



**CWU 11th
Biennial Conference**
May 2022, Athlone

Shaping the Future Union

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General





Union Mission Statement

“We will build an organising Union that prospers through excellence in service and commitment to recruitment.

We will be innovative in our responses to change by being progressive in our outlook, and determined in our efforts to always act in the best interests of the Union and its members.

We will, in solidarity with other like minded organisations, campaign for economic and social justice, for freedom of association and respect for human rights and the dignity of all who suffer from oppression or prejudice, whatever its form.”

Foreword

At the outset I extend a *Céad Míle Fáilte* to delegates, NEC, and guests to this, our 11th Biennial Conference. As we gather in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone to review events since our last Conference, we will do so with mixed emotions. Relief, as we move to the next juncture of the Covid-19 pandemic. Delight at our ability to meet up with colleagues, but with caution as to the next phase. Uncertainty, as to the long-term financial implications. Sadness too, for the loss of friends and loved ones.

There will also be outrage at the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the appalling attacks on peoples' homes, workplaces, and their country's infrastructure. While we unequivocally call on the restoration of peace, we must also act in solidarity to assist our brothers and sisters by support with humanitarian aid.

Moving to the Irish Trade Union movement, the membership figures speak for themselves: a 15% decline in the last 10 years with less than 13% in the private sector. Nonetheless progress is being made at ICTU/UNI Global Union level and there are good grounds for optimism. That said, we must continue the good fight to maximise our own influence and grow our membership base. We must continue to work collaboratively with the ICTU, UNI Global Union and other like-minded Unions to face these challenges, making the best use of our resources to safeguard our future. Throughout Covid-19, the leadership of Congress, in particular General Secretary, Patricia King, demonstrated the power and relevance of the Trade Union movement. The Executive Council's well documented **No Going Back** strategy, set the agenda for us all.

For our part, we must re-energise the CWU Mission, which is as relevant today as when we adopted it over 20 years ago. We certainly should be proud of what we do and of our achievements. However, we can and must do better, building on what we have, striving for excellence. We must be active and tough in representing and tackling difficult issues, standing up to employers, management, and politicians. Trust is earned and we must be at our members' side when needed. They must have confidence, and management must know: we will act whenever the need arises - including with financial support.

We have a proud history of being a campaigning Union with a recognisable public profile, that demonstrates to members we will fight for them. I will ensure the CWU continues our very active involvement in full support of ICTU/UNI Global Union.

On the membership front, the trend is obvious and although investments are healthy, there are significant underlying concerns. It is therefore paramount that we place "organising, recruitment and retention" centre stage in everything we do. The revised Head Office Structure agreed by the Officials and NEC will ensure a real and dedicated focus to recruitment in all areas.

The change of leadership presented an ideal opportunity to reflect and review on all aspects of our business. In shaping the future of the CWU, it's important to establish a vision and direction, generating an ethos that the Trade Union movement is a force for good. We have acted quickly to develop strategic plans for the CWU Organisation: Organising, Recruitment and Retention, Finance, and Communications being key. We must have a progressive approach to remain relevant, nurturing new talent, embracing all constituencies, as everyone has a stake in the future. Our objective includes being the face and voice of the Communications sector and not leave it to others.

As General Secretary, my responsibility is to set the tone and tempo, to lead with conviction, vision, and direction. What we do, or fail to do, will shape the trajectory of the Union for the next 5-10 years. I am absolutely convinced that, with your support, we will emerge a better Union, strengthened by the challenges ahead. The ultimate measure is not where we stand when times are good, but where we stand at times of change and challenge.



*Seán McDonagh,
General Secretary,
Communications
Workers' Union*

The outlook in the eComms Sector remains as challenging as ever with regulation and competition exposure being the main forces of change. Our members' interest in eir has the added dimension of a very profitable company, managed by French owners NJJ, but leveraged by huge debt. The business and its brand have suffered enormously because the focus has been to extract return for investors, with curtailment of much needed investment. This cash extraction has resulted in poor customer services primarily related to staff and skill shortages. The recent appointment of Oliver Loomes as CEO and the stated focus by the Company regarding customer care appears to signal a positive change, which, if materialises, will be both welcomed and supported by the CWU. The ultimate test for eir management is their investment in staffing and a declaration of its intended employee levels to maintain services.

Equally, the National Broadband debacle, which places eir and KN/Circet central to the provision of vital community services is testimony to the failure of politicians and the regulator. The ownership, cost and subsequent essential public service provision has too many similarities to the failures associated with the building of the National Children's Hospital.

In the Postal/Courier sector, the changing profile of mail and retail counter services, both of which have been accelerated because of Covid-19 are the main issues. An Post absorbed the costs of Covid-19 and the consequential impact on its business, postponing price increases. Government was lauded over the provision of valuable essential services with little or no support for the Company or its staff. To the contrary in fact, they welcomed with open arms developments at Amazon, which is a real threat to the postal industry generally, but in particular the national carrier and its employees.

Sustainable national postal services are not possible without the main stakeholders' support, as such a business model will inevitably be taken advantage of by the gig economy. This will result in a diminution of services, threat to the universal service obligation and a threat to conditions of employment. Curtailment of pay and pension entitlements is not the answer and should not be expected or countenanced by staff or pensioners. The CWU is working with ICTU in seeking tangible financial support from government.

In the other companies operating in both sectors the Union's obligation is to support a level competitive playing field and to ensure staff are provided with comparative pay and conditions of employment.

The CWU and its representatives should be proud of its history and achievements. At Conference we will celebrate our members' dedication and professionalism in ensuring the maintenance of essential services throughout the pandemic, keeping communities connected. I am eternally grateful to all our representatives and Head Office staff, for their trojan work in ensuring the Union's business and service to members was maintained to such a high degree during these difficult times.

This Conference presents the opportunity to debate policy and develop our strategic plans for the CWU going forward. Your input to this is vital and I very much look forward to hearing your views and suggestions. Our value is predicated on broad participation, open dialogue, operating an inclusive approach that values all views. Success depends on commitment, appropriate structures, resources, and a determined focus at all levels, with leadership from the top. In a way we have everything to gain and nothing to lose if we embrace change and work diligently to achieve our goals.

While I have referenced the critical issues above, this report sets out the wide ranging and detailed work of the Union over the past eighteen months. On taking up the role as General Secretary last September, I committed to re-energising our organisation. We have made good progress and I look forward to moving to the next stage, which starts now, with your support, with a successful Conference here in Athlone that will set our agenda for the next two years. I'm very heartened by the commitment of our activists and positive reception at the AGMs, which confirms to me the CWU is up for the challenge. I wish all our delegates a successful Conference and I look forward to listening to the debates and meeting you all after too long an absence.

Union Structure & Organisation

Biennial Conference 2020

Following several unsuccessful attempts to convene our 10th Biennial Conference in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, the National Executive Council decided to convene a remote teleConference on the 21st and 22nd October 2020. In doing so, the Union led the way by embracing the technological advances to ensure the Union's business was not diverted because of the COVID-19 constraints. The Head Office team, led by Office Manager, Imelda Hyland, organised a truly successful event, completing all aspects of Conference at our own state of the art Conference facilities at William Norton House. The President, Mike O'Connor, attained the added accolade of successfully guiding the Union through the early period of the pandemic, culminating in steering delegates through their unchartered first remote Conference. The Conference concluded the agenda by electing Willie Mooney as President to take up the mantle until May 2022, with optimism of convening a traditional Conference in Athlone.

National Executive Council Election

- Willie Mooney (*President*)
- Jason Caulfield
- Catriona Dewane
- Frank Donohoe
- Jonathon Donnelly
- Ken Good
- Paul Kennedy
- Vinny Kilroy
- Anthony McCrave
- Deirdre Medlar
- Ellen Moore
- Tara Ravenhill
- Adrian Scanlon
- Gerry Sexton
- Michael Wall
- Ivor Reynolds (*Vice-President*)
- Pascal Connolly
- Alan Dempsey
- John Dunleavy
- Stephen Elliott
- Deborah Flannery
- Thomas Hayes
- Frank Joyce
- Shane Murphy
- Michael O'Toole (*retired*)
- Gerry Perry
- Tom Sheehan
- Pat Sheridan

General Secretary -Appointment

Following confirmation by Steve Fitzpatrick in February 2021 of his intention to retire as General Secretary, the National Executive Council immediately commenced the process of advertising and filling the position. In May, following an internal competitive process, the National Executive Council unanimously endorsed the appointment of Seán McDonagh as General Secretary Designate. It was subsequently agreed that he would, following a three-month transitional handover, take up his new assignment as General Secretary on the 1st September 2021. We wish Steve and his family every good wish in his retirement.

Deputy General Secretary – Appointment

In September 2021, the National Executive Council confirmed the appointment of Ian McArdle, to the position of Deputy General Secretary of the CWU. Ian has a proven track record, with over twenty years' experience as a Trade Union Official. He joined CWU in 2006 as National Officer, with responsibility for Organising and Regulatory Affairs in the postal and telecommunications industries.

Shaping the Future Union - CWU Strategic Plan

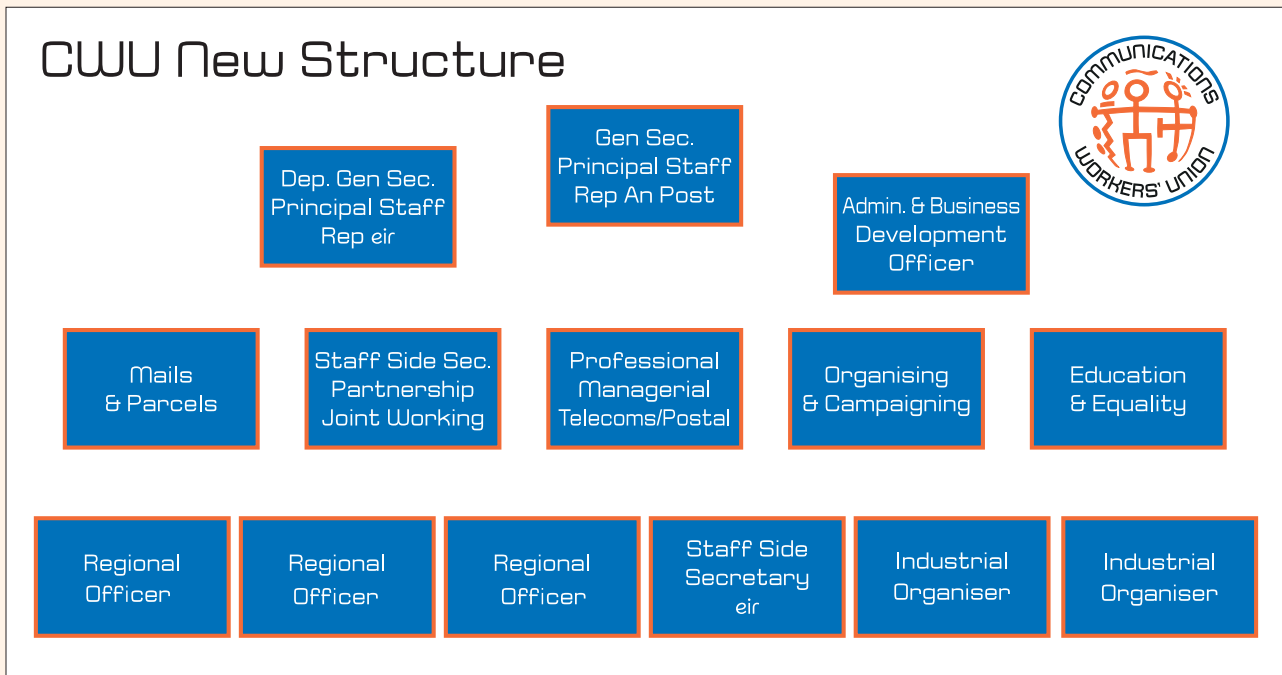
In September 2021, the General Secretary initiated development of a strategic plan entitled **Shaping the Future Union**. The objective being to re-energise our mission, to establish a vision and direction, to ensure our effectiveness in progressing the interests of communications workers and secure the long-term future of this great Union. Within three months an organisational overhaul commenced, with the undertaking of a complete review of all aspects of the Union's business.

Head Office - New Structure

Agreement was concluded on a renewed and re-energised Head Office structure, which will ensure a focused attention to the core aspects of the CWU mission statement.

The changes agreed by the Officials and the National Executive Council ensures:

- Alignment of responsibilities, to reflect the size of the organisation
- Improved service to members, making best use of resources
- Harnesses experience, promoting Teamwork
- Financial Accountability
- Organising as a Top Priority
- Maintaining commitments to ICTU, UNI Global



Organising/Recruitment & Campaigning

In response to our declining income and membership, the Union is advocating a control of costs in tandem with investment in a membership growth strategy. Organising, recruitment and retention are central to this and are a core responsibility of all Officers. Together with workplace activity, these are key to achieving our goal of defending, expanding and (re)building our organisation. As part of this renewed focus, the role of the existing Organisers has been expanded to combine organising and the industrial relations agenda. We have expanded on our plans in the Organising and Campaigning section of this report. We can't shoulder this responsibility on our own and for this reason the CWU will work hand-in-glove with ICTU, UNI Global Union and like-minded Unions.

Officers

- General Secretary: Seán McDonagh
- Deputy General Secretary: Ian McArdle
- National Officer: Carol Scheffer
- National Officer (An Post): Cormac Ó Dálaigh
- National Officer: John Clarke
- National Officer: Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin
- Staff Side Secretary (An Post): Pat Kenny
- Staff Side Secretary (eir): Tom Sheehan
- Industrial Organiser: Diarmuid O'Connell
- Industrial Organiser: Laura McKenna
- Administration & Business Development Officer: Imelda Hyland

- Regional Officer: John Tansey
- Regional Officer: Jarlath Heneghan
- Regional Officer: Bill Colfer

CWU Administrative Team Members

- Ruth Dungan
- Ciara Melinn
- Lorraine Newman
- Adrienne Power
- Fan Ryan
- Sarah Vaughan
- Canford Danga (Finance Assistant)
- Sandra Connors (Service Operative)

The CWU would like to thank Jimmy O'Connor for all the work he puts into the running of the Humanitarian Aid Fund on behalf of our members.

Branch Rationalisation – Consultation Process

Central to our strategy to focus on membership growth, the Union is obliged to make sure we make the best use of our resources to maintain and improve services to members. This is critical to the continued success of CWU. Having implemented a new Head Office structure, the next step is an examination of the Branch structures. In any changes we adopt, the opportunity must remain for our members' input and contact across the country. In the main, our structures have served the Union well but in the current context, a review of what works best for the organisation is timely. The Rationalisation Sub-Committee sought the views of Branches of the Professional & Managerial, Postal and Telecom Branch Structures and a report will be made to Conference in May.

Trade Union Relations

The Communications Workers' Union has, for many years, been steadfast in its approach to working in solidarity with both National and International unions and confederations. As part of the *Shaping the Future Union* strategy, the CWU has restated its commitment to working hand in glove with the ICTU, UNI Global Union and like-minded unions.



Irish Congress of Trade Unions

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions held its Biennial Delegates Conference in Belfast in October 2022. The Conference was held amidst complicated guidance surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, with delegates travelling to attend in person from all over the Island and abroad. It is a credit to the organisers that the Conference was a great success.

At the Conference, General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, was elected to the National Executive Council and Head of Organising Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin was re-elected, retaining two seats for the CWU on the NEC of Congress.

Both CWU Motions to the BDC were agreed by the Conference. The first – seeking Collective Bargaining provisions in public contracts highlighted the signing of the contract for the National Broadband Plan, at a cost of €3 billion. The contract was signed in the absence of any obligation on contractors to respect trade unions or collective bargaining. As the most expensive third-party contract in the history of the state, creating in excess of one thousand direct jobs, it represents a missed opportunity that must not be permitted to happen in the future. Securing a commitment that all future public contracts will contain provisions to facilitate collective bargaining is of key importance to the future of telecoms in Ireland and to the strategic future of the CWU.

The second Motion passed at BDC sought provision of financial support for carrying out essential services during and post-Covid-19 and the development of a strategic business model for mails and retail services in An Post. The Motion acknowledges the trojan efforts of staff and management at An Post in maintaining essential Nationwide services throughout the pandemic and noted that An Post had absorbed the significant

financial costs of these efforts with no financial assistance or support from Government. The Motion called on Government to provide tangible financial support to An Post for the provision of essential services and that An Post should jointly develop a strategic business model for future Mails and Retail services with the relevant employee stakeholders.

CWU involvement in ICTU

- Seán McDonagh – Executive Council
- Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin – Executive Council
- Ian McArdle – Private Sector
- Carol Scheffer – Equality
- Pat Kenny – Health & Safety

Retired Members' Committee

- Joe Guinan
- JJ Higgins
- Paddy Costello
- Margaret Jenkins

Low Pay Commission

In 2021, Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin, National Officer, was re-appointed to the Low Pay Commission to represent the interests of employees, together with Michael Taft, SIPTU. In addition to the Commission's role in making recommendations to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to set a Minimum Wage in Ireland, this year the Commission is also charged, under the Programme for Government, with examining progression to a Living Wage and a Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilot.



UNI Global Union

The CWU continues its long-standing support for international trade union affairs through its affiliation with UNI Global Union. UNI Global Union builds union power to improve workers' lives everywhere. As a global union federation with affiliates in 150 countries, UNI uses collective strength to expand collective bargaining, advance social and economic justice, hold corporations accountable and transform an unfair global economy.

UNI has negotiated over 50 global agreements and protocols that have secured the rights of tens-of-millions-of workers worldwide. These agreements are vital tools to level the playing field between workers and multinational corporations, and they create frameworks for workers to organise and negotiate free from fear and intimidation.

CWU involvement in UNI

Carol Scheffer, National Officer, was elected President of the UNI Europa Women's Committee at the 6th UNI Europa Women's Conference held in April 2021, that gathered 118 unions participating from 33 countries. The Conference set out the key strategic priorities for the Committee, including Violence and Economic Inequalities; Health Inequalities; Digitalisation.

Seán McDonagh, General Secretary, represents the CWU on the UNI Europa Post & Logistics, EU Social Dialogue Committee.

Ian McArdle, Deputy General Secretary, represents the CWU on the UNI Europa ICTS Committee and the Telecoms Social Dialogue Committee.

Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin, National Officer, represents the CWU on the Amazon Alliance and the Alphabet (Google) Alliance.

Pat Kenny, Staff Side Secretary, An Post, represents the CWU on the Health & Safety Committee.

CWU Trustees

The Union wishes to thank the four Trustees for their cooperation and dedication to detail in overseeing the Union's finances on behalf of our members.

The Trustees are:

- Dick O'Leary
- Jim McCann
- Frank Joyce
- Pat Compton

Branch Microsoft Account

The CWU issued a Microsoft Office account with a CWU email address to all Branches. Going forward, Headquarters will only issue emails to the Branch email account and will stop using personal email addresses for communications with Branches. This is to meet GDPR compliance and to ensure all records and access are confined to the CWU.

Helping the Environment

CWU has installed two Beehives on the roof of Headquarters as part of our commitment to the environment and the fight against climate change. Because of the impact of global warming, bees are under threat. Our beekeeper, Kieran Harnett, who looks after the beehives, advises they are a good barometer of what's going on elsewhere in the environment.



John Egan RIP

In December 2020, John Egan, a dear friend, colleague and staunch CWU activist, passed away very suddenly. He was the eir Staff Side Secretary to the JCC and Dublin No 1 Branch Secretary for over sixteen years. He was known throughout the Union as a safe pair of hands to the benefit of members in eir. He is sadly missed, and we convey our deepest sympathy to his family, friends and colleagues for his untimely loss. In his memory, the CWU have set up an Education Bursary, which the Finance Committee will administer.



Paddy (Porry) Redmond RIP

It was with great sadness we learned of the passing of Paddy Redmond. A committed Trade Unionist, he was also the commander and chief of various social gatherings, possessing a unique ability to bring people together. Delegates attending Conferences will recall with fondness his stamina and good humour in ensuring they were entertained to the small hours of the morning. The CWU conveys its deepest sympathy to his family. Paddy's memory and catch phrase, "*Your friend, my friend everybody's friend*", will ring in our hearts and in our minds forever more.



Trade Union Organising

Organising, recruitment and retention are central to the future of our Union. The Postal/Courier and eComms landscape has changed immeasurably in the last decades. Where before, the CWU was intrinsic to the fabric of two or three main employers, the sectors have expanded to include not just new employers, but new modes of work and new models of employment.

If we are to secure a strong voice for workers in our sectors for the years to come, this means consolidating in areas where our membership has been traditionally robust, while also strengthening in those newer areas.

Under the *Shaping the Future Union* strategy, as agreed by the National Executive, Organising will no longer be treated as a separate function but will be embedded into every action and function of our Union. As a result of this renewed focus, the role of the existing Organisers has been expanded to combine organising and the industrial relations agenda. The positions have been re-graded as Industrial Organisers and going forward, will be working closely with the National Officers to execute the overall Organising Strategy for the Union.

It has been agreed by the NEC that Organising is a core responsibility of all Officers. Together with workplace activity, these are key to achieving our goal of defending, expanding and (re)building our organisation. Of course, we will only succeed by providing the necessary resources and by supporting our Branch Activists, who are essential to organising and recruitment, with the tools and skills to do their job.

National and International Context

The trade union movement's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was a triumph for collectivism and was guided and assisted throughout by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. In that spirit of collectivism, it was reasserted at the recent ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference that strengthening the trade union movement in Ireland is an imperative for all ICTU affiliates and that we must work together if we are to achieve this common objective.

Motions to that Conference clearly indicated a momentum and commitment to the role of Organising as a central pillar of ensuring the rights of workers through trade union membership and activism. As a result, a number of initiatives have been established to develop collaborative, cross-union strategies to build trade union profile, presence and membership.

Collective bargaining coverage in Ireland has been in gradual decline for the last 25 years, in the absence of robust legislation underpinning the right of workers to bargain collectively and to have their trade union recognised by their employer. Congress continues to seek the expansion of these rights, within the ETUC, to progress the delivery of the proposed Draft EU Directive on adequate minimum wages and collective bargaining coverage, published in October 2020. The Draft Directive seeks to promote collective bargaining in countries where it applies to fewer than 70% of workers. As a country with just over 33% collective bargaining coverage, Ireland would be obliged to "*establish an action plan to promote collective bargaining*". Similarly, the ICTU continues to use its voice through the Irish Government-established High Level Expert Group on Collective Bargaining to ensure that trade union demands are enshrined in any recommendation implemented by Government.

The Low Pay Commission in Ireland has been tasked with examining the introduction of a Living Wage within the lifetime of this Government. The introduction of a Living Wage could address the significant gap between the current Minimum Wage and a worker's ability to live a dignified life in a country where the cost of living is prohibitively high. It is expected that the Commission's recommendations on a Living Wage will be put to a public consultation in 2022.

Internationally, unions continue to explore new ways of collaborating in an increasingly globalised world. Multinational companies operate across continents and the trade union movement must mobilise globally to meet the challenges presented by these often anti-union giants. Through affiliation with UNI Global Union, the CWU works together with sister Unions to explore and develop Organising Strategies in both established sectors and the growing digital world of work, notably as members of both the Amazon and Google Alliances.

Covid-19 Response: Training & Inductions

Relationship building through face-to-face interactions are the bedrock of building successful Organising campaigns. The restrictions that were imposed as part of the response to the pandemic meant that the

Organising Department had to move from their traditional means of engaging with workers to the online environment.

This meant that the Organising Training Programme had to be adapted so that it could be delivered remotely. The new platform facilitated full group participation, enabling our activists to shape the strategy of campaigns. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, workers were able to continue to build power and collectively meet the challenges they faced in their workplace.

Union inductions are a key ingredient in maintaining the power that CWU has built in our workplaces. Due to the demands of our sectors, employers continued to recruit new staff to their operations during the pandemic and by necessity, the Organising Department had to respond by moving inductions online. While the online training proved a success, online inductions were more challenging, as the face-to-face interaction, which is vital at induction, was curtailed. At the time of writing, we can report that in-person inductions have recommenced following the lifting of restrictions and a high proportion of inductees are joining CWU.

Synchro Retail Stores

In October, eir announced a plan to bring its franchised retail shops in-house. Synchro has been running more than 30 stores across the country for eir. Workers in Synchro were informed they would be moving to eir under the Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) on the 1st January 2022. Following the news, a number of Synchro staff contacted the CWU with concerns regarding their terms and conditions. Workers in Synchro were not collectively represented by the CWU and the majority had less favourable terms and conditions than members directly employed by eir.

Organisers arranged zoom meetings over the course of several weeks and workers made the decision to organise into the CWU. Membership grew significantly and consultation meetings were secured with both Synchro and eir. As a result, members successfully negotiated through the TUPE process and the full harmonisation of these members into eir was completed at the end of January.

Vodafone Organising

The Vodafone Branch Secretary, Shane Murphy, conducted a round of store visits in Autumn 2021 to meet with retail staff and identify and discuss the challenges they face in the course of their work. Through this engagement, a theme began to emerge in relation to the pressures our members face in relation to targets, staffing levels and the overall impact of these issues on their mental wellbeing.

In order to collectivise these issues and bring our members' experience to Vodafone Management, a follow-up online survey of retail staff was conducted. The survey revealed that a large proportion of our members felt that inadequate staffing levels were leading to increased workloads, resulting in difficulty meeting targets and achieving commission. The survey revealed that the culmination of these factors was adversely impacting our members, with 92% of members reporting that current targets were having a negative impact on their mental wellbeing, while 51% of respondents reported that they thought about targets excessively when they go home.

Armed with the feedback of members, the Branch Committee engaged with Vodafone Management to voice our members' concerns and put measures in place to address the issues at play. Following negotiations, the Branch won a 20% reduction in targets and a commitment to review store targets on a case-by-case basis, where staffing shortages have occurred. In addition, and in recognition of the increasingly complex nature of the retail role, the Company has agreed to introduce reading breaks for staff.

Member participation in this campaign was central to shaping the industrial relations agenda and demonstrates how organising around the issues that matter to members delivers the wins they want to see. The fact that all the work in the campaign was carried out by the Branch is indicative of a self-sustaining structure and resulted in firstly, a win for members and secondly, saw an increase in Union membership which builds on the power that workers have already built in the Vodafone Branch.

Remote Working Survey

For many members, the Covid-19 lockdowns saw life undergo significant upheaval and led to a whole new way of working. As restrictions began to ease, it was important that we understood both the negative and positive effects that working from home had for members. Members who found themselves working from

home due to the pandemic were surveyed in order to better understand the way these changes impacted people across our primary sectors, including members working where we have collective bargaining procedures and those without.

Response numbers were very positive, with a large majority taking the time to detail their thoughts in comments. Call Centre Workers, Clerks, Administration and Engineers all took time to engage with the survey.

Having collated the results, it was clear that there was an appetite amongst a large number of members to explore a blended approach to working. Members highlighted challenges, not just with practical issues such as office equipment, but with the ability to disconnect, either at the end of the day, or taking appropriate, scheduled breaks.

The findings of the survey demonstrated that working from home, in many cases, significantly increased productivity. However, workload, sick leave and adequate rest periods would require vigilance.

The results of the survey informed the Union's engagement with multiple employers to implement a Remote Working Policy. To explore the opportunities presented by working from home in the longer term, a balance between increased productivity/workload will need to be offset with clear guidelines, to ensure members' work/life balance is not negatively affected.

*The Remote Working Survey Results can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Remote Working Survey Results](#)

DPD

A survey of DPD workers in the Athlone Depot was carried out in September of 2020. The survey was prompted following the rise in parcel volumes due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated impacts on staff and staffing levels. The survey also provided the local Branch Committee with an opportunity to engage with new hires who were brought in to cope with the increase in parcel volumes in Athlone and encourage them to join the CWU.

Armed with the feedback from the survey, CWU engaged with DPD management and won significant increases in contracted hours for staff.

The high level of engagement in the survey demonstrated a desire among DPD workers to effect positive change in their workplace and their input was invaluable. As the survey showed, membership of the CWU offers workers the opportunity to have a voice within their workplace and influence improvements in their working conditions.

For example, the top concern raised among staff in an open question at the end of the survey was an extra payment from DPD management for working through the Covid-19 crisis. Following the survey, staff received a €250 bonus payment in recognition of their efforts throughout the pandemic. There was also progress made in other areas that the survey identified, such as Upgrades, Pay, and the Sunday Premium Payment.

Overall, the survey resulted in a significant increase in CWU membership and served as a vehicle for DPD workers to collectively identify the issues that matter to them and shape the industrial relations agenda so that they get the wins that they want.

*The DPD Survey Report can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[DPD Survey Report](#)

The Value Added Benefits of being a Member of the CWU



Being a member of the CWU goes beyond improving the core issues of pay and terms and conditions by providing additional benefits to members. Some of the benefits provide a cost saving measure for members and are explicit and plain to see in the form of the Medical Fund or the schemes that are run through Halligan Insurance and FM Downes. However, the purpose of other benefits is to alleviate stress and suffering when members fall on hard times through illness, bereavement, or tragedy. This aspect of CWU activity is conducted with sensitivity and confidentiality and therefore often goes unnoticed. Schemes such as the Social Benefit Fund, Medisan and the Orphans Pension Scheme are operating out of sight supporting members who are facing challenges in their life. It is with great pride that the CWU is able to offer assistance and support to alleviate the financial worries of our members when they most need it.

The details of the Added Benefits are set out below:

Social Benefit Fund

This fund provides financial support to 'In Benefit' members who pay a 1% subscription and have gone on to reduced pay due to a long-term sick absence at the following rates:

- 1-4 months up to 70% of members' basic pay
- 5-8 months up to 65% of members' basic pay
- 9-12 months up to 60% of members' basic pay

This means that a qualifying member who has had a serious illness will receive between 60%-70% of their basic pay for a period of 12 months after they have gone on to reduced pay.

Mortality Fund

This scheme provides financial assistance to members, or a members family who have suffered a bereavement. An "In Benefit" member may be paid €635 on the death of their spouse/civil partner. The estate of an "In Benefit" member may be paid €5,080 on their death.

Orphans Pension Scheme

In the event of a member's death in service, a sum of €20 per week (paid monthly) may be paid in respect of each child registered with the Scheme, until that child reaches the age of 18 years. The Scheme is a FREE benefit to all members.

Legal Aid

Assistance is provided to "In Benefit" members of the Union in certain circumstances and subject to certain conditions in relation to:

- Offences under Road Traffic Acts
- Compensation claims

- Inquests
- Wills
- Certain legal advice

Medical Fund

The medical fund is an optional extra for members and costs €3 per week. Members may claim for themselves, their spouse/civil partner, and their children at the following rates.

- Dental Grant Up to €305
- Optical Grant Up to €152
- Surgical & Medical Appliances Up to €152

The annual cost works out at €156, and the annual potential benefit is €609.

Education Grant Scheme

This scheme is aimed at providing support to members and their families at various stages of their education. A draw is held annually by the National Executive Council and financial assistance is paid out to successful applicants at the below rates.

