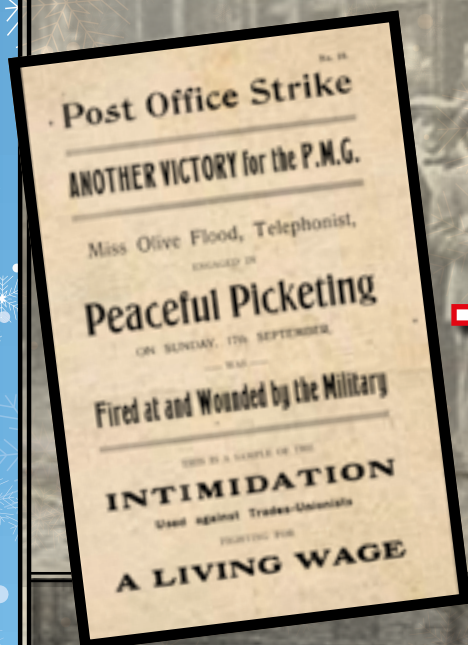




CONNECT

CHRISTMAS 2022 VOL: 24 NO.3

Centenary of 1922 Postal Strike



NOTWITHSTANDING THE GOVERNMENT BAN ON PICKETS, HERE THEY ARE ON THE MARCH IN DUBLIN



CONNECT

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Editorial



Christmas & New Year Message from the General Secretary



Colleagues,

Ushering in a new year is ordinarily filled with anticipation, excitement, hope and optimism for a better future. As we approach the end of 2022 and reflect on a very tough and challenging twelve months, many will be filled with fear and worry as to what the future holds. What started so positively as we emerged from the trauma of COVID-19, was unceremoniously halted by the illegal invasion of Ukraine, by Russia. The anger and outrage at the horror of such unforgivable action was coupled with unequivocal support and solidarity for the people of Ukraine. Almost a year on, we remain with the unthinkable, *another world war*, being possible. In fact, while Putin continues with the physical destruction of Ukraine a financial war, primarily related to Russia's actions, is being waged on innocent people worldwide. The long-term consequences and damage are unquantifiable, but there will inevitably be catastrophic impacts for the people of the poorest countries.

That said, there are other factors contributing to these latest economic crises which predated the war in Ukraine. The global economic outlook is gloomy as we move towards recession, albeit in this country the public finances are ostensibly in a strong position, but vulnerable to potentially volatile corporate tax receipts. Inflation has spiralled, driving up the cost of living with energy prices rocketing, daily increases in the price of food, travel and gas/electricity together with interest rates rising has left many unable to cope. According to the CSO survey on Income and Living Conditions, nearly half of households are finding it difficult to make ends meet. Moreover, a separate finding confirmed one in five of Ireland's 420,000 workers are over 50 and earning below the living wage pay level. That's the bare minimum for survival!

In this edition of Connect we commemorate the

centenary of the 1922 postal strike, which was the first nationwide strike to occur under the newly established Free State. Having fought for freedom the new government were quick to move to deny postal workers the right to strike. Similarly, while we are in solidarity with Ukraine, it is disturbing that in the fight to maintain freedom for its people, rights of Unions are being denied at the very same time. Many comparisons and similarities of that time can be made with 2022. Some will conclude in many ways, nothing has changed.

“New Year, New Chapter or Just the same old story?”

We have reproduced some of the press coverage from 1922 and I wish to acknowledge, with deep gratitude, the work by Shay Cody and the Irish Labour History Society for marking the occasion last September.

“Join the Union, and in protecting and redefining the world of work, we build a decent fulfilling world”

Last month, President Michael D Higgins urged people to join Trade Unions as the best outcomes for workers are achieved by being members of a Union. As society struggles with imbalances, the value of Unions - the Collective, demonstrate a strong trade union movement generating and producing consistent gains for workers, is a key component of a healthy, inclusive economy and a properly functioning democracy. The CWU is actively working at all levels with its affiliates in the ICTU, UNI Global and in the communications sector to grow our membership base and the voice of workers. In this regard I wish to pay tribute to Patricia King, who retired as General Secretary of the ICTU for her sterling work. She saw out her tenure in a typically unassuming fashion by bringing to conclusion a joint report with employers recommending that companies should be forced to negotiate with Unions. I also convey best wishes and support to Owen Reidy in his new role as General Secretary.

To our sister Union, CWU UK, we wish a successful outcome to the long at protracted disputes with Royal Mail and BT. In BT where it is thirty-five years since the last strike action place, thankfully a solution has emerged with the outcome going to ballot as we went to print. At Royal Mail the situation seems to deteriorate each day with the dispute having all the hallmarks of our dispute with An Post in 2004/2005. The unwavering support of members and strong and passionate leadership will hopefully deliver an acceptable resolution.

So my focus moves to our members and the work of the CWU organisation over the past twelve months together with our objectives for 2023. This edition of Connect speaks volumes for the work of the CWU, the progress and

agreements, secured for members across the communications sector. The wide range of issues demonstrates the organisation is firing on all cylinders, moving forward, maximising our influence. I wish to sincerely thank our activists for their support and hard work to enable us together, to bring these about.

Pensions and pensionable pay is a key area, a major focus for the CWU, an area

we are indeed fortunate to have hard working and dedicated Trustees at both eir and An Post, where they have steered the funds to a healthy surplus. Of course, the sacrifices of members have significantly contributed to this surplus. For this very reason, this Union has secured additional increases in eir, notwithstanding a review is not due for another year. At An Post, we await the deliberations of the Labour Court and I am confident of a successful outcome, bringing about additional pensionable increases.

“We must demand that all work is recognised, remunerated properly and valued”

In the new year, we will review and formulate our approach to discussions on pay, taking into consideration the impact of inflation and of course the financial position of the company. In eir the final phase pay increase is due from the 1st July 2023 and we expect to open discussions on other measures early in the new year. In An Post we have received confirmation of payment dates for the second phase of our pay agreement and are actively engaged on the transformation and reward elements. We will also engage with all of the other companies with a view to securing new pay agreements for our members.

So, notwithstanding the major challenges we face, because of your support, I am very optimistic in our ability to represent and protect our members interests. On behalf of all at head office, I wish each and every one of you a peaceful and happy Christmas and a new year full of hope and optimism.



*Seán McDonagh
General Secretary, CWU*



eircom Defined Benefit Schemes

The fund is in a strong financial position and its recent Triennial Review indicated that it is financially healthy and stable. This result is primarily because of the sacrifices of members under the **Pension Accord** and very prudent management by the Trustees. It has enabled the eircom Superannuation Fund to continually de-risk its assets that has resulted in the fund continually achieving statutory funding requirements (**Minimum Funding Standard**).

The CWU is committed to maximising pensionable increases, notwithstanding the constraints of the pay agreement. Given the current unanticipated cost of living difficulties and the current stability of the fund, we approached the Company with a view to securing a pensionable increase over and above the 2% pay increase applied on the 1 st of July 2022.

We recently reached agreement with the Company, to exercise its power under the Trust Deed to increase pensions as follows:

Pensioners and Deferred – Provide an exceptional additional one off 1% increase of pension in the case of pensioners or 1% of benefits in the case of deferred.

Actives – Provide an exceptional additional one off 1% transfer from non-pensionable pay to pensionable pay.

All increases to pensions and deferred benefits are subject to Ministerial approval.

The above are in addition to the pension increases of 2% that arises under the terms of the Pension Accord which gives an overall result of a one-off exceptional **increase of 3% to pensions for 2022**. There is no doubt

the increase is welcomed, particularly by pensioners at this time.

The increases to pensions, combined with the reversal of amounts, held for the pension levy, has delivered **5%** for pensioners **over the last 2 years** as follows.

% Increase	Effective from	Processed
0.2%	01/07/2015	2020
0.4%	01/07/2018	2020
0.5%	01/07/2019	2020
0.9%	01/07/2020	2021
3.0%	01/07/2022	2022 (Awaiting Ministerial Approval)
5%	Total	

Our experience of Ministerial approval suggests that it may take several months, however it is our intention to engage with the relevant departments so that sign off can be achieved as soon as possible.

After years of service, Brian Duncan has retired as Chairperson. We wish him well and would like to express our sincere appreciation for, and acknowledgment of his good work and guidance on behalf of members over the years. We very much welcome the appointment of Michael Madden as Chairperson, who has a wealth of experience and who is also the Chairperson of the An Post Superannuation Scheme.

eir Transport

The Company has informed us that it has sourced and secured a number of Opel Crossland to replace some Front-Line Manager (FLM) vehicles. Opel Ireland has agreed to convert to commercial units. These will all be coloured grey. The Opel Crossland is more in

line with the Astras that the Company currently have on the FLM Fleet.

eir has also secured two fully electric Vivaro vans for a trial on commercial EVs. eir intends to issue one to a rural-based driver and the second will be issued to an urban-based driver.

KN/Circet

Since the last *Connect* issue, and following lengthy and difficult discussions, the CWU National Executive Council (NEC) accepted the CWU KN/Circet Branch AGM proposal to increase pay for our KN/Circet membership as follows:

K.N.I.S.

An overall 3% increase in rates.

In addition to the 3% increase in rates, the Company has also made changes to the “quarterly completions bonus”, which has resulted in **70% of eligible staff receiving a payment for Q1** (Jan/Feb/Mar 2022). The average **payment for Q1** will be **€400**. Current indications are that Q2 completions bonus payments are lower.

Management informed us that they were working with operators to help reduce the number of fails in the field. The Branch continues to raise this issue and other issues, such as travel time to jobs with the Company. The CWU believe that further improvements can be made to this bonus scheme that will result in a higher percentage of our members receiving a bonus payment.

The CWU was also informed that the Company has increased the “Back Stop Payment” that will include a payment for additional skills that staff obtain.

KN Networks (Direct Staff)

The pay increase in this area has been achieved following a review of codes regularly used by our members. Overall, **there will be an increase in the codes of 3%**,

however, several individual codes will increase beyond that amount.

The CWU’s intention was to enter into a 2-year pay agreement. However, the Company disagreed, due to the uncertain economic environment they face. Notwithstanding this, it is the intention of the CWU to seek an additional increase in 2023 for our members.

Other Issues

CWU HQ are awaiting engagement from the Company, following a Company e-mail to staff relating to on-site instructions.

Some of the issues currently under discussion include:

- Use of the €1000 (tax-free) Voucher in the yearly bonus payments.
- Training and tools.
- Downloading work for the following day.

The CWU are also actively contacting individuals who have indicated that they would like to become involved in the CWU. Our intention is to confirm their interest and follow up with some training and support that will deliver representation in all areas of the country. A representative structure will help deliver updated communications and provide effective representations at local level.

6.6% pay rise in Vodafone Retail

Back in the summer, armed with a thought-provoking survey, Vodafone Branch Secretary, Shane Murphy, took the opportunity to visit all Vodafone retail stores on behalf of the Branch.

The visits were a major success. The Branch substantially grew the membership, and the results of the survey gave a good insight into members’ thoughts and also gave a good platform to start engagement with the Company.

The survey identified issues around general pay, staff shortages, the negative impact of annual leave on members’ ability to earn commission and the lack of premium pay for working on Sundays.

On the back of this feedback, the Vodafone Branch lodged 3 claims with the Company:

- (1) Increase on basic pay rates
- (2) Introduction of a Sunday work premium in line with retail norms and standards
- (3) Annual leave pay that is comprised of average sales commission

Armed with the information provided in the survey, Shane Murphy, with the support of the Deputy General Secretary, Ian McArdle, met with the Company to set out the results. One key message was that recent leavers had quoted “pay” as one of the main reasons for leaving, and in engaging with store managers, “basic pay” was also reported as an obstacle in recruiting the right candidates.

After debate and negotiation, a 6.6% pay increase was agreed for all retail employees, as well as a commitment to come to a resolution on the other two claims made. We continue to work with the Company on this and hope to reach a positive outcome before Christmas.

The pay increase was very well received with the membership and the Branch has since gone back to the Company with further claims in relation to pay and tax-free vouchers as the cost-of-living crisis continues to present serious issues for our members. The Branch is also planning another round of store visits in the new year.

Obelisk Members Ballot 4.5% Pay Offer

Following intensive negotiations with Obelisk and extensive discussions within the Branch Committee, the following pay proposal has been agreed to be put to a ballot of the membership:

Obelisk are committed to implementing a pay increase of 4.5% on basic salary for each employee. This will be backdated to April 1st, 2022 and will apply for 12 months.

For its part, the Company have reiterated the following conditions as agreed upon in October 2020:

- Each engineer updates their tasks and gives the

status on all of their assigned tickets at the end of each working day

- Work on both build and maintenance tasks:
- More engineers on the on-call rota not just for specific tasks but for all Vodafone network issues:
- Embrace technology and use the systems that we have in place or are planning to implement:

The CWU Vodafone Branch Committee believes this represents a satisfactory outcome and has recommended that members vote IN FAVOUR of the deal.

At the time of writing the ballot has not closed.

eir Retail - Contactless Payments

The CWU has been actively engaged in discussions with eir management, seeking the return of contactless payments in the retail stores. We are pleased to announce the re-introduction of contactless payments has been rolled out across all retail stores.

This issue was raised by our members through the national survey conducted by CWU Branches across the retail stores. There was an overwhelming consensus on the question of contactless payments, with 93% of

respondents stating that they would like to see a return of the system. Many workers reported that the loss of contactless payments was having a negative impact on their sales and commission.

This positive outcome is a result of CWU members engaging with the survey to effect positive changes in their workplace. The CWU will continue to engage with eir management on members' feedback from the survey on other issues.

eir JCC Update

Agreed Report 644 - Newly Revised and agreed eir A/L Policy for 2022 – Covid 19

This agreement, which provided the automatic carry-over of 5 days' leave with the possibility of 5 additional days, subject to approval, is anticipated to be the last special A/L policy under COVID-19. Talks are ongoing on securing a new policy to commence in 2023.

Agreed Report 645 - Company funded Pre-Retirement Courses

In recognition of two important retirement milestones for employees, the Company will provide a yearly pre-retirement course available for the following

employee groups:

- Employees turning 65 in the following year period
- Employees turning 60 in the following year period

Employees can therefore avail of two Company-funded pre-retirement courses: one when they turn 59 and the second (should they remain in the Company), when they turn 64.

This has been a long-standing matter of concern for members and the CWU welcomes the positive response by the Company to our representations. The development is most welcome, as it recognises the importance of preparing for a new life after a long career, as well as an acknowledgement of loyal service to the Company.

Call Centre Loyalty Bonus

Following representations from the Branches, the Union is very pleased to confirm that eir agreed that Call Centre staff who are eligible for the Loyalty Bonus payment that was scheduled for January 2023 will now receive this bonus in December 2022.

The Government announced in the recent budget that workers would be able to receive tax-free bonuses of up to €1,000, in the form of vouchers or gift cards. Previously, the amount workers could claim tax-free in one year was €500.

With this change, we are very pleased that the €500 being brought forward can now be paid tax-free, before Christmas.

Further, this means that staff who will be eligible for the €1000 loyalty bonus in 2023 will now also be able to receive this full amount in tax-free vouchers.

This positive agreement comes on the back of previous pay increases in the centres and it is through members' ongoing participation that we can continue to work to improve the lives of everyone in the Union.

The Union Premium – Call Centre Case Study

Since eir decided to bring its customer care function back in-house, the CWU has been determined to make quick progress on securing improved levels of pay and working conditions.

Over the last two years, ongoing negotiations have produced successive agreements for our members in the Centres. Each agreement has delivered improvements to members' terms and conditions.

As well as increases in base pay, the union has sought further improvements such as restructured and reduced targets.

These pay and bonus improvements are on top of the company-wide pay increases negotiated for all members in eir.

2020

- Agents and Team Leaders
- 1-year pay deal: 2.7% (including variable pay)
- Inclusion in New Ways of Working strategy (Agile Working)
- Extension of overall Collective Bargaining on pay to staff in the Centres

2021

- Introduction of new pay scale for Senior Agents
- New base pay for new Agents - €22,000
- Increased base pay for Agents, Senior Agents and Team Leaders (10-17%)
- Reduction in KPIs from 5 to 3
- Introduction of "Attendance Payment" for Agents - €1,700
- Introduction of a "Loyalty Bonus" - €500 + €500 + €1,000

2022

- Agents and Senior Agents
- Consolidation of €1,700 Attendance Payment into base pay
- Bonus calculated off higher base
- Restructure of bonus from 3 KPIs to 2
- Reduction in targets to achieve Bonus
- Softening of threshold for absences to achieve Bonus
- Loyalty Bonus brought forward [See article below/above]

Summary: From 2020 to 2022

Agents -

- New Agent base pay has moved from €20,000 to €23,700
- Improvements in bonus structures – OTE [on target earnings] after pay deal 2022 is €28,173

Senior Agents -

- Introduction of pay scale and pay increases – from Agent base of €20,000 to OTE in 2022 is €29,555

Team Leaders -

- From base pay of €28,000 to €31,000 – OTE is €35,650

These substantial overhauls of pay and benefits over a short period of time represent a real achievement for our members and demonstrates quite clearly the benefits of Union membership.

American Airlines – Further Improvement to Pay Terms

As reported in the last issue, CWU members in American Airlines successfully negotiated a pay agreement.

Following from this a number of issues related to the pay deal have been agreed.

Security of hours – during the winter months, American Airline members face a cut to their hours due to a downturn in flights. This results in a significant loss of earning for our members. Following engagement between local management and local CWU representatives, members have secured a minimum of 6 hours per shift for the winter season. This not only further enhances the pay agreement but gives financial security to our members.

Acting Allowance for Team Leader – Members were paid an acting allowance of €6.90 per day for the Acting Team Leader Role. In October, members secured an increase of €2.50 per hour and a guarantee of 8 hours per shift while fulfilling this duty. Further to this, the agreement was backdated to June this year.

This represents a very positive increase from €6.90 to €18.75 per day.

These improvements for our members in American Airlines could only be made possible by the strength of the Union membership and the work of the local Union Representatives who continued to engage with management on their colleague's behalf.

Migration of eDiary/cDiary to ODOO – Update

The **eComms Sectoral Executive** received an update of the migration of eDiary/cDiary to ODOO at our meeting on 20/10/22. The following points were outlined:

- The ODOO system has been designed to replace **eDiary functionality**
- A **mobile app** has been developed and launched to all eDiary users
- Both the web version and app have been built to mirror the look and feel of eDiary/cDiary
- The system was configured with **consistent input**, feedback, and coordination with key business and CWU stakeholders
- Rigorous testing on the system has been taking place for **15 months** to ensure it will operate exactly as eDiary currently does.
- Pilot testing was conducted by groups of representative pilot employees (90 in total) nominated by business areas
- The app and web versions are now active, and staff are using them without issue.

System Comparisons

System Comparison - Timesheets

eDiary

Odoo App

System Comparison - Subsistence

eDiary

Odoo App

System Comparison - Allowances

eDiary

Allowances

Odoo App

Odoo Web

System Comparison - Appropriations

eDiary

Appropriations

Odoo App

Odoo Web

Key Points

The rollout of the new system is being supported by line managers and **system champions** who have been nominated from across the business areas. System champions have been trained in the system. Daily calls are held to provide support and communication. The new system will be constantly tested for the period of transition. The Company is proactively seeking feedback (through appropriate channels) and improving the

system where possible. Any issues that are identified will be addressed and resolved. All timesheets being submitted across both eDiary and ODOO are being compared to test as many scenarios as possible.

At the time of writing the proposed cut over date from eDiary/cDiary to ODOO is Wednesday 23/11/22. To date we are informed that 93% of staff have completed a timesheet on ODOO.

ComReg wants €5.3m penalty imposed on eir

Watchdog's application to admit case
(over alleged failure to allow competitors access infrastructure)
to High Court's fast-track commercial division adjourned

Irish Times Online



The telecoms watchdog, ComReg, believes the High Court should impose a €5.3 million penalty on eircom over its alleged failure to comply with certain requirements allowing competitors access its infrastructure.

ComReg has brought proceedings against eircom Ltd, trading as eir, claiming it is in breach of its obligations as the dominant provider in the telecommunications market to allow other operators to purchase access to eir's physical infrastructure, including its ducts and cabling.

An application to admit the case to the High Court's fast-track commercial division on Monday was adjourned, as mediation talks are due to take place next month.

Dominant Provider

Brian Kennedy SC, for ComReg, said that, as the dominant provider or provider with a "*significant market position*" in the wholesale local access market, eir must allow other providers to not only access its physical infrastructure but also its "*passive records*", which detail locations and capacity of that infrastructure.

ComReg was not satisfied eir was doing so and, in 2019, the watchdog opened an investigation that continued until 2021. This resulted in the issuing of a notice of non-compliance with the relevant EC (Electronic Communications and Services Access) regulation and seeking remediation.

Counsel said there was an exchange of correspondence

between eir and ComReg and, while eir had now made a proposal for remediation of the breaches, it was not full remediation.

ComReg prepared a report recommending that the High Court should be asked to impose a penalty of some €5.379 million. It wanted the case admitted to the Commercial Court so the matter could be dealt with expeditiously.

Competitive Advantage

ComReg says non-compliant conduct hampers the ability of competitors to compete in the market and can have serious commercial implications including the strengthening of eir's competitive advantage.

Johnathan Newman SC, for eir, opposed the admission of the case to the commercial list because the parties had already agreed to go to mediation. The only difference between the parties was which week next month the mediation should begin, he said.

Given that there was only a week between the parties, nobody was "*going to die in a ditch*" by putting the application for entry to the list back to December, he said.

Mr Justice Michael Twomey agreed that a week would not make any difference and said the focus should be on mediation in the interest of saving on costs and ensuring court resources were used in an efficient manner.

He adjourned the application to December and encouraged the parties "*in the strongest terms*" to seek a resolution through mediation.

eir owner, Xavier Niel, takes stake in biggest rival Vodafone

eir owner and French billionaire, Xavier Niel, has surprised the telecoms world by acquiring a 2.5pc stake in Vodafone – one of Europe's biggest telecoms companies.

*By Adrian Weckler
Independent online*



The move, made through Mr Niel's Atlas Investissement subsidiary, has led to speculation over whether Mr Niel intends to try again to buy one of Vodafone's European operations, or pursue a greater share of the overall group.

Earlier this year, an €11bn offer from Mr Niel's Iliad subsidiary for Vodafone's Italian business was rejected.

If the billionaire were to increase his stake in Vodafone further, it could lead to interest from Ireland's telecoms regulator, Comreg.

Vodafone remains Ireland's largest mobile operator and the second-largest fixed-line broadband seller.

While Atlas Investissement says it is separate from the Iliad Group, the ownership connection would not go unnoticed by competition regulators here.

A spokesperson for Comreg declined to comment.

In a statement, Atlas Investissement said Vodafone was an "attractive investment opportunity, as per the quality of its assets portfolio and the solid underlying trends in the global telecoms sector."

The statement added that Atlas was supportive of Vodafone's publicly-stated intention to pursue consolidation opportunities, as well as its efforts in infrastructure separation.

Atlas reported its stake in Vodafone, even though it was under the 3pc threshold for holdings to be made

public.

Mr Niel has telecoms investments in nine countries in Europe, with nearly 50m active subscribers and more than €10bn of revenue.

In Ireland, Mr Niel has been raising cash through a combination of dividends from eir and selling some of the Company's strategic assets.

This year, eir struck a deal to sell 49.9pc of its fibre network to French investment firm InfraVia for €350m, following the sale of its majority stake in the Tetra emergency communications network for €76m. In 2020, it sold its tower infrastructure company for €300m.

And while its most recent accounts show a decline in revenue and profits, Mr Niel took €190m in dividends from the Company.

Italy, which has been one of the most competitive markets in Europe since Iliad's entry in 2018, has been identified by Vodafone as one of the countries that could benefit from consolidation.

Mr Niel's Iliad subsidiary has established a reputation as a specialist in low-cost communications that aggressively captures market share.

In Ireland, eir's cut-price Gomo mobile operator raced to over 5pc market share within two years of launching, sparking a change in market offerings.

Deja vu all over again as eir delivers €1.73bn in windfalls

Joe Brennan: While the hope is that earnings will stabilise next year, rising inflation and the weakening wider economic backdrop doesn't help



Photograph: Nick Bradshaw

A return of asset stripping, cost cutting and financial engineering has yielded more than €1.73 billion of dividends since the eir takeover.

Xavier Niel, the French billionaire who co-owns the rights to the ballad *My Way* popularised by Frank Sinatra, is sticking to an all-too-familiar chorus with his investment in eir.

The telecoms entrepreneur's takeover of eir in early 2018 was supposed to open a fresh chapter for the former State monopoly.

