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connect

TRADE UNION

Paddy Kavanagh *General Secretary/Treasurer*



Thursday, 2nd April

Connect trade union calls for government clarity on what are essential services

Connect trade union has called on the government to clarify the process whereby companies are defined as providing essential services and institute a clear procedure for dealing with complaints in regard to the following of social distancing guidelines and other issues related to the Covid-19 crisis in workplaces.

Connect General Secretary, Paddy Kavanagh, said: “The current manner in which companies are self-declaring themselves as providing essential services and thereby necessitating workers to attend their workplaces is not acceptable. As a union our members fully support the national effort to overcome the current Covid-19 crisis, however, a failure to adequately consider and communicate which companies should be determined to be providing essential services will undermine this vital struggle.

“In the interest of workers and public health a body must be allocated, or be brought together, to assume the role of considering which companies are providing essential services which are needed to assist the struggle against the threat of coronavirus in Ireland or internationally.

“Our members are willing to fully play their part during this time of national emergency by following clear decisions, which are backed by medical advice, in relation to when they must work. The failure of the government to act quickly and engage with our union on this vital issue threatens to undermine our members resolve.

“Another issue which must immediately be addressed by the government is which body is responsible for dealing with complaints in relation to the enforcement of social distancing, the imposition of proper hygiene practices and the provision of adequate Personal Protective Equipment within workplaces. This body could be the Health and Safety Authority or others. Whichever body, or bodies, are assigned this crucial role must be fully resourced to meet the demand that will be placed upon them.”

He added: “Many Connect trade union members are on the frontline in the struggle to protect our communities and wider society during this time of national emergency. It is a role they are proud to play. It is essential that their resolve is not undermined during this critical period by any sense of a lack of leadership on key issues such as what are essential services and complaint procedures.

“We have contacted government officials concerning these issues but have yet to receive a satisfactory response or evidence of any actions taken. These issues are of such immediate importance to Connect members and to public health that we must now publicly call on the government to resolve them immediately.

“If there is a continuing failure to adequately deal with these issues, we will have to consult with the members involved concerning what action they are willing to take to protect themselves and the public.”

Paddy Kavanagh
Connect General Secretary



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