

CHRISTMAS 2023 VOL: 25 NO.2





#WomenRising

ELECTED! Carol Scheffer

UNI World Women's President

Carol Scheffer, National Officer CWU Elected as UNI Global Union World President



Contents

Editorial	2-3
eComms Update	4-9
Who are Carraun?	10
Brussels slaps down ComReg's approach to	
copper switch-off	11
EU urges Ireland to speed up copper switch-off	12
FM Downes Insurance & Mortgage Brokers	13
Russian missile strike on Kharkiv postal centre	14
Make Amazon Pay - Manchester Summit	15
Accenture	16-19
We must revamp our economic model to recognise	
true value of labour	20-21
Postal Update	22-37
Register to Vote	32
Halligan Insurances	38
Committing to a Gender-Inclusive Union	39
UNI Global Union	40-41
Menstrual & Menopausal Welfare at Work	42
6th Uni Global Union Congress – Rising Together	43
Equality Update	44-49
Organising Update	50-55
Communism and Fascism - The Postal Worker	56-57
Education Update	58-62
The ICTU Housing Ireland Conference	63
Health & Safety Update	64-65
A-Z of Health & Safety	66
Explainer: Why has the value of my	
pension pot dropped?	67-69
DLCM Solicitors. Frequently Asked Questions:	
Buying a House	70-71
Selling a House	71-72
Making a Will	72-73
Autism Ireland - AsIAm.ie	74-75
Exemplar Firefighter	76
People's College Choir seeks male voices	77
The Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland	78-79
Trade Union Activism: A call to arms	80-81
CWU Appoints New Finance Officer	81
CWU People	82-94
Book Review by Adrienne Power	95-96
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Christmas & New Year Message from the General Secretary



At the time of writing this Xmas and New Year message, our capital city was in shock and utter dismay, following the traumatic events of vicious attacks on children and a care worker followed by looting and vandalism by violent thugs. Our immediate thoughts and concern are for a speedy recovery for the injured in both events. It will be a concern for the families, pupils and staff as they endeavour to pick up the pieces to enable normal schooling to resume. No child, no parent should have to live in fear of coming to, going from, or being at school.

The subsequent, but very much separate events of thuggery and vandalism, primarily targeting Gardaí, Firefighters and Ambulance personnel, are a horrendous and unacceptable attack on workers and our society. The scenes of violence and looting of businesses is not the society that we want and certainly does not represent us as workers or as a country. We should not hesitate in condemning those who exploit tragedy to push their right-wing agenda, foment anger and direct attacks on any group within our society. Our trade union values stand in direct opposition to this kind of exploitation.

The long-awaited temporary ceasefire between Israeli and Hamas provide a ray of hope that some women and children held hostage by Hamas can be released. It will also enable some much-needed humanitarian aid to flow into Gaza. We can only hope this pause can be built upon, leading to more long-term conflict resolution. The deliberate targeting of civilians, the disproportionate and indiscriminate killing and injuring of non-combatants is wholly unacceptable and must stop. It is equally concerning that the illegal invasion by Russia and waging of war on the people of Ukraine continues with no end in sight. It is incumbent on all leaders to work to find solutions to these conflicts and political will and strong leadership is needed now more than ever.

Against the above backdrop, the challenges in our society are somewhat less. However, we continue to have a housing, health and homeless crisis. Many are unable to cope with the financial crises, as people simply do not have enough money to provide for the very basics. Given the relatively healthy financial position of the state, it is unacceptable that the wealth gap for these people continues to widen as the rich get richer.

There isn't any doubt that being in a Union is better, as working collectively we can improve working conditions for our members. This edition of **Connect** is testimony of the progress made at the various companies. In consulting with and taking feedback from members, including conducting extensive surveys, we have documented the impact inflation and high prices are having. In the new year we will make it very clear to employers the need to do more, most particularly on pay. While government are predicting inflation will fall next year, we can safely predict the same cannot be said for prices.

In this regard, in consultation with the ICTU, we are developing a pay strategy across all companies in preparation for discussion on new agreements. In eir, senior management must put the needs of the business to the fore, which includes staff, as opposed to any further pandering to the pockets of the shareholders. It is regrettable that eir failed to respond positively to the CWU request for recognition the high cost of living was having on staff. They were one of the few companies that ignored this impact. Consequently, any new pay deal has additional heavy lifting to play catch up.

At An Post, notwithstanding a number of issues associated with the distribution of Vouchers, the Company did respond positively to the Union's claim and recognised the difficulties of its staff. The existing agreement pay expires at the end of this year and I have made it clear the next agreement must reflect the Company's financial



Seán McDonagh General Secretary, CWU

progress and ongoing transformation. In my view members are entitled to, and expect, to have, the highest pay award at An Post in the past twenty years.

It was pleasing to secure payment of the increases and arrears for the Pensioners of eir and An Post and I want to thank all the branches and retired members who played their part in this successful campaign that reminded our TDs and the Ministers in question of the power of this Union Your impact across the country was essential to getting the victory.

On the cover of this edition we pay tribute to Carol Scheffer on her election to the position of the Women's World President of UNI. It is a huge achievement for Carol and a very proud appointment for CWU. In her acceptance speech, she outlined the learnings she had from the likes of Rosie Hackett, a messenger at Jacobs biscuit factory who organised the workers and led a withdrawal of their labour, achieving better conditions of pay. She also referenced former President Mary Robinson and her fight against the oppressive church and state regime.

Solidarity and growing the trade union movement must be our single-minded focus. In many ways we have achieved a lot but we equally have a lot to learn.

Finally, I extend the season's greetings, best wishes and good health to you and your family.





Circet Ireland KN Branch Update

Pay

The CWU have formally submitted a pay increase for our KN membership. We are awaiting a response from the company. Initial discussions with the company suggest that average earnings have increased by circa 20% in 2023 compared to 2022. The company have presented us with data that, they say, supports their position. The KN Branch will update members on any progress with discussions.

Job Codes

You will be aware that back in 2021 the company introduced a new rate card that was to address all work activities in the network and reward "effort". The codes have proved beneficial to our membership. In October 2023 some members contacted the Branch to say that the company was changing the codes. The KN Branch met the company and they stated that they will not be changing the codes, however there will be close monitoring of how and when codes are used. They also stated that the hoist code for D Poles POI – HDP will be removed and the assist code for hoists will remain.

Bonus

The quarterly Bonus targets are proving difficult to achieve. This can be down to several factors including

doable work, volumes of work, travel distance etc. The company is exploring other bonus options. When they have considered their options, they will let us know. Their bottom line is that no matter what bonus is implemented the trigger for any bonus is achieving targets set by operators/clients.

Disciplinary Process

Over the past number of months, a growing number of our members have found themselves becoming involved in the company's disciplinary process. Whether that be at investigation stage or formal disciplinary stage. It is worth pointing out that if a member is requested to attend a disciplinary meeting whether online or in person, they are entitled to have a Union Representative attend the meeting also. It is important that members request this option.

Branch Structure

The Branch representatives have had a number of meetings online this year following the AGM. It is proving difficult to represent all members as there are pockets of the country with no representation at all. In preparation for the Branch AGM early next year we would encourage members to become involved and help develop a Branch that can develop our members' agenda at local level.

eir pension

The CWU is aware that the 2% pension increase for pensioners is now signed off by the Ministers concerned.

We expect payment of the increase and arrears back to July 2023 early in the New Year.

CWU Telecoms Branches Amalgamations

The National Executive Council (NEC) also agreed to the following Branch amalgamations.

- Galway District Branch and Sligo District Branch.
- Seand Connolly Waterford District Branch and Portlaoise District Branch.

To date the amalgamations are proceeding with the intention to have the two new branches in place by the end of November. These amalgamations are the first step to addressing the challenges we face and at the same time improving our service to our membership.





Q. What's the fastest round trip from City West to Heuston?

A. Join eir

Back in 2006 eircom moved to their spanking new headquarters in 1HSQ (just before they sold the building and then leased it back). Then in 2018 they decided to move again from 1HSQ to City West. In summer this year 2023 the company announced that they were moving back to Heuston (2HSQ). Like the move in 2006 there is a strong suspicion that there are financial benefits in the move back to Heuston for the company.

Senior Management point to the move as a next step "of our transformation". The move, they outline,

"signifies the next exciting chapter in our history and presents an opportunity to bring together colleagues based in Bianconi Avenue and Cherrywood into one modern HQ building that reflects our purpose and our ambition." I think we can say we heard that all before!

On a serious note, we wish our members the best of luck in their new building. Working together and meeting people will foster a collaborative approach that will benefit the individual and the business. Space is provided for informal catch up and chats that is important. New technology and design will also provide a good work environment for our members. Attendance arrangements are governed by the **Agile Working Policy** agreed with the Group of Unions.

November 6th, 2023 was the day staff moved back to their new headquarters HSQ2. For our members we have negotiated a relocation payment that is in line with our previous agreements. Details will be communicated shortly.



eir Cost-of-Living Survey 2023

Your Union frequently conducts surveys to give a voice to our members and gather feedback on important issues. For our members in eir, a survey was conducted to accurately assess the impact that the Cost of Living Crisis has had on our eir members and the responses from this survey will inform the upcoming pay discussions with eir management.

The survey was distributed online by email and text. eir Branches across the country actively encouraged each member to participate and provide feedback on financial concerns and we got a huge number of responses from all across the country.







Key Findings

78% of those surveyed reported that compared to this time last year, they are financially worse off and 68% feel that their wages have not kept up with the Cost of Living Crisis resulting in a reduction of their disposable income.

80% of respondents state that they find it hard to pay energy bills while 60% struggle to pay either their rent or mortgage. Alarmingly, 56% report difficulty buying food.

29% of those who took part in the survey stated that they are short money at the end of every month to cover expenses and 63% indicated that they are just getting by financially. Thinking about the next 12 months, 64% of respondents feel that their financial situation will get worse. The impact of this results in 86% of members feel that the Cost Of Living Crisis is having a negative impact on their mental health.

The survey received 1,063 responses; the highest return rate of any survey previously conducted of our members in eir and on foot of the survey many workers who were not previously in the Union have made the decision to become members of the CWU.

eir Cost-of-Living Survey Sends a Clear Signal

The findings of the eir Cost-of-Living Survey are stark. Members sent a clear signal in their responses on just how big an impact the cost-of-living crisis has had on their ability to make ends meet. Thanks to a huge response from over a thousand members from all over the country the Union has very useful information, directly from members' lived experience, that will inform our next round of pay negotiations with eir.



These findings are not surprising given that the Company has resisted efforts by the CWU to negotiate measures that might have alleviated the financial pressure members are under as a result of the increased cost-ofliving. This is all the more frustrating for our members as we have seen many other large, successful and profitable companies in the same league as eir take swift action to allow pay agreements to be reviewed to provide extra help. Failing that, other companies have taken steps to provide additional financial assistance to staff whether that was in the form of tax-free vouchers or additional one-off payments.

This did not occur in eir.

Instead, the Company opted to continue to pay massive dividends to investors with \in 237m paid up until September this year alone and over \in 1.85bn paid out since Xavier Neill took over the Company. It is safe to say that the cost-of-living crisis has no impact on those who get to share out almost two billion euro. Senior management must put the needs of the business to the fore, which includes staff, as opposed to pandering to the pockets of the shareholder.

Commenting, General Secretary, Seán McDonagh said, 'The huge dividends being taken out of eir while this costof-living crisis heaps pressure on our members serves only to increase the sense of frustration and expectation of members as we enter the final months of our current pay deal. The next pay deal has a lot of heavy lifting to do and these dividends confirm there is scope within the balance sheet of eir to do a lot more to support the financial well being of their staff. eir has been very successful under the new owners and costs have been carefully managed but we cannot lose sight of the fact that our members have been essential to that success, and they deserve their fair share of the rewards too. We have a clear agenda for the next round of pay negotiations when they begin.'





BT — Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS) Members Vote in Favour of Industrial Action

CWU members in ECAS, otherwise known as the 999 service, have voted 82% in favour of industrial action up to and including strike action. The ECAS contract is a state contract which BT Ireland won the rights to after a public tendering process. It operates across two sites in Ballyshannon and Navan.

The ballot was conducted following BT's repeated refusal to engage with the local CWU representatives and CWU officials on a range of issues including Union recognition.

This serious development comes on the back of a yearlong campaign by CWU members in ECAS to organise and unionise their workplace, achieve Union recognition and win improvements to their terms and conditions of employment.

The campaign began in November 2022 when the CWU was contacted by operators from ECAS in relation to what they described as a "toxic" culture within their workplace where concerns around bullying by management were not being adequately addressed.

Following several meetings, a number of CWU activists from both centres attended CWU Head Office for organising training and campaign planning. The key issues that the operators are campaigning to address have been identified and communicated to BT management on several occasions and are as follows:

- Union recognition
- Pay
- On Call Allowance
- Lead OP Position
- Majors Policy
- Availability of Annual Leave

The campaign has involved numerous members meetings and several collective actions including surveys and petitions to management. All these actions were extremely well supported, and Union membership has continued to grow as the campaign has progressed. BT's response to requests to meet with Union Reps to discuss and progress these issues has been extremely intimidating. ECAS operators were summoned to onsite meetings with BT's Senior management team and warned of the dangers of unionising their workplace. In a follow up Union survey of those in attendance, 94% of respondents found the meetings to be intimidating and reported not feeling safe enough in the meeting to express their opinion in front of management.

Such a response from a company who are operating a state contract is extremely disappointing and indeed concerning to the CWU. The treatment of the ECAS operators raises fundamental questions about the process of public procurement in Ireland.

This is particularly relevant in the context of the forthcoming EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages which will be transposed into Irish law. That directive has an objective of 80% collective bargaining coverage within the state once it comes into operation. Given the acceptance and acknowledgment at a European and Governmental level of the important role that Trade Union recognition and collective bargaining plays in our society, BT's attitude toward their staff is reprehensible and contrary to the shifting political and social consensus.

Essentially, the plight of the ECAS workers is an example of all that is wrong with the current legislative landscape when it comes to workers' rights in Ireland.

This example should serve to inform how the EU directive is transposed into Irish law and provision should be made within the legislation that all state contracts that are awarded to employers must include a provision which makes union recognition, access to Organise workers and collective bargaining a pre-requisite to the awarding of a state contract.

BT recognises unions in the North of Ireland and the UK. To deny the staff the dignity and respect of having their voice heard through their union in the Republic is a damning indictment of the approach of BT management in this jurisdiction.

Notwithstanding the intimidatory tactics that have been adopted by BT, the campaign has seen significant success in terms of improvement to the Lead Op, On Call allowance and pay. The company have tried to attribute these increases to their own internal engagement mechanism. However, staff are under no illusions that these wins were achieved through the power that staff



have built up through their union and the pressure they have put on company management.

The ECAS staff provide a vital public service. When members of the public are at their most vulnerable and most in need, ECAS operators remain calm and compassionate and direct their calls to the services they need in times of emergency, in times of trauma and in times of tragedy.

The overwhelming support for the ballot for industrial action in the face of managements approach is a testament to the character and resolve of CWU members in ECAS who are fighting to have their voice heard by their employer. At the same time, the operators understand the essential nature of the work they do and are eager to act responsibly by making every effort not to cause any undue disruption to the service. Therefore, to exhaust every avenue possible before taking any action that is mandated by the ballot, Members have decided to refer the matter to the WRC conciliation services.

The question now is will a company who are receiving public money and operating a public contract respect the industrial relations machinery of the state and engage with the WRC.

Members will be kept up to date with any developments.

vodafone Store Visits

In early summer, on the back of a 16% pay increase for Retail employees, Vodafone Branch Secretary and NEC Member Shane Murphy, undertook to visit the Vodafone retail stores.

Engagement from both existing membership and new staff to Vodafone was very positive as expected on the back of the pay rise achieved. However, signing up new members was difficult as the pay increase had already been achieved.

In Galway, along with the Branch Chairman John Donohue, there was a visit to the Galway store

together. This made for some very interesting, local conversations and we had a very successful visit, signing up 5 out of the six people we spoke with.

Overall, the visits were a success. The Branch gained valuable feedback, unearthed some issues it wasn't aware of and grew the branch with 18 newly signed up members.

With the current cost of living biting for our membership, the branch is currently finalizing a new survey that will be used to engage our membership in another round of store visits before Christmas.

Photograph Competition Results		
David Taite Dublin No 2 Branch	lst Prize	
Aidan Griffin Dublin Managers Branch	2nd Prize	
Ted Jordan Cork Postal Branch	3rd Prize	Wi



Winning Photos can be viewed on cwu.ie



Who are Carraun?

Carraun confirms it has acquired a 6% interest in Proximus

Reporting by prnewswire.com



Xavier Niel is eir's majority shareholder.

Carraun, the parent company of eir, confirms that it holds an approximately 6% interest in Proximus ("Proximus" or the "Company").

Carraun is making the investment in Proximus to get exposure to the Belgian leader in connectivity. As the undisputed domestic leader in fixed and mobile, Proximus has a strong track record among the European incumbents. Proximus has also managed to develop a successful international business via its affiliates BICS and Telesign, a unique position among EU incumbents.

As the Irish incumbent – with more than 2 million subscribers and the number one domestic FTTH network – Carraun via eir has a deep understanding of Proximus business. eir is currently pursuing a strategy similar to Proximus with a relentless focus on (i) offering best value for money to its customers, (ii) hiring and retaining top quality management and employees, and (iii) investing billions in 5G and FTTH networks.

Carraun is controlled by Mr Xavier Niel. Mr Niel has built over the years a European champion in Telecoms with presence in 9 European countries, nearly 50 million subscribers and combined Revenues of over €10 billion. Mr Niel's Telecoms group is well known for its speed of execution, strong innovation focus and entrepreneurial culture. Mr Niel's group has also acquired a unique expertise in FTTH networks with more than 40 million FTTH homes passed across its various geographies (owned and through dedicated wholesale agreements). Mr Niel is constantly looking to strengthen its European base and sees Proximus as a very attractive and longterm investment.

Carraun is supportive of the current strategy of Proximus top management, and in particular its ambitious FTTH roll-out plan. Carraun is willing to cooperate with Proximus management and is looking forward to building a mutually beneficial partnership, with the ambition to favor value creation for both companies and economic development for both Belgium and Ireland.

Mr. Niel said: "We have built a pan-European telecom group over the past decade always focussing on providing our customers with best value for money and relying on high quality mobile and fixed network infrastructure. I have been attracted by the Belgian market for a long time with its strong economy and where a sound regulatory approach has led to a vibrant telecom sector, as demonstrated in the recently discussed FTTH co-investment plan. I am very pleased that we now have the opportunity to invest in Proximus and hopefully create ties for the long-term. Proximus is an iconic operator whose history is closely associated with Belgium. Over the years, Proximus has managed to adapt to a rapidly changing telecom environment and remain the national leader. It would be an honour if we could contribute as a long-term partner to the future evolution of Proximus."

