

NASRA – Growing Stronger and Delivering for Frontline Paramedics

When NASRA was launched as the independent trade union for national ambulance service paramedics back in 2010 the recognised unions predicted we would not last two days never mind two years. Instead NASRA has gone from strength to strength and is now the second largest trade union independently representing paramedics of the National Ambulance Service.

We formed NASRA out of the frustration felt by paramedics who had been let down by the recognised trade unions for the last forty years. NASRA believes that paramedics can be proud of their role in building the national ambulance service. However, despite the part those paramedics have played in the professionalization of the service they have been let down again and again by the unions when it came to putting in place the policy infrastructure to support the efforts of paramedics. So paramedics found themselves with no voice when it came to crucial policy issues such as capability, the adverse effect policy and amended disciplinary procedure – to name but a few.

Basic principles of democracy and consultation were ignored and paramedics were forced to blindly accept fundamental

changes that were impacting on their welfare and their rights as trade union members.

We saw the retirement age of the profession extended to 67

New entrants suffered a further 10% pay cut.

There was a new AP deployment model, green hours, a draft national transfer policy.

We saw the failure to address the hardship of non-roistered staff and abolish on call.

All of this is happening against a background where the worth of the Paramedic was being diluted and constantly undermined. We know we deserve better as professionals. And we question the worth of unions led by officials who show no understanding of the realities of our professional lives and the toll it takes on our members and their families. This is best illustrated in the decision to agree to a new retirement age for paramedics of 67.

Paramedics can rightly ask what benefits union recognition brought when this fundamental change to their working lives, and that of their families, was agreed

to. Unlike the recognised unions NASRA does not accept that the contribution of paramedics can be treated so fundamentally different to their colleagues in the Gardaí and fire service?

NASRA set about addressing these basic deficiencies in how paramedics are represented. We built NASRA on the basis that as professional front line emergency staff we can only change how we are being represented at the negotiating table if we first recognise our worth and not our place.

As new members join NASRA all over the country we will continue to demand recognition from management.

And as NASRA moves into its second year of operation I want to assure you that we remain totally committed to the principles that inspired us to form the union. We know the challenges that face us personally as professionals, and the threats to the vital services we provide to the public in this climate of cutbacks and austerity.

You can be assured that the NASRA leadership around the country is committed to meeting those challenges on your behalf and we ask for your continued support.



Gerry Mc Keon newly appointed Student Welfare Officer

New NASRA Student Welfare Officer Appointed

NASRA is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Gerry Mc Keon as our designated Student Officer. Gerry's new

role is an important one for the union and he will now be the first point of contact for student paramedics where they may have issues regarding welfare, entitlements or representation. As an indication of the importance of student paramedics to NASRA we are offering free membership to all students for the duration of their college training (not whilst on internships).

We look forward to working with our student members and believe they will make a significant contribution to the development NASRA. Please contact the NASRA office for details.

Conference

Remember our 2nd Delegate Conference will be held Friday 11th of May 2012 at the Hodson Bay Hotel in Athlone.

The hard work of building the union has been continuing throughout the year and with numbers growing steadily around the country we are looking forward to a busy Delegate Conference. In the meantime we want to hear from YOU about industrial relations and union issues, comments and general queries. Remember: NASRA – Your Union, Your Voice.

National Transfer Policy - A crucial issue for paramedics



Tony Gregg & Gregory Clarke at a regional meeting Letterkenny, Donegal

Last June NASRA initiated a process to challenge the absence of a National Transfer Policy. The issue was raised with HSE Human Resources resulting in a request for more time by HR to respond as issues had far reaching consequences for future Paramedic transfers. The HR department explained that they needed to consult with senior management of the NAS in order to address the issue. We also raised the issue of panel numbers and why no policy or guidance was available to managers in order for them to issue accurate service numbers to staff. This was resulting in staff receiving several different panel numbers in order to determine their length of service and to facilitate transparent rostering and placements.

Consequently NAS called upon the IARC to sign a draft policy which was prepared and signed off in haste and still does not address the issue of a NTP for ALL staff. It is clear to NASRA that the reason for the delay in achieving any NTP is the lack of interest by the recognised unions for paramedic issues.

As paramedics we are failed by the recognised unions that are too eager to passively adopt management policies on key issues and which these same unions have no interest in consulting with members of the NAS on the matters which concern and directly affect us.

However, with the support of so many paramedics across the country, NASRA is fully committed to delivering a better and more transparent equal NTP. We are not

interested in any token policies drafted which do not satisfy the needs of our members.

Following a response from HR we intend to pursue all options including through the industrial relation mechanisms, to deliver a workable NTP for paramedics. Once again we call for your support to allow NASRA to deliver for you.

Labour Court Success for NASRA

NASRA has been active in the Labour Court on behalf of a member in recent weeks.

The issue concerned the member been immediately removed from the sick pay scheme following unsuccessful negotiations at the Labour Relations Commission. The issue was then referred for a full Labour Court hearing.

