” leading to efficiencies and savings in overtime.
- New rosters agreed in large urban areas - to maximise frontline Garda presence at peak times;
- Introduction of civilians for admin roles.

###### 2. Prison Officers:

- Introduction of annualised hours working - leading to significant savings in overtime;
- IT initiatives enhancing security surrounding access to prisons leading to redeployment of prison officers to other areas;
- Dedicated escort corps for prisoner transfers leading to savings in overtime.

##### Defence Forces:

- Introduction of new contracts providing for shorter periods of service and greater overseas commitment;
- Reduced staffing levels (down 1300 in past six years)
- 48% increase in Navy patrol days.

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**Due to Government ban on recruitment, further flexibility and ongoing redeployment are now daily realities for frontline staff to cover vacant posts.**

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### FACT SHEET 5

## WHO IS THE TAXPAYER?

### 2007 Tax Year:

- Direct Tax Yield 57% - Indirect Taxes 43%;
- Income Tax Accounted for 51% of Direct Taxes;
- PAYE Workers paid 75% of All Income Tax (80% in 2008);
- Public Service Workers paid 31% of all PAYE.

PAYE WORKERS PAY MORE TAX THAN ANY OTHER SECTOR OF IRISH SOCIETY.

PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS CONTRIBUTE 31% OF PAYE ALTHOUGH THEY ONLY ACCOUNT FOR 16% OF THE WORKFORCE.

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### FACT SHEET 6

### HOW YOU CAN PROMOTE THIS CAMPAIGN

Below are the telephone numbers of the prominent TV and Radio Comment Lines. Frontline Staff should take every opportunity to respond to negative media comments on the public service and to promote positive aspects of the services we provide.

### MEDIA CONTACTS

JOE DUFFY                      1850 715 815

PAT KENNY                      1850 715 900

MARIAN FINUCANE            1850 715 150

GEORGE HOOK                1890 453 106