Third-Level Education

Four grants of €2,000 x 4 years of study (Max)

Second-Level Education

Thirty grants of €400

Gaeltacht Course

Twenty grants of €350

Hardship Fund

This fund is overseen by the Finance Committee and provides financial assistance on a case-by-case basis to members who are experiencing financial difficulties in their life.

Medisan Fund

The Medisan Fund is an independent entity that is run in conjunction with the CWU. The cost of membership is €1.50 per week. The fund provides financial assistance for a number of specified illnesses in the following way.

- Income assistance during periods of reduced pay
- Assistance towards consultations and drugs
- Assistance towards the cost of counselling and therapy
- Assistance towards the cost of convalescence
- 50% match up of VHI shortfall (up to a specified maximum)

Rowland Hill Memorial Fund

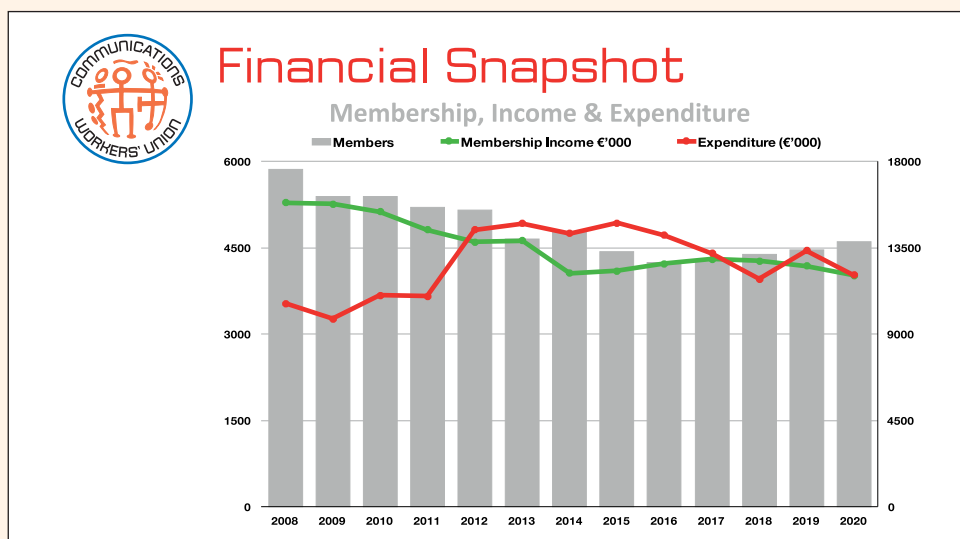
This fund is administered by an independent and voluntary body of Trustees and provides financial assistance to those in need due to age, poverty or infirmity. The suggested minimum subscription is 65 cent per week.

Finance

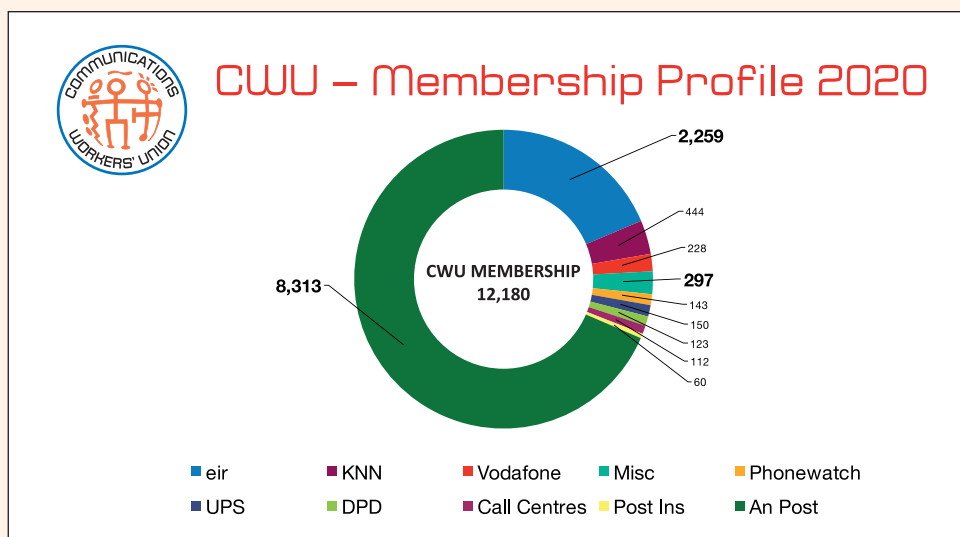
In October 2021, Fóla Partners were commissioned to conduct an independent review of all the financial activities of the Communications Workers' Union. The focus of the project being to do an in-depth analysis of income and expenditure, with a view to developing financial projections and budgets for the next 5 years. In summary the audited accounts for 2020 and 2021 set out the following:

	2020	2021
Net Assets	€22 m	€22.5m
Head Office property valued at	€7.989m	€7.749m
Investments valued at	€11.8 m	€12.795m
Cash in the bank of	€2.94 m	€2.768m
Income Member contributions	€4m	€4m
Expenditure of approx.	€4m	€4.6m
Surplus (includes Investment Return)	€282,000	€467,000

Financial Snapshot



Membership profile 2020



Investments

The Union has built up a significant level of financial reserves of approx. €11 million by the end of 2020, which are invested with and managed by Acumen Investment. While the performance of Acumen Investment has been most satisfactory to date, there is always a risk to these investments, as experienced in recent years by major swings in returns between 2019, 2020 and 2021 indicating a surprisingly high degree of volatility. The Union has adopted a low-to-medium risk profile for investment purposes.

Financial Services & Benefits

- **Social Benefit Fund**
- **Mortality Fund**
- **Orphans' Pension Scheme**
- **Legal Aid**
- **Medical Fund**
- **Education Grant Schemes**
- **Hardship Fund**
- **Medisan**
- **Rowland Hill Memorial Fund**
- **Halligans Insurances**
- **F.M. Downes**

All of these are expanded on in this Report.

Financial Overview

Although the investments and property value provide financial security, the trend is obvious in terms of membership and finances. The investments return has been plugging the deficits for a considerable number of years. The Covid-19 effect has mitigated the deficit by reducing expenditure. Legitimate expenditure for on site meetings, Conferences etc, will in the main return. Therefore, a control of costs is essential to maintain equilibrium. In the absence of a return to growth there are long term risks and consequences. The rules provide that 20% of contribution income goes to the Social Benefit Fund, which is comprised of the Sickness Benefit Scheme, Mortality Grant Scheme and the Hardship Grant Scheme. The fund has been in deficit for a number of years and benefit payments currently account for approx. 27% of the Union's outgoings.

A more detailed report of the finances will be given during the Private Session of Conference.

Communications

As part of our overall restructuring plan, we have put a firm focus on a comprehensive communications strategy that is currently being developed. This will address many aspects of how the Union communicates with members, representatives, the media, the government, political parties, and other stakeholders.

This involves being responsive and up-to-date on key issues in all our members' sectors. Our strategy will focus on various workstreams that include the Union website, our use of social media, Union publications, public relations and so on. All of our activities will have the objective of reclaiming our role as the voice of workers in the communications industry and not leaving it to others. Organising, recruitment and retention of members will be supported by strong communications, focused on achieving our objectives in specific campaigns or disputes. Paramount, of course, is communicating with respect, broad participation, open dialogue and an inclusive approach. To commence this process, we started with a review of the CWU Website, which is the first part of the overall communications strategy as part of our capacity-building exercise.

The following section of the report highlights the work done to date, as well as areas that we intend to address in the coming months.

Background to the Review of CWU Website.

In December of 2021, we conducted a detailed survey with the Executive, Head Office and Branch Secretaries. The purpose was to identify and implement areas for enhancement and key recommendations from the CWU survey. We have also carried out an analysis of the features of other trade union websites, with a view to seeing what we can implement on our own site to improve our offering. On a separate note, we are conscious that the website needs to be updated on a regular basis and workstreams are being identified within Head Office, so that the relevant information is posted in a timely and effective manner.

We analysed eight different union websites and then presented our findings in a report to the Executive in March.

In the website report, we have taken into consideration navigation of the site, access for members, areas for improvement, and additional requirements, with a view to ensuring that the website is suitable for the CWU as the premier Union in the communications sector.

The report analysed each section of the website and identified additional requirements as follows:

1. Navigation

Overall, the comments about navigation from the survey were positive, however some enhancements could be made. One consideration was how accessible the website was from other devices, such as mobile and tablet, which we will work on further.

2. About CWU

We need to be able to clearly relay what the CWU stands for and who we are. We have addressed this by providing information on areas of responsibility in Head Office and will further enhance this section with information on our Union affiliations, such as ICTU and UNI, as well as other organisations that we work with. We have a very clear Mission Statement and will build on this to make our vision and focus for the communications sector in Ireland as clear as possible.

3. Being a Member

Being a member is all about the benefits of CWU membership. This includes various schemes, funds, and professional services that the Union provides to our members. It also involves providing advice to members in the areas where we have great expertise.

We will enhance this section with sector specific information, details of employment rights, as well as general topics that affect members' working lives.

4. News

We know that it is very important that we update the news section in a timely manner, and this has been achieved in recent weeks with various articles from the An Post Pay Deal, the war in Ukraine, and new equality initiatives, to name but a few. Once we update the latest news, we will then populate this information, where appropriate, to our other social media feeds. Press releases and updates from our General Secretary will also be included here.

5. Events

There are many events that the Union participates in that we will highlight, particularly in areas that will require member involvement. This section will include a Calendar of Events from Workers' Memorial Day to Mental Health Week, and so on.

We will also include our Training Calendar, Conference and other relevant events that will be of interest.

6. Campaigns

Again, the Union is involved in a lot of campaigns and projects, both at a national and international level, and we will use this section to give the members a flavour of the work that we do, as all these campaigns have made a real difference on how the Union conducts its business.

7. Additional Requirements

We intend to have a dedicated section on Union training that will cover our calendar of events, new developments with [UNION link](#), our digital photography competition as well as the work that we do with other organisations.

The survey showed that members want more information on their own sectors. This will be populated by the relevant officers, so that members are receiving information in real time. For example, any Company agreement or policy, as appropriate, can be summarised on the website.

We also intend to make forms, booklets, Conference information, the *Connect* magazine, and information for representatives as accessible as possible through our website, which will be very beneficial in the long term.

Conclusions

As outlined, the website is the first area that we are focusing on, as part of our overall communications strategy. It will take time and resources to develop but at this point we know that the information on the website is up-to-date and now we have a body of work to do to implement the recommendations from the survey, as well as the recommendations from the comparative analysis that we did with the other union websites.

We believe that this is a good starting point, and we welcome any feedback from members on how we can enhance communications on their behalf.

Equality & Diversity

1. Introduction

The CWU Diversity and Equality Committee is a long-standing sub-committee of the National Executive that is fully committed to ensuring our agenda is mainstreamed into the Union's activities. Down through the years we have focused on a variety of issues we consider have a definite impact on our members' working lives. These can range from mental health issues, childcare, flexible work arrangements and most recently the impact of Covid-19 on the world of work.

We also take a broad view of equality in society and how this can impact on the creation of more inclusive workplaces. By inclusive workplaces and societies, we specifically mean that, irrespective of race, age, gender, ability, religion and so on, we are committed to creating social and working environments where all have an opportunity to participate to their full ability. In other words, nobody should be left behind.

Our equality agenda is based on employment equality legislation that prohibits discrimination on **nine distinct grounds** in a wide range of employment areas. The legislation defines discrimination as treating one person in a less favourable way than another person based on the following 9 grounds:

1. **Gender:** this means man, woman, or transgender
2. **Civil status:** includes single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, civil partners and former civil partners
3. **Family status:** parents of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability
4. **Sexual orientation:** refers to being gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual
5. **Religion:** means religious belief, background, outlook, or none
6. **Age:** applies to all aged over 16
7. **Disability:** this is a broad definition which includes physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities as well as various medical conditions
8. **Race:** includes race, skin colour, nationality, or ethnic origin
9. Membership of the Traveller community

We are also fully committed to securing comprehensive workplace policies where we have collective bargaining so we can secure decent employment which respects the dignity of our members.

The Union builds our agenda around these grounds which in turn gives us direction on issues that can make a real difference to working lives. We also use every opportunity to liaise with the membership and keep up-to-date on relevant issues, to ensure equality and diversity is at the heart and mind of the Union activities.

As referenced, to meet our aims, we have in place the Diversity and Equality Committee. Over the last two years, the Committee has played a key role in driving our activities.

The Members of the Committee are as follows:

1. Catriona Dewane, Administrative Managers' Branch
2. Deborah Flannery, eir Sligo District
3. Paul Kennedy, Galway Postal
4. Vinny Kilroy, Portlaoise/Naas Managers Branch
5. Deirdre Medlar, Ballina Postal
6. Tara Ravenhill, Athlone Postal
7. Tom Sheehan, eir Cork District
8. Pat Sheridan, eir Waterford District
9. Elaine Cockburn, Clonmel Postal

The Union also provides training every year to Equality Representatives who then have an opportunity to join our contact group of representatives from various Branches around the country. By having this infrastructure in place, we have increased capacity to develop equality initiatives and find out what is happening on the ground at Branch level.

We continue to work with other unions to share resources. This ensures that we can develop activities jointly and learn from best practice.

The CWU is represented on the ICTU Disability, the Women's Committee and most recently the Equality Network of Union Officials as well as the UNI Europa Women's Committee and UNI World Women's Committee. We have also continued to be active in representing equality issues on the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Telecommunications. This is a European forum made up of employer and employee representatives and we have worked on various equality initiatives and projects relevant to the sector.

By working with these national and European committees we have ensured that we are on the cutting edge of best practice which we can promote to the employers we engage with. This is necessary so that the work that we do on these various projects and committees is implemented for the benefit of our members.

Finally, members wishing to know more about the CWU equality agenda can look for regular features in the *Connect* magazine, on Facebook and on the Union website. We continue to mainstream equality and diversity through Union training and several equality related courses are available through our online learning platform [UNION link](#).

As part of our overall training programmes we ensure that we have dedicated modules on equality and diversity so that our representatives can have a clear understanding of our agenda and our activities in this area.

2. Equality Updates 2020-2022

Equality Representative Training

Members will be aware from our various education updates that the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on many of our courses. However we managed to deliver from a classroom setting to remote-based training. Equality Representative training was held in early March 2021 and was attended by a variety of Branches across the eComms and Postal/Courier sectors.

The Equality Representative is a support role to the Branch Secretary, who can assist with equality related matters. This course is based primarily on the nine grounds of discrimination under employment equality legislation and deals with such matters as work/life balance, statutory and non-statutory leave, disability in the workplace etc. Equality Representatives make reports to their committee and AGM, as required. As an elected Branch position, the Equality Representative can keep the committee up-to-date regarding any new initiatives or developments and this infrastructure of representatives further assists us to mainstream equality at local level.

With the lifting of restrictions we are now back in the position to hold classroom-based training as normal and to welcome newly-elected Equality Representatives for our training later this year.

Review of Equality Legislation

In June of last year, the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth announced a review of Ireland's existing legislation that promotes equality and prohibits discrimination on the nine grounds. The review encompasses the two main pieces of Irish Equality Legislation, namely the *Equal Status Act 2000* and the *Employment Equality Act 1998* as well as subsequent legislative amendments to these Acts.

As part of the review, ICTU conducted a comprehensive submission to the department and stated *"The current review of the equality legislation holds the potential to energise equality legislation and to make it more comprehensive, including further grounds. Some of the exemptions need to be removed and some of the provisions strengthened. We know it has to increase its reach into organisations, requiring systems and practices within organisations that respond effectively to the practical implications of diversity and that advance outcomes of equality."*

The CWU supported the Congress submission, and we will keep members apprised of developments in this area.

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap in Ireland is estimated to be at an average of 14% which is the differential between the average pay of male and female employees within an organisation. Legislative measures to address the

Gender Pay and Pensions Gap were published in 2019 with the legislative process being completed in July 2021. This established the *Gender Pay Gap Information Act, 2021*.

The legislation will apply in both the public and private sector and will require employers with more than 250 employees to disclose the pay gap between male and female employees. This will eventually be extended to cover employments with 50 or more employees.

The CWU has participated in an ICTU working group on the gender pay gap convened in light of the legislation on pay transparency. We are also currently involved in a project with ICTU to build capacity for unions to address gender pay gap audits as well as developing strategic proposals for the collective bargaining agenda. This will be key as Unions play a critical role in addressing the gap.

Members will also be aware that we have made significant progress in An Post with their announcement of the elimination of the Gender Pay Gap in their organisation and discussions are ongoing in eir.

Citizen's Assembly makes Significant progress on Gender Equality

On April 24th 2021, the 99 members of the Assembly on Gender Equality put forward robust measures for a programme of change which is a welcome development. The recommendations covered a wide range of areas such as changes to the Constitution, politics and leadership, caregiving and childcare, as well as domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

The Chair of the Assembly, Catherine Day stated *'The recommendations the citizens agreed don't just call for incremental change. They call for big changes that can make Ireland a better and more gender equal place to live for all of us.'*

Work/Life Balance – Statutory and Non-Statutory Leave

An integral part of the work of the CWU is to promote and enhance work/life balance arrangements for our members. It is critical that members understand that this is not just about caring arrangements but the balance of integrating work and personal life commitments.

Work/life balance options are either statutory or non-statutory. Statutory is provided by legislation while non-statutory arrangements are not provided for by law but are negotiated directly between the Union and employer. Statutory leave arrangements provide a basic floor of rights that employers must implement for their staff and in many situations the Union has been successful in negotiating enhancements to these arrangements that make them more accessible for employees. We have also successfully agreed leave arrangements with employers in advance of legislation being established so that we are ahead of the curve.

The value of non-statutory leave arrangements cannot be underestimated, and these can range from bereavement leave to term time. Again, the Union is driven by members' needs and we take direction from our Diversity and Equality Committee to determine what would be of most value.

For example, we have concluded agreements in eir and An Post on paid leave for those impacted by domestic abuse. Most recently in eir we have agreed policies on pregnancy loss and fertility which are welcome and forward-thinking.

As always we encourage members to contact their representatives with any queries they may have about statutory and non-statutory leave arrangements as well as any interventions that the Union may provide.

Further details are in the sectoral reports.

ICTU Committees

The CWU is a long-standing member of the ICTU Women's Committee, which meets regularly to discuss gender-based issues. Our current activities include topics such as domestic violence, remote work, Covid-19 and the impact on women, and the gender pay gap amongst others.

ICTU Women's Conference 2020

The Women's Committee organised a National Women's Conference in March 2020 in Wexford, just before Covid-19 restrictions were implemented. Entitled *'Realising our Rights: Women Organising for Change'*, the Conference heard from the ICTU General Secretary, Patricia King, as well as a range of guest speakers.

The agenda, as always, debated a variety of motions covering topics including violence and harassment in the world of work, childcare, balancing caring responsibilities with work, parental leave developments and tackling insecure work.

The CWU was represented by the women on our National Executive Council.

Council of the Isles

The Union continued to attend the Women's Council of the Isles meetings since our last Conference. The Council is made up of women trade union delegates from both Britain and Ireland, who gather once a year to address issues of common interest. The CWU made a presentation on behalf of ICTU at the last meeting on remote work, the current developments in Ireland and how the gender dimension can be included when considering processes and procedures. As always, the meeting was very informative.

ICTU Women's Committee - International Women's Day 2022

Many Trade Unions have long been campaigning to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, as we see this issue as both an equality and occupational health issue. We know that the effects of domestic and sexual violence are severe and can spill into the workplace, which can also include sexual harassment. The ILO Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work is a progressive international measure which trade unions can use to negotiate effective remedies and workplace policies. C190 needs to be ratified in our own jurisdiction, which Irish Unions have been pushing for. However it puts a firm focus on the issue of violence as a workplace issue.

To mark International Women's Day for 2022, the ICTU Women's Committee held a lunchtime webinar to examine practical ways trade unions can use the convention.

Keynote speakers on the day included Patricia King, ICTU General Secretary, Marieke Koning, International Trade Union Confederation, Mandy La Combre and Eileen Gorman, Financial Services Union, and Maxine Murphy Higgins, NASUWT.

No Woman Left Behind Rally

The National Women's Council of Ireland planned a large-scale rally calling for political leadership and action on the critical issues that face women as part of this year's International Women's Day events. The rally entitled *#NoWomanLeftBehind* took place outside the Dáil on Saturday, 5th March.

The key demands of the rally were:

- a zero-tolerance culture to end violence against women.
- women's representation in areas where decisions are made affecting women's lives.
- access to quality public services including childcare, housing, and a decent income on which we all can live.
- a healthcare system that has women at its centre – including reproductive health measures.

This event was supported by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and was endorsed by the ICTU Women's Committee, with an address from Patricia King.

CWU members were well-represented on the day.

Congress Disability Seminar 2021

As referenced, the Union also participates on the ICTU Disability Committee which pursues the objective of decent work for all disabled people. The committee holds regular seminars which emphasise the need for employment of people with a disability, which is key to individual independence.

December 3rd marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The CWU attended an ICTU webinar, the theme of which was, *"Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-Covid-19 world"*. The webinar examined the employment landscape for disabled people with presentations from the National Disability Authority, Department of Community Northern Ireland, amongst others.

Further details can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).

<https://ictu.ie/disability>

Women in Leadership – November 16th

In line with the ICTU Women’s Conference motion to promote women in leadership, the CWU, in conjunction with the FSU, came together to organise a course on November 16th 2021. The course was facilitated by Isobel Butler, to explore themes of leadership in the trade union movement and in society. We were pleased to be able to have this as a classroom-based course, in light of the recent restrictions. The course will be rolled out further in 2022, as it was well received by the participants.

UNI Europa Women’s Committee Meeting and UNI World Women’s Committee

In April of 2021, Carol Scheffer took up the position of President of UNI Europa Women’s Committee. Down through the years, Carol has represented the CWU on the Committee and has promoted the work of UNI within the CWU and in other Unions, so becoming President was a significant milestone for the Union. She has always placed great value on the work of UNI Equal Opportunities, who have assisted the Union down through the years to develop our agenda to proactively support gender-based issues. The projects and policy guidelines produced by UNI Equal Opportunities has been of great assistance to the CWU.

Taking on the role of President and being active in UNI has developed our networks greatly with other unions and we will continue this work well into the future.

Carol also has a seat on the UNI World Women’s Committee and CWU has worked with trade unions in this forum on a global level from a variety of sectors with various experiences and perspectives, which enhances our own agenda at local level. The following section of the report highlights the various projects and initiatives in which have been involved.

We are pleased to be part of this innovative two-year project which is an EU Cross-sectoral Social Dialogue joint project *“Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work”*.

One in three women experience physical, mental or sexual violence during their lifetime. However it is acknowledged that no group of workers, sectors or industry is totally free from violence. While they are most affected, only 40% of women who experience violence report it or seek assistance, according to data from UN Women. The impact of violence and harassment was, of course, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving many in isolated, precarious positions.

The two-year project will support the work of UNI Europa in the fight for equal opportunities. This will be a crucial topic on gender equality as we work with our social partners and employers’ organisations to have a unified voice to fight violence at EU level. To achieve this aim, UNI has decided to focus on developing EU Cross-sectoral guidelines on the prevention of violence and harassment in the work of work.

The project will focus on two priorities:

1. Ending Violence and Harassment at work (ratification process of ILO C190) – Third-party violence
2. Tackling Domestic Violence – Home being the “new workplace”

The project will have several webinars, round-table events and extensive research with a view to having a final Conference in Paris. UNI Europa affiliates working more in-depth on the project and representing the services sectors include: FISAC, UILCA, ANTIC, CWU Irl, Pro Finland.

In the context of this work, UNI Europa Equal Opportunities held a webinar on ratification of the ILO Convention C190 that gathered over 200 representatives of unions, employers, and other organisations from 41 countries. The Conference was chaired by Carol Scheffer, UNI Europa Women’s President.

Expert speakers included MEP Maria Eugenia Palop, Dr Jane Pillinger and Ms Valentina Beguini, ILO technical specialist on gender equality and non-discrimination. All speakers shared their expertise on 190, the various EU instruments to fight violence and harassment as well as gender-based violence. It was a great opportunity to exchange on best practices. These will assist with the cross-sectoral guidelines on preventing and combating violence at work which will be developed on foot of the joint project.

Gender Pay Transparency Directive

Considerable discussion has taken place on the EU proposal for a gender pay transparency directive. Many trade unions at a European level are lobbying their own Members of Parliament to support trade union demands to make the directive sustainable.

UNI Europa is part of a working group with the ETUC on gender pay transparency who have identified three key priorities:

- Eliminating the threshold for employer pay reporting obligations
- Enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value
- Safeguarding trade union prerogatives and promoting the right to bargain to close the gender pay gap

Together with the ETUC, UNI Europa campaigned on the issue via our social media channels on these three priorities.

3. Conclusions

Our thanks to the committee and the Equality Representatives for their support during the last two years. We believe that CWU has successfully continued its commitment to equality and the promotion of more inclusive workplaces. Our profile at a National and European level allows us to develop the work that we do. Our thanks in particular to the UNI Equal Opportunities Department, who have been great colleagues to work with and have been exemplary in promoting gender issues and many others that affect minority groups. Our thanks as well to ICTU for their support.

As we emphasise in all reports, we want to hear from our Branches regarding any proposals they may have around our work or future initiatives. We also encourage all feedback from our membership base, which can be referred through the local Equality Rep or Branch Secretary.

Training & Education

Introduction

The last two years have been particularly challenging for the purpose of delivering training. In 2020 with the onset of Covid-19 all our training courses that were classroom based were postponed. This meant that we had to adapt quickly to find different methods to deliver training and instead had to redevelop our training delivery from classroom-based to remote which although was a difficult process we found that we were fortunate that we could start delivering programmes again.

Although not ideal, our training courses recommenced remotely, but we also had [UNION link](#) our online learning platform to supplement our training. Given the pandemic, [UNION link](#) certainly proved its value. Furthermore, to assist our members we developed an online learning course on how to use MS Teams, Zoom and Skype. We wanted to be as responsive as possible to our members' needs during this difficult time and because of our progressive Education Committee we were able to achieve this.

This is in line with our following **mission statement**:

The CWU is committed to the training and education of representatives and members at all levels in the organisation to a high standard. In this context we will provide a high-quality training and education service that equip CWU representatives with the relevant knowledge and skills to enhance their effectiveness as Union Representatives while reinforcing the values of the Union.

The union also commits, where possible, to remove barriers which may prevent members accessing and participating in the Union. The CWU advocates the promotion and improvement of adult literacy and learning.

The CWU will commit the resources at its disposal to meeting these training and development needs.

As always, the CWU Education Committee has relied on our strategic approach to the design, delivery and monitoring of our courses particularly so that they could be adapted to the new blended learning approach to arise due to Covid-19.

Education Committee Constitution

The Education Committee comprises of the Education Officer (Carol Scheffer) and eight committee members as follows:

1. Pascal Connolly, eir Sligo
2. John Dunleavy, eir Dublin No 2
3. Anthony McCrave, Drogheda Postal
4. Willie Mooney, Dublin Postal Clerks Branch
5. Ellen Moore, Portlaoise Postal Branch
6. Tara Ravenhill, Athlone Postal Branch
7. Ivor Reynolds, eir Dublin No 1
8. Tom Sheehan, eir Cork District

As the Committee work directly in the Postal/Courier and eComms sectors, they are best placed to assist representatives in dealing with issues relevant to them. This is a significant advantage as the Committee can be responsive to facilitate training around relevant issues for our representatives. The Education Committee is very reactive to the feedback of those attending our training and meets to continue to evaluate our course content.

Section 1: Internal Training Provision

This section outlines the training provided by the CWU in 2020 and 2021. Again, we had a busy schedule and the following outlines the courses that were delivered. That said we moved from classroom-based training to a blended learning approach and offered training to all who may have been affected by the pandemic in 2020 to attend our 2021 training courses.

While we advertised our courses in the normal way for 2020, we had to amend our calendar and postpone some courses to 2021, however our priority was maintained to support new representatives with their requirements.

Training Activity 2020:

- Branch Secretary Stage 1

Training Activity 2021:

- Equality Representative Training
- Branch Secretary Stage 1
- Branch Secretary Stage 2
- Chairperson Training
- Branch Officer
- Committee Training
- Women in Leadership Course

For all elected representatives the training is mandatory, and courses are advertised by general circular in February along with the relevant nomination forms. All the forms can be downloaded from the Union website. Courses are also advertised in the *Connect* journal.

With Covid-19 restrictions lifted we are now back on track to train individual Branch Committees at regional locations. Arrangements are made at a local level and the Education Committee will organise training programmes subject to viable numbers and workplace release as required. Where this is not possible new representatives have the option of attending training in Head Office. We encourage Branches to avail of this offer so that they can work together collectively on local and national issues.

CWU Education Grant Scheme

In relation to further initiatives, members will be aware that our Education Grant Scheme has been running now for many years. We have reviewed it on an annual basis, and it is one of the ways that we can deliver benefits directly to our members.

The Union invites applications for our Education Grant Scheme on an annual basis which is open to members and their dependants. The grant scheme is made up of the following three categories:

1. Gaeltacht Awards

Up to 20 awards are made each year for Gaeltacht students to help cover the cost of their participation in a Gaeltacht course to a maximum value of €350.

However due to the Covid-19 crises, Gaeltacht courses for the summer of 2020 and 2021 were cancelled and accordingly the CWU draw for those years were cancelled. The CWU Education Committee decided to reallocate the Gaeltacht grant amount towards the second level scheme thus creating 17 extra second level awards in both 2020 and 2021. The 3rd level grant was unaffected.

2. Second Level Awards

Up to 30 awards will be made annually to the value of €400 to help with the purchase of schoolbooks and class materials. Members studying for the Junior and/or Leaving Certificate as mature students can also apply for this award.

3. Third Level Education Awards

The third level category offers up to four awards annually to a maximum value of €2,000 for each year of study up to a maximum of four years. These awards will be made to Union members or members' dependants involved in study or research at Diploma, Degree, Post-Graduate Diploma or Post-Graduate Degree level.

The Union is committed to monitoring this scheme and it will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Education Committee considering the applications received, budgeting and requirements of members.



Branch Officer Course



Committee Training 2021



We believe that all our members should have the opportunity to develop their skills at a time and a place that suits them. With **UNION link** this is possible as courses can be completed at any time of day. All courses are free of charge and are designed to be engaging and interactive.

In the last two years we have introduced our new course Digital Photography. The course is accompanied by our competition which is open to those who have completed our digital photography course on **UNION link**, so this is an ideal opportunity for members to learn a new skill.

The competition is for amateur photographers and there are many themes to choose from. First prize is a digital camera and there are also several runner-up prizes.

We particularly found that with the Covid-19 pandemic the competition was a nice way to stay in contact with our members with entrants providing some quality snaps. Our thanks to John Chaney for judging the entries.

UNION link encourages members to become more engaged and active in their union as well as building the skills, knowledge, and confidence of CWU activists. We have offered a broad range of courses over the last two years some of which are listed below:

- Mental Health Awareness
- IT Courses – Word, Excel & PowerPoint
- How to use Skype, Zoom and MS Teams
- Digital Photography

Our plan is to offer **UNION link** courses in circumstances whereby a representative is unable to attend classroom training for any reason. By completing the online course, a gap can be bridged until the rep is able to attend.