However, after NAS management had received notice of the LC hearing the paramedic was returned to the sick pay scheme. At the LC hearing the court was critical of the manner in which the member was disqualified from the sick pay scheme but also noted that the member had been returned by the NAS to his full entitlements and benefits.

The success of this full Labour Court hearing was and is a very important and critical milestone for NASRA.

We have also been very active with the LRC on other industrial relations issues across the country. One of these issues concerned members who have been overlooked or ignored for placements on the upcoming AP training courses. These paramedics have been displaced out of sequence from their panel positions achieved through a competitive process. NASRA believes this non adherence to panel positions is an unacceptable practice and must be addressed urgently. We are hopeful that the LRC will resolve this dispute without us having to refer again to a full LC hearing.

NASRA-using the grievance procedures to get results for members

NASRA has been effectively using the grievance procedure process to resolve a number of issues for members recently.

Recent examples of issues dealt with on behalf of members concerned issues such as duty of care, standard of care, negligence, delayed implementation of support policies such as the injury at work grant and the non-payment of subsistence.

NASRA has made it clear that in accordance with the HSE grievance procedure (and as we have already demonstrated in referrals to the States Industrial Relations mechanisms) we will reserve the right if dissatisfied with the response to these issues for members to refer these cases to the Labour Relations Commission, the Labour Court, Equality Tribunal or the Rights Commissioner.

Meetings with the Medical Director-know your rights.

Recently some members have been invited by the Medical Directors office to meetings under the policy "adverse clinical events". In the event of any member receiving such an invitation our advise is that you first consult with your trade union as these meetings can be at times of a disciplinary nature. Although these hearings may focus on guidance or education it is wise to establish exactly the concerns of the medical director before attending and you may need the help and advise of your trade union to complete the process.

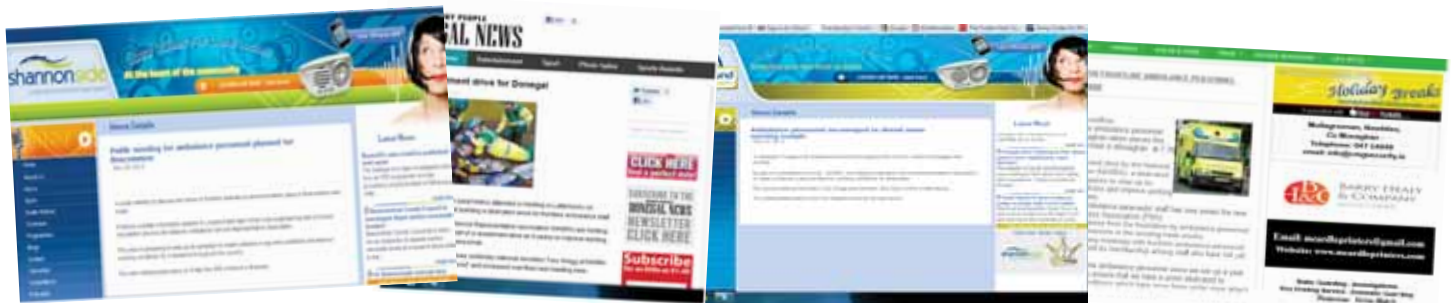
NAS Divisional areas

Members are currently been represented by local NASRA reps in Galway, Clare, Mayo, the Midlands, Cavan and Dublin. We would like to take this opportunity to thank these members for raising these issues and concerns which affect all members across the country and wish them every success.

Very special thanks to our union representatives presenting these cases such as John Dillane, Andrew Long, John Jordan, Gerry McKeon and Eric Henry.

NASRA Branch Representatives 2012

Forename	Surname	Branch	Forename	Surname	Branch
Mick	Cardiff	James Street	Michael	Dixon	Gorey
Mike	Malone	Mullingar	Ray	Sinnott	Wexford Town
Robbie	O'Brien	Athy	Declan	Harte	Clonmel
Damien	Scally	Tullamore	James	Ward	Cork City
Sean	O'Donnell	Loughlinstown	Dave	Walker	Mallow
Christy	Kelly	Portlaoise	Sean	Prendergast	Cashel
John	Gill	Boyle	Ray	Brady	Tallaght
Greg	Clarke	Carndonagh	Matthew	Mc Shane	Dundalk
John	Dillane	Galway City	Chris	Connolly	Monaghan
Jim	Dooley	Roscrea	Karl	Lewishy	Dungarvan
Donal	O'Donnell	Limerick	Gerry	Mc Keon	Tullamore
John	Jordan	Castlebar	Eric	Henry	Dundalk
Michael	Noone	Ballina	Albert	Coffey	Longford



Tony and Mick On the Road and On the Air.

