

Trade union numbers growing overall, 46 unions now on Register

## **ANDY PRENDERGAST**

**One new trade union was registered in 2024, bringing the total of unions and employer associations in the Republic of Ireland to 46, while the total ICTU union membership base continues recovery.**

The single new union added to the Register of Friendly Societies (RFS) in 2024 was The Employee Pharmacist Association of Ireland.

This non-ICTU association said it “champions pharmacists’ professional development, working conditions, and rights in Ireland through dedicated legal support, career advancement resources, and proactive public relations advocacy”.

There are now 46 trade unions on the Register of Friendly Societies; 32 are employee unions (most of which are ICTU-affiliated), nine employer associations and five trade associations (see below). Eight trade unions were removed from the register in 2022 for failing to file returns and respond to cancellation notices from the RFS.

Trade union membership in ICTU-affiliated unions stood at 523,723 in 2024, up slightly on the previous year. The total number of Congress union members has recovered from a dip after the onset of the Covid pandemic.

The pattern of an increasing membership in the last couple of years changes the trend since the financial crisis; before the crash, ICTU unions membership was north of 600,000, but by a decade later it was closer to 500,000.

The unions that have seen an increase in membership since the pandemic are mostly public service, like the teacher unions, the INMO, SIPTU and the AHCPS – while others such as Mandate have seen a decline (its membership is particularly exposed to the decline in ‘bricks and mortar’ retail).

There has been a more significant increase in membership in Northern Ireland, up 7.5% since 2020, now standing at 213,843, bringing the total ICTU membership base to 737,566 in 2024.

## **EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER UNIONS**

The trade unions on the Register at 31 December 2024 are:

### **Employee Unions**

- Alliance of Family Doctors
- Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants
- Association of Irish Traditional Musicians
- Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
- Building and Allied Trades Union
- Communications Workers’ Union
- Connect Trade Union
- Dairy Executives Association

- Energy Services Union
- Fórsa
- GMB
- Guinness Staff Association
- Financial Services Union
- Independent Workers Union
- Irish Federation of University Teachers
- The Irish Film Workers Association
- Irish Medical Organisation
- Irish National Teachers Organisation
- Irish Postmasters Union
- Mandate
- Medical Laboratory Scientists' Association
- National Bus and Rail Union
- Operative Plasterers and Allied Trades Society of Ireland
- Prison Officers Association
- Psychiatric Nurses Association of Ireland
- Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- The Employee Pharmacist Association of Ireland
- The Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation
- Union of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland
- Veterinary Ireland
- Veterinary Officers Association

#### **Employer Associations**

- Construction Industry Federation
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation
- Irish Hotels Federation
- Irish Pharmacy Union
- Irish Printing Federation
- Licensed Vintners' Association

- Regional Newspapers and Printers Association of Ireland
- The Irish Dental Association
- The Society of the Irish Motor Industry

**Trade Associations**

- Association of Electrical Contractors (Ireland)
- Business Retail Union of Ireland
- Electrical Industries Federation of Ireland
- Irish Hairdressers' Federation
- Limerick and Clare Milk Producers Association