



**IRISH MEDICAL ORGANISATION**

**INFORMATION ON NCHD BALLOT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

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# #standing UP4NCHDs



## OBJECTIVES

The IMO NCHD Committee are calling on NCHDs to VOTE YES for Industrial Action, up to and including strike action, in support of the #STANDINGUP4NCHDs campaign.

The objective is to enter negotiations with Government and HSE to;

1. Immediately address:

- Systemic and persistent contract breaches around unsafe and illegal hours
- Implementation of transparent verification and payment systems for all hours worked, and a payment system that avoids emergency tax and reduces the need for NCHDs to repeatedly provide information already held within the system
- Provide guaranteed access to annual leave and study leave
- Introduce measures to address financial burden associated with training structures
- Agree improvements to funding and operational issues for TSS

2. Secure commitment to a realistic timeframe to agree and implement a full NCHD Contract Revision that will:

- Align contract with changing demographic of NCHD workforce
- Incorporate a full review of training structure including flexible training
- Address specific obstacles for International Doctors
- Include engagement to address Work Life Balance, Gender Equality Issues and Family Friendly Policies

The IMO believes that a very strong mandate from NCHDs is required to ensure that when negotiations take place both Government and the HSE know that NCHDs will no longer tolerate the status quo nor accept lip service or token adjustments.

# #standing UP4NCHDs



## WHY ARE IMO BALLOTING NOW?

The IMO undertook extensive research on NCHD Working Conditions & Contract Breaches, Gender Equality Issues and Mental Health and Well Being. The results of that research and consultation shows NCHDs are demoralised, frustrated, angry and want change for themselves and for future generations of NCHDs.

Despite previous industrial action and having reached agreements with the HSE it is clear that any progress made at that time has been eroded by the actions of the employer.

The persistent and systemic contract breaches are exploiting a workforce that is treated as “temporary” employees with little regard for their health and safety. Additionally the current contract is not aligned to the changing demographic of the NCHD workforce and significant contract reform is required if we are to have any hope of retaining the workforce in the Irish public health services.

## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

### Contract Breaches

- 100% of NCHDs are working beyond their rostered hours
- 54% are NOT paid for all hours worked
- 40% of NCHDs are routinely working shifts in excess of 24 Hours
- 96% of NCHDs routinely work in excess of 48 hours a week
- 50% of NCHDs have difficulty taking annual leave and 91% have problems with study leave
- 91% of hospitals DO NOT provide locum cover for absent NCHDs

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## Mental Health and Well Being

- 96.8% of NCHDs reported having experienced some mental health issues relating to or made worse by work
- 78% of NCHDs are dissatisfied with work-life balance
- 78% of NCHDs are at high risk of burnout

## Gender Equality Issues

- 48% of NCHDs (53.6% female and 28.8% male) in training have postponed having a family for fear of the impact on training opportunities
- 69% of NCHDs in training with children (76.4% of female and 36.7% of male) have considered changing their career speciality as their current working conditions did not seem conducive to caring for a child
- 31% of NCHDs who took maternity leave have had to either repeat all or part of a training post. For over half of these doctors the time they had to make up was not directly proportional to the time that they had missed

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THE BALLOT?

All members of the IMO who hold an NCHD Contract are entitled to vote in the Ballot – this includes NCHDs who work in hospital settings, GP setting, public health and community health. The IMO is not permitted under Industrial Relations legislation to ballot non-members. It is critical that all NCHDs are members of the IMO, support each other in this action and demonstrate solidarity so as to effect meaningful change.

## CAN NCHDs WHO JOIN AFTER THE 9<sup>th</sup> MAY STILL VOTE?

Yes. NCHDs can avail of the special offer to join the IMO and receive free membership until 26<sup>th</sup> June [HERE](#) . Within a few days of joining those new members will receive the electronic ballot paper and be eligible to vote.

# #standing UP4NCHDs



## WHO CAN PARTICIPIATE IN ANY INDUSTRIAL ACTION?

Under Industrial Relations legislation only IMO members are protected in any industrial action, up to and including strike action.

## WHEN WILL INDUSTRIAL ACTION TAKE PLACE?

The IMO NCHD Committee will carefully consider the manner and timing of any industrial action based on:

- Willingness of Government and HSE to engage in negotiations on the issues
- Commitment by Government and HSE to structures which ensure safe working conditions and contractual reform that deals with all the issues outlined above

In terms of any decision to take industrial action we are obliged to serve notice on the HSE of the dates and nature of the action and engage in a process to seek agreement around emergency cover during any action.

Industrial action, including strike action, is not a decision that will be taken lightly but our strong view is that unless Government and HSE clearly recognise, acknowledge and work with us to resolve the issues it may become inevitable.

## ARE SENIOR COLLEAGUES SUPPORTIVE OF THIS ACTION?

Yes. IMO Council and all IMO Specialty Committees – Consultants, GPs, Public and Community Health are strongly supportive of the NCHD Committee's campaign and ballot for Industrial Action. The strength of the IMO as a Trade Union is that we represent all members of the medical profession. Many of your senior colleagues, as IMO members, have taken part in industrial action as NCHDs to improve terms and conditions and to tackle the unsustainable hours. They all feel it is regrettable that, despite many agreements over the years, the employer continues to disregard or not fully implement the hard won terms of those agreements.

# #standing UP4NCHDs

## WHEN WILL I GET MY BALLOT PAPER?

The Ballot process will commence from Monday 9th May and will run over the next four weeks to allow all NCHDs to participate. The closing date will be Wednesday 8th June.

The IMO have engaged Mi-Voice to run the ballot electronically and over the coming days all IMO members will receive an email from [elections@mi-voice.com](mailto:elections@mi-voice.com) including Ballot Paper and information on the ballot.

## NEXT STEPS

The IMO has formally advised the HSE that a ballot will now commence and has sought engagement on the issues which are directly contributing to low morale, high levels of burnout and NCHDs choosing to emigrate to other healthcare systems where they are valued, respected and supported to deliver safe care.

The HSE and Government have indicated they are prepared to meet with IMO however we must be resolute that all our concerns are on the table for meaningful negotiations and contract reform.

IMO representatives will be visiting hospitals around the country over next number of weeks and you will be advised as to the dates they will be in your location. If you have any queries on this campaign, ballot or other contract issues they will be happy to assist. We also strongly encourage members to attend the NATIONAL NCHD MEETING at the IMO AGM on 28th May – please register [here](#).

It is critical that you and your colleagues:

- Send a strong message by voting YES in this ballot
- Continue to support the #standingUP4NCHDs campaign and report all contract breaches to IMO at [NCHDissues@imo.ie](mailto:NCHDissues@imo.ie)
- Encourage colleagues to join IMO and get behind the campaign
- Follow and engage with the campaign on [Instagram](#) , [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

09<sup>th</sup> May 2022