Only six years earlier, the Company succumbed to examinership, overburdened with €4.1 billion of borrowings after a series of financial owners used it as a vehicle to load up with debt and extract cash – at the expense of much-needed investment in its network.

The rescue involved creditors writing off €1.8 billion of what they were owed and senior lenders taking control of the telecoms group.

Olivier Rosenfeld, one of Mr Niel's right-hand men at NJJ, the billionaire's private holding company, told reporters when the deal was announced that it was "back to basics" at eir and that the new investors aimed to improve eir's relationship with ComReg, the industry regulator, and the Government. Xavier Niel's companies would, he said, in future make money "through dividends and not refinancing".

Back to basics, as it turns out, has been a return of asset stripping, cost cutting and financial engineering, which has yielded more than €1.73 billion of dividends since the takeover, in a period when revenues have declined. Dividend payouts in public companies are normally a percentage of net income.

In the case of eir, they've been a multiple of the group's accumulated €270 million net profits over the period under Mr Niel's control.

All told, Mr Niel's companies have benefited to the tune of €858 million from eir dividends – some €200 million more than what they paid for their combined stake.



Photograph: Ludovic Marini/AFP

French businessman and chairman of telecommunications company Iliad Xavier Niel.

Two New York hedge funds, Anchorage and Davidson Kempner, which owned 56 per cent of eir before Mr Niel turned up, continue to hold more than 35 per cent of the Company, after selling a chunk of their shares to the Frenchman. They have also had massive paydays under the new regime.

The payouts started in April 2019, exactly a year after the takeover was cemented. eir used €400 million that month from a €1.15 billion debt refinancing to pay a dividend up to a holding company.

This was used to redeem €400 million of loan notes that had been issued to Anchorage and Davidson Kempner as part consideration for eir shares they sold to Mr Niel's companies.

The manoeuvre effectively moved the liability from a holding company to debt to be carried directly by eir.

eir followed up with a €80 million dividend that December to shareholders. This marked the first put-out to Mr Niel.

The sale of eir's mobile tower infrastructure company in July 2020 to US group Phoenix Tower International for €300 million was followed, within months, by a further €450 million dividend distribution.

Figures contained in the Company's financial report for the first nine months of this year, published this week, show that it doled out a further €800 million of dividends to Xavier Niel (who took Iliad private late last year) and the US hedge funds.

The windfall was underpinned by eir's sale of a 49.9 per cent stake in its wholesale broadband subsidiary, Fibre Networks Ireland (FNI), to French private equity firm InfraVia, and a subsequent €765 million debt raise by the FNI.

Net proceeds from the deal, including the debt sale, totalled €1.2 billion, a company spokeswoman said in response to questions from The Irish Times this week.

eir also sold a majority stake in Tetra Ireland, a provider of secure communications to the Garda and emergency services, in a €76 million deal.

The group, it has to be said, has also bought back €320 million of debt so far this year.

"This dividend comes in the context of a massive programme of infrastructural investment, which has seen eir invest €1 billion to build Ireland's largest fibre-to-the-home [circa 1 million premises by the end of 2022] and 5G mobile network, with a further €1 billion committed investment in those networks over the next four years," the spokeswoman said.

The investment figures sound impressive. But capital expenditure at eir was running at an average rate of more than €290 million in the five years after it emerged from examinership in 2012.

It has actually declined marginally under Mr Niel to a run rate of less than €280 million.

eir, which pulled an initial public offering (IPO) in 2014 as investors refused to pay up for a company with flagging revenues, hasn't suddenly become a growth story under the Frenchman.

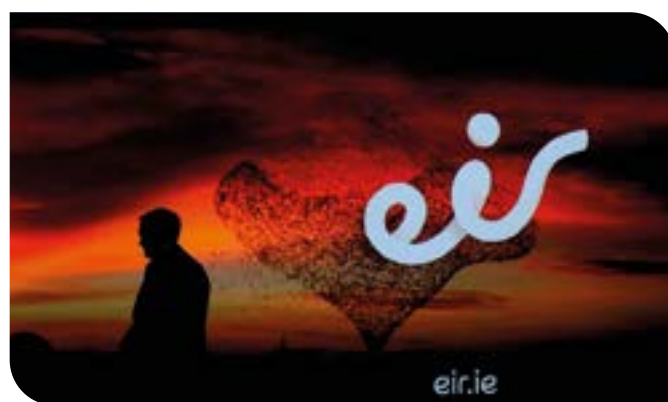
Revenues last year came to €1.24 billion, down almost 5 per cent from the 12-month period to June 2017 – and continuing a trend of ongoing decline that

started in 2008. (Eir last year aligned its financial period with the calendar year.)

However, eir's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (ebitda) jumped more than 27 per cent between 2017 and 2021, to €662 million – driven as the billionaire's lieutenants took a red pen to eir's costs base. Operating expenses were hacked back by 26 per cent over the period, to €574 million.

The Company slashed its sales and marketing and customer service bill by moving previously outsourced activities back inhouse – with no discernible improvement to its notoriously woeful client service.

This followed an axing of hundreds of long-serving and higher-paid employees shortly after Mr Niel took over.



Debt ratings agency Moody's downgraded its outlook on eir's already junk-rated creditworthiness to "negative" in September

Pay costs declined by 15 per cent between 2017 and 2021, even though its overall headcount expanded by 2.5 per cent to 3,361. (The workforce subsequently rose further, to 3,487, during the first nine months of this year.)

The group's €2.56 billion of net debt in September equated to 4.4 times earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (ebitda) over the previous 12 months – marginally higher than where the ratio stood at the end of 2017.

The Company expects it to decline to four by the end of this year – even as eir forecasts that its ebitda will decline by "a low single-digit" per cent.

Debt ratings agency Moody's downgraded its outlook on eir's already junk-rated creditworthiness to "negative" in September – saying its debt burden remains well above what is normal for a company with a B1 status (which is 13 rungs below Moody's top-notch Aaa rating and four levels below what is considered investment grade).

While the hope is that earnings will stabilise next year, rising inflation and the weakening wider economic backdrop doesn't help. Hardly a time for large payouts.

Irish Trade Unions edge closer to Holy Grail of Mandatory Recognition by Employers – but Issues Remain



Patricia King: the ICTU General Secretary sat on the High Level Working Group that has recommended employers be forced by courts to negotiate with trade unions

Mark Paul: A working group has told the Government that employers should be forced by court order to deal with trade unions. But turning that into a reality is still some way away.

Another week, another working group reporting to the Government with proposals to set hearts a-flutter among those of a left-leaning disposition. These days, that seems to be pretty much most people.

Last month, the Commission on Taxation and Welfare reported with a slew of proposed tax hikes that would inflate the State like a party balloon over the next 15 years. This time, it was the turn of the High Level Working Group on Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations. Its proposals this week were far less heavily remarked upon, but are just as radical in the realm of how things are done in Ireland.

The working group has, in effect, told the Government to introduce a form of mandatory trade union recognition for companies. This wouldn't be the slightest bit controversial anywhere else in Europe, where almost every other country already has mandatory recognition in place.

But in this country, the desire by trade unions to force companies to deal with trade unions is an age-old battle, older even than the State itself: think of Big Jim Larkin and the 1913 lockout, for example. Successive governments since then have maintained the State's commitment to "voluntarism" in Irish industrial relations – workers and employers can associate as they like, but nobody can be forced to do anything.

That a Government-appointed advisory group could now suggest a form of mandatory trade union recognition without a whimper from employers – in fact, with the imprimatur of IBEC, the employers' lobby – shows just how far the ground has shifted under society and the economy in recent years.

Ryanair's 2017 recognition of trade unions was a landmark in Irish industrial relations. There was nobody left for employers opposed to unions to rally round

The working group has proposed that non-unionised companies should be forced, by court order, to negotiate "in good faith" with trade unions. Even five or six years ago, the notion that they could be told by a judge to sit down at a table and be nice to trade unionists would have had some Irish private sector employers upturning their desks. But then their poster boy flipped.

Michael O'Leary, the chief executive of the Ryanair group, used to be the *bête noire* of trade unionism, while

for Irish private sector employers he was their very own Big Mick. In 2007, Ryanair even went to the Supreme Court to fight legislative tweaks on collective bargaining that it felt were forcing “trade union recognition by the back door.” It won.

Eight years later, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition under Enda Kenny passed laws to get round that Supreme Court decision and strengthen the right of workers to collectively bargain with their employers. Two years after that, in December 2017, at the end of Ryanair’s *annus horribilis* of disruption caused by a shortage of pilots, O’Leary took a deep breath and agreed to recognise trade unions. It was a landmark in Irish industrial relations. There was nobody left for employers opposed to trade unions to rally round.

Ryanair’s about-turn on trade union recognition also had another compounding effect. For years, it had argued that if it had to deal with trade unionists – dinosaurs, as it saw them – it would cripple the company’s profitability and growth. But since it signed its first union recognition deals in 2018, Ryanair’s growth has actually taken off faster than one of its Boeing 737s.

The pandemic clipped its wings somewhat, as it did for all airlines. But Ryanair kept the majority of its now heavily unionised workforce on the payroll. As a direct consequence of this foresight, it was all tooled up and ready to go as soon as anti-Covid restrictions were lifted. It has mercilessly battered its competition this year all over Europe.

O’Leary could argue that he took all the big decisions that gave Ryanair the edge. But the point here is that the involvement of trade unions in the company’s industrial relations machinery has not cramped its style in any appreciable way. Dinosaurs are extinct. Most trade unionists just want to do fair deals.

The flipside of all of this is that the majority of Irish workers have never shown any great collective desire to join trade unions. I was never a member of a trade union myself until about nine years ago. Throughout that time, I never felt disadvantaged by my decision.

Then I joined my current employer. One day soon afterwards, I returned from my lunchbreak to find that an application form for the National Union of Journalists had mysteriously appeared on my desk. I smiled to myself at the chutzpah of it all, took the hint and filled it out. I have neither regretted nor rejoiced in that decision since. The NUJ is perfectly fine.

But now I am among a small minority in the Irish workforce. Last year, it was estimated that there were around 516,000 members of trade unions in this State. The most recent Central Statistics Office employment reports show there are now more than 2.5 million people in employment.

Could trade union density now be as low as barely 20 per cent? A report last year by UCD academics John

Geary and Maria Belizon put it at 28 per cent, and just 23 per cent if you strip out the public sector, where trade union membership is more like 80 per cent. Regardless of the exact figure for density, trade union membership in Ireland is surely at a nadir in relation to the size of the workforce.

The US multinationals that pump billions into our economy each year tend to have little truck with trade unionists.

Successive Irish governments have fretted over the impact that any move towards mandatory trade union recognition could have on this State’s attractiveness for foreign direct investment. The US multinationals that pump billions into our economy each year tend to have little truck with trade unionists. Imagine the looks on the faces of Amazon executives if they were ordered by Dublin Circuit Court to sit down with a trade union over working conditions at the web retail giant’s new logistics hub off the N7.

Some of the best private sector employers in their sectors in Ireland – Google, Aldi and Lidl spring to mind – deal directly with their own workers. The paltry density figures show that the union movement in this country has a lot of work to do to convince the majority of ordinary workers that it is in their interests to each pay a couple of hundred euro annually towards the salaries of full-time union officials.

The High-Level Working Group has brought Irish trade unions a step closer to their Holy Grail of mandatory recognition. But obstacles remain. The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, thanked the working group and said he would consider how “its recommendations” could best be implemented.

Contrast that with the cautious words of the Minister for Business and the next Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar. He said he would ask his officials to “develop proposals for implementation”, which leaves plenty of space for those proposals to be different from the working groups.

Mandatory trade union recognition is so near, yet possibly still so far.





Patricia King Retires as General Secretary of the ICTU

After more than seven years in the role, Patricia King stepped down as General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in September



Ms King was previously a Vice-President of SIPTU, where she had worked for more than 25 years.

In 2015, she became the first woman to be appointed General Secretary of the ICTU.

Patricia, from Co Wicklow, was a lead negotiator in the Croke Park and Haddington Road Agreements between the Government and public service unions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she was instrumental in pushing for adequate State supports for workers, such as the Pandemic Unemployment

Payment and the wage subsidy scheme, to keep workers in jobs. She played a key role in ensuring people were protected from the worst effects of the pandemic in what was an extraordinarily difficult time for working people in Ireland.

She has long been a friend to the CWU and has offered invaluable support on many issues in her role as General Secretary and, in particular, through the Private Sector Committee of Congress. The CWU would like to wish her a long and happy retirement.



Owen Reidy named as New General Secretary of the ICTU



Owen Reidy, the outgoing Assistant General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, was ratified as the new General Secretary, following Patricia King, after she stepped down from the post in September.

Mr Reidy, a father of two and a native of Donegal, has 24 years of full-time experience in the Irish trade union movement. He started his career as a union official in SIPTU in the west of Ireland and occupied a range of roles in the Union, representing and organising workers in the aviation, insurance, and finance, non-commercial semi-states, and cleaning and security sectors. He was appointed one of SIPTU's 5 Divisional Organisers in 2013, when he managed and ran the Union's Transport, Energy, Aviation and Construction Division. During this time, he was involved in a number of high profile and successful industrial disputes, including the Greyhound lockout, the Luas dispute, and pay disputes in the CIE transport companies.

In 2016, Mr Reidy took up the position of Assistant General Secretary of the ICTU, with primary responsibility for the ICTU in Northern Ireland. He has coordinated the Work and Voice of the Trade Union movement in NI in response to Brexit, political stalemate, and the current cost of living crisis. Mr Reidy came through a competitive interview process to be selected as the new General Secretary.

Commenting on his appointment, Owen Reidy said, "I am delighted and humbled to be selected for this important leadership role in our trade union movement. I want to pay tribute to my friend, colleague and mentor Patricia King, for her work and the valuable legacy she has left us all in her work both in SIPTU and as General Secretary of our Congress. I think we have the potential to rebuild and grow our movement and reach out to workers currently not organised in trade unions. We need to make work pay for all and build a more inclusive economy and society.

Our number one priority must be to transpose the recent Adequate Minimum Wages directive, which has a transformative potential when it comes to collective bargaining in Ireland, and to legislate for the LEEF High-Level Group report on collective bargaining in Ireland. I look forward to working with my colleagues in a collective leadership to strengthen collective bargaining, to grow our movement, and to improve worker voice in society and the economy," concluded Reidy.

At the time of going to print, the ICTU is currently recruiting to fill the role of Assistant General Secretary, vacated by Mr Reidy. Commenting on the appointment CWU General Secretary, Seán, expressed a very warm welcome and committed the whole-hearted support of the CWU organisation.

Administered by



Now
is the
time!

Let's talk AVCs

What is an AVC Scheme?

An AVC Scheme provides you with a tax-efficient way to build up a sum of money that can be used by you in retirement.

The following are broad examples of scope for a Main Scheme member to take out an AVC:

• Missing years

If you do not expect to have full service, you could use AVCs to make up part or all of the **shortfall**.

• Non-pensionable earnings / Last minute AVC

If you have non-pensionable earnings (such as overtime or allowances), you can use AVCs to fund the gap.

Why are AVCs important?

AVCs help protect your financial future after you retire. There are a number of benefit options, depending on individual circumstances:

- a Immediate tax free cash lump sum.
- b Purchase an annuity, for an additional pension on top of your An Post pension.
- c Transfer funds to an Approved Retirement Fund (ARF) for a taxable income on top of your pension.
- d Access additional taxable cash.

How do you join the Plan?

Joining is easy. Simply contact the AVC Scheme administrators, Halligan Insurances: **01 87 97 100** for advice and to request an application form link or a new member email pack to be emailed to you.

**Wishing all CWU Members and their families a
Happy Christmas and a Prosperous 2023**



WHAT IS THE LIVING WAGE?

(and when are we getting it?)

There is some understandable confusion as to what exactly is the Living Wage. This is due to the fact that there are essentially three definitions of what constitutes a living wage currently doing the rounds:

- The Living Wage Technical Group definition (based on a basket of goods approach) - Just recently announced at €13.85 for 2023;
- The definition from the Low Pay Commission which defines a 'living wage' at 66% of median earnings;
- Lastly – the interpretation by the Government of what the LPC said, fixing the Living Wage at 60% of the median.

The Low Pay Commission did not set the Living Wage at 60% of the median wage. It specifically stated:

'After the 60% of the median wage target has been reached, subject to an assessment of the impact of the progression to the 60% target finding no significant adverse effects on employment, and the increased availability of international evidence on the impact of increases above the 60% threshold, the Commission should assess the economic practicality of gradually increasing the targeted threshold rate towards 66% of the median wage and make recommendations accordingly.'

And:

'Low-wage earners are defined by Eurostat [the statistical office of the EU] as "those employees earning two-thirds or less of the national median gross hourly earnings". On that basis, having a living wage rate set at 66% of median wage will eradicate low-wage employment for all workers earning at or above the living wage rate.'

It is clear that the destination is 66%. While the wording is a compromise, the proviso that an assessment be conducted on the impact on employment is something the Low Pay Commission does every year, so there is nothing new in this.

However, the Government recently announced that the "national living wage will be set at 60% of hourly median wages, in line with the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission" and that "it will be introduced over a four-year period and will be in place by 2026, at which point it will replace the National Minimum Wage."

It further stated that, "Once the national living wage has come into effect in 2026, subject to an assessment of the impact of the change, the Low Pay Commission will advise on the practicalities of gradually increasing the targeted threshold rate towards 66% of the hourly median wage."

The Minimum Wage

Essentially, what has been announced is that the National Minimum Wage will increase incrementally until it reaches a "living wage". The first step will be the 80 cent increase to the National Minimum Wage from 1st January 2023 to €11.30 per hour.

It is worth noting that the value of the Minimum Wage, measured as a percentage of the median wage, has fallen significantly over the last few years. In 2016, it was 56.8 percent. By 2021 it had fallen to 50.9 percent. If the minimum wage had maintained its value relative to overall wage increases since 2016, the minimum wage would have been approximately €11.20 in 2021.

The two Irish Congress of Trade Unions nominees to the Low Pay Commission, Fionnuala Ní Bhrógaín and Michael Taft, rejected the 80c proposal and wrote a minority report they said would provide the Government with an "alternative and superior" recommendation. They noted the Commission's recommendation of an 80 cent rise "fails to vindicate the living standards of low-paid workers and threatens the introduction of a living wage".

Timelines

The estimated rate for 60% of median earnings for 2023 is €13.10 per hour. This is an 'indicative' figure and will remain voluntary for employers until Minimum Wage increases catch up.

The Government announcement should see the Minimum Wage increase until 2026, at which point the Minimum Wage will be set at 60% of median earnings. After that, the Low Pay Commission will examine the impact of those increases with a view to further increases to 66%. Which, as quoted above, is the rate needed to eradicate low-wage employment

The commitment in the programme for government was to "progress to a living wage *over the lifetime of the government*". Whether this has been fulfilled is a matter of opinion.

DPD Workers in Kerry Win Pay Increases of up to 20%, Union Recognition and Sick pay

Workers in DPD Kerry embarked on a campaign in March 2022 to Organise their workplace. The campaign began with local union activists undertaking Organising training. As part of the training, the workers identified the three key issues set out below to build their campaign:

- Collective Bargaining
- Living Wage
- Sick Pay

It was clear to CWU Organisers that these workers were serious about improving their pay and conditions by building power in their workplace. A key element of an Organising campaign is what we call structure tests. Structure tests are always ongoing and are a measurement of how strong or committed workers are in their campaign.

For example, if one out of ten people turn up to a meeting, that is an indication of where the group are structurally and what work needs to be done to build more power. The initial training in DPD Kerry was scheduled for a Sunday and nine workers showed up. Nine workers giving up their only day off to undertake training is a clear indication that these workers wanted to build something.

Having identified the issues they wanted to win, activists began to have one to one conversations with their co-workers about Union formation and building the power they needed to improve their working lives and have a voice in their workplace.

Union membership grew quickly in the Kerry Depot as a result of these conversations and the demands of the campaign were set out to their employer.

I am happy to report that following a number of collective actions by the workers, and a number of meetings with management, all three of the campaign objectives have now been won.

The success of the campaign provides for increases in pay of up to 20% meaning that annual pay will rise by up to €5,000 for the majority of workers. This has only been won through the collective power that DPD workers in Kerry have built through their Union.

The details of the pay deal and the campaign are set out below in an article that appeared in Industrial Relations News.



industrial relations news

Landmark 'living wage' and Union recognition deal with courier firm

A 'living wage' and Union recognition agreement has been accepted by CWU members at a DPD depot in Kerry, run by a contractor firm – the first deal of its kind in the country.

Dynamic Delivery, which operates DPD's depot in Tralee, has agreed to recognise the Communications Workers' Union (CWU), as well as bump its drivers' pay by up to 20% over two years. The deal means most of the workers' salaries will increase by €5,000.

DPD, one of the largest international courier companies in the world, recognises the CWU at its main hub in Athlone. However, its 35+ depots across the country are run by contractor firms, including Dynamic Delivery.

The CWU began a recognition campaign at the Tralee depot earlier this year, at which nearly 50 people work. Last Monday, its members voted in favour of a major agreement that includes recognition, substantial pay increases and a new sick pay scheme.

The courier industry is marked by a fragmented employment system, with layers of contracting and subcontracting – often resulting in delivery drivers being self-employed. The CWU-Dynamic Delivery Agreement is the first of its kind across contractor courier depots in Ireland.

Most of the Tralee-based drivers were on rates just above the national minimum wage (currently €10.50 per hour). The terms of the pay deal means most drivers will now experience a basic pay increase of nearly 20% by October 2023.

POSTAL UPDATE

The terms of the backdated pay deal are as follows:

- March 1, 2022 – 60c increase per hour
- October 1, 2022 – 60c increase per hour
- March 1, 2023 – 60c increase per hour
- October 1, 2023 – final increase to reach €12.90 per hour

Sick Pay & Efficiencies

The new agreement also outlines the introduction of a new sick pay scheme, broadly matching the statutory Sick Pay measures that will come into effect in 2023.

On January 1, 2023, Dynamic Delivery drivers will be entitled to five days' Sick Leave. On January 1, 2024, this entitlement increases to seven days. On January 1, 2025, it increases to nine days, and on January 1, 2026, there will be a minimum of 10 days' Sick Leave.

The main difference between the Collective Agreement and Statutory Sick Leave is that the latter will provide for a minimum of three days from January 1, 2023.

In return for the pay elements of the new agreement, the concessions on the workers' side are that efficiencies are implemented. These are understood to be moving the start time from 7am to 8am; the liability to work contracted hours; and flexibility on routes.

The campaign undertaken and won by the workers in Kerry is a clear example of how workplace democracy leads to social democracy. The pay deal means that approximately one quarter of a million euro a year will be going into the pay packets of DPD workers as opposed to shareholders pockets. Instead, that money will be spent in the local economy in Tralee which supports local employment.

Workers have lacked power over the course of decades and that lack of power has seen growing inequality in our society, where profits go to the top while ordinary workers who create the profits through their labour have their living standards eroded.

When the power imbalance in the employment relationship is addressed through an organised workplace it leads to a fairer distribution of wealth, where workers can put more of a value on their labour.

These are important wins for workers in a material sense, but they also create two other very important things. Number one is a sense of agency that when workers stick together, we can win, and we can improve our terms and conditions in a meaningful way. Number two, those improvements mean that we can inhabit our lives and our families in a less stressful way which has huge impacts on our own and our family's wellbeing, so they are good for your mental health too.

**The fight for a fair society begins
and ends on the factory floor.
Well done to all the workers
in DPD Kerry.**

Get into print!

Anyone wishing to submit articles or photos to appear in the Connect journal, please either:

email to imelda@cwu.ie

or post to

**Imelda Wall,
Communications Workers' Union,
575 North Circular Road,
Dublin D01 TR53**

Wear your Union Badge



CWU Members Supported the March on Saturday 26th November 2022 for the Raise the Roof Campaign



A New Deal for Housing

The Government and key State bodies must now step in to deliver

- A State-led housing programme with a mandate to deliver affordable homes for all
- A new State body with responsibility for housing delivery
- Emergency measures to reduce homelessness and shorten time spent in emergency accommodation
- An end to 'no fault' evictions, a freeze on rents and long-term security for renters
- A legal Right to Housing



Marches gathers after the protest in Merrion Square



Pictured above: Ian Mc Ardle DGS, Ivor Reynolds, President, and Colin Moore leading the charge on behalf of the CWU



Pictured right: DGS Ian on the lookout for a volunteer to take over the banner 😊



Pictured below: The Melinn Family showing solidarity.