Brussels slaps down ComReg's approach to copper switch-off

eir urging regulator to implement EU recommendations quickly following criticism of delays on regulatory side



eir CEO Oliver Loomes welcomed what he described as the EU's serious concerns.

eir has secured a significant win after EU authorities shot down elements of regulator ComReg's approach to the planned switch-off of old copper networks by the formerly State-owned telecoms provider.

eir CEO Oliver Loomes said the Irish regulator should now implement the Commission recommendations quickly, picking up on language from Brussels that criticised delays on the regulatory side that might slow down rolling out modern fibre cable across the country.

That criticism was raised in a letter to ComReg from Roberto Violo, the European Commission's director general for Communications, Networks, Content and Technology.

He outlined a number of concerns over ComReg's proposed Framework or regulatory approach to switching off copper, which was submitted to Brussels in August.

The letter is published on the Commission's website. It said elements of the proposed Framework would impose unfair and disproportionate requirements on eir without a proper legal basis.

eir announced the project to replace copper with faster fibre lines throughout the country over five years at a cost of around \notin 1bn back in 2018.

In early 2021 it published its preferred approach to switching off the old lines as new high-speed fibre-optic lines are rolled out.

That has implications for customers who may lose the option of staying with the old, slower, but potentially cheaper service – and the proposals are subject to regulatory approval.

by Donal O'Donovan Irish Independent Online

On August 3 this year, ComReg notified the European Commission of its preferred approach, or Framework to the switch-off, as required under EU rules. The Commission's September 20 response is critical of ComReg's timeline and suggests it had caused a "significant" delay in taking over two years to react to eir.

Brussels said ComReg should "refrain from further delay" when it comes up with the next phase of its work, including a template for moving customers over to new high-speed fibre.

It also suggested ComReg overstepped its legal authority by trying to impose a control over the price eir can charge where it is required to ensure an alternative is in place for customers losing copper connection.

The legal basis the regulator relied on, Article 81 of the Electronic Communications Code, is not a "sufficient self-standing legal basis to impose price regulation," the Commission said.

It does allow ComReg to insist the quality of an alternative service offered by eir is comparable to the old product but not the new price, the Commission found.

Finally, the Commission questioned the fairness of requiring eir to carry the full burden of so-called "non-standard connection costs", with no upper price limit in cases where additional work is required to ensure services are maintained.

The letter asked ComReg "to reassess the proportionality of this" against the wider policy objective of maximising connectivity.

Mr Loomes welcomed what he described as the EU's serious concerns.

"This is the fourth European ruling in three years to find against ComReg's approach to regulating eir."

He also urged the Government to support a more effective regulatory environment including by filling a vacancy for a third commissioner at ComReg that has been open for nearly two years.

EU urges Ireland to speed up copper switch-off

By Brian O'Donovan, Work & Technology Correspondent RTÉ News Online



The switch-off of legacy copper networks is seen as a key step in the rollout of new broadband networks)

The European Commission has urged Ireland to speed up the switching off of out-ofdate copper wire networks for phone and broadband services.

The switch-off of legacy copper networks is seen as a key step in the rollout of new broadband networks.

The communications regulator ComReg published proposed rules around the switch-off earlier this year and notified this to the European Commission as required under EU rules.

The Commission has published comments on the process recommending a shorter timeframe for the copper switch-off.

"The Commission urges ComReg to refrain from any more delays in the adoption of the framework that could further postpone the copper switch-off process in Ireland," according to a letter to ComReg from the European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology.

The Commission also questioned a requirement that telecom company eir bear the entirety of "non-standard connection costs" and asked ComReg "to reassess the proportionality of this measure in light of the objectives of the (electronic communications) code".

CEO of eir Oliver Loomes welcomed the European Commission recommendations.

"We welcome this important intervention by the Commission under the European Electronic Communications Code," Mr Loomes said.

"A fair and proportionate regulatory environment is absolutely critical to eir's high speed fibre rollout plan, and we urge ComReg to adopt the EU Commission recommendations in a timely and effective manner," he added.

ComReg said it noted that the comments letter from the European Commission was issued as part of a standard notification procedure under EU rules.

"It does not constitute an intervention or raises serious concerns on the part of the Commission," ComReg said in a statement.

"The Commission has expressed no such serious doubts and ComReg may proceed with adopting the draft decision it notified having taken utmost account of the Commission's comments," it added.

ComReg said it is expected to make a final decision on this matter in the coming weeks.





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Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and hoping for a Peaceful 2024



Russian missile strike on Kharkiv postal centre kills six people, officials say

Ministry of internal affairs says 16 injured in attack on civilian site in Ukrainian city

The Guardian Online with Agence France-Presse, Associated Press and Reuters



scandar proprist, totorial the beablete for the totary of the with ACI's Critical Treasts Higert, Network NY ensemble Assign forces have operated in a laurched attache against luct do rell control. Your local time, J1 October 2022

Six people have been killed and 16 injured after Russian missiles struck a postal distribution centre in Ukraine's north-eastern Kharkiv region, local officials have said.

The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, shared a video on Saturday night showing what appeared to be a heavily damaged warehouse surrounded by rubble and red trucks with the words Nova Poshta written in Ukrainian.

"Russian missiles hit the Nova Poshta centre, an ordinary civilian object," Zelenskiy said. "We need to respond to Russian terror every day with results on the frontline. And, even more so, we need to strengthen global unity in order to fight against this terror."

The governor of the Kharkiv region, Oleh Syniehubov, said those killed and injured were all employees of the private Ukrainian postal and courier service Nova Poshta. "This is strictly a civilian site," he said. "The Russians have inflicted more terror on Kharkiv's peaceful population."

Seven of the injured were in serious condition, he said. "The victims, aged between 19 and 42, received shrapnel wounds and blast injuries. Doctors are fighting for their lives," he added.

The ministry of internal affairs confirmed the death toll and said 16 people had been injured, up from initial reports of 14.

In a statement, Nova Poshta said the air-raid siren had sounded moments before the attack, leaving employees with no time to reach shelter. Sunday would be a day of mourning for the company, it added.

Sergiy Nozhka, an employee at Nova Poshta, told the news agency AFP that a rocket "flew into the neighbouring depot, but at ours too – the windows and shutters flew out". He added: "This is not the first time."

Russia has not yet commented on the strike.

According to the regional prosecutor's office, Russian forces in the Belgorod region north of Kharkiv fired S-300 missiles, two of which hit the warehouse.

"Debris analysis continues at the site in order to establish the exact number of injured and dead," its spokesperson Dmytro Chubenko told Suspilne, Ukraine's state broadcaster.

In the frontline city of Kharkiv, about 20 miles (30km) from the Russian border, missile strikes continue almost daily, adding to the devastation wrought by Russia's ferocious bombing of Ukraine's second city in the first weeks of the war.

On Sunday, Ukraine's air force said its defence systems had destroyed six Russian-launched attack drones and a cruise missile overnight, and Russia had launched a total of nine cruise missiles at Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials said on Sunday that Russian forces had used a record number of aerial bombs over the Kherson region in the south of the country during the past 24 hours.

Natalia Humeniuk, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian military's operational command south, said 36 bombs had been recorded across the area, with some villages being hit by several strikes.

Russia has also struck other parts of southern and eastern Ukraine with artillery and missiles in recent days, according to local officials. Fatal attacks have been reported in Nikopol and Kryvyi Rih.

The Institute for the Study of War said on Saturday that Russian forces could be diversifying the mix of missiles, guided bombs and drones used in strikes on Ukraine. The Washington-based thinktank speculated that the change could be part of an attempt to find gaps in Ukraine's air defences before further strikes over the winter.



Manchester Summit



Industrial Organiser, Diarmuid O'Connell attended the first ever Summit to **'Make Amazon Pay'** which took place in Manchester in October. Amazon is one of the biggest and most profitable multinational companies in the world which operates not just in logistics and deliveries, but also has a huge footprint in cloud services through Amazon Web Services (AWS). These operations have a significant impact not just on workers, the community, and our environment but also our society by lobbying for special tax treatment from governments.

The Summit brought together trade unions, social movements, civil society groups and parliamentarians from around the world and cemented ideas, strategies, and a collective determination to build power within our movement until we conclusively **'Make Amazon Pay'**.

Participants shared their experiences of workplace campaigns and how Trade Unions are building the power of workers to take strike action and fight back against Amazon's notoriously harsh treatment of workers. There were also examples of new legislation from around the world, at local, national, and international levels which are aimed at tackling Amazon and its anti-Union and environmentally destructive practices.

The shared experiences of delegates enabled participants at the summit to plot out a collective, transnational roadmap to **'Make Amazon Pay'** everywhere it operates, across the range of issues that workers, communities, and environmental defenders are raising.

The **'Make Amazon Pay'** movement was established in 2020 and has achieved some very significant changes. In the US, Amazon warehouse workers have won protective legislation and the Federal Trade Commission along with 17 state attorneys have initiated legal action to prevent Amazon from using anti-competitive and unfair strategies to maintain their monopoly power. A Spanish court has ruled that Amazon broke labour laws by forcing delivery drivers to use an app that controlled their work schedules and payments while requiring them to use their own cars and phones. Barcelona has introduced new measures forcing Amazon to pay tax on their deliveries and in Ireland work is under way to establish legislation banning corporations like Amazon from dumping unused items into the environment.

In the UK, the GMB Union are running an extremely encouraging campaign at the Amazon warehouse in Coventry has seen thousands of workers join the GMB. This campaign has seen Amazon workers exercise their collective power by taking 26 days of strike action in their pursuit of a fair share of the profits they create for Amazon through a decent pay increase and union recognition.

In response, Amazon have adopted all of their notorious union-busting tactics to try and break the Union, including hiring in hundreds of extra staff in an attempt to dilute the power that GMB have built within the Coventry facility. However, despite those attempts, workers have remained strong, and the campaign has already resulted in significant wins for workers who have seen their hourly rate of pay increase from an initially proposed £10.50 per hour up to £13 an hour in addition to a £500 bonus for staff.

Taking on Amazon, one of the most powerful corporations in history, isn't a sprint, it's a marathon. Success is only possible if we can come together as workers, trade unions, social movements, civil society groups and politicians to build power in workplaces, in the streets, and in our parliaments to challenge the role that Amazon plays in our society, the impact it has on our environment and the power it exerts on workers.

We believe that by coming together across borders, and across our issues we can build a movement that can **'Make Amazon Pay'** and, in the process, shape the economy of the 21st century so it meets the needs of workers, communities and the planet.

Accenture

On the 31st July, Accenture announced 890 Redundancies out of its 6,500 Irish-based staff. Following on from an earlier wave of redundancies in March, this would bring the number of Irish jobs Accenture was cutting in Ireland to almost 1300 this year.

The CWU called publicly on Accenture to engage with staff and their representatives in redundancy negotiations. As a result, affected workers reached out to the Union. Following initial discussions, a survey of potentially impacted workers was launched and was circulated amongst staff. A series of online meetings were held, inviting workers to join the CWU. A significant number of CWU members were subsequently elected to the Employee Consultation Forum. With little or no training or support from the company, these workers would be required to represent nearly 900 of their colleagues in a very stressful process. To better support these members, the Union prepared and delivered Negotiation Training for the group.

While this round of lay-offs is coming to a close in Accenture, one thing is clear – tech workers need to organise and unionise to build power in their workplaces.

www.datacwu.ie



FSU and CWU Joint Press Statement on Accenture

Explanation required from Accenture on why they are aggressively and disproportionately targeting its Irish operation for redundancies.

Offensive that Accenture continue to advertise for staff on their website as they propose to axe 890 jobs.



The Financial Services Union (FSU) and the Communications Workers' Union (CWU) have jointly called on Accenture to explain why they are aggressively targeting their Irish operation for redundancies and described it as "disproportionate to what is happening elsewhere."

Accenture announced on Monday its plans to cut 890 jobs from its Irish operation. This announcement follows on from a previous cut of nearly 400 jobs last April. This brings the total number of proposed jobs loses close to 1,300 in Ireland.

Commenting on the announcement John O'Connell, General Secretary of the FSU said:

"Given that they are still recruiting for staff on their website today the Financial Services Union (FSU) and Communications Workers' Union (CWU) would like to understand the rationale behind these announcements and the reasons why Accenture have aggressively targeted their Irish operation for redundancies. An explanation is required for the staff who have shown loyalty to Accenture, and worked hard to contribute to the company's growth and success. Our members raised concerns in relation to the last consultation process that went unanswered and have again contacted their Unions to ask for our help and support through the current consultation process.

We are requesting immediate engagement with the company on this and other issues in relation to the consultation process."

Seán McDonagh, General Secretary of the CWU said:

"This is a worrying and stressful time for anyone working in the Technology Sector. The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney TD and Enterprise Ireland need to be proactive in their approach to ensure that staff are treated fairly through the redundancy process and then have options open to them for employment elsewhere."

The CWU and the FSU are available to support our members and request that Accenture facilitate this fair and reasonable request on behalf of their staff.

Staff are shocked and distraught at the news this week and to ask them to undertake a consultation process of this size, in these circumstances, is profoundly unfair. It places an overwhelming burden on the shoulders of ordinary workers at a time when they need additional support, not extra pressure.

We understand the process for the election of the employee representatives has been set out and the time frame for the start of the consultation period has been set. To ensure a fair and transparent process Accenture needs to ensure that the employee representatives have professional representation via their trade unions at these consultation meetings."

Other issues of concern that both Unions have raised with the Company are :

- Clarity as to the criteria involved in the decision making and who is making these decisions.
- Where individual roles are identified as redundant is there an appeals process in place.
- What is Accenture doing to mitigate against compulsory redundancy.
- What are the terms on offer to those that are in scope for redundancy.
- What plans are in place to ensure that members have proper suitably experienced representatives in place for such discussions.

"Both Unions insist that the redundancy process is a voluntary led approach. This is the practice in industrial relations in Ireland and we expect that Accenture will conform to what normally occurs in other sectors of the economy.

Both Unions are available to meet at short notice so discussions can commence on the above issues."

THE IRISH TIMES

Unions call for 'immediate engagement' over Accenture redundancies

Global giant plans to cut 890 jobs from its Irish operation, bringing to almost 1,300 the number of jobs it will cut here this year



Unions representing workers at Accenture have jointly called for "immediate engagement" with the company on upcoming redundancy talks amid what they say are "disproportionate" job cuts in Ireland.

The global professional services company said on Monday it plans to cut 890 jobs from its Irish operation, bringing to almost 1,300 the number of jobs it will cut Ellen O'Regan – Irish Times Business Online

here this year. That equates to about 20 per cent of its Irish workforce.

Accenture said it is focusing on "ensuring we have the right talent to serve our clients and run our business today and tomorrow".

In March, Accenture cut its global workforce by 2.5 per cent.

The Financial Services Union (FSU) and the Communications Workers' Union (CWU) jointly called on the firm to explain why it is "aggressively" and "disproportionately" targeting its Irish business for redundancies.

John O'Connell, General Secretary of the FSU, said his Union and the CWU would like to understand the rationale behind the company's latest redundancy announcement.

"An explanation is required for the staff who have shown loyalty to Accenture and worked hard to contribute to the company's growth and success," he said. Mr O'Connell said FSU members raised concerns during the last redundancy consultation process which "went unanswered" as the company shed 400 Irish jobs over recent months.

He said that those affected in this round of lay-offs have again reached out to their unions for support through the consultation process.

Seán McDonagh, General Secretary of the CWU, said both unions are available to support their members and called on Accenture to "facilitate this fair and reasonable request on behalf of their staff".

Mr McDonagh said staff in Accenture are "shocked and distraught" at the news this week and to ask them to undertake a consultation process of this size would be "profoundly unfair".

"We understand the process for the election of the employee representatives has been set out and the time frame for the start of the consultation period has been set. To ensure a fair and transparent process, Accenture needs to ensure that the employee representatives have professional representation via their trade unions at these consultation meetings," he said.

The unions have called for clarity around a number of issues, such as the criteria and individuals involved in the decision-making process, if there is an appeals process in place for individual redundancies and what terms will be offered to those in scope for redundancy. The unions have also queried what Accenture is doing to mitigate against compulsory redundancy and what plans are in place to ensure their members have representatives in place for discussions.

Mr McDonagh also called on Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Simon Coveney and Enterprise Ireland to be "proactive" in ensuring that staff are treated fairly through the redundancy process and that they have options open to them for employment elsewhere.

Both the FSU and CWU have said they insist on a voluntary-led approach to the redundancy process, a demand echoed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in a separate statement on Thursday.

"Accenture must engage with unions, who have rightly questioned the rationale behind these significant measures, and explain why Irish workers are bearing such a disproportionate burden in contrast to what is happening elsewhere," said ICTU General Secretary, Owen Reidy.

"I am also concerned that Accenture is continuing to recruit staff while announcing significant plans to make staff redundant," he added.

The Journal

Unions say 'do the right thing' after Accenture's announcement of 890 layoffs in Ireland

The unions have also demanded to know why there are still jobs in Ireland being advertised on Accenture's website

The Journal Online with additional reporting from Olivia Kelleher

TRADE UNIONS ARE asking for an explanation from Accenture after the multinational IT service and consultancy firm announced on Monday that 890 jobs are to be cut from its Irish staff.

The latest round of redundancies comes after almost 400 Irish-based Accenture employees lost their jobs in March.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the Financial Services Union (FSU) and the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) have all called on Accenture to provide further detail regarding the nature of the layoffs as well as the reasons why its Irish staff have been affected more than others.

The latest round of layoffs represents almost 14 percent of the company's Irish workforce of 6,500.

The unions have also demanded to know why there are still jobs in Ireland being advertised on Accenture's

website.

"As things stand the nature of the layoffs look like they're going to be compulsory," CWU spokesperson lan McArdle told The Journal. He said that there has been no indication from Accenture that there will be a voluntary scheme.

He also pointed to the sheer scale of the layoff as reason to believe that the redundancies will not be voluntary.

As for the kinds of workers affected, McArdle said they are likely to be mainly content moderators, the people who assess and take down illegal or banned videos and images from social media sites.

As McArdle says, it can be "very challenging and very difficult work".

"These are the people who keep the internet safe for the rest of us. They have to view what you might call the worst of humanity. It's a tough job, they do it very well and unfortunately they are the people who are most likely in the scope for redundancy.

"So, we're calling on Accenture to do the right thing."

In a joint statement issued by the FSU and CWU, the two unions asked Accenture to "explain why they are aggressively targeting their Irish operation for redundancies and described it as 'disproportionate to what is happening elsewhere'".

Commenting on the announcement John O'Connell, General Secretary of the FSU said that given the fact that the company is still recruiting for positions in Ireland, the unions "would like to understand the rationale behind these announcements and the reasons why Accenture have aggressively targeted their Irish operation for redundancies.

"An explanation is required for the staff who have shown loyalty to Accenture, and worked hard to contribute to the company's growth and success. Our members raised concerns in relation to the last consultation process that went unanswered and have again contacted their Unions to ask for our help and support through the current consultation process.

"We are requesting immediate engagement with the company on this and other issues in relation to the consultation process."

Seán McDonagh, General Secretary of the CWU, described the situation for technology workers in general as "worrying and stressful" and called on the Minister for Trade, Enterprise and Employment, Simon Coveney, to be "proactive" in ensuring staff are treated fairly during the redundancy process.