We have continued to work with the CWU UK through their programme Left Click. It is our intention to continue our collaboration with the CWU UK so that we can further develop online learning.

In June of last year, we also surveyed our members on **UNION link** on what courses members would like to see us offer and how we can improve their learning experience. The survey proved to be very valuable to use and provided is with a lot of ideas for new content.

Members can go to www.unionlink.org to set up an account.

Section 2 External Training Provision

This section outlines the training that the CWU has access to through various training initiatives and other training providers.

Certificate in Business Studies (Trade Union Studies)

The CWU continues to support the SIPTU/ICTU Certificate in Business and Trade Union Studies which is held on a regional basis. For CWU activists this course is open to NEC members and Branch Secretaries who have

served at least **two years** in their elected role. The course is jointly funded by the participant and the Union on completion of the two-year course. This course is accredited at Level 6 by QQI and involves 6 modules delivered over two years. The six course modules are:

- Safety, Health & Welfare at Work
- Human Resource Management
- Equality and Diversity
- Introduction to Irish Employment Law
- Collective Bargaining and the Theory and Practice of Negotiation
- Introduction to Economics

Our congratulations to those who have successfully completed the training.

Working with other Unions

We are aware that by sharing resources with other unions we are in a better position to gain access to other courses in a cost competitive way. We maintain strong links with other training providers to deliver various training modules which is proving popular with our representatives. In the last year we have worked closely with SIPTU, FORSA, Mandate, and the FSU to share courses, webinars, and other information.

Aontas

In 2021, the CWU joined Aontas. AONTAS is Ireland's National Adult Learning Organisation which promotes the benefits of adult learning. With a membership of over 400 organisations and individuals, Aontas holds many events during the year on how we can engage more to promote adult learning.

As new members of Aontas we have already participated in some of these events, and we look forward to seeing what initiatives we can get involved in for the benefit of our membership.

*Further information can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

www.aontas.com

Conclusion

We have seen during the pandemic that working with other unions has been critical. We have discussed how we work together to share resources and make the delivery of union training more efficient and sustainable during these difficult times.

UNION link in many ways has also been critical during Covid-19, it has given us another resource to deliver training, and many saw the benefits of engaging with online learning which was also obvious to us from the results of our survey. We encourage members to engage with this free learning resource and to use it as a platform for further development of skills.

Our thanks also to our Representatives who have stuck with us during the Covid-19 pandemic and in many situations were not able to network with other new Representatives which is an important part of continued development. With the upcoming Conference they will have an opportunity once again to build their network with other Union Representatives and Officials.

Our thanks once again to the CWU Education Committee for their continued commitment and hard work to deliver training to our Representatives since the last Conference.

Retirement Benefits

1. Introduction

The number of Defined Benefit Schemes has reduced significantly and continues to do so. In recent times, we have witnessed Companies closing fully-funded DB schemes. Although they fail to explain the rationale behind their decision, it is most certainly linked to the Minimum Funding Standard and the requirement under FRS 17 for pension liabilities to appear on company balance sheets.

2. IORPS

An EU Directive on the activities and supervision of Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (the IORP II Directive) was adopted in 2016. This was signed into Irish Law when the European Union (Occupational Pension Schemes) Regulations, 2021 (the Regulations) were adopted on the 22 April 2021.

On 13 May 2021, the Pensions Authority (the Authority) published an information note for trustees on the Regulations. The purpose of the note is to give trustees of occupational pension schemes an overview of the key provisions of the Regulations. The note also sets out how the Authority will oversee compliance with the Regulations, including the effect of derogations and transitional periods.

The Regulations create a significant additional burden for pension schemes, are very broad ranging and require immediate action for many schemes. Ultimately the aim of the Directive is to introduce an effective system of governance for the operation of pension schemes across the EU. The requirements range from the qualifications of trustees, appointment of new risk and internal audit function holders, right through to the enforcement powers of the Pensions Authority.

The Pension Authority Guidance and Information for Pension Trustees can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[IORP ii Regulations – Information for Trustees](#)

3. Defined Benefit Schemes – Review of 2020 Statistics

Trustees of defined benefit schemes subject to the funding standard provisions of the Pensions Act 1990 are required to submit an Annual Actuarial Data Return (AADR). AADRs are submitted to the Pensions Authority within 9 months of the scheme year-end. Each year the Pensions Authority publishes a summary of this information.

A total of 560 schemes were subject to the funding standard provisions of the Act as at 31st March 2021. The table breaks these down into three categories

	2019	2020
Status Current	371	376
Status Frozen	184	194
Continuing Schemes	558	570
Schemes in Wind-up	2	12
Total Schemes	560	582
Subject to funding standard		

A total of 59 DB schemes did not satisfy the funding standard and these had a combined deficit of €1.3bn.

The report can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Defined Benefit Schemes – Review of 2020 Statistics](#)

4. Pension Scheme Fee Rates for 2022

Revised Pension Authority fees for occupational schemes were introduced with effect from 1st January 2022. The new fees saw an increase of 50% which was a considerable increase and well ahead of inflation. However, in its consultation document issued in advance of the decision the Pensions Authority had suggested an even larger increase. It is expected that there will be further increases including the possibility of asset-based fees which is the preferred approach of the Pensions Authority

The revised rates are set out in the table below.

Occupational pension scheme fee rates			
Year	Fee per member for schemes with 500 or less active members	Flat fee for schemes with 501-1000 active members	Fee per member for schemes with 1001 plus active members
2022	€12.00	€6,000.00	€6.00
2021	€8.00	€4,000.00	€4.00

5. Retirement Age

The 2020 *Programme for Government, Our Shared Future* ('the Programme') provided for the establishment of a Commission on Pensions: "to examine sustainability and eligibility issues with State Pensions and the Social Insurance Fund." This followed the 2020 General Election during which the planned increase in the pension age to 67 with effect from 1st January 2021 was an issue. Pending the Commission report the State Pension age remained at 66.

The Commission reported in October 2021 and recommended the following in relation to the Pension Age:

- Align retirement ages in employment contracts with the State Pension Age.
- Enact legislation which allows (but does not compel) employees to stay on to State Pension Age.
- The legislation would apply to existing and new employment contracts.

In addition, where a retirement age below the State Pension Age continued then employers would be required to give notice to workers in order to ensure that the worker is aware that a retirement age below the State Pension Age applies.

They also recommended a gradual incremental increase in State Pension Age by three months each year commencing in 2028 reaching 67 in 2031, with further increases of three months every second year reaching 68 in 2039.

In early February the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development published its report in response to the Commission's Report. The Committee recommended the current pension age be retained. They also proposed legislation should be developed to ban the use of mandatory retirement clauses in existing and new employment contracts. The Government has indicated it intends to issue a pension plan by the end of March 2022.

5.1 Retirement Age: New Code of Practice

In early 2018 the Workplace Relations Commission ("WRC") in consultation with IBEC, ICTU and relevant Government Departments, published a Code of Practice which sets out best practice on the management of retirement in organisations.

The Industrial Relations Act 1990 (Code of Practice on Longer Working) (Declaration) Order 2017 (the "Code") provides useful and comprehensive guidelines on the challenging issue of retirement ages in employment. The Code should be read in conjunction with section 34(4) of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and will be the starting point for employers in managing the engagement with employees on this particularly sensitive topic.

The Code of Practice outlines how requests to work longer should be administered for, Objective Justification, Retirement Process and Requests to Work Longer.

*A copy of the Code can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Code of Practice on Longer Working](#)

6. State Pensions- Total Contributions Approach

Applications for the State Pension (Contributory) after 1 September 2012 for those that do not qualify for the maximum rate of pension because of gaps in their PRSI record can be assessed under a new Total Contributions Approach. The HomeCaring Periods Scheme can assist in qualification for a higher rate of pension.

The total number of PRSI contributions paid, irrespective of when they were paid, are taken into account when the DSP assesses an application for a pension. The TCA calculation includes the new HomeCaring Periods Scheme. The changes benefit people who spent time outside the paid workplace, while raising a family or in a caring role. Under the HomeCaring Periods Scheme periods of time spent caring for someone can be included in your Social Insurance record. Those reaching pension age on or after 1 September 2012, can have their pension rate calculated in 2 ways: using the *average rule* or using the new TCA. The DSP will carry out both calculations and choose whichever is more beneficial.

*The rules governing qualification for a State Pension can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[How to Qualify for a State Contributory Pension](#)

7. Definitions

*Definitions of the various terms used when discussing pensions can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Definitions](#)

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



WOMEN'S RIGHTS, INCLUDING HEALTH,
ARE BETTER PROTECTED WITH A UNION.

#WOMENOHS

UI global
union

women

Health & Safety

1. Introduction

The Union represents workers across a wide range of activities and is very proactive in respect of their safety. Covid-19 changed the world of work and highlighted the need for strong and robust Health & Safety policies, which is a key priority for the Union. Our combined efforts make a difference by reducing workplace accidents and injuries, as well as incidents of ill health caused by work. In this regard we have demonstrated to employers that effective Health & Safety management contributes to business success. While there are over 200 legislative Acts and Statutory Instruments dealing with occupational Health & Safety, the primary piece of legislation is the *Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005*. This Act imposes duties and obligations on employers and employees, based on the principle of hazard identification and risk assessment.

2. Health & Safety Statistics

Each year the Health & Safety Authority reports significant and avoidable workplace fatalities, as well as confirming thousands of workers suffering injury or illness at work. In Ireland, in 2020, 54 people were killed in the workplace and a further 38 in 2021. These figures are too high, and it is incumbent on us all to do everything we can to reduce the numbers killed or injured. Most likely these figures do not represent the full picture, as they exclude those who are killed while driving for work, or the hundreds who die every year as a result of work-related cancers. For example, An Gardaí have estimated that up to 46 work-related fatal collisions took place in 2019.

A total of 7,417 injuries were reported to the Health & Safety authority in 2020. This was a reduction of over 20% on the 2019 figures. However, this decrease is largely attributable to the public health measures implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Health & Safety Authority believe the actual figure is much higher, with smaller enterprises and the self-employed less likely to report incidences. Manual handling, slips, trips and falls were the most common triggers in 2020, which is the case every year since 2016.

3. ICTU

The CWU actively participates at the ICTU Health & Safety Committee to campaign for improvements in Health & Safety. Following the ICTU Biennial Conference in October 2021, Pat Kenny was re-elected as Chairperson of the Committee.

The Committee meets on a regular basis, both as a full committee and also through sub-committees, where most of the day-to-day work gets done. The following Sub-Committees have been formed:

- Strategy
- Safety Representatives
- Mental Health
- Legislative Review
- Workers' Memorial Day

The aims of the Committees are:

- To keep Unions informed of developments in the area of Safety, Health & Welfare at work;
- Campaign for improvements in workplace safety;
- Advise the Executive Council of Congress on matters relating to Health & Safety;
- Coordinate activity to support Safety Representatives and promote Health & Safety in workplaces and in Trade Unions.

Set out below are some of the main issues discussed or dealt with by the Committee.

3.1 Workers' Memorial Day

International Workers' Memorial Day is held annually worldwide on the 28th April. It is an International Day of Remembrance and Action for workers killed disabled or injured while working. The 28th April is formally recognised as the official commemoration day in Ireland, when it was officially recognised by the State for the first time in 2015.

3.1.1 Workers' Memorial Day 2020

For Workers' Memorial Day 2020, it was decided to focus on Covid-19 and the contributions made by frontline workers. The commemoration was streamed live from Áras an Uachtaráin with the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, laying a wreath at the Starry Plough Monument in the presence of 5 key frontline workers representing those involved in providing essential services to those of us at home. The workers involved were nominated by CWU, Fórsa, INMO, Mandate and SIPTU and included a nurse, a cleaner, a postal worker, a retail worker and fire brigade/ambulance worker. Gerry Sexton, DPDB and National Executive Council, represented the CWU and Postal Workers at this event.

3.1.2 Workers' Memorial Day 2021

Given the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, it was decided to once again hold an online ceremony. A memorial wreath was laid by Minister Damian English at the Garden of Remembrance, a poem, written by Sue Waltz, and dedicated to all workers and specially written for International Workers' Memorial Day, was read by two frontline workers from Beaumont Hospital. Dr. Mike Ryan, Director of the World Health Organisation Emergency Programme also recorded a message, particularly praising the courageous battle being fought by healthcare workers across the globe.

3.2 Safety Representatives

Section 25 of the 2005 Act entitles employees to decide on, select and appoint Safety Representatives or by agreement with their employer more than one Safety Representative. Employers have no role in selecting Safety Representatives.

Uniquely among workplace representatives in Ireland, Safety Representatives have a statutory basis with functions, entitlements, and protections defined in the *Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005*. Unlike other jurisdictions, including the UK, we do not in Ireland have a specific "Trade Union Safety Representative". However, all workers are entitled to select a Safety Representative and this has traditionally been done under the auspices of the Union represented in the workplace.

Regrettably, we lost many Safety Representatives during the years of austerity and recession and there are now many sectors where having a Safety Representative is far from the norm. We are aware of confusion over the role, in that many workers assume that they become responsible for safety and health within their workplaces if they take on the Safety Representative role, which is not the case. In many other companies, it is clear that there are management-appointed "Safety Representatives", which is against both the spirit and the letter of the law. We think the time has come to reinforce this important role and for trade unions to again take a lead in selecting and supporting representatives to take it on, while also emphasising the importance of Occupational Safety and Health as a trade union issue.

A key issue for Congress is ensuring that Safety Representatives have the necessary resources and supports available to assist them in their role. Some of the supports that are available are listed below:

- BeSmart.ie – a resource for Safety Representatives
- Safety Representatives online course – available on www.hslearning.ie

*The Safety Representatives Resource Book can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Safety Representatives Resource Book](#)

3.2.1 Discussions with the Health & Safety Authority

The ICTU Health & Safety Committee established a Sub-Committee to review with the HSA the plans it had for actions arising from its strategic commitment to support the role of the Safety Representative. The following issues are under discussion:

1. Training for Safety Representatives
2. Facilities and time off for Safety Representatives
3. Register of Safety Representatives
4. Sectoral Safety Representative Conferences
5. Annual Safety Representative Award

3.3 Mental Health Guidelines for Trade Unions

As detailed above, one of the Sub-Committees established by the Health & Safety Committee was to examine support for Trade Union Representatives to deal with mental health issues in the workplace. Mental health is an issue for us all. According to Mental Health Ireland, everybody will experience some kind of mental health issue during their lives with the vast majority coping and making a full recovery. Trade Unions are key to promoting positive mental health and expect that their members should operate in an environment where high standards are the norm. These high standards require good working conditions and policies in the workplace to allow all of our members to be treated with dignity and respect and to operate in an environment free of harassment, where our workers may flourish in their chosen occupation.

The Committee has drawn up a guidance document for trade unions which sets out ways in which trade unions can respond. The document sets out six commitments which trade unions could adopt, as follows:

1. To create an open and inclusive workplace for Union employees and members, which upholds respect for all including those with mental health difficulties;
2. To work with and develop policies with the organisations where we hold representation rights to promote the mental health of our members and support those experiencing mental health difficulties in the workplace;
3. To promote equality of opportunity and challenge discrimination in the workplace;
4. To promote equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection and promotion of those with mental health difficulties;
5. To identify and provide sources of information, training and support for our Representatives, to allow them to provide support to Union members experiencing mental difficulties;
6. To promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing at work through a range of initiatives from campaigns promoting mental health to flexible working.

*A copy of the Guidelines can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[ICTU Trade Unions and Mental Health](#)

3.4 Anti-Bullying Guidelines

In December 2020 the Health & Safety Authority published a new *Code of Practice on Workplace Bullying*. This new Code repeals the HSA Code from 2007 and the Labour Relations Commission Code from 2002 and is entitled “*Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work*”.

The new code was developed with input from Congress and its purpose is to provide guidance to employers, employees and their representatives on good practice and procedures for addressing workplace bullying. Following the publication of the Code, all employers are expected to review their existing policies and procedures in consultation with their employees.

*The Code of Practice can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Code of Practice for Employers & Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work](#)

The Health & Safety Committee developed prevention guidelines for Trade Union Activists. The purpose of the guidance is to help Union Representatives understand the different definitions of bullying and harassment and assist them to recognise the workplace behaviours that contribute to them. This document outlines the role of Union Representatives who are contacted by a member, who is either the victim of alleged bullying or harassment, or who is the subject of an alleged complaint of bullying or harassment. This will also assist in raising awareness of issues pertaining to bullying and harassment, as well as the avenues for progressing complaints.

Trade union training courses are provided for activists on the difference between Bullying and Harassment and their role in assisting individuals involved in such cases. This booklet will also support these Education Programmes and provide Union Representatives with the necessary skills to support members who are involved in such cases.

*The Prevention Guidelines can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[ICTU Bullying & Harassment – Prevention Guidelines for Trade Union Activists](#)

3.5 Focal Point Network

The European Agency for Safety & Health at Work mission is to make Europe's workplaces safer, healthier and more productive. It does this by bringing together European workplaces to share knowledge and information to promote a culture of risk prevention. Located in Bilbao, Spain, they have a dedicated staff of occupational safety and health, communication and administrative specialists. At the national level, they are represented through a network of focal points, which are usually the lead OSH bodies in the individual member States. The Health & Safety Authority is the National Focal Point for Ireland. The network is made up of stakeholders covering a wide range of representative bodies. ICTU is represented on the Network by Dessie Robinson (Fórsa), Michelle Quinn (SIPTU), Rosena Jordan (INTO) and Pat Kenny (CWU).

The "Lighten the Load" campaign was launched in October 2020 and will run until November 2022. As part of this campaign, we organised a webinar on Musculoskeletal disorders in October 2021. This webinar, which was run from CWU offices, was well attended, with speakers from the Health & Safety Authority, St Vincent's Hospital and the European Trade Union Congress. Musculoskeletal disorders are one of the most common work-related ailments and they affect millions of workers throughout Europe and cost employers billions of Euros. They affect the back, neck, shoulders and upper limbs and tackling this issue will help improve the lives of workers.

3.6 Work-Related Vehicle Consultative Panel (WRVCP)

The Work-Related Vehicle Consultative Panel acts in a consultancy capacity to the Work-Related Vehicle Safety Steering Group which comprises the Health & Safety Authority, An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority. Its purpose is to influence a reduction in the level of death, ill-health and injury caused by Work-Related Vehicle activities. Pat Kenny represents Congress on the Committee.

Driving for work is a high-risk activity. People who drive for work are 40% more likely than other drivers to be involved in a collision. It is estimated that driving for work accounts for involvement in 1 to 3 road collisions every year. In addition to the human cost, driving for work incidents create a financial burden for employers, from vehicle repair cost, worker absence, third-party claims and lost business opportunities. Driving for work also poses risks for fellow workers, members of the public and road-users, especially vulnerable road-users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

The purpose of the WRVCP is raise awareness of the issues, provide guidance where necessary for both employers and employees, and develop training and education programmes.

4. Public Consultation on HSA's Statement of Strategy 2022 - 2024

The Health & Safety Authority is required by the *Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005* to produce a written statement of strategy every three years. Part of this process involves a public consultation on its draft strategy. The CWU made a submission highlighting the following:

- The increased focus on the role of the Safety Representative needs to continue, with increased emphasis on training and the resources required to undertake the role
- Inspections play a key role in driving compliance with Health & Safety Regulations and the number of workplace inspections needs to increase, particularly in areas which are not considered high-risk and so are not inspected
- The Right to Disconnect should be established as a right but it must also be flexible towards worker requirements, while at the same time ensuring safe working hours.

- Employers need to be made aware of their statutory obligations towards employees working remotely or in hubs.
- We continue to support the HSA in its endeavours to increase the knowledge and understanding of how to manage work-related Health & Welfare
- The HSA should prioritise the risks to the Bogus Self Employed as part of any strategy
- The HSA should address the failure of the Customer Contact Unit to provide feedback on the outcome of a complaint

*The Union Submission can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[CWU Submission – Public Consultation on HSA Strategy 2022-2024](#)

5. Covid-19

Since the first case of Covid-19 was diagnosed in Ireland the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has played a leading and successful role in highlighting the threats to workers and the need for strong and robust health and safety policies in the workplace. As a result of the campaign organised by Congress, the government introduced an enhanced illness benefit of €350 per week in addition to waiving the six unpaid waiting days. This highlighted the requirement for legislation to be introduced to make sick pay mandatory and this campaign has won cross-party support and the Government has committed to legislating for statutory sick pay. The CWU gave its wholehearted support to the initiatives of Congress and ensured adherence to the Health and Safety requirements together with adherence of the medical advice by the companies in which we have members.

The unprecedented nature of the crisis required a significant amount of time to ensure our members' interests and safety were protected in all companies. CWU Officials were in constant contact with Senior Management to ensure our members were not put at risk while providing essential services to communities. Equally, to have financial support for those unable to attend for work. Administration, IT and Clerical back-office work, where possible was performed remotely.

5.1 Work Safely Protocols

A key objective of Congress was to ensure proper protocols were in place to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of everyone, most particularly as workers returned to the workplace. These protocols were developed at the Labour Employer Economic Forum and were designed to support employers and workers as public health measures changed. This protocol was reviewed on a regular basis.

*The Work Safety Protocol can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Work Safely Protocol – COVID-19 National Protocol for Employers & Workers](#)

The Strategy Sub-Committee of the Health & Safety Committee met on a regular basis and sought to support the work being done by Congress to develop the Work Safely Protocols.

A new Covid-19 Section was designed and published as part of the Congress Health & Safety site. All the key resources, including the *Return to Work Safely Protocol*, the checklists and templates provided by the HSA, the Congress Guide to the protocol, together with all the new resources, were uploaded to this site. In addition, a list of reliable links to other sources of information and support was published.

5.2 Lead Worker Representative

One of the main achievements in the protocols was the introduction of the Lead Worker Representative. Provision was made for the appointment of at least one Lead Worker Representative in all workplaces. Anyone undertaking the role must be trained and also have a structured framework to follow within the organisation, to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. The Health & Safety Committee identified and developed resources to support the work of the Covid-19 Lead Worker Representative. The Strategy

Group of the Committee then worked on the production of a number of documents which included:

- A Guide to the Role of the Lead Worker Representative
- A Complaints Procedure to be used in the event of non-compliance with the protocol
- A PowerPoint Presentation with associated guide to be used to explain the role of the LWR

*The documents listed above can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

Role of Lead Workplace Representative

LWR Return to Work Safely Protocol – A guide to the role

COVID-19 Local Workplace Representative Complaints Procedure

5.3 Transitional Protocol

Following the announcement on Friday evening, 21st January 2022, on the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, the Government published a Transitional Protocol: *Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19*, which is a revision of the Work Safely Protocol.

This Protocol reflects the lessons learned to date and places a greater emphasis on guidance and best practice to support the safe return to physical attendance in the workplace. It is a general document applicable to all sectors. It is not designed to prohibit the introduction of specific measures in particular sectors or workplaces.

The guidance announced on the 21st January removed a number of measures, including the general requirement for physical distancing and subsequently the requirement to wear masks in indoor settings.

*The guide to prevent the spread of Covid-19 can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

Transitional Protocol – Good practice guidance for continuing to prevent the spread of COVID-19

While the Government removed some restrictions, they made it clear that the pandemic wasn't over, and employers and workers were called upon to be supportive of continued good practice which support a safe working environment for all. Continued adoption of good infection control measures, such as hand washing/sanitising, respiratory hygiene, and ventilation in workplaces, is advised.

It remains critically important that everyone continues to play their part in limiting transmission. Covid-19 continues to pose a risk to public health. The pandemic is not over and the emergence of new variants with increased levels of transmissibility, immune-escape and/or virulence, remains a risk both nationally and globally.

5.4 CWU Approach

The Union's business and service to members was maintained nationwide. Branch activists are saluted for fulfilling their representative role throughout this most burdening period. At Head Office, Officials worked in the main remotely with most of the engagement with employers held via Teams/Zoom conference calls. The Administration Staff maintained essential services to members by working a skeleton staffing operation of the office in rotation.

The entire operation was successfully policed by constable Pat Kenny, who worked tirelessly with ICTU, Officials, Branches and An Post. We will celebrate the Union and its members at Conference and mark their dedication in the course of their work.

5.4.1 Provision of PPE

At the outset, due to global demand, there was a shortage of PPE but this was addressed and maintained throughout the pandemic. Union Officials remained in contact with employers to ensure supplies of protective equipment continued to be available.

5.4.2 Remote Working

Facilities for home working were agreed. In addition, we finalised agreement on voluntary remote working and right-to-disconnect policies, the details of which are outlined elsewhere in this report.

5.4.3 Facilities for Branches

The Union ensured Branches and members had access to the Teams facilities so that meetings with members could be organised remotely. Branches were encouraged to hold Committee Meetings online. As a support, a Unionlink course was developed on the subject.

Branches were given a choice in relation to AGMs, i.e. hold the meeting online or defer it until public health guidelines allowed a physical meeting. Support was provided from Union Head Office to assist Branches holding their AGM remotely.

5.4.4 Retired Members

We provided Branches with a list of their Retired Members and encouraged them to contact them on a regular basis to make sure they were ok.

5.4.5 Sectors

In the Postal/Courier sector our members were deservedly in receipt of high praise from all quarters for the service they provided and demonstrated the need for a strong postal service. An Post members continued to deliver to the most vulnerable people in our society. As part of the response, we agreed to support a number of initiatives including, Government national mailing, free postcards.

In addition, the Union proposed to An Post that it was in the national interest that we maintained and explored new ways and services to the public. We agreed Postpersons, in the course of their delivery, would check in regularly with the elderly, vulnerable or people self-quarantining. In doing so, as with all contact with customers, staff maintained the social distancing rules at all times. It was also agreed that free collection and postage will be provided to these people.

In our eComms sector, our members continued to ensure that the key telecommunication networks were still running, which was even more important given the needs of families in isolation who rely on their phone and internet services for contact with friends and family, as well as education and entertainment services.

Details of the specific sectoral issues on Covid-19 are covered in the Sectoral Reports.

*The GS Circulars can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSG 06-20 COVID-19 Continuity of Service to our Members](#)

[GSG 08-20 COVID-19 Update](#)

[GSG 10-20 Retired Members](#)

[GSG 11-20 COVID-19](#)

[GSG 16-20 Remote Branch Committee Meetings](#)

[GSG 23-20 10th Biennial Conference 2020](#)

[GSG 25-20 10th Biennial Conference](#)

[GSG 32-20 Branch AGMs 2021](#)

[GSG 26-21 Work Safely Protocol](#)



**THE ROWLAND HILL
MEMORIAL FUND OF
IRELAND**

The Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland provides financial assistance for serving and retired staff of An Post and eir, and their dependants who find themselves in need due to age, poverty or infirmity. It also provides financial assistance for retired staff and their dependants of the former Department of Posts and Telegraphs, Telecom Éireann, and eircom.

For more information on applying for assistance, contact:

Liam Kirwan, Secretary

info@rhmfi.net

085 174 4130

www.rhmfi.net



An Post



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Pay, Pension & Allowances in An Post

1. Pay Agreement 2021

The Group of Unions in An Post lodged a claim for a cost-of-living pay increase, to apply from 1st May 2020. However, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic delayed progression of the claim, primarily because of the uncertainty and the adverse impact on the Company finances. Following assistance by the WRC, agreement was concluded on a proposal which contained:

- An eight-month pay pause.
- A pay increase of 2.75% from 1st January 2021.
- The increase was not pensionable.

The ballot resulted in 88% of members voting in favour.

*Supplementary documents can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 02-21 An Post Pay](#)

[Attachment to GSP 02-21 An Post Pay](#)

[GSP 03-21 An Post Pay Information Seminar](#)

[CWU An Post Newsletter re An Post Pay Deal 2021](#)

[Postal Seminar – WRC Pay Proposal 2021](#)

[GSP 06-21 WRC Pay Proposal – An Post](#)

[Attachment to GSP 06-21 WRC Pay Proposal](#)

2. Pay Agreement 2022

The pay element of the WRC agreement expired on the 31st December 2021. Consequently, the Union lodged a claim at the Joint Conciliation Council, seeking a significant pay increase for members from 1st January 2022. Following direct discussions, the Union and Company concluded agreement on a comprehensive proposal which provided for a:

- 2.5% pay increase from the 1st January 2022
- 2.5% pay increase from the 1st January 2023

The ballot resulted in 93% of members voting in favour.

*The An Post Pay and Pension circular can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 25-21 An Post Pay and Pension](#)

3. Consolidation of Productivity/Change Allowance

Agreement was concluded to consolidate 2.5% of the Change Allowance payable to Post Office Clerks and Postal Sorters by way of an additional increment at the maximum point of the pay scale, effective from 1st January 2020. The details of this agreement were included in *GS Circular 34/20*.

In Mails & Parcels there is a substantial earnings gap between Postal Operatives that have the Productivity/Change Allowance and those that do not. Staff recruited since 2006 are not paid the 10% productivity allowance, which is regarded by An Post and supported by the Labour Court to be personal to holder. The Union regards this to be no longer tenable and has lodged a claim at the JCC, seeking the consolidation of 5% of the Productivity/Change Allowance into basic pay. An update will be made at Conference.

*The Change Allowance circular can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

GSP 34-20 Change Allowance for Post Office Clerks & Postal Sorters

4. Eating on Route Allowance

A review of the Eating on Route Allowance is conducted on a biennial basis, with the most recent review taking place in January 2022. The review takes into account changes in the Consumer Price Index for food and non-alcoholic beverages over the previous two-year period, i.e. 2020/2021. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the outcome of the review.

5. Subsistence Allowances

Arising from discussions at the JCC, new subsistence rates were agreed, effective from 1st July 2019. The changes resulted in an increase of the day rates, with the overnight rates remaining the same. A further review in the Civil Service resulted in new rates, effective from 1st December 2021. The new rates provided for an increase in the daily 5-hour rate to €16.29 and the 10-hour rate increasing to €39.08, with no change to the overnight rate.

6. Managers' Salary Review

The WRC Pay Proposal detailed above, provided for the finalisation of a Company-wide grading structure for Managers below Level 2 within three months of the date of the proposal. The Union had expectations that An Post Senior Management would move quickly to agree a common grade and pay structure.

While discussions on this are ongoing, the Union is disappointed at the delay by the Company to advance, in a timely manner, proposals to address this issue. More positive engagement has taken place at the time of writing, and we are hopeful of concluding an agreement which we expect will also address the current poor operation of the performance-related pay assessment and the unfair bonus model.

7. Mail Room Assistants

The Union was successful in having the pay of the Mail Room Assistants increased to the level of Service Officers.

8. Clerks' Incremental Scale

The Union secured agreement for the removal of the first incremental point from the Clerks' incremental scale.