Liam Cunningham Irish actor best known for playing Davos Seaworth in the epic-fantasy series Game of Thrones supported the March

There have been a number of legislative changes recently in the areas of statutory leave. In this article we provide members with an update on what has been put in place and what can be anticipated.

Parents' Leave



Parents' Leave is a statutory entitlement for Parents with the intention of allowing parents spend more time with their child or adopted child. When introduced this provided for two weeks paid leave. This increased to 5 weeks in April 2021 and to 7 weeks in July 2022. This leave can be taken within 2 years of the child's birth

This leave is unpaid, however those availing of Parents' leave may qualify for Parents' Benefit. Furthermore, members should check with their employer to see whether they provide a top up to the Parents' benefit.

To be eligible to take Parents' Leave the employee must meet certain criteria as follows:

- Be a relevant parent
- Take the leave within 104 weeks of the birth of the child or in the case of adoption, from the date the child is placed
- Give at least six weeks' notice to your employer

A relevant parent is defined as follows:

- A parent of the child
- A spouse, civil partner, or cohabitant of the parent of the child
- A parent of a donor-conceived child as provided for under section 5 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- The adopting parent or parents of a child
- The spouse, civil partner, or spouse of the adopting parent of the child (if the parents have not adopted jointly)
- Each member of a married couple of the same sex, a couple that are civil partners of each other, or a cohabiting couple of the same sex

Parents' Leave can be taken either as one continuous period of two weeks or in period of not less than one week.

There are many different types of statutory leave available to parents in addition to maternity leave and adoptive leave as appropriate. The following table provides a brief synopsis showing the differences between Parents' Leave, Parental Leave and Paternity Leave.

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 7 weeks	Parents' benefit from the state may be available, but may also be topped up by the employer
Paternity Leave	New parents of children under 6 months (excluding the mother) and must be taken within 6 months of the birth	2 weeks	Paternity benefit payable from the state and again members should check with the employer to see if they pay a top up.

EQUALITY UPDATE

Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill

The Government in August announced approval for the publication of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill, 2022. This Bill when enacted will introduce a range of measures to improve family friendly work practices and support women in the workplace.



The measures contained within the Bill include:

- The introduction of paid leave for victims of domestic violence
- The provision of supports for employers to assist them in developing domestic violence workplace policies
- A right to request flexible working arrangements for caring purposes, for parents and carers
- A right to leave for medical care purposes, for employees with children up to age 12 and for carers.
- Extension of the current entitlement to breastfeeding/lactation breaks from six months to 2 years

The CWU has welcomed the publication of the Bill as it introduces a range of measures required to transpose the EU Work Life Balance Directive.

The issues contained within the Bill will be the focus of Union discussions with our main employers in the future. We have already agreed domestic violence leave in eir and An Post and we had initiated discussions on breastfeeding breaks. It would be preferable that the right to request flexible working arrangements was extended beyond parents and carers to include all workers. This is an issue that the Union will pursue separately in our discussions

Breastfeeding Breaks

The Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill, 2022 once enacted will extend the right to breastfeeding breaks up until the child reached 2 years of age which is in line with the recommendations from the World

Health Authority. Existing legislation only provides for breastfeeding breaks up to 26 weeks.



Women who are breastfeeding will be entitled to time off from work or a reduction in working hours to breastfeed their baby. Where facilities are provided, the employee will be allowed up to one hour (with pay) breastfeeding breaks or to express breast milk for up to 26 weeks after birth. This time may be taken as; one 60-minute break, two 30-minute breaks or three 20-minute breaks or such other periods as may be agreed between the parties.

Where no facilities can be made available for breastfeeding or expressing at work, a reduction in working hours by one hour each day (per eight-hour working day) without loss of pay (e.g., by starting an hour later or leaving an hour earlier). These arrangements have already been put in place in eir as part of the maternity leave policy and are currently being progressed in An Post.

Disability Policy



Under the Disability Act 2005, An Post has several legal responsibilities one of which is to report the number and percentage of employees with disabilities in the workplace. An Post, as a commercial Semi-State organisation, has a disability employment target of 3% of its total employee population to comply with the 2005 Act. This is due to increase to 6% by 2024.

EQUALITY UPDATE

The Company reported to the Monitoring Committee for the Department of Communications. While the Union remains supportive of the good work An Post does regarding disability, more can be done at recruitment level to employ people with disabilities, and we will continue to raise this with the Company.

The Company is committed to enhancements in this area, and we have commenced a review of the Disability Policy. We expect to conclude these discussions shortly which will also address the issue of reasonable accommodation and how requests for same are handled by the Company. This is an area where we have experienced some challenges and we will be progressing this topic as part of our discussions.

Reasonable Accommodation Passports



The Union and An Post is also examining the possibility of introducing Reasonable Accommodation Passports. The Reasonable Accommodation Passport is a concept developed by the TUC in the UK and is supported by both ICTU and IBEC. They are designed for disabled employees who require workplace adjustments or accommodations. It is a written record of accommodations or workplace adjustments that have been agreed between the employee and their employer. The reasonable accommodation passport is a confidential document about changes to work practices, with a built-in review period to ensure that it reflects the current situation for the employee in the workplace.

The passports will ensure that reasonable accommodations are put in place and kept up to date, in line with changes in job role or the employee's needs. For some individuals who have fluctuating needs, additional steps can be established regarding short-term flexibility required within the overall reasonable accommodation passport framework. This is another positive development which will benefit disabled employees at work.

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. With issues relating to menopause highlighted in the media there is now a wider appreciation and greater understanding of the challenges menopause poses.



Menopause can be experienced by women, transgender men and people who are intersex or identify as non-binary, particularly those who may not have accessed medical forms of transition. An employee who is affected by menopause can request support which will be provided in a confidential and dignified manner. Employees may not wish to disclose that they are going through the menopause and may also hide this as the reason for any absences or confidentiality.

Given the above both eir and An Post along with the group of unions have agreed to develop a policy on the menopause. The following is established as key supports:

- Raise awareness of the issue and provide practical information for all employees
- Promote the supports available including EAP and/or Occupational Health & Support
- Highlight the three stages of menopause i.e., Perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause
- Outline the symptoms associated with the menopause
- Outline the possible impact on working life
- Encourage women who may be experiencing difficulties with the menopause to speak to their GP or seek assistance through company occupational health service.
- Detail the practical supports available to staff

While the eir policy has been concluded, discussions are at an advanced stage in An Post, and we expect to conclude discussions shortly.

Branch Secretary Stage 1 Training



Our five-day Branch Secretary Stage 1 course was held April 5th, 6th, 7th, 13th, and 14th of this year. All newly-elected Branch Secretaries attend the Stage 1 course to prepare them for their role. During the training we covered the duties of the Branch Secretary, negotiation skills and other modules relevant to the role. Our thanks to the group for their participation.

In attendance were:

Donal O'Driscoll Cork District, Bert Nevin Nenagh Postal, Ray McDonnell Mullingar Postal, John Byrne Carlow Postal, Sinead Power Post Insurance, Kieran Keenan Monaghan Postal, Deborah Flannery Sligo District, Michael Boland Cork District and Thomas Behan Naas Postal.

Vodafone Committee Training

*Vodafone Branch
pictured with
former President
and Branch Member,
Mike O'Connor*



We were very pleased to welcome the Vodafone Committee to Union Head Office for Committee Training on April 27th. We focused on Grievance and Disciplinary issues and the effective running of a union branch committee. We wish the branch every success for the future.

In attendance were:

Shane Murphy Branch Secretary, Ed Flannery, Gerry Lynch, Caroline Schween, Leanne Kirwan, John Donohue, John Fitzgerald, and Marc Blackett.

Branch Officer Training



The Branch Officer Course took place in Union Head Office and commenced on June 1st. We had high attendance from the sectors, with the course being open to Assistant Secretaries and Vice-Chairpersons. The aim of this course is to provide Branch Officers with the necessary skills to carry out the role of Branch Officer given that they will be required, from time to time, to stand in for either the Branch Secretary or Branch Chairperson. We wish the group well.

In attendance were:

Patrick McCrudden (Donegal Southwest Postal), Patsy McGroary (Donegal Southwest Postal), Ann Kenneally (Clonmel Postal), Finbarr Corcoran (Mallow Postal), Kevin Gaynor (Thurles Postal), David Looby (Clonmel Postal), Jack Harrington (Sligo District), Lucinda Ross (West Cork Postal), Shane White (North Wexford/South Wicklow Postal), David Fitzpatrick (North Wexford/South Wicklow Postal), and Tim Noonan (Mallow Postal).

Included in the photo are CWU Trainers, John Dunleavy and Anthony McCrave.

Cork Postal Committee Training

The Education Committee was delighted to be able to deliver training to the relatively new Cork Postal Branch on May 27th in the Metropole Hotel.

In attendance were:

Danny Quinlan, Tracey O'Mahoney, Breffeni Jones, Kevin Foley, Des Hopkins, Fiona Quinlan, Adrian Brady, Denis McCarthy, Eamonn Browne, Ray Hallissey, and Deirdre Dorney.

Portlaoise Postal Committee Training

The long established Portlaoise Postal Committee received training on June 28th, which was delivered by Tara Ravenhill and Ellen Moore. New members of the Committee were welcomed and our thanks to the attendees for their active participation.

In attendance were:

David Cole, Don White, Teresa Dunphy, Clare Delaney, Christina O'Reilly, Patrick O'Reilly, Darragh Travers, Sadie Fox, Mark Walsh, Catherine Hughes, and Heathcliff Maher.

Kells Postal Committee Training

Training was provided to the Committee between August 26th & 27th. The course focused on key issues relevant to the postal sector, such as ASMP, grievance and disciplinary procedures as well as employment law. Our thanks to the Branch for making the necessary arrangements for the course to be delivered.

In attendance were:

Liam Sheridan, Mary Lovett, Tom Tully, Mark McGovern, Catherine Farrell, Claire Brady, Ann Lynch, Roisin Doughty, Peter Duffy, and Anne McPhillips.

Treasurer Training



Our Treasurer Training Course was held on June 2nd. The course included the financial duties and representative role of the Treasurer. We welcomed representatives from both the Postal and Telecoms sectors, and we wish them well in their role.

In attendance were:

Gary O'Reilly (South Kerry Postal), Arno Korthout (Kilkenny Postal), Niall McGowan (Limerick Postal),

Fiona Barrett (West Cork Postal), Paddy Creamer (Longford Postal), Seán Boylan (Cavan Postal), Keith O'Neill (UPS Branch), Shane Murphy (Vodafone Branch), John Moyles (Ballina Postal), John Tiernan (Kells Postal), Mick Dineen (Cork District), and Michael Seavers (Dublin No 2).

Included in the photo are CWU Trainers, Tara Ravenhill and Ellen Moore.

Naas Postal Committee Training



The Naas Committee received training on October 14. The training focused on the role of the Branch Officer and the Committee as well as ASMP, Health & Safety and Bullying in the Workplace. We thank the Branch for their positive engagement on the day.

In attendance were:

Willie Mooney (Trainer), Marie Kelly, Sinead O'Keeffe, Robert Kent, Raymond Murphy, Brian Mullarkey, Brian Heffernan, Joseph Eaton, and Thomas Behan Branch Secretary.

Chairperson Training



This year our Chairperson Training Course took place between September 26th to 28th. All newly-elected Chairpersons attend this course to learn about their role within their Branch Structure. We cover other relevant modules such as grievance and disciplinary procedures, equality at work, health & safety and many others. We also pay focus on practical chairing skills and preparation for Committee meetings and AGMs. Our thanks to all who participated.

In attendance were:

John Barry (Cork District), Aidan McCormack (Monaghan Postal), Joel Potts (Drogheda District), Paul Bleahan (Ballinasloe Postal), Paul McKelvey (Portlaoise District), Damien Delaney (Portlaoise District), Bernard Doyle (Carlow Postal), Aaron Molloy (Sligo District), Maureen Conway (eir Regional Managers), and Michael Scully (Cork District).

Advanced Branch Officer Training

This course was held in Union Head Office on October 5th & 6th. We had a large group in attendance this year, as the course continues to be popular. The course focused on the experience of the experienced Branch Officer as well as further supports the Union can provide on their role. The second day of the training focused on advanced negotiation skills and our thanks to Gerard McMahon for delivering this training. The course feedback was very positive.

This course is open to Branch Secretaries **who have completed the stage 2 course** prior to 2022 and have been re-elected to their role. It is also open to Branch

Chairpersons who completed the Chairperson Training Course prior to 2022 and have been re-elected.

In attendance were:

Barney Foley (Drogheda District), Stephen Elliott (Drogheda District), Diarmuid Gorman (Portlaoise District), Anthony Horan (Waterford Postal), Eddie Heslin (Carrick-on-Shannon Postal), Alan McLoughlin (Cavan Postal), Matt Finnegan (Cavan Postal), Anne Marie Murray (Ballinasloe Postal), Conor Waldron (Westport Postal), Paul Sheehy (Tullamore Postal), and Michael Brophy (Castlebar Postal).

Dublin Postal Amalgamated Branch Committee Training



Back Row L to R: Declan Curley, Dermot Walsh, Paula Martin, Adrian Scanlon, Stephen Comiskey O'Keeffe, Paul D'Arcy, Mark Browne, Russell Gummerson, and Anthony McCrave (Trainer).

Front Row L to R: Ellen Moore (Trainer), Noel Byrne, Anthony Larkin, Sharon Kelly, Therese Dunne, James Moore, George Ellis, and Ciaran Healey

This Course was held in Union Head Office on June 24th. As always, there was great engagement from the Committee.

The topics covered included how to manage

member's issues, ASMP, Health and Safety, Bullying in the Workplace and many other issues relevant for the Committee to carry out their role.

Our thanks to the Branch for their attendance.

Committee Training Union Head Office

Our final course of the year was a Committee Training Course held in Union Head Office on November 17th. On this course, we were pleased to include members from the new DPD Branch in Tralee. The course covered the structure of the Union as well as the role of the Branch Officers and Committee. Our thanks to all for their participation.

In attendance were:

Niall Foley (Carrick-on-Shannon Postal), Gavin Kielty (North Wexford/South Wicklow Postal),

Niamh O'Connor (Dublin Postal Managers' Branch), Karen Malone (Dublin Postal Managers' Branch), David Stack (Dublin No 1), Dejan Grkcevic (Dublin No 1), Cyril Tallon (Birr/Roscrea Postal), Dennis Harty (DPD Kerry), Jonathon Bolton (Dublin No 2), Mathew Drury (Dublin No 2), and Ken Rice (DPD Kerry).





Attendees at the Advanced Branch Officer Training

Equality Representative Trainings



The Equality Representative Course was held On November 2nd and 3rd in Union Head Office. 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, as required. This course is only open to elected Equality Representatives.

In attendance were:

Gillian Earley (Waterford Postal), Deborah Flannery (eir Sligo District), Joseph McCloskey (Donegal Southwest Postal), Martin McGinley (Letterkenny Postal), Seán Tighe (eir Galway District), Michael Shine (Cork Postal), Eleanor McElroy (Monaghan Postal), Theresa Curley (Ballinasloe Postal), Claire Brady (Kells Postal), Sinead O'Keeffe (Naas Postal), Ciara Wade (eir Sligo District), Mick Seavers (Dublin No 2), and Damien Babington (Dundalk Postal). Missing from picture Brian Coffee (Clonmel Postal).



Do you want a quick and easy way to learn more about your Union?

Do you want to develop your knowledge and skills through online learning?

If so, a **UNION link** course is ideal for you.

How **UNION link** helps our members

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 you can complete courses 24 hours a day, be it on your tablet, computer, laptop, or smartphone. **All courses are free of charge.**

Some examples of the types of courses that can be accessed are:

- Stress Management in the Workplace
- Mindfulness
- Understanding Trade Unions
- Sexual Harassment
- Whistleblowing
- Political Economy
- Digital Photography
- Getting to Know Your Computer

UNION link login instructions

- To complete a course, you first need to register on **UNION link** as a learner.
- The **UNION link** address is unionlink.org
- To sign up for **UNION link**, you require a username and password. To get this you will need to create an account by filling out the “create account” form with your details.
- 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.

Did You Know?

We are pleased to advise that we launched three 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 **UNION link** website.

9 Essential Winter Driving Safety Tips | The AA



Why are winter driving conditions more dangerous?

Driving during the winter season can be more challenging than at any other time of the year, as weather conditions can change drastically over the course of a single day.

The combination of changing weather, reduced daylight and the increased risk of fatigue kicking in during the pre- and post-work commute (for those who are travelling to work) unfortunately often leads to an increase in incidents on Irish roads at this time of year.

A few small changes to your driving behaviour can go a long way towards keeping our roads safe.

1. Be Alert to the Risk of Fatigue



While fatigue is an issue for drivers all year round, the winter season brings with it a heightened risk as we often find ourselves doing most of our driving in darkness. This, combined with the additional commitments you may be juggling in the months ahead, can lead to your concentration slipping while you're behind the wheel.

2. What To Do When You're Driving Fatigued



If you find this happening, the best option is to pull in somewhere safe and **take a 10 to 15-minute break** from driving, ideally getting a coffee if you have the option to do so.

3. Plan Your Winter Journey in Advance

During the winter season your car may take a little longer to get started in the morning – so plan ahead and **get up at least 10 minutes early** to give you time to prepare the car.

Far too often we all encounter motorists driving around during the winter season with only a small gap cleared in their windscreen – don't be one of these people. Only begin your commute when the **windscreen is fully clear**, using a scraper and de-icer if necessary.

Most importantly, remember to prioritise your own

safety and that of other road users ahead of punctuality in the months ahead – especially if the weather worsens.

4. Allow Extra Time For Any Winter Journeys



During the coming months, **allow extra time** for any journey you are taking, particularly those either early in the morning or late at night, but also accept that you may find yourself running late on a few occasions due to an unexpected delay on the roads.

Never drive in a reckless manner or without adequately clearing your windscreen, windows and mirrors just for the sake of starting your journey a few minutes earlier.

5. Be Prepared for Driving in Snow and/or Ice



Over the next few weeks and months we're likely to encounter snow, high winds, heavy rainfall and every kind of weather condition in between. The best advice is to **slow down** and **use gentle manoeuvres** when driving, to stay safe and to adapt your driving to the weather on the day. For example, stopping distances are 10 times longer in ice and snow.

6. Uphill Driving in Winter Conditions

If you find yourself driving on snowy or icy roads, then remember to use a **low gear** when driving uphill and leave plenty of distance between you and the car in front of you. If driving down a slope, then **reduce your speed** before you reach the hill, use a low gear and try to avoid any sudden braking.

7. What to Wear When Driving in Winter Road Conditions

No, this isn't about making sure you're warm in your car, but about making sure that you have the **right footwear** for driving. During the course of your day, the shoes you wore to work could become wet from rain or snow, potentially increasing the risk that they could slip off the pedals of your car. Having a pair of flat shoes which you keep in your car and only use for driving could also go a long way towards staying safe on the roads.

8. Watch Out for Breakdowns and Vulnerable Road Users



While the number of pedestrians and cyclists may drop slightly during the winter months, especially if weather conditions worsen significantly, it's important that you **remain on the lookout** for these vulnerable road users while driving and allow extra space when overtaking. For example, during high winds a cyclist or pedestrian could easily be blown off course, so exercising additional caution is vital.

9. What To Do When Encountering a Winter Breakdown

Similarly, you are more likely to encounter a broken down car during the course of your driving over the coming months. While there are some things you can do to avoid your own car breaking down, if the road ahead is partially blocked by a breakdown, slow down, only overtake when it is safe to do so, and **use your hazard warning lights** to alert cars behind you to the obstruction.





**For workers and consumers,
the price of everything is going up.**



Amazon squeezes workers: real wages are going down while the corporation rakes in record revenue - \$121bn for the second quarter of 2022 - and doubles down on its union-busting tactics.

Amazon squeezes communities: paying no income tax in Europe in 2021 and instead was paid \$1bn in tax credits on \$55 billion sales.



Amazon squeezes our planet: despite including only 1% of all product sales in its carbon accounting, the corporation's CO₂ emissions rose by 18% in 2021. We are workers and citizens divided by geography and our role in the global economy but united in our commitment to Make Amazon Pay fair wages, its taxes and for its impact on the planet.

**Amazon can afford to pay,
but only will if we make it.**

Join us at makeamazonpay.com

President Michael D. Higgins encourages all workers to join a trade union

by Anne-Marie Walsh – Independent Online



President Michael D. Higgins has urged people to join unions and says their protection is “surely urgent” due to recent “regressive” trends in the world of work.

In the foreword of a book launched today, he criticises those who fail to acknowledge unions’ contributions “over the decades”.

“Let us hear it loud and clear,” he wrote in Connect Trade Union’s Centenary Book, which will be launched at its Biennial Conference.

“Join the Union, and in protecting and redefining the world of work, we build a decent, fulfilling world.”

He said the best outcomes for workers, “their defence and their prospects”, are achieved by being members of a union.

Mr Higgins said we must demand that all work is “recognised, remunerated properly and valued”.

“I have so often been struck by the reluctance of those who claim to be fervent enthusiasts of democratic institutions to acknowledge the

contribution of trade unions over the decades – to acknowledge, to take account of what they have secured, what they have protected us from, indeed to see how they are our best advocates for our enduring bond to democracy,” he said.

He added that creating a society that is more equal and has adequate social protection is far from easy to achieve “given current geopolitics”.

Mr Higgins also paid tribute to frontline workers who kept society and the economy operating during the pandemic.

Mr Higgins described trade unionism as “a movement that has endured relentless struggles to secure human rights in often epic, hard-fought battles; a movement inextricably interlinked in our nation’s struggle for independence or giving a lead in opposition to the waste of human life that is war”.

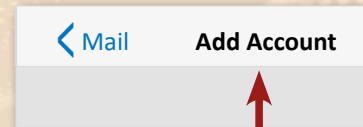
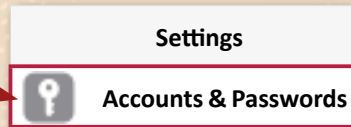
“The world of work is on the cusp of great changes,” he said.

He added that remote working and hybrid working are presenting real challenges.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR BRANCH SECRETARIES SETTING UP A CWU BRANCH MAILBOX ACCOUNT ON A MOBILE PHONE DEVICE

For iPhone Users

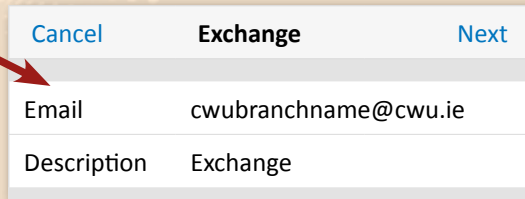
1. Go to your iPhone or iPad's **Settings** > scroll down and tap **Accounts & Passwords** > **Add Account**.



2. From the list of options, select **Exchange**



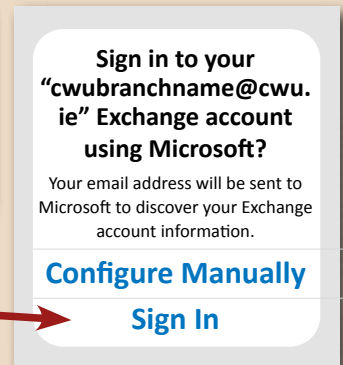
3. (a) At **Email** enter your **CWU Branch email address name** followed by **@cwu.ie**



- (b) In **Description** enter the word **Exchange**

- (c) Then tap **Next** (top right of menu in image)

- (d) Next page, tap **Sign In**



4. Enter your **CWU Branch email PASSWORD**

Note: This is the same password you use to access the mailbox from other devices. **Should you need to retrieve your password, you should email: privacy@cwu.ie**
Tap **Sign in** (as indicated in image)



5. The Mail app may request certain permissions.
Tap **Accept**



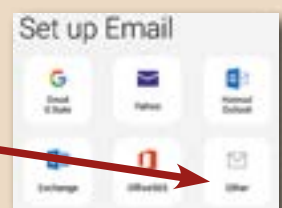
6. Choose the services you want to sync with your iOS device and tap **Save** (top right of menu in image)

You're done!

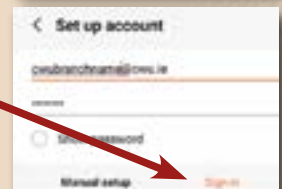


For Samsung Users

1. Open the Samsung **Email** app (if you haven't got it installed, you can download it from the **PLAY STORE** or if you have, you can locate it in **Settings** > **Apps** > **Email**)
2. Once you open the Samsung **Email** app, in the "**Set up Email**" select **Other**
3. This brings you the **Set up account** page where you enter your **CWU Branch email address name** followed by **@cwu.ie** and then enter your **Password**
Tap **Sign in** (Note: if the email app detects your provider, you may be redirected to a different sign in screen.)