"The CWU and the FSU are available to support our members and request that Accenture facilitate this fair and reasonable request on behalf of their staff," he said.

"Staff are shocked and distraught at the news this week and to ask them to undertake a consultation process of this size, in these circumstances, is profoundly unfair. It places an overwhelming burden on the shoulders of ordinary workers at a time when they need additional support, not extra pressure."

Mr McDonagh added that the Union understands the process of electing employee representatives is underway and that the timeframe for the consultation period has been set.

"To ensure a fair and transparent process Accenture needs to ensure that the employee representatives have professional representation via their trade unions at these consultation meetings."

The joint statement also said that "both Unions insist that the redundancy process is a voluntary led approach. This is the practice in industrial relations in Ireland and we expect that Accenture will conform to what normally occurs in other sectors of the economy."

Speaking in Cork today, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said that the medium to long term outlook for the tech sector in Ireland remains positive, even if there is currently some "retrenching" and "downsizing" in the sector.

During a visit to the Apple plant in Hollyhill, Mr Varadkar said that the tech sector had grown very rapidly during the pandemic.

"It is now retrenching a bit. Downsizing by about five or fifteen percent and I think that is still ongoing. But I am convinced in the medium to long term that we are going to see a lot more tech jobs in Ireland.

"Why do I think that? Because the future is digital. The future is artificial intelligence. The future is virtual reality. The future is robotics. There is only going to be more of that in the medium to long term.

"When I visit schools, and I talk to young people, I always encourage them to continue to study science, technology, engineering and maths precisely for that reason. Because this is going to be a growth sector in the medium to long term."

Mr Varadkar was asked about supports which could be given to laid off tech workers given that we are approaching the Budget this year with a surplus.

He said that the Government was monitoring the situation and planned to provide every support possible, whilst calling on companies who are downsizing to treat their employees fairly.

"Workers who get laid off are entitled to redundancy payments from their employer. What I am saying to companies that are downsizing, that are still profitable, that the basic redundancy of two weeks per year of service isn't enough.

"We expect companies that are profitable, not withstanding the fact that they are downsizing, to offer much better exit packages for their employees and in fairness most of them are doing that."

Mr Varadkar was joined on the visit to the Apple plant on the northside of Cork City by Minister Coveney and Cork North Central TD Colm Burke. Mr Coveney was keen to emphasise that Ireland "is at full employment at the moment."

"There have of course been some high profile layoffs in and by tech companies this year. From our experience in the Department of Enterprise those people have found employment very quickly elsewhere. Because they are highly skilled people.

He said that the Government would assist people in finding new work or going into education if necessary, adding that "in most cases they will be sought after by other companies.

He also pointed out that the tech sector has already announced around 12,000 new jobs in Ireland.

"So yes we have seen some reductions (in the tech sector) but we have also seen growth."



We must revamp our economic model to recognise true value of labour

Humancapitalisanasset, notacost. It is what drives all our progress, but currently most workers are locked out of participation in the enterprises where they work.

> by Joe Cunningham, General Secretary of Siptu



'Labour must be treated an equal stakeholder in the production and distribution of the goods and services that make up our life quality'

In the recent budget, the government forecast that we are entering into a lengthy period of low growth, averaging 2 per cent per year out to 2030. You'd have to go back a long way to find an extended period of such low growth. When you also take into account the effects of climate change, technological disruption and an ageing demographic, the economic and social challenges will be extensive and highly disruptive.

We can't continue as we have been. Over the last 20 years, during periods of much higher growth, wages failed to keep pace with productivity in the domestic economy. While workers produced more goods and services, they received less and less benefit from that growth. A low-growth future will put further pressure on this dismal trend. The old norms, the old ways of doing business, are well past their sell-by date.

The inability of our current economic model to meet these challenges goes deeper than workers' shrinking share of productivity. In the future, sustainable growth will increasingly rely on human capital: the skills, knowledge and experience of women and men in the workplace. Our ability to mobilise these resources will determine what level of business and, therefore, economic success we can achieve.

Unfortunately, today, too many workers are locked out of participation in the enterprises in which they work. Their contributions are ignored, their concerns are dismissed, their involvement in the decision-making process of the enterprise is unwelcome. This is a formula for failure, both today and in the future.

The most egregious example of this failure is the denial of workers' right to bargain collectively in the workplace. The jury is not out – it came in a long time ago. Collective bargaining not only boosts wages – in particular, for the low-paid and women – it boosts productivity, solves workplace problems and maximises innovation potential.

We need a new economic and business model that drives democracy and participation in the workplace and throughout the economy. Workers' contributions – their ideas, their knowledge, their experience – must be at the heart of this new model. Workers' right to collective bargaining is the foundation, but it's about so much more. Employee participation and autonomy, collaborative management, enterprise or works councils, worker-directors on company boards, labourmanaged enterprises: each step up the democratic ladder increases productivity and enterprise success.

Human capital is an asset, held by over two million workers. Leveraging that asset, bringing workers' skills and experience to the centre of policy and action at national and enterprise level, could be transformative.

For too long labour has been treated as a 'cost' (profits are never described as such, even though the Central Bank found that profits were a driving force in domestic-based inflation). Not only has this served as justification for suppressing wages below productivity growth. It has resulted in a deterioration of employment quality.

One-in-four households with one person in work suffers multiple deprivation. More than a quarter of workers believe their health and safety is at risk because of their work, while over a third suffer from physical or emotional exhaustion and burnout. And Irish employees in the market economy work some of the longest hours in Europe. In-work poverty, unsafe workplaces, exhaustion and long working hours: does anyone really believe this is the foundation for a dynamic, innovative and resilient economy?

Labour is not a cost. It is the producer of value. Labour builds houses, provides care, works factory lines, delivers food to our doors, drives the buses and lorries, designs software and nurses us back to health. It creates and organises. If the term 'stakeholder' is something more than just a buzz-word sprinkled about in government publications and corporate mission statements, then labour must be treated as such: an equal stakeholder in the production and distribution of the goods and services that make up our life quality.

There are companies that get this. In these companies, owners and managers don't see increasing employee participation as an attack on their social status, an interference in their prerogative or a boxticking exercise of form over substance. They know that greater participation lifts the entire boat.

These companies realise that decarbonisation is essential, that reinvestment must take precedence over short-term value extraction, that continual expenditure in upskilling and R&D pays multiple returns. They also know that the participation of workers through collective bargaining and other inclusive initiatives is key to enterprise performance.

These are the 'good' companies we should be promoting. In a new economic model, such companies would be privileged in public procurement contracts, grant-aiding and tax incentives. We need to 'crowdin' these good companies, treating them as templates for an enterprise strategy that values investment, innovation and participation. A new economic model will need to address a number of issues in addition to the transformation of the workplace including fiscal stability, price stabilisation, social equality, public service expansion and Just Transition.

There is one key issue that deserves special mention and that is child poverty. That nearly a quarter of a million children live in official deprivation (with tens of thousands more at risk) is a social obscenity. It also degrades future growth, productivity and innovation as the life chances of these children are scarred by poverty. Abolishing poverty, especially for children, is a social and economic imperative.

The ICTU has launched a two-year discussion and debate within the trade union movement on a new economic model, one capable of meeting the challenges facing the Irish economy. At the Siptu Biennial Delegate Conference in Galway this week, I will be promoting a model that puts each and every worker in all enterprises across all sectors at the heart of a new framework for prosperity and resilience. We are inviting all workers to join this discussion.





Update on Joint Working Groups

Diversity and Equality Sub-Committee

Menopause Policy

Following discussions with An Post agreement was concluded on the introduction of a Menopause Policy. This policy recognises that 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.

The policy seeks to raise awareness and support for those experiencing symptoms. The aims of the policy are to:

- **Understand** menopause and how it can affect employees, and their colleagues;
- **Raise awareness** amongst employees, and to outline support is available;
- Respond positively to employee needs, enabling impacted employees to raise concerns and seek support in a dignified and confidential way, so they can perform at their best;
- **Promote** the services provided by the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to those going through menopause;
- **Foster** an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably engage in discussions about menopause.

The policy outlines the practical supports that are available to employees including:

- Communications: fostering a culture of open communications so employees can feel confident discussing their work-related issues with their managers. Line managers are expected to engage empathetically and to offer supports to their employees where feasible;
- Facilities: Where feasible An Post will provide access to restrooms when employees need to manage difficult symptoms;
- Environmental Factors: Temperature control can be an important factor for some women experiencing menopause. For office workers, desk fans will be provided upon request, as well as access to chilled drinking water. Changes to office seating plans will also be made as appropriate so that affected employees can be near a window or open door, or if the employee wishes to be away from radiators. Windows will also have fully functioning fitted blinds if appropriate;

- Breaks: Flexibility around the taking of breaks, or increased breaks during the working day can be considered where possible;
- Workwear and Dress Code: Flexibility over dress codes, as well as the provision of a spare workwear/uniforms, can be provided as required for those impacted by heavy periods, hot flushes, sweating, or other relevant symptoms requiring a change of clothes;
- Change of Duties: Where feasible, changes to the employee's duties which assist in the management of menopause symptoms may be put in place, in agreement with local management (and local colleagues if appropriate) for the duration of menopausal symptoms;
- Performance: Line managers should work with the employee to determine how best to support them and make any appropriate adjustments to targets/work duties with due consideration to the challenges faced;
- Sick Absences: Where, during ASMP processes it becomes clear that absence(s) are related directly or indirectly to menopausal symptoms, consideration will be given to the aims of this policy before making any decisions under the ASMP processes;
- Flexible Working Arrangements: In areas where flexi-time does not exist, arrangements such as an earlier/later start and finish times will be considered with the employee where feasible. Requests for hybrid/remote work will also be considered and may be put in place where practical and appropriate;
- Medical Appointments and Support: Employees are encouraged to speak to their GP when they are experiencing symptoms. They should work with their line manager to ensure that time off is supported and planned for, giving as much notice as reasonably possible where the medical appointment cannot be scheduled outside working hours;
- Training: The company will provide awareness/ training sessions to line managers and employees to increase awareness and understanding of menopause, which will help them support and make adjustments, where possible for those affected.

The policy outlines the important role Managers will play in its implementation and guidelines have been provided to them on how to respond to employees requests for supports.



Disability and Associated Issues

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 2022 is 4.22%. While this is above the average it is below the figure for 2021 of 4.39%

Disability Inclusion Policy

During the past year we reviewed the Disability Policy and we agreed to rename it the Disability Inclusion Policy. One of the issues of concern to the Union was what would be considered a disproportionate burden for the Company. The redrafted policy sets out how the disproportionate burden will be determined and it takes into account the following:

- The financial cost of the accommodation;
- The resources available to the Company;
- The possibility of securing external funding/ support;
- The costs and impact on business productivity.

Where the reasonable accommodation has a direct impact on work colleagues, including managers, the support and understanding of those colleagues will be expected and may be enlisted by sharing information about the specific circumstance, but only with the permission of the employee with the disability.

Reasonable Accommodation Passports

The Union also sought the introduction of Reasonable Accommodation Passports. This 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. 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.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

To provide for reasonable accommodation passports and also to provide more information to employees on how reasonable accommodations would work both the Company and the Union agreed to the introduction of a Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

Accommodations can include the provision of training resources or work adaptations such as making workplace premises more accessible, introducing work equipment such as computer screen reading programmes for the visually impaired or changes to the pattern of work or the distribution of tasks.

The Policy sets out how those who wish to disclose their disability or request a reasonable accommodation can do so. The policy sets out how reasonable accommodation passports will be utilised which will reduce the requirement discuss any accommodation when new line managers are appointed. They will allow employees to:

- Have a conversation about how their disability has an impact on their work;
- Explain the barriers they encounter which impede their work;
- Recommend accommodations which would make work easier for them;
- Share any change to their disability or circumstance which would have a bearing on the accommodation/s in place;
- Review the effectiveness of accommodations in place;
- Feel reassured that correct actions be taken if they become unwell at work, and what to do/who to contact in a case of emergency;
- Know how and when their manager will keep in touch, for example during times of absence from work due to their disability.

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.

During COVID, term time was suspended and as a result, the review put on hold. This year term time leave resumed and a total of 704 employees availed of the leave. The Company has advised that filling these vacancies was extremely challenging and they may need to reduce the number of staff allowed to take the leave this year. This will be discussed as part of the review. In addition, the Company has confirmed that grandparents



who are primary carers can apply for term time and this will be considered in line with other applications.

Part-Time Working

We have agreed to prioritise discussions in relation to the introduction of a part-time work policy. Agreement on the introduction of Work Sharing several years ago has alleviated some concerns but we still have issues that need to be addressed. Of primary concern is the requirement that staff who apply for part time work do not have the option of returning to full-time work after a period of time. The Union is addressing a number of concerns and how they could be addressed with the Company.

Safety Footwear

The Company are obliged every few years to tender for new Safety Footwear. We have agreed as part of the tendering process to trial the various types of footwear available. As part of the trial, we have also agreed that we will also be trialling safety footwear in the Mail Centres. The tendering process has shortlisted 6 companies. We have agreed to run the trial in Crumlin DSU, Galway DSU and Dublin Mails Centre and the trial will commence in the New Year.

Display Screen Equipment Assessment

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 employers are required to carry out an analysis or risk assessment of employee workstations. They are also required to train employees in the use of workstations before commencing work with display screen equipment and whenever the organisation of the workstation is modified. There are four stages in the risk assessment i.e.:

- 1. Initial consultation with the employee;
- 2. Observation of the employee working at the computer workstation;
- 3. Identify the issues that need to be addressed;
- 4. Review the implementation of the action plan.

The legislation does not apply to Laptops or for example employees working for short periods at a non-standard workstation.

Following the move to the EXO there was a requirement that these assessments take place. The Company is also obliged to assess the workstations of those working remotely. In the past these assessments took place in person when requested. Given the level of assessments required and the requirement to assess remote workers we agreed to a remote assessment process as it would be more efficient in terms of resources and cost.

To assist An Post engaged the services of a competent third party, LCE, who will carry out the assessments on their behalf. One of the benefits of this approach is the assessments can be carried at a time that suits the employee. As most of the workstations in the EXO are standard an assessment completed at one Workstation would suffice for other similar workstations.

Assessments will be carried out with employees either:

- 1. At an EXO Workstation standard set up
- 2. **Remote Workstation –** Hybrid
- 3. **Sit/Stand Workstation** for those who have been medically assessed.

The assessment will be supplemented by advice from the remote provider LCE and information on the intranet.

Professional Driver Training Programme

The Professional Driving Programme contract with the Irish School of Motoring has been ongoing with approximately 1500 drivers trained to date. The renewal of this contract is up for tender and we have commenced discussions with the Company on what future driver training should contain. We believe that future training should be targeted at driver behaviour which will make the training more targeted and smarter. Discussions are ongoing.

Other Issues

Protected Disclosures

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 became operational on 15th July 2014. Workers are protected under the legislation who suffer, or are threatened with detriment for having made a disclosure provided they follow the procedures outlined in the Act. It is not designed to protect employees who recklessly make allegations of wrongdoing and it sets parameters on what proof is required. We agreed a policy in 2018.

Since then, the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 was signed into Irish Law on the 28th of July 2022. This Act transposes the EU Whistleblowing Directive and amends the existing Irish Framework for the protection of whistle blowers under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. As a result, we reviewed the "Company Policy and Procedures for Raising Matters of Concern under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014". The company presented us with a draft policy in December 2023 which contained many of the changes suggested in the 2022 Amendment Act. We suggested a number of further amendments which were accepted by the Company. We have agreed to review further based on experience.



Some of the key changes in the Act which were incorporated into the policy are:

- The establishment of internal reporting channels that maintain the confidentiality of the reporting person.
- An acknowledgement of a report in writing to the reporting person within 7 days of receipt of the report
- A requirement to designate a competent impartial person who will be tasked with communicating with the reporting person. This person will be required to diligently follow up within a reasonable period and at regular intervals.
- Clear and easily accessible information on the procedures applicable to the making of reports.
- Similar provisions will apply to reports to prescribed persons. The 3-month deadline for the provision of feedback can be extended to 6 months "in duly justified cases".
- A worker may make a report to a relevant Minister if the worker was employed in a public body and one or more conditions are met.
- The definition of penalisation is expanded to cover any direct or indirect act or omission which occurs in a work-related context and includes expanded examples of penalisation.
- Under the Act there is no obligation to follow up on anonymous reports

The Act provides for the establishment of the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner, within the office of the Ombudsman. The Commissioner will have extensive powers to carry out their duties and will direct protected disclosures to the most appropriate body when it is unclear which body is responsible.

Remote Working

Following discussions with the Company agreement was concluded on the introduction of a Voluntary Remote Working Policy that would provide a range of options for staff. The agreed approach for staff with a five-day liability is a hybrid model, which enables them to work 2 days in the office and 2 days remotely with the fifth day determined if it could be worked remotely or not within a reasonable timeframe. We agreed that it would be introduced initially in a test and learn basis while staff were returning to work following COVID. Our priority in any discussions was to ensure that any policy would make remote work available to those who wanted it and that it would be administered in a fair and transparent manner. The test and learn process is now complete and the company has now commenced the formal application process. Once this process was complete, we agreed to review the policy based on experience and this is ongoing at the time of writing.

Review of CCTV Policy

We agreed the CCTV Policy in 2016 and while we have reviewed it informally on several occasions, we recently commenced a formal review of the policy. The purpose of this in addition to addressing concerns we may have is to highlight once again how CCTV should be used and ensure that it is not misused. It is important that we understand why CCTV is introduced and the rules governing its use:

- 1. CCTV systems are installed both internally and externally at the Premises for the following legitimate business purposes of An Post:
 - Security and prevention of crime
 - Promotion of safety and customer service.
 - Ensuring public and staff safety, investigating accidents and near misses and dealing with customer complaints about service.
- 2. CCTV will not be used for the day-to-day supervision of employees and any material which has been viewed may only be referred to in the context of the objectives set out above.
- Information obtained through CCTV recording may only be released when authorised by the Head of Security, Regional Operations Manager, HR Manager or Level One or Two Manager as appropriate to the circumstances under enquiry.
- 4. Information recorded on CCTV will be retained in secure designated locations and access will be restricted to authorised personnel.
- 5. Where matters of a serious nature arise, which are being dealt with under the Company's Grievance or Disciplinary Procedures, the Company may seek to establish if any relevant information is held on CCTV systems.
- 6. Covert Surveillance is only permitted on a case-bycase basis for preventing, detecting or investigating offences or apprehending or prosecuting offenders.

As part of the review, we have raised concerns about where monitors in Managers Offices are placed.

Review of Acting up and Temporary Appointment Policies

In 2014 we agreed to the introduction of an Acting Up Policy and also a Policy on temporary appointments to a higher grade. The Transformation Agreement finalised earlier this year with the assistance of the Monitoring Group, stated the following in relation to Acting Up to Management Grades.

To bring consistency to acting up arrangements - acting up to management grades including the management grades referred to in this agreement will be on the basis of advancing from current rate of pay (including any productivity/change allowance) to 80%



of the median of the higher grade or to a 5% increase whichever is greater.