9. Pension Issues

9.1 Superannuation Schemes

The asset valuation of the Superannuation Fund, as of the 31st December 2021, was €4,011bn, with liabilities of €3,356bn. From January 2016, in addition to meeting minimum funding standard, schemes are obliged to maintain a Risk Reserve. The Risk Reserve is 10% of the fund's liabilities less the amount of the fund held in EU Government Bonds or cash. This means there is a minimum funding standard surplus of €655m. This figure includes the Company-contingent asset of €100m, as part of the required Risk Reserve, which will only apply in the event of the fund winding up.

Under current legislation, in the event of the Scheme winding up, the assets of the Scheme would first be used to secure pensions in payment to pensioners, through the purchase of annuities. This does not provide for future pension increases. The remaining assets of the Scheme would then be used to pay pension benefits to active (employees) and deferred members. However, the Scheme remains in robust condition, building up a healthy surplus, although remaining susceptible to market movements, i.e. changes in equity or bond markets. A relatively small adverse movement can result in a material change to the funding position.

*Proposal documentation can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

Proposals to address An Post Pension Fund Deficit

9.2 Review of Pension Agreement

The WRC Pay Agreement, concluded in 2021, provided for a review of the Pension Accord, with a focus on the widening gap between base pay and pensionable pay and, in addition, to review the pension provisions arrangements post-2023, when the agreement expires. To develop a full understanding of the issues outlined below, and to observe experiences of other organisations/pension schemes, assistance was invited from Byrne's Actuaries, to assist both sides.

9.3 Calculation of CPI

The Pension Accord provides for increases in pensionable salary by either (a) the actual pay/salary increases, or (b) the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 2%, whichever is lowest. Discussions are ongoing to determine a methodology for calculating CPI.

9.4 Rates for the Purchase of Additional Service

As a result of the changes in the Pension Accord, the rates for the purchase of additional service need to be revised. Mercers provided actuarial tables, which need to be ultimately approved by the Minister for Communications, Energy & Climate Change. The Company expect to be in a position to share some examples with the Staff Side shortly.

9.5 Ill-Health Retirement – Added Years

As part of the ill-health retirement arrangements in An Post, staff can attain added years based on service up to 6 years and 243 days. However, the benefit is limited up to age 60, which the Union contends is discriminatory on the grounds of age. The Company has accepted that there is a requirement to amend the existing pension/rules and it has agreed that this should be addressed as part of the review of the Pension Accord.

9.6 Pensionable Allowances

The Company applies the cap on pensionable pay to the allowances in the same way. The Union contends this is a double-whammy, by capping pension increases to basic pay and then applying the very same cap to the calculation of the allowances.

9.7 TRR- Pension Rate of Pay

The Union raised its concern at the manner in which the Company applies payment of TRR (pension rate). Of particular concern was how staff were advised in relation to reduced pay and how reduced pay was calculated. Following discussions, we agreed the following would be set out in correspondence to staff on sick leave:

- The rate and date on which they will go on reduced pay.
- A copy of the circular setting out the rules that apply.
- Advice that they may be entitled to extended sick pay associated with critical illness and who they should contact.
- Advice that they can contact their Union for assistance.

9.8 Pensionable Increases

Since agreement was reached on the Pension Accord, pensionable increases are as follows:

DATE OF PAY RISE	% PAY RISE	% PENSIONABLE
1st May 2016	2.5	0
1st August 2017	2	0.8
1st May 2018	1.5	0
1st May 2019	2.5	1.7
1st January 2021	2.75	0
1st January 2022	2.5	2
Total	13.75	4.5

Increase of 2.5% from 1st January, 2023, will apply with CPI determined at that stage.

3 Updated Computer Skills Courses



1

Create Posters, Address Labels, Agenda layouts ...



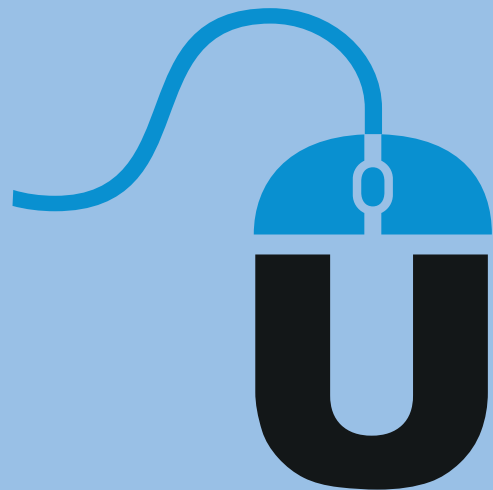
2

Create Expense Claim forms, Contact List, Pivot Tables ...



3

Getting Started, Tables & Charts and adding an Overview ...



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Regulation

1. Introduction

The *Communication Regulation (Postal Services) Act 2011* was transposed into Irish Law when the President signed it in August 2011. This represented the final step in the opening of the postal market in Ireland to full competition.

2. Universal Service Obligation (USO)

The USO guarantees that all Irish citizens can receive mail five days a week at the same price, irrespective of location, in conjunction with easy access to a Postal outlet. The guarantee of a daily postal service to every address throughout the entire country is enshrined in the legislation and, given that the USO is the cornerstone of the postal network, this legal guarantee is critical. The Third Postal Directive on which the Irish legislation is based provided for this guarantee in law.

The funding of the USO and An Post's financial strategy remains a major issue for the Union, not least because both are inextricably linked and have a consequential impact on the pay and conditions of employment for our members.

3. ComReg calls for inputs into Postal Strategy 2022 – 2024

In June 2021, ComReg called for inputs into the Postal Strategy. In its consultation document, it highlighted how the Covid-19 pandemic confirmed the importance of the postal sector, although it also accelerated the trend towards digitalisation of the postal industry, with the increase in online shopping increasing the demand for parcels.

*The full consultation document can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[ComReg Call for Inputs – Postal Regulation Strategy 2022-2024](#)

3.1 Submissions Received

ComReg received 9 submissions in response to its call for input. They were from Age Action Ireland, An Post, Consumer Association of Ireland, Chambers Ireland, IBEC, Irish Rural Link, UPS and 2 members of the public.

A number of the submissions highlighted the positive role An Post played during the pandemic and this demonstrated the need to have a secure, reliable and effective postal sector.

Also highlighted was the negative impact a reduced service would have on older adults, particularly in rural communities.

In its submission, An Post sought the introduction of an environmentally-friendly USO service, which delivers at lower frequency. It also asked ComReg to ensure that the future regulatory framework supports the rights to a decent job with good terms and conditions. The Company advised that it would continue to fight against the excesses of the gig economy and, in contrast, it will promote the dignity and respect of the postal profession. This position was supported by Chambers Ireland, which requested that ComReg should consider how the gig economy is impacting the postal delivery sector.

*The responses to the consultation can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[ComReg Postal Strategy Statement – Submissions to Calls for Input](#)

3.2 Postal Strategy Statement 2022 – 2024

The *Postal Strategy Statement 2022 - 2024* was published on the 1st December 2021. In the Strategy, ComReg identified the following trends:

1. A continued decline in letter post volumes
2. Changing mix of letter post and speed of delivery
3. Continued competition and growth in the parcels sector

It has also identified the following principal challenges:

1. Responding to changing user needs
2. Responding to environmental sustainability challenges
3. Reducing losses on international inbound post
4. The continued liquidity challenges for An Post

ComReg has developed three statements of strategic intent based on the above trends and challenges:

Table 1 – ComReg’s Strategic Intents	
SI 1: Ensure a universal postal service	There is a universal postal service that meets the reasonable needs of postal service users
SI 2: Promote the interests of postal service users	Postal service users can choose and use postal services with confidence
SI 3: Promote the development of the postal sector	A postal sector that delivers high quality services, innovation, and choice

ComReg set out its strategic goal as follows:

- Goal 1:** Ensure a universal postal service that meets the reasonable needs of postal service users
Goal 2: Consider the designation of universal postal service provider(s)
Goal 3: Monitor compliance with universal postal service requirements

In order to promote the interests of postal service users it has set out the following goals:

- Goal 4:** Empower postal service users by ensuring the availability of accurate and appropriate information
Goal 5: Protect postal service users by ensuring the availability of complaints and redress procedures
Goal 6: Engage with consumer interest groups

In order to promote the development of the postal sector it has set out the following goals:

- Goal 7:** Provide research, data, and information
Goal 8: Facilitate the development of the postal sector by delivering on our legal remit
Goal 9: Facilitate the development of the postal sector by considering other remits that impact the postal sector

*The full strategy statement can be accessed by clicking on the link below
 (only available in the online version of this report).*

[ComReg Postal Strategy Statement 2022-2024](#)

4. An Post Pricing

An Post announced stamp price increases, to apply from the 1st March 2022. The revised rates increased the domestic stamp price to €1.25 and the international stamp to €2.20. The Company advocates that the overall price increases to be less than 6% and required to offset sharp price inflation across transport, fuel and energy.

5. Consumer Confidence and Awareness Survey

In October 2021, ComReg published the outcome of its Consumer Confidence and Awareness Survey, which was an online survey conducted by Behaviours and Attitudes. The main points of the survey are:

- 7 in 10 claim daily delivery of letter post is important to them, this increases to 8 in 10 regarding parcel post.

- Daily delivery of letter post is most important to the over-50 age group.
- High importance of daily delivery of parcel post across all demographics, particularly the 50-64 age group.
- 7 in 10 claim next-day-delivery of letter post is important to them, while 2 in 3 have a similar attitude towards next-day-delivery of parcel post.
- Next-day-delivery of letter post is most important to the over-50 age group.
- Next-day-delivery of parcel post is most important to the under-50 age group.
- Clear variation in attitudes towards speed of letter post delivery across age groups, note 1 in 5 under 25s feel three working days is acceptable.
- 9 in 10 feel the price of sending letters and parcels needs to be kept affordable.
- Affordability of letter post is most important to the over-50 age group.
- Affordability of parcel post is most important to the over-50 age group.

*The full report can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[B&A Consumer Confidence & Awareness Postal Survey Q2 2021](#)

6. *An Post Quality of Service 2020*

ComReg published a report on An Post's Quality of Service on the 30th December 2021. In the report, ComReg commended An Post for continuing to provide the universal postal service throughout the pandemic. It advised that the 2020 Quality of Service monitor was suspended from 1st April to 30th June 2020.

The 2020 report covered the other nine months of 2020 with the reported results as follows:

- Next-day-delivery was 82%, which was a decline of 8% on 2019
- This must be taken in the context of the impact of the pandemic
- An Post delivered 97.4% within 3 working days, which was 1.7% below 2019

*A copy of the report can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[ComReg reports An Post's performance for next-day delivery of mail in 2020](#)



Partnership & Joint Working

1. Partnership

The Company regularly provides business updates and strategic direction on an ongoing basis, which creates a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing An Post and its staff. Joint Working Groups examine requirements in the following areas as detailed below.

2. Health & Safety

2.1 Safety Consultation and Participation

An Post manages its legal requirements under Health & Safety Legislation through an Occupational Health & Safety Management System (OHSMS). This is a framework that allows the Company to consistently identify and control its Health & Safety risks, reduce the potential for accidents, help achieve compliance with Health & Safety legislation and continually improve its performance.

Last year, the Company achieved the International Workplace Occupational Health & Safety Standard ISO 45001:2018. Corporate Policy Statement signed by the CEO and a Safety Task Procedure Manual, identifying the risks within each office, is available at offices. Health & Safety legislation stipulates employers must make arrangements for employee consultation and participation. These arrangements allow employees to be consulted on the steps taken to safeguard their Safety, Health & Welfare, together with checking the effectiveness of safeguards. The Consultation process in place includes:

- JCC Health & Safety Sub-Committee
- Safety Committees
- Safety Representatives

As part of its commitment to Health & Safety, An Post ensures that Occupational Health & Safety information is provided and communicated to include the Safety Statement, Occupational Health & Safety Policy, Safety Training, Staff Safety booklets, Staff Briefing notes, Company Circulars and Safety Notice Boards.

*Details of the consultation arrangements can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Terms of Reference – Health & Safety Committee](#)

[Safety Committees in An Post](#)

2.2 Safety Representatives

Section 25 of the **Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005** entitles employees to select a Safety Representative to represent them on safety and health matters, in consultation with their employer. We have a large number of Safety Representatives across the Company, and they play a very important role in the consultation process. It is important that Safety Representatives have the knowledge and skills to perform their role effectively. In that regard, the Union has concluded an agreement as to how the Safety Representatives can operate effectively.

*Safety Representatives Agreement can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Safety Representatives in An Post](#)

2.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Section 8 of the **Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005** places a duty on employers to supply PPE, where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled. The Union understands that key role PPE provides in protecting our members from injury and the provision and review of PPE is a constant item on our agenda.

Once the requirement to wear PPE is established, there is an obligation on all staff to correctly use it, to report any defects or damage and inform management. All staff members, including Casuals and Managers, are expected to wear PPE, where it is prescribed.

2.3.1 Safety Footwear

A review of Safety Footwear involving trials of different types of footwear was conducted at Cork South City, Crumlin and Galway DSUs. Arising from positive feedback from the candidates, it was agreed to provide a shoe as part of the Uniform distribution for 2022.

2.3.2 Rainwear

A trial of different types of rainwear was also conducted and an update will be provided to Conference.

2.3.3 Replacement PPE

Regulation 66 of the *Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act (General Application) Regulations 2007* places a responsibility on employers to ensure that any PPE provided must be maintained at all times in good working order and they should be replaced when worn or faulty. While Health & Safety Managers are aware of this, it appears some managers involved in the procurement of PPE do not understand their responsibilities and continually fail to replace faulty PPE.

Given the extent of the problem, we have raised our concerns again at the Health & Safety Committee and we have agreed that a protocol should be agreed on how faulty PPE should be replaced. This will involve input from Health & Safety, Procurement, HR and the Union and discussions on this are ongoing at the time of writing.

2.4 Cancer Awareness and Sun Cream

Skin Cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with almost 12,000 people diagnosed every year. Recent research conducted by the Irish Cancer Society found that 90% of the days between April and September had a UV level high enough to do damage to the skin. It is important for anyone who works outdoors to be aware of sun protection. Where there is daylight, there is sunlight. Consequently, we agreed to raise awareness of the risk by developing a communications campaign commencing with the provision of protective sun cream to all outdoor workers.

2.5 Defibrillators

Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the *Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007* sets out that the provision of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in workplaces to prevent sudden cardiac death, should be considered. Following discussions, we agreed defibrillators will be installed at all Company Offices over a three-year period, commencing at the end of 2021.

2.6 Driver Issues

2.6.1 Professional Driver Training Programme

Continuation of the Driver Training Programme was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with a limited amount of training taking place. This programme consists of a review on delivery, with follow-on training for those who don't achieve the required standard.

2.6.2 Driver Safety Issues

The Company raised its serious concerns in relation to significant safety breaches by Postal Operatives which had potential for serious injury or fatalities to either drivers or pedestrians. The main concern relates to vehicle rollaways, which in the main arose because the handbrake was not applied correctly. This has resulted in Company vans either rolling into other vans, colliding with houses, rolling into gardens and in some cases, tipping over.

Given the seriousness and potential danger to the public, the Company has advised that the non-observance of this normal safety measure is a serious cause of concern and that this could lead to the driver being subject to disciplinary sanction, up to and including dismissal. They could also find themselves liable for prosecution.

Following representations from the Union, the Company has confirmed that it is installing alarm buzzers in the fleet which will remind the Postal Operative to engage the handbrake. The rollout of this initiative was hampered by a shortage of parts, but the Company advise by the end of September 2021, they will be fitting 80 per week. Driving/parking on footpaths is prohibited.

2.7 Accident Statistics

At the Health & Safety Committee, the Company provide the Staff Side with the accident statistics on an ongoing basis. These are provided in two formats: The first one is Lost Time Accidents (LTAs) and the second one is HSA reportable accidents (>3 days). The accident frequency rate for LTAs reduced from 1.78 per 100,000 hours worked in 2019 to 1.46 per 100,000 hours worked in 2020. The IR1 accident rate also reduced from 1.25 per 100,000 hours worked in 2019 to 1.06 per 100,000 hours worked in 2020. The accident severity rate, which is the number of days lost per 100,000 hours worked, also reduced from 37.15 in 2019 to 25.56 in 2020. The vast majority of reported workplace accidents were attributed to either manual handling or trips, slips and falls, and highlights the requirement for manual handling training.

2.8 Safety Training

The table below sets out the safety training carried out from January to September 2021.

HEALTH & SAFETY AND DRIVER TRAINING ACTIVITY		
TRAINING TYPE	2021 TARGETS	2021 YTD
Manual Handling	3000	2145
Power Pallet/Stacker & Refresher	TBD	143
First Aid & Refresher	60	37
Safety Management System	TBD	4
Safety Representative	10	6
Fire Safety	40	93
Fork-Lift	TBD	8
Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Air – Awareness	100	68
Pro-Drive (Vans) & Follow-On	700	659
CPC	500	404
eVan/eTruck familiarisation	300	748
Van Familiarisation	TBD	52
B&C Licence Acquisition	TBD	16

TBD = Needs to be established on an ongoing basis with S&E, Operations, Transport and HR.

2.9 Other issues under discussion

Some of the other issues under discussion include:

- Accommodation Difficulties
- Night Work Policy
- Manual Handling of Parcels
- Green Pallet Boxes
- Review of Manual Handling
- Review of Safety Booklets
- Internal and External OHS Audits

2.10 Covid-19

The Covid-19 Pandemic has changed the world we live in and has had immeasurable and long-lasting impact on every aspect of our lives. Millions of people have been infected resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths. At all stages during the crisis, our priority was to protect the Health & Safety of our members and, if nothing else, the pandemic has highlighted the requirement for strong and robust Health & Safety consultation within the Company. Throughout the pandemic, we met the Company on a weekly basis to

discuss the response to Covid-19 and the different issues as they arose. When necessary, we issued GS Circulars and notes to Branch Secretaries. This issues of concern included:

- Consultation Process
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment
- Covid-19 Special and Sick Leave
- Health & Safety Arrangements
- Infection Prevention and Control Measures
- Physical Distancing
- Hand Hygiene
- Cleaning
- Leave Arrangements
- Training
- Lead Worker Representative and the Role of the Safety Representative
- Remote Working
- Work Safely Protocol

The details of the GS Circulars issued can be accessed by clicking on the links below (only available in the online version of this report).

[GSP 30-20 COVID-19 Contact Tracing & Close Contacts](#)

[GSP 04-21 An Post – Role of Safety Representative during COVID-19](#)

[GSP 05-21 COVID-19 Health & Safety Measures](#)

[GSP 08-21 Annual Leave 2021](#)

[GSP 13-21 Training Update](#)

[GSP 14-21 Vaccinations](#)

[Attachment to GSP 14-21 Vaccinations](#)

[GSP 17-21 Training – Mails & Parcels for Summer 2021](#)

[GSP 22-21 COVID-19 & Social Distancing](#)

[GSP 24-21 Payments during COVID-19](#)

[GSP 03-22 Easing of Workplace Restrictions](#)

[GSP 04-22 Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions](#)

3. Diversity and Equality

The CWU is committed to Equality and Diversity and, through the JCC Diversity Sub-Committee, the Union negotiates changes to Diversity and Equality policies and changes to work/life balance options within the Company. Set out below is a summary of the main issues under discussion at the Committee.

3.1 Statutory Leave for Parents

A number of changes have taken place in relation to the statutory leave available to parents. This included an increase in Parental Leave and the introduction of Parents Leave. As a result of these and other changes, we agreed to the introduction of one-policy document, which would detail all of the leave available to parents. The agreed policy document comprehends the following areas and how they will apply in An Post:

- Parental Leave
- Parents Leave
- Force Majeure Leave
- Paternity Leave

It includes details on eligibility, the application process, including appeals process, qualifying conditions, duration, the impact on terms and conditions of employment and, where applicable, the details of any enhancements we have agreed.

A summary of the leave available is detailed below:

Leave Type	Who can avail of it?	How long is it?	Is it paid?
Parental Leave	Parents and guardians of children under 12 years of age	A maximum of 26 weeks	No it is unpaid
Parents Leave	Parents and guardians of children under 2 years of age	A maximum of 5 weeks	Parents benefit from the state may be available but the Company does not top up this leave
Paternity Leave	New parents of children under 6 months (not the mother of the child) and must be taken within 6 months of the birth	2 weeks	Paternity benefit is payable from the state and An Post will top this up

The policy document and the GS Circular issued can be accessed by clicking on the links below (only available in the online version of this report).

GSP 15-21 Statutory Leave for Parents

An Post Policy – Statutory Leave Arrangements for Parents

3.2 Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control

The Union is aware of the severe impact that domestic violence can have on employees and their families. As a result, we sought the introduction of a Company Policy and this was finalised and launched in March 2021. The policy provides details of the supports available to victims of domestic abuse and coercive control, including possible changes to working hours, the provision of flexible working and access to up to 2 weeks' paid special leave to facilitate legal meetings, court attendances etc. This is a very positive development, and we are grateful to the Company for agreeing to its introduction.

Details of the Policy and GS Circular issued can be accessed by clicking on the links below (only available in the online version of this report).

GSP 11-21 Launch of Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control Policy

An Post Policy – Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control

3.3 Review of Dignity at Work

In December 2020, The Health & Safety Authority (HSA) and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) published a new code of practice entitled “Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work”. In addition, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) has also published a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work.

As a result, the Union and the Company reviewed the Company “Dignity at Work” Policy, taking into account the two guidance documents and a new policy has been agreed.

Bullying at work is not acceptable and all workers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. The new policy will enable members to raise concerns which can be dealt with quickly and effectively. At the time of writing, we are in the process of agreeing how the new policy will be launched and, once we have the communications process agreed, we will issue a GS Circular. We also intend to agree a training programme with the Company for Union Representatives.

The full policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

An Post Policy – Dignity at Work

3.4 Gender Pay Gap Report

In October 2019, An Post launched its first *Gender Pay Gap Report and Action Plan*. An Post announced that its gender pay gap was 3.71%, compared to 13.9% nationally. The Company, in its report, highlighted the need for a more inclusive workplace. It advised that it intended to work with staff and the Group of Unions to develop a fully diverse and inclusive workplace. The Report highlighted areas where the Company could make improvements by:

- Achieving a better gender balance at management level – currently there are far more men in management roles
- Improving the overall workforce gender balance, currently 75% male - 25% female
- Creating an inclusive workplace environment for all employees
- Helping people find opportunities to progress in An Post
- Encouraging female colleagues to apply for management roles

We welcome the report and believe that it forms a basis for further discussion. We are fully supportive of the Company's attempts to promote women and to have more women involved at Senior Management level. We have highlighted the lack of women at middle management level and also the need to encourage women who have taken time off to raise a family, to look for promotional opportunities. The Company issued further documents in 2020 and 2021. After the report was published in 2020, we highlighted the lack of consultation with the Staff Side. We met the Company in advance of the publication of the 2021 report and raised our concerns. The Company committed to a number of actions for 2022 including:

- Agenda item for all Equality & Diversity Sub-Committee Meetings
- Aspire Programme which is supporting women at CM1/CM2 to progress in the organisation
- Advance Programme – this is their internal mentoring programme
- Recruitment campaigns to encourage more women to apply for some of the male dominated areas, such as Postal Operative

3.1 Other Items Under Discussion

3.5.1 Term Time Review

The Union sought a review of term time, which was put on hold as a result of Covid-19, but we expect the review to resume shortly.

3.5.2 Breastfeeding Breaks

Under existing legislation, women who are breastfeeding are entitled to time off from work, or a reduction in working hours, to breastfeed their baby. This continues until the child is 26 weeks of age. In the guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation, they have recommended that Breastfeeding breaks should be available until the child's second birthday. Given all of this, the Union has sought the extension of breastfeeding breaks until the child reaches the age of 2.

3.5.3 Sabbatical Leave

Discussions are ongoing with the Company for the introduction of a Sabbatical Leave Scheme. Sabbatical Leave is unpaid leave whereby staff can apply for 1,2,3,6 to a maximum of 9 months off. Schemes like Term Time allow for periods of up to three months off, in certain circumstances, and Career Breaks allow for unpaid leave of over 12 months. In addition, the unpaid special leave arrangements only apply in certain circumstances and the circular given effect to it was issued in 1979.

3.5.4 Menopause at Work Policy

The composition of the Irish workforce is changing, with more women working and staying longer in employment. Menopause is a natural transition that will affect every woman and symptoms vary for each person, from mild to debilitating. Menopause can create some real challenges in the workplace and many women may not wish to disclose that they are going through the menopause. They may also hide this as the reason for any absences or difficulties performing day-to-day tasks due to embarrassment or concerns around confidentiality. Given this, the Union has sought the introduction of a Company Policy on the menopause.

3.5.5 An Post – Employee Assistance Programme

We were pleased to advise of the launch of the An Post Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in March of 2021. This service is available 24/7 and is provided by Spectrum Life. The Company engaged with the Union and the Occupational Health and Support service, to provide reliable supports through the EAP.

Services on offer range from nutrition and fitness, financial wellness, mental health promotion and counselling. Furthermore, the EAP will complement the existing services provided by Occupational Health & Support team.

The service is confidential and is free-of-charge to An Post Employees and their families.

We encourage our members to register with the service. Further information can be found on the Post People App.

4. Attendance Support and Management Process

4.1 Background

Irregular employee attendance continues to be a significant cost issue for the Company. Each 1% at Company level costs approximately €3m to the Company's bottom line each year. The Company does accept that, even if it was fully effective in managing all aspects of absence, it would still be incurring a certain level of absence. In terms of absence management, the best year was 4.47% in 2009 and, if absence could be reduced to that level, the Company could be saving up to €6m per annum. The Company believes it to be realistic to make savings of €3m by bringing the absence levels to 5.6%. The ASMP process has been in place since February 2013.

4.2 Terms of Reference

Part of the agreement on the introduction of ASMP provided for the establishment of a Sub-Committee. This committee would meet bi-monthly and would examine issues such as the underlying reasons for absence. Set out below is a summary of some of the issues under discussion.

A copy of the terms of reference of the Sub-Committee can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Terms of Reference – Joint Attendance Working Group](#)

4.3 Sick Pay Arrangements

In 2016, as part of the Labour Court Finding LCR21206, revised sick pay arrangements were introduced. Under these arrangements, an employee who is absent from work arising from illness from the 1st July 2016 may have access to paid sick leave, subject to the following limits:

- (i) A maximum of 92 days' sick leave on full pay in a year
- (i) A further maximum of 91 days' sick leave on half pay

subject to a maximum of 183 days' paid sick leave in a rolling four-year period. Where an employee has exhausted 183 days' paid sick leave in a rolling four-year period and is absent because of illness again, they may be granted Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR). TRR was formerly referred to as 'Pension Rate of Pay' and will continue to be calculated in the same way. An employee must have 5 years' continuous service to qualify for the payment of TRR.

Details of the Scheme can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Company Circular 35-2016 Revision of An Post Sick Pay Scheme](#)

4.1 Critical Illness Protocol (CIP)

In recognition of the fact that, sometimes, a longer period of sick leave can be required to address a critical illness or serious physical injury, there is provision for the following to apply in exceptional circumstances:

- (i) A maximum of 183 days on full pay in a year
- (ii) A further maximum of 182 days' sick leave on half pay

subject to a maximum of 365 days' paid sick leave in a rolling four-year period. Where an employee has exhausted 365 days' extended sick pay under the Critical Illness Protocol, they may be granted Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (TRR) for a further period of 12 months.

The Union has raised concerns with the Company in relation to how Critical Illness is managed. Decisions on whether someone can qualify for Critical Illness should be made quickly and without any delay. Our experience is that this process takes too long, with individuals reduced to half pay for some time before a decision is made on their application. We have conveyed our concern to management, and we have sought details on the process to be followed. We contend that, if a decision on whether someone can avail of CIP is not made, then they should not have reduced pay applied until such time as a decision is made.

In relation to Critical Illness, a guidance document was issued to HR Managers when the new Sick Pay Scheme was introduced. This document details the process to be followed for employees applying for Critical Illness. The Company believes the difficulties experienced in 2021 have been addressed with the appointment of a third-party provider and they expect that there will be a significant improvement this year. This issue will be the subject of ongoing discussion at the Sub-Committee.

*A link to the guidance document can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

Implementation of Revised An Post Sick Pay Scheme – Guidelines for HR Managers

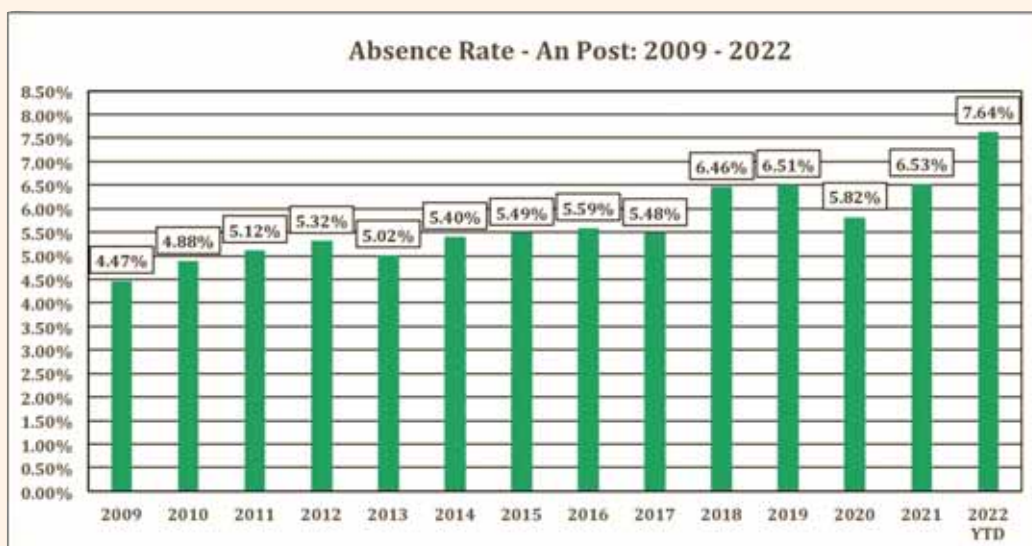
We have also agreed an appeals process, with final adjudication by the Monitoring Group.

4.5 Long Term Sick Leave

We have also raised concerns with the Company relating to the high number of staff on sick leave, with some of them not contacted by the Company for months. It appears to the Union that, once they have gone on TRR (pension rate of pay), the Company no longer has an interest in reviewing or actively managing their status. Following our representations, the Company has advised that it is carrying out a review of such cases and, at the time of writing, we are awaiting the outcome. An updated report will be provided to Conference.

4.6 Current Position

In relation to absence data, the graph below shows the trend as it relates to the sick absence rate over the last number of years. The data for 2022 has been impacted by the fact that an increasing proportion of Covid-19-related absence has been captured as sick absence, since the start of the year. The Company believes that the YTD sick absence rate has been inflated by 0.8% to 1% for this reason. Since 2018, the proportion of sick absence days associated with longer-term absence relative to those associated with short-term absence has increased, such that the ratio of long-term to short-term absence is now greater than 55:45.



5. Uniform and Workwear

A Joint Working Group reviews on an ongoing basis, issues relating to the provision of Uniforms and Workwear.