4. If you're prompted to **select account type**, choose **Microsoft Exchange Active Sync** to sync contacts and calendars (this could take a few moments to complete)
Then, you're done!



For Android Users

Before you begin, update the Gmail app to the latest version. To do this:

- Open the **GOOGLE PLAY STORE** app on your phone or tablet.
- Type "**Gmail**" into the search bar and then select **Update**

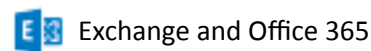
PLEASE NOTE: YOU ARE SETTING UP EXCHANGE

Choose your built-in Android email app and follow the instructions below:

1. Open the Gmail app.

Tap the menu icon in the upper left corner

Settings > Add account > Set up email > Exchange and Office 365



2. Enter your full **CWU Branch email address name** followed by **@cwu.ie**

Then tap **Next**

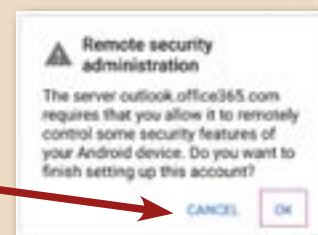
Enter your **CWU Branch email address name password** and tap **Next**

Microsoft 365 work or school

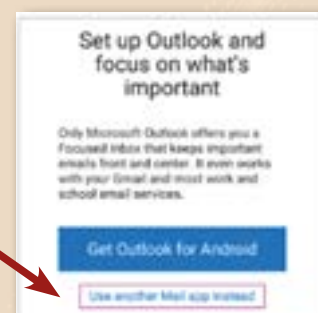
You may see a **Redirect request** screen. Tap **OK** On the Incoming server settings screen, change your server to **outlook.office365.com**

3. Follow any prompts you may get for security or device permissions, sync settings, and more.

You may also be asked to confirm **Remote security administration** and approve additional security measures. In this case, choose **OK** or **Activate**



4. Go to the inbox you just set up. If you see an email that says "**Action Required to Sync Email**" open it and tap **Use another Mail app instead**. If you don't see this message and emails are syncing, skip this step.



5. Pull down the Android notification bar by swiping down from the top of your screen.

If you see a notification that reads "**Unable to sync calendar and contacts**", tap it. Then tap **Allow** to give access and you're done!



If you require **additional support** to set up the CWU mailbox account on your mobile phone device, please email **supportdesk@calnet.ie** or phone **(01) 818 3272**.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event of a change in Branch Secretary, passwords will be reset for security purposes

Fóla Financial Report

YOU may be aware from previous correspondence and the Biennial Conference, that the Union engaged Fóla Partners to conduct a detailed review of the CWU financial activities over the past four years, the purpose being to comprehensively review our financial operations to ensure they are placed on a sound footing going forward.

Fóla found, that while financially healthy, the appropriate and necessary financial controls, procedures and systems, are not in place. Neither does the Union have the required experienced professional skill sets and disciplined financial management and oversight, to ensure financial probity, efficiency and good governance.

Following consideration of the report and

recommendations, the National Executive Council decided to recruit professional assistance to ensure the following activities are put in place as soon as possible.

- Update the Finance administrative systems and upgrade the finance systems to allow more streamlined management and financial reporting going forward
- Update Financial controls in line with Union policy
- Move to annual budgeting and forecasting processes
- Prepare quarterly/monthly accounts in-house, including variance reporting to Budget.
- Review Payroll and Pension procedures
- Review Investment Strategy
- Examine Social Benefit Fund
- Simplify the presentation of accounts

New Finance Team

We are pleased to advise the Union has recruited **Stephen O'Kelly** as Head of Finance to assist with implementation of the above. Stephen is a qualified accountant with the relevant financial experience having worked in large organisations such as RTÉ, The National Museum of Ireland, Bausch & Lomb and Philips in senior finance positions, as well as various senior finance project roles for SME companies. He brings a wide range of financial control expertise to help us achieve our aims.

Reporting to the General Secretary and working with the Finance Sub-Committee of the National Executive Council, to put in place the necessary financial controls

that ensures accuracy and integrity of our financial performance from a management and statutory perspective.

The CWU has also recruited **Jelena Bogdanova** – Accountant Technician. Jelena is a detail-oriented and organised Accounting Specialist with over 20 years of work experience. She is gifted with an analytical mindset and critical thinking abilities: a multi-tasking individual capable of thriving both independently and in a team environment. Jelena is also a great communicator with remarkable time management skills, financial knowledge and understanding and she is extremely motivated and eager to be challenged. She will be working alongside Stephen, helping to put the proper financial governance in place.



*Stephen O'Kelly
Head of Finance*



*Jelena Bogdanova
Accountant Technician*

CWU Host 10th NERI Dónal Nevin Lecture



Pictured l to r:

Reamonn Lydon, Head of Function, Monetary Policy, Central Bank of Ireland, Dr. Tom McDonnell, Co-director, NERI, Kevin Callinan, President of the ICTU & General Secretary of Fórsa, Sharon Donnery, Deputy Governor (Financial Regulation), Central Bank of Ireland, and Brian O'Donovan, Work and Technology Correspondent, RTÉ.

On Thursday 10th November, the CWU was delighted to host the 10th Annual NERI Dónal Nevin Lecture.

Chaired by Brian O'Donovan, Work and Technology Correspondent, RTÉ, the topic for discussion was 'Inflation and labour market dynamics after the pandemic'.

Sharon Donnery, Deputy Governor (Financial Regulation), Central Bank of Ireland, delivered the annual lecture as keynote speaker. Kevin Callinan, President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions & General Secretary of Fórsa, responded.

In response to persistently high inflation above its two percent target, the ECB raised interest rates for the first time in 11 years in July 2022. Further increases are likely in the coming months. The lecture examined the reasons for high inflation, highlighting both pandemic-related supply shocks and strong pent-up demand, and how monetary policy is responding. As a key input price, wage dynamics also matter for inflation. The second part of the lecture looked at post-pandemic labour market developments and considered the implications for both inflation and living standards.

Ms Donnery noted that persistently high inflation can cause inflation expectations to drift upward and become entrenched in wage demands, making it even more challenging to hit inflation targets. However, she went on to observe that 'there is little evidence of any such self-reinforcing wage-price dynamics at the moment, either in Ireland or in the rest of the Euro area.'

Responding, Mr Callinan noted that protecting the incomes of trade union members and seeking stability

for our economy are not mutually exclusive goals but achieving them together requires a delicate balance.

He noted that in the current cost-of-living crisis 'low- and fixed-income groups are at a greatly increased risk of energy poverty and deprivation this Winter and indeed next Winter.' Acknowledging the role of energy prices as a factor in the crisis, Mr Callinan continued, 'But the supply issues that have instigated this crisis go beyond energy. The housing crisis in this country represents an act of economic self-sabotage that we can no longer afford to ignore. Yes, the war in Ukraine has had a huge impact. But we are also paying the price for years of inaction on cost-of-living issues that have been compounded over the years that preceded it.'

Regarding wages, Mr Callinan said, 'It [the cost-of-living crisis] was not caused by workers making outrageous pay demands nor was it caused by hard working families spending to excess.'

In closing, Mr Callinan noted that a 'stronger trade union influence is associated with a larger share of income going to labour. This is because unions increase the bargaining power of workers which offsets the inherent bargaining advantage held by the employer. This in turn reduces inequality... A strong trade union movement generating and producing consistent gains for workers is therefore a key component of a healthy inclusive economy and a healthy democracy. Greater equality is itself associated with a range of quality of life and well-being benefits across the economy and society, ranging from greater social trust, to increased life expectancy and happiness, to lower levels of crime and stress'.

Joint Working Groups Report

Parents' Leave

Parents' Leave is a statutory entitlement to allow parents spend more time with their child or adopted child during their first year. When first introduced it provided for two weeks paid leave which increased to 5 weeks in April 2021 and to 7 weeks in July 2022. This leave can be taken within 2 years of the child's birth.

It is unpaid leave, but those availing of Parents' leave may qualify for Parents' Benefit. An Post does not currently top this up. To be eligible to take Parents Leave you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a relevant parent
- Take the leave within 104 weeks of the birth of the child or in the case of adoption, from the date the child is placed
- Give at least six weeks' notice to your employer

A relevant parent is:

- A parent of the child
- A spouse, civil partner, or cohabitant of the parent of the child
- A parent of a donor-conceived child as provided for under section 5 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- The adopting parent or parents of a child
- The spouse, civil partner, or spouse of the adopting parent of the child (if the parents have not adopted jointly).
- Each member of a married couple of the same sex, a couple that are civil partners of each other, or a cohabiting couple of the same sex

Parents can take Parents' Leave either as one continuous period of two weeks, or in period of not less than one week.

Different Types of Leave available to Parents

See table 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 7 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

Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill

In August, the Government announced approval for the publication of the **Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2022**. This Bill when enacted will introduce a range of measures to improve family friendly work practices and support women in the workplace.

The measures contained within the Bill includes:

- The introduction of paid leave for victims of domestic violence
- The provision of supports for employers to assist them in developing domestic violence workplace policies
- A right to request flexible working arrangements for caring purposes, for parents and carers
- A right to leave for medical care purposes, for employees with children up to age 12 and for carers.
- Extension of the current entitlement to breastfeeding/lactation breaks from six months to 2 years

The CWU welcomed the publication of the Bill, as it introduces a range of measures required to transpose the EU Work Life Balance Directive. These measures will improve family friendly work practices and support women in the workplace.

The issues contained within the Bill will also be the focus of Union/Company over the next few months. We have already agreed the Leave for domestic violence and coercive control, and we had initiated discussions on breastfeeding breaks. It is disappointing that the rights to request flexible working arrangements is limited to caring purposes for parents and carers, as we believe this is a lost opportunity as this right should be available to all workers. The Union will pursue this separately with the Company.

Breastfeeding Breaks

The above Bill once enacted will extend the right to breastfeeding breaks up until the child is 2 years of age which is in line with the recommendations from the World Health Authority. Existing legislation only provides for breastfeeding breaks up to 26 weeks.

Women who are breastfeeding will be entitled to time off from work or a reduction in working hours to breastfeed their baby. Where facilities are provided, the employee can be allowed up to one-hour (with pay) breastfeeding breaks or to express breast milk for up to 26 weeks after birth. This time may be taken as one 60-minute break, two 30-minute breaks or three 20-minute breaks or such other periods as may be agreed between the parties

Where no facilities can be made available for breastfeeding or expressing at work, a reduction in working hours by one hour each day (per eight-hour working day) without loss of pay (e.g., by starting an hour later or leaving an hour earlier).

Disability and Disability Policy

Under the **Disability Act 2005** the Company has several legal responsibilities, one of which is to report the number and percentage of employees with disabilities in the workplace. An Post, as a commercial Semi-State organisation, has a disability employment target of 3% of its total employee population to comply with the 2005 Act. This is due to increase to 6% by 2024.

The Company reported to the Monitoring Committee for the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources that the percentage of employees declaring themselves as having a disability under the definition contained within the Disability Act for 2021 is 4.39% which is above the average.

While the Staff Side remain supportive of the good work An Post does regarding disability, we contend that they should do more at recruitment level to employ people with disabilities and we continue to raise this with the Company

With the above in mind, we have commenced a review of the Disability Policy and we expect to conclude these discussions shortly. As part of these discussions, we are looking at introducing a policy on reasonable accommodation and we are looking at how requests for reasonable accommodation are handled by the Company as we have experienced a lot of difficulties with such requests.

Reasonable Accommodation Passports

We are also examining the possibility of introducing Reasonable Accommodation Passports, a concept developed by the TUC in the UK and is supported by

both ICTU and IBEC. They are designed for disabled employees who require workplace adjustments or accommodations. It is a written record of accommodations or workplace adjustments that have been agreed between the employee and their employer. They are 'live' confidential documents about changes to work, with a built-in review period to ensure they reflect the current situation for the employee in the workplace. It will ensure reasonable accommodations are put in place and kept up to date, in line with changes in job role or in the employee's needs. For some individuals who have fluctuating needs, additional steps can be spelt out regarding short term flexibility required within the overall reasonable accommodation passport framework. This is another positive development.

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. With issues relating to menopause highlighted in the media there is now a wider appreciation and greater understanding of the challenges menopause poses.

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 the above the Company and the Group of Unions have agreed to develop a policy on the menopause. The Policy once finalised will

- Raise awareness of the issue and provide practical information for all employees
- Promote the supports available including EAP and Occupational Health and Support
- Highlight the three stages of menopause i.e., Perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause
- Outline the symptoms associated with the menopause
- Outline the possible impact on working life
- Encourage women who may be experiencing difficulties with the menopause to speak to their GP or seek assistance through An Post's occupational health service.
- Detail the practical supports available to staff

Discussions are at an advanced stage, and we expect to conclude discussions shortly.

Review of Term Time

Term time working provides for special leave for the purposes of allowing working parents or primary carers to match their working arrangements to the

main summer holidays of their children or to care for a person who resides with them and who has a disability of such a nature as to give rise to the need for care on a continuing or frequent basis.

Prior to the onset of COVID we had sought a review but given term time was put on hold during COVID for many members, review didn't take place. Now that it has been restored we have agreed to review term time based on this years' experience. The Company and the Union will develop a survey that will be sent to all of those who participated in term time. The Union would welcome feedback from members and Branches on their experience. Any comments, suggestions etc should be sent to patkenny@cwu.ie by the 16th December 2022.

Driver Rollaways

The Company continues to raise concerns with the Union in relation to driver safety issues with particular concern raised about the failure to engage the hand brake correctly which can lead to the vehicle being involved in a rollaway. These can be extremely dangerous and terrifying events with drivers unable to prevent a collision with either other vehicles, pedestrians or third party property. These incidents can lead to injury, death and many thousands of euros in damage.

The Union has also been required to assist members who are the subject of disciplinary sanctions because of their involvement in driver rollaway incidents with the Company imposing sanctions from 1st level written warnings up to dismissal. In some instances, the Company has sought the repayment of the cost of damage to company vehicles, third party vehicles or buildings which has run into many thousands of euro.

For this reason the Union has worked closely with the Company on a campaign to reduce the risk of rollaways. While working to reduce the risk of rollaways we also advised the Company that they had a responsibility to put in place an engineering solution to warn the Postal Operative when the handbrake was not correctly engaged. As a result, the Company commenced the installation of buzzers which warn the driver if the handbrake is not engaged properly.

To date the Company has installed over 1000 of the buzzers with a further 1000 to be installed after Christmas. There was some difficulties at the outset particularly in relation to communications and these were addressed and during the rollout the Union will meeting regularly with the Company to review progress.

The Union advised members on the status of discussions by GS Circular 18/22.

One of the key issues relates to members who experience difficulties in applying the hand and reaching the required level. They can have their circumstances reviewed by occupational health who can assess what practical measures the Company can put in place to

ensure the staff member concerned can work safely. The Company will engage with their medical advisors, operations and Transport to ascertain what reasonable accommodations are needed where practicable.

In agreeing to this initiative, it is important to remember why we are doing it. As detailed above rollaways are dangerous events which can lead to serious injuries or death. It is incumbent on us all to do all we can to prevent such instances and it is our belief that the installation of such alarms will assist members who may fail to properly engage the handbrake.

The Union believe that the key issue in relation to dealing with this issue is the future design of vans and we have highlighted this with the Company. The van or truck is the Postal Operatives Office and this needs to be factored in when buying or hiring new vans. We need to have fully automated hand brakes with a push button mechanism which would be more effective and would reduce the effort required to use the handbrake. This and the future design of vehicles will be the focus of the Union's attention at the Health and Safety Committee

Safety Representative

Across the Company we currently have about 140 safety representatives. There are a number of offices where we do not have safety representatives and the Union will be running a campaign in the New Year to encourage members to take on the role.

A Safety Representative is an employee elected by their fellow employees, whose main role is to represent them to management on all health and safety issues. The Safety Representative provides a direct link between the Company and members on issues that may be identified through workplace inspections or through direct communication with fellow workers.

Safety Representatives are not responsible for safety in an office, this is a function of the Manager. However, the Safety Representative can promote better practice in the workplace. Safety Representatives are allowed time off from their work, without loss of earnings, for training and for undertaking the functions of being a Safety Representative

Safety Representatives must have access to information on measures required under safety and health legislation such as risk assessments and reportable incidents.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the role, they can contact patkenny@cwu.ie.

Education Support Scheme

The Education Support Scheme is available for employees who undertake courses that lead to a recognised qualification from an accredited College or Institution. Sponsorship is available up to 50% of the approved course fees.

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The Scheme is open to all employees who have successfully completed probation and completed 12 months within the Company and who wish to study a Certificate, Diploma or Degree course, subject to managerial approval and budget availability.

To qualify, courses must:

- be job related and have a direct impact on the employee's current assignment at An Post; or
- Prepare an employee for a higher-level position at An Post; or
- Be relevant to the business of An Post

Eligible employees should complete and submit an Educational Support Application Form and send it to An Post Learning and Development. Forms should be signed by your Direct Line Manager and the appropriate Level 2 Manager. Employees are allowed up to a maximum of 5 days' Paid Leave to study for exams, depending on the course demands and at their manager's discretion. Paid Leave will also be granted to sit approved exams if they fall during normal working hours, upon production of evidence of exam dates. If an employee voluntarily leaves An Post during the pursuit of a qualification that has been financially supported by the Company, then they must agree to reimburse An Post on a pro-rated basis according to the following related scale from the course completion date:

Length of Service from Course Completion Date	Reimbursement Percentage %
0-6 months	75%
> 6-12 months	50%

A number of courses are available through the "Springboard" upskilling initiative in higher education which offers free and subsidised courses at certificate, degree and masters level. Funding of up to 90% of course fees are available through the National Training Fund. further information is available at: <https://springboardcourses.ie/>

Communications & Policies

The Staff Side has raised concerns for some time the manner in which the Company circulates policy documents and communicates with employees, with an over reliance on the Post People App and the intranet, which many do not have access to. The Union and the Company has established a Sub-Committee to examine these concerns. The Union priority is to ensure that all employees regardless of where they work have equal access to communications and to policies once agreed with the Union. We recognise there is a requirement to reduce the level of paper documents in support of the sustainability agenda.

The Company has committed to communicating

policies in a manner that will ensure that they are clear and authentic and that are easily understood by employees and that all employees are fully informed on matters that are likely to affect them.

The Company currently communicate using the following means:

- Post People App (a real time newsfeed app on employees' smart phones)
- Email
- Company Circulars
- Manager cascade (that is the passing of messages or information from senior management through the manager levels to all employees directly or indirectly reporting to them)
- Intranet
- Posters & digital screens, including screensavers

The Company will continue to use a combination of the above to ensure employees have access to policies etc. While it is a long-term goal all employees should have access to company email and intranet

The Company has in recent times confirmed that staff policies can be now accessed on the Company intranet. Currently the five available are:

- Dignity at Work
- Adverse Weather
- Domestic abuse and coercive control policy
- Statutory leave available to parents
- Retirement Policy

These can be accessed by going to anpost.com, go to the bottom of the page and click the link for working with An Post and click on policies. As we review policies we will be adding to this list.

Security & Staff Assaults

Following discussions with the Company, we have completed a review and update of the guidelines for dealing with workplace violence which An Post Employees experience. The updated guidelines contain several improvements including:

- The adoption of the Health and Safety Authority definition of Workplace Violence. This brings certain obligations including the mandatory reporting of incidents. This will involve reviews of the Risk Assessments and Safety Task Procedures.
- The guidelines have been extended company wide and includes all locations regardless of the nature of the work
- The guidelines will offer more guidance on supports available through the Employee Assistance Programme including free counselling sessions.
- While absences related to incidents of workplace violence will be managed in line with ASMP, the focus will be on ensuring ongoing support for and

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engagement with the employee. This will ensure that the employee is aware of the workplace supports available

- 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.
- The ex-gratia payment applies in the following circumstances
 - Robberies on premises where violence is used or threatened
 - Where an employee performs some resourceful act during a robbery which may be regarded as beyond the call of duty
 - This is on the understanding that nothing should be done by employees during a robbery that might endanger their own or another’s personal safety
 - Where an employee is subject to an assault from a member of the public in the course of their work
- Where an incident of workplace violence gives rise to medical treatment or hospitalisation, disbursement of an ex-gratia payment, will be considered.

- Updated signage will be issued to Branch Offices prohibiting several activities by members of the public including photographing and video recording within Branch Offices. In addition, new signage under the theme of respect our staff was designed

The aim of the guidelines is to provide guidance to employees while also equipping managers so that they can identify manage and solve problems related to workplace violence as well as supporting employees.

The guidelines cover:

- The potential effects of a violent incident on duty and the negative impact it can have on employees
- The support that is available to employees both immediately and following an incident
- The responsibilities of employees including to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others
- Specific guidelines for Counter Employees, Contact Centre Employees, TV Licence Employees and Outdoor Employees
- Specific guidelines for employees in the event of Workplace Violence perpetrated by a colleague or another An Post Employee
- Sick Leave payments
- Ex Gratia Payments

DPD – Athlone Pay 2022/23

CWU Officials along with DPD Athlone Branch Representatives engaged with DPD Management in September on a new pay proposal for 2022/23. Following these discussions, Company management tabled a pay proposal that provided for a 6% pay increase over two years.

Attempts to improve the proposal by the DPD Branch Committee were unsuccessful, as the Company expressed their belief that the proposal was fair and generous. As a result, the proposal went to ballot without the endorsement of the DPD Branch Committee.

Before members had been balloted, DPD management made an announcement that pay had been agreed. They also announced that non-Union members would receive payment immediately while Union members would be paid if they accepted the terms of the proposal.

It is not clear why the Company chose this course of action and broke from the tradition of awaiting the result of the democratic process of a ballot. What is clear is that all it achieved was to highlight the fact that Union Members have a voice on the issues that impact their working lives. While non-Members have no say in these matters and have decisions enforced upon them whether they like the level of increase or not.

Ultimately, the proposal went to ballot in October and CWU Members voted to reject the offer by a majority of 2:1 in a turnout of nearly 70% of members.

Your Branch Committee and CWU Officials have listened to the voice of Members and have been engaging with DPD management to achieve an improved pay deal that is acceptable.

In the meantime, in a further break from tradition the Company also began to engage with Members on an individual basis in relation to pay. This practice flies in the face of our collective agreement and only served to cause division within the workplace. The Union has set out to the Company that this practice was totally unacceptable especially given the financial pressures that workers are currently facing.

To this end, the Union sought to have everyone treated equally and the Company have agreed that all Staff would receive the initial instalment of 3% plus the €500 voucher. This will allow space for ongoing discussion around improving the Company’s initial pay offer while putting much needed money into members’ pockets.

Talks are ongoing at the time of going to print and Members will be kept up to date of any developments.

CENTENARY OF 1922 POSTAL STRIKE



THE 1922 POSTAL STRIKE was the first nationwide strike to occur under the newly established Free State. When the strike began the government denied the right of postal workers to strike on the grounds that they were civil servants. The unions declared that the issue was one of the basic rights of workers to combine and to withdraw their labour. The government viewed the dispute as a similar level of threat to its authority as that posed by anti-Treaty forces, accusing the workers of never having said “boo” when the British were here. Government tactics, including the harassment and intimidation of workers by the military and victimisation, were widespread.

