

# Frontline



**NASRA**  
"For People and Services"

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## Fighting the Cuts and Protecting Services

Welcome to the first edition of 'Frontline' the new official newsletter of NASRA, in which we aim to keep you, our colleagues in the National Ambulance Service informed and involved with all aspects of your union. This edition is also addressed to those currently in another union, and we want to appeal to these colleagues to join us in NASRA as we continue to build a dedicated union for front line ambulance personnel that will forcefully address the real issues facing our members and deliver real results for them.

NASRA was established over a year ago, by ambulance personnel for ambulance personnel. Since its inception, NASRA has been rapidly expanding its membership and

with the support of all ambulance personnel throughout the country we are ready to tackle the issues of pay and conditions that are causing real concerns for our membership.

As part of a strategic alliance with the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA), NASRA has the strength and commitment leadership to provide a professional, dedicated and effective representation to our members.

We believe NASRA members are amongst the most educated and skilled pre-hospital care providers in the world yet our skills are increasingly unrecognised as we face a sustained assault on our pay and conditions. While NASRA members display their

commitment and professionalism to their roles as frontline responders every day the vital services they are expected to deliver are cut, downgraded and reconfigured beyond recognition.

NASRA Chairman, Mick Dixon said: "NASRA represents a new beginning for emergency personnel. We now have a membership led union that for the first time is focussed on our interests and those of the service we provide. As the Government yields the "Austerity Axe" on public sector workers and the HSE faces another year of doing more with less, there has never been a time of greater need for a strong, unified voice from ambulance personnel – NASRA is that voice."



Minister for Health, Dr. James O'Reilly & Mr Tony Gregg, Nasra National Secretary

### We Need Your Support to Fight For Your Rights – Join NASRA Now

Just a year ago NASRA was formed out of frustration with the lack of a dedicated and focused representation for ambulance personnel in the exiting trade unions. Ambulance personnel have shown their commitment to defending their livelihoods and the services they deliver with pride by joining NASRA in their hundreds.

We now represent hundreds of all NAS staff and have fully democratic committee, officer and executive structures in place throughout the country. However, fearful of a dedicated and effective union for ambulance staff the HSE have conveniently denied negotiating rights to NASRA. NASRA is determined to achieve those rights so that we can progress with the important work of representing our members interests.

We need the support of ALL AMBULANCE PERSONNEL to secure those negotiating rights now and are appealing to those staff who are not already members to join now and give NASRA the mandate to work on behalf of all ambulance personnel.

By joining NASRA you will be ensuring that the HSE and health service management have to negotiate with your union on the critical issues affecting the livelihoods and futures of ambulance personnel.

**Please complete and return the Application Form at the back of the Newsletter.**

### 2012 – NASRA to resist Cuts in Pay and Services and Fight for Member's Rights on Conditions and Training.

With the Government and HSE determined to continue with the assault on public sector pay and services the morale across the health services and in the ambulance service will again be undermined. NASRA is determined to end the current unfair system and continue to build the union in 2012 as a powerful independent, body representing solely the interests of National Ambulance Service employees. . .

As the union formed by professional ambulance staff, who understand the pressures of shift work, the good and not so good aspects of our work we will be pursuing a busy agenda in 2012 on issues that are vital to our members throughout the country. These include :

**Officer Status:** Despite the enormous changes that our member have undergone in their

### NASRA : Your Union, Your Voice

#### What are the benefits of joining Nasra?

- A dedicated Union for Ambulance Personnel
- Member led and driven professional Association working in alliances with, and having access to, professional resources and services of Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA)
- Fully democratic national structures
- Full range of member benefits and offers.



Chairman Mick Dixon, National Secretary Tony Gregg attending a regional meeting in Dungarvin, Waterford.

professional lives as the result of the relentless drive to upskill ambulance personnel we continued to be denied Officer Status, with consequent inferior pension and sick leave entitlements. The demand for Officer Status will be a major focus for NASRA in the coming year.

#### National Ambulance Transfer Policy. :

The absence of an agreed and workable transfer policy is causing severe hardship and financial loss to ambulance personnel. NASRA is determined to end the current unfair system.

**Lone Workers:** the push to cut costs by moving to services based on lone workers is putting enormous pressures and danger on ambulance personnel. NASRA will fight to ensure that the professional integrity and safety of staff are protected and taken account of in any changes to rostering and manning.

## NASRA – Act now to give a strong voice to Paramedics

**The trade union that holds your negotiation rights has signed an agreement on your behalf concerning AP deployment.** This agreement along with the agreement on the Intermediary care service has been made without any form of consultation with any member of the Ambulance service. There has not been one meeting organised to debate these issues in order to gather collectively the opinion of members. Nor has there been a single ballot box produced in any station, in any part of the country, to obtain a clear mandate for discussion with the employer on any of these issues.