5.1 Uniform and Workwear Distribution 2021

The Union raised concerns relating to delays in the distribution of uniform and workwear. The Company advised the Union of its decision to defer the 2021 uniform distribution until April 2022. This was as a result of commercial issues facing the Company and supply issues on foot of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Company confirmed its decision did not impact on the distribution of PPE or replacement of any item of individual uniform, where required. The Union made it clear to the Company that it was not happy with this decision. While we accept that there were issues with the supply chain, it is not acceptable that individual would be left without replacement uniform or workwear for such a long period of time.

5.2 Uniform and Workwear Distribution 2022

The Company confirmed the uniform distribution schedule would commence on the 21st March 2022 and be completed by the end of April 2022. The Company had expected distribution would have commenced earlier, but delays relating to customs and Brexit made this impossible.

5.3 Retail Workwear

The Company raised concerns regarding the high number of Retail Staff who failed to return requests for workwear. This has resulted in a delay to the distribution of the Workwear and, at the time of writing, we are awaiting a commencement date.

Given the impact of Covid-19 and the requirement for ventilation in offices, the Union requested that staff be provided with a fleece-type jacket. The Company provided a soft shell jacket but were unable to source this until January 2022. A trial of the garment at a number of offices was well-received.

5.4 Uniform Application Process

Discussions are ongoing in relation to an improved process for ordering uniform items. This will be an online process, with the information inputted by the IAOs. This should also address the Union concerns with online ordering. Discussions are ongoing at the time of writing and an updated report will be provided to Biennial Conference.

6. Accommodation

6.1 Introduction

The Joint Accommodation Committee was established to provide a forum where the Union and the Company could discuss and engage constructively on matters relating to accommodation. As part of the agreed process, the Company would take into account the Union's views in relation to the prioritisation of expenditure in the refurbishment or replacement of Company accommodation. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis.

6.2 Health & Safety

Section 8 of the **Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act** requires the Company to ensure, so far as practical, the safety, health and welfare at work of all its employees. This includes the design, provision and maintenance of safe workplaces. In addition, Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the **Safety Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007** deals with the physical environment and also sets out the facilities which should be provided as standard facilities for a premises used as a workplace.

We have reminded the Company of its legal responsibilities under the legislation, particularly the requirement to manage and conduct work activities so as to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees. When dealing with accommodation issues, the Union intends to use the legislation where possible, to improve the facilities for staff.

6.3 Update

The Union is aware that conditions in some offices are unacceptable and pose a risk to the health and safety of staff. We also recognise that difficulties will arise as we transit from letters to parcels. However, it is

important Branches do not allow conditions to become unsafe. Safety Representatives should identify issues of concern are brought to the attention of Management. If no progress is made, then reports should be made to Head Office via the Regional Officers.

6.3.1 Planning Timelines

We have, on a regular basis, raised concerns in relation to planning guidelines and the Company has set out the following process that is involved in bringing properties to completion:

1. The process of securing planning approval from a Local Authority can take up to 9 months, whether a change of use or a new application is involved. This period allows for further information requests by the Local Authority, but not for any appeal to An Bord Pleanála.
2. If, at the end of the 9 months, there is an objection to the Local Authority decision, it can be an additional 4 months before An Bord Pleanála makes a decision. Even if the decision is favourable, a waiting period of one month is provided for by An Board Pleanála.
3. In such circumstances, it is always prudent to allow for a longer timeline. Any contraction in the planning approval process timeline, will of course allow for earlier delivery of the build.
4. Where a change of usage is involved, the Company allow 3 months for the fit out to be completed.
5. If a new DSU is involved, there is additional time allowed at the start of the process – a thorough feasibility examination of scheme, layout, ground & engineering surveys, pre-planning & planning due diligence, negotiations, approvals, legals are required. This adds at least 6 months to the timeline for any build.
6. Once planning is approved, the Company is required to tender for construction (which can take up to 3 months) and the build itself can take up to 9 months to be completed assuming that there are no unknown issues.

While recognising that difficulties exist in a large number of offices the Union has prioritised a number of offices for attention and an update is provided below in relation to them.

6.3.2 Tralee

A site search is underway for Tralee. The Company is in discussion with a landowner in the region, in relation to a longer-term solution which needs to be assessed for a new DSU.

However, assuming the site is suitable and terms can be agreed, the likely timeline for delivery of this option is 18 months.

The Company also undertook to engage with the Branch locally on a solution identified by the Branch which would provide some temporary relief.

6.3.3 Dungarvan

Dungarvan was not originally on the shortlist of priority buildings to be resolved. However, following ongoing representations from the Union the DSU is now included on the priority list. In 2019 a decision was made to secure a TPU that adjoins the DSU. This created difficulties for staff particularly in relations to vermin present on the site. A Health & Safety assessment was completed in May 2021 and a number of recommendations were made which have since been implemented. A potential site has been selected and due diligence has been completed with negotiations continuing with the landowner.

6.3.4 Ballina

The Board of An Post has approved the spend on a new building for Ballina DSU. However, there are a number of processes to complete before the Company is in a position to take occupancy of a new DSU. Change of use planning application is required and that can only be done once the necessary legal paperwork has been finalised. The lease is in the process of being counter signed by the landlord and once that is done and detailed design signed off by Operations a change of use application will be made.

6.3.5 Bantry

As with Ballina, the An Post Board has approved the spend on a new building and the Company is currently working through the legal process. There is also a change of use planning application required which cannot be done until the legal paperwork has been completed. They have a TPU solution in place in the interim and

while this is not ideal, it is an improvement on the previous operation when sorting was done in the shed on site. The Lease is complete, and the Landlord has applied for Planning. (This should only take 3 months as it is only an amalgamation of units and signage.

An updated report on Accommodation will be provided to Biennial Conference.

Employee Health & Wellbeing



Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is here to help. We provide free and confidential counselling services to support employees and their family members with health, financial, social concerns including personal or family challenges.

We're available 24/7, 365 days a year and offer:

- Counselling
- Emotional Wellbeing Support
- Consumer Advice
- Legal Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Life Coaching
- Career Guidance
- Mediation
- Fitness & Nutrition Advice

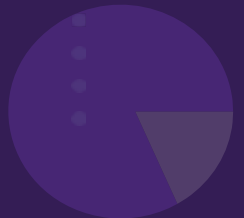
Contact the EAP:

Freephone: 1800 903 542

Wellbeing Platform:

<https://anpost.spectrum.life>

(Organisation Code: **AnPost**)



Our EAP complements our Occupational Health Support & Services (OHS) & (OSS) which provides expertise on fitness for work, bereavement counselling, mental health & stress, rehabilitation back to work and supporting employees to overcome difficulties that are affecting their working life.

Email: ohsreferrals@anpost.ie



An Post General

1. Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018

The *Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018* became effective on the 4th March 2019. Some of the provisions of this Act had an impact on the terms and conditions of Postal Staff. All new employees recruited after that time must now be given certain information about their terms and conditions of employment within 5 days of commencement.

The new Act also introduced a new right for employees whose contract of employment or statement of terms does not reflect the reality of the hours they habitually work. Where this is the case, employees are entitled to request to be placed in a band of hours that better reflects the hours they have worked over a 12-month reference period.

1.1 Banded Hours Agreement

The Union concluded agreement with the Company in relation to how this provision would apply in An Post. The agreement reflects the legislative change, while also recognising the requirement to provide for stability of earnings and the business requirements. The following bands of hours are agreed:

Band	From	To
1	3 hours	Less than 6 hours
2	6 hours or more	Less than 11 hours
3	11 hours or more	Less than 16 hours
4	16 hours or more	Less than 21 hours
5	21 hours or more	Less than 26 hours
6	26 hours or more	Less than 31hours
7	31 hours or more	Less than 35hours
8	37.5	

Details of the GS Circular to give effect to the agreement can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[GSP 16-19 Banded Hours Agreement](#)

Details of the agreement can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Attachment to GSP 16-19 Banded Hours Agreement](#)

2. Appointments

In July 2016, as part of the Labour Court Pay Agreement (LCR21206), revised staffing arrangements, including provision for future appointments, were introduced. As a result, temporary staff with over two years' continuous unbroken employment with the Company would be appointed, subject to the condition that they are required for ongoing work requirements.

Since that time, there have been a number of clarifications issued by the Monitoring Group in relation to how appointments should be handled. The most recent was in March 2019, when they confirmed the main criteria for an appointment, i.e.:

Temporary staff with over two years' continuous unbroken employment with the Company will be appointed subject to the condition that they are required for ongoing work requirements.

Where temporary staff have intermittent broken employment during the two-year period, which generally

does not exceed four weeks in any year, they may be considered for appointment where the other conditions are met.

In addition to the above, where vacancies exist, then they will be filled without the requirement for the individual to wait two years. Where an employee is employed against a vacancy, then they can be appointed, once they complete their probation, i.e. after six months' employment with the Company.

Details of the various circulars and Monitoring Group Determinations in relation to appointments can be accessed by clicking on the links below (only available in the online version of this report).

GSP 16-16 Appointments

Monitoring Group Determination No.238 C&D Appointments – Individual Cases

Monitoring Group Determination No.248 Revised Staffing Arrangements

Monitoring Group Determination No.255 Staffing Arrangements

GSP 17-19 Staffing Arrangements & Appointment Process

3. Agreed Policies

Following on from Biennial Conference in 2020, the Union agreed a number of policies with the Company. These policies were circulated to members by way of GS Circulars. We are in the process of agreeing a Communication Policy, in order that all employees, regardless of where they work, can have access to them.

Summarised below are some of these policies:

3.1 Transfer Policy

This policy was agreed in October 2021. Under the new policy, all staff, regardless of status, can apply for inclusion on a transfer list, once they have completed probation. When determining whether a vacancy is filled by utilisation of the transfer list, or the appointment of a temporary member of staff, consideration will be given to the date of continuous employment of the temporary staff member and the date the employee applied for inclusion on the transfer list.

The circular relating to the Voluntary Transfer Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

GSP 21-21 Voluntary Transfer Policy – Mails & Parcels

The An Post Voluntary Transfer Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

An Post Policy – Voluntary Transfer for Working Locations – Mails & Parcels

3.2 Adverse Weather Policy

Following a discussion at Biennial Conference in 2018, and the introduction of the weather warnings by Met Éireann, the Union sought a review of the Adverse Weather Policy. In any review, the Union wanted to ensure that information conveyed to staff was done in a consistent manner. The policy recognises that extreme weather events can impact on an employee's ability to report to work, and the Company will take guidance from the National Emergency Coordination Group and Met Éireann. The policy confirms that, depending on the conditions, a decision may be made to suspend services during red warnings.

This policy was agreed and was issued in May 2021.

*The circular relating to the Adverse Weather Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 16-21 Adverse Weather Policy](#)

*The An Post Adverse Weather Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[An Post Policy – Adverse Weather](#)

3.3 Remote Working Policy

*GS Circular on the Remote Working Policy – An Post can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 06-22 Remote Working Policy – An Post](#)

Advances in technology have made it possible for many people to work from home. With the restrictions introduced by the Government to help slow the spread of Covid-19, thousands of workers were required to work from home, including a substantial number of An Post Workers. In many cases this was their first experience of working remotely. Many workers have expressed an interest in continuing this type of working arrangement, as it can reduce travel time and improve their work/life balance. In addition, many established norms relating to when, how and where work is carried out are being redefined.

As a result, both the Union and the Company accepted the requirement for a Voluntary Remote Working Policy which would provide for a range of options for staff. Following discussions, a new policy has been agreed. In finalising the policy the Union wanted to ensure that, where it was possible, it would be offered in a fair and transparent manner.

In order to assist those who do not have the facilities to work from home, we have agreed that “hub type” locations around Dublin and further afield will be provided. We have agreed a hybrid model which will mean, as a general rule, for someone with a five-day liability, employees can work 2 days in the office and 2 days remotely and the fifth day can be determined, with reasonable notice, if it could be worked remotely or not.

*The An Post Remote Working Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[An Post Policy – Remote Working](#)

3.4 Right to Disconnect

The world of work has changed profoundly over recent years. Technological advances mean that we are always contactable and accessible, and this creates challenges and benefits arising from these new ways of working, such as remote working. This can mean that we are always contactable, and while this brings benefits in relation to flexibility, there is a risk that the barriers between working and personal time are eroded. The right to disconnect refers to the right of employees to disconnect from their work and to not receive or answer any work-related emails, calls, or messages outside of normal working hours.

The Union has agreed a policy with the Company, which recognises that employees can disconnect from outside of their normal working hours.

*The An Post Right To Disconnect Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[An Post Policy – Right to Disconnect](#)

3.5 Retirement Policy

The Union raised a number of issues with the Company in relation to requests by individuals for an extension to their retirement age and how retirements generally are administered. Following discussions, a new policy was agreed and circulated to staff in September 2021. The agreed policy sets out the process to deal with requests to extend retirement age, together with an appeals mechanism for those who believe their requests were not handled correctly. It also sets out how retirements will be managed, with obligation by HR to contact each employee at least 12 months before their Normal Retirement Age.

The circular relating to the Retirement Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

GSP 20-21 Retirement Policy – An Post

The An Post Retirement Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

An Post Policy – Retirement

4. *Medical and Drug Refund Scheme*

The Company advised the Union that the Company Medical Scheme was considered not tax compliant, requiring the Company to pay the tax liability for 2019 and 2020. However, Revenue is insisting that the scheme must be self-financing. Following detailed discussions, agreement was concluded with the following to apply:

- All staff in An Post, up to and including Level 3, will be enrolled in the Scheme (unless they specifically opt out – see 3 below). New employees will commence deductions from their start date but will not be eligible to avail of the scheme benefits until they have contributed for six months.
- In areas where there is no Company-appointed Doctor within 15km of the employee's home, a refund of the employee's private Doctor (General Practitioner) fees will be provided, pending appointment of a Company Doctor.
- Prescription medicine will continue to be provided by Healthwave, with only HSE-reimbursed medicines included in the scheme and generic brands will be used at all times when available.

5. *Security and Staff Assaults*

The CWU continues to raise concerns regarding the manner in which the Company deals with assaults and after threats of assaults on staff. We also raised concerns with regard to security arrangements in operation. At the time of writing, we are close to finalising agreement on new guidelines for dealing with Workplace Violence. The key issues agreed in the guidelines are as follows:

- We have agreed to adopt the Health & Safety Authority definition of workplace violence, which will include the mandatory reporting of incidents.
- The scope of the guidance has been extended Company-wide and will apply to all staff, irrespective of where they work or the nature of their work.
- The guidelines now offer more guidance on supports and details on the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Incidents of Assaults on Duty will generally be viewed as "once off" in nature and will not count towards triggering entry to or escalation under ASMP.
- The ex-gratia payment is increased from €100 to €250 and it will also be reviewed biennially, based on CPI movement in the previous two years.

6. *Christmas Arrangements*

6.1 Christmas Arrangements 2020

The arrangements for Peak/Xmas 2020 reflected the continued reduction in letter mail and the significant growth in parcels and packets. Branches were advised that the onus was on management to ensure sufficient resources and facilities were in place, to enable timely mail clearance. Overtime levels were similar to the previous year, with additional overtime, including weekend deliveries, put in place to cater for high parcel volume. Branches

were advised to conclude local discussions as early as possible and in the event of disagreement, a signed minute should be referred to the Regional Officers.

6.2 Christmas Arrangements 2021

In 2020, discussions proved to be difficult, particularly because of the uncertainty around the volumes likely to be in place in addition to the ongoing uncertainty in relation to Covid-19. The Union accepted the resources agreed in 2020 were exceptional and in that regard, we agreed that the benchmark should be the arrangements that applied in 2019. Once again Branches were advised to conclude local discussions as early as possible and, in the event of disagreement, a signed minute should be referred to the Regional Officers.

6.3 Review of Christmas Arrangements 2021

The Union conducted a review of the arrangements in place at DSUs and Mail Centres, with Branches invited to forward any observations, suggestions or recommendations to Head Office for consideration by the Postal Executive. The Company advised it was conducting a similar review, to enable it to formulate proposals as to future arrangements. We also requested Branches to reference the Quality of Service/Circulation of mail pre/post-Christmas and the antigen postings.

In all the Union received 9 responses and the issues raised are summarised below:

- Disparity between Dublin and Provincial overtime levels
- Christmas Mail delivered in January
- Level of Casual Staff recruited with no local mail
- The Company concentrating on parcels to the detriment of letter mail
- Issues with green pallet boxes
- Level of uncancelled stamps
- Lack of training of Casual Staff in Mail Centres led to increase in missorts
- A review of the impact of CMC mail into the PMC at Christmas needs to take place and lessons need to be learned
- Better training plan needs to be in place

GS Circulars issued in relation to Christmas Arrangements can be accessed by clicking on the links below (only available in the online version of this report).

[GSP 31-20 Collection & Delivery Christmas-Peak Arrangements 2020](#)

[GSP 23-21 Collection & Delivery Christmas-Peak Arrangements 2021](#)

[GSP 02-22 Review of Christmas Arrangements 2021](#)

7. JCC

7.1 Other Claims Finalised at the JCC

The following claims were also concluded at the JCC:

- Policy for Refund of Employee/Office Holder's Travel, Subsistence and/or Vouched out of Pocket Expenses
- Social Clubs Policy
- Claim on behalf of the CWU that fixed-term or specific-purpose contracts should only be used to cover temporary vacancies and that all other vacancies should be filled on a permanent basis in line with the agree probationary period
- Claim on behalf of the CWU for an increase in the on-call payment made to staff in GTS
- Claim on behalf of the Group of Unions for the payment of a bonus to all staff in recognition of staff's efforts in response to the pandemic.

8. Relocation of Corporate Headquarters

The An Post Board decided that the Company should identify possible alternatives to the GPO Dublin premises in the event that a decision is made to vacate it, which they considered not fit for purpose. A Sub-Committee

of the JCC was established to examine the issues. Separately we expressed concern about the usefulness of the process.

In August 2020, following a meeting with the relevant Branches, we agreed the following:

- Group of Unions do not share the Company analysis regarding the immediacy of the project.
- Secure best terms for any move.
- Engage on relocation terms for EXO Premises.
- Engage on relocation terms for possible alternative An Post sites.
- Confirm what Sections will remain in the GPO.
- Arrange site(s) visit.
- Agree Remote Working Policy.

In September 2021 the Officials shared an update on discussions with the members of the Sub-Committee covering the following areas:

- Number of staff moving
- Details of staff remaining in the GPO
- Sections moving to alternative locations
- Remote Working Policy
- Remote Working Hubs
- Relocation and voluntary options including severance
- Catering
- Ancillary Services
- Staff facilities
- Parking
- New ways of working

At the time of writing, the Company confirmed it had secured confirmation from the Department to the relocation to the EXO premises. The target date for occupation is October 2022.

Mails & Parcels

1. Processing & Delivery

The capacity of the mails and parcels processing and delivery networks were tested to the limit throughout the pandemic. In 2020 the Peak/Xmas period saw parcels and packets increase to unprecedented levels. The additional temporary facilities, additional staffing and trojan efforts by staff ensured clearance of the mails. The following year saw a very concentrated peak/xmas more along the traditional pressure period. However, overall, the impact of Covid-19 has resulted in an accelerated 20% reduction in mails. At the time of writing there is no certainty as to where the volumes will level at, resulting in both the mail centres and delivery units operating below capacity.

The transformational changes envisaged by the Company to rationalise processing to one mail centre and consolidation down to 28 DSUs were put on hold when the Company deferred introduction of Prio/Eco. The Company has also had to deal with the expansion and development by Amazon of its own services, which has significantly reduced volumes particularly on the east coast.

McKinsey Consultants have set out a scaled back approach with target implementation of the transformational changes on a phased basis up to 2030. While the impact on members may not be as originally feared, there is no doubt, changes to the existing networks and duty design will be radical, which will mainly be attributable to the changing profile of mail and customer demands.

1.1 Prio Eco/Next Day

The pay agreement concluded with the assistance of the WRC provided for ongoing cooperation with the Company's proposals on their Prio Eco/Next Day delivery project with agreement to conclude the associated discussions by the end of March 2021. In January 2021 the Company made a detailed proposal to the Union. It advised it had a green light to proceed with the pricing changes in March 2021 and it then intended to redesign a large number of DSUs by November 2021. The Company expected a large head count reduction from this exercise.

It subsequently confirmed that it would not be in a position to proceed with Prio Eco/Next Day until 2022. At that stage the Company had not produced any evidence to show that it had Government or Regulatory approval. We advised the Company that we remained committed to concluding the framework agreement to address any staff impact issues. Prio Eco/Next Day will only succeed where it is part of a fit for purpose delivery network which can adapt to the new delivery needs while ensuring room for growth.

Discussions continued in relation to the framework agreement and these in the main focused on the Company approach to the trial of the Company concept at a number of DSUs. It was envisaged that the trial using live mail over a four-week period would inform of the best approach to redesign. However, in June 2021 the Company advised that live mail cannot be used in the trial as it would impact on customers. Instead the Company proposed a limited test and learn exercise of the Company's alternate delivery model at the agreed DSUs. This would involve a simulated desktop exercise capturing the volume and hit rates of live mail for a two-week period. The Union agreed to cooperate with this limited pilot which took place in July 2021.

The Union always contended that the Company was not ready to introduce its alternate delivery model. We believe that the rapidly changing environment during Covid-19 and the impact on mails volumes was not fully understood. The Union believes that the enforced pause presents an opportunity to consider an alternative approach that would allow the new pricing strategy to be introduced on the existing delivery model. Resourcing requirements could then be revised that mirror actual volumes and customer demands.

Discussions are ongoing at the time of writing.

*The GS Circulars issued can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 12-21 Prio-Next Day](#)

[GSP 19-21 Mails & Parcels](#)

1.2 DSU Optimisation Implementation Process

In 2019 the Postal/Courier Executive agreed a revised DSU Optimisation Implementation Process to apply from 2020. This agreement was circulated to Branches in January 2020.

*The circular and Agreement can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 01-20 C&D DSU Redesign](#)

[Attachment to GSP 01-20 An Post DSU Optimisation Implementation Process Agreement 2020](#)

1.3 Cork Super DSU

Following the closure of the Cork Mails Centre, the Company decided to retain the Little Island premises and to develop a Super DSU there. The plan, details of which were shared with the Cork Branches in July 2020, envisaged the consolidation of a number of DSUs on a phased basis.

Following the consolidation of Cobh DSU into Little Island, discussions took place both locally and at the CSG to conclude agreement on the consolidation of North and South City. While substantial progress was made locally, particularly in relation to the design of routes, and following further discussion at the CSG a number of outstanding issues were referred to the Monitoring Group which issued a determination on 1st June 2021. This Determination addressed a wide range of issues. It also proposed that the go live date for North City should be 2nd July 2021 and the go live date for South City should be the 14th July 2021.

Finally, the Monitoring Group determined that a review of the potential impact on night duty and shift allowance should be undertaken 3 months after the implementation of the changes and the financial impact on staff should be calculated and paid in accordance with existing agreements from the go live date.

*The Monitoring Group Determination can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Monitoring Group Determination No.287 Cork DSU Reorganisation](#)

2. Home Garaging

The Labour Court in its recommendation of 14th April 2016 recommended that the cessation of Home Garaging among other issues to fund a pay rise. This was accepted by members in a ballot. The Monitoring Group subsequently issued a Determination in July 2016 setting out that home garaging would cease on the 30th September 2016. A number of staff retained home garaging on a personal to holder basis. This amounts to approximately 800 individuals.

One of the Social Distancing measures introduced to alleviate the spread of Covid-19, was the facility to home garage. In February 2022 with the easing of public health measures NPHET advised that there was no longer any requirement for Social Distancing and agreement was reached to cease the Social Distancing measures in DSUs. This included the requirement for home garaging.

Since the public health measures were first introduced there have been a lot of changes in DSUs. The rollout of electric vehicles has meant that home garaging was no longer available to a significant number of employees. In addition, the revision of offices and the increased number of vans in operation has created some parking difficulties in offices.

Implementation of the agreement to cease the Social Distancing measures in place in DSUs was subject to consultation at local level. Branches in reviewing home garaging were advised to take the following into account:

- Available parking at DSUs
- Costs of alternative parking
- Health & Safety – all DSUs should have a traffic management plan in place which should be in writing and should address all the risks in respect of the movement of vehicles and pedestrians

The Company previously confirmed to the Union that, where a more cost-effective arrangement is available that suits both the Company and employees, the facility for Home Garaging may be extended. The Company

also confirmed as part of the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions that the Operations Managers have been given some leeway on this issue.

Individuals who believe they have a case were advised to raise their concerns under the grievance procedures with the assistance of their Branch and if they are not happy with the outcome then Branch Secretaries should refer the case to the Regional Officers with the details of the representations.

If Branches believe that the Company is not addressing any legitimate Health and Safety concerns, they were advised to raise them with the Operations Managers with the assistance of the CWU Regional Officers. Any referral should include the details of representations made and highlight the health and safety concerns. If no agreement can be reached the matter should be referred to Union HQ.

3. *Easter Arrangements 2021*

Agreement was concluded on Easter Arrangements. Given the 12% decrease in letter mail volume the Company had contemplated having no letter delivery on Good Friday but following representations they agreed to defer this service change until 2022. In relation to parcels/packets it was accepted that they were operating at near peak and significant resources were required to achieve nationwide clearance. The Company decided following consultation to have a mix of attendances on Easter Saturday and Easter Monday and Managers were advised to put a plan in place to cater for additional volumes including on rural duties where necessary.

The Union made it abundantly clear that where Area management made a miscalculated decision to restrict or curtail attendances in any area or duty, it would not be a matter for delivery staff to carry the burden of their flawed decision. In such circumstances Branches were advised to respond in kind, by advising members to finish on time on Tuesday.

*The GS Circular issued can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 10-21 Easter Arrangements – Branch Offices 2021](#)

4. *Indoor Admin Operative and Registered Locker Allowance*

In December 2019 the Monitoring Group issued a determination which addressed a number of outstanding issues and provided for the introduction of the Indoor Postal Operative Grade. This new grade represented a promotional opportunity for Postal Operatives which is welcome. In June 2021 the Company confirmed that the sign-off in respect of the new posts was now completed and the successful candidates received confirmation of their appointments with all appointments effective from 31st August 2020.

*The Monitoring Group Determination can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

**[Monitoring Group Determination No.280 Collection & Delivery Agreement –
Grade Change Postal Operative](#)**

4.1 Registered Locker Allowance

The Union submitted a claim for an increase in the Registered Locker Allowance for Postal Operatives. The Union referred this issue to the Monitoring Group and they issued a Determination in March 2020 directing the Company and the Union to conclude discussions on the claim. The Union priority was to address issues around the IAO. The Company undertook an analysis to determine the numbers who obtain the allowance, and shared this information with the Union. Discussions are ongoing in relation to the parameters for payment and the potential values of the allowance and an update will be provided to Biennial Conference.

*The Monitoring Group Determination can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Monitoring Group Determination No.281 Registered Locker Allowance](#)

The Monitoring Group issued a further determination on the 10th June 2021 to address some outstanding issues relating to the new management structure in Cork DSU.

*The Determination can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Monitoring Group Determination No.288 Cork DSU Reorganisation – Managers Branch Issues](#)

5. COVID-19 – Antigen Tests

In January 2022, An Post was requested to provide a nationwide delivery of antigen tests kits on behalf of the HSE over the seven days of each week throughout the month of January. The Union recognised that this would put additional demands on staff, but the Union also believed that we should continue to play our part in supporting the country during these challenging times and highlight once again the importance of the postal service. It was agreed that the Sunday rate of overtime would be paid for deliveries on both Saturday and Sunday. The significant volumes delivered have positively impacted on the Company finances.

*The GS Circular can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 01-22 HSE Mailings January 2022](#)

Clerical & Administration

1 Retail

1.1 Introduction

The impact of Covid-19 on the core mails and parcels business has mirrored the accelerated changes of transaction and footfall decline by approximately 20% in the Retail Branch Offices. This has resulted in a further review of staffing requirements by way of the agreed work measurement process, based on figures from October and November 2021, and the last two weeks of January and first two weeks of February 2022. Local discussion commenced in March with a focus by the Company to extract up to 80% of the surplus requirements by way of an office redesign. Ongoing efforts are being pursued by the Company to attract additional financial and banking services together with government support for the network.

Major transformational changes and savings are envisaged by the Company from its review of all of the back office work predominately carried out at the GPO Dublin. In conjunction with the move to its new corporate headquarters, new ways of working and administrative system changes have targeted a reduction of up to one hundred staff. There are a plethora of project reviews ongoing to examine the feasibility and impact of the proposed changes. While the Union and Company agreed to the move, it is subject to final agreement of all of the associated issues.

1.2 Work Measurement

The Retail Operations Work Measurement Project is in place for some time, with 37 Branch Offices redesigned since 2017. Reduced transactions, cash usage and footfall accelerated by Covid-19 has resulted in the Company seeking a further review of staffing levels, which it intends to complete by end of Quarter 2.

1.2.1 Retail Headcount Reduction – St. Andrew Street and Rathmines

Issues in relation to the headcount reduction in St Andrew Street and Rathmines were disagreed by the Union and referred to the Monitoring Group. The Union contended significant reductions in St Andrew Street were already implemented and that as a flagship office, the Company should not be seeking more cuts at this time, but rather should be looking at attracting additional business into the office. In Rathmines the reduction in business amounted to 5% from 2019 to 2021. The Company contended the established and agreed work measurement process supported the reductions which were delayed for a considerable period of time, the passage of which would merit further deductions. The Monitoring Group upheld the Company position.

*The Monitoring Group Determination can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

**[Monitoring Group Determination No.291 Retail Headcount Reduction –
St. Andrew Street & Rathmines](#)**

1.3 Customer Experience Excellence Programme

In October 2020, the Company advised the Union that it planned to roll out a training programme in November 2020 called the *Customer Experience Excellence Programme for Branch Managers and Staff*. The programme to be rolled out to 19 Branch Offices initially and its objective was to build on previous training initiatives, such as *Customer Plus*.

*Details of the GS Circular can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSP 32-20 An Post Retail Training](#)

1.4 New Business

Covid-19 impacted greatly on our members working in Retail. An ongoing reduction in service transaction levels was accelerated, with a number of measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 negatively impacting

on the business. The announcement by the Minister of Social Protection that jobseekers' payments will return to the post offices was a welcome development. During the pandemic, Post Offices demonstrated how important they are by providing essential services. It is important that the Government continues to support the network by providing more government services to the community.

The Company is confident that services, such as the foreign exchange business, will return to pre-pandemic levels. It also advised that the Postmobile business has continued to grow its market base.

The most significant development in terms of new business is the contract with Bank of Ireland. 88 Bank of Ireland Branches closed, with their lodgement and withdrawals business transferring to An Post. BOI is now live in every office, with weekly transactions about 25% of AIB, which is ahead of expectations.

1.5 Brand Ambassador

The role of the Brand Ambassador was reviewed in 2019. Brand Ambassadors were stood down for most of the pandemic. This will be a critical year for the Retail business and the Brand Ambassadors will play a key role in supporting the business and the Company intend to mobilise them by the middle of February 2022.