(For the avoidance of doubt employees acting to PMD grades will have their acting allowance calculated by reference to the higher of either (i) 80% of the median of the relevant PMD grade, or (ii) the total of existing pay plus any productivity allowance, plus 5% of basic pay.

Historical calculation of acting allowances by reference

to older promotional payscales or differentials will no longer apply, effective from the date of this agreement.) Given the above there is a requirement to review these policies, in which we have raised the following issues

- Payment for Acting up on day off
- Performance related pay
- Incremental progression
- Accumulated acting.



Following the Strategic Plan **"Shaping the Future Union"** adopted at Conference 2022 a review of the Branch Structure was agreed. This review included:

- The need to adapt to changes in our membership profile.
- To improve service to members
- Maintain connectivity, improve communications and engagement with members.
- Age profile demanded a focus on succession planning.

In An Post there were 9 Manager Branches. Following the review, the National Executive Council (NEC) agreed to the following Postal Managers new structure:

- Amalgamate Dublin Postal Managers and Administration Managers
- Retain the Dublin Mail Managers Branch.
- Amalgamate managers branches in

CWU Postal Managers Branch Amalgamations

Cork, Waterford/Limerick Portlaoise/ Naas.

 Amalgamate managers branches in Galway, Sligo Mulingar/Dundalk.

Since the agreement a number of meetings have taken place to formally set up the new Branches. The amalgamations create a new structure for our manager members in An Post.

- Dublin Managers Branch
- Dublin Mail Managers Branch
- Southern Regional Managers Branch
- Western Regional Managers Branch

This structure aims to grow and effectively represent our membership. It provides a defined mechanism for our members to continue to raise issues and concerns they may have at local level while retaining and developing a C.W.U. presence in the Company's Corporate Headquarters at both the GPO and EXO.



Bantry DSU Patience Rewarded

After many false dawns our Members in Bantry finally moved into a new office in September. As you will see from the photos the condition (and location) of the old office left a lot to be desired. We would like to wish them all the best in their new surroundings.

OUT OF THE OLD

INTO THE NEW













Clerical Administration Rationalisation

In line with the 'Shaping the Future Union' strategy as set by the General Secretary and endorsed at our Biennial Conference in 2022 a further update on progress was made at our Seminar in Waterford earlier this year. The Rationalisation Committee is progressing implementation of the changes to our structures in consultation with Branches.

There are approximately 750 clerical members across the national branch structures (with a few exceptions) with a concentration of members in Dublin Clerks (371) and Cork Clerks (47).

Around 320 Clerical members are distributed across 46 branches all across the country.

Some of these branches have more than 20 clerical members some as few as one and the average is just over 7 per branch.

Broadly speaking the result is that in many of these branches clerical issues are not always given the attention they deserve. Anecdotally we know that some branches are active and inclusive of their clerical members while some struggle to reps. A survey of these members to determine how best to support and represent this grade across the country received a very strong response rate (310 responses) across the country.

The survey posed the following question:

This survey is designed to get your views on how the CWU can better engage and represent our Clerical members as a group in their own right.

One option is a National Clerical Branch, which will bring together all Clerical members. This Branch would then be organised by an occupational section or by geographical area.

Another option is to develop a Regional Clerical Branch to work in conjunction with the Dublin Clerks Branch. The Regional Clerical Branch would bring together the Clerks outside of Dublin.

In your opinion, would more effective representation be provided by a National Clerical Branch or a Regional Clerical Branch?



Future Options

From the survey it is clear that there is an appetite for change and there is ample support for either option, albeit, the Regional/Dublin option is slightly favoured.

In considering which option would be better we must be mindful of a number of factors:

- 1. The overall potential changes within the An Post branch structures which are the subject of some consideration
- 2. Within this, we need to be careful of any impact on union release
- 3. We should be mindful of the Clerical presence on the NEC
- 4. Effective communications, including holding meetings/AGMs will be important in making either option a success

National Branch

This will bring all the Clerical members together in one national branch of approximately 750.

This will require the right structures to be put in place within the branch to ensure effective representation, one suggestion from the Clerical sub-group is that it should be organised by occupational section and/or by geography.

For example there could be sections within the branch for Counters, TLVS, etc..

This would require discussion with the existing clerical branches on how this could work best in line with the factors outlined above.

One benefit of this approach is that it creates a very strong platform for Clerks, unifies them on a national basis and with the right branch structure, will be more effective at representing their issues across the work types. A national branch eliminates any prospect of inter-branch issues.

Some branches might be concerned about losing their clerks and we will need to integrate this branch with the revised An Post branch structures to ensure that these members remain connected to their office colleagues.

Dublin and Regional Branch

This would create two branches Dublin Clerks Branch (371 members) and a Regional Clerks Branch (approximately 400 members).

This will require careful consideration of how to structure the branch, which will be covering a large geographical area.

One key consideration is to align any potential changes with any revisions to the existing branch structures that may occur.

If this emerges as the preferred option, there will have to be close co-operation with the two branches.



An Post Transformation Agreement 2023-2026

Financials		
One4All Voucher	€750 ISSUED	
DSU Postal Operatives	3% Allowance 1st July 2024 -Consolidated 1st January 2025 2% Allowance 1st January 2025-Consolidated 1st January 2026 The above also applies to Indoor Admin Operatives	
Cleaners/Patrols	2.5% Consolidated from 1st January 2022 PAID	
Working Leader	2.5%-Consolidated from 1st January 2023 PAID	
E-Trike Allowance of €15	PAID on implementation of the DSU Redesign	
DSM Salary	Review-Market movement for 2023 PAID	
Revised Clerk scale	effective 1st January 2024	

Final Mile

In May 2023 the CWU Postal Courier Executive unanimously endorsed the Transformation Agreement with An Post. A major component of the Company programme was an ambition to complete a full redesign of all Delivery Service Units over an eighteen-month period. The Company redesign programme was based on learnings from three Test & Learn sites at Ravensdale Road Dublin, Drogheda and Kilmallock. The heavy schedule envisaged 35 offices going live by December 2023.

However, it became evident once the learnings from Test & Learn sites had been shared with CWU that the plan for 2023 was too ambitious. Notwithstanding the full cooperation by CWU, the Company sensibly decided to scale back on its expectations. The offices that have been implemented are in reality a further test of the process, of what is a complete reorganisation of the existing indoor and delivery workings.

The new design approach is the first major change for An Post and staff members since the initial C&D redesigns which commenced in 2006. Those of you who were around at the time will recall that the Company strategy appeared to be managing a declining letter business into further decline and it had little or no interest in the commercial parcel market. Our Union, recognising that e-substitution was the single biggest threat to the livelihood of our members, invested considerable time and effort in persuading the Company of the shortsightedness of their strategy and from 2017 onwards, the genesis of a successful commercial parcel operation, ensuring the future of An Post, began. This change was difficult for us, but in the intervening period we have cooperated with a range of initiatives which have helped secure a better future for the Company and our members than was previously envisaged.

In 2019, the Union faced a further challenge, when, prompted by a trend that was happening in Postal companies internationally in response to plummeting mail volume, the Company began to plan the introduction of reducing delivery to every second day. This would have had a devastating impact on our members, significantly reducing the number of staff in the delivery area.

In the end, common sense prevailed and COVID ensured that there was a change of strategic direction. However, given that all DSUs and routes since 2006 have been designed on what was effectively a letters delivery model, a new approach to design was necessary. This new approach resulted in the current Transformation Agreement.

The objective of the Transformation Agreement was to put in place as a fit-for-purpose network, designed on volumes and standards, to a consistent approach for all DSUs, utilizing the most up-to-date information systems.

There is no doubt that this has proven to be quite a culture shock as the designs in place for over 15 years are replaced by the new operation.

On reflection, we believe that both the Union and Company would accept that we probably should have communicated more effectively on the impact staff and customers would experience in the changeover. It is clear from the feedback collected by CWU, that staff feel their office has been turned upside-down. Disruption is an inevitable consequence of change on this scale and scope and, as mentioned earlier, for more



than 15 years, offices have been designed entirely for organising the delivery of letters.

Supports for the change in strategic direction and the focus on the commercial parcel market were undertaken in a haphazard manner, including in some cases, just putting a van on the existing bicycle route. The fastharvesting exercise was done to support a basic pay increase for our members, but it was an overly-simplistic approach that compounded some of the issues already being experienced in the DSUs. Consolidations of DSOs, encompassing 600 routes that were never redesigned and which were simply relocated as is to the adjacent office was not a strategic approach. Apart from peak/ Christmas and high volumes during lockdown periods of COVID, a serious imbalance of work on routes, with many being under-scheduled, became clear.

To retain the existing letter-based network, the

Union would have had to agree to resize the work as is, and as each duty became vacant the Company would fill the vacancy to the required level. This would have introduced a large number of part-time posts. Certainly this would have left the sorting the same and mean less training requirements. It would have also meant a serious reduction in overtime levels, as the Company would have the ability to have in place a resource that could deal with spikes in mail volumes more efficiently and at significantly less cost. It was not a route preferred by the Union, which is why we have agreed to cooperate with the current redesign approach of An Post.

The 14-week engagement and implementation process was recently reviewed based on the experiences thus far of the Branch Secretaries at the first 35 offices. The areas of concern identified by branches are being jointly reviewed.



CWU Postal Branch Secretaries attend HQ for an update on the Transformation Agreement



Cost-of-Living Voucher Secured for An Post Insurance Members

With thanks to all participating An Post members, from Ian McArdle, Deputy General Secretary.

In June 2023, the An Post Insurance Branch conducted a survey of their members on the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis. As the current pay deal does not expire until mid-2024, the union wanted to explore ways to alleviate the pressures facing our members as they try and deal with the crisis.

The CWU An Post Insurance Branch got a very strong response to the 'Cost-of-Living' survey and many workers who were not previously CWU members made the decision to join.







Key Findings

The results are compelling and speak for themselves. The Branch did not need to say much by way of explanation when they presented them to management recently. It is clear that the cost-of-living increases are having a direct impact on our members' disposable income with the vast bulk of members struggling to pay rent/mortgage, food and energy bills.

As well as this, over 85% of respondents agreed that the cost-of-living crisis is having a negative impact on their mental health. Has An Post Insurance done enough to financially assist you to deal with the cost of living crisis?

On foot of the survey, a meeting was held with management and discussions took place on what assistance could be provided to staff to deal with these challenges. Following negotiations, the union secured a €500 One4all voucher.

This is a welcome outcome for our members in An Post Insurance and could not have been achieved without the feedback from our members who took part in the survey. The CWU An Post Insurance Branch will continue to monitor the cost-of-living increases as they prepare for negotiations on pay in 2024.



All you need to know, and do, to get on the Register of Electors

Are you registered to vote? **CheckTheRegister.ie to see if you're on the register of electors.** If you're registered, great. If not, don't worry! They'll guide you through it.

The annual electoral register deadline is in November each year for all new voters and those looking to change their details. If a vote is called (e.g. a general election, Presidential election or referendum) you can also apply to be added to the register (known as the supplement to the register), **but your application must be received by your local authority at least 15 days before polling day, not counting Sundays or public holidays**. To be included on the supplement to the Postal or Special Voters list, you must apply by **28 days before polling day**.

How do I register?

There are two types of registers that you can apply to be on. Which one you apply for depends on the time of year that you're filling out the application.

Supplementary Register

If there is an election or a referendum coming up and you're not included in the register of electors, then you can apply to be included on the supplementary register.

Draft Register of Electors

The draft register of electors is published on the 1st of November each year. This shows a list of the people included on the official Register of Electors on the 15th of February the following year.

To be included in the Draft Register, you must send in your application form **before November 25th**.

The register which came into force on 15th February 2020 is on display from 1 November to 25 November 2020. This means that if on 15th February 2020, you are aged 18 or over, you should check that your name, address and other details are present and correct on the Draft Register.

If there is a mistake, tell your local Council as soon as possible.



CWU Seeks Significant New Pay Deal at An Post

anpost money manager

Government Loan ✓ Sub-Post Offices ✓ National Lottery ✓ Pension ✓ Transformation ✓ Cash ✓ Pay 2024 ?

Union requires basic pay increase that is best in over twenty years at the Company

The Communications Workers' Union (CWU) is seeking a significant new pay deal for An Post's employees as the current agreement expires at the end of December 2023.

The Union contends any new pay deal must fully reflect the pivotal role that the workforce has played in turning the Company's fortunes around in a dynamic postal/courier market which has brought An Post back to profitability and positive cash flows. This is based on the Union and the Company signing up to the Transformation Agreement which is set to deliver on the Company's change programme from 2023 to 2026.

Commenting, **CWU** General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, said: "The transformation at An Post has been remarkable in a dynamic and competitive postal/ courier market. The financial performance indicators at the Company are now all positively green. An Post workers and their Union want to see their roles in this transformation properly and fully recognised. This follows many years where they were asked to dig deeper and deeper to keep the operation afloat, enduring pay freezes and cost cutting measures. This included sacrificing wage increases and legitimate pension expectations and entitlements."

The Union concurs fully with CEO David McRedmond whom described the Pension Agreement finalised earlier this year with the assistance of the Labour Court to be ground breaking. It secured pensions increases for An Post pensioners and the restoration of pensionable pay for workers. However, it also significantly reduced the contribution from An Post to the Superannuation Schemes at the Company. This revised contribution applies for another two years and provides further space for the Company to invest this cash in the business and its key asset, its workers.

An Post has also had its own Lottery Win following the sale of its share in the National Lottery License which has delivered a handsome cash injection of \in 15 million return on its investment. Furthermore, the Company's return to profitability and positive cashflows has allowed it repay in full and on time its \in 30m investment Loan to Government. Government itself, has been shy in investing in the Company albeit it has ponied up \in 30m, more likely for political expediency, to the loss making sub post offices. This has assisted in the Retail division registering a profit.

There is no doubt that the financial conditions at An Post are a tribute to its management and particularly its workers. They have, time and again, demonstrated their commitment, professionalism and flexibility in providing fantastic, high quality services to An Post's customers. They are also coping at a personal level with high costs and increased levels of inflation. This has been recognised by An Post and the company has responded positively to this by way of payment of the \in 750 voucher to staff. The Union shares the vision and supports the strategy of the CEO and his team.

The General Secretary believes the time is now right for a new pay deal that is equally transformative and be the best pay agreement in over twenty years at An Post. The next pay agreement must recognise and reward workers at the Company for their invaluable contribution, their tough sacrifices and to address the continuing high cost of living.

SECURED BY CWU – DELAYED BY MINISTER

STOP THE DELAY, MINISTER!

An Post sioners

Further to GS Circulars GSP 11 & 12-23, the CWU engaged in extensive representations with various Ministers and Departments, which escalated with correspondence to An Taoiseach and An Tánaiste in an effort to secure approval to sanction the payment of the increases due to An Postpensioners. NewERA (an organisation that provides financial and commercial advice to Government Ministers and Departments in relation to State companies) had completed its report on the matter at the end of June 2023. However, following on from this report, it soon became apparent that the payment of the pension increases due to An Post Pensioners would not go as smoothly as anticipated. This culminated in the CWU engaging in a campaign to end the inordinate delay in obtaining Ministerial approval for the payment of the pension increases due to former An Post and eircom workers (P&T). The campaign gained traction and was carried in the media.

In September, the CWU further escalated its action and subsequently wrote to all TDs and Senators from the political parties seeking their assistance and support for the campaign. Some of the replies received are enclosed for your information.

Finally, on the 11th September, following a long and protracted process that the Government has in place, An Post received confirmation of Ministerial approval to pay the agreed increases to pensioners. This result was only achieved by the Union through the hard work and dedication of our representatives, Worker Directors, ICTU and our retired members throughout the campaign process. To enable us to keep you informed we ask all our retired members to ensure we have the correct contact details for address, email and phone. **You can update your details by contacting info@cwu.ie or 01 8663000.**

The Union will continue its work to have an accelerated process and timeframe for future payments.

An Post Pensioners Campaign -Pension Increases

AN POST PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

Secretary: David Burke Home Tel: 01 4556684 P.O. Box 3177 Rutland Place D.O. Dublin 1, Ireland

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Jean Sean

26th Achden 2023

I would like to thank and congratulate on the increase to our Pansions that you secured, it was hard fought and greatly offerwated by our rembers,

May thanks again

David Burthe 16.5. Sec.

The Union wishes to acknowledge and thank all the TDs and Senators who supported our campaign to get this increase paid.

Irish Independent 🕅

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'Tawdry treatment' – An Post pensioners unhappy at delayed hike in payment which 'risks co-operation with company's transformation agenda'



Civic Reception for Postal Workers held by Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council

A Civic reception was hosted by An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Denis O'Callaghan, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council to acknowledge postal workers role as frontline workers during Covid-19. The staff and management from **Blackrock DSU**, **Glenageary DSU**, **Churchtown DSU**, **Edmondstown DSU and Foxrock DSU**, who service the Dun Laoghiare/Rathdown area were invited to attend along with Frank Donohoe from the CWU.

Speaking at the event An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Denis O'Callaghan said:

"The COVID-19 pandemic changed everything. People had to re-adjust to a new way of living as social distancing and isolation became the norm. Postal workers as frontline staff were key for many to remain connected to their communities. Despite having to alter their own work schedules, postal staff continued to provide delivery services across our County, keeping connectivity with every household, all while looking out for elderly and vulnerable people. The contribution made by postal workers during the COVID-19 pandemic ranks among the highest level of contribution from front-line workers. On behalf of the citizens of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, I salute and thank each of you for your contribution to our County and the wider community."

Frank Donohoe, CWU said

"We would like to sincerely thank Dun Laoghaire/ Rathdown County Council and An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Denis O'Callaghan for acknowledging the role played by our members during the pandemic. It is much appreciated and we will be forever grateful to you for hosting this wonderful event."

Denis also referred to his 41 years' service as a postal worker and a proud member of the CWU.

A great evening was had by all those who attended and presentations were made to each of the five offices.



Frank Donohoe, CWU & An Cathaoirleach Cllr. Denis O'Callaghan



Presentation to Stephen Hogan, Branch Representative, Blackrock DSU



Presentation to Mark McLoughlin, Branch Representative, Churchtown DSU



Presentation to Ciaran Doyle, Branch Representative, Edmondstown DSU
POSTAL UPDATE





Presentation to Mark Moloney Branch Representative, Foxrock DSU



Presentation to Greg Mulhall Branch Representative, Glenageary DSU



Pictured left Members from Blackrock DSU

Pictured right Members from Churchtown DSU





Pictured left Members from Edmondstown DSU

Pictured right Members from Glenageary DSU



Valuable Life and Illness Cover for CWU Members

CWU FamilyCare

CWU Life and Illness Insurance Cover for the whole family* at a discounted rate



CWU FamilyCare provides peace of mind for you and your family should the worst occur. Cover for both Life and Illness cover for your and your family at a special CWU rate.