The centenary of the 1922 postal strike was marked with a talk by Dr Mary Muldowney on 10th September 2022 in Dublin’s Pearse Street Library. Dr Muldowney is an executive member of the Irish Labour History Society and is joint editor of its annual journal, *Saothar*. September also saw the launch of Labour History Collections on the Digital Repository of Ireland and on the revamped website of the Irish Labour History Society: www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com

These collections include historic Post Office Workers’ Union

material relevant to the 1922 strike and includes twenty handbills distributed to the public during the dispute. A representative from the Communications Workers’ Union, Pat Kenny (An Post Staff-Side Secretary), also spoke at the event. 1922 was a difficult year for Irish workers and their families as the Civil War commenced in earnest. As well as facing the threats from anti-Treaty forces, postal workers also suffered at the hands of the new Free State government, when pay reductions in the amount of the inflation-linked “war bonus” were enforced, in line with the UK pattern. There was an initial suggestion by the Postmaster General, J.J. Walsh,



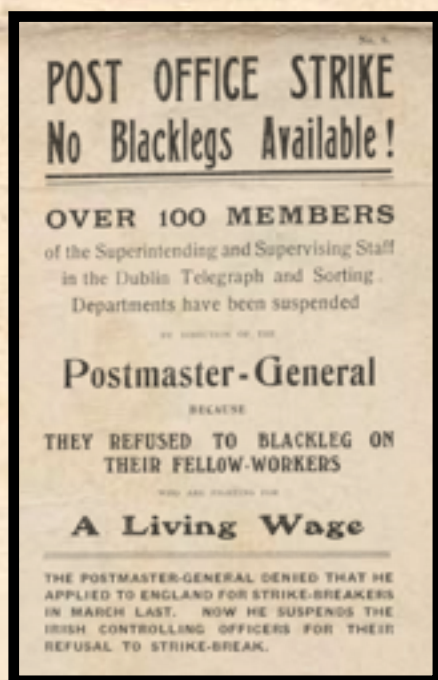
ironically a former postal worker, that replacements for potential strikers would be imported from England. Tom Johnson, who was leader of the combined Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, wrote to the workers’ unions that if *“any attempt is made to bring men and women from England for the purpose of breaking a strike, should one occur, it will meet with the fiercest hostility from all ranks of Irish Labour. It is undoubtedly a most serious matter for Irish Labour in general that one of the first acts of an Irish Minister should be to ask a British Minister to send scabs to break a strike.”*

Background to the strike

In 1922, three unions represented post office staff: the Irish Postal Union (IPU), the Irish Postal Workers’ Union (IPWU), and the Irish Post Office Engineering Union (IPOEU). The 1922 postal strike was the first major industrial dispute faced by the new Irish Free State government. Liam Mellows, writing from his prison cell prior to his execution in December 1922,

said that the government's attitude towards striking postal workers makes clear what its attitude towards workers generally will be.

During the first world war the British government introduced a cost of living bonus for civil servants. The bonus was paid twice a year and was calculated as a percentage of basic pay. These payments were an essential part of the wages of postal workers. The Postmaster General at the time was James Joseph Walsh, who was a former postal worker and Cork TD. One of his first acts was to announce the cost of living bonus would not be paid to civil servants. He then sought to use workers from England to replace Irish workers supporting any strike opposing the cuts. The unions argued that these cuts were not justified as there was no compensating fall in the cost of living in Ireland, citing post office workers were among the poorest paid in the country.



At the IPU Conference in February 1922 a decision to strike was taken in the *“event of a reduction being enforced”*. Initially, the strike was scheduled to commence on 5th March 1922, but four hours before it was scheduled to commence, it was averted by the establishment of an

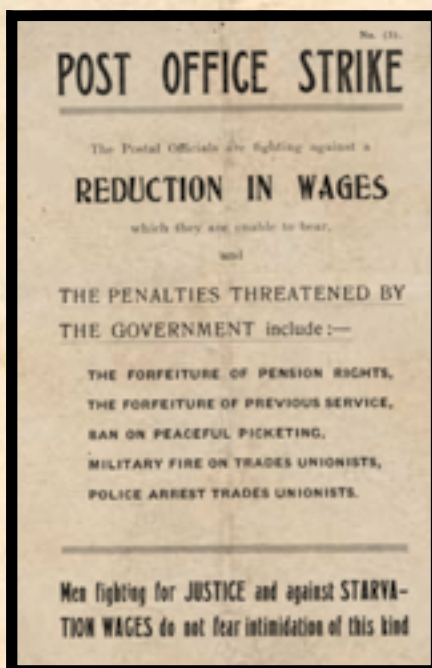
independent commission, chaired by James G. Douglas, to report by 15th May 1922.

The commission issued an interim report on 11th May 1922 acknowledging that post office staff could not reasonably bear the cut in the bonus and found as follows

“That the Post Office Staff in Ireland have found it extremely difficult to adjust their living expenses to the reduction in their bonus.

That this reduction has caused hardship, especially in the case of married men with families.”

It recommended increases in pay of between 7.5% and 12%. The outcome was hailed as a “union triumph” but this joy was short lived as the government reneged on its promises. In September 1922 the unions became aware the government was preparing its own cost of living figures to justify the cuts in post office staff's pay, announcing that the bonus would cease on 1st September with further reductions to follow. A Special Conference was held in the Round Room of the Mansion House on 5th September 1922 where a motion in favour of industrial action was carried unanimously. The strike began on 10th September 1922 and lasted less than three weeks.



Acts of intimidation on the part of the government

The post office issued a directive that all strikers would forfeit their position and if reinstated would not carry restoration of pension rights. Accounts of intimidation were widespread and included everything from abusive language to arrest without charges, and even the shooting of one Telephonist, Olive Flood, who was wounded in the knee. The 1922 October and November publications of the Irish Post and the Irish Postal and Telegraph Guardian carried extensive reports on some of the incidents of intimidation.

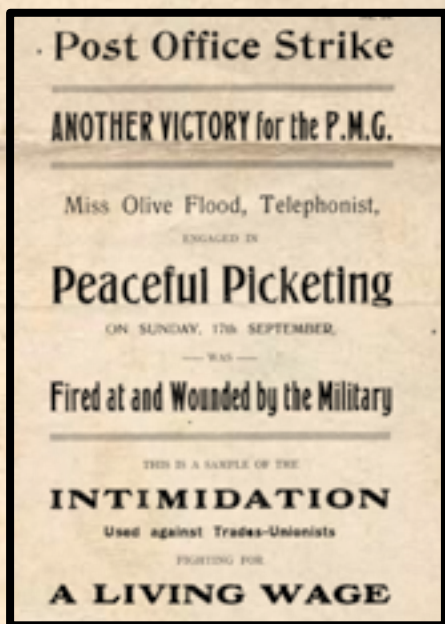
Dublin Central: *“When the strike was only 15 minutes declared an attack was opened at Crown Alley Exchange with rifle fire by some individual who gave a splendid exhibition of a Buffalo Bill on the warpath. To threaten girls with a rifle speaks for itself, but when faced by men he got a lesson in courage which was evidently foreign to him.”*

Dundalk: *“The baptism of PO strikers was heralded here by pickets patrolling quietly in front of the office. Peaceful picketing continued until interrupted by the military in the afternoon, when they arrested 2 reliefs (6 men). The breach created was quickly filled by three more manly strikers. They were arrested, as also were the others who gallantly took up the vacant places until 14 all told were lodged in the local prison.”*

Limerick: *“On Wednesday evening, 27th September, a large number of military police, dressed in civilian clothes, made an unprovoked attack on our pickets, using sticks and revolvers and knuckle dusters injuring 18 members including ladies, one of whom was knocked down and trampled on by the attackers.”*

Monaghan: “Notwithstanding the intervention of the local garrison, who endeavoured to subvert our members by vague promises and their subsequent action as strike breakers, our members proved staunch and were undismayed by promises or threats of future dire happenings.”

Westport: “We refused to surrender any of rights to which we claim to be entitled to exercise. The military in full war paint and all the panoply of war endeavoured to prevent us carrying out what we had a perfect lawful right to do and even went to the lengths of firing a few rounds over our heads; but the sounds of rifle fire had no terror for us and only served as a greater incentive to our people to carry on.”



Unity and Solidarity

As a result of the decision to strike, the three unions voted to amalgamate, with the UPU formed in 1922 and later the POWU formed in June 1923. The IPOEU subsequently withdrew from the amalgamation, eventually amalgamating in 1989 with the formation of the present CWU.

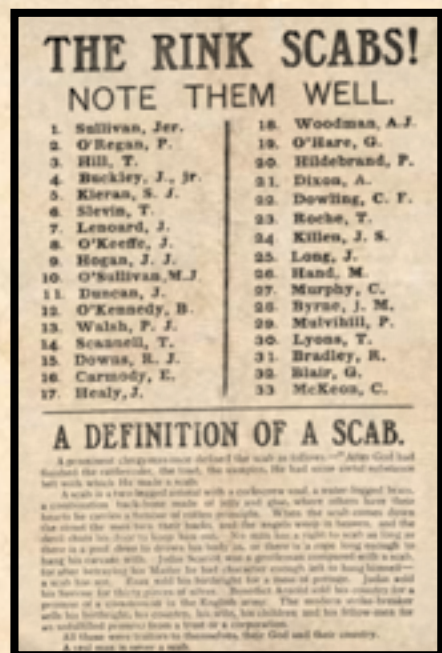
Mr P.J. McPhillips, at the mass meeting in the Round Room of the



Mansion House on 28th September stated: “When the various Postal Unions decided that they should fight this ruinous reduction they took a preliminary step, partly on their own initiative and partly at the suggestion of the head of the Labour Party – Mr. Tom Johnson- they united. United they remain and united they will remain, even when the fight is over.”

Again, reports in the Irish Post and Irish Postal and Telegraph Guardian following the strike highlighted this solidarity:

Arklow Branch: “From the moment the strike started the three Unions became one and gave of their best to ensure that victory should crown our efforts.”



Dublin Parcels: “The response to the call of the Executives was practically unanimous, only one individual failing to come up to the scratch on the grounds that having a diseased heart he would neither please the Post Office or the unions but please himself.”

Ennis: “Not a solitary parcel or telegram was delivered in Ennis district during the three weeks, the Banner County being entirely isolated as far as the postal service was concerned.”

The strike was settled on the 28th September with 5/8 of the total cut to be retained until 1st December with 3/8 of the cut to take effect from 1st September. The independent commission would resume immediately with a final report to be issued by 1st December 1922.

Victimisation

Victimisation of members during and after the strike became an issue and those who crossed picket lines were favoured for promotion. The terms of settlement were considered and agreed at an Executive Meeting on 29th September 1922. The absence of a no victimisation clause was raised at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting stated the following:

“The absence from the terms of a no victimisation clause was raised and it was explained that Mr Douglas in urging acceptance



of the terms laid stress on the assurance in this regard given by President Cosgrave to the Labour Party, and in the circumstances, it was not considered necessary to insist on the undertaking being embodied in the agreement."

The pledge of no victimisation was not honoured, with the Department issuing a circular stating that temporary workers taken on during the strike should be given preference over those who went on strike. The union pointed out that 39 strike breakers were retained in the Dublin Sorting Office in circumstances where the Postmaster General stated it was overstaffed. This issue was a matter of concern raised at the annual conferences of the POWU for some years afterwards. Other issues relating to pensions remained unresolved until 1938, sixteen years after the historic postal strike.

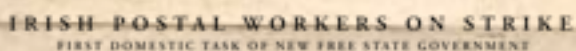
In December 1922 the Editor wrote in the Irish Postal & Telegraph Guardian:

"At the end of 12 months of an Irish, or quasi-Irish, Administration, one feels filled with a feeling of almost absolute despair supervening a not entirely unexpected disappointment. That any party called to the position of

control in this country should have to undergo a period of apprenticeship in the ways of government was inevitable and acceptable, allowance was made, and is being made, for the possible mistakes incidental to the starting of a system of Governmental machinery. One



cannot, however, help coming to the conclusion that, with all the allowances made on this score, the prospect is far from bright."



KEEP WATER PUBLIC NAME THE DATE



Keep Water Public Campaign – Name the Date

Following a lengthy public campaign which CWU supported, Government committed to holding a referendum on holding Irish Water in public ownership. Because of an inordinate and wholly unacceptable delay by Government, Union's representing workers in the industry recently launched a campaign demanding the date for the referendum be set. The details are posted on the CWU's website and social media platforms

Notwithstanding the commitments made by government to date, it is the view of ICTU and its affiliated unions that a referendum to enshrine the state ownership of Irish Water in the Constitution, Bunreacht na hÉireann, is necessary to guarantee that there can be no future privatisation of this utility.

The CWU has first-hand experience of the devastating consequences of privatisation of services, particularly in the telecoms industry. We fought fiercely and campaigned against the privatisation of Telecom Éireann, warning

government that the company would be asset-stripped to subsidise the profits of major stakeholders; a warning which was unheeded and very unfortunately came to pass.

Over the past three decades we have seen a rapid increase in privatisation, liberalisation, and deregulation across almost every industry. These actions have been taken to grow the bank balances of investors and shareholders, without any consideration for the impact this would have on ordinary working people. We have witnessed public services sold off to the highest bidder in the telecoms and energy sectors. In health, we have a two-tier system which prioritises access for the wealthier who can afford insurance. In housing, there continues to be a complete failure of government policy to deliver affordable homes for workers and their families. We say, enough is enough let the people have their say, without delay and name the date for the referendum.

CWU Band Christmas Concert

**The Communications Workers' Union Band
is pleased to announce our Christmas Concert.
It will be held on Friday the 16th of December
in the Unitarian Church, St Stephen's Green, Dublin, at 8pm.**

*The programme will include popular and seasonal pieces. Admission
will be free, however those attending will be asked for a donation in
support of the Unitarian Church restoration programme.*

**The Annual Mass for Deceased Members
was celebrated on 27th November at 11am
in St Francis Xavier Church, Gardiner St., Dublin.**

*The band rehearse every Sunday from 11am to 1.30pm
at the CWU offices, 575 North Circular Road.*

*We are always happy to welcome new members and guests,
and those interested should contact Martha at: 086 1604833.*





Charlie Kelly, former President of the CWU, still working hard for CWU members.

Charlie leads the charge against An Post Pensioners' Long Wait for Increase



PENSIONERS of An Post in Donegal were among 7,000 nationwide who lobbied their local and national politicians over the failure of the Government to sign-off on a 2% increase that was due to come into effect at the beginning of January.

An Post pensioner and former President, Charlie Kelly, led the charge, urging all the retired workers with An Post in Donegal to write to their local TDs requesting them to make contact with the Government to authorise the payment without further delay.

"The 2% increase for pensioners was due since January 1st and there was no reason why it was being delayed. An Post had requested Minister for Communications, Eamonn Ryan, to sign off. His Department had acknowledged correspondence sent by the Union on the matter, as did the Minister for Public Expenditure, Michael McGrath. The An Post Superannuation Scheme had a surplus of €580 million last year, which means the funding was available to pay this very modest increase to the 7,000 An Post Pensioners," Mr Kelly said.

The An Post Group of Unions wrote on July

4th to Michael McGrath, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, highlighting the delay in the 2% payment, describing it as a serious issue which was causing additional and unnecessary financial hardship to the 7,000 pensioners. "These pensioners, many of whom are in their twilight years, are due payment of a 2% pensionable increase effective from the 1st January 2022. Regrettably, approval of the payment, for reasons which are neither rational or understandable, has been subject to unacceptable and inordinate delay".

The Union had previously written to the Minister for Communications, Eamonn Ryan, on 23rd of June, setting out their concerns but, other than an acknowledgement, have not received a response on the 2% payment. Charlie Kelly said it was an appalling situation that men and women who had given a lifetime of service to An Post were so far being denied a very modest increase in their pensions. "We can't wait any longer, so our local TDs will know what we are looking for is justified. They must get on to both Minister Ryan and Mr McGrath and get the approval so that An Post can give us our 2% rise," Mr Kelly said.



CWU Ireland
host

6th UNI Europa Post & Logistics Conference 14-16 November 2022 - Dublin, Ireland

*Seán McDonagh, CWU General Secretary,
welcomes delegates to the 6th UNI Europa
Post & Logistics Conference.*

UNI global
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post & logistics



The CWU had the proud honour of hosting the 6th UNI Europa Post & Logistics Conference at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire. Affiliates from across Europe had an intensive engagement on a range of critical issues facing workers in the postal industry. The hybrid event was a tremendous success, superbly organised by the CWU Head Office staff under the direction of Imelda Wall, Office Manager. Over 120 delegates attended with a further 30 participating online. General Secretary Seán McDonagh sopening the Conference, welcomed the delegates, highlighting the CWU had restructured its organisation to ensure it was best placed to face the challenges in the postal sector.

President Jens Saverstam, SEKO, Sweden, chaired and steered the debate which covered a range of issues, such as Collective Bargaining: EU Law and Policy, the sustainable financing of the USO and how to ensure quality postal services and quality postal work through strong regulation and legislation. A lively and very informative panel discussion, moderated by Cornelia Berger, UNI Head of Department Post & Logistics, was the highlight involving the following participants:

- **Merete Clausen**, European Commission, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Unit C3 – Investment conditions and public services
- **Petros Galides**, European Regulators Group for Postal Services – ERGP Chair
- **Botond Szebeny**, PostEurop Secretary General
- **David McRedmond**, An Post CEO

- **Dimitris Theodorakis**, UNI Europa Director for Post & Logistics

The Conference received a great insight into the impact the Postal balloting had on the USA elections provided by Jim Sauber, Chief Of Staff at National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC). Mr Loïc Verreman, Policy Coordinator Post & Logistics UNI Global Union, delivered a comprehensive presentation on Due Diligence. The UNI Europa Regional Secretary, Oliver Roethig, gave an overview of the industry in which he stressed that postal services must be maintained as an essential lifeline, keeping communities connected and not solely provided or focussed on profit.

Des Travers, CEO DPD Ireland, made a presentation citing his actions on climate change, warning against companies engaging in a pricing race to the bottom, which would inevitably lead to a worsening quality of service. He also outlined his preference for the franchise owner driver model in place at DPD.

The worldwide campaign by UNI Global at Amazon regarding the Black Friday calling to “Make Amazon Pay” was discussed and the literature relating to this is posted on page

CWU UK General Secretary, Dave Ward, addressed the Conference remotely, providing an update on the dispute at Royal Mail.

At the conclusion of the Conference, a member of the delegation from Ukraine gave a disturbing insight into the struggle of postal workers to maintain postal services in the face of the war.



Conference Campaign for Save Our Post



CWU General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, with David McRedmond, CEO An Post, and Cormac Ó Dálaigh NEC



Diarmuid O'Connell, Industrial Organiser address Conference



Conference showing support for Ukraine Postal Service



Bernard Connolly, IT Technician, had a hands-full job working on keeping all the interpreters remotely connected to the Conference.



General Secretary, Seán McDonagh with Dimitris Theodorakis, UNI Global and Des Travers, CEO of DPD.



Pictured right:
Carol Scheffer congratulating Seán after his presentation.



Jim Sauber, National Letter Carriers Association, addresses Conference



Vice-President, Frank Donohoe, and President, Ivor Reynolds



Lorraine Newman and Imelda Wall helping to make the Conference run smoothly.



Deirdre Medlar and Bill Colfer voting at the event



Loïc Verreman. Policy Advisor UNI

An Post Superannuation Scheme Review

*CWU seeking to close the gap and
secure pensionable increases*



The Workplace Relations Commission assisted pay agreement 2021, provided for a review of the pension accord, with a specific focus on the widening gap, between base pay and pensionable pay. Separately, the Superannuation Scheme funding is reviewed by Mercers, with an independent actuary doing a valuation. The purpose of such is to provide a snapshot of the estimated financial position at a point in time. The most recent actuarial valuation of the scheme was signed off by the actuary in September for the three-year period to the 1st January 2022. The asset valuation of the scheme on that date was €4079.1m and the accrued liabilities was

€3575.8m, leaving a surplus of €503.3m.

Based on these positive results CWU and An Post held intensive discussions with a view to agreeing how this surplus could be distributed. To develop a full understanding of the issues involved and to observe the experiences of other organisation and pension schemes assistance was provided by Byrne Actuaries. Although significant progress was made a number of issues remained to be addressed. Assistance was sought from the WRC, but agreement was not possible. In such circumstances, it was jointly agreed to refer the disagreed issues to the Labour Court. At the time of writing, we were awaiting a hearing

Algorithmic Management: 1 in 3 workers left in the dark



A new UNI survey of workers reveals a major lack of information about the application of algorithmic management tools within companies. 34% of respondents, predominantly workers in the ICT and telecommunications sector across Europe, reported that they do not know if algorithmic management tools are being implemented in their workplace.

Increasingly, companies in the services sectors are turning towards using tools and techniques that enable automated or semi-automated management decision-making. These techniques rely heavily on data collection and surveillance of workers. As well as in recruitment they are frequently used in performance management.

“These results are very concerning. When people do not know the process by which their work is assessed and managed, it becomes very hard for them to question decisions that shape their everyday working lives. Companies should learn the lessons from the precedents of algorithmic management reinforcing discriminatory practices. It is by no means

a given that these new tools and techniques will meet ethical expectations of workers and the public. Social partners must work together to build transparency and accountability into the application and development of algorithmic management approaches,” said Oliver Roethig, Regional Secretary of UNI Europa.

As Matthias Weber, Director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung’s ‘Competence Centre on the Future of Work’, further underlines, “this survey clearly shows that there is a lack of understanding knowledge from the workers’ side regarding the functioning, use and risks of algorithmic management at the workplace. Employers need to take responsibility to make algorithmic management tools more transparent in order to raise workers’ acceptance and inhibit undesirable outcomes. This process has to be accompanied by active trade unions.”

The survey, undertaken by UNI Europa and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung’s Competence Centre on the Future of Work, was completed by approximately 1400 workers across Europe.



*Matthias Weber,
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*



*Oliver Roethig,
Regional Secretary of UNI Europa*

UNI Workshop on Ending Workplace Violence

To be able to work safely and in dignity, free from violence and harassment of any kind, is a fundamental human right which no worker must be denied.

ICTS workers are unfortunately affected by inequalities and discrimination in their own industry. Over the course of a two-day workshop, trade unionists and employers from across Europe's ICTS sector came together. They shared their experiences and learned about initiatives at the European and global levels aiming to put an end to workplace violence and harassment. They also exchanged on anti-harassment and violence prevention policies in different countries and companies and to further discuss joint actions to eliminate negative practices by strengthening social dialogue and implementing appropriate preventive mechanisms.

According to the workshop participants, violence is perceived as an external problem, with gender-related violence being the most frequent aggression. Third-party violence especially occurs in contact centres, retail shops and other customer-facing areas. In this context, it is positive that many companies in the ICTS sector already have an overall anti-discrimination policy on violence and harassment in place, some even a stand-alone policy.

"We have to address this crucial topic and find solutions also in collective agreements, especially for the pressing issue of external violence" – said Daniel Hügli, UNI Europa ICTS President.

It has been almost 3 years since the ILO adopted, in June 2019, its Convention 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work and yet, to date, only nineteen countries around the world have ratified it – and only six of these in Europe.

The EU Cross-sectoral guidelines to eliminating violence and harassment at work for services sector should be based on an integrated, comprehensive and a gender-responsive approach strengthened by social dialogue. The ILO C190 ratification in all EU members states is imperative" said Amel Selma Djemail, UNI Europa Equal Opportunities Director.

The workshop ended with a brainstorming on what should be included in the cross-sector guidelines which will be developed throughout the course of the project and presented at its final conference next year. Key points that came out of the discussions were the importance of awareness raising and training for both managers and employees, as well as the need to identify threats early on. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are the tools to build workplace policies that should include a strong protection against discrimination, violence

and harassment and provide provisions on prevention, implementation, and monitoring mechanisms. The participants will follow up on today's event and feed the discussion results into their work on a joint declaration on violence in the European sectoral social dialogue for telecom.

"ICTS unions play an important role in the fight against violence and harassment. Collecting good practice examples, raising awareness about the many faces of violence, and addressing this in collective bargaining, we can help create a safer and more inclusive workplace for all," underlined Birte Dedden, UNI Europa ICTS Director.

Inequality between women and men persists in the world of work in many forms, from career prospects and development opportunities to various terms and conditions. The aim of this UNI Europa Equal Opportunities cross-sector project is to contribute to ending violence and harassment at work and tackle domestic violence, as – with rising remote work – the home has become the new workplace.

Through this project, UNI Europa intends to:

- continue to campaign for the ratification of ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 260
- train and inform about the tools and mechanisms available to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work
- encourage affiliates and employer organisations to use collective bargaining as a tool to reach these objectives
- address the gender pay and pensions gap to tackle the issue of economic violence
- discuss the content of the draft EU Pay Transparency Directive
- encourage active participation in campaigns, activities, marches, and protests
- combat all forms of social regression
- support a multifaceted, joint social partner strategy, including the exchange of best practices to tackle exclusion and discrimination in the workplace as well as the development of participatory workplace cultures where inclusion and diversity are a priority
- and develop Cross-sectoral EU guidelines for services workers on the prevention of violence and harassment at work.

Carol Scheffer, CWU National Officer and UNI Europa Women's Committee President stated "we must ensure a safe and secure environment whereby all workers are confident that issues pertaining to violence and harassment are dealt with effectively through collective agreements so that no worker should suffer in silence".

UPS Survey Findings 2022

**142 survey
responses were
received**



Introduction to the Workplace Survey

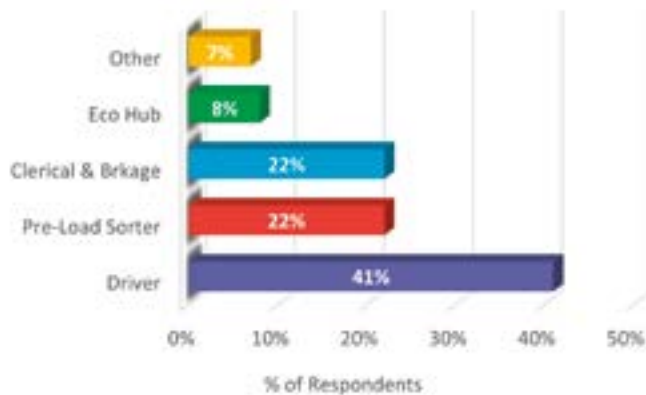
This survey was conducted following several concerns that were raised at a UPS Branch AGM. The concerns were centred around what members described as ‘a culture of disrespect and ill treatment’ within their workplace.