1.6 Front of House Sales Support Activity

The Company deferred plans to introduce a sales support role outside the post office counter in 2020 due to the pandemic. The primary role is to engage with customers, establish their needs and where appropriate direct them towards the self service area with the ultimate aim of improving the customer experience and growing the business.

1.7 Proposals to reduce Supervisory Posts in Retail Offices

A Company proposal to reduce supervisory posts at Retail Branches in Cork, Limerick and Galway which were agreed by the respective Managers' Branches were subsequently disagreed by the Clerical Branches affected by the proposed arrangements and were referred to the Monitoring Group for Determination. The Union argued that Clerical Staff should be compensated for any additional responsibilities they are required to undertake on Saturdays or any other day of the week as a result of the Company decision to reduce the number of Supervisory Staff at these locations.

The Monitoring Group noted that revised arrangements were successfully introduced in Galway with no additional responsibilities transferring to Clerical Staff. They determined that the Company proposals should be progressed with an appropriate time allowance built into the designated clerical duties to reflect the additional tasks.

*The Monitoring Group Determination can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

**[Monitoring Group Determination No.292 Impact of Proposals to
Reduce Supervisory Posts in Retail Branches](#)**

2. Transformation of the Corporate Centre

As part of the pay agreement in 2021 it was agreed to progress the Company proposals on the Transformation of the Corporate Centre. The Company objective is to transform its headquarter operations by the adoption of innovative practices using the best in class practices and technology. A four-phase approach to identifying change in each area, i.e. discovery, roadmap, feasibility and design and finally implementation. The main areas impacted include, Finance, Legal, Security Services, Procurement, Philatelic and Corporate.

3. TV Licence

The question around the future of the TV Licence contract remains in abeyance with the debate continuing in Government circles. An Post has attracted unfair criticism of its role in collecting the licence fee, most particularly from RTÉ. The uninformed statements by RTÉ are more associated with their financial shortcomings. In correspondence to the Minister and also the Joint Oireachtas Committee the Union has highlighted the difficulties with the existing legislation which places the onus on the TV Licence Inspector to prove the householder has a television receiving apparatus, (TV or Aerial). In contrast to the UK where the

legislation places the onus on the householder, evasion rate is below 5%. An Post has sought changes to the legislation, but these have not been forthcoming.

We have also reminded Government that there are over 80 staff in An Post performing this work on a nationwide basis and any decision must take into account any rationalisation costs associated with such a proposal. An Post faces serious challenges and any decision to reduce this revenue stream will only accelerate the deterioration of its services.

An Post for its part has confirmed that the retention of the TV Licence business on a commercial basis is an important part of the Company plans.

**1st Prize
Digital
Camera**



CWU DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE & COMPETITION

Now that the days are getting longer, it is an ideal time to learn a new skill. So why not take the plunge and try out our new online Digital Photography course? Simply login or create an account on www.unionlink.org and get started. This basic course will give you the necessary skills to go out and enjoy taking photographs whether you are a complete beginner or simply want to learn more. The course will introduce you to the following:

- Camera basics and functions
- Light & how to use it
- Composition techniques
- Tips and guidance for excellent photos

The CWU will also run a Digital Photography Competition for members who have completed our Digital Photography course on *Unionlink*.

MORE INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON THE CWU WEBSITE WHEN THE COMPETITION OPENS LATER IN 2022

* By entering the competition all members accept the terms and conditions outlined on the webpage



**Should you need assistance with the course
or have any queries, email carol@cwu.ie**



An Post Subsidiaries

Billpost

1. Introduction

Billpost is based in Kilrush, Co. Clare and it was originally set up to process postal payments for a number of large utility companies. Over the years it has re-invented itself and it now provides fully integrated payment processes, document storage and data management.

2. Pay and Change

The introduction of new work which needs to be serviced in the same time window as it is received required new ways of working and the Company sought significant changes in the business model with staff expected to move between the different work elements. As a result, the Union and the Company entered into an agreement which was put to the staff in a ballot in May 2021.

The key parts of the agreement were:

1. An acceptance by all staff that they will be required to carry out all tasks required by Billpost on an on-going and ad hoc basis.
2. The operation will be extended to provide a service from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9am to 2pm on Saturday. These hours may be subject to change to meet the business needs.
3. All full-time and part-time employees will be rostered to meet their contractual hours Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm.
4. All new employees will have a 5 over 7 days contractual liability
5. The following pay terms were agreed:
 - a. Pay pause of seven months followed by a 2% pay increase from 1st July 2020
 - b. A further 2% from the 1st July 2021 which will expire on 31st December 2022
 - c. No other cost increasing claims until 31st December 2022
 - d. The pay scales will be reduced from the current 8 points to three points for both Team Leaders and Operators
 - e. A 2% non-pensionable allowance will be paid to all permanent staff
6. The existing bonus system will stay in place for 2021 but the Company has advised that it intends to bring forward proposals in 2022 for changes to the scheme

In addition to the above a number of members availed of a severance package. Following a ballot members voted to accept the proposals with 73% voting in favour.

At the time of writing the new rosters have been introduced and appear to be operating well. In addition, and for the first time in a number of years, new staff have been recruited.

The details of the Collective Agreement can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Collective Agreement between Billpost and CWU](#)

3. EAP Services

The Company extended the An Post Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to staff in Billpost. This service is available 24/7 and is provided by Spectrum.Life. Services on offer range from nutrition and fitness, financial wellness, mental health promotion and counselling. The service is confidential and is free of charge to the staff involved and their families. The Union welcomed its introduction and extension to Billpost staff.

Printpost

1. Introduction

Printpost is a wholly owned subsidiary of An Post. It is based in two locations Portlaoise and the larger one in Tallaght. It operates as a specialist critical financial document bureau, producing critical financial documents such as Statements, Invoices, Billing, Payslips and Direct Mail.

PrintPost and the CWU have signed a Collective Agreement which provides for representation of staff members on all matters relating to terms and conditions of employment. In addition to this, PrintPost recognises the CWU as the official representative body for staff in relation to disciplinary and grievance issues as they might arise.

Printpost has increased its operation in Tallaght by leasing the premises next door and it also invested in a large colour printer to allow it to be more competitive.

2. Pay

Following discussion with the Company, a pay agreement was concluded in August 2021. The agreement provided for a 2.75%, no strings attached pay increase payable from 1st March 2022. This included a six month pay pause. Although there were no strings attached to this agreement the Company has indicated that it intends to carry out a major review of its business in 2022 and they will discuss any proposed changes with the Union. Following a ballot the proposal was accepted by the vast majority of our members.

The Union has lodged a claim with the Company for a further pay increase for 2022 and we are examining the possibility of a two-year deal. At the time of writing, discussions are ongoing.

3. EAP Services

The Company extended the An Post Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to staff in Printpost. This service is available 24/7 and is provided by Spectrum.Life. Services on offer range from nutrition and fitness, financial wellness, mental health promotion and counselling. The service is confidential and is free of charge to the staff involved and their families. The Union welcomed its introduction and extension to Printpost staff.

An Post Insurance

1. Introduction

An Post Insurance Head Office is based in Athlone with some staff employed in some of the An Post Retail Offices. The Company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of An Post and has contributed significantly to the Company bottom line over the years.

2. COVID-19

Covid-19 has significantly impacted on the working lives of our members in An Post Insurance. There has been a large drop in business in particular in the “New Business” section. There was also a serious decline in both Car and Home renewal policies. The Company did however honour their commitments in relation to pay and PRP as they acknowledged the flexibility shown by staff.

In addition, there has been uncertainty in the working model. A significant number of our members worked from home for the duration of the pandemic with a small number continuing to work onsite. This caused some difficulties as members onsite were requested to carry out work they were not familiar with which had some impact on their potential earnings.

The Company did invest in Covid-19 prevention measures such as safety screens etc. in the Athlone site but it did not alleviate the concerns of some of our members. The Union brought these concerns to the Company’s attention and endeavoured to address them as much as possible. There was also a number of town hall meetings where members could raise concerns.

In recent weeks the Company has presented the Union with a draft Remote Working Policy, but this will require some work before it is finalised and an update will be provided to the Biennial Conference.

3. Pay

Following discussions between the Union and the Company a pay proposal was agreed in and this proposal was put to the members concerned in November 2021.

The proposal provided for the following:

- An increase in starting salary from 1st February 2022 from €22,500 to €23,500
- A further increase to €24,500 following the successful passing of 11 months' probation
- A further increase to €25,500 following the successful passing of APA exams
- In relation to salaries between €24,000 to €29,999 an increase of €1000
- For those earning €30,000 plus an increase of 2%
- A further increase of 2% on all salaries from 1st April 2023

Following a ballot of members, the proposals were accepted with 78% voting in favour.

4. EAP Services

The Company extended the An Post Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to staff in An Post Insurance. This service is available 24/7 and is provided by Spectrum.Life. Services on offer range from nutrition and fitness, financial wellness, mental health promotion and counselling. The service is confidential and is free of charge to the staff involved and their families. The Union welcomed its introduction and extension to An Post Insurance staff.



THE BENEFITS OF CWU MEMBERSHIP

Giving workers a voice in their workplace on the issues that matter, including:

- **Pay**
- **Individual issues**
- **Work/Life Balance**
- **Targets & Bonuses**
- **Health & Safety**

CWU members also enjoy a number of additional benefits:

FREE BENEFITS

Social Benefit: Members on reduced pay due to sick absence may receive up to 60-70% of pay for 12-months

Mortality Fund: A member may be paid €635 on the death of their spouse/civil partner. The estate of a member may be paid €5,080 on their death

Orphans' Pension Scheme: €20 per week (paid monthly) may be paid in respect of each child registered with the Scheme, until that child reaches the age of 18 years

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Medical Fund: €3 per week. Annual claim for Optical up to €152; Dental up to €305; Medical Appliances up to €152)

Medisan: €1.50 per week. Income support and assistance toward the cost of treatments and medication for a number of specified illnesses

Insurance Group Schemes: Reduced rates on car, home, life, travel and health insurance with Halligan Insurances and FM Downes

Private Sector

IO Systems

1. Introduction

IO Systems is engaged on a contractual basis by An Post to service the automation machinery at the three Mail Centres. It is a subsidiary of Okamoto Kogyo of Tokyo and is based in Athlone.

2. Pay Increases

The issue of pay in IO Systems was dealt with previously at Arbitration by Mr. Phil Flynn who determined as follows:

“While accepting the constraints within which the Company finds itself, in one’s view a limitless pay freeze situation is not sustainable. In this regard, one is aware that CWU is currently engaged in pay discussions with An Post. Accordingly, it is proposed that the necessary variation be made to IO Systems/ An Post Contract to facilitate the applications to IO Systems personnel of whatever general pay increase emerges for An Post Staff”

Following conclusion of a pay agreement at An Post, the Union sought the same arrangements for IO Systems staff. Because of ongoing delays in having this paid the Union referred the matter to third party with the subsequent finding issued on the 14th June 2021.

One is satisfied that there is ample recorded evidence supporting the legitimacy of this claim. In the circumstances, any inordinate delay in extending it to IO Systems Staff amounts to bad and unfair practice. Accordingly, the issue should be addressed to conclusion without delay.

The pay increase of 2.75%, effective from 1st January 2021 was paid to all CWU members.

Following acceptance of the recent pay agreement by members in An Post, the CWU wrote to IO Systems seeking payment of the first phase pay increase of 2.5% from the 1st January 2022.

3. Contract Retention Bonus

The settlement terms agreed between the Union and the Company following the dispute in 2015 provided for the payment of a contract retention bonus of 2% per annum. Following discussions between the parties and Mr. Phil Flynn he determined that the payment date should be 30th September every year. Notwithstanding this, staff have experienced delays in payments each year and only receive them following extensive Union representation.

4. Outstanding Issues

Following the installation of the new automation in the DPH, IO systems Staff were requested to undertake the maintenance of the machinery. In addition, following the renewal of the contract with An Post the Company advised of changes they wished to make to the shift arrangements in the PMC. These issues remained unresolved throughout 2020.

4.1 Mediation June 2021

In May 2021 the Company advised the Union that they wished to refer these outstanding issues to mediation. A hearing was held on the 14th June 2021. The Union also referred Shop Steward facilities and the pay rise as detailed above.

The Company advised that An Post had agreed to the following changes in the DMC:

1. The previous requirement to transfer a DMC Technician to PMC is no longer an issue
2. Employment of an additional Technician to the Shift structure
3. Employment of an additional Technical Assistant
4. Linked to the reintroduction of weekend shift a reinstatement of 5% shift premium

The Union advised that 4 additional Technicians were required and also sought the continuation of a 3% payment.

In his determination issued on the 16th June the Mediator proposed that the plan be implemented and monitored for a period of six months including the Christmas period. He advised that engagement should take place with both parties on the 3%. In an addendum to the finding issued on the 24th July 2021 he proposed that the Technicians should receive an ex gratia payment of €750 in January 2022 on the basis of cooperation with the trial.

In Portlaoise the Company sought to realign the shift structure in PMC with the AMC. The Union did not accept this as the current shift arrangement was implemented following a binding process arising from the dispute in 2015. It was agreed that a further 2 weeks of discussion should take place.

Finally in relation to Shop Steward facilities he recommended that the parties reactivate their consideration of the matter with reasonable priority and in the context of the WRC Code of Practice.

4.2 PMC Shift

Resolution of this issue proved problematic as the Company viewed its proposal as non-negotiable. The Union could not countenance such a position particularly as it was contrary to the settlement proposals agreed in 2015. Accordingly, the Union, without prejudice to its position, developed its own shift pattern which if acceptable to the Company would be recommended to our members in the PMC. This position was rejected by the Company as it did not address the totality of its concerns and the issue was referred back to the Mediator.

A further mediation hearing took place on the 28th October 2021 but no progress was made as the Union made it clear that it is not physically possible for a small group of Technicians to provide the cover as suggested by the Company. We also highlighted that the existing shift arrangement was as a result of a binding process in 2015 and nothing justifying a change has occurred in the meantime. In addition, the compromise issued by the Union in September meets the Company cover requirement and should be accepted. The Mediator issued a finding in February 2022 which is currently being considered by the Union and an update will be provided to Conference.

4.3 Maintenance Plan DMC

The trial period set by the Mediator expired on the 16th January 2021. The Company indicated that it wished to continue the trial and the Union was agreeable to this on the basis that the 3% payment was addressed. The Company agreed to pay the amount agreed with the Mediator to allow for further time to consult. In advance of a review of the arrangements the Branch Chairperson prepared a comprehensive document which set out the difficulties with the trial and the problems encountered which was presented to the Company. At a meeting with the Branch in early February the Company indicated that it was happy with the document and just needed to flesh this out with details of near-misses etc. Discussions are ongoing at the time of writing.

2. DPD

2.1 Pay 2020

The Union lodged a pay claim with DPD management in August 2020. Following negotiations, a two year pay proposal was put to ballot which comprised of a 2% increase and a €500 One for All Voucher for each year. The pay proposal was overwhelmingly accepted by members in September 2020 and is due to expire in September 2022.

2.2 Member Survey

The DPD Branch Committee conducted a survey of staff in conjunction with the 2020 pay ballot. The purpose of the survey was to give DPD workers the opportunity to identify issues and shape the industrial relations agenda. Members identified issues such as a Covid-19 recognition payment, a fair process around upgrades, pay rates, Sunday premium pay and sick pay. Progress and improvements have been made on all these issues except for sick pay which is yet to be implemented in DPD.

*The Survey and DPD Member Update can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[DPD Survey Report](#)
[DPD Member Update 2021](#)

2.3 Covid-19

Our members in Athlone had to adjust to working through the pandemic which led to changes in normal work practices in order to contain the spread of the virus. This was an extremely stressful time for our members and, coupled with the growth in parcels as a result of the closure of retail, represented a very challenging period. Our members identified, through the staff survey, their desire for recognition from DPD management for navigating the pandemic. DPD management had initially issued a paltry €15 food voucher. Following on from the feedback in the staff survey and representations from CWU, a €250 bonus payment was eventually secured.

2.4 Roster Changes

The Union has engaged with the Company on roster and contract changes for Supervisors and Sorters. This has resulted in some of our members increasing their contracted hours to reflect the reality of their actual working week. Having these hours reflected contractually is extremely important in the context of things like loan or mortgage applications for our members.

3. UPS

3.1 Pay Agreement 2020

The Union concluded a pay agreement which provided for a new shortened incremental scale. Agreement was also reached around the introduction of an average pay for annual leave which comprehends Drivers, Warehouse Staff and Drivers Helpers from April 2020.

A dispute arose around the interpretation and application of a 2.75% pay increase to the new pay scale. UPS management argued that staff, whose pay was above the maximum point of the scale applicable to them, should only receive a 2.25% increase. The Union argued that a 2.75% increase should apply to all staff who are below the top point of the scale. Failure to reach agreement at a Conciliation Conference through the WRC resulted in the matter being referred to the Labour Court in April 2021. The Court issued a finding in the Union's favour.

*The Labour Court finding can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Recommendation No. LCR22392](#)

3.2 Pay Agreement 2021

An initial two-year pay proposal was put to ballot in July 2021. The proposal consisted of 2 x 2.5% pay increases and a commitment to engage in discussions with the Company around Roster changes and arrangement for Peak 2021. This proposal was narrowly defeated.

Following re-engagement between the parties, a new one year 2.5% increase, with "no-strings-attached" pay proposal was put to members. This proposal was accepted by a large majority.

*The proposal and related documentation can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[UPS Pay Update 2021](#)
[UPS Member Update – Pay Proposal 2021](#)
[UPS Pay Proposal – Ballot Result](#)

3.3 Nightline Integration

The integration of the Nightline operation into UPS has concluded. Following a successful Organising Campaign, all former Nightline workers are now on the same pay and terms & conditions as our members in UPS. This represents a significant improvement in remuneration for those involved.

Although the harmonisation of pay and terms and conditions has been a success, the harmonisation of operational cultures has presented some challenges which the Union continues to address.

3.4 Extended Shift - Finglas

Following negotiations between the Union and UPS management, a new extended Night Preload Shift was agreed and implemented. The shift was introduced to deal with the increase in parcel volumes and resulted in a large increase in contracted hours for members.

3.5 Collective Bargaining – Clerical & Brokerage

The CWU currently have full collective bargaining rights for all Drivers and Preload Staff in Finglas, Shannon, Cork, Waterford and the Eco Hubs in Dublin 1 and 2. Frustratingly, we currently do not have full collective bargaining rights for Clerical and Brokerage Staff. The Union has made attempts to have these workers comprehended by our Collective Agreement but have met resistance from UPS management thus far.

3.6 Outsourcing

A major concern for the Union has been the reduction in directly-employed drivers in UPS and the increase in the OSP Model, which the Union regard as a “yellow pack” solution which drives down the cost of labour. It also leaves these drivers with very few of the rights or benefits enjoyed by our directly-employed members.

The CWU would like to thank our Representatives across the country for the work they do on our members’ behalf. We would also like to wish all the best to Mike Daly, our former Representative in Shannon, who is unwell at the moment.

4. Sodexo

The CWU has members employed by Sodexo working at two An Post locations; the Dublin Mail Centre and the GPO, Dublin. It is unclear what An Post’s intentions are regarding the maintenance of its contract with Sodexo to provide catering services at its corporate headquarters in the Exo premises and indeed at the GPO, where more staff will be based than originally announced by An Post. Suffice to say the impact for the Sodexo staff will have to be addressed in advance of any relocation. The Union will keep members up to date on any developments in consultation with their Branch, the Dublin Postal Amalgamated Branch.

Separately, the CWU has engaged with Sodexo and An Post regarding pay, with a view to securing at a minimum, payment of the “living wage” to staff. Any tendering process by An Post must include provision for this.

Efforts by Sodexo to change workers from weekly pay to monthly pay were successfully thwarted.



eComms



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eir Pay & Bonus

1. Pay

In November 2020 our members voted to accept, by a significant majority, the pay deal negotiated by the Union that will see pay rise by 6% over three years; 2021, 2022 and 2023. This followed a recommendation from the National Executive Council to accept the terms of the offer.

For the first time the pay proposals applied not just to our graded members but also to members in the following work areas:

- SOMs
- FLMs
- Former Apprentices (within Openeir)
- Retail (shop) staff
- Call Centres
- ITPP (CIO and CTO only)
- FOTS

Including these members in our pay negotiations for the first time was a significant win for the CWU and our members in eir.

The 6% increase will apply differently to the various work groups outlined above and for our graded members the deal provided for a revised Transition payment which guaranteed a minimum 70%.

The other elements of the agreement included a review of the current Pension Accord which was completed, and which led to a reversal of pension levy charges (see below). Any further review will be following the pay agreement timeline of 2024.

The deal also provided for agreement on an updated sick leave policy and a commitment to enter discussions on a redeployment process.

The pay deal attempted to:

- Maximise the pay for our lower paid members in the centres
- Maximise the DB element for active DB members
- Encompass as many members as possible in the deal
- Confirm JCC collective bargaining status for the expanded groups of workers

As there are different groupings of membership (graded, retail, centres, people platforms etc.) the 2% applied differently.

Pension Accord Review

The review of the Accord has resulted in the reversal of the pension levy charge on DB members. This will result in a 2% increase in pensions for all DB members 0.4%, 0.2%, 0.5% (active, deferred, pensioners) with the 0.9% increase due for 2020 with the Minister for signed off.

*Pay Deal information can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSE 13-20 Proposed Pay Increase for CWU Members in eir.](#)

[eir Pay Proposal Q&A](#)

[JCC Agreed Report No.634 Final Pay Agreement](#)

[eir Policy – Revised Sick Leave Scheme](#)

[eir Graded Payscales 2021](#)

Retail Sunday Premium

Following extensive discussions at the Joint Conciliation Council (JCC) between the Group of Unions and eir management agreement was finally reached to increase in the rate of the premium that applies for working on Sunday in eir retail shops.

In line with the 2% pay increase the Union agreed for 2021/22 which came into effect on 1st July 2021, the CWU has reached an agreement to increase the Sunday premium for retail staff to time and a third. This is increased from the 10% premium that was agreed for the first time in the previous pay deal.

The agreed premium will apply to both salaried and non-salaried staff (*Store Managers, Assistant Store Managers, Full & Part time RSCs*) and is applicable to the basic rate of pay for hours worked on Sundays. This payment was backdated to 1st July 2021 in line with the pay agreement.

*Retail Sunday Premium information can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

GSE 01-22 Retail Sunday Premium

PsMR Outturn 2021

Performance Management - PMR

COUNT OF STAFF		RATING			
Level 1 Manager		Does not meet Target	Meets Target	Exceeds Target	Grand Total
Joseph Phelan	Service Assurance	61	389	259	709
William Holohan	National Design & Build	18	88	66	172
Enda J Loughnane	Service Delivery	–	15	7	22
Maurice Muldoon	Transformation & Bus Support	–	2	3	5
Patrick Cheshire	Strategic Fibre Programmes	–	3	1	4
Patrick O’Sullivan	Support Services	2	20	11	33
Core Networks	Core Networks	11	121	39	174
GRAND TOTAL		92	638	386	1116

PERCENTAGE OF STAFF		RATING			
Level 1 Manager		Does not meet Target	Meets Target	Exceeds Target	Grand Total
Joseph Phelan	Service Assurance	8.60%	54.87%	36.53%	100.00%
William Holohan	National Design & Build	10.47%	51.16%	38.37%	100.00%
Enda J Loughnane	Service Delivery	0.00%	68.18%	31.82%	100.00%
Maurice Muldoon	Transformation & Bus Support	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%	100.00%
Patrick Cheshire	Strategic Fibre Programmes	0.00%	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%
Patrick O’Sullivan	Support Services	6.06%	60.61%	33.33%	100.00%
Core Networks	Core Networks	6.43%	70.76%	22.81%	100.00%
GRAND TOTAL		8.24%	57.17%	34.59%	100.00%

PMR Outturn 2021

2020 Full Year			
Core	Below	Meets	Exceeds
	3%	74%	23%
FAO	Below	Meets	Exceeds
	12%	56%	32%

2022 Interim Bonus Arrangements

The Company announced in late 2021 that it is changing its Financial Year from 1st July to 30th June and moving to 1st January to 31st December. For the period 1st July 2021 to 31st December 2021 the following alterations will be made to the Graded and STIP bonus pay-outs;

- Graded PMR – An employee's mid-year rating will be used as an end of year rating and bonus payment will be generated from that.
- STIP – Employee ratings from EOY FY 20/21 will carry through and a 50% bonus will be paid based on those ratings. A review will take place of those who received a 2 rating across the business to see if the rating still applies.

These bonuses will be paid in March 2022 (and subsequent years subject to Company performance). This interim bonus (to December 2021) will include a tax-free voucher element and those retiring, as a result of turning 65 between January 1st and the payment of the bonus in March will receive a bonus payment in March.

Pay in the Customer Service Centres

While examining pay across the three Customer Service Centres in 2021, the four main items identified by the Union were base pay, bonuses, pay for Senior Agents and a loyalty bonus.

All four items have been addressed in the overhaul of remuneration in the centres.

The new remuneration model includes:

- Increased base pay for Agents, Senior Agents and Team Leaders (increases between 10% - 17%)
- Clear, achievable bonus structure – based on 3 key KPIs
- Introduction of standalone 'Attendance Payment' for agents
- Introduction of a 'Loyalty Bonus'

These increases come on top of the 2.7% pay increase already won for the Centres in 2020. Also part of that 2020 agreement, members in these areas are now included in overall collectively bargained pay deals across the business. This means that they will receive the benefit of the currently agreed 3 year 6% pay deal **on top** of the two stand alone agreements outlined above, and will continue to be included for future collectively bargained pay deals into the future.

Customer Service Pay Agreement Breakdown can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Breakdown of Customer Service Pay Agreement 2021](#)

Covid-19 Bonus

The Company decided to pay an "additional tech bonus" of €250 to staff in the Core and Access Networks towards the end of 2021.

The decision to augment the bonus pay-out for staff in Core and Access, in recognition of the work done to

maintain the network in a very challenging environment, rightfully acknowledges the efforts of our members to protect and enhance what is a critical piece of our national infrastructure. More than ever, this vital network helped connect families, communities and businesses when it was needed the most.

However, they did not do this alone. Our colleagues across all the business areas in eir played their part, in equally challenging circumstances, to ensure the continued success of the Company in achieving excellent results. CWU members were front and centre in dealing with the public, contributing to eir's national response to the pandemic.

The decision by the Company not to adequately recognise the efforts of all staff and their contribution to the success of the Company caused much annoyance and upset. As a result, the General Secretary sought an urgent meeting with the Company to set out our concerns and to appeal for a more equitable recognition of the efforts of staff.

Regrettably this meeting did not yield a positive outcome and the matter has been referred as a claim to the JCC. At the time of writing the Company has not responded to the claim.

*Covid Bonus information can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSE 05-21 eir Bonus Payment](#)

2. HR Platform – Odoo

In December 2020 the Company introduced a new HR system that caused widespread anger among our membership. Members reported cases where they were left short of overtime payments, subsistence payments, expenses and mileage. It was also reported that some DAS (credit union, bank etc) were missed also. At the time concern was expressed at the lack of consultation with the CWU and with the attitude taken by HR to the difficulties faced by our membership. Contacting HR and the communication from the Company was also highlighted as an issue.

The approach taken by CWU HQ was to force the Company to fix members' issues and make sure that protocols are in place to prevent this happening again. The Company was slow to resolve our members issues, however, over time matters were resolved to some degree. The CWU outlined that the Company can make system changes, however the Company needs to absolutely understand that, where that impacts on members' pay, we will react.

It was agreed that the Company take responsibility for its actions and communicate with staff confirming resolution to outstanding payments etc.

*Odoo HR System information can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[GSE 02-21 New Company HR System – Odoo](#)

eir JCC

Since the Conference in 2020, the Joint Conciliation Council (JCC) has been very busy representing our expanded group of members. Following the acceptance of the last pay deal and under Agreed Report 634, the JCC now includes new groups of workers including:

- Graded staff
- Retail Sales Consultants, Store Asst Managers, Store Managers & Area Managers
- Call Centre staff
- IT People Platform staff
- FLM & SOM
- Consumer and SMB FOTS
- Former Apprentices

This is a vital development for the CWU, as it expands our collective bargaining coverage and allows for greater representation for a much bigger pool of staff.

In simple pay terms, the JCC has been busy. In conjunction with the main pay deal that the JCC secured, a subsequent pay increase was agreed for the Call Centres, Agreed Report 635, and this was followed with an agreement to improve Sunday Premium pay in the retail shops, Agreed Report 639. Aside from pay-related claims, agreement has been reached on numerous other claims listed below.

John Egan (Dublin No. 1 Branch), who very suddenly and tragically passed away on 19th December 2020, was replaced as Staff Side Secretary by Tom Sheehan (Cork District Branch). John's contribution to the JCC was, while all too brief in time, profound in its impact and he will be sadly missed in a role that he very much enjoyed. Tom has taken up the role with vigour and has been instrumental in driving our agenda with the Company, in particular around the Call Centre deal and, in conjunction with National Officer Carol Scheffer, helped secure important policy agreements.