Up to €100,000 Life Cover per member @ €3.89 per week and spouse/partner @ €3.46 per week Up to €60,000 Illness Cover per member @ €3.94 per week and spouse/partner @ €3.94 per week €10,000 Life Cover per child from birth up to age 25 automatically included €20,000 Illness Cover per child from birth up to age 25 automatically included

Warning: The current premium may increase after the next review of the scheme at 01/06/2025

Halligan Life & Pensions Ltd t/a Halligan Insurances is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Irish Life Assurance plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. *T&C's apply

End of an era - Michael Halligan Retires

Michael Halligan recently retired as Managing Director of Halligan Insurances following 40 plus years of service. Michael went out on his own in 1981, setting up his own insurance brokerage, that would become Halligan Insurances.

He began a long and valued partnership with the PTWU in 1984 and continued to serve members of the CWU up to his retirement with a range of insurance schemes designed to save members money on their insurance policies.

Michael was always a regular at Conference, and we wish him the very best in his well deserved retirement.

Halligan Life & Pensions Ltd. t/a Halligan Insurances is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Contract of the second s

Wishing you a very Happy Retirment, Michael!



Committing to a Gender-Inclusive Union

The CWU is a progressive Union which advocates a gender-inclusive approach. In this regard we provide leadership training and mentoring as part of our Union training programmes, as well as creating opportunities for women to network and engage further with their Union through various initiatives.

Members will also be aware that the Union has a strong gender equality programme and have successfully implemented resources to mainstream gender issues into our overall Union aims. This has ranged from work/life balance enhancements to women's health at work as well as many other equal opportunity initiatives. The Union has also focused on representation within our decisionmaking structures and recently conducted a review of gender representation on the National Executive Council (NEC).

Heretofore, the Union operated a reserve seat system with two seats reserved for women on the Postal Courier sector and one seat reserved for eComms. Female membership of the CWU normally is between 21% to 25%, which reflects the number of female employees in what is traditionally a male dominated sector, however this has not always been reflected on the NEC.

This was reviewed by the Executive Council, and it was agreed to refer the matter to the General Purpose Subcommittee of the NEC, with National Officer Carol Scheffer researching the process of gender representation at executive level in other unions, namely SIPTU, Financial Services Union, Mandate, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, UNI Global Union and CWU UK.

Following a thorough examination, a report was prepared for the Executive on the premise that the CWU aims to achieve proportional representation of women across both sectors of the NEC to reflect our membership base which in turn requires a positive action rule change.

Recommendations for CWU from the Report

Having conducted the research the following was agreed by the Executive:

1. Remove the reserve seat(s) from both sectors and replace with a system of proportional representation similar to what is in operation in CWU UK, SIPTU and ICTU as follows::

- Postal/Courier sector and eComms sectors: ensure a minimum of 20% of these panels are of either gender on both panels, i.e., no less than 20% of female members and no less than 20% of male members.
- Remove Subsection 18 which states that: "A member will only be permitted to serve one (1) term on the National Executive Council utilising a Reserved Seat for Women." Accordingly, there would be no restriction on the number of terms that a female member can serve on the main panel.
- 3. Vacancies that arise during the term of the Executive will be filled using the normal procedure however the proportional representation must be maintained.

The above was agreed as a significant step to ensuring proportional gender representation. This will require a rule change at the next Biennial Conference and if implemented will take effect after the BDC of 2026.

This issue of gender representation on the executive board and across all levels of the CWU will be monitored and reviewed as we continue to build a more progressive organisation as we prepare for the future challenges.



UA global union

Report from UNI World Women's Congress

UNI welcomed around 600 participants from 202 unions and 73 countries during the UNI World Women's Conference, which so far was the largest UNI World Women's Conference. Philadelphia is noted as a strong union city with deep labour movement roots. It was fitting therefore that the city hosted the one-and-a-half-day Conference, which preceded the UNI World Congress.



Under the banner "Women Rising Together", the UNI Equal Opportunities Department paid homage to the millions of women workers who worked tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath and called for women to rise together to fight for women's and worker's rights, setting out new strategic priorities that would lead the work of the women's group for the next four years.

Motions to Congress

Six motions were put forward for approval at the Conference and debated by participants. With approximately 103 speakers taking the floor during the debates, all motions were adopted unanimously by the Conference and a new work plan was set out for the UNI Equal Opportunities Department for the next four years.

The motions included:

1. Strategic Priorities

This focused on women's representation in unions and the need to have organising campaigns to

increase women's participation, the need to fight against violence and harassment and to have Unions working for women to eliminate entrenched inequalities.

2. Women rising for decent work and a sustainable world.

This motion took into consideration the obstacles created for gender equality from the rise of new technologies such as AI (artificial intelligence), the increased representation of women in remote and part-time work, as well as the gender pay gap and the lack of work-life balance.

3. Women rising for a world free of violence and harassment.

We emphasised the need to raise awareness on the effect of violence and harassment not only workers but entire families and communities.

4. Women rising in unions.

We marked the 10-year anniversary of the UNI Mentoring Program which has been a huge success and continues to grow around the world. The motion focused on supporting women so they can take on more influential roles in their unions.

5. Women's rising together for health and safety.

We emphasised the need to have gender appropriate research conducted in the area of women's health and safety with support needed from UNI affiliates for women's health campaigns as part of the collective bargaining agenda.

6. Women rising for Youth.

This motion aimed at the need to support and mainstream young women workers into their trade unions, which can be a considerable challenge.

Carol Scheffer unanimously elected as UNI World Women's President



Carol expressed her gratitude to the affiliates on her election and also to the CWU Ireland for their support.

She also thanked the women of Area 1, UK & Ireland for their continued backing.

Carol stated 'As an Irish woman, I have learned a lot from my predecessors, who fought for our freedom, like Rosie Hackett who set up the Irish Women Workers' Union, and from leaders like former President of Ireland Mary Robinson. In As the UNI World Women's Conference drew to a close, a new President was elected Carol Scheffer from CWU Ireland. It was also an opportunity to thank Patricia Nyman from SACCAWU, South Africa for her activism, dedication and strength in guiding the Women's group during the last five years.

effect Irish women understand struggle. In all our countries the women who have come before us have laid the foundation upon which we build our solidarity and it is now for us to carry on their legacy'.

With a new roadmap and under a new leadership, the UNI World Women's Committee is moving forward, rising together for women workers around the world, fighting for their rights and equality in the world of work.

Menstrual & Menopausal WELFARE AT WORK

What is menstruation and the menopause?

Menstruation is a normal part of the menstrual cycle that results in bleeding out of the vagina every 28-40 days as the body sheds its uterine lining. Menstruation typically occurs between the ages of 12-45 in people who have a uterus.

Menopause is when a person stops having a period due to lower hormone levels as a natural part of ageing. While this can occur any time between the ages of 45-55, the average age of menopause in Ireland is 51.

What are the symptoms associated with menstruation and the menopause?

Many people experience mild to severe symptoms while menstruating and experiencing menopause that can require extraordinary circumstances to mitigate. These symptoms often include:



- St NOPAUSE
- heavy bleeding
- nausea
- mood swings
- feeling depressed or irritable
- migraines
- tiredness
- bloating
- breast tenderness
- abdominal cramping

- hot flushes
- night sweats
- difficulty sleeping
- fatique
- lack of energy
- low mood or anxiety
- problems with memory or concentration
- headaches
- heart palpitations
- recurring UTIs
- loss of muscle
- weight gain
- joint aches and pains

The results of a trade union's survey on menstruation in May of 2022 revealed staggering information about how people are (or are not) coping with menstruation and the menopause in their workplace.



Why is this important in the workplace?

The stigma surrounding periods and the menopause is preventing people from discussing ways to improve their quality of life in the workplace. Issues of absenteeism in the workplace may result in lower rates of career progression, especially for women, who either feel like they can't go for a promotion due to their health or are perceived as less dedicated due to time take off for health reasons. Presenteeism (working while ill) also occurs, and results in lower rates of productivity.

symptoms

What can your workplace do to improve?

Employers can take several steps to better support those who menstruate or are experiencing the menopause at work:

- Provide free sanitary products to all employees
- Ensure accessibility to proper toilet facilities
- Use of darker fabrics for upholstered furniture and permission for darker fabrics in uniforms
- A form of temperature control to help those experiencing hot flushes
- Use of more breathable fabrics in uniforms
- Improved training on menstruation and menopause for line managers and supervisors
- Access to flexible working arrangements when required



6th UNI Global Union Congress — Rising Together



CWU Motley Crew and Flag!

UNI Global Union's 6th World Congress took place from Sunday, 27 August to Wednesday, 30 August 2023 at the Philadelphia Convention Centre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States and the CWU had a delegation in attendance.

Under the theme 'Rising Together,' the Congress brought trade union leaders, representing 20 million workers worldwide, together to build power and set a programme for action for the next four years.

Over 1,200 delegates from unions in more than 150 countries attended to debate how plan for how the global trade union movement can win better jobs and better communities by organising, building collective bargaining strength and working together at a global level. Central to this are campaigns that can create change on a global scale by strengthening capacity at a grassroots level such as the #MakeAmazonPay campaign.

UNI General Secretary Christy Hoffman said of the Congress, "The theme "Rising Together" captures a collective desire to emerge from the pandemic and costof-living crisis stronger than ever before, and with the participation of diverse leaders representing 20 million workers globally, we will set a transformative program in the next four years that puts worker's rights at the heart of the global economy."

The Congress will focus on key issues aimed at advancing workers' rights and addressing pressing global challenges. Some of the crucial items on the agenda include:

• **Building Union Power for All:** Strengthening the influence of working people by expanding union membership through strategic organizing efforts

worldwide. UNI seeks to grow workers' influence over multinational corporations and advocate for the protection and extension of collective bargaining rights.

- Changing the Rules to Hold Corporations Accountable: Ensuring businesses worldwide respect workers' human rights. UNI fights to establish effective and binding instruments to hold multinational corporations accountable, with a particular emphasis on involving unions in all stages of binding due diligence.
- Rising Together for a Digital Transformation with Shared Benefits for All: Seeking to ensure that workers share the benefits of technological advancements while addressing the potential risks through union-led initiatives. As digitalization continues to shape the world of work, UNI and its affiliates are determined to negotiate the impact of this transformation collectively. They
- **Rising Together for Health & Safety:** Underscoring the post-pandemic need for strong workplace representation and safety regulations. UNI Global Union and its affiliates will develop strategies to organise and bargain around health and safety concerns and promote independent health and safety committees.

From a CWU perspective it was a very successful Congress, both General Secretary, Seán McDonagh and National Officer, Carol Scheffer were elected to the UNI World Executive Committee 2023-2027 which will ensure our Union will continue to play its part in shaping the debate on these important objectives over the next four years.





Stop the Stigma Campaign — Trade Unions Call for Workplace Policies on Menopause and Menstrual Health

The CWU as part of a trade union coalition called for the implementation of mandatory workplace menstrual and menopausal policies. Made up of Fórsa Trade Union, the Financial Services Union (FSU), the Communication Workers' Union (CWU), the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO), the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), the Services, Industrial, Professional, and Technical Union (SIPTU), UNITE the Union, and backed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the coalition emphasised the need for longoverdue measures to support workers and to stop the stigma surrounding menstruation and the menopause. Trade Union research found a shocking 70% of respondents had to take time off work as a direct result of their periods. With only 1% of workplaces currently having a menstrual welfare policy in place, it was decided that there was a real need to have serious conversations about menstrual and menopausal health at work, thus resulting in the launch of the **#StopTheStigma** campaign.

The trade union coalition launched its position paper in Leinster House on October 24th which includes the results of the research conducted as well as recommended draft policies in relation to menstruation and menopause.



National Officer Carol Scheffer and NEC member Ellen Moore at the Launch of the Stop the Stigma Campaign



Speaking at the launch, Irish Congress of Trade Union's Vice-President, Phil Ní Sheaghdha, said, *"This is very serious. The potential for women's careers to be negatively impacted particularly by menopause needs to be eliminated, and education and awareness training are key to reducing stigma and facilitating the vital conversations women need to have at work."* There is a real need for a gender-sensitive approach as well as a fit-for-purpose menstrual and menopausal workplace health strategy that would see issues experienced by workers addressed in practical ways through union and employer collective bargaining. This would have a significant impact on the reduction of sick leave and ensuring dignified workplaces for all."

The Stop the Stigma Campaign has created a comprehensive list of best practice solutions for a proper menstrual and menopause workplace policy as follows:

- Flexible work arrangements: We advocate for flexible scheduling options, including remote work and adjusted hours, to accommodate physical discomfort and fatigue due to periods and menopause.
- 2. Enhanced managerial training: Employers should provide training for line managers to facilitate open discussions about menstruation and menopause, offering guidance on supporting and accommodating affected employees.
- 3. Free menstrual and menopause products: Employers should ensure free access to essential period products in toilets and provide tailored options upon request.
- 4. Physical accommodations: We call for reasonable physical accommodations, like ergonomic workstations and temperature controls to alleviate pain and discomfort.
- 5. Access to risk assessments: Employers must conduct risk assessments with consideration for menstruating and menopausal employees, including aspects like temperature and welfare facilities.
- 6. Promoting a supportive culture: A culture supporting open discussions and understanding of these processes is vital.
- 7. Confidentiality and privacy: Information about menstrual cycles and menopause-related symptoms should be treated confidentially.
- 8. Paid time off: Feasible paid time off should be provided for symptoms without detriment

The role of the CWU

In May 2023 the CWU, in association with An Post, launched various initiatives to promote menopause awareness in the workplace. This included a menopause policy, a toolkit, and 'in person' sessions at various locations organised in association with the Menopause Hub which were well received by members. Securing gender-related occupational health supports is a driving focus of the CWU and this year we also commenced an 'End Period Poverty' campaign. We have successfully raised the issue of menstrual health in the workplace with An Post, who have agreed to provide Wellness Packs in their various distribution centres. Our next step will be to issue Union claims for workplace menstrual health policies.

It is time to change the workplace for the better!



A Year of Working with Breast Cancer Ireland



Once again the CWU was delighted to work with Breast Cancer Ireland (BCI) to increase awareness of breast cancer symptoms and treatment among our members. BCI promote good breast health for women of all ages across Ireland with their free of charge programme, to companies and other groups on a national level.

We are fully aware that early detection is key and the best way to do this is through education and effective breast checks. The programme delivered by BCI highlights the importance of good breast health and consists of a visit from a Breast Cancer Ireland Outreach Coordinator who demonstrates with a medical mannequin, how to perform an effective self-breast examination, and goes through the eights signs and symptoms to look out for as these are often not as obvious as one would think.

This year we were delighted to work with these Coordinators who have made a real difference through their demonstrations. Our thanks to Carol Scott, Juliette O'Keeffe and Rachel Fitzgerald Feeley for being amazing advocates of Breast Cancer awareness and for working with us this year. Programmes were carried out in the mail centres, in An Post Insurance and also in all the eir call centres.

Should members wish to have a demonstration in their area, they can contact Union Head office directly.

For more information on the programme please see https://www.breastcancerireland.com



Members in the Portlaoise Mails Centre examining the mannequin for breast cancer signs

Members are encouraged to download the Breast Cancer Awareness App







A fantastic turnout from the Athlone Mails Centre. Our thanks to Caroline Heavin and Tara Ravenhill for making the necessary arrangements.

Also thanks to Paula Kennedy Hogan, Head of An Post HR Services for making the checks in An Post so successful.



The wonderful Dublin Postal Amalgamated Branch who were the first Branch to come on board for the Breast Checks Programme.

Thanks to Paula Martin and Lesley Sheridan for making this happen!









National Officer Carol Scheffer in attendance at Sligo Call Centre

Sligo Call Centre Groups

Two groups were facilitated at the Sligo Call Centre. We had great participation. Thanks to local Sligo Rep Deborah Flannery and also to HR Sligo, Grania Mulligan and Marsha Dunleavy.

On the same day the programme was delivered at the Waterford Call Centre. Thanks to Branch Secretary Pat Sheridan and eir HR Bernadette Marshall.

Limerick Call Centre is scheduled for December 14th.



(Pictured Above) Deborah Flannery and Pascal Connolly eir Sligo District with Outreach Coordinator Rachel Fitzgerald Feeley.



Cork Call Centre



Breast Check Awareness in eir's Cork Call centre coordinated by Local Branch Representative Alanna Cotter.

An Post Insurance



(Pictured Above) Branch Secretary Sinead Power who coordinated the Seminar for An Post Insurance.

(Pictured Right) Sinead with Breast Check Coordinator Rachel Fitzgerald Feeley.





Organising Training – Dublin Clerks Branch and DPAB

Following completion of the membership audit of the Postal Branches, the Dublin Clerks Branch and the Dublin Postal Amalgamated Branch attended tailored Organising and Recruitment training to further enhance skills for engaging with both existing members and potential members in their areas. CWU Industrial Organisers delivered oneday training courses including mapping, one-toone conversations and Union inductions.

Confident one-to-one organising conversations are an indispensable skill when inviting nonmembers to become part of our Union. There is a structed approach to ensure that workers fully understand that it is in their best interest to become a Union member. As part of the training, Branch Committee members were brought through best practice approaches to these conversations.

Branch Committee members were also provided

with detailed training on conducting Union inductions for new staff. Union inductions are an essential function of the Union Branches to ensure that membership density is maintained and continues to grow, securing the long-term strength of our Branches and the Union as a whole.

Finally, participants were brought through detailed mapping exercises to build a comprehensive picture of their Branch footprint. The ability to consult an at-a-glance map of a Branch's area not only allows Branch leaders to identify where membership density can be enhanced, employing skills covered earlier in the training, but also to recognise the activists and leaders of the future.

Following the training, both Branches not only increased their membership but reported that they felt more confident in engaging with non-members in their areas.

American Airlines Update

Last year, CWU Officials and AA Union Representatives negotiated a three-year pay agreement with AA management. The proposal was put to a ballot and accepted by our members.

In June this year, the CWU concluded discussions with AA management on the terms of the second year of the pay plan.

We are pleased to announce the following has been agreed after intense negotiations:

- 1. 10.3% increase to the base rate of pay, backdated to 1st April 2023
- 2. €25 dry cleaning allowance
- 3. Commitment to annual review of medical insurance (VHI) in August 2023

During the winter months, American Airline members face a potential cut to their hours due to a downturn in flights. This results in a significant loss of earning for our members, many of whom have had to take up a second job during the offseason. Following engagement between local management and local CWU representatives, members have secured their working hours for the winter season. This not only further enhances the pay agreement but gives financial security to our members.

The above could only be achieved through the hard work of the CWU Reps and the continued support of our members in AA.

ORGANISING UPDATE



DPD - Clare Depot

Workers from the DPD Depot in Clare have embarked on a campaign to organise their workplace following the success of their colleagues in the DPD Kerry Depot last year. A number of activists attended training to begin to lay the foundations for their campaign and the strategies they would adopt to achieve the goals they wanted.

The campaign has seen CWU Members in Clare take several collective actions including participating in two surveys and two petitions, all of which were extremely well-supported and have been presented to company management. CWU officials have written to DPD management seeking a meeting to discuss the bellow issues that CWU Members in Clare wish to address:

- Pay
- Sick Pay
- Collective Bargaining

At the time of writing, local CWU Representatives alongside CWU officials are due to have an initial meeting with DPD management in the coming days. Members will be kept up-to-date with any developments.