NASRA National Secretary, Tony Gregg and Chairman Mick Dixon have been on the road building the union with a rolling series of meetings throughout the country in recent months. As well as keeping down the day jobs, they have been attending meetings with paramedics from Donegal to Cork and Dublin to Galway. They have also been getting the NASRA message out through the local media with coverage in newspapers and on radio up and down the country.

"The response around the country has been really encouraging. There is genuine interest from the local radio stations in NASRA as a new independent voice for paramedics. There is huge respect and pride in the difficult work that paramedics do but the local media never hear about the issues and concerns of frontline paramedics. NASRA wants to change that and make sure that we have the support of our local communities behind us when we bring issues to management at the negotiating table."

"We are also very pleased with the turn-out at the meetings. We are building NASRA all the time and the local and regional structure is coming together. If there is one message we have been repeating at our regional meetings it is that if paramedics want an independent, dedicated union for ambulance personnel then it is time to get off the fence and make a commitment to NASRA."



Dave Walker taking part in Malin to Mizen Head Cycle

The Sophie Cycle Run

NASRA proudly supports THE SOPHIE CYCLE RUN organised by the Paramedics of the Midland Region of the Ambulance Service in support of Crumlin Children's Hospital and our colleagues who may have to avail of the services of Crumlin now and in the future.

To All Paramedics in the Midland Division

Our colleague Leona (McDonald) Mahon based at Portlaoise station gave birth to a baby girl, Sophie, last November.

Sophie was born with Renal failure and was rushed to Crumlin Hospital for immediate care. The outlook for Sophie was not good but

due to the fantastic work of Crumlin Hospital Sophie is now four and a half months old and in much better health. Another colleague of ours Cora Brady based in Tullamore has a three year old cousin suffering from Leukaemia and is being treated in Crumlin also.

Plans for a fundraiser for Crumlin with the proceeds to be divided between the Renal, Cancer and Cardiology Units are now underway. We are calling on all Paramedics, Advanced Paramedics, Officers, Controllers and Administration staff to participate in the Cycle Run or help in any way possible to raise as much money as we can for Crumlin Hospital. The event will start on Saturday 19th May 2012 in Longford and travel to Ballymahon, Athlone,

Mullingar and Edenderry. On Sunday 20th we start in Tullamore and on to Birr, Roscrea, Mountrath, finishing in Portlaoise that evening.

We want all Stations and Departments to nominate two people to form a Working Committee. Everyone can help in some way by cycling; being part of the logistic team or contacting companies or suppliers to sponsor the Cycle in some way.

Please contact me as soon as possible - Gerry McKeon Paramedic Tullamore Ambulance Station at (083-0037746) / email gerry.mckeon.ie@gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing from you all.



NASRA

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Our vision is to provide: Dynamic, value driven leadership, developing and maintaining diversity within our Association whilst maintaining the integrity and ethical practice of pre-hospital care practitioners. Our Association provides leadership to promote pre-hospital care, to improve health care for individual's families, groups and communities and shape pre-hospital care policy for the delivery of health services. NASRA will provide a variety of communication vehicles, to assist members in their growth and development as leaders and facilitate internal and external liaisons for the Association. Providing learning and growth inherent in relationships, partnerships and networks with advocacy, consumer and other professional groups. Maintaining careful allocation and prudent stewardship of the Associations resources.

Our aims and objectives are:

- ✚ To promote and protect the interests of our members and in particular to provide professional and industrial leadership for the statutory pre-hospital profession.
- ✚ To improve statutory rights and benefits of members with improved salaries and conditions of work, through to representing members in relation to work matters.
- ✚ To improve career progression and the personal development of our members.
- ✚ To ensure a healthy and safe workplace for our members.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

NAME: _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

DATE OF BIRTH

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GRADE: PARAMEDIC ADVANCED PARAMEDIC EMC

TEL NO: _____ MOBILE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ PAYROLL NO: _____

WORK LOCATION : _____

SIGNED: _____

Please return signed mandate to NASRA Head Office, Station House, The Waterways, Sallins, Co. Kildare
This will then be forwarded to the relevant HSE Location or Employing Authority

Deduction From Salary Mandate

To: Payroll Manager _____ (HSE Location) Please arrange to have deducted from my salary

the sum of: €5.50 Weekly €11 Fortnightly €23.83 Monthly



NASRA

(Subscription Deduction Period must equate with your salary payment period) In respect of Union Subscriptions to NASRA

Signed _____ HSE Location _____

Payroll No: _____ Date: _____

I accept that there may be periodic adjustments to the above level of contribution as determined by the Executive and I also accept that these adjustments may be notified directly to my Bank/Building Society by the Head Office of my Union. I also understand that advance notice of any change in subscriptions will issue through a General Circular and that individual advance notices will not be issued.

I further authorise you to discontinue payment of contribution to any other Trade Union with the effect from the implementation of this mandate.

I acknowledge that this deduction is made for my convenience and may be terminated by the HSE at any time. I am aware that the HSE does not accept any further liability for amounts so deducted and paid over to NASRA