

Paramedic reinstated after High Court settlement of disciplinary matter

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A legal action brought by a paramedic trying to stop disciplinary action against him has been settled out of court, following a period of suspension stemming from his involvement in a work-to-rule by a non-recognised union in 2018.

The paramedic, a member of the National Ambulance Service Representative Association (NASRA), took part in a work-to-rule in October 2018. Disciplinary proceedings were then initiated against him. During his suspension he was on paid administrative leave.

NASRA is a branch of the Psychiatric Nurses' Association (PNA), a non-ICTU union. The union is not recognised by the HSE for collective bargaining in respect of paramedics. The HSE recognises SIPTU, Unite and Fórsa for employees of the National Ambulance Service. The PNA/NASRA ran an industrial action campaign seeking recognition in 2018.

The work to rule in October 2018 involved standing down vehicles that were not inspected. Earlier that year the HSE moved to get a Court injunction against planned industrial action by NASRA at that time. A NASRA strike did not go ahead in 2018, but there were strike days the following year.

The paramedic had secured an injunction in February 2022, halting disciplinary action against him, after his counsel, Helen Callanan SC and William Maher BL, told the judge he was at risk of dismissal.

The worker claimed he joined the dispute in 2018 and had worked within the confinements and remit of industrial action and would "never have put anyone's health or welfare at risk."

PNA general secretary Peter Hughes said the settlement "affirmed the right of all of its members in NASRA to engage in official industrial action." The union said the HSE agreed to pay the worker's legal costs.