Organising Expert Jane McAlevey Launches New Book

Long standing friend of the CWU, Jane McAlevey, launched her latest book, *'Rules to Win By: Power and Participation in Union Negotiations*'in Ireland on 9th November in the Forsa offices.

This is Jane McAlevey's fourth book and her first two books, 'Raising Expectations (and Raising Hell)' and 'No Shortcuts' have set out a clear model for trade union organising that has been embraced all over the world and in no small measure has been influential within our own Union. These books talk about building worker power by identifying good workplace leaders, giving workers the confidence to organise and represent themselves and understanding the power dynamics inside and outside the workplace.

The new book is for anyone who wants to understand how to build the power required to effectively challenge and reverse income inequality and attacks on democracy. She uses lessons from some of the toughest fights today, preparing a durable, all-out strike in a union-hostile environment, to provide a masterclass in participatory social change, indispensable both within and beyond the workplaces where we spend half of our waking lives.

At the launch she spoke about the ever-increasing importance of the organised workers and trade union in combatting the rise of the far right, citing examples from her campaigns with German unions. She also spoke about high participation bargaining and the role all workers can play in that dynamic as well as the need to properly resource organising work. She observed that servicing and organising are very linked and that building the confidence in workers to 'govern the workplace' is key.

After the initial talk, Ms McAlevey met with a CWU delegation, including the General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, to answer questions and discuss some aspects of the talk in more detail.



Pictured I to r: Ethel Buckley, DGS SIPTU, Ian McArdle, DGS CWU, author Jane McAlevey, and Diarmuid O'Connell, Industrial Organiser CWU.



Photography: Conor Healy / Picture It Photography

ORGANISING UPDATE



CWU & UPS Sign New Framework Agreement

The CWU has signed a new collective Framework Agreement with UPS Ireland. The agreement comprehends the traditional areas where CWU currently has a presence in Dublin, Cork and Shannon but also expands into new areas.

All union members in the following small package operations are covered by the agreement:	
Athlone	Dublin Furry Park
Galway	Dublin Uni 3 Finglas
Shannon	Dublin Unit 5 Finglas
Sligo	Cork I
Waterford	Cork III

At the national level the new agreement provides a structured framework for engagement and consultation between CWU and UPS on a collective basis regarding pay and terms and conditions. The agreement also provides for structured weekly engagement at the local level between CWU Reps and UPS management. Importantly, to make the agreement functional both parties recognise the need to provide training to CWU Reps and the facility to attend CWU Conferences both of which are provided for in this agreement.

The following workgroups within the above areas are comprehended by the agreement:	
	Admin
	Warehouse
	Helpers
	Bikers
	Drivers
	Feeder Drivers

DPD – Clare Depot

Workers from the DPD Depot in Clare have embarked on a campaign to organise their workplace following the success of their colleagues in the DPD Kerry Depot last year. A number of activists attended training to begin to lay the foundations for their campaign and the strategies they would adopt to achieve the goals they wanted to achieve.

The campaign has seen CWU Members in Clare take several collective actions including participating in two surveys and two petitions all Overall, this agreement is a positive development and provides a solid foundation for good industrial relations between CWU and UPS. The clarity that this agreement provides gives the CWU the platform to continue making improvements to our members terms and conditions. It is also an opportunity to grow the presence of our Union within UPS.

To this end, there is provision within the agreement for access to all new hires so that they are given the opportunity to join CWU. As part of the roll out of this agreement arrangements will be made for CWU to visit the various sites and speak with non-union members in the new year.

Halligan Insurance & FM Downes Insurance in UPS

As part of the negotiations of the Framework Agreement the CWU has reached agreement with UPS management to facilitate a pay roll deduction facility for our insurance partners Halligan Insurance and FM Downes Insurance. CWU Members working in UPS will now be able to avail of financial advice and reduced rates on all types of insurance including:

- Home insurance
- Motor insurance
- Health Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Pensions
- Mortgages

This additional benefit is extremely popular among CWU Members as it helps with the household budget and avoids having to worry about monthly direct debit payments as insurance premiums are taken directly out of members wages.

Both Halligan Insurance and FM Downes Insurance will visit the various UPS sites in the new year to meet with staff and discuss the insurance products that they provide.

of which were extremely well supported and have been presented to company management.

CWU officials have written to DPD management seeking a meeting to discuss the bellow issues that CWU Members in Clare wish to address:

- Pay
- Sick Pay
- Collective Bargaining

At the time of writing, local CWU Reps alongside CWU officials are due to have an initial meeting with DPD management in the coming days. Members will be kept up to date with any developments.



Drivers from the UPS Finglas Branch attend CWU Training



(L to R) Keith O'Neill, Jason Lee, Stuart Carey, Joe May, and Edward Byrne

The UPS Finglas Branch Committee have been engaging with UPS management in relation to several concerns that have been raised with Reps over recent months. As part of this process, there has been an agreed method of weekly engagement between CWU Reps and local management.

The purpose of this engagement is to resolve issues at the local level in the first instance and to facilitate a clear and structured way of addressing concerns that arise for members. Any issues that are not resolved at this level will then be referred to Union Head Office and UPS senior management for resolution. Additionally, it has also been agreed that a CWU Rep will attend the CHSP meetings to raise and address concerns that emerge in relation to Health & Safety.

This process is under ongoing review to ensure that effective engagement is taking place and that issues are brought to a conclusion.

The union reached agreement with the company on the release of the committee to attend union training so that local CWU Reps were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to utilize the engagement structures effectively.

In August, The UPS Finglas Branch Committee attended CWU Head Office for two separate training days. The first day of training covered the all the key components that are required to run an effective Branch Committee. This included how to conduct effective meetings with company management. The roles and responsibilities on each member of the committee and what their function is in ensuring that the Branch conducts its business in an effective way for Members was also covered. From a representative perspective all attendees were brought through how to conduct representations in grievance and disciplinary procedures.

The second day covered the key components of Organising within the Branch with a particular focus on member participation and involvement as a prerequisite to power.

The training was delivered within the context of the agreed engagement structures mentioned above. The training and the engagement structure means that the UPS Finglas Branch are now empowered to address Members' issues locally on a day-to-day basis.

UPS Cork

UPS Ireland made an announcement earlier this year that it was reviewing its operational staffing requirements in Dublin, Cork and Shannon. While those reviews have concluded in Dublin and Shannon, Members in Cork are still awaiting the outcome of their review.

The delay has caused a great deal of uncertainty

for CWU Members in UPS Cork. Local Reps and CWU officials have sought to gain clarification and to expedite the company to announce their intention in relation to the Cork operation. However, this process has been frustrated by delays in the renovation of the proposed new building.

CWU officials will continue to engage with UPS management on this issue and Members will be informed of any developments immediately.

ORGANISING UPDATE

RIGHT TO ORGANISE RIGHT TO ORGANISE

The CWU, along with a group of other unions representing private sector workers including SIPTU, Mandate and the FSU, are working on a campaign to fight for the **Right to Organise**, early in the new year.

The campaign will be run in tandem with the transposition, by the Irish government, of the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages. This Directive demands that the government make a plan to increase collective bargaining coverage in Ireland from the current rate of 30% (approximately) to 80%.

On the face of it this sounds like a very positive development for workers until you realise that the business response to this legal obligation is to redefine what we understand collective bargaining to mean. For us, collective bargaining means negotiations with a trade union whose ultimate strength within those negotiations is the power of its members to withdraw their labour.

For Employers however, it could mean discussions (not negotiations) with an internal staff forum which has no power to withdraw its labour and therefore has no power in negotiations. If the latter situation was to transpire and employers get their way, legislation which promises to build worker power has the potential to actually deliver a weaker trade union movement.

The reason for this is simple, the focus of the Directive is on sectoral bargaining, which is great at extending collective bargaining coverage, but it does not automatically mean a growth in Union membership. We need only to look at the example of France where there

is approximately 90% collective bargaining coverage and only 8% Union density.

High level agreements for sectors which are not backed up by high levels of trade union density weakens the negotiating position of unions when engaging with employers. High Union density alone will not build power, it is high participation of members which does that. This is only achieved through old fashioned Organisng and a bottom-up approach which is led by members.

However, the legislative and cultural landscape in Ireland makes this extremely difficult. We are probably the most hostile country in Europe when it comes to trade union rights. Our voluntarist system means that access to workers for trade unions in a non-union workplace is virtually non-existent. Even when workers do organise their workplace there is no requirement on the employer to recognise the trade union. And to add insult to injury there is very limited protections for workers who are targeted by their employer for trade union activities and the protections that do exist are often hard to achieve.

This is an extremely prohibitive context for trade union organising and we need to try and change this. That is why this campaign for the **Right to Organise** is so essential. We are campaigning to ensure that any new legislation that comes out of the European Directive on collective bargaining coverage does not bypass or diminish trade unions but enhances them.

The campaign will fight to make it safer for workers

ORGANISING UPDATE

to organise with a radical overhaul of the protections for trade union membership and activity. The Unfair Dismissals Act is 30 years old and frankly it is past its sell by date. We need legislation that takes on the unionbusters in this country so that never ever again will it be cheap or easy for a boss to fire a union activist.

For workers to build the power required for real, meaningful power based collective bargaining, the rules of the game must change. To this end, the campaign for the **Right to Organise** has a number of key demands which are set out below:

Every Shop Steward has the means required to discharge their function by having the right to:

- Hold Union meetings in the workplace
- Distribute information about the Union to all workers

- Ask non-members to join the Union
- Attend and represent members in meetings with management
- Release for training
- Access to workers
- Improved protections for workers

This will be a national campaign of political engagement, something which the CWU has done to great effect in relation to pensions and postal liberalisation. We will be adopting a high participation approach by calling on all branches and activists to play their part when the time comes. This could be a defining campaign for the trade union movement and the Directive is a great opportunity to improve our collective ability to organise in the workplace.

THERE'S POWER IN A UNION

With the rise of extreme right-wing, fascist rhetoric on social media, it is worth remembering that this is not the first time our Union has stood up to these despicable forces. This excerpt from 'The Postal Worker' in 1937 speaks for itself.

MARCH, 1937

THE POSTAL WORKER

COMMUNISM AND FASCISM. Democracy the People's Safeguard.

Mr. Norton on Evils of Dictatorship.

The following is a report of the speech on Communism and Fascism delivered by Mr. Norton at the recent Conference of the Labour Party. In view of the interest aroused by the speech we publish it verbatim. As the speech was not delivered from notes we thank the Labour Party for its kindness in furnishing us with a transcript.

Deputy Norton said : It ought not be necessary at this hour of the day to introduce at an Irish Labour Party Conference a resolution condemning Fascism and Communism. The community ought to know by now that the Labour Party condemns Communism and Fascism alike. (Applause). Unfortunately, how-ever, it has become fashionable during the past twolve months to address admonitions to Irish workers warning them of the dangers of Godless Communism and suggesting in these admonitions that there is a danger that Irish workers would embrace Communism as an economic and religious creed. I say, as one Irish Catholic worker, that such admonitions addressed to us are quite unjustified by the facts of Irish history and that they betray a deplorable want of faith in the deep-seated religious convictions of the Irish working class

To those who consider it necessary, day in and day out, to warn the Irish workers of the dangers of Communiam, I would suggest that we need no warning, cithor about Communism or Fascism. Both of them are menaces, not only to our minds and consciences, but to the liberty and freedom of the people. As far as we are concerned we reject Communism and Fascism with a genuine enthusiasm which might well be shared by some of those who address advice to us. In my opinion, the scare stories about Communism, the constant references to the dangers and the exaggerated reports of the extent to which Communism is alleged to exist in this country, are calculated to develop an interest in Communism rather than to retard its development here. The Labour movement has never had any relations with the Communist Party in this country, and those who profess to warn us of the dangers of Communism ought to know that as far as the Communist Party is concerned it has selected the Labour Party as the target for its bitterest criticism and vilest abuse

Dictatorships and Liberty.

We can all remember a few years ago when the Labour Party endeavoured to inaugurate a campaign by a public meeting in the Mansion House. The Communists attended there and did everything in their power to wreck that meeting. Yet these same people extend to the other political parties the kindness of their absence from or silence at their meetings. Our early experiences of the Communist Party in this country have convinced us that the Communist Party here, just as in other countries, has been the bitterest enemy of the official Labour movement.

The resolution before the Conference deals with Fascism, and the amendment with Communism, and in particular with "Godless Communism." When we look at the face of Europe to-day, and especially at Germany and at Russia, we see in both these countries, where dictatorships rule, that there has been a stifling of all legitimate parliamentary Opposition. In Germany, we can see a ruthless suppression of the trades unions-the bulwark of the workers on the industrial field-and a trampling upon all freedom of the mind and liberty of speech in both countries. In Germany the dictatorship is being maintained only by the establishment of concentration camps in which all those who stood for freedom of mind and conscience have been incarcerated and persecuted. The Dictatorship has been maintained there only by bludgeonings and jailings, by periodical purges and blood-baths and by the introduction of that strange pagan spectacle, the ceremonial suicide.

51

The bloody events of June, 1934, when between 300 and 800 prominent leaders in the Hitler regime were ordered to take their own lives so that the dictatorship might continue, have not passed from our minds. In Germany, a vain-glorious belligerency compels the people to deny themselves necessary articles of food and clothing so that the German military machine may again take the field for a new holocaust which threatens the very existence of civilisation not only in Europe but throughout the world.

To the unchristian race hatred fostered by the German Dictatorship has been added the diabolical attempt to create a State-made religion, substituting Hitler for Almighty God, in the vain hope that it can supplant divine teaching. That typifies German Fascism!

The Purges.

In Russia, the picture we see is no more comforting. There, too, we have periodical purges and systematic efforts to extinguish all spiritual light from the lives of the Russian people. Like Germany, the dictatorship is maintained there only by those dreadful periodical purges involving the most wanton and revolting sacrifice of human lives. These horrifying deeds, these deeds which have diagraced Russia and Germany, display a gross contempt for the majesty and sacredness of human life and ought to reveal to our people, who prize liberty of mind and consciance, the dangers inherent in Communism on the one hand and in Fascism on the other.

In my opinion the cause of human progress will not be advanced by the substitution of the new method of dictatorship for the older, if in some respects, less spectacular methods of democracy. Mass regimentation may suit the people of Germany, or the people of the vast territories of Russia, but mass regimentation does not suit the Irish mind and there is no set of circumstances here which ought to induce us to abandon the well tried, peaceful and harmonious system of Government by democracy for a dictatorship which would only give us the same horrors and evils, the same slaughter and persecution of our kith and kin as it has given Germany and Russia. We must relain

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS AND MENTION "THE POSTAL WORKER."

our Irish political institutions and our right to regulate Irish life in accord with Irish aspirations, and these find no echo in Germany or Russia to-day.

Unbridled Exploitation.

It is a remarkable fact, and those who are seeking to address their admonitions to us might well bear it in mind, that Communism makes its greatest progress in those countries where there have been social excesses and unbridled exploitation of the workers. Communism has made its greatest progress in those countries where there has been abysmal poverty and human degradation side by side with unbounded wealth and unscrupulous financial domination. In a set of circumstances where the vast mass of the people is exploited and ground down by a soul-less system, heedless of human needs and human suffering, where finance dominates the very lives of the individuals, seeds of Communism find fertile soil in the sufferings of the poor. It is in those countries with appalling poverty and towering wealth that we see Communism of the most vicious and pernicious type. That develop-ment and the circumstances under which it takes place should have some meaning and significance for this country.

If Communism is to be combatted here and in other countries where it has not yet made any progress, then it can only be combatted effectively by the removal of the economic ills and the social injustices on the existence of which the dangerous doctrine thrives. (Applause).

Here in this country we have those ills. We have a very serious and deep-rooted problem of unemployment. We see tens of thousands of our people, able and willing to work, only too anxious to operate on the nation's resources and to add to the common pool of productivity, yet in this relatively undeveloped land of ours these tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens are denied an opportunity of adding to the country's wealth and denied an opportunity of creating the goods which would sustain them in decency and happiness.

Poverty and its Results.

We see thousands of our people made the folder of industrial machines and exploited in some of our socalled factories at rates of wages which are a disgrace to any Christian community or Christian concept of society. We see thousands of our people in the towns and cities and in the rural areas compelled to live in disease-ridden shums and rain-soaked hovels. It is that widespread vein of poverty that produces the most fruitful fertiliser for Communism in this or any other country. If we want to remove the menace of Communism, if we want to cansure that it can never take root in our country we must set about creating a condition of things which will give to every Irish citizen the right to live free from that misery and exploitation which is to-day the sad lot of tens of thousands of our people.

In my opinion, there is only one party in this country with a policy and programme calculated to deliver the people from the economic thraidom and social misery which they are compelled to endure to-day. In the policy and programme of the Labour Party, the people will find their best hopes of economic and social salvation and the greatest weapon for combatting any possible Communist or Fascist menace. (Applance).

An Irish Policy.

And the policy of Irish Labour has its roots in Ireland, is based upon Irish ideals, on Christian and democratic principles, and guided by Irish men and women. It is no exotic thing and incorporates none of the tyraunies rightly condemned elsewhere.

There are some people who have been impressed by the big and speedy way in which Fascism and Communism appears to have set about doing things. Undoubtedly both Fascism and Communism have done big and spectacular things, although it is doubtful whether human welfare was served by many of these things. But we believe we can get things done in a better and far more expeditions way under a democratic system of Government.

To those inclined to put their faith in the Russian method or in the German method, I would commend a study of the conditions which exist in those countries. where to-day Labour Governments are in office-in Sweden and in New Zealand. In both of those countries the democratic system still lives and no tyranuy is necessary to sustain it, and in both of them we find the working class enjoying a standard of living incomparably higher under their respective Labour Governments than the German worker enjoys under Hitler or the Russian worker under Stalin. Let us remember, too, that Sweden and New Zealand are two democratic countries which in many respects resemble our own. These countries have shown the democratic peoples of the world that it is possible to maintain democracy and at the same time to give the plain people of the country a standard of life immensely higher than is given under any system of dictatorship in the world to-day.

Irish Labour's Aim.

I believe that in the Labour policy will be found the most effective means of fighting Communism and the most effective means of curbing Pascist tendencies in this country. If we can do for our workers in this country what Sweden and New Zealand have been able to do, then we can ensure that neither Communism nor Fascism will have a chance to grow here. In our policy we want to guarantee the people against want and the terrifying scourage of insecurity, to give to every citizen a full life in return for services rendered to the nation, to give to each and every one of our citizens the fullest opportunities for educational, cultural and spiritual development. We want to promote here the highest possible standard of social legislation and to apply the philosophy that human beings are the country's most cherished assets. We want to say to each and every citizen who is prepared to render service to the nation that not only shall he be secured against want and destitution but that behind him in his daily life, in old age, in sickness and in adversity. stands the multiplied resources of the State, guaranteeing him against insecurity and poverty, sharing with him as an individual citizen of the nation-a portner in the national estate-portion of the national horitage which he has helped to create and in which he is legitimately entitled to porticipate. (Prolonged applause).