In fact Siptu, and the Iarc, have consistently ignored the fundamental principles of representation for a very long time to date. None of the other unions, Impact or Unite, who are involved in the making of these agreements, have objected in any manner, to these agreements. By association with the union who commandeer your negotiation rights they are guilty of ignoring the fundamental principles of the trade union movement. These agreements are being made by unions and paramedics who have demonstrated a total disregard for the opinion of paramedics of the National Ambulance Service.

**We in NASRA believe that the officials presenting these negotiations have consistently failed to understand the essence of the profession of the paramedic.**

This year we launched a new trade union to independently represent the opinion of National Ambulance Service Paramedics. The organisers of NASRA, the union representatives and the members who have already signed up, have shown leadership beyond expectation.

Over the years they have listened to their colleagues who have consistently expressed disappointment and disapproval with the trade unions representing paramedics. They understood the level of frustration which was expressed in each argument, how people felt let down, disregarded, and denied the opportunity to make their view known through the ballot box. The unions failed and were unwilling to consult with paramedics, and again and again showed that those negotiating did not understand the challenges of the profession they were meant to be representing. It was from this totally unsatisfactory situation that a new trade union, NASRA, was formed.

The employer in collusion with the trade unions, mainly SIPTU, has actively attempted to frustrate and derail the progress of NASRA by singling out their leaders and members, and by refusing to recognise NASRA. In doing this their aim is to dissuade any more Paramedics from joining the cause for independent representation.

**The employers motive is clear- with NASRA as an independent trade union they know there will be no more easy deals. In the case of the existing trade unions they are fearful of losing control of a very powerful group of professionals whose strength and critical role to society is essential in enhancing the industrial strength of the other weaker grades in their relative sections.**

The motive for the objections of the smaller unions is to pick up the membership of NASRA into their union so as to enhance their industrial strength, based on the assumption that no Nasra member will return to Siptu.

These vested interests all exclude the issues and interests of paramedics. Ironically these unions have a new found enthusiasm for paramedic issues, such as officer grade and the eradication of on call, an illusion designed to demonstrate their new found interest in paramedics.

Following recent agreements, the ICS and AP deployment, paramedics have looked to NASRA for leadership to oppose this adulteration and to take action against it.

For the moment, the **reality is that NASRA is not in possession of your negotiation rights and are not invited to the table to represent your interests.**

**In order to achieve this privilege we need the critical mass necessary to demonstrate and support a demand for recognition. This means that every single member of the National Ambulance Service needs to join with us in NASRA if they are serious about having the right to consultation and inclusion.**

**We have completed all the requirements needed to represent your voice on these and other critical issues concerning Paramedics but we need your vote. If as paramedics we are serious about our professional entitlements, about the right to justice, about our appropriate grade and retirement age about a compensation scheme for Paramedics about achieving the respect from our employer our profession demands then we need you to join the movement to obtain this.**

**To be truly effective as a trade union we need a mandate from the majority of Paramedics in the service.**

**If like so many of your fellow paramedics, you feel let down yet again by the current trade unions misuse of your negotiation rights, then there is only one last form of effective action left open to you. That is to march with your membership, join NASRA and allow us to your protest in the strongest possible way.**

## NASRA tackles the NAS Transfer Policy

The issues arising from the National Transfer Policy and lack thereof have been formalised in this letter which was sent to Mr Robert Morton. It is our intention to bring to managements attention the hardships being suffered by some of our colleagues which could be avoided if the National Ambulance Service had not failed its paramedics by having no workable transfer policy in situ. It is our intention –failing a meaningful dialogue with the same management to seek the assistance of the LRC or Labour Court in an attempt to establish a TRANSPARENT, WORKABLE NATIONAL TRANSFER POLICY.

The ludicrous situation that exists at present where a member who requests and is offered a transfer must first resign their existing position, followed by a term of transient unemployment in anticipation of the transfer becoming a reality. That they then must accept a new contract within the same service ( a supposedly National Service,) is just unacceptable.

NASRA want to make it crystal clear to the same management that this lack of transfer policy is a direct contributor to financial and emotional hardship, family stress, the accruing of hundreds of KMs round trips to and from stations which are several counties away from ones home, along with the added fiscal burdens of overnight accommodation, and ever increasing fuel prices for which no remuneration is paid. In direct contrast to the HSE's own published 'Family Friendly Policy'-this non-policy is pulverizing paramedics and their families lives to pieces. Is it not shameful that the caring profession cannot-or will not take care of its own? Tokenism will no longer be accepted. Neither will the adage that it is a 'National Ambulance Service '(meaning you will go where you are told to go)-as shown in the opening paragraph it is increasingly an a la carte 'National Ambulance Service'.

