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## DÁIL ÉIREANN

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### *Motion re: Pay Rise for Community and Voluntary sector workers*

That Dáil Éireann –

Recognises:

- that until 2008 people employed in the community, voluntary and care sector such as Section 39 workers received pay increases under national wage agreements, but have not received pay increases since, and have no formal mechanism for collective pay bargaining;
- the immeasurable contribution of independent non-State agencies in the community and voluntary sector, which provide a range of vital health and personal social services that the State has historically outsourced;
- that these vital public services include HSE-funded Section 39 organisations, Tusla-funded Section 56 organisations, Section 10 homeless services funded indirectly through the Department of Housing, and a broad range of community services like those managed by Community Employment, Tús and RSS supervisors, where salaries are indirectly funded by the State;
- that without the continued active participation of these bodies, there would be massive deficits in public services across a range of activities including meeting the healthcare needs of both old and young, and for people with disabilities; provision of child and family services; accommodation and homeless assistance; dealing with substance abuse and suicide prevention; domestic violence supports, and working for social inclusion, education and community development across the State;

notes:

- that public sector workers received a pay rise of 3% under Building Momentum with a further 6.5% increase under an extension to that agreement, but no pay rise or improvement in conditions was provided to the community and voluntary sector;
- that pay claims have been submitted as part of the ICTU-led *Valuing Care, Valuing Community* campaign supported by SIPTU, Fórsa and the INMO;
- that the Fórsa commissioned Harvey report on delivery of health services by Section 39 organisations found very high annual staff exit rates of up to a third annually; with further reports since of workers leaving to take up direct employment in the public service such as the HSE, due to the pay gap and gulf in terms and conditions;
- that during the economic crisis Section 39 bodies were instructed by the HSE to cut the pay of staff in line with pay reductions for public servants, but that these staff were not automatically included in pay restoration agreements, and while there was some pay restoration measures these were not commensurate with those in the public

service;

- these bodies are funded through a mix of Service Level Agreements and fundraising, but there is no automatic rise in public funding in line with public service pay agreements, and that recent increases to some bodies have been to support service delivery not improved terms and conditions, or pay restoration and parity for staff;

Acknowledges:

- while these organisations continue to sustain the communities they serve, there is a growing crisis within the sector because its workers, who have endured over a decade without a pay rise, are undervalued and disrespected by the State;
- that the anomalous position of these workers leaves them excluded from public sector negotiations on pay and conditions, and from any other collective bargaining arrangement, and that their vulnerable status has resulted in them being undervalued and underpaid in insecure employment with poor career paths, resulting in a high turnover of staff which adversely impacts on the level of care that can be provided to those in need;
- the need to establish a renewed relationship between not-for-profit organisations and the State, based on a shared long-term vision and plan, that would allow for an integrated approach to service provision supported by adequate funding;

Calls for the government to:

- mandate the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to reverse the policy that has resulted in the exclusion of thousands of affected workers from the established norms of the public sector employment framework on the basis of continuing claims that no direct employment relationship exists between those workers and any public body;
- fund pay rises for workers in the community and voluntary sector, in line with recent public sector pay agreements;
- implement these pay rises through the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform by establishing a standing forum and mechanism for collective bargaining on pay and conditions with recognised trade unions in the sector;
- guarantee that Ministers in relevant line Departments commit to funding increases for organisations they support in order to provide for salary increases;
- ensure that future Service Level Agreements provide for automatic funding increases for salaries in line with public service pay increases and policy;
- commit to a multiannual funding framework for the sector to provide certainty for providers, their staff, and those who rely on their essential services.

– *Duncan Smith, Ivana Bacik, Brendan Howlin, Alan Kelly, Ged Nash, Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, Seán Sherlock.*