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52





We were very pleased to have a large number of Branch Secretaries in attendance for our course this year from various branches. This course is attended by Branch Secretaries who have completed Stage 1 and are in their second or consecutive term as Branch Secretary. This year we covered grievance and disciplinary case studies, motions to conference, negotiation skills and focused primarily on the development of the branch secretary role and how best to represent members.

In attendance were:

Mike Boland (Cork District), Donal O' Driscoll (Cork District), Stephen Elliott (Drogheda District), Deborah Flannery (Sligo District), Neil Quinn (Longford Postal), Tim Noonan (Mallow Postal), Ray McDonnell (Mullingar Postal), Bertie Nevin (Nenagh Postal), Ronan Murtagh (Navan Postal), Diarmuid Gorman (Portlaoise District), and Anne Marie Murray (Ballinasloe Postal).

Dublin Postal Clerks Committee Training, September 19th



The Dublin Postal Clerks Branch attended Union Head Office for training and covered organising and recruitment, employment law and its application in An Post, ASMP, grievance and disciplinary procedures as well as bullying in the workplace. Our thanks to the Branch for their active participation.

In attendance were:

(from I to r): Willie Mooney, Thomas Elliott, Paul Connor, Paul Coleman, Danny Hoare David Meehan, and Ryan Kavanagh.





The EPOC programme brings together unions from across northern and western Europe to organise in a coordinated and effective way by building workers' power. Its remit is to defend, extend and (re)build collective bargaining by providing support to affiliates in building sustainable structures. EPOC was established in 2019 specifically to work with affiliated unions of UNI so that unions have clear and well-developed organising and collective bargaining strategies, as well as strong teams to carry them out. Online meetings of the network take place monthly.



In October of this year, the CWU Education and Organising committees came together to avail of this comprehensive training delivered by Ben Egan, UNI Organising Director. The course covered the fundamentals of organising both greenfield and infill aswell as relative campaigns, sectoral mapping and lead generation, team-building using social media to campaign and network.

We anticipate that this will be the first of many sessions that we do with EPOC as we grow into the tech sector and continue to build our Union in traditional and key areas.



In attendance were:

Ellen Moore (Portlaoise Postal), Gerry Sexton (DPDB), Ivor Reynolds (Do No 1) Tom Sheehan (Cork District), Diarmuid O'Connell (Industrial Officer), Laura McKenna (Industrial Officer), Carol Scheffer (National Officer) Mikey Wall (North Kerry Postal), Anthony McCrave (Dundalk Postal), Shane Murphy (Vodafone Branch) and Paul Connors (Dublin Postal Clerks).

Equality Representative Training, October 11th



We had a very progressive training course with our new equality reps. 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.

In attendance were:

Niamh O'Connor (Dublin Postal Managers), Clare Delaney (Portlaoise Postal), Joan Lowe (North Kerry Postal), Patricia Palmer (Westport Postal), Liah Mailey (Letterkenny Postal), Niall McGowan (Limerick Postal), Oliver Butler (Navan Postal), Jeremiah Bergin (Clonmel Postal), Mark Peuch (eir Managers), Diarmuid O'Dalaigh (DPAB), Catherine Walding (DPAB), and Caroline O'Halloran (DPAB).





Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Committee Training, October 11th



As anticipated, we had a large number of attendees from the Dublin Postal Delivery Branch in Union Head Office. The training provided guidance on grievance and disciplinary cases, ASMP, employment legislation, pension arrangements, bullying at work and the role of the committee.

In attendance were:

Frank Donohoe, Conor Donoghue, Anthony Heary, Mark McLoughlin, William Greene, Gary Ellis, Michael Lonergan, Derek Lordan, Gareth Whelan, Pat McDermot, Stephen Hogan, Niall Redmond, Sindy Nestere, Ger Gough, and Mark Dowling.

Branch Committee Training, Union Head Office, October 12th



Certainly, one of our biggest groups yet to attend training this year as we welcomed a number of attendees from various branches across the country. Most of the attendees were relatively new on their branch committees and we covered the role of the Representative, the role of the Branch Committee, Union structure and organisation, bullying in the workplace and problem-solving approaches. Our thanks to all the participants.

In attendance were:

Niamh O' Connor (Dublin Postal Managers), Karen

Malone (Dublin Postal Managers), Paul Comiskey (Dublin Postal Managers), Gary Langan (Dublin Postal Managers), Ruairi Mejia (Ballina Postal), Fiona Woods (eir Managers), Paul McTiernan (Carrick-on-Shannon Postal), William Fitzpatrick (Sean Connolly Waterford District), Katie McMillan (DPAB), Joel Potts (Drogheda District), Catherine Walding (DPAB), Jackie McNamara (Ennis Postal), Michael Quinn (Limerick District), Tommy Guilfoyle (Ennis Postal), Shane Murray (Drogheda District), Laura Molloy (Navan Postal), James Cooley (DPAB), and Diarmuid O'Dalaigh (DPAB)



North Kerry Committee Training



In attendance were: William O'Sullivan, Joan Lowe, Walter Sheehan, Timothy O'Halloran, Dave Callaghan, Mikey Wall, Ted Murphy, Paul O'Sullivan, John Joy, Angela Sheehy, Joanne Brosnan, Oonagh Kiely, and Sean Devane.

Monaghan Postal Branch Committee Training



In attendance were: Brian McCarville, Mary McGinnity, Michael Keenan, Sylvia Smuth, Martin Clerkin, Declan Brennan, Eleanor McElroy, Ciaran McPhillips, Stephen O'Neill, Kevin Boylan, Jason Gill, Gerard McPhillips, and Kieran Keenan.

Housing Ireland Conference



The ICTU Housing Ireland Conference took place in CWU HQ on Friday October 13th.

The well attended conference discussed the concerns of the Trade Union Movement at the crisis that exists in accessing secure affordable Housing in Ireland.

Owen Reidy, General Secretary of Congress introduced the Conference and highlighted that the current housing emergency is without parallel and has in effect locked out and disenfranchised an entire generation.

Congress, he added believes that a new housing semi-state, - Housing Irelandthat works in conjunction with local authorities should be established.

The Conference which was chaired by Ethel Buckley of SIPTU and Phil Ní Sheaghda of the INMO, had a number of speakers who covered every element of the housing crisis under two headings;

- 1. Can Official Policy fix the Housing Crisis?
- 2. What measures can we take to end the Crisis?

The speakers included:

Lorcan Sirr, Toby Lloyd, Aidan Regan, Michaela Kauer, Paul Goldrick Kelly, Ann-Marie O'Reilly

The concluding remarks on the conference were given by Justin Mc Camphill (NASUWT, Congress President)

The speakers covered many issues around the housing crisis and explored what was happening outside of Ireland. Issues such as the cost of Land and the shortage of tradespeople were also discussed.

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Friday October 13, CWU Conference Ce -577 North Circular Road, D01 TR

HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE



Health & Safety Presentations



Health & Safety Sub-Committee

Regional Safety Representatives Forum

The Union has been seeking for some time the establishment of Regional Safety Representatives Forums. While we had agreement in principle on this Covid intervened and we were unable to arrange. We believe that these forums would be beneficial and also in line with Health and Safety Legislation.

Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act Safety Representatives have rights and functions. These include:

- Section 25.2 (j) the right to consult and liaise with other safety representatives in the same undertaking. They do not have to work in the same workplace.
- Section 25.5 (a) reasonable time off without loss of remuneration to acquire the knowledge and training necessary to undertake the role.

In addition, Section 9(1) provides that Safety Representatives must have access to certain information including reportable accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences.

The above is important as it enables Representatives to fulfil their role and play an informed part in preventing accidents and promoting a health and safety culture across the Company. We also believe that Representatives Forums would be beneficial as it would update them on the specific risks within the Company. They would:

- 1. Allow for collaboration between safety representatives as provided for in the legislation;
- 2. Provide the Company with the opportunity to provide them with details on reportable accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences;
- 3. Provide an opportunity to provide training on the specific risks in An Post particularly in relation to transport;
- 4. Allow us to provide them information on changes to legislation.

It is our view that a properly-informed Safety Representative plays an important role in the workplace and it is in everyone's interests to ensure that they receive the necessary training and information to allow them to perform their roles.

We have now agreed that these take place on a regional basis across the Company. The first one took place in CWU Head Offices on Thursday, 7th November 2023 and this was attended by 26 Safety Representatives with Presentations by Noel Lacey, Health and Safety Manager An Post, the Staff Side Secretary and Joan Cahill from the Health and Safety Authority. The presentation covered a wide range of issues including the role, the consultation process, accident statistics and new and emerging risks. It is our intention to organise the second meeting for the first quarter of next year and every quarter thereafter.

HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE













A-Z of Health & Safety

An interactive document that details the risks, role and responsibilities under health and safety legislation

The CWU represents workers across a range of industries and their health and safety is a key priority for the Union . Our members encounter all types of hazards while undertaking their daily tasks during the course of their work, including working with electricity, machinery as well as the dangers of road accidents. Some members have to contend with human hazards such as robbery and crime, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and physical violence.

The CWU plays a hugely important role in highlighting the various risks in the workplace and making our members aware of their rights under Health and Safety legislation. Workplace health and safety is about managing risks in order to ensure that workers are protected from accidents or illnesses caused by work. As part of the role in advising members on issues related to Health and Safety the Union has developed an "A – Z" of Health and Safety for our website

This "A - Z" is an interactive document that details the risks, role and responsibilities under health and safety legislation. Where necessary it contains links to more detailed information and advice.

This can be assessed on the website under the employment rights section or by following the link below:

www.cwu.ie/being-a-member/ employment-rights/ health-and-safety-at-work/



Explainer: Why has the value of my pension pot dropped?

by Gill Stedman for RTÉ News Online



The total value of Irish pensions fell by almost 16% last year.

Have you received your pension statement lately? Well if so, you may have noticed a drop in its value over the past year.

But don't panic, you're not alone.

The total value of Irish pensions fell by almost 16% last year, having increased by an average of 4.6% a year over the last decade.

This drop happened right across the world, with international pension values down by just under 17% in 2022.

We're taking a look at why pension values dropped, and how to make sense of your pension statement.

What are the main reasons behind this drop?



Inflation and the response of Central Banks lead to huge volatility in the markets last year.

When Central Banks raise interest rates, this weighs upon returns and things like equity or company shares, and on Government bonds which are the core of how pension schemes tend to invest.

Rising interest rates and the geo-political uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine wiped significant value off pension funds around the globe.

But things are beginning to look up.

Figures from the Central Bank of Ireland show that pension funds here recovered somewhat in the first quarter of this year.

The Irish pension fund sector jumped by 9% or \in 10.6 billion between January and March.

That brings funds' total assets to €128 billion.

The Central Bank said this "partially reverses" the trend observed during 2022, but assets remain down 6.8% on the series high of \notin 137 billion at end of 2021.

Should we be worried about a drop in pension values?



Pensions are designed to provide income during retirement, which is typically a long-term goal.

Paul Merriman, CEO of Fairstone Ireland and Founder of financial advisory firm Askpaul pointed out that short-term fluctuations in pension values may not have a significant impact on your retirement income if you have many years until retirement.

"It's important to focus on the long-term performance of your pension investments rather than short-term fluctuations," he said.

But he said it is good practice to regularly review your pension plan and investments.

If you have concerns about the drop in your pension value or need clarification on your pension statements, it is a good idea to consult with a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) or Qualified Financial Advisor (QFA).

They can assess your specific circumstances, provide personalised advice, and help you make informed decisions about your retirement savings.

Is there anything we can do to minimise losses?



Diversification

It is important to review the diversification strategy of your pension fund, to understand how different assets contribute to the overall value.

"Pension funds typically invest in a diversified portfolio of assets to mitigate risk," Mr Merriman explained.

"While some investments may experience declines, others may perform better, helping to balance out the overall performance."

Spreading your pension investments across different asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate, can reduce the impact of a decline in any single investment.

"Diversification helps balance risk and potential returns," he added.

Stay informed and educated

Keeping up to date on financial markets, economic trends, and investment strategies is also recommended.

"Understanding the factors that can affect pension values will empower you to make informed decisions," Mr Merriman said.

"Consider staying abreast of financial news, reading investment literature, or consulting with a CFP or QFA to enhance your knowledge," he added.

Mr Merriman said to avoid reacting impulsively to market volatility.

"Trying to time the market or making hasty investment decisions based on short-term fluctuations can be risky.

"Stay committed to your investment strategy," he added.

What should those nearing retirement do?



Revisit your risk tolerance

A significant drop in pension values close to retirement can have a more significant impact on your retirement income.

As you approach retirement, Mr Merriman said it's essential to reassess your risk tolerance.

"Consider adjusting your asset allocation to a more conservative mix that focuses on capital preservation rather than aggressive growth," he suggested.

"This approach can help reduce the potential impact of market volatility as you near retirement."

Consider delaying retirement

If you have flexibility in your retirement timeline, Mr Merriman said you may want to consider postponing retirement for a period.

"This can provide an opportunity for your pension values to potentially recover from any recent decline.

"Additionally, delaying retirement allows you to continue contributing to your pension or other retirement savings, potentially increasing your overall retirement income," he said.

Explore additional savings options

If you have concerns about the adequacy of your pension, you can consider exploring additional savings options.

Mr Merriman said this could include contributing to individual retirement accounts, employer-matching retirement plans, or other investment vehicles.

"Increasing your savings can help supplement your pension and provide a greater sense of financial security in retirement," he added.

How do I make sense of my pension statement?



You should receive a pension statement at least once a year.

The document can seem pretty daunting - but instead of ignoring it, here are seven things you should do.

1. Review contributions

Pay attention to the contributions made to your pension plan during the statement period.

Mr Merriman said you should verify that the amounts match your payroll deductions or employer contributions as expected.

"Ensure that all eligible contributions have been accurately recorded," he said.

2. Assess investment performance

Examine the investment performance section of your statement.

Look for information on the rate of return or investment gains or losses over the statement period, Mr Merriman suggested.

"Compare the performance against relevant benchmarks or the overall market trends to assess how well your investments have performed," he said.

3. Check account balance

Note the current account balance of your pension plan. This figure represents the accumulated value of your contributions and investment returns. "Monitoring changes in your account balance over time can help you gauge the growth and overall health of your pension fund," Mr Merriman said.

4. Understand fees and expenses

Pay attention to any fees or expenses disclosed in the statement.

Mr Merriment said this may include management fees, administrative costs, or other charges associated with the management of your pension plan.

"Understanding these fees can give you insight into the potential impact on your investment returns."

5. Projected benefits

Many pension statements provide estimates of your projected retirement benefits based on certain assumptions, such as retirement age and salary projections.

Mr Merriman urged people to pay attention to these projections.

"They give you an indication of the potential income you can expect in retirement," he explained.

"Consider reviewing these estimates periodically to track your progress towards your retirement goals."

6. Seek clarification

If there are terms or sections in your pension statement that you don't fully understand, don't hesitate to seek clarification.

Mr Merriman said you should contact your pension plan administrator or human resources department to get the necessary explanations.

"It's important to have a clear understanding of the information provided in your statements," he said.

7. Keep a record

Maintain a file or folder where you keep all your pension statements together.

This allows you to easily track the changes in your pension plan over time.

"Having a record of past statements can also be useful for comparison, tracking your progress, and preparing for retirement," Mr Merriman said.





Frequently Asked Questions — Buying a House

by Deirdre Conneely, a partner at Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors LLP of The Corn Exchange, Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 Phone: 01 671 5618 Contact: deirdre@dlcm.ie or info@dlcm.ie

I am thinking of buying a house. What do I need to know?

Buying a property is a serious financial commitment and it is worth doing your homework to ensure the purchase goes as smoothly as possible. This means knowing your area and budget, having everything in order for your loan application and instructing a Solicitor.

The position is similar for buying an apartment but in that case your Solicitor will also have to raise detailed pre-Contract queries on the management of the development

What comes first the loan or the Solicitor?

We recommend you check with a mortgage broker or lending institution before you start your search to find out how much you can borrow and what paperwork they will need for a loan application. This can take time and it will be a real bonus to have it ready when you find a property. You should also instruct a Solicitor who will give you general advice on the proposed purchase and having the property surveyed.

Why do I need a Solicitor?

You need a Solicitor to investigate title, complete the paperwork to transfer ownership from the previous owner to you, register your purchase and mortgage and forward title deeds to your lending institution. This legal process is called Conveyancing. The Solicitor will also give you advice throughout the process.

How much will this cost?

The legal costs and outlays will depend on a number of factors including the title to your property and if there are any unforeseen difficulties. Your Solicitor will give you a written estimate of the costs and outlays before you sign Contracts. Outlays include Stamp Duty, Search Fees, and Registration Fees.

What happens when I find a property?

In most cases you will engage with an Auctioneer who will take bids from interested parties. These bids are made 'subject to contract' to ensure you are not bound before the paperwork is approved by your Solicitor. When your bid is accepted, you will have to pay a Booking Deposit to the Auctioneer to hold the property. The Vendors Solicitor will now prepare Contracts and forward these with title to your Solicitor. At the same time, you must apply to your lending institution to issue a formal Loan Approval.

What does the Solicitor do?

The Solicitor investigates title to ensure the Vendor is the legal owner and that there are no issues arising in relation to boundaries, planning etc. which will cause problems for you. They will raise detailed queries with the Vendors Solicitor and prepare the Transfer and Mortgage documents when Loan Approval issues.

What must I do now?

Your Solicitor will need standard identity documents and when satisfied with title they will have you call to sign Contracts and pay the balance deposit (generally 10% of the purchase price less the Booking Deposit). You need to liaise with your lending institution and comply with any conditions in the Loan Offer – including making immediate application for any Life Assurance. You will need house insurance in place before completion.

What happens if I am buying the property with my Partner?

The above comments apply to both of you if married or in a Civil Partnership. In most cases the property will be bought as Joint Tenants. That means the surviving owner will automatically inherit the property on death. Different tax rules apply if you are not married or in a Civil Partnership and you will have to take advice about this.

How long will this take?

The time frame can vary but it generally takes about two weeks from accepting your offer for Contracts to issue. The legal process then takes about four weeks to completion. However, there can be delays especially if this is a sale following a death or if there are any issues with title or loan issue.

When do I get my keys?

You will be given keys (or authority to collect keys) following completion of the sale on an agreed date. Before this date you have to meet with your Solicitor to sign Mortgage documents and give your Solicitor the balance purchase monies (less the loan amount) together with final costs and outlays. All monies are generally transferred by electronic transfer including the

loan funds. When everything is in order your Solicitor will transfer balance funds to the Vendors Solicitor and the sale will complete.

Does anything happen after the sale closes?

Yes. Your Solicitor will complete the formalities to

stamp and register the purchase and mortgage before forwarding your Deeds to the lending institution. This can take up to twelve months but does not affect your ownership. You will also be advised to make a Will.

And finally, congratulations, you can now enjoy your new home....



Frequently Asked Questions — Selling a House

by Deirdre Conneely, a partner at Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors LLP of The Corn Exchange, Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 Phone: 01 671 5618 Contact: deirdre@dlcm.ie or info@dlcm.ie

l am thinking of selling my house — what do l need to know?