I have no doubt that the transfer policy issue will progress to a third party where all our issues and examples of the aforementioned hardships will be brought to light. I also have no doubt that any other issues and grievances will also be forwarded to a third party for resolution now,

and in the future in the absence of consultation and discussion. With your continued support, NASRA will not be found wanting when it comes to representing you, the paramedic. We continue to do this, and will continue to forward all issues, (not just this transfer policy issue,) that impact our colleagues lives, to the relevant most senior authority for resolution- as is our right. We will continue to do this despite the NAS management schoolyard exclusion policy. In the interim, we would appreciate examples of hardships or difficulties being made known to your station/ regional representatives. In the absence of a representative, please contact the office and we will return your call.

We will of course, be informing you all of updates as they occur, either on our website or in our next issue of 'FRONTLINE'.

With every good wish  
Tony Gregg

For a copy of this correspondence please go to the NASRA website

# NASRA Your Union Fighting for Your Rights

I am writing to you as Chairman of the National Ambulance Service Representative Association as the members of NASRA and to your colleagues whom are not yet members of NASRA.

NASRA was set up to identify the inadequacies within our employment and through consultation with management to resolve any issues with our employer through the industrial relations mechanism's already in place. We knew from the start that this was going to be a slow and arduous endeavor, due in the main to the cosy relationships between other unions and management. NASRA will not be sending its members on junkets to other jurisdictions as thank you for your support, nor will we sign off on any policy without informing ALL our members and receiving a mandate from our members. NASRA IS ONLY INTERESTED IN YOUR EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS and conditions of employment that there is a fair and transparent workable industrial relations mechanism in place.

To date we have travelled the length and breadth of the country and will continue to do so to discuss NASRA but also to inform all employees of the NAS that there is an alternative for each and every one of you. At these meetings across the country I have heard all or nearly all the rumours and innuendo regarding NASRA and to date none of them stand the test and all are unfounded.

Let me just say, to date NASRA have hundreds of all NAS employees signed up to this union. Let me say that again, hundreds of all NAS

employees are members of NASRA, from EMT, Paramedic, Emergency Medical Controller, Advanced Paramedic and Leading Emergency Medical Technician. We have been on a recruitment drive over the past twelve months and we have listened to the good and not so good, but the one thing I take from all these meetings is the genuine problems and issues, the support and understanding of all of you, the NAS employee.

No matter what way you look at it there has to be major changes to the way YOU the NAS employee is represented, and to me and so many others within the NAS is a union from us, for us and run by us the NAS employee. You only have to look at our other Emergency Services colleagues in The Garda Representative Association, The Prison Officers Association and our colleagues in the armed service, PDFORRA. These associations represent employees of their own profession, not the porters, housekeepers, gardeners, security, catering or anyone else, only those within their own remit.

Take the time to look at a pay slip from 2008 and compare that to 2012 look at what you have lost in that short time and no one is listening to you. Look at the changes to your daily work practices and no one is listening to you and you have no say. It's called the National Ambulance Service and yet 80% of its policies are still local policies with a spin. Colleagues, to have a private company (which SIPTU is) representing Public Service Employees is a complete contradiction. The only true representation that you can have is

from like minded people doing the same job as you day in and day out but with a complete understanding of the pressures and difficulties that we have to endure.

For years I have listened to ambulance crews complaining at the back of ambulances, outside ambulance bases, in their bases, outside hospitals, accident and emergency departments, down corridors, in canteens and even on the side of the road. Each and every one of us is guilty and that includes myself. However there is an alternative and better way, take the leap of faith in your colleagues and unite yourself to one union with one objective YOU!

If you are not consulted how can you have fair employment terms? You need to find your voice and that can be achieved through NASRA. It is 12 months since we began this journey and now it is time for you to come onboard. Join Nasra and find your voice and collectively we can achieve the respect and proper industrial Relations that each and every one of you is entitled to.

No more are we to be splintered and divided, band together under NASRA and become the strongest union within the HSE with one voice, YOURS! The National Ambulance Service Representative Association needs your support and in return you will have our full support and expertise to represent you at all levels with one voice and equality for all.

Yours Sincerely,  
Mick Dixon

## Information Box

### We Need to Hear News From You

It's your Frontline.....

We want to hear from you. If you have information or photographs concerning industrial relations or union issues, station or community news, that you want to share with your colleagues then send it to us at Frontline email: [admin@nasra.ie](mailto:admin@nasra.ie) or phone: 045 852300

For details on your Station Representatives and dates for upcoming National meetings please contact NASRA HQ for information on 045 852 300

The Representatives from Nasra will be visiting stations region by region in the coming months. We would hope to have the majority of areas covered and to have any queries answered before 2nd Delegate Conference which will be held Friday, 11th May, Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone.



If any NASRA members are bikers and interested in starting a Paramedics Biker Club, Contact Jim Dooley on 087 6498183 or [jimemt96@eircom.net](mailto:jimemt96@eircom.net)

Visit the NASRA Website for up to date information at [www.Nasra.ie](http://www.Nasra.ie)



**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

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



(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