Staff Side Panel Annual Report 2021

4 JCC meetings were held in 2021 as well as 2 JCC Diversity meetings. The following claims have either been agreed or are still subject to discussion:

1. The Staff Side seeks a comprehensive Call Centre Pay Agreement.
Claim 080721(c)
Company Response. Agreed see AR635
2. Claim to increase the Retail Sunday Working Premium following the conclusion of the last three year pay agreement and the ratification of the current three year pay deal.
Claim 080721(d)
Company Response. Agreed AR to issue.
3. The Staff Side seek to extend the terms of Joint Conciliation Council (JCC) Report No. 631 to cover 2021 A/L.
Claim 080721(e)
Company Response. Agreed see AR636
4. The Staff Side seeks a comprehensive Pay Agreement.
Claim 080721(f)
Company Response. Agreed see AR634
5. Claim to Increase the Medical Refund Scheme payments in line with JCC Agreed pay increases under JCC Agreed Report No. 632.
Claim 080721(g)
Company Response. Agreed AR to issue

6. The Staff Side seeks to have a discounted eir bundle made available to all Retired Members.
Claim 300921(b)
Company Response. Agreed AR to issue.
7. The Staff Side seeks to have a comprehensive Pre-Retirement Course made available to all JCC comprehended staff as they approach retirement.
Claim 300921(c)
Company Response. Under discussion.
8. The Staff Side seeks to have all contiguous casual service reckonable for pension purposes.
Claim 300921(d)
Company Response. Under discussion.
9. The Staff Side seeks to have an allowance paid to managers who act in place of a more senior manager to cover absences.
Claim 300921(e)
Company Response. Company to consider and revert.
10. The Staff Side seeks the suspension of PMR targets for affected staff while a Met Éireann, Orange or higher, weather warning is in place.
Claim 300921(f)
Company Response. Company to consider and revert.
11. The Staff Side seeks to ensure that all JCC comprehended staff are paid at or above the Living Wage.
Claim 300921(g)
Company Response. Company to take away and confirm.
12. Claim on behalf of the Group of Union's for the payment of a bonus to all staff in recognition of the Staff's effort in response to the pandemic.
Claim 300921(h)
Company Response. Company to consider and revert.
13. The Staff Side seeks an increase in the subsistence rates in eir in line with civil service rates.
Claim 270421(d)
Claim under discussion.
14. The Staff Side seeks to increase the vouched meal expenses for PC members, from the present €12 a day to align it with the existing Class 1 Graded subsistence rate of €14.82.
Claim 270421(e)
Claim under discussion.
15. Claim to implement a policy to cover The Right to Disconnect for eir employees in line with the WRC Code of Practice.
Claim 270421(g)
Claim under discussion.
16. The Staff Side seeks to review with eir the Apprentice terms and conditions with particular emphasis on Allowances and Rota liability.
Claim 080721(a)
Claim under discussion

*JCC Agreed Reports can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[JCC Agreed Report No.630 Parental Leave](#)

[JCC Agreed Report No.631 AL Policy 2020 COVID-19](#)

[JCC Agreed Report No.632 Medical Refund Scheme](#)

Continued overleaf

Continued:

JCC Agreed Report No.633 Domestic Violence Policy

JCC Agreed Report No.634 eir Pay Agreement

JCC Agreed Report No.635 Call Centre Pay Agreement

JCC Agreed Report No.636 Newly Revised & Agreed eir Annual Leave Policy 2021

JCC Agreed Report No.637 Medical Refund Scheme

JCC Agreed Report No.638 Premium paid to Retail Staff for Sunday Working

JCC Agreed Report No.639 Sunday Premium to non-graded SMC

JCC Agreed Report No.640 Collective Agreement Final Version

BENEFITS YOU CAN AFFORD



Affordable benefits for only €1.50 per week

The illnesses catered for by Medisan usually necessitate long treatment. The scheme provides assistance for members suffering from:

Tuberculosis

Psychiatric Illness

Cardiac Disease

Renal Failure

Ulcerative Colitis

Crohn's Disease

Insulin-dependent Diabetes

Diseases of Central Nervous System

Cancer

Addictions

With the ever increasing cost of medical attention and treatment you will find yourself faced with considerable financial strain, apart altogether from a possible reduction in pay if you are unfortunate enough to contract any of these illnesses. Medisan will assist towards the following:

- **Income assistance during periods of reduced pay**
- **Assistance towards consultations and drugs**
- **Assistance towards the cost of counselling and therapy**
- **Assistance towards the cost of convalescence**
- **50% match up of VHI shortfall (up to a specified maximum)**

While it is true that you, like the majority of members, may never require the assistance of the scheme, you will be helping your less fortunate colleagues who do, and ensuring help for yourself should the occasion arise.

DON'T DELAY, JOIN TODAY!

To join the Medisan scheme, please complete the form overleaf and return it to:

PO Box 222, An Post Delivery Unit, Mullaghboy Industrial Estate, Navan, Co. Meath

eir Superannuation Schemes

1. eir Superannuation Scheme (post 1984 service)

Financial Development of the Fund

The Assets increased over the year to 31st March 2021 from €4.31billion to €4.55 billion, after taking into account net benefits of €163.7 million paid from the Fund.

The return on the Fund's investments over the year was +9.6% as the Fund's growth assets, particularly equities, rebounded strongly from the lows of March 2020 while fixed income holdings generally increased in value as the central banks increased their purchases in the market to keep interest rates at low levels and underpin economic activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most recent Actuarial Funding Certificate and Funding Standard Reserve Certificate were both prepared with an effective date of 31st March 2019. The Actuarial Funding Certificate confirmed that at the effective date, the Fund satisfied the Funding Standard set out in Section 44 of the Act while the Funding Standard Reserve Certificate confirmed that at the effective date, the Fund satisfied the Funding Standard Reserve set out in Section 44 of the Act. More details can be found in the Annual Report.

Membership

The following table sets out the member movements during the scheme year to 31st March 2021

Membership of the Fund	Active	Deferred	Pensioners	Total
Opening Membership at the 1 April 2020	1,539	3,344	11,057	15,940
Leavers	-50	50	0	0
Transfers Out	-15	-86	0	-101
Retirements	-145	-673	818	0
Retirements - Lump sum only	0	-4	0	-4
New Spouse's/dependants pension	0	0	92	92
Death/cessation of pension	-9	-20	-274	-303
Closing membership at 31 March 2021	1,320	2,611	11,693	15624

Pension Increases

Under the Trust Deeds and Rules, pension increases for pensioners and deferred members are granted by eir, subject to the approval by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Ministerial approval was received in 2020 to permit payment of an increase of 0.4% effective from 1st July 2018, plus a second increase of 0.5% effective from 1 July 2019.

Additionally, as advised to pensioners members in October 2020, the Trustees agreed to restore a previously withheld increase of 0.2% from 1st July 2015. This increase had been withheld in respect of service after 1st January 1984 to cover part of the cost of the 2011 Government pension levy. All approved increases, together with arrears, were processed in 2020.

Since then, Ministerial approval was granted for a further discretionary pension increase of 0.9%, effective from 1st July 2020. This was processed in the July 2021 payroll for all eligible pensioners and backdated to the date of the award.

Accrued benefits for active members are increased in line with pensionable salary increases.

There are no pensions or pension increases being paid by or at the request of the Trustees for which the Fund would not have a liability in the event of its winding up.

IORP II

It is worth pointing out the key provisions of the recently transposed Directive (EU) 2016/2341 (the IORP II Directive) through the European Union (Occupational Pension Schemes) Regulations 2021 (the Regulations), on pension schemes.

What is it?

IORPs are funded occupational Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution pension schemes. IORP II is an updated version of the existing IORP directive (implemented back in 2003) that is designed – broadly – to improve the management of pension schemes by implementing stricter rules around governance and communication.

Benefits of IORP II

For members of pension schemes, IORP II is designed to deliver benefits including:

- Provide better protection through enhanced governance and risk management
- Provide clear, relevant and more consistent communication about your pension scheme
- Remove barriers to cross-border schemes
- Ensure that trustees have the necessary powers and credentials to supervise schemes

The new Directive is wide-ranging and contains no less than 67 Articles covering areas such as trustee qualifications (trustees must pass a “fit and proper” test), risk management, auditing and reporting, cross-border activities, solvency, supervision and investment.

2. *The eircom Limited Defined Contribution Retirement Savings Scheme*

The Scheme is established under a trust and is constituted and governed by the Trust Deed and Rules. It has been approved by the Revenue Commissioners under Section 774 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. It is a defined contribution scheme with its own legal entity and is totally separate from the Principal Employer, eircom, Limited’ and from the participating employers. The Trustees have the responsibility of ensuring that the Scheme is properly managed in accordance with the trust documents. The Scheme is registered with the Pensions Authority, registration number PB315546.

Financial Development of the Scheme 2021

The value of the Scheme’s net assets increased from €107,577,245 at the start of the year to €133,578,972 at the end of the year. This increase was accounted for by net additions from the dealings with members of the €6,660,9698 combined with net returns on the Scheme’s investments of €19,340,849.

Contributions and transfers in amounted to €10,086,269. Benefits paid or payable amounted to €1,370,294, payments to and on account of leavers amounted to €1,991,633 and other payments amounted to €63,644.

The above information has been extracted from the financial statements that form part of the most recent Trustee Report.

Membership

The profile of Scheme membership is as follows:

	30/06/2020	Joiners	Leavers	Active to Deferred	30/06/2021
Active Members	1,466	94	-29	-125	1406
Deferred Members	632	0	-50	125	707

There are no members in receipt of pension benefits under the Rules of the Scheme which are being paid from the resources of the Scheme.

Member Information

On joining the Scheme, each new member is given a copy of the Explanatory Booklet outlining the benefits being provided for themselves and/or their dependants under the scheme.

Active and deferred members receive benefit statements each year with details of their contributions and the details of the value of their individual holdings in their selected funds. Members can also, on request, receive a copy of the Trustee report and financial statements every year.

Queries

Enquiries about the scheme generally, or about an individual's entitlement to benefit, should in the first instance be sent to:

Phelim Kelly,
Irish Life Assurance plc
Irish Life Centre,
Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.
Email: code@irishlife.ie



eir Networks

Access Network

1. Access Network Build

Bespoke Corporate Fibre

The activity on delivery of fibre for dedicated business lines continues to be healthy. eir and eNet landed significant additional contracts with the Higher Education Authority (HEANET) to supply fibre connectivity to secondary schools. eNet are wholesaling a significant number of those where they have poor reach and Openeir wholesale have accepted orders to deliver. The mobile backhaul build for eir Mobile continues with ~100 sites actively in delivery and ~800 connected with fibre to date. Since July 2021 Openeir Networks have been actively working to deliver an upgraded service to TETRA sites. eir won the contract for TETRA for another 10 years and the current 3-year programme to bring fibre to ~600 sites previously served by copper and Martis technology (256K leased lines).

IFN

An increase in the programme to deliver FTTH to 1.9 million premises was announced in late Summer 2021. The previous commitment was to serve 1.4 million urban homes in the FTTC VDSL footprint. This on top of the 300K rural FTTH premises would have brought the overall tally to 1.7 million. An additional 200K premises are now planned to bring the total to 1.9 million by the end of 2026. This coupled with the National Broadband plan commitment of ~500K premises, will bring FTTH to all premises in the state. The majority of this FTTH build is currently being done by Circet. There is still some Openeir Networks design and build activity in this space where resources are available to carry out work.

NFN

The NFN programme is continuing with steady progress. Openeir Networks are currently building Ring 7 of 9. The last remaining rings are expected to complete over the next two years and this will enable a completely renewed Core network with ample fibre capacity into the future. Other Core network fibre build includes small pockets of activity to provide resilience to some of the more remote TETRA sites and serving exchanges.

NBP/NBI

Work continues to make duct and pole access available for use in the National Broadband Plan rollout. The main activities are Pole replacement and subduct installation. The main involvement from an Openeir Networks perspective is in the contractor management area and in the supervision of activities of both Openeir Networks contractors (Circet & Secto) and external civils contractors working for NBI (Circet, Secto, Actavo etc.)

2. FAST – Fixed Access Service Teams

The number of staff in the repair organisation has decreased by approximately 12% since 2018/19. The volume of repair truck rolls in the last 2 years has reduced by approx. 24% compared to the average number for previous years. FTTH will pass 1.9 million homes by 2026. Connections to FTTH are increasing and the majority of customers are migrating from copper service.

The fault index on the fibre network is significantly lower than the copper network, so as more customers migrate from copper to fibre networks, fault volumes are projected to continue to reduce.

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) has awarded a contract to provide high speed broadband to 540,000 eircodes in rural Ireland. When completed there will be little or no customers working on the Openeir copper network within the NBP footprint. Currently the NBP area has the highest fault index.

Other network companies like Siro and Magnet have fibre networks in place in urban areas across Ireland. It is expected that these networks will compete with Openeir's IFN for customers.

3. Access Design

Organisation Changes in Networks Design & Build

Background

The 2020/21 Voluntary leaving scheme had a significant uptake within Networks Design & Build (NDB) with 90 Technicians and Managers out of 138 eligible applicants approved to exit. This document outlines how the NDB organisation will re align to take account of the planned exits. The thrust of the initiative is not to merely align around span of control but rather to maintain a national geographic presence albeit with many teams decreasing in size. The following sections set out the changes by geographic Service Operations Manager (SOM) area.

The net effect of the re-organisation will be reduction in overall resource with the advertisement and filling of 3 FLM positions within NDB. The expected timeline for the new organisational structure is early December 2020 to coincide with retirement of existing FLMs.

Proposed Organisational changes by SOM area

Build Dublin

The departure of the FLM from C552S (Jimmy Fagan) and his team exits will reduce the Dublin IFN team strength by ~50%. The remaining 6 Technicians in C552S will be incorporated into team C551S (Kevin Lalor) bringing that team to a strength of 15.

Gerry O'Hanlon's team (C546S) and Eugene Keogh's team (C548S) will combine as a copper jointing/projects team with a new strength of 9. A new FLM position will be advertised to fill the vacancy created and will manage the combined residual team as C546S.

The dedicated PQO team previously managed by Timmy Murray (C545S) will be retained and a new FLM position will be advertised. The team strength following the changes will be 11.

Build North

The Utility Vehicle capability in Build North (C570S) lost its FLM and will lose Technicians in the current deal. The function will be retained and a new FLM position will be advertised to manage the remaining 5 crew capability. Trucks are currently being refurbished to ensure that we have vehicles in good working order and reserve vehicles in the event of repair being required.

The departure of FLMs James Boyle (C554S) and Joe Flynn (C556S) and Technicians from both these teams and from team C567S (Fiona Woods) reduces the strength of all 3 teams. The remaining Technicians will be incorporated into team C567S (Fiona Woods) bring that team strength to 17.

The Pole Testing team (C559S) will have 4 Technicians remaining following the current round of exits. The remaining Technicians will continue in their current roles with no change to their terms and conditions and will report to FLM Eoin Mullarkey (C558S). The combined North/South Pole testing team will have a strength of 14.

Build South

The bulk of reduction in resource in the south will be from teams C555S (Olive Casey) and team C569S (Dermot O'Sullivan's UV team). Additionally, FLM Noel McMahon (C557S) will retire. The remainder of Technicians in team C555S and Team C569S will join team C555S as a combined Build team + 1UV crew and will be managed by Dermot O'Sullivan. Team C555S will have a team strength of 10.

Olive Casey will manage the remainder of Noel's team which will continue as team C557S and will have team strength of 9.

Build South

Access Design will reduce in size due to both retiring Designers and FLMs. Team C576S previous managed by Des Malone will reduce to 3 Designers and will be incorporated into team C571S (Matthew Ryan) and team C572S (Andy Mason). There will be no change to Designer terms and conditions as a result of the team reorganisation. Team C571S will have a new team strength of 11 while Team C572S will have a new strength of 15.

Team C574S (Pat Prendergast) will lose its FLM and will be incorporated into teams C573S (Liam Kenny) and team C575S (Pat Bracken). Again there is no change to Designer T&Cs. The revised team strengths for both C573S and C575S will be 13.

In addition there will be a small adjustment to the reporting structures of the North East and South East based Designers in Teams C572S (Andy Mason) and C573S (Liam Kenny) to balance the numbers in the Mid Region design team (C575S).

New Team Structure & Team Sizes

The table below outlines the proposed new team structure and span of control resulting from the current round of exits. There will be some fluctuations in team size illustrated below in the coming months until the last of the exits complete in March 2021.

Row Labels	Proposed New FLM	Count of Name
C5455	New FLM 1 (PQO)	11
C5465	New FLM 2 (Projects)	9
C5475	Mr Eli Roche	15
C5495	Mr Paul Burke	10
C5515	Mr Kevin Lalor	15
C5555	Mr Jeremiah O’Sullivan	10
C5575	Ms Olive Casey	9
C5585	Mr Eoin Mullarkey	14
C5625	Mr Martin Malone	11
C5645	Mr Aidan Byrne	15
C5655	Mr Leo Logan	11
C5665	Mr Thomas Keane	17
Row Labels	Proposed New FLM	Count of Name
C5675	Ms Fiona Woods	17
C5705	New FLM 3 (UV North)	9
C5715	Mr Matthew Ryan	11
C5725	Mr Andrew Mason	15
C5735	Mr Liam Kenny	13
C5755	Mr Patrick Bracken	13
Grand Total		225

Fibre Networks Ireland – (FNI)

On Friday the 28th January 2022 we all woke up to the news that eir had reached an agreement with **InfraVia Capital Partners** (InfraVia) to create a dedicated fibre company focused on the deployment of fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) access the Republic of Ireland. eir will contribute its existing FTTH and copper infrastructure while InfraVia will serve as an investment partner to accelerate the roll out of eir’s open access FTTH network in order to reach 1.9 million premises by the end of 2025. The agreement covers eir’s access network. The core fibre network and exchanges **are not included**.

CWU was not involved or did not have any prior knowledge of this agreement. The Company has confirmed that there is no staff impact resulting from this agreement and that the *“employment relationship remains the same”*.

The “partnership” between eir and InfraVia is dependent on **Competition Authority approval**.

*eir Fibre documents can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

GSE 02-22 eir Fibre Networks Ireland Announcement

eir Fibre Networks Ireland Presentation

Core Network

1. *Project Diamond*

At the Biennial Conference 2020 it was reported that agreement had been reached with eir on the terms of Project Diamond which facilitated a network modernisation programme. This programme involved the closure of 46 AXE and E10 exchanges along with their associated RSUs and transmission would be replaced with new IP-based Call Controller server nodes in two sites and MSANs in each RSU.

Associated with this programme is a targeted, deferred exit scheme for SMC back office and Core field engineering staff (excluding Meteor Fops). Following discussions led by a sub-group of the eComms Sectoral Executive comprised of Ivor Reynolds, Tom Sheehan and John Egan, agreement was reached which provided for redeployment for Build staff not availing of the VL scheme as well as 8 NDEX promotions and 4 Training roles. An ex-gratia payment of €2,000 was paid to other staff. In conjunction with this, the Union negotiated the introduction of an apprentice scheme to back fill some of these positions.

*The Project Diamond Agreement can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

Project Diamond Collective Agreement

2. *Core Trainee Technicians*

In line with the Collective Agreement formed under Project Diamond, the Company launched the eir Trainee Technician Programme within the CTO function. It has been 37 years since the last apprentice scheme into this part of the Company and after much pressure from CWU this marks an exciting and important investment in the future of the Company with obvious, positive implications for the Union too.

The programme will set out to develop 35 Core Field Technicians and 10 Centre Technicians over a 3-year period with the first intake coming in 2021. The duration of the programme will be 18 months per intake.

As of this was made possible following agreement between the CWU and the Company on the terms and conditions applicable to this new role which will see staff move through a five-point scale to reach €43,000.

*Trainee Technician information can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

Terms & Conditions Core Apprentice Programme

Technician Trainee Programme Presentation

3. *Service Management Centre Restructure*

Following from Project Diamond the focus of the Company's modernisation programme shifted to the SMC whereby management were seeking to reorganise the profile of work conducted in this part of the business.

Driven by Network & IT System upgrades in conjunction with an upgrade to the existing SMC Monitoring System (Monolith), decreasing fault levels and a re-profiling of the work drove a demand from the business to reduce the overall staff requirement in the SMC rota function to 22.

A working group established by the Executive, comprised of Ivor Reynolds, Tom Sheehan and Deirdre O'Hara, undertook local discussions on the implications for staff arising from the proposed changes. In conjunction with a voluntary leaving deal, which at the time of writing has just been launched, the group reached agreement on a proposed rota.

In addition, a number of other changes were agreed as well as protections for existing staff.

*Service Management Centre information can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

GSE 03-22 SMC Reorganisation
Service Management Centre Collective Agreement

UNION *link* support

Contact your Union's Education Officer or email support@unionlink.org for technical assistance, or if you are prompted for an enrolment key.

Your Education Officer can also advise on what courses would suit you and how you can further develop your skills.

You can access the
UNIONLINK WEBSITE
by scanning the
QR code here with your
smartphone camera.



 SCAN ME

You can find out more about
Unionlink by accessing this
INTRODUCTORY VIDEO
by scanning the QR code here.



 SCAN ME

eir Apprentice Programme

Fault Deployment

2021 was very similar to previous years. There was **0% long range** >100KM deployments in low fault volumes months. Almost all long range was due to Storm Barra in December. **1% of possible deployments were long range across the year.** For the month of **December this was 4%.**

For short range > 50KM< 100KM the **rate was 4%**

Callouts

There was a total of **768 callouts** in 2021. The highest month of callouts for our members was March with **83** the lowest month was April with **39**. Over the year **223 members** had 1 call out with **10 members** with 7 or more callouts.

CALLOUTS 2021	
Row Labels	Count of FHS REF
March	83
Feb	77
Oct	75
Aug	75
Nov	70
May	69
June	61
Dec	61
July	58
Sept	51
Jan	49
April	39
Grand Total	768

No of Callouts	Count of Name
1	223
2	80
3	35
4	25
5	11
6	5
7&>	10

CALLOUTS 2020	
Row Labels	Count of FHS /Midas/ Remedy Reference
March	73
April	92
Jan	88
Feb	83
May	50
Jun	36
Aug	54
Oct	40
Nov	42
Dec	73
July	54
Sept	48
	42
Grand Total	775

No of Techs with callouts = 345	
No of Callouts	Count of Name
1	214
2	54
3	25
4	24
5	14
6	3
>6	10
100	1
Grand Total	345

Apprentice Team Assignments

As Apprentices complete their training, they are assigned to team areas. This can be a difficult time for individuals as their contracts state that they can be moved to any part of the country. The Company reserves the right to move individuals to any part of the country. Each year the CWU engage with management and try to bring our members back as near to their home area as much as possible. This has proved successful in the past with small numbers, each year, required to move long distance from their home base. Where members found themselves in this position there was a commitment that within 12 to 18 months their request to

transfer back to their home areas would be considered. The above approach was assisted by a new intake of Apprentices each year.

Assignments in 2021 proved very difficult because of no Apprentice intake. Branches were successful in moving back a large number to a location near their home however, the CWU were notified of 5/6 individuals where their transfer could not be facilitated. The family circumstances had changed for the individuals, and they would not sign their contracts due to the location they were asked to move to.

The CWU made representations on their behalf. During our engagement with management, they outlined their assignment policy as follows:

- Transfer requests were considered first.
- Then Apprentice placements were looked at.
- If an Apprentice was needed in their home location, they were kept there.
- Then short-range moves were carried out.
- Then long range was the option.

The Company insisted on the moves and unfortunately 2 members decided to resign from the Company. The CWU is very disappointed with this outcome, as it was the first time the assignment process resulted in resignations.

Terms and conditions

Through the JCC, the CWU continue to attempt to improve the terms and conditions of our Apprentice/NRT members. Personal Contracts have proved difficult to amend however we continue to engage with management on improvements in line with Motions to our Conferences.



eir Customer Service Centres

Pay in the Customer Service Centres

While examining pay across the three Customer Service Centres in 2021, the four main items identified by the Union were base pay, bonuses, pay for Senior Agents and a loyalty bonus.

All four items have been addressed in the overhaul of remuneration in the centres.

The new remuneration model includes:

- Increased base pay for Agents, Senior Agents and Team Leaders (increases between 10% - 17%)
- Clear, achievable bonus structure – based on 3 key KPIs
- Introduction of standalone 'Attendance Payment' for agents
- Introduction of a 'Loyalty Bonus'

These increases come on top of the 2.7% pay increase already won for the Centres in 2020. Also part of that 2020 agreement, members in these areas are now included in overall collectively bargained pay deals across the business. This means that they will receive the benefit of the currently agreed 3 year 6% pay deal **on top** of the two stand alone agreements outlined above, and will continue to be included for future collectively bargained pay deals into the future.

For Agents

4 Pay Elements			
1. Base Pay Improvement to base pay for new and existing Agents	2. Bonus 15%* paid monthly based on 3 KPIs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHT • Same Day Repeat • Productivity 	3. Attendance Payment Work your scheduled hours to & receive a monthly payment totalling €1,700 per annum (Gross)	4. Loyalty Bonus Loyalty bonus after 12 months, 18 months & 24 months.

Summary

1. Increased base pay to €22,000 per annum (new & existing agents)
2. New bonus structure - 15% (20% CVM) based across 3 KPIs
3. New attendance payment of €1,700 per annum spread out equally over 13 pay periods
4. New Loyalty bonus based on tenure to be recognised at:
 - 12 months: €500
 - 18 months: €500
 - 24 months: €1,000

All employees will benefit:

- If current base salary is under €22,000, all staff will receive the appropriate increase to bring them to €22,000
- If salary deficit to €22,000 is less than the 5% of current bonus then 5% will be added to their current base salary
- If you have already received the previous pay deal you will see base go to €22,440

Bonuses

- Performance bonus eligibility of 15% for agents based on achievement of 3 core KPIs
 - Average Call Handling Time (AHT)
 - Productivity
 - Repeat Calls (Same Day repeats)

- CVM agents will be eligible for 20% performance bonus based on the achievement of 4 core KPIs
 - Average Call Handling Time (AHT)
 - Productivity
 - Repeat Calls (Same Day repeats)
 - Churn target

Attendance Bonus

In addition to the Performance Bonus, members will have the opportunity to earn a further attendance payment of €1,700 gross per annum paid equally over 13 pay cycles.

Loyalty Bonus

- Complete 12 months of service from relevant effective date - payment of €500
- Complete 18 months of service from relevant effective date - payment of €500
- Complete 24 months of service from relevant effective date - payment of €1,000
- 12 and 24 month payments can be taken as €500 one4all tax free voucher

To see how this affects the different roles:

Care Agents

Remuneration for a new Care Agent	BASE	BONUS	Attendance Payment	Annualised Total	Loyalty Bonus
Current Remuneration for a new Care Agent	€20,000	20%/€4,000	€0	€24,000	
Revised Remuneration - Example timeline for a Care Agent					
Day 1	€22,000	€3,300	€1,700	€27,000	
Pass Probation	€22,440	€3,366	€1,700	€27,506	
Month 12	€22,440	€3,366	€1,700	€27,506	+€500
Pay Deal	€22,815	€3,422	€1,700	€27,937	
Month 18	€22,815	€3,422	€1,700	€27,937	+€500
Month 24	€22,815	€3,433	€1,700	€27,937	+€1,000

Senior Agents

The new starting salary for a Senior Agent will be €24,000 per annum, plus a bonus of 15%. (Potential of up to 17% increase, e.g. from minimum base)

Example - Remuneration of a Care Senior Agent	BASE	BONUS	Attendance Payment	Annualised Total
Current	€20,450	20%/€4,090	€0	€24,540
Revised Remuneration	€24,000	15%/€3,600	€1,700	€29,300

Team Leaders

The new starting salary for a Team Leader will be €31,000 per annum, plus a bonus of 15%. (Potential of up to 11% increase, e.g., from a minimum base).

Example - Remuneration of a Care TL	BASE	BONUS	Annualised Total
Current	€28,000	20%/€5,600	€33,600
Revised Remuneration	€31,000	15%/€4,650	€35,650

Additionally, there is to be new and continued investment in training and upskilling:

New Knowledge Management – Upskilling & Knowledge in Life

- Developing Knowledge Management to identify skills and training requirements.
- New L&D programme
- Investing in L&D to support agent progression and development
- Training needs assessment and upskilling road map for Agent & TL by line of business.

Leadership Training

- Continued Investment in Team Leader and Senior Agents in a Leadership Programme (level 6)

Finally, as part of the continuing assessment and modernising of systems being used by agents, a number of obsolete systems will be taken offline, and agents will be fully trained and integrated with the Care teams.



Health insurance - available through payroll

Some additional benefits for Irish Life Health members



Digital Doctor

With Digital Doctor you get unlimited consultations with a GP by phone or online video. Phone services are available 24/7, 364 days per year.



Back-Up

Get expert advice and treatment for acute back and neck pain from a network of nationwide physiotherapists. Members may access up to two treatment programmes per year, if deemed clinically applicable, for a fee of €50 per treatment programme.



Healthy Minds

Get access to independent professional counselling. Because we all need a healthy mind as well as a healthy body. Members may access up to 6 counselling sessions via phone, chat, video or face to face.



Minor Injury Clinic

Get rapid access to a network of walk-in minor injury clinics, providing medical treatment and advice 365 days a year. Irish Life Health offer a contribution towards a nationwide network of walk-in Minor Injury Clinics.



For individual advice in relation to your health insurance, call us on **01 855 6666**, visit **www.fmdownes.com** or email **info@fmdownes.com**

Please note each Irish Life Health plan provides different levels of cover which may or may not suit your needs. Information relating to benefits, cover and member benefits contained in tables within this document is not conclusive. For full details on what's covered and what's not covered see the relevant Table of Cover and Health Plans Member Handbook. Terms and Conditions apply. Plan information correct as of 1st January 2021.

Irish Life Health doc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.
FM Downes Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

ILH_40088-21-04

eir National Managers' Branch

FLM Cars

Following the replacement of seven cars in 2020 the Company have confirmed that ten cars will be replaced in the first half of 2022. They are currently awaiting budget approval to replace the balance of seven cars in the second half of 2022. This will see all FLMs in 2018 or newer vehicles.

*FLM Car Policy can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Car Policy](#)

Promotions

Following recent Voluntary Leave (V/L) schemes the CWU agreed to fill 9 Front Line Managers (FLM) positions. Given the numbers of members who availed of voluntary leaving securing this level of promotions was welcoming. The positions advertised and filled were as follows

- FLM Donegal area
- FLM Cork area
- FLM Limerick area
- FLM Cavan/Monaghan area
- FLM Dublin area
- FLM NRT North Midlands area
- FLM NRT South - West area
- FLM East Leinster area
- FLM Build: Ireland South

Pay

We are now entering the second year of the pay agreement. To recap the agreement 2% per year increase for three years as follows;

FLM/SOMS

- **Within Band Payment** - All payments to the band max (*movement in the band*) are DB pensionable under the terms of the Pension Accord
- **Non-DB Members** will receive a 2% pay increase
- **Over Band Payments** - The 2% increase each year for three years.

For DB members the increase is comprised of three elements;

- (i) An increase that will be determined by the **CPI** (Consumer Price Index) each year. This increase is DB pensionable in line with the Pension Accord.
 - (ii) **Transition Payment**. This will be 70% of the remaining pot when you take away the increase outlined in number 1. This payment is DB pensionable.
 - (iii) **DC element** - what remains when you take away point 1 & 2 above is pensionable under the DC scheme.
- **Band Maximums** The top of the FLM band will remain at €56,982 and the top of the SOM band will remain at €71,419 for DB purpose.

PC Members

Our PC members will receive 2% increase per year for the 3 years of the agreement. Those who are members of the DB Pension Scheme were provided with an opportunity to include the transition payment into their pay increase.



eir Retail/FOTS

Impact of Covid-19

Since our last Conference our members in eir retail and FOTS have continued to experience a very challenging period in their working lives on foot of the Health & Safety challenges created by the pandemic. Our retail and FOTS members have had to endure an on-again/off-again period of uncertainty. At the time of writing, Government has lifted the last of restrictions and while mandatory mask wearing no longer applies in retail, staff will have the option to keep wearing one if they wish. The Company has confirmed that the remaining Covid-19-related measures such as protective screens and sanitisation stations will be removed on a gradual basis. This is in stark contrast to the experience of our members just after the last Conference when the 'emergency status' of telecoms meant our members were very much on the frontline for eir. Thanks to the hard work of our Lead Worker Representative, Rachel Carton, Dublin No. 1 Branch, we have worked with the Company to minimise the risk to our members across the retail network while protecting pay and commission.

The Retail/FOTS Commission Changes Communication can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Member Update – Retail & FOTS Commission Changes](#)

Commission and Emergency Status Circular can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[GSE 12-20 CWU Retail Update – Commission and Emergency Status](#)

Retail Pay and Conditions

Sunday Premium Pay

As part of the last pay deal, it was agreed to bring the Retail/FOTS staff into the Joint Conciliation Council (JCC) which allows the pursuit of claims under the formal structures that we use for other claims as well as ensuring that these members are now comprehended by the collective pay agreements that we conclude with eir.

