

# Dublin and Wicklow workers demand HSE action to save service and Jobs

Home Help and Home Care workers employed by not-for-profit voluntary agencies have been busy campaigning in Dublin and Wicklow in recent months.

While the HSE and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform have been dragging their heels with regard to negotiations for HSE Home Helps, they have yet to engage at all with regard to the cutbacks for colleagues in other organisations.

Due to the HSE engaging in a race to the bottom in wages and conditions of workers, voluntary services are desperately trying to compete with the private agencies tendering for home care packages. At the same time, they are trying to deal with a series of budget cuts by the HSE. This has resulted in some agencies cutting pay and conditions of employment.

These workers provide the home help and home care service on behalf of the HSE through voluntary agencies. Workers in these services



Home Helps demonstration in Wicklow Town

have, through their union, secured the right to the same pay and conditions of employment as their counterparts in the HSE, however due to budget cuts many employers claim they are not in a position to concede these conditions. Now they are facing pay cuts, changes to conditions and a reduction in their hours.

The SIPTU Shop Steward Committee of Voluntary Agencies calls on the HSE to immediately restore funding to these agencies to enable them to provide the levels of care and the standards of employment needed to treat both clients and workers with respect.



# Home Help Home Care News



**THIS FIGHT ISN'T OVER!**

At the beginning of this year the future for SIPTU Home Help workers looked brighter; following an intensive campaign of marches, protests and lobbying the Government had promised the restoration of home help hours, and Labour Relations Commission (LRC) talks looked like they could lead to a comprehensive agreement for Home Help workers.

Four months on, and those hopes have been frustrated by a combination of bad faith on the part of the HSE, and a government that doesn't appear to care. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) is now involved in the

negotiations and appears more interested in trying to save money than in reaching a fair deal for Home Helps. On the ground, there has been no evidence to date of any "restoration" of hours, while home helps continue to see private operators receiving home care packages.

Commenting on the lack of progress Carmel Bannon a Home Help worker from Co Offaly and Chairperson of SIPTU's Home Help National Committee said "All we are asking for is a fair contract of employment - one that would give us security, and a decent income while ensuring high quality care to our clients. The HSE and our politicians promised us progress, but

so far have delivered nothing."

Though SIPTU is now going back to the Labour Court, we need the employers' representatives to accept that home help and home care workers have waited long enough for a resolution. We need both the HSE and the DPER to engage in good faith.

SIPTU Home Help members must take their fight for justice directly to the Government Ministers whose departments are responsible for the failure of the LRC talks to date. Minister for Health James Reilly and his cabinet colleagues have the power to deliver a fair deal for Home Help workers - **don't let them off the hook!**



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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION  
& SUPPORT CENTRE (MISC)

1890 747 881

8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Monday - Friday

Email: misc@siptu.ie

For more information on how to join SIPTU — the union for Home Help workers — please call 01 858 6367 or email organising@siptu.ie



# ORGANISING TO WIN

It's been a busy nine months for Home Help and Home Care activists right across the country.

SIPTU members have engaged in months of lobbying politicians in constituencies around the country, gathering tens of thousands of petitions, visiting the Dáil, holding marches, demonstrations and protests, securing support for their campaign at various county councils and bringing their case to the public through a sustained media campaign.

Here's a snapshot of the story so far.



Home Helps protest in Castlebar



Home Helps Protest in Cork, November 2012



SIPTU Home Help workers marching in Letterkenny



Sinn Féin TD's signing our petition!

**Meeting to lobby TDs on home help cuts**



Catherine Kraus, Home Help worker from Cork

"Home Care packages are being given to private for profit companies even as our hours are being cut, even though it costs the HSE more money"



Home Helps protest in Cork



Galway Home Helps on the march

**Anger over home help cuts set to be vented at protest**



O'Sullivan slams HSE for cutting home help hours

Taoiseach feels the heat after being door stepped by Home Help activists in Cork

"The public were shocked to learn about HSE policy to reduce calls to clients to as little as 15 minutes"



Marian Tyrell, Home Help worker from Offaly



Minister James Reilly is presented with our 35,000 signature petition by Home Help activist Violet Carroll

**DISTRAUGHT MUM'S HOME HELP SLASHED**  
HSE left message on answering machine for mother-of-seven



Jackie De La Ruelle Home Help worker from Galway

"Our campaign has highlighted that people have been forced out of their homes and into hospital beds because of cuts to home help services"

There's strength in numbers



Home Help activists marching through Tullamore.