To gain a clearer understanding of the experiences of members, it was decided that local Branches would conduct surveys across the various UPS Depots, with a view to presenting the findings to UPS management and progressing these issues for members.

For the purposes of clarity, the survey figures will be reported in either agreement or disagreement figures, with the charts reflecting the strength of feeling among participants in the form of: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree; and N/A (no response). The survey results have now been collated and are presented in this booklet.

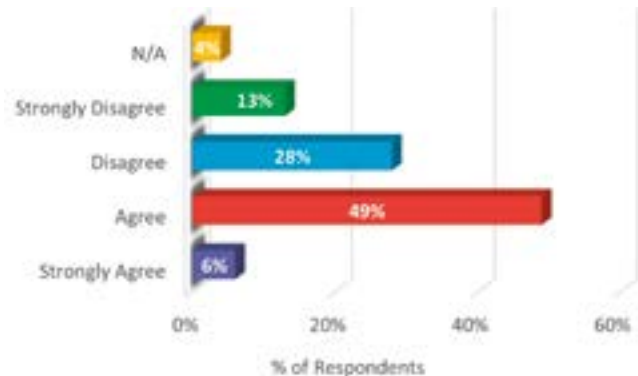
Question 1

Please indicate your work area.



Question 3

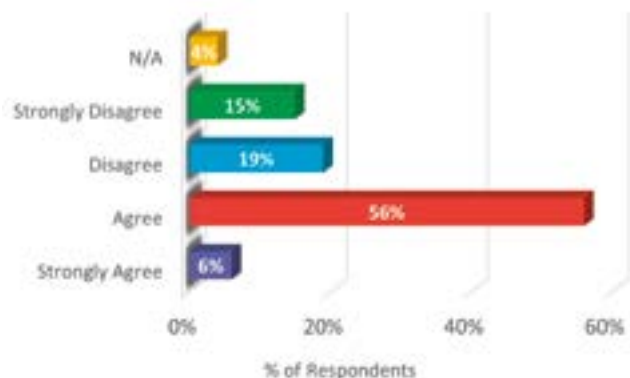
I feel that my workloads are fair and achievable.



55% of respondents agreed, while 41% disagreed

Question 2

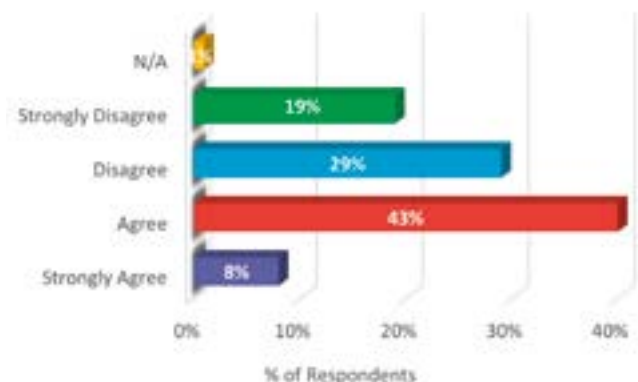
UPS is a good place to work.



62% of respondents agreed, while 34% disagreed

Question 4

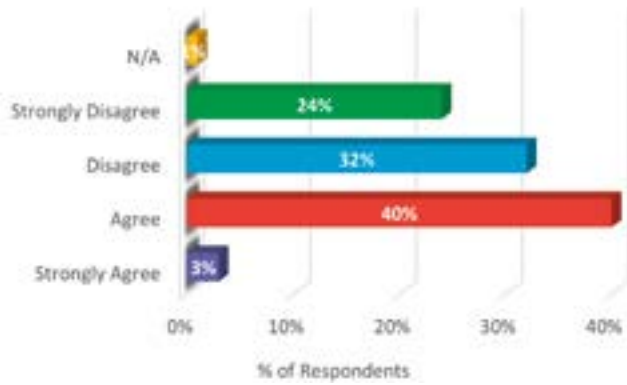
I DO NOT feel pressured by UPS management.



51% of respondents agreed, while 48% disagreed

Question 5

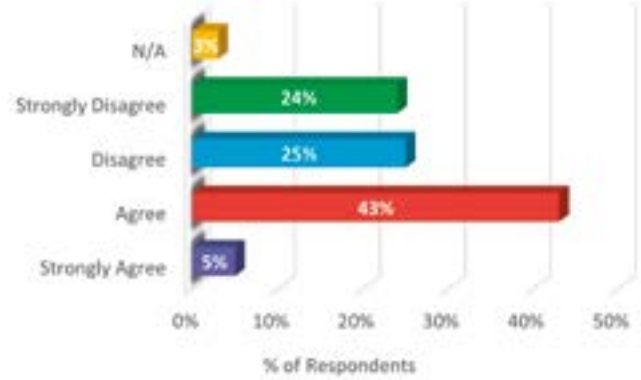
I DO NOT feel stressed at work



56% of respondents agreed, while 43% disagreed

Question 8

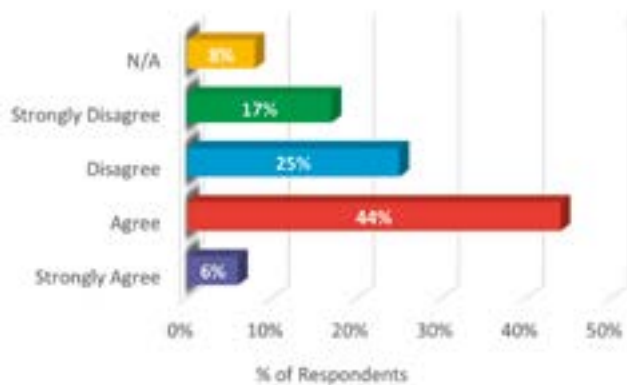
I feel that UPS management protect my health & safety.



48% of respondents agreed, while 49% disagreed

Question 6

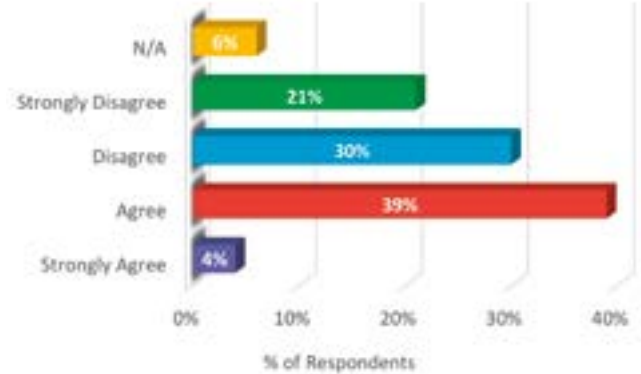
Overtime arrangements are fair



50% of respondents agreed, while 42% disagreed

Question 9

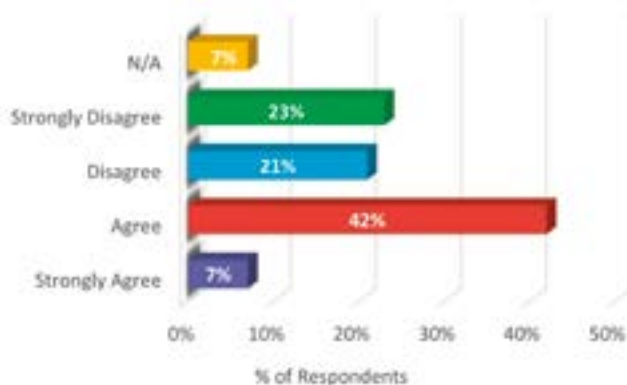
UPS applies its policies and procedures in a fair manner



43% of respondents agreed, while 51% disagreed

Question 7

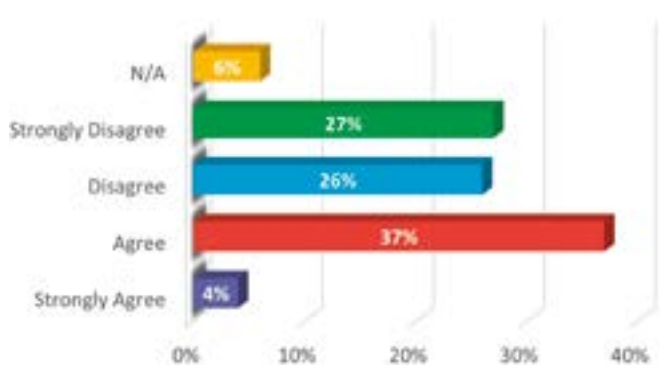
I feel that the holiday allocation process is fair and transparent



49% of respondents agreed, while 44% disagreed

Question 10

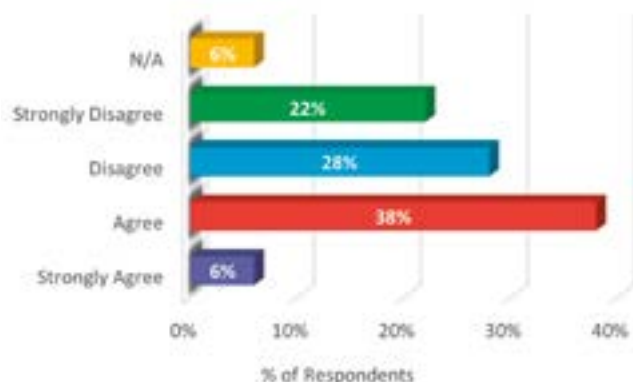
I am confident that UPS management listens to and follows-up on any concerns I raise with them



41% of respondents agreed, while 53% disagreed

Question 11

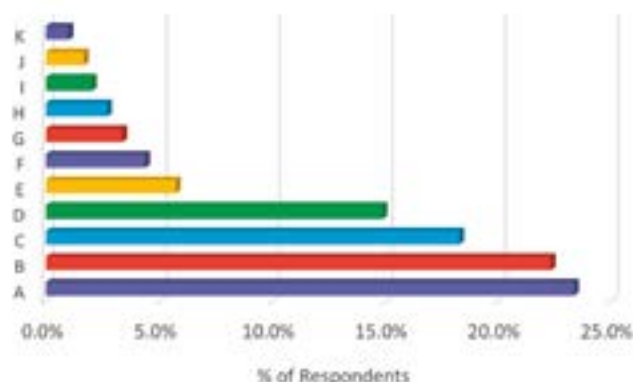
UPS management set the standard by treating all employees with dignity and respect



44% of respondents agreed, while **50%** disagreed

Question 12

If you could change three things in your workplace, what would they be?



41% of respondents agreed, while **53%** disagreed

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Question 12 Top 5 Responses: Findings by Location

- A Pay & Bonus**
- B Workload & Staffing Levels**
- C Facilities & Equipment**
- D Attitude of Management & Atmosphere**
- E Communications**

From a nationwide perspective, 62% indicated that UPS is a good place to work, while 34% reported that they disagreed. The percentage ratios vary by region, with Cork at 70/25; Shannon at 67/33; Dublin at 57/40; and Waterford at 45/33.

When asked if their workloads were fair and achievable, overall 55% indicated that they agreed with this statement, while a significant minority (44%) disagreed. In Waterford, the majority (89%) agreed with this statement. However, around one-third of staff in Cork (29%) and Shannon (33%) reported that they felt their workloads were not fair and achievable. Concerningly, in Dublin this figure jumped to 55%.

Overall, nearly half (48%) of respondents reported that they felt pressured by UPS management. This number falls to one-third in both Cork (34%) and Shannon (33%), while in Dublin it jumps to a worrying 64%, or nearly two out of three respondents indicating that they feel pressured by UPS management. The experience of the majority of respondents from Waterford appears to be different however, with 78% indicating that they do not feel pressured.

Over half (56%) of respondents overall reported feeling stressed at work. Although the levels of stress experienced in both Waterford and Cork falls when compared nationally, it still remains concerningly high at 44% in both sites. And, while it improves further in Shannon, one in three (33%) reported that they feel stressed at work. The findings indicate that the most stressful place to work is Dublin, with 70% indicating that they feel stressed at work.

Half of overall respondents (50%) indicated that they thought that overtime arrangements were fair, with 42% indicating that they were unfair. These figures were reflective across the regions, with the exception

Question 12

Breakdown of Responses:

A	Pay & Bonuses	23.4%
B	Workload & Staffing Levels	22.4%
C	Facilities & Equipment	18.3%
D	Management Attitude/ Improved Atmosphere	14.9%
E	Communications	5.8%
F	Annual Leave	4.4%
G	Policies & Procedures	3.4%
H	Improve Health & Safety	2.7%
I	Collective Bargaining	2.0%
J	Improve Work/Life Balance	1.7%
K	Training	1.0%

of Waterford, where 67% of participants indicated that overtime arrangements were unfair.

While 49% of overall respondents indicated that they thought the process of allocating holidays was fair and transparent, nearly the same amount (44%) thought it was not. These numbers varied among both the regions and the work areas, which we will explore further in the survey findings.

Overall, nearly half (49%) of total respondents felt that UPS management does not protect their health and safety. This figure dropped significantly to 30% in Cork and 22% in Waterford. However, 57% of participants in Dublin report negatively on health and safety, while in Shannon it rises further again, with 67% saying they do not feel that their health and safety is protected by UPS management.

When asked if UPS applies its policies and procedures in a fair manner, over half (51%) reported that they disagreed, while 43% agreed. However, there is a stark difference between the regions, ranging in dissatisfaction from as low as 11% in Waterford, all the way to 71% in Shannon.

Overall, 53% reported that they lacked confidence in UPS management following up on their concerns, while 41% were confident in management. Again, there were stark differences in the experiences of respondents across the regions, where dissatisfaction with management follow-up ranged from 22% in Waterford to 67% in Shannon.

Overall, half of those surveyed (50%) felt that UPS management did not set the standard in relation to dignity & respect and the treatment of staff, while 44% thought that they did. The regions again reported varying degrees of dissatisfaction, which ranged from 22% in Waterford to 62% in Shannon.

The final question in the survey asked participants "If you could change three things in your workplace, what would they be?" The number one response to this question was pay and bonuses followed by workloads & staffing levels and facilities. The fourth highest response related to the attitude of management and the workplace atmosphere. While the fifth most popular response related to improved communications from management.

The numbers and reported experiences varied among the work areas which we will now explore.

Findings by Work Area

Driver

When examining the findings by work area we found that overall, 54% of drivers report that UPS is a good place to work. Within the regions this figure dropped to 46% in Dublin and rose to 77% in Shannon.

Although there was a high degree of satisfaction in Shannon, it is not without its challenges in certain areas. Notably, 77% report dissatisfaction with the application of policies and procedures, while 69% report a lack

of confidence that UPS management listens to and follows-up on concerns.

In Cork, 92% of respondents felt that workloads are not fair and achievable, and that there was a high level of pressure from management (60%) and stress (65%).

In Dublin, it is clear that there are significant challenges in relation to the work environment, with over 90% of respondents reporting dissatisfaction in relation to their workloads, management pressure, and stress. Further, a vast majority in Dublin also report discontent with the application of policies and procedures (84%), management follow-up on concerns (92%), and dignity & respect (81%).

Pre-Load Sorters

When asked if UPS is a good place to work, overall 61% of pre-load sorters agreed. However, there is a large degree of variance between the regions, with 75% of respondents in Dublin and Shannon disagreeing with that statement. In Waterford and Cork on the other hand, all respondents agreed that UPS is a good place to work.

These figures are supported by the fact that in Waterford and Cork low levels of pressure from management and feelings of stress were reported. In addition, there is also a consistently high level of satisfaction reported in relation to health & safety, dignity & respect, the application of policies and procedures, and confidence management in those sites will listen to and follow-up on concerns.

Whereas in Dublin and Shannon, the figures suggest that participants have the opposite experience, with high levels of dissatisfaction reported in relation to achievable workloads, health & safety, dignity & respect, and the holiday allocation process.

Clerical & Brokerage

The findings reveal that, overall, workers in Clerical & Brokerage are the most content group, with 79% of respondents agreeing that UPS is a good place to work. This rises to 87% in Dublin, while in Shannon (67%) and Cork (75%) the numbers are still relatively high.

Unsurprisingly, these sites reported mainly high levels of satisfaction with regard to achievable workloads, pressure and stress, although there were a number of areas where dissatisfaction was reported. The specific dissatisfactions relate to the holiday allocation process in Cork (75%) and in Shannon (100%), as well as management follow-up (67%), and the application of policies and procedures (67%).

Notably however, all respondents in Waterford do not agree that UPS is a good place to work. These findings are supported by accompanying responses regarding stress, overtime arrangements, and holiday allocation, with 100% reporting dissatisfaction with in these questions.

Eco Hubs

The Eco Hubs are only present in Dublin so there are no regional variations to report. 55% of respondents from the Eco Hubs agreed that UPS is a good place to work.

However, 100% of respondents reported feeling stressed at work, with 82% reporting feeling pressured by management. Similarly, 82% disagree that UPS applies its policies and procedures in a fair manner. In relation to both health & safety and dignity & respect, 73% indicated dissatisfaction. Approximately two-thirds of those surveyed also reported dissatisfaction regarding workloads, holiday allocation, and management follow-up.

Conclusion

When examining the results of the survey, it was striking that whether the numbers are looked at by location or work area, or indeed both, a very clear picture emerges of what is working and what is not working in those areas.

For example, in Dublin, where drivers reported high levels of stress, management pressure, dissatisfaction with dignity & respect, and management follow-up, less than half of those workers think UPS is a good place to work.

Similarly, pre-load sorters in Dublin report high levels of stress, pressure from management, and workloads that are unachievable, and only one quarter of those workers think UPS is a good place to work.

Whereas, in Waterford and Cork, although not without their problems, pre-load sorters reported relatively low feelings of stress and pressure from management, and all of those workers who were surveyed think that UPS is a good place to work.

This pattern continues in the Clerical & Brokerage area, where the vast majority believe that UPS is a good place to work and report high levels of satisfaction in relation to workloads, stress, and management pressure.

The correlation between respondents' views on whether UPS is a good place to work or not, and their lived experience in relation to their work environment, suggests that a localised HR approach is impacting on UPS employees in their workplace.

The survey reveals that there are a number of areas of serious concern that need to be addressed, including stress levels, pressure, confidence in management, workloads, health & safety, and dignity & respect.

The findings of the survey will now be presented to UPS management with a view to addressing the issues that have been identified. This will include a detailed examination of the findings by work area and location so that the issues that have been identified in each area can be addressed.

Worker participation in this survey has given voice to the issues that matter to UPS staff and their input is invaluable in shaping the discussions that your Branch Committees will have with the Company. Members will be kept up to date on the progress of these discussions.



**If you would like to join the CWU
you can contact:
your local Branch Representative
or email: join@cwu.ie**

POSTAL UPDATE



Daniel Merriman and Freddie Drohan of our Waterford Postal Branch will be taking part in the 2023 Palestine Marathon

The Palestine Marathon aims to establish a running culture in Palestine. The event shows the international community another side of Palestinians; it creates international awareness of the Palestinian story, increases knowledge of Palestinian life, culture, and hospitality, and builds understanding across cultures.

All money raised will be distributed to registered Palestinian charitable organisations working on the ground in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Donations from Branches/members can be made directly to CWU Head Office:

Account Name: (for cheques & postal orders)
Communications Workers' Union

IBAN:
IE06 BOFI 9000 1741 1473 91

BIC:
BOFIIE2D

*Go n-éirí an bóthar libh,
a chomrádaithe!*



Photo by David Murphy Studio

STRONGER TOGETHER
CONGRESS
Irish Congress of Trade Unions



TUC
Changing the world
of work for good

stuc
Wales
TUC
Cymru

**To mark International Day
for the Elimination of
Violence against Women
and Girls and the 16 days
of Action Campaign**

**#SilenceIsCompliance
on sexual harassment
at work.**



Trade Union Women Say:

**“Silence is Compliance: Preventing & Tackling
Sexual Harassment at Work”**



Wills v Intestacy

by Deirdre Conneely, a partner at Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors LLP
of The Corn Exchange, Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 info@dlcm.ie

A Will

Your solicitor will strongly advise you to make a Will.

The most advantageous reason for making a Will is to leave your assets (also called your Estate) to the beneficiaries you have chosen and not as determined by law.

It is a clear legal document which takes effect on your death and covers all assets in your name at that time. It generally does not cover assets in joint names and in most cases these assets will automatically go to the surviving joint owner.

By making a Will you take charge of what happens to the assets you own at the date of your death and not the State. However if you do not make a Will your assets will be distributed according to the Succession Act and this may not be what you want. This is called **Intestacy** (ie. where you die without making a Will) and is set out below.

When making a Will you will nominate the person(s) responsible for carrying out your wishes (your Executor(s)). This will enable you to choose the most suitable person(s) to look after the administration of your estate.

By making a Will you can also ensure that your assets are distributed as **tax efficiently** as possible, so that the minimum amount of tax possible is payable by the beneficiaries.

A Will allows you to make provision for family members with special needs, again in a tax efficient manner.

You can change your Will at any time during your lifetime, once you have capacity and we recommend you review your Will every few years to take account of any changes in your personal circumstances or tax legislation.

A Will is automatically revoked on marriage (unless made in contemplation of that marriage) and you will need to make a new Will if getting married.

A Divorce does not revoke a Will (which may leave everything to your ex spouse) and should be reviewed/changed if there is any change in your family law circumstances.

On your death it may be necessary to extract a Grant of Probate to allow the Executor(s) to deal with your assets and distribute your Estate to the beneficiaries entitled under your Will. A Solicitor can assist with this and prepare the necessary paperwork.

Intestacy

Where a person dies without making a Will (or without making a valid Will) they are said to die "Intestate" and it is left to the State to decide how the deceased's assets

are distributed after their death.

The Rules of Intestacy are set out in the Succession Act 1965 and they determine who inherits your estate if you die Intestate. It depends on your circumstances at the date of death, and who survives you. The following sets out the persons entitled and their share on intestacy:

- **A spouse or civil partner but no children (or grandchildren):** your spouse or civil partner inherits the entire estate.
- **A spouse or civil partner and children:** your spouse/civil partner inherits two-thirds of your estate and the remaining one-third is divided equally among your children. If one of your children has died, that share goes to his/her children.
- **Children, but no spouse or civil partner:** your estate is divided equally among your children (or their children).
- **Parents, but no spouse, civil partner or children:** your estate is divided equally between your parents or given entirely to one parent if only one is living.
- **Brothers and sisters only:** your estate is shared equally among them, with the children of a deceased brother or sister taking his/her share.
- **Nieces and nephews only:** your estate is divided equally among those surviving.
- **Other relatives only:** your estate is divided equally between the nearest equal relations.
- **No relatives:** your estate goes to the State.

The person who is entitled to act as Personal Representative and extract a Grant of Letters of Administration Intestate and administer your estate is known as the Administrator and they have to ensure that the estate is distributed in accordance with the Rules on Intestacy. Again, a Solicitor can assist with this and prepare the necessary paperwork.

Summary

Your Solicitor will strongly advise you not to leave it to the State to decide how your assets are distributed after your death. Make sure to ask your Solicitor any questions you may have in relation to making your Will. They are there to help you. There are strict formalities required to make a valid Will and it is important to instruct a Solicitor – do **not** make a Will without legal advice.

Note: The above is intended as general information and is not legal advice. There are certain exceptions which may apply to you. Accordingly it is extremely important that you take legal advice on your own particular circumstances.



Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)

by Deirdre Conneely, a partner at Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors LLP
of The Corn Exchange, Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 info@dclm.ie

An Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) enables you to choose a person (called an Attorney) to manage your property and affairs in the event of you becoming mentally incapable of doing so.

If you become mentally incapacitated and have not executed an EPA, the person who wishes to look after your interests can apply to the High Court to have you made a Ward of Court. However this is more cumbersome and expensive than having an EPA.

Because the EPA involves the transfer of considerable powers from you to another person, there are a number of legal safeguards to protect you from abuses.

You must have the mental capacity to execute an EPA and your capacity has to be certified by your Solicitor and GP as soon as possible after executing the EPA.

An EPA only takes effect if you become mentally incapacitated, for example because of dementia, and are no longer able to manage your own affairs. There are strict procedures to be followed and the courts have a general supervisory role in the implementation of the power.

The Attorney may also make certain personal care decisions on your behalf which must be made in your best interests, and must be in accordance with what you would have been likely to do.