On foot of a claim to the JCC to improve the Sunday premium payment agreement was reached to increase the rate from 10% to 33%. This was communicated in January 2022 but was back dated to 1st July 2021.

The Sunday Premium Pay Circular can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[GSE 01-22 Retail Sunday Premium](#)

Lead RSC Allowance

In January, agreement was reached to restructure part of eir's retail estate by examining store locations with a view to having one manager take responsibility for two locations that were in close proximity. As part of this agreement, the position of Lead Retail Sales Consultant (RSC) was created for the shops that were in scope and the role attracted a €3,000 allowance.

Retail Structure Proposal Presentation can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

[Retail Structure Proposal Presentation](#)

Synchro

In October 2021, eir announced a plan to bring its franchised retail shops in-house. Synchro had been operating more than 30 stores across the country for eir. The franchise agreement was to expire on December 31st and workers in Synchro were informed that they would move their employment to eir under The Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) on the 1st of January 2022.

Following the news, a number of Synchro staff contacted the CWU with concerns regarding their terms and conditions. As face-to-face meetings were not safe at the time, the Organising department arranged an urgent online meeting open to all Synchro workers. Following a large attendance at the meeting, these workers made the decision to begin an organising campaign to build their union and have the CWU represent them during and after the TUPE consultation process.

As a result of their hard work and commitment, union membership grew significantly, and these members became actively involved in the campaign. CWU Officers contacted both companies and secured a meeting to begin negotiating on the TUPE process and the subsequent harmonisation process. For the majority of members in Synchro, the eir terms and conditions were an improvement on their current contracts and they were eager to have the harmonisation concluded before the transfer.

In February, Synchro staff transferred their employment to eir. Due to the successful organising campaign, workers were offered eir contracts and are satisfied with the outcome they achieved.

*Synchro Communication information can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Synchro Communication 2021](#)

eir Health & Safety

Introduction

The National Health & Safety Committee in eir meets on a regular basis, mainly monthly to consider a wide range of matters concerning Health & Safety and wellness issues. This committee is a sub-group of the JCC and comprises of representatives from management and the Unions represented at JCC.

The NHSC Committee

There have been changes to the committee since the last BDC as some committee members have left the Company. The current members are:

- John Dunleavy CWU
- Tom Sheehan CWU
- Pascal Connolly CWU (Secretary)
- Maurice Muldoon Fixed Access Operations
- Donie Pardy Head of Environment, Health & Safety (Chairperson)
- Allan Rochford Director of Service Management.
- Andrew O'Neill Health & Safety Unit

Meeting Agenda and Structure

The committee held fifteen meetings to date since the last BDC report.

Health, Safety, Environment

A Health, Safety, Environment and Well-being page is available on eir space which is accessible by all eir staff.

There were approximately 200 items of correspondence dealt with by the secretary and committee which entails a large range of items referred by Branch Secretaries and Safety Representatives which resulted in many action points for different members of the committee.

Where items are referred relating to new equipment or work practices, a risk assessment is carried out by the EHS unit and the results of these assessments are considered by the committee and where appropriate new accident prevention guidelines are issued or updated.

If an emergency EHS issue arises, safety alerts or a safety bulletin can be issued depending on what type of issue is involved.

Appendix 1 provides a greater overview of some of the the activities involved.

Safety Manager's Report

The Safety Manager reports at every NHSC meeting, providing latest accident statistics, statistics for the Lone Worker Alert System, the most up to date COVID-19 figures in eir and any H&S issues that may have arisen since the previous meeting he also updates the committee on the on-going health and wellness programme.

eir Wellness Programme

eir introduced a company-wide wellness programme in 2017 to reduce instances of sickness, absence and injury, and to improve levels of wellbeing and employee engagement in the workplace. The NHSC support this programme ensuring its successful implementation on a national basis. eir Wellness is a rolling agenda item at the NHSC, a wellness sub-group was also set up with Carol Scheffer CWU Equality Officer and members of the NHSC to further support the wellbeing programme.

Fostering a greater awareness of physical and mental health some of the achievements since BDC 2020 include;

- eir Wellness Covid-19 Support page
- One to one consultations Finance, Ergonomics, Health and Fitness
- Agile Working Policy and Ergonomics for Remote Working

- Detailed Corporate Report with Recommendations for Agile Working
- Ergonomic Assessments via Video (risk mitigation measures)
- Educational Live Seminars
- Let's Get Jogging; Digital Wellbeing Series
- Nutritionist - Digital Consultations
- Physio/Nutrition/Onsite Seminars
- Cancer Awareness
- Healthy Mind Workshops
- Employee Assistance Programme re-Launch
- EAP - Manager Information Sessions
- Flu Vaccines
- CWU/eir Green ribbon Campaign
- New Mental Health Promotion Officer (MHPO) Fergus Maher

Summary

Some of the main items discussed since the last BDC were LWAS, Personnel Protection Equipment (PPE) of which a field trial took place in early 2021 a report regarding this field trial is attached in Appendix 2. COVID-19 a Lead Worker Group was set up to discuss staff issues with the Company see Appendix 3.

Areas of Focus 2022/2023

As we move away from COVID-19 issues a refocus of some of the main items of focus for the NHSC for the coming year will be the LWAS. A sub group has been set up to look at this issue and eir IT is in the process of developing an APP and discussions are on-going at this time.

The eir wellness programme will also be a main topic of discussion at the NHSC and has been embraced very well by all the staff of the Company be they field or office based staff. Its continue success will be a priority for the NHSC.

Listed below are some of the other items which were discussed at the committee since the last BDC for your information.

*The eir Health & Safety documents can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Safety & Health Appendix 1](#)

[Safety & Health Appendix 2](#)

[Safety & Health Appendix 3](#)

[Safety & Health COVID-19 Report](#)

[eir CMO Letter \(Vaccines\)](#)

[eir Policy – COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

[eir COVID-19 Report](#)

[eir PPE Field Trial](#)

[Memo on Introduction of Replacement PPE Items](#)

eir Transport & Facilities

1. Company Vehicles

During 2020 the Company delivered 34 new 3.5 tonne Aerial Platforms and a further 11 4.5 tonne Aerial Platforms arrived in late 2021 and were operational in January 2022. In the core area we also delivered 12 4x4 jeeps in 2020.

Subject to capex approval, they aim to deliver a number of Fibre & Hybrid vans this year 2022, replacing the 2014 Masters. An order will be placed for more Aerial Platforms as eir continue to replace older 2010 - 2012 Aerial Platforms.

2. Electric Vehicles

The Company position of electric commercial electric vans is they are continuously reviewing the market and talking to manufacturers. The issue they face is the pay load for the electric vans doesn't cover the weight of the tools etc. staff carry so the KM range is significantly reduced not making them feasible for the majority of eir work streams.

3. Exchange Facilities

The Company has informed us that it proposes to remove cookers and fire hoods from exchanges and replace the cookers with a combi-microwave so heated food can be prepared. The reason for replacement is that the cooker fire suppression hoods are at end of life/maintenance etc. The hoods were fitted approx. 15 years ago to mitigate the risk of fire in exchanges. (In the past there was a fire in an exchange due to a cooker being left "on" and left unattended.)

This proposal involves the removal of cookers and fire hoods from 'exchanges' approx 45 exchanges with 53 cookers and fire suppression hoods.

A **combination microwave and oven** is proposed, the selection of the specific standalone unit would be determined through eir procurement and RFP however the specification that will drive selection will include:

- Capacity – Width of dish that can fit through the door without tilting, range from 29cm dish to 35cm
- Auto-cook programmes – automatically cook food for the correct time and with correct combination of microwave, convection, and grill, enter the weight and type of food and the programming cooks the food to programme.
- Multi-step programming – allows a user to programme different cooking modes to begin one after the other. A user can set it to automatically defrost, then cook and grill the top at the end – all without having to come back and reset.

These features are at the higher end of the combi-microwave specification particularly the multi-step programme. The Company has committed to purchase the "best in class" combi-microwave oven.

*Drop Point and Redistribution information can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[eir Drop Point Consolidation Presentation](#)

[eir Drop Point Agreement](#)

[Redistribution of Cavan and Tullamore Deliveries](#)



eir Equality

The eir JCC Diversity Subcommittee meets regularly to progress our agenda in eir with the aim of defining common activities. The Union has been working consistently with the Company in the areas of wellness and equality and despite the Covid-19 pandemic have made progress in several areas. These areas include enhanced leave arrangements, policy updates and robust gender policies, the details of which will be outlined in this report.

At the end of December 2021, the Company launched 5 people policies as follows:

*The eir Policies can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[eir Policy – Menopause](#)

[eir Policy – Pregnancy Loss](#)

[eir Policy – Domestic Violence](#)

[eir Policy – Fertility](#)

[eir Policy – Parent’s Leave](#)

These were the subject of considerable discussions through the committee, particularly the Menopause Policy which originated as a Union claim in February 2020 and the Domestic Violence Policy which again originated as a Union claim in June of 2019.

The Union lodged these claims on behalf of our members because we felt strongly that these are important workplace issues that needed to be addressed and more could be done to protect and support members.

The CWU welcomes the introduction of these policies and the appropriate supports that will be put in place for impacted employees. The details of the policies are as follows:

1. Menopause Policy

eir recognises menopause as a workplace issue and is fully committed to providing a working environment that provides support and appropriate adjustments for staff experiencing menopause. This recognises that the experience of menopause will vary for each individual and that the symptoms can cause real challenges for women in the workplace. Menopause can still be a taboo subject and many women may not wish to disclose that they are going through menopause, however both Employer and Union believes that no woman should suffer in silence or struggle with any challenges posed by menopause in the workplace.

This policy ensures that staff concerns are addressed in a confidential dignified manner. The policy raises awareness, identifies the symptoms of menopause and perimenopause and how these symptoms can cause challenges to workplace performance and attendance.

Furthermore, the policy firmly recognises the duty of care towards impacted employees and the various supports available as well as the EAP services.

Some of the practical supports that we encourage members to seek include:

- Adjustment in working hours such as flexible start and end times to support women who have difficulty sleeping
- Changes in work wear as appropriate
- Flexibility with tasks, workload, or breaks
- Ready access to toilet and washing facilities
- Proper ventilation, provision of fans and setting of room temperatures
- Access to a nearby water cooler

These supports should be discussed on a case-by-case with line management who should address concerns effectively and with all due sensitivity.

2. *Pregnancy Loss Policy*

The Union welcomed the introduction of this policy as it acknowledges the trauma that is caused for those experiencing a pregnancy loss as well as for all the family concerned. Therefore, the application of the policy is not only for the employee impacted directly themselves, but also their partner or their baby's surrogate mother.

The policy assures employees of a supportive environment where they can access help in a confidential sensitive manner.

The Company is providing five days' paid leave for all employees who have been affected with a pregnancy loss. Those requiring additional leave can seek same as appropriate and again the EAP services are available for those who need it.

We also wish to remind members that in the unfortunate event where an employee suffers a miscarriage after 24 weeks' pregnancy, the maternity policy will apply.

3. *Domestic Violence Policy*

For a considerable time, the Union has been pushing for domestic violence to be taken seriously as a workplace issue that can severely impact on employees who are the subject of domestic and sexual violence. In that regard the ability of employees to attend work and carry out their duties maybe affected. The staff member may also be in receipt of abusive communications and contact from their partner at work and it is necessary to keep them and their co-workers safe.

We were pleased therefore to be able to have our claim accepted and a policy agreed. The employee's workplace should be a safe environment whereby they can access support services and maintain their financial independence. In that regard it is essential that employees are not adversely affected after being absent from work or by being unable to fulfil their duties. In recognition of the above, the Company implemented a domestic violence policy with various arrangements in place that will support the wellbeing of employees.

The Company will facilitate, where appropriate, up to two weeks' paid leave for legal meetings, to attend court hearings, for hospital/medical appointments, to mind family members or for any other incidents related to domestic violence.

This leave will be in addition to other leave entitlements and may be taken in consecutive days or broken down. This will be agreed on a case-by-case basis between the employee and the management.

To ensure a safe working environment for those experiencing domestic violence the employee may also request the following:

- Change in working hours and/or provision of flexible working as per the Company's flexible working arrangements
- Change of work telephone number, mobile number, or email address as appropriate
- Change in work location as deemed necessary
- Financial assistance upon request in the form of advances to salary.

All requests for leave and assistance will be dealt with confidentially.

4. *Fertility Policy*

Again, this policy is a very welcome development as the issue of fertility and fertility treatment is still a very sensitive topic that can be both physically and emotionally demanding for the impacted employee. This policy has been created to provide help and support for eir employees and their partners who have 6 months' service and who are going through the fertility treatment process.

The employees will be able to avail of fertility leave which will be up to three days' paid leave per cycle of treatment, up to a maximum of three cycles in total. The leave is for the purpose of attending medical appointments as well as receiving and recovering from treatment.

Other supports are available to the employee, and we advise members to refer directly to the policy document for full information.

5. Parent's Leave

Parent's leave entitles each parent to 5 weeks' leave during the first 2 years of a child's life, or in the case of adoption, within 2 years of the placement of the child.

The CWU was successful in reaching an agreement with eir to top up this payment. Employees who meet the relevant conditions and who have 6 months' service with the Company will receive full pay for the duration of their 5 weeks Parent's Leave.

This pay is less any statutory deductions and any amount due to the employee in respect of parent's benefit and is conditional on the employee complying with certain conditions. The Union welcomes the changes to the Parent's Leave Policy that will make Parent's Leave more financially viable and will provide the necessary supports for families with young children.

As was announced for the 2022 Budget, the following provisions will apply from July 2022:

- 5 weeks' parent's leave will increase to 7 weeks for each parent
- 5 weeks' parent's benefit will increase to 7 weeks for each qualifying parent

At that point the Union will again revert to the Company for updates.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, the Union was arranging a further meeting with the Company to discuss other key issues which will include updating the bullying and harassment policy, developing guidelines on the right to disconnect and the new gender pay reporting requirements. This also includes discussions around the progression of women in the Company from entry level to middle management to senior positions. We have already presented the Company with best practice measures in that regard which have been established through the Union's involvement on various European projects which we hope to explore with the Company further.

We also wish to remind members of the Company's surrogacy policy as well as other diversity and equality measures which we have worked closely on. The Union recommends that members refer to the relevant Company circulars and their Branch Representative for further information.

Finally, our wellness team consisting of Union and Company representatives have continued to meet regularly. The wellness team is now well established, and we have worked jointly with the Company to promote company advice/services from diet and fitness to stress awareness amongst many others. Each month, the Company issues a bulletin on upcoming events, and we recommend that our members participate as much as possible. We strongly consider the work of the wellness team as a Company/Union success story, and we are always open to members' feedback.

The Union sees the implementation of all these policies and actions in eir as a progressive step towards our diversity and equality agenda which we are passionate about. As always, we will keep these policies under review, and we will continue to develop members conditions in line with our diversity and equality agenda.

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Regulation

1. Meeting with Department of Communications

Deputy General Secretary, Ian McArdle and National Officer, John Clarke met with representatives from the Department of Communications in November 2021 to discuss the implementation of the National Broadband Plan (NBP).

The CWU reiterated that it welcomes the progress to date on the implementation of the NBP and the awarding of the contract to National Broadband Ireland (NBI) as a necessary step to realising this long awaited investment in the eComms sector. CWU is a key stakeholder in the telecoms marketplace and views this state intervention as a positive development.

The €3bn National Broadband Plan, will be transformative for the telecom's marketplace and for the 1.1 million citizens who will benefit from improved broadband access. Of key interest to the CWU is the effect that this investment will have on the labour market in the telecoms and related sectors that will be utilised to deliver this huge project. This intervention will put significant pressures on the resources and skills available, with existing and new contracting companies all vying for an opportunity to benefit.

The CWU outlined its concern that in these highly competitive conditions, where significant investment and profit is available, companies will seek to make the cost of labour their competitive advantage. In simple terms, the workers and their terms and conditions are often at risk in these highly competitive but lucrative market opportunities. It is essential that this scenario is not allowed to occur under the auspices of a state contract.

As a key stakeholder in the telecoms market, the CWU has a vital role to play in ensuring that employment standards and terms and conditions are maintained, protected and enhanced across the sector.

The Union relayed the importance of companies like NBI, and others, adhering to a high standard of corporate governance that will ensure they respect the norms and standards of industrial relations in sector which includes the use of the industrial relations machinery of the state, namely the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and Labour Court.

Assurances were given by the representatives from the Department that this message would be relayed to NBI and that the Department of Communications would expect that these standards would absolutely be met.

2. Meeting with National Broadband Ireland (NBI)

Following this meeting with the Department of Communications the Deputy General Secretary wrote to National Broadband Ireland (NBI) seeking a meeting to have a general discussion on matters relating to the National Broadband Plan (NBP).

At a subsequent meeting with NBI the CWU outlined its role as a key stakeholder in the telecoms marketplace representing the interests of telecoms workers from a range of key companies across the sector. The Union outlined the importance of good employment standards and the need for adherence to markets norms that will protect workers from exploitation from employers seeking to take advantage of the significant investment the State is making. The CWU observed that NBI, as the custodian of the NBP contract, has a particular responsibility in this regard. The Company stated that work was under way on a Corporate Social Responsibility statement and that further engagement with the CWU would be worthwhile. Disappointingly however, after some initial meetings and some good engagement NBI has not responded to subsequent attempts to follow up on these discussions.

3. Regulatory Developments

The Government Legislative Programme for Spring 2022 includes plans to legislate for the Communications Regulations (Enforcement) Bill 2022.

This will transpose the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) which is intended to revise the

entire legislative framework for the electronic communications sector in Europe. It aims to codify all existing EU telecoms regulatory regimes in one legal instrument, and to ensure that ‘traditional’ and ‘online-only’ operators are subject to the same regulatory rules.

The Bill will grant additional powers to ComReg including:

- The ability to impose financial sanctions of up to €5 million or 10 per of a firm’s turnover, whichever is greater
- Compel companies to provide compensation to their customers for missed installation appointments and delays in switching of numbers, as well as other failures
- New investigation and adjudication powers and allow it to make declarations of non-compliance against operators

The Bill also seeks to introduce a number of customer service protections, which will be developed in close co-operation with ComReg. These include the following:

- (i) A compensation scheme for specific customer service failings by operators;
- (ii) A new ‘Customer Charter’ which will act as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for customers to identify appropriate standards of service from operators. ComReg intends to set enforceable minimum quality of standards; and
- (iii) An enhanced alternative dispute resolution process for consumers.

It remains to be seen what implications the ‘Customer Charter’ might have for the customer support operations in the main telecoms’ companies.

In addition, Article 81 of the EECC provides the basis for a national protocol to be established for legacy migration which is the basis for the White Paper released by eir last year.

*A summary of the Enforcement Bill can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Communications Regulation \(Enforcement Bill\) 2022 Summary](#)

3. eir White Paper: Copper Switch Off – Leaving a Legacy for the Future

Early in 2021 eir produced a white paper ‘Copper Switch Off – Leaving a Legacy for the Future’ and in doing so set out its views on the transition from copper to fibre.

The paper goes through the benefits that should accrue to Irish society, economy and climate as the migration to fibre takes place and the copper network is switched off. Clearly this process will have serious implications for our members in eir and other related companies. The paper outlines a proposed process, initially based on consumer decisions, that will usher in the transition to fibre.

This involves not selling wholesale copper services where FTTP is available. Once transitioned to fibre a customer cannot migrate back to the legacy network. Following this, when 75% of premises in an Openeir exchange area have fibre available eir is seeking to increase the wholesale copper price to that of the entry level price for FTTP. In doing so they will signal to the consumer the increased cost involved in maintaining the copper network and incentivise further migrations.

The final transition stage occurs when 95% of all premises within an open eir exchange area have fibre available. Remaining copper customers who have access to fibre will be given 12 months notice that copper services will be withdrawn. Openeir will commit that within the next three years, all remaining premises within that exchange area will have broadband with speeds greater than 30Mbps made available to them. End users who have not acted will be terminated on the cessation date (unless self-declared to be a vulnerable user or a user providing critical national infrastructure).

In tandem with these steps the Company makes detailed proposals on a communications plan to the consumer, to businesses and to the industry on the information it will make available throughout the process.

Lastly the paper makes the point that the IFN project is due to conclude in 2024 and that it make a formal

announcement by 2025 regarding the withdrawal of access to these copper-based services and associated timelines for the business to business and government markets.

*The full White Paper can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Copper Switch-off – Leaving a Legacy for the Future](#)



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- Some of your details will include your membership number so please ensure you have this at hand when creating your account. You can get this from head office as required.
- You will then be sent an e-mail with a web link that you click on to confirm your registration.
- If you need any assistance, then email carol@cwu.ie

You can also download a **UNION link** certificate once you have successfully completed your course.

What's New?

We are pleased to advise that we launched three new courses: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft PowerPoint. These courses have been produced courtesy of our colleagues in the CWU UK and we thank them for our continued collaboration and partnership. Further details of these three courses are on the website www.cwu.ie

KN Circet

1. KNIS Update

New Rate Card/Pay

The rate card was finally produced in early 2021 and promised an increase in average earnings for our members. The rate card changes were included in an overall package that was presented and agreed by the NEC. The package included:

- Increase in subsistence (€8 increase pw)
- Enhanced income protection (illness benefit/sick pay)
- Additional bonus annual leave
- Increased pension benefit
- New quarterly bonus scheme – due to be implemented next quarter
- Increased death in service benefit (4 times salary).
- Changes to the Saturday roster that includes a 50% uplift and the opportunity for additional bonus increments.

The CWU accepted that the only way to ensure the Company promises to deliver an increase in average wage, was to ask our members to provide us with information. This information quickly moved to comparison between the old and new rate card. With any introduction of new rates, it takes time to bed in and it was the view of the Branch that several months of operating to the new rates would provide them with real comparisons. It is worth noting that average wages have increased year on year up to this point.

A survey was decided as the best mechanism and we should wait several months before conducting one. However, following calls from members it was decided to ask Representatives to canvas staff and provide the Branch Secretary with the data required. The returns were very disappointing both from a volume and details perspective. On foot of that the survey was arranged. There was a good response to the survey

A summary of the key findings from respondents were as follows:

- **81% disagree or strongly disagree that their average wage has increased following the introduction of the new rate card.**
- **77% have informed management of the decrease in average wage**
- **82% are willing to provide supporting documentation to the CWU to address the decrease.**
- **50% disagree or strongly disagree that all work activities are covered on the new rate card.**
- **59% disagree or strongly disagree that the fluidity of work has increased recently.**
- **52% disagree or strongly disagree that job survey information has improved.**
- **71% disagree or strongly disagree that travel has reduced between jobs.**
- **69% disagree or strongly disagree that changes to bonus targets have made them more achievable.**
- **91% have outlined changes they would make to the rate card.**
- **73% agree or strongly agree that their holiday pay has been negatively impacted.**
- **52% indicate that the Company have made deductions from their wages in recent months.**
- **50% disagree or strongly disagree that changes to the payment for assistance on jobs is fair.**
- **52% indicate that they are not provided with adequate tools and PPE (including Covid-19 requirements).**

Due to the complex nature of the rate card comparison the Branch contacted over 100 individuals who indicated their willingness to share their data with us. The members were emailed and provided with a template to input their data. Again, the Branch were very disappointed with the returns. Data provided by the Company consistently showed average increases for our members when comparing old rates against new rates. It is the view that this long-drawn-out process is not benefitting our members and a move to the standard % increase per year is the best option available to deliver on behalf of our membership. It is our intention to lodge a pay claim this year. Any progress will be reported to Conference.

*KNIS Rates Review and Survey information can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[KNIS Members re Rates Review Update](#)

[Summary of Responses to KNIS Survey](#)

[KNIS Survey Results](#)

[Follow-up to KNIS Survey](#)

Work Fluidity

Having doable work is a key component to the delivery of an output that will reflect in our members wages. The Company has continuously indicated that it is committed to reducing the level of wasted truck rolls and travel between jobs. The CWU is disappointed with progress on this matter. It is the view of the CWU that increasing the level of doable work for our members is essential. With the help of Branch members, we will ensure that the Company deliver on its commitments to provide daily “doable” work to the membership.

KN Branch

The function of a good Branch is to represent all our members and ensure involvement/engagement/communication at member level. Along with our organising department we are developing a strategy that strengthens the involvement of local area representatives. We are capturing information at inductions and following up with individuals who indicate a preference to become involved. We will continue to develop the KN Branch to provide them with the strength and ability for members to set their own agenda that is discussed at committee level and taken up with local/national union/management on a regular basis. Union participation encourages involvement that will deliver more effective communications to and from our KN CIRCET membership.

2. KN/Circet Networks Performance Bonus and Process

The Company has introduced a Performance Management Review (PMR) in KN/Circet Networks area. The CWU support the introduction of a bonus scheme to our members as it provides an opportunity to receive additional payments over the year, however, PMR will only work if the targets are achievable and workloads fluid. The CWU approach to PMR is one of no surprises, members should know how they **are doing throughout the process** and have the right to appeal if an out turn is seen as unfair.

The CWU will review the operation of this scheme’s outturns with our members and ensure that it is used in a **fair and transparent manner**. The Company’s intention is to award a bonus at the end of each quarter based on the performance rating.

Overall performance against goals will be measured on a three-point scale:

3. **Exceeds Targets**– where an employee scores at or above 105% of the overall weighted target.
2. **Meets Targets**– where an employee scores in the range 80% to 105% of the overall weighted target.
1. **Does Not Meet** - where an employee scores below 80% of the overall weighted target.

The payment of a bonus is discretionary and is dependent on overall Company performance.

Range of bonus payments are €0 - €600 per quarter plus €0 - €600 for the full year (equivalent to €0 - €3,000 per annum).

Performance Rating	Award
Exceeds	€600/quarter plus €600 for full year. Equivalent to up to €3,000/year
Meets	€400/quarter plus €400 for full year. Equivalent to €2,000/year
Does Not Meet	No bonus

Payment

Payment of the bonus will be quarterly, one quarter in arrears.

Eligibility

Employee must be employed by the Company at the start of the quarter.

Must be employed by the Company at the payment date.

*The PMR and Bonus Scheme Presentation can be accessed by clicking on the link below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[PMR and Bonus Scheme Presentation](#)



Vodafone

Vodafone Retail

The retail sector has been a very challenging environment during the pandemic, with stores remaining open for essential services only. This has also made engaging with members quite difficult. Traditionally, the Branch Secretary would visit stores and discuss issues. As this was not possible in the early part of 2021, the Branch decided to invite members to Microsoft Teams meetings on a store-by-store basis to discuss issues. Although nothing replaces a face-to-face conversation, engagement on the calls was good and we received some very valuable feedback and insight into what life was like in stores during level 5 restrictions.

Vodafone Retail decided to reintroduce targets in January 2021 at a time when Covid-19 cases were at their highest and restrictions at their tightest. After representation from the Branch, the Company agreed to the removal of targets January and February.

In March, the Company again introduced targets. The Branch engaged with the Company and, although the Company insisted the targets stay in place, the Branch suggested a safety net be put in place to ensure that no members were left behind. Full-time employees received a guaranteed commission of €200 while part-time received €100, whilst still having the ability to earn more should they reach target. It was also agreed that targets be set at a fair level.

In October 2021, the Vodafone Branch conducted an online survey of our members on Mental Health. The survey was conducted in conjunction with Mental Health Awareness month and provided an avenue for CWU members to give feedback and for the Branch to identify opportunities. The high level of engagement in this survey demonstrates a desire among CWU members to effect positive change in their workplace.

A reduction of 20% in target for January, the introduction of reading time for members to catch up on continuous learnings and an invitation by the Company for the Branch to report target issues in stores with short staff, shows that positive change is achievable through ongoing engagement between the Branch and its members.

Crucially, the Branch Secretary, Shane Murphy, was able to visit the shops with the survey and in doing so, he was able to drive up the membership in the Branch significantly – a clear demonstration of how the Branch can successfully combine an organising strategy with worker's issues in the workplace.

*Vodafone Survey information can be accessed by clicking on the links below
(only available in the online version of this report).*

[Vodafone Retail – Mental Wellbeing Survey Results](#)

[Vodafone Retail – Survey Discussion](#)

Vodafone - Mountainview

The effects of the pandemic are set to bring changes in Mountainview that will outlive the restrictions. On return to the office, Vodafone have opted for a 60/40 return to the office, with 60% of the working time spent at home and 40% spent in the office. While the finer detail on this hasn't been finalised, it has been broadly welcomed by our membership. The Branch feels the arrangement offers a better work/life balance and opens the door to recruiting for Mountainview outside the traditional Dublin base.



PhoneWatch

Customer Service Centralised to Spain

In May 2021, Sector Alarms decided to centralise its customer service operations to Fuengirola, Spain. Following discussions with the Company, it was agreed that there would be no compulsory or voluntary redundancies arising from the decision. Instead, staff would be offered the chance to move to Spain and take up a role in the new office on local terms and conditions, but they would maintain their years of service. Those opting not to move would continue in their existing roles in Dublin until they either left the Company or were promoted into another role.

Customer Service Communications information can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

Customer Support move to Spain

Compulsory Annual Leave

The Level 5 restrictions that were in place in the early part of 2021 presented a huge challenge to the field staff in PhoneWatch. It significantly restricted in the work that could be done and the average number of service visits were reduced to around 2 per day. This reduction had an impact in other parts of the Company also. In the interest of protecting jobs and incomes the Company proposed that Field Operations staff take 2 days' annual leave in March (and while restrictions apply). Following discussion with the Branch and at the AGM it was agreed that this course of action was necessary.

PhoneWatch – Annual Leave information can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

PhoneWatch – Annual Leave

Pay Negotiations

On entering pay talks with Management, the Branch was presented with a very challenging position by the Company. The opening position of the Company was that, following the difficulties endured under Covid-19 conditions, a pay freeze for twelve months was the prudent course of action. The Branch rejected this position, reminding management that staff had also carried a significant burden throughout this period.

After some further intensive discussions agreement was reached on a set of proposals that the Branch felt it could recommend for acceptance in a ballot, as follows:

- A pay agreement for 12 months – 1st January 2022 to December 31st 2022;
- An overall pay increase of 3% for all staff in PhoneWatch over that 12-month period;
- Introduction of Performance Related Pay Progression into the ARC for staff employed since 2015;
- This will be on a scale of 0-3% and will be based on the hourly rate inclusive of shift pay. There will also be a one-off payment for these staff due to the delays in agreeing this process.

At the time of writing the pay proposals were being balloted on and a result is expected by mid-March.

PhoneWatch Ballot – Pay Negotiations can be accessed by clicking on the link below (only available in the online version of this report).

PhoneWatch Ballot – Pay Negotiations



Workers Memorial Day

April 28, 2010



*Pray for the dead
and fight like hell
for the Living.*

Mary Harris "Mother" Jones
1837-1930



U.S. Department of Labor
Hilda L. Solis, Secretary of Labor