Selling a house involves several practical steps. We recommend you instruct a reputable Estate Agent who will give you detailed advice on getting the house ready for sale and agreeing a marketing plan.

At this stage you should also instruct your Solicitor as they will need to take up your title deeds from your lending institution. This can take up to four weeks. If there is no mortgage you can bring your Deeds directly to your Solicitor.

If this is not your home since purchase, there may be tax implications on the sale.

What will my Solicitor do?

Your Solicitor will need standard identity documents for all owners of the property to open a file. They will explain the legal process to you and give an estimate of fees and outlays. They will also check if there have been any developments to the property since purchase or any issues to affect a purchaser as may need to update your title before preparing Contracts. They will need to know your family law status and will request details for Local Property Tax to check that your payments are up to date.

What happens when the house is sold?

The Estate Agent will request a booking deposit from the purchaser and notify your Solicitor to prepare Contracts for Sale. At this stage your Solicitor will check information with you. They will want to know if there are contents included in the sale and agree a closing date. The Solicitor will now send Contracts with other documents to the purchasers Solicitor for approval and signing. The Contracts are then returned with a full deposit, and you will have to call to your Solicitor to sign the Contracts. One part Contract is now returned to the purchasers Solicitor. At this stage, both sides are bound to the sale. However, if there is a condition such as a loan clause the Contracts are not binding until the condition is satisfied.

What do you mean by closing date?

Sale of a property takes time and there is a delay from signing Contracts to date of completion ie. when you vacate the property and transfer ownership in exchange for the purchase monies. This is generally 4 to 6 weeks from date of signing Contracts, but it can be a longer or shorter period. If this is a sale following death of the owner, the closing date will depend on issue of a Grant of Probate.

What happens in the meantime?

Both sets of Solicitors will work on preparing detailed closing documents. Your Solicitor will request up to date redemption figures from your lending institution and will reply to any queries. When the closing date has been confirmed your Solicitor will contact you to sign closing documents and to give a spare set of keys. Alternatively, these will be held by the Estate Agent. You will have to vacate the house by the closing date and arrange furniture removal, transfer of utilities etc. You should also cancel house insurance following completion.

What happens on the closing date?

Your Solicitor will liaise with the purchasers Solicitor to ensure funds are transferred and that paperwork is in order. Your Solicitor will then confirm completion of the sale and authorise release of keys. They will now discharge your Mortgage, prepare a final Account, and pay the net funds to you. This is generally done by electronic transfer to your account.

Is it the same process when selling an apartment?

Yes, the process for selling an apartment is very similar to selling a house. However, there will be a Management Company involved for apartments and managed developments and your Solicitor will need to liaise with them at an early stage to request approval for the sale and management information.



Frequently Asked Questions — Making a Will

by Deirdre Conneely, a partner at Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors LLP of The Corn Exchange, Burgh Quay, Dublin 2 Phone: 01 671 5618 Contact: deirdre@dlcm.ie or info@dlcm.ie

What is a Will and why should I make one?

A Will is what's known as a testamentary document and only takes effect when you die. The purpose of a Will is for you to choose who benefits from your Estate when you die. It also enables you make an inheritance as tax efficient as possible and to nominate a person or persons to take charge of your estate.

What is my Estate?

Your estate will comprise any assets you hold in your own name at date of death. This will include property, savings, and possible benefits under a Pension Scheme. My family home is held with my husband/wife. Is that included in my estate?

Probably not as property held in joint names generally goes to the surviving joint owner and this is outside your Will. You will need to check the position with your Solicitor as there can be different types of joint ownership.

l have very few assets. Do I need to make a Will?

Your Will covers your assets at date of death and not at date of making the Will. It is good financial management to make a Will at an early age and review it as your circumstances change. It is particularly important to make a Will when you have property and/or children.

Can I leave my estate to anyone I want?

No, there are restrictions under the Succession Act. This

provides that you must leave a minimum of one third of your estate to your Spouse or Civil Partner when you have a child or children and one half of your estate if you have no children. Remember, this is in addition to any joint property.

What happens if I do not make a Will?

The Succession Act steps in and provides that your Spouse or Civil Partner is entitled to a minimum of two thirds of your estate if you have children and your entire estate if you do not have children. If you have no Spouse or Civil Partner, the estate generally goes to your children. If there are no children, the Act sets out the persons next entitled.

Do I need a Solicitor to make a Will?

It is absolutely recommended that you instruct a Solicitor. The law in this area is very complex and many court cases arise from people making their own Will or using a set form. This causes great distress to the people left behind and the costs involved reduce the value of your Estate.

What will my Solicitor need from me?

Your Solicitor will need standard identity documents, details of your home situation and present assets together with the name of your Executor (this is the person responsible for administering your Estate). You will need to give details of beneficiaries and what you want them to inherit (this can be given as percentages
as you will not know the actual value of your Estate when making a Will).

What happens next?

Your Solicitor will draft a Will and discuss this with you. When satisfied with the draft the Solicitor will arrange for you to call and sign the final Will. There are strict requirements about the format and signing of the Will. The Solicitor will generally hold the original Will and give you a copy.

Can I change my Will?

Yes, your Will can be changed at any time subject to capacity and should be kept under review to take

account of changes in your personal circumstances or tax laws. It is automatically revoked on marriage (unless made in contemplation of that marriage) and you will need to make a new Will at that time.

And finally, how much will this cost me?

The cost of a Will depends on the time spent by your Solicitor. This can vary depending on the complexity of the Will and advice required. However, a straightforward Will with our firm generally costs in the region of \in 300 plus Vat (total \in 369). Your Solicitor will give you an estimate when taking instructions.

Dublin Postal Amalgamated Branch Committee Training



Back Row I to r: Paula Martin, Adrian Scanlon, Sharon Kelly, Declan Curley, Mark Browne, Brian Ryan, Paul D'Arcy, and Catherine Walding.

Front Row I to r: John Seagrave, Anthony Larkin, James Moore, Caroline O'Halloran, George Ellis.

ASIAM AUTISM IRELAND

"Sometimes it is the people no one can imagine anything of, who do the things no one can imagine"

Alan Turing

My son Wylder, was diagnosed with Autism just over two years ago. On his 3rd birthday, we received the results of his assessments and so a journey began.

It is estimated that 1 in 36 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Autism can affect the way a person thinks, communicates, interacts and experiences the world around them.

Some people with Autism might communicate verbally and some may use non-verbal methods of communication. Some find it difficult to express or understand emotion. Some have sensitivities which means they may not see, hear or feel things in the same way as others. Some people need and find comfort in routine. Every person with Autism is unique, should be respected, and should receive a level of support appropriate to their individual needs, in all aspects of life.



My name is Paul Syder and I am a Postman in Crumlin, Dublin 12. I am the Local Representative for Crumlin DSU and am also on the Committee for the Dublin Postal Delivery Branch. I had spent a few years on the CWU Youth Committee when I first joined An Post.

My activism is about learning and educating about Autism. When I first received Wylder's diagnosis, it was a very challenging and daunting time. We all entered into an unknown world. Fast forward to the present day, my son is progressing greatly and I have undertaken a lifelong challenge to raise Awareness for Autism.

Having a background in the fitness industry, running 5k's to Ultra Marathons, participating in local triathlons and competing in an Ironman, these races and social media will provide a catalyst to interact with people from all backgrounds to spread the word on Autism.



Adam Harris, CEO AslAm

ASIAM AUTISM IRELAND



Paul, before his Marathon Run



Dick White, AslAm

I recently ran the Dublin City Marathon in the An Post uniform to raise Awareness for Autism. I had completed two events previous until Covid slowed the World down a bit. For the Marathon, I was able to associate with AsIAm (Ireland's National Autism Charity). On the day, I wore the uniform and a custom designed hi-vis for Autism. I handed out gold envelopes with OneForAll vouchers and informational leaflets on Autism to the spectators. It was a great success and created a lot of attention. I was delighted to meet Adam Harris, CEO of AslAm after. The Dublin Postal Branch generously donated on behalf of the CWU to AslAm.

Going forward, I would love the opportunity to work with the CWU and have their support. I have a number of sporting events this year and currently, myself and Dick White (Fundraising Manager AsIAm) have some proposals that we are hoping to share with you.



"Each of us can make a difference but together we can make a change"

Barbara Mikulski

The fire service of the service of t

LONG-TIME HEAD OF THE LISTOWEL FIRE SERVICE, STATION OFFICER PAUL O'SULLIVAN, TELLS DÓNAL NOLAN ABOUT LIFE AND TIMES ON THE FRONTLINE IN NORTH KERRY AS HE RETIRES FROM THE BRIGADE



NEWS

17

A COOL head is a must for any successful career in management. But when the service you happen to be

But when the service you happen to be managing is responsible for nothing less than saving lives and property from fires – and other emergencies – it's an absolute prerequisite.

A large part of North Kerry was lucky, then, to have had Listowel man Paul O'Sullivan in charge for so long, an individual with an innate, calming manner no doubt tempered further by decades of work on the frontline against the flames in the district.

Paul has seen it all in his 37 years with the Kerry Fire Service; ever ready at any time in that span to have jumped into action at the first stir from his bleeper. And there was a lot of action notwith-

And there was a lot of action notwithstanding the relatively quiet appearance of the farming heartland. He hung up his boots as Listowel Station Officer – the position of command he had been in for 22 years – earlier this month and is already finding the absence of the familiar 'bleep bleep' deeply strange.

"It's the first time in 37 years I haven't had a bleeper, and it's very strange. "It's the first time in 37 years I haven't had a bleeper, and it's very strange not having it anymore. Even going up to bed at night, say, Id suddenly realise I'm not carrying it anymore," he says. "I have to remember that I don't have to be constantly thinking about It. Like going for a walk in Ballybunion, I might be walking the cliffs but I'd have to be thinking about where I parked, how fast I could get back to the car if the bleeper goes, that sort of thing.

for a walk in Ballybunion, I might be walking the cliffs but I'd have to be thinking about where I parked, how fast I could get back to the car if the bleeper goes, that sort of thing. "I love a bit of fishing but I always stayed within a close distance of my home and the car, but now I can go back the river for miles. It feels strange all right!" The life of a retained fire fighter is an operating an pa type ways. Paul lowed the igh

The life of a retained fire fighter is an onerous one, no two ways. Paul loved the job intensely, but he concedes it was all-consuming. "The Fire Service takes over your life, it completely runs it, and that's why I can understand lads taking industrial action now because they feel they're not paid enough.

"It's very hard on families too. We don't have kids, it's just my wife and I in the house, but it's hard on family people. You could be setting off for a family drive when the bleeper goes, and that's the end of the whole day then," he said.

er goes, and that's the end of the whole day then," he said. But he wouldn't have changed it for anything: "I was running my own cleaning business when my good friend, Joe Bunyan, approached me to join back in 1985. I trained that year and started in January of 1986.

approached in January of 1986. "I took to it very quickly, having come in under Anthony McAuliffe, who was the Station Officer in Listowel. He was great, he gave us



great aul' training. So did Donal Guerin, who was second in command in Kerry, based in Tralee. If Donal asked you to do something, by God then you did it! We had great respect for him always, as commanding as he was. In fact, he rang me just recently and I could feel my back straightening up automatically," Paul joked.

He wasn't long soaking in all the expertise his superiors demonstrated, learning hard lessons fast in the cut and thrust of the job.

He's not inclined to talk details of the worst fires and accidents, out of sensitivity to surviving loved ones, but mentioned one particular emergency in general terms. "It was a fire that claimed the lives of chil-

dren and that was awful tough all right, that stands out among the worst of the scenes I would have been at. There were car accidents in which multiple people were killed. I can remember another very sad incident in which a young girl was killed. She broke her neck in the impact and there wasn't a mark on her. "I suppose back then we didn't talk too

"I suppose back then we didn't talk too much about things to each other, but you kind of grow into the Fire Service too, so they don't affect you badly. That's what I found anyway, but I guess you never know what fellas are like behind closed doors.

"That said, the Fire Service is completely changed for the better today and Kerry County Council is a great employer. We want for nothing in terms of the best equipment and



ABOVE, LEFT: Listowel Station Officer Paul O'Sullivan signs off for the very last time at his beloved station. ABOVE: Paul, front centre, at a retirement reception organised by his fellow Kerry fire officers in Killarney last week.

BELOW: A young Paul O'Sullivan, right, at the outset of his career in the 1980s, with the late Jackie Sheehan standing to his left, and Jerry Mullins, sitting, at the scene of an oil spill on the Listowel-Tralee road.

support and there's counselling support you can avail of entirely confidentially, among many other things."

Paul was there in the thick of one of the biggest fires of recent times, one everyone over a certain age in Listowel remembers - the inferno that consumed O'Carroll's Hardware store in 1996. The massive store was gutted: "It was a desperate blaze, I'll never forget it. We battled it for hours and became a race to

save the bank next door and other buildings." That they achieved this side of the mission spoke volumes for their professionalism –

and that of their Ballybunion and Tralee colleagues who arrived as back-up on the day. "It's all about having each others' backs.

Like any work environment, there could be a personal issue between two lads, but as soon as those bleepers go, that's all forgotten about – at least until you're safely back at the station again!"

Paul thanked all his colleagues for their camaraderie and help over the decades: "It's a great job and there's plenty of good times too, especially around non-tragic call-outs. I have to thank everyone we worked with, not least the Civil Defence. They are unsung heroes, in fairness, given the work they do.



"Thanks also to my colleagues in the gardaí, the HSE, the Ballybunion Coastguard and the Ballybunion Sea and Cliff Rescue

"But, above all, thanks to my wife, Margaret, for her patience and support always."



Male voice recruitment for the People's College Choir

We are a mixed-voice choir of 45 members, are a friendly and welcoming bunch of people from Dublin and neighbouring counties and include trade union and community activists. This year marks our 30th anniversary and we are looking for new members to share in the joy of singing together in harmony.

The choir was founded in 1993 by the then President of the People's College, Dr Sheila Conroy, first ever female member of the ITGWU Executive. The College itself was established in 1948 to promote worker and cultural education and the choir is part of that wider programme.

We sing an extensive range of songs in a non-competitive atmosphere; some old, some new, some folk, traditional Irish airs and modern popular songs as well as songs of social progress – some of which we have performed at trade union organised events and even in Áras an Uachteráin.

> We rehearse from 8.30 p.m. until 10 p.m. each Tuesday evening in Club na Múinteoirí (the 'Teachers' Club', Parnell Square.

> Our choral year runs from September until May of the following year

Why not join some fellow Union members?

Contact the musical director, Paul Walsh, at peoplescollegechoir@gmail.com.

Rehearsals resume in the 'Club' on Tuesday, 12th September 2023.

PEOPLE'S COLLEGE

Adult Education Association

31 Parnell Square, Dublin 1 Founded 1948

THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL FUND OF IRELAND

Providing Financial Assistance to Workers & Retired Stat

he Rowland Hill Memorial Fund has been part of the fabric of the Post Office since the late 19th Century. The Rowland Hill Fund was set up in 1882 by the Post Office to help "needy Post Office employees, pensioners and dependants."

Postal staff in Ireland were encouraged to support the Fund and were subscribers and recipients of assistance from the beginning.

The independent **Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland** was founded in Ireland in 1928, under a Deed of Trust approved by the High Court of Justice. As times progressed, most staff in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs were subscribing to the Fund.

Today, the **Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland** provides financial assistance for serving or retired staff of An Post and eir, and their dependants. It also provides financial assistance for retired staff and their dependants, of the former Department of Posts and Telegraphs, eircom and Telecom Éireann.

Assistance may be given to those who find themselves in need due to age, poverty or infirmity. The **Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland** is managed by an independent and voluntary committee of Trustees.

In such difficult time for many it is crucial that those who may be in difficulty and are eligible to apply for assistance can do so.

Therefore, if you are aware of such need, please encourage the person in need to contact the Fund either directly through the Secretary or through your union branch. Every application will be considered on its own merit. I, Liam Kirwan, Secretary, can be contacted by any of the means below:

Freepost:	Secretary, Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland,
	c/o An Post, G.P.O.,
	O'Connell Street,
	Dublin 1, DO1F5P2
Website:	www.rhmfi.net
Email:	info@rhmfi.net
Phone:	085 1744130

I would strongly encourage all members of serving staff and those retired to become subscribers to the Fund. This is our own staff-supported charity with 140 years of service to those serving and retired and their dependants. The recommended subscription is 65c per week, deducted from your wages or pension.

So, in summary, the Fund is worthy of your support because: -

- 1. It is our own staff charity.
- 2. It is managed by an independent and voluntary committee of Trustees.
- 3. Thousands of staff, both serving and retired and their dependants, have been helped over the years when they were in urgent need of help.
- 4. Subscriptions is deducted from your wages. A few cents deducted regularly will mean a lot to the work of the Fund.
- 5. The suggested subscription is 65 cent per week.

THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL FUND OF IRELAND

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To subscribe to the Fund please complete the form below, detach it, and send it 'FREEPOST' to:					
Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland, c/o An Post G.P.O., O'Connell Street Dublin 1 DO1F5P2					
THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL FUND OF IRELAND					
I hereby authorise the deduction of:		€			
Please tick (\checkmark) as appropriate:		per week	per fortnight	per month	
Please tick (\checkmark) as appropriate:		from my wages	from my pension		
for payment to the Rowland Hill Memorial Fund of Ireland.					
Name (BLOCK LETTERS):					
Address (BLOCK LETTERS):					
Contact Number:					
Staff/Pension Number:					
Please tick (\checkmark) as appropriate:		Serving	Retired		
Please tick (\checkmark) as appropriate:		An Post	eir		
Signature:					
Date:					
The suggested subscription is 65 cent per week.					

Trade Union Activism: A CALL TO ARMS

by Stephen Elliott, Drogheda District Branch



Gordon Gekko said, "greed is good". Although a fictional character from nineteen-eighty-seven's Wallstreet, the sentiment perfectly sums up the avarice of the capitalist class. In the dark time before social media these rapacious capitalists would climb over each other, unseen, for the chance to prey upon the hapless worker. Now, in the full light of the digital age they are positively gloating about it. Not a day goes by that we don't hear about Bezo's journey to Mars or Musk's journey to the

centre of himself. They are pigs publicly rolling around in the muck of their own apparent 'success' while millions starve, and their own workforces suffer multiple indignities.

These 'self-made' billionaires would have us believe that they transformed their own sweat into gold through sheer

guile and genius. The opposite is usually true. Bezos started Amazon with a three-hundred-thousanddollar loan from his parents, Musk's father funded Elon's life with profits from a Zambian emerald mine. Self-made men, ladies and gentlemen. These are the types of people who are placed upon a pedestal for their seeming success by the mainstream media while members of the trade union movement are vilified for seeking fair pay and conditions for their members. But greed is good, remember.

In this digital age where no one takes a bite of a sandwich without first posting a picture of it to Instagram, we are inundated with the rich lollygagging their way around the globe. Tik Tok, Instagram and Twitter (I refuse to call it X) is littered with these glittering faux Barbies and somehