

Issued by the Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA).

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## **Medical Scientists to ballot for industrial action**

### **Medical Scientists call on HSE to lift suppression of posts**

Medical Scientists will ballot members for industrial action in the coming weeks due to the HSE's suppression of posts vacant on 31st December 2023, and failure to replace posts vacant since then.

A motion on a ballot was passed unanimously at the 2024 Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA) AGM.

Many Medical Scientist posts were vacant on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 due to the longstanding recruitment and retention crisis in the profession, and the situation has worsened since then with further posts becoming vacant.

MLSA Chairperson Mairead Ní Mhuimhneacháin said: "The HSE has suppressed these frontline posts without assessing the impact on service of the permanent loss of these posts, and has refused to share data with Trade Unions on how many funded and approved vacancies have been suppressed.

"And furthermore, many Medical Scientist vacancies since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 are not being approved or prioritised."

Medical Scientists carry out critical diagnostic testing of patient samples in public hospitals across the country and have been warning the HSE for many years about serious risks to laboratory services, due to its failure to train sufficient numbers of registered Medical Scientists.

MLSA General Secretary Terry Casey said: "The demands on laboratory services continue to grow and Medical Scientists continue to try to keep services going at great personal cost. Medical Scientists can no longer sustain current levels of service and cannot afford to let the situation go unchallenged."

The MLSA is joining other health care unions, including Forsa, INMO and Connect in balloting staff because of the serious risk to patient and staff health, safety and welfare.

In a letter to the HSE, the MLSA stated the following reasons for balloting members on industrial action.

1. *The suppression by the HSE of critical approved medical scientist posts that were vacant on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 and which are necessary for the provision of safe services;*
2. *The failure to fill funded medical scientist posts that have fallen vacant since that date;*
3. *The ongoing refusal of the HSE to engage with the HSE staff panel of unions on the rationale and methodology of the Pay and Numbers Strategy and its effect on safe delivery of health services to the public and on the safety, health and wellbeing of our members.*

## **Further Information**

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## **Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA)**

The MLSA is the Trade Union representing Medical Scientists, the scientific professionals who carry out critical diagnostic testing of patient samples. It represents more than 2,000 Medical Scientists employed in public voluntary hospitals, HSE hospitals, private hospitals and the Irish Blood Transfusion Service. [www.mlsa.ie](http://www.mlsa.ie)

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