You may choose one Attorney or more than one. If more than one you have to decide whether they can act **jointly** (that is they must all act together and cannot act separately) or **jointly and severally** (that is they can all act together but they can also act separately if they wish).

You can appoint an Attorney or Attorneys to act in the event that the original Attorney is unable or unwilling to act.

You can also name any person you would like the Attorney to consult so that the Attorney can have regard to what would be in your best interests

Most people give their Attorney(s) General Power in relation to all their property and affairs to enable the Attorney(s) to be able to deal with all investments or property and to have wide powers where necessary. If you do not want your Attorney to have such wide powers restrictions can be included in the documentation.

You must give notice of the making of the Enduring Power as soon as practical to at least two persons, one has to be your closest relative and another person. This is generally done by your Solicitor who has drafted the EPA and can complete the necessary paperwork.

It is only if your Attorney has reason in the future to believe that you have become or are becoming mentally incapable of managing your affairs that an application

has to be made to have the Enduring Power registered in the High Court. Once registered it cannot be revoked unless the Court confirms the revocation and you may revoke the Power at any time before registration.

If you would like to make an Enduring Power of Attorney, your solicitor will need the following information:

1. Your date of birth.
2. Full name and address of any Attorney/Attorneys.
3. Whether Attorneys are to act jointly and severally (if more than one).
4. Whether to have general or limited authority.
5. Whether authority is to relate to all your property or affairs or only to specified property or affairs.
6. Whether personal care decisions are to be included.
7. Name and address of your GP who can certify as to your capacity.
8. Names and addresses of two notice parties, one of whom must be your nearest relative.

Please note that your Attorney/s will need to be available to sign acceptance of the Power at the same time as you are signing the Enduring Power.

You should consider the suitability of your Attorney(s) and bear in mind any potential family conflicts. The Attorney(s) should be trustworthy and reliable, with the time, energy and willpower to do the job if ever called upon and the ability to manage property and affairs.

Advanced Healthcare Directive

The Attorney does not have the power to make a decision as to whether or not a person suffering from dementia should undergo medical treatment. You can make an Advance Healthcare Directive or a Living Will to outline the medical treatment you would prefer in the event that you can no longer communicate your wishes.

Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015

The *Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015* is a legal framework of supports for adults who have difficulties with decision-making capacity which will affect the making of EPAs and Advanced Healthcare Directives. The Act has not yet come into operation and (*at the time of this publication*) is expected to be commenced at the end of November 2022.

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Combined Services Third World Fund

Civil Service An Post eir Vodafone and various State Agencies

Dear Colleagues,

At the time of writing, following suffering a harrowing two years of coping with severe restrictions, arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic, we are at last emerging - although not there yet - into some kind of what we would regard as normal living again. However, our heartfelt sympathy goes to the many families who have suffered greatly, particularly those who lost loved ones from the awful virus during lockdowns and other restrictions. On the other hand, our eternal gratitude is owed to those - especially those in the health services - who despite those very same lockdowns and restrictions, managed to keep going with their work and in many cases risked their lives for the rest of us.

As regards the Fund, as will be noticed in this Annual Report & Accounts, despite being unable for the most part to have physical meetings of the Committees, we managed to fund forty projects totalling some €247,000. However, this was in large part due to there being a substantial surplus in the Fund resulting from less activity due to constraints of the Covid 19



pandemic the previous year. As will be noted, subscriptions in 2021 are down some €36,000 on those of 2020, a downward trend, due mainly to subscriber retirements, which has been the norm for many years despite the Fund's best efforts to attract new subscribers. If this trend were to continue it would likely lead to the Fund unfortunately having to be wound up in the not too distant future.

Since its foundation in 1980, the Fund has supported almost 3,300 small projects in various parts of the developing world in excess of €9,000,000. The projects while small, have nevertheless filled a gap, as it were, in these sectors which would otherwise not be funded by some of the larger Agencies. For all this activity the Fund

is eternally grateful to its various subscribers without whom this work would not have been possible.

As mentioned above, the Fund supported forty projects totalling some €247,000 in 2021. This was made possible, by the voluntary work of the Management and Advisory Committees, despite the severe constraints on their activities arising from Covid 19.

Speaking about volunteering generally in the sector, it is our experience that it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain and attract volunteers for such committees because of the vast changes in fiduciary and legislative obligations that impact directly on them. For example, increasing legal obligations under the Charities Act, Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection obligations, Audit directives, etc., and a tendency by Regulators to adopt a 'one size fits all' approach.

www.cstwf.ie

**15 Lower Hatch Street
Dublin 2 Ireland**

Telephone: 01 4082473/75

Email: thecstwf@hotmail.com

Just a very few examples of CSTWF projects supported in 2021:



Equipping a surgical department at Kamkop Medical Centre in Cameroon

A grant of €8,000 was provided to the centre in January 2021. The purpose of the equipment - installed in June 2021 - is to provide access to surgical services among the residents of the Kamkop community, e.g. pregnant women in surgical emergencies such as Caesarian sections. Maternal and infant mortality has already reduced.



Purchase of Projectors, Mumias School for Deaf Girls, Kenya

€7,500 was granted in June 2021 to the School which is the only school in western Kenya that serves mainly deaf and deaf/blind girls. The equipment has enhanced learning and enabled the students to understand better the skills they need in order to compete in the Twenty-First Century.



Construction of a Classroom Block, Kontagora, Niger State, Nigeria

Also in January 2021 a sum of €8,000 was granted to the Society of African Missions for the construction of classrooms for a new dry season literacy course in the remote Kigbera region of Borgu Local Government area of Niger State.



Structures maintenance at Emmaus Outreach Centre, Bamenda, Cameroon

The Centre caters for mentally impaired and homeless persons. It provides them with a place to sleep, eat and some health care services. A grant of €7,800 was approved in April 2021 towards the restoration of access structures eroded by long periods of heavy rain.



Acquisition of two motorcycles for Health Outreach Programme, Ashanti Region, Ghana

The programme is provided by the Oku Clinic, one of two clinics covering a district of about 1,564 sq. kms which has no hospital. It serves an isolated population of around 7,000 in 25 settlements and 10 outreach points. Tractors, motorcycles and modern 4-wheel-drive are the only form of transport that manage the mud roads during the rainy season. The fund provided €5,000 for the motorcycles in August 2021 to assist access to outreach points.



As mentioned above, there has been a continuing unfortunate downward trend in subscriptions to the Fund. If you are not a subscriber and wish to contribute to the good work of the Fund, please contact Ciara or Joe at the Combined Services Third World Fund on:

01 4082473/75 or email: thecstwf@hotmail.com

CSTWF Receipts and Payments Account Year Ending 31st December 2021

Receipts		2021	2020
	Notes	€	€
Subscriptions	1	206,505	242,876
TOTAL RECEIPTS		206,505	242,876
Payments			
Projects	2	247,000	156,500
Office Expenses		11,494	13,363
TOTAL PAYMENTS		258,494	169,863
Excess Receipts over Payments		(51,989)	73,013
Opening Bank Balance		100,107	27,097
Closing Bank Balance		48,118	100,107

Prepared from the 2021 accounts of the Combined Services Th World Fund by the Fund's Registered Auditors

(Signed) **Natalie Kelly**
25th February 2022

Crowleys DFK Unlimited Company
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm
16/17 College Green Dublin 2



- Education
- Community Development
- Solar
- Water
- Agriculture
- Health

CSTWF grants made in 2021 (€000's)

Note 1		
No.	Donor	Amount
		€
1	Agriculture, Food & Marine	16,211
2	An Bord Pleanála	308
3	An Post	40,198
4	Attorney General	539
5	Business, Enterprise & Innovation	3,265
6	Central Statistics Office	2,892
7	Chief State Solicitor's Office	542
8	Children & Youth Affairs	1,514
9	Coillte	3,990
10	Dept of Communications, Climate Action & Environment	621
11	Comptroller & Auditor General	262
12	Courts Service	2,795
13	Dept of Culture, Heritage & Gaeltacht	562
14	Data Protection Commission	40
15	Dept of Defence	1,756
16	Director of Public Prosecutions	362
17	Dept of Education & Skills	5,157
18	Further & Higher Education	299
19	eir	2,084
20	eir Pensioners	5,556
21	Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection	14,822
22	Finance	800
23	Accountant Dept of Finance	109
24	Foreign Affairs & Trade	4,142
25	Garda Civilian	2,840
26	Health	2,175
27	Health & Safety Authority	239
28	Housing, Planning & Local Government	3,976
29	Individual Subscriptions	400
30	Irish Aviation Authority	440
31	Justice & Equality	4,136
32	National Library	132
33	National Lottery	336
34	Office of Public Works	2,881
35	Oireachtas Leinster House	1,215
36	Ombudsman	106
37	Ordinance Survey	727
38	PMG Pensions	39,141
39	President	51
40	Prison Service	181
41	Property Registration Authority	1,400
42	Public Appointments Service	460
43	Public Expenditure & Reform	1,404
44	Revenue Commissioners	27,294
45	Road Safety Authority	446
46	Dept of Rural & Community Development	885
47	Sea Fisheries Protection Authority	210
48	Shared Services	1,292
49	State Laboratory	255
50	Taoiseach	701
51	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	1,333
52	Dept of Transport, Tourism & Sport	2,262
53	Unidentified	81
54	Valuation Office	542
55	Vodafone	77
56	Waterways Ireland	61
Total		206,505

		Note 2	
Project	Country	Projects Funded	Amount €
3215	Pakistan	Rehabilitation of Agricultural land for poverty stricken farmers	2,800
3231	Uganda	Rainwater harvesting at St Luke's Health Centre, Luwero	6,800
3238	Tanzania	Borehole at Village Community, Kondoa	6,000
3240	Rwanda	Rainwater canalization, Muzenge Science School, Ruhengeri	7,000
3241	Zambia	Home & Economics Laboratory, Secondary School, Nalwei	8,000
3242	Cameroon	Equiping of Surgical Department, Medical Centre, Kemcop	8,000
3243	Rwanda	Rainwater harvesting, Nyanagumba Primary School, Ruhengeri	6,000
3244	Uganda	Water Tank, Centre for Children with special needs, Wakiso District	6,000
3245	Tanzania	Brick making machine, Youth vocational development, Singida	7,000
3246	Tanzania	Bee keeping, Widows & Orphans, Njombe District,	6,500
3247	Tanzania	Solar system, Orphanage Centre, Sumbawawla, Katandala	7,500
3248	Cameroon	New Toilets, Health Centre, Bafang, Yabassi	5,000
3249	Nigeria	Three Classroom Block, Kontagora, Niger State	8,000
3250	Tanzania	Girl's Dormitory, St. Bonaventure Primary School	7,000
3252	Uganda	Ultra Sound Scan Machine, Musuli Health Centre	5,500
3253	India	Iron beds for Girl's Hostel, Lourdu Matha, Thallampadu	5,500
3254	Cameroon	Structure maintainance, Emmaus Outreach Centre, Bamenda	7,800
3256	Tanzania	Rainwater harvesting, Arusha	7,800
3257	Kenya	Borehole, Girl's Secondary School, Timau Meru	6,500
3258	Kenya	Projectors, School for Deaf Girls, Mumias	7,500
3260	Kenya	Out of School Youth Project, Nairobi	6,000
3261	Senegal	School, Kaolock Regiion	4,000
3262	Cameroon	Community Borewell, Bayelle - Bamenda	3,800
3263	Malawi	Two classrooms, Chikabvumbwa Primary School	5,000
3264	India	Multipurpose Community Development Hall, Sirumalai, Nagar	8,000
3265	Ghana	Two motorcycles for Healthcare Outreach Programme, Oku Clinic	5,000
3266	Pakistan	Safe drinking water, High School, Chowk Sarwar Shaheed Ghan	6,500
3267	Tanzania	Furniture and fittings for Pharmaceutical Assistant's School, Ngaramtomi	8,000
3268	Uganda	Wheelchairs, Kawalo Welfare Primary School, Kampala	8,000
3269	India	Toilets & Bathrooms, Caussanel Psychiatric Rehab Centre, Mekkalar	5,000
3270	Uganda	Pit Latrnes & Water Harvesting, Primary School, Masaka	4,500
3271	Malawi	Renovation of Building for Laboratory, Kasina Health Centre	5,000
3272	Uganda	Sewing Machines, Vocational School	4,000
3273	Kenya	Water & Sanitation, Boarding School, Sondu	5,000
3274	Nigeria	Secondary School renovation, Enungba, Agatu, Benue State	4,000
3275	Uganda	Completion Of Classroom Block, Ssenyange Hilfs Primary School	8,000
3277	Tanzania	Renovation, Girl's Dormitory, Duluti, Arusha	8,000
3278	Uganda	Completion of Out Patient Block, St Luc Eye Clinic, Bwanda	8,000
3279	Ethiopia	Furniture & Equipment, Primary School, Bongo Town	8,000
3283	Kenya	Basic Computer Skills Training for Youth, Mukuru	6,000
3223	Tanzania	Medical Equipment, Mkulwe Health Centre - overpayment in 2020	(5,000)
		Total	247,000

High Level Group Outlines Key Principles for New Era of Collective Bargaining

by Andy Prendergast



THE High Level Group on Collective Bargaining has published its long-awaited recommendations on industrial relations reform, involving four principles – including a new measure compelling non-union employers to engage with trade unions.

As first reported in *Industrial Relations News (IRN)* recently, the group has made a series of recommendations under four key principles: “good faith” engagement, reform of the Joint Labour Committee system; the use of technical assessors in cases taken under the 2001-2015 IR Acts; and an education and training initiative for local level enterprise bargaining.

The Group, established last year by An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar, worked under the auspices of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF). It was chaired by Professor Michael Doherty and features high-ranking social partners, including Patricia King and Kevin Callinan of ICTU, and Danny McCoy and Maeve McElwee of IBEC.

The level of membership required could be developed by Labour Court recommendations.

The work of the Group is also cognisant of the forthcoming EU Directive on adequate minimum wages, which will require most Member States to promote collective bargaining.

IRN has received a wide range of initial reactions to the report’s recommendations, ranging from them being a positive “stepping stone”, to concern about a negative reaction in the FDI sector. Another informed observer told IRN that the proposals relating to non-union companies will change little on the ground unless unions significantly increase their membership.

What will arguably stir the most attention from the Group’s recommendations, particularly amongst non-union multinationals operating in Ireland, is the “good

faith” engagement recommendation, which outlines a new path for trade unions to get non-union companies to sit down with them.

Heretofore, trade unions seeking inroads with non-union employers had two routes they could pursue, outside of industrial action: referrals under section 20(1) of the 1969 IR Act to the Labour Court, or initiate the process introduced in the 2001-2015 Industrial Relations Acts – also known as the “right to bargain” law.

Recommendations under section 20(1) of the 1969 IR Act are generally regarded as toothless, as they are binding only on the union, while the 2001-2015 Acts have been fraught with complications over the past two decades.

‘Good Faith’ Process

Now, the Group recommends a new process for “good faith” engagement. This process attracts various standards and recourse for trade unions to the Labour Court – and Circuit Court, if necessary – but stops short of compelling collective bargaining or requiring the parties to reach an agreement.

An abbreviated version of the process is as follows:

1. A trade union makes a written request to an employer, seeking talks in relation to pay and/or terms and conditions of employment of a “grade, group or category” of workers.
2. The union must establish a threshold of membership amongst the specific grade, group or category of workers. No explicit threshold is recommended but the 10% marker (as featured in the Employees (Information and Consultation) Act 2006) is referenced.

- However, the Group says to avoid setting a strict percentage or numerical threshold, the level of membership required, “could be one that is ‘meaningful’ (leaving it to Labour Court to develop, through any recommendations it might issue, guidance on this term).” The requirements of unions using the “right to bargain” law at the Labour Court is suggested to operate here.
3. Where the employer does not engage, the matter can be referred to the Labour Court for investigation. The Court can decline to conduct an investigation into a request for good faith engagement, where it is satisfied that the employer is already engaged in collective bargaining with a recognised trade union or a properly constituted accepted body.
 4. The employer and the trade union engage in good faith:
 - A good faith engagement meeting will be held within a defined time period.
 - A clear agenda outlining the key representations to be made must be furnished by the trade union in advance of the meeting.
 - The good faith engagement meeting should be attended by the relevant management and trade union representatives.
 - The employer will give genuine consideration to the key representations set out by the trade union in the agenda.
 - The employer will furnish the trade union with a clear, considered, and reasoned response, in writing, to the key representations made, within a reasonable period.
 - Each party will be afforded an opportunity to obtain reasonable clarifications solely regarding the key agenda items discussed and/ or the written response furnished.
 5. The trade union cannot take industrial action once the good faith engagement process has been triggered.
 6. A trade union has recourse to the Labour Court if the employer has not engaged in good faith. The Labour Court shall give the parties an opportunity to be heard and decide whether the complaint is, or is not, well-founded. If the Labour Court finds that the complaint is well-founded, it may make a recommendation setting out what the employer should do in order to comply with the good faith engagement obligation under this process. Whether a recommendation is made to have a good faith engagement is a matter entirely at the discretion of the Labour Court.
 7. A trade union may complain to the Labour Court, within six weeks of the Labour Court issuing its recommendation, that there has been a failure to comply with the recommendation. The Labour Court shall give the parties an opportunity to be

heard and decide whether the complaint is, or is not, well-founded. If the Labour Court finds that the complaint is well-founded, it may make a determination setting out what the employer should do in order to comply with the good faith engagement obligation under this process.

8. Where there is a failure to comply with the terms of a determination, the trade union can seek enforcement at the Circuit Court. The Circuit Court shall, without hearing the employer or any further evidence, make an order directing the employer to carry out the determination in accordance with its terms.
9. Failure to comply with such an order of the Circuit Court would be an offence and be subject to a pecuniary penalty.
10. The trade union may not make any further application to the Labour Court for a good faith engagement for a period of three years.

What makes good faith engagement?

The Group outlines the following, non-exhaustive principles as constituting good faith engagement:

- Attending, and participating in, any meeting within a reasonable timeframe.
- Giving genuine consideration to representations made by the other party.
- Providing any relevant information (other than confidential or commercially sensitive information) in a timely manner.
- Giving a clear, considered, and reasoned written response to representations made by the other party following a good faith meeting within an agreed timeframe.
- The parties should be responsive, and must not do anything likely to mislead or deceive each other.
- The size, composition and representative nature of the trade union and employer representatives should be reasonable and balanced between the parties.
- Refraining from capricious or unfair conduct (this could include, for example, refusing to meet, or discuss, with properly nominated representatives of the other party; penalisation of an employee due to trade union activity; interfering with the process of the parties’ nomination of their independent representatives; unduly hurrying the engagement to prevent proper consideration; taking extreme positions with the intention of shutting down the engagement)
- Each party should be responsible for making its own record of discussions held.

Technical Assessors

The Group also recommends the use of technical assessors for cases that are before the Labour Court

under the 2001-2015 Industrial Relations Acts.

Despite being amended in 2015, this avenue for trade unions seeking a bargaining platform seemingly ran aground after just four separate cases brought before the Court.

The Group identified several difficulties claims under this provision can encounter:

- Precise data on the types of jobs done may be difficult to establish where the named comparator(s) are not party to the dispute and have no reason, incentive, or obligation to supply any information.
- It may be difficult to obtain organisational information on named comparator(s) not party to the dispute, where such comparator(s) have no reason, incentive, or obligation to supply any information.
- Terms and conditions of employment clearly constitute commercially sensitive information. Named comparator(s) not party to the dispute have no reason, incentive, or obligation to supply any information (and, in fact, are likely to have an interest in not doing so for commercial and industrial relations reasons).

The Group now recommends the use of technical assessors to assist the Labour Court on any matter relating to proceedings before the Court. The use of such assessors is already provided for under section 14 of the 1946 Industrial Relations Act.

Bargaining Training

The report also adds a recommendation on collective bargaining training, citing, in particular, the various uses of section 20 of the 1969 IR Act.

Referrals under section 20(2) of the Act – where both the union and company agree in advance to be “bound” by the Court’s recommendation – are an, arguably, underused feature of the Act, while section 20(1) referrals, which are much more common, have little to no effect on the employer against whom the claim is taken.

The Group now says that constructive and efficient collective bargaining processes “require support for those, on all sides, engaging in such processes.”

They recommend using the National Training Fund Act 2000 to access funding for trade unions and employers. Providing training in the practice of collective bargaining “will not only increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the process but may encourage greater take-up of collective bargaining opportunities.”

The report also outlines a 13-point Code of Practice on Best Practice on Enterprise Level Collective Bargaining.

The Group emphasises its recommendations on the four principles “should not be considered as the end of a process, but as one element of what will be ongoing efforts to improve the system of industrial relations in Ireland, respecting the autonomy of the social

partners, and to continue to build relationships of trust, confidence, and mutual respect between employers and workers and their representatives at all levels (national, sectoral, and local).”

“These efforts should be focused on attempting to resolve any differences through structured engagement between the parties, in line with Ireland’s voluntarist tradition, rather than through recourse to the adversarial common law system.”

Meeting Obligations

The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, welcomed the Group’s report, saying it “will now be fully considered by Government, with a view to how its recommendations can be best implemented.”

He said its publication is “timely, given the renewed focus at a European and international level on collective bargaining.” The Group’s recommendations “will ensure Ireland is well placed to respond to EU developments in relation to collective bargaining.”

The Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, noted that Ireland “operates a voluntary system of industrial relations, where the State tries to help parties to reach agreement among themselves. This has been very successful in resolving many complex and protracted disputes.”

“However, our laws are weak when parties refuse to engage”, he said. “We also need to keep abreast of the legal situation, as well as developments at EU level which will require us to promote better representation of workers in the workplace.”

He said he has now asked the Department to consider the report, consult with stakeholders and develop proposals for implementation which would be subject to a further Government decision.

ICTU General Secretary, Patricia King, said Congress “endorses the Group’s recommendations and believes them to be crucial to aligning our industrial relations procedures with our EU peers and for delivering improved outcomes for workers and employers as well as for society and the economy as a whole.”

IBEC CEO, Danny McCoy, said it is “important to look forward, for business to work to shape the right conditions for future engagements and maintain the best aspects of our existing, very stable industrial relations environment.”

He added: “There was strong consensus in the Working Group that the recommendations contained in the report to the Tánaiste, if implemented, will be a significant first step in progressing a positive momentum in collective bargaining coverage and meeting our upcoming obligations under the Directive.”

The work of the High-Level Group and its recommendations are due to be discussed at the *IRN Conference 2022* in Dublin this week, featuring members of the Group, Chair Michael Doherty, Patricia King (ICTU) and Maeve McElwee (Ibec).

CWU PHOTO COMPETITION PRIZEWINNERS



1st Prize

Stephen Walsh

Nth-Wicklow/Sth-Wexford

Only a Winters Tail

2nd Prize

Michael Kearney

Retired Members

Girl with bowl of berries

*(Photo taken with natural light
early July 2022)*



3rd Prize

Mick Bohan

KNN Contractors

**Rushing waters in
Connemara**

Galway Postal Branch Retirements

Galway Postal Branch held a Retirement Party recently for a number of newly-retired members. CWU General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, and Paul Kennedy, NEC, made the presentations and wished everyone the very best for a long and happy retirement.



Nora Daly



Peggy Byrne



Mike Keaveney



Mike Curran



Mary Conroy



John Fahy



Eileen Mattimoe



Breege Glynn



Alan Small

Galway Postal Coffee Morning

Galway Postal held a Coffee Morning in Galway DSU in September to support Carmel Heery PO, who was part of the Irish Deaf Women's Futsal football team that travelled to the European Championships in Italy in

October, 2022.

Huge congratulations are due to both Carmel and her team mates who qualified for the World Cup Tournament next year!



Special Delivery



Paul Moore from Gorey DSU, with the first postal delivery to his granddaughter, Sophie Moore, from Gorey, who lives on his post route. Here's hoping Paul (and Santa!) have plenty more nice surprise deliveries for Sophie for many years to come. How Cute! She is a little beauty 😊

Billy McCormack Retires



Billy McCormack, Dublin Postal Clerks Branch, getting his Union Scroll from Lee Corcoran, Branch Committee member, on his retirement from An Post. Best wishes for the future!

MIKE DALY RETIRES



Mike Daly, former Branch Secretary from UPS in Shannon, pictured on his retirement after 35 years, with all his colleagues in the depot. We wish him a happy and healthy retirement. Included in the group is Laurence Mullen, incoming Chairman, Ivan Thomas, Treasurer, and Orla Quinn Madden, Secretary.

Frank Freney Retires



Frank Freney, pictured with his colleagues, being presented with his Union Scroll, on the day of his retirement from Cashel DSU after 16 years with An Post and CWU Tipperary Postal Branch.

Pat Reddan & Michael Thompson Retire



Roscrea DSU Staff celebrate with Pat Reddan (left), with 30 years' service and Michael Thompson (right), with 22 years' service. They are pictured with DSU Manager, Jimmy Cooney (centre), and their work colleagues. The Branch wish them both a long and healthy retirement.

Eamonn "Bagpipes" Walsh Retires



Adrian Scanlon, NEC & Branch Secretary, DPAB, presenting Eamonn with a framed copy of the Union Scroll while Tom Horan, Plant Manager DMC Campus, presented Eamonn with a statuette of Cú Chulainn. Pictured in the background is Eamonn's Posts & Telegraph uniform, together with a 1927 Postman's Bicycle, which he used outside the GPO during the centenary of the 1916 Rising. Well-known Eamonn retired from An Post after 43 years' service. He joined the P&T in 1979 as a Postman and worked in the Central Sorting Office in Sheriff Street. He was a staunch Union supporter and played the Uilleann Pipes at a number of Union demonstrations. He also played at the Official opening of CWU HQ on March 28th 2013.

Sé Cullen Retires



Sé Cullen, Branch Manager of Flagship Retail Office GPO, Dublin, having spent many years guiding the ship through sometimes turbulent waters and, on occasion, just about managing to keep it off the rocks, has decided to vacate the Bridge and retire. The Public Office GPO Dublin is a multi-faceted affair, with Sé presiding over several circles at play therein, the inner circle, outer circle and indeed the inner inner circle, sometimes being eccentric. Suffice to say Captain Sé will be sorely missed, as he departs the Flagship, rowing off into the Sunset, we wish him well for the future, fair winds and calm waters!

Shay Cullen being presented with his Union Scroll on his last day by Colin Moore, Dublin Postal Managers' Branch Secretary. We wish him well on his retirement.

Dundalk Postal Branch Retirements



Committee member, Benny McDonald presented Anne McDonald with her Union Scroll after 38 years' service in Retail.



Chairperson, Mark Gilmore, presented Paddy Fitzpatrick with his Union Scroll, following 50 years' service in Retail.



Following 25 years' service as a Postal Operative, Patricia Long received her Union Scroll from fellow Carlingford Postman and best friend, John Ferguson.

Carrick-on-Shannon Branch Retirements



Pictured centre are: Pat Cassidy, Phyllis McTague and Michael Convey, who retired from An Post in Carrick-on-Shannon and who each received their Union Scrolls from (far left) John Tansey, Regional Officer CWU, and (far right) Sean Murtagh, CWU Branch Secretary Carrick-on-Shannon. (Picture credit Gerry Faughnan).

Mike Kelly Retires



Presentation of CWU Scroll to Mike Kelly by Tony Doyle, Section Chairperson, CWU Galway District Branch. Mike has retired after almost 45 years' service and we wish him a long and happy retirement.

Alan Keaveney Retires



Barry Kehoe, Alan Keaveney and Darren Clucas, following Alan's retirement from the Bray Postal Branch, and receiving a Presentation Gift and the Union Scroll.



Marion Morris Retires

Marion Morris, who worked in the TV licence section in Kells, retires after serving 41 years. Everyone at Kells DSU wish her well in her retirement and, on behalf of the Branch, want to thank her for all her dedication and service for many years as Branch Treasurer.

Marion is pictured here receiving her Union Scroll and Presentation Gift from Branch Secretary, Catherine Farrell.

ITF World Cup 2022



Alison Greal (*pictured 3rd from left in photo*) travelled to Slovenia for the ITF World Cup, which took place from 3/10/2022 to 08/10/2022.

She was successful in taking a bronze medal in Team Patterns. This was her first World Championship

competition and follows her previous success at European Championship level.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the CWU for their support. We gratefully appreciate your assistance and generosity.

Portlaoise Mails Centre All-Ireland Success



Laois bridge 22-year gap to claim All-Ireland Ladies Intermediate Football title.

Portlaoise Mails Centre celebrate their very own Erone Fitzpatrick, who is pictured with teammate Mo Nerney and Portlaoise Postal Branch colleagues, celebrating the Laois Ladies' win over Wexford recently.

Huge congratulations, well done and best of luck for next season!

Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Retirements

Presentations were made by Frank Donohoe, Vice-President, Gerry Sexton NEC, Seán O'Donnell, Branch Chairman, and Richie Edgeworth, Committee Member, to recent DPDB retirees



*Eamonn Prendergast,
Tallaght DSU*



*Tommy Dornan,
Bannow Road DSU*



*Beatrice Carty,
Dunshaughlin DSU*



*Kevin Keatinge,
Churchtown*



*Mick Murphy,
Blanchardstown DSU*

CWU PEOPLE



*Declan Whelan,
Baldoyle DSU*



*Kevin Lynch,
Blackrock DSU*



*Brendan Brady,
Rutland Place*



*Ben Baker,
Glenageary DSU*



From l to r:

*Ciaran Doyle, Branch Representative,
Michael Brennan, DSU 16, who was presented
with his Union Scroll following his retirement,
and Cormac Ó Dálaigh, National Officer.*

Portlaoise Mails Centre Vigil



Staff at Portlaoise Mail Centre hosted a vigil on Saturday, November 5, to honour colleagues, past and present, and those unwell at this time. Colleagues, family and friends gathered on what was an emotional day and received a blessing from Fr. David Bard, who attended the Centre.

“The idea was born from a very sad occasion on a memorial walk for Ashling Murphy last January. This was our respectful way of remembering our past colleagues and friends and keeping in our minds those that are sick at the moment”, said Karen Connolly.

I want to say a special thank you to all who volunteered and supported us on the day, making sure everything

was in place and who helped serve the refreshments provided by Aileen Donohue, Plant Manager, PMC. A special word of thanks to Ellen Moore and the CWU Portlaoise Postal Branch for their generous donation towards the cost on the day, Karen added.

Also special thanks to Anthony Maher, Tony Cahill, Deirdre Delaney, Ellen Moore, Elaine Fitzpatrick and Dina Considine for organising the event, which they hope will become an annual event.

Following the vigil, a donation was made to Path Portlaoise Action to help homeless people and extra refreshments were transported to Dublin to feed those in need.



Portlaoise Mail Centre participate in the first Pride Parade to be held in Portlaoise on 17th September 2022





Libby Downes QFA CIP
Managing Director
libby@fmdownes.com

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Kate Ruane QFA CIP
Insurance Specialist
kate@fmdownes.com

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- 💬 Text **'Review'** to **51444** to receive a call
- 🌐 Visit **www.fmdownes.com** to schedule a call
- ✉ Email **info@fmdownes.com** subject line "CWU Review"



Wishing all our friends in the CWU a Merry Christmas and Happy 2023



Dublin No. 2 Retirements

*Dublin No.2 members receiving their CWU Scrolls and Badges on their retirement from eir.
Marie Glennon, Michael Dooley, Kevin Gaffney, Murtagh Doyle and Gerry Christie.*



Kells Postal Branch Remembrance Garden



Catherine Farrell and Peter Duffy, Branch Secretary and Chairperson, officially opening the Kells Postal Branch Memorial Garden

THE Kells Postal Branch recently renovated and opened a remembrance garden/mindfulness space for everyone to enjoy in the grounds of the DSU. Everyone in the Branch worked tirelessly and pulled together to create the space for all to enjoy.

Branch Secretary, Catherine Farrell, said she was immensely proud of what the Branch had achieved and hoped everyone would enjoy the quiet space and use it

to remember colleagues who are sadly no longer with us.

Special mention was given to the O'Reilly, McCaughey, Taite and Quail families and the Branch Secretary thanked them for making the day special by being present for the Opening Ceremony.

She finished by thanking representatives from CWU and An Post who were also present at the official opening. Congratulations to all involved and well done.

Enjoying the Kells Postal Branch Remembrance Garden:



Jane Duffy, Marian Morris, Martin Smith and Cyril Convey



Noel Flanagan and Phelim Denning celebrate the opening with a coffee

CWU PEOPLE



Noel Taite's family pictured with Catherine Murphy, HR Manager An Post



Branch members, Brendan Brady, Michael Daly and Eamon Yore enjoying a cuppa and a chat



Roisin Doughty, Assistant Branch Secretary, and Eugene Mattimoe, Area Manager Mails & Parcels in An Post



Roisin Doughty, Assistant Branch Secretary, Martin County, DSM, Micheal Pritchard, Padraig Carpenter and Peter Duffy, Branch Chairperson



Peadar Burns, a friend of the late Hughie Reilly, pictured with Kevin Reilly, both enjoying the space



Martin County, DSM Kells, Catherine Farrell, Branch Secretary Kells Postal Branch, Catherine Murphy, An Post HR Manager, Jarlath Heneghan, Regional Officer and Peter Duffy, Branch Chairperson

Carmel Duffy RIP

Carmel Duffy, Staff No. D66611 began working in telecommunications on 8th August 1979 the company then known as P+T (Post and Telegraph). Carmel trained in Ballina, Co Mayo and was then offered a move to Lifford, Co Donegal, where she lived during the week and came home to her beloved Carrowmacbrine at the weekends. During this period both Carmel's parents passed away within 18 months of each other and so to support her family, four siblings of which she is the eldest, she requested a transfer and was moved back home to Sligo.



Carmel worked in the Telephone Exchange on the Switch Board in Easkey, Co Sligo for a period until she was moved to Sligo Town where she worked in The National Rehabilitation Centre working with the Visually Impaired, teaching Telephony. She found this job challenging but rewarding and was always delighted to see the trainees receive their certificates after completing their course, enabling them to obtain employment. Carmel was also a Telephonist in the Telephone Exchange in Sligo Town for a period and following the closing of this building she and her colleagues moved to Rathedmond where she spent many happy years.

Carmel's final job description was Cable Database Coordinator – working with teams on the road all over Ireland. She really enjoyed this job and its challenges. She loved talking to different people throughout the day. Making sure jobs were out in time and within reasonable distances for the crews. She liked to have everything in order and to be organised for the following day which would often mean a late evening at the office. Carmel was well known for her beautiful baking and would often bring some homemade treats

to work, apple tarts, scones, porter cakes and not forgetting the Christmas cakes earning her the title 'Queen of tarts'!

When Carmel got her terrible news, from that day to her last 'the lads on the road' never left her mind. Likewise she and her daughter quickly learned the feeling was mutual – the support, well wishes and constant encouragement shown by her colleagues was amazing and meant so much to her. She always got a lift with every txt, phone call, card, letter, bouquet of flowers etc. she received. Carmel's daughter Denise

would like to take this opportunity to thank you all so very much for this support and especially through such a difficult time of the pandemic. Carmel worked in telecommunications for 40years seeing the company through many changes. Like most jobs there were ups and downs but she loved her job and all the connections she made throughout her 40years.

Carmel was extremely proud of where she came from, a little area called Carrowmacbrine beside the sea in Rathlee, Co Sligo. She often spoke of wanting to get the area tidy at the end of her road and have a picnic area developed for locals and visitors alike. So with this in mind a stone picnic table and seats were designed with some symbols reflecting Carmel's life and were put in place for her birthday 9th October 2021. If ever any of you are in the area please feel free to pay this a visit, sit and take in the lovely sea air and the calming sound of the sea that Carmel loved so much, without doubt she is never too far away.

*Where a Beautiful Soul has travelled
Beautiful Memories
Remain Forever*

Josephine (Josie) McKenna RIP



There was great sadness in Dundalk Postal Branch with the passing of the late Josephine (Josie) McKenna after a short illness, on the 4th September 2022.

Josie was a cleaner in both Dundalk DSU and Dundalk retail office since June 1997 and her passing is deeply regretted by all her colleagues. She was a wonderful lady, full of kindness and compassion and had a great connection with every member of staff with her craic and a cuppa.

The esteem with which Josie was held was evident by the large attendance of her colleagues from both offices at her funeral. She was a true friend, a wonderful colleague and a devout family woman. She will be sadly missed by her husband Michael, sons, Brendan and Barry, her mother, Bridie, and all her family.

On behalf of the Dundalk Postal Branch we pass on our sincere condolences to her family. She will always be remembered very fondly, so goodbye for now Josie, a friend, colleague, lady.

Kieran Mooney RIP



The death has occurred of Kieran Mooney, a long-standing retired member of the Dublin Postal Delivery Branch who was a great CWU supporter and a genuine dear friend to many of us.

Kieran was a true gentleman: generous, warm and always in good form. He was loved by all who met him and could always bring a smile to your face. He will be sadly missed by all his friends, which was proven by the huge crowd who gather to say a final farewell to him in Dardistown Crematorium.

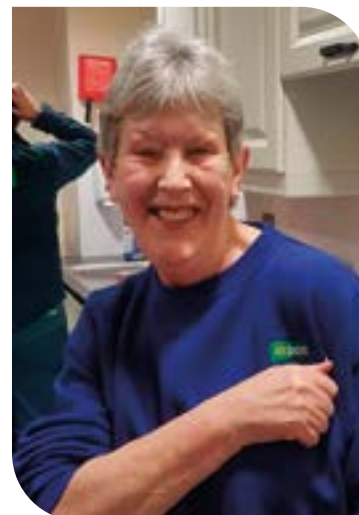
Kieran passed away suddenly at home on 25th October 2022. He was the beloved husband of the late Marjorie and father of the late John. Sadly missed by his sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren, sisters, extended family, friends and neighbours. May he rest in peace.

Nora Quail RIP

Sadly, on the 22nd of June 2022, we lost a dear friend, Nora Quail (RIP) She was so full of life, with the biggest heart and always had a cup of tea and chat for everyone. She never forgot a birthday or a family occasion - her warm personality and her zest for life and fun, and sense of family and community spirit shone through everyday.

We were privileged to work with Nora in Kells. We will remember her fondly and miss the wit and wisdom we had with her every day. We extend our sincere condolences to her husband Jimmy, sons James, Mark and Liam and the extended Quail and Kearns family.

Ar Dheis De go raibh a hanam.



Anne Coghlan RIP

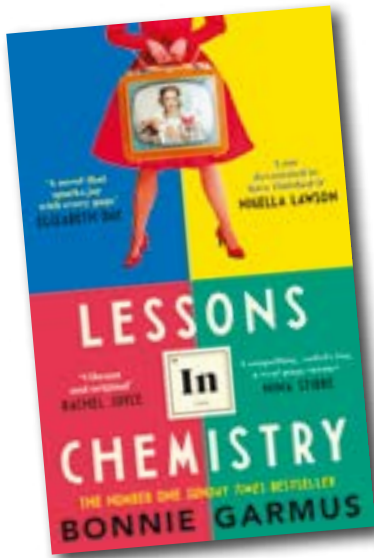


Long-standing member of CWU in Billpost, Anne Coghlan, passed away recently.

Her colleagues extend their deepest sympathies to her family and friends. She will be dearly missed by everyone in Kilrush.



Book Review by Adrienne Power



LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

Author: Bonnie Garmus

First published: 2022

Quotes from the book:

"Your days are numbered.

Use them to throw open the windows of your soul to the sun."

"Chemistry is change....".

The setting is 1961: the time of a woman's place being in the home. The main character, Elizabeth Zott, is a breath of fresh air. She is a brilliant, intelligent chemist, but as a woman has no career prospects. When her daughter Madeline's lunch is stolen in school by the daughter of a TV Executive, Elizabeth's prospects change for the better.

She becomes a TV sensation on *Supper at Six* TV Show, when she uses her chemistry skills in preparing healthy meals. The character's fascinating scientific approach to cooking takes everyone by storm. She gives housewives a portal to a different life.

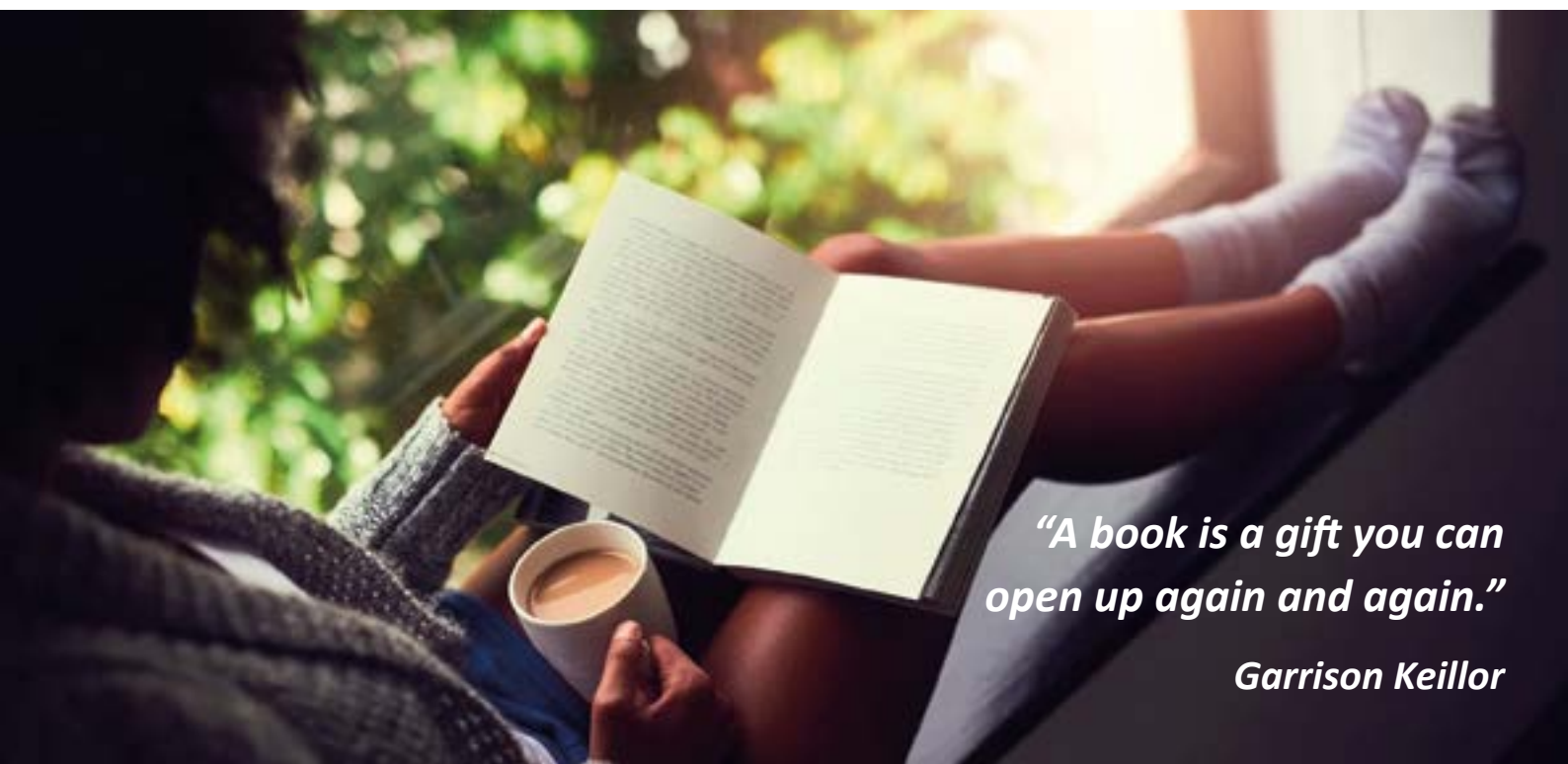
This is such a captivating and colourful tale. It is the

first novel of 65-year-old American, Bonnie Garmus. She used a chemistry book from the 1950s to write the novel. It was originally called "Introduction to Chemistry" but caused confusion as people thought it was non-fiction. The novel is such a mix of real and unreal. There is both hope and despair in the story and then simply trying to make your way in the world. The marvellous dog character, Six thirty, is like something straight out of a Disney story.

"My dog is busy in the afternoons..... he picks my child up from school"

The other wonderful character is Elizabeth's daughter, Madeline (Mad), who must deal with her mother's unconventional ways.

This is such an inventive story, full wacky goings-on, so feelgood, very entertaining also enlightening and empowering!

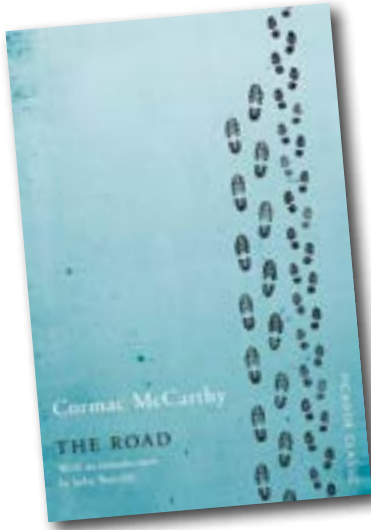


"A book is a gift you can open up again and again."

Garrison Keillor



Book Review by Adrienne Power



THE ROAD

Author: Cormac McCarthy

First published: 2006

The ground shakes. Dead trees fall. A father and son head along the road going south in a destroyed world of ash. They battle cold, starvation, lawless groups (some that survive on other humans). All birds and animals are now extinct.

Day in and out, Father and Son struggle along the road. They are most times fearful, but they keep moving forward. From the beginning we realise

the father is ill and possibly dying.

Cormac McCarthy writes with very little punctuation and no chapters. A style that suits the journey when all seems lost and hopeless, yet something moves a body forward to face the unknown day. You keep reading ... you must keep going forward like the father and son on the road.... swept along through this terrifying grey world.

The prose is sparse and chilling but also has so much beauty in his descriptions. There is a dreamlike quality to it.

Even though all seems lost you still feel hope emerge through his wonderful writing.

A compelling read that sweeps you along through a terrifying, grey world!

THE WINTER GUEST

Author: W.C. Ryan

First published: 2022

The setting is Kilcolgan House in 1921. Large windows shimmer like mirrors in the silver moonlight. Shots ring out. An ambush has occurred....

Captain Tom Harkin, returning from the Great War, is sent to Kilcolgan House to investigate the death of his former fiancée, Maud Prendeville, in the ambush.

Kilcolgan has seen better days. The waves of the sea crash just behind the shelter of the trees. It is now a dark mausoleum housing the Prendeville family, part of the dying aristocracy.

Harkin himself is haunted by his time in the trenches in France, shell-shocked and stressed by sleepless nights when dead comrades stalk his dreams.

This is a terrific whodunnit. Amid Civil war, not

knowing who to trust, Tom Harkin searches for the truth while weighed down by his own misfortunes. This is an otherworldly and tense drama. A very well-written book that has it all – historical, crime, gothic feel, and romance. Thoroughly engaging and captivating with the place being as much a character as the people in the story.



The ghosts of the war follow people like living entities in this atmospheric story!

THE RINK SCABS!

NOTE THEM WELL.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Sullivan, Jer. | 18. Woodman, A.J. |
| 2. O'Regan, P. | 19. O'Hare, G. |
| 3. Hill, T. | 20. Hildebrand, P. |
| 4. Buckley, J., jr. | 21. Dixon, A. |
| 5. Kieran, S. J. | 22. Dowling, C. F. |
| 6. Slevin, T. | 23. Roche, T. |
| 7. Lenoard, J. | 24. Killen, J. S. |
| 8. O'Keeffe, J. | 25. Long, J. |
| 9. Hogan, J. J. | 26. Hand, M. |
| 10. O'Sullivan, M.J. | 27. Murphy, C. |
| 11. Duncan, J. | 28. Byrne, J. M. |
| 12. O'Kennedy, B. | 29. Mulvihill, P. |
| 13. Walsh, P. J. | 30. Lyons, T. |
| 14. Scannell, T. | 31. Bradley, R. |
| 15. Downs, R. J. | 32. Blair, G. |
| 16. Carmody, E. | 33. McKeon, C. |
| 17. Healy, J. | |

A DEFINITION OF A SCAB.

A prominent clergyman once defined the scab as follows.—“After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, the vampire, He had some awful substance left with which He made a scab.

A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a water-logged brain, a combination back-bone made of jelly and glue, where others have their hearts he carries a tumour of rotten principle. When the scab comes down the street the men turn their backs, and the angels weep in heaven, and the devil shuts his door to keep him out. No man has a right to scab as long as there is a pool deep to drown his body in, or there is a rope long enough to hang his carcass with. Judas Scariot was a gentleman compared with a scab, for after betraying his Master he had character enough left to hang himself—a scab has not. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Judas sold his Saviour for thirty pieces of silver. Benedict Arnold sold his country for a promise of a commission in the English army. The modern strike-breaker sells his birthright, his country, his wife, his children and his fellow-men for an unfulfilled promise from a trust or a corporation.

All these were traitors to themselves, their God and their country.

A real man is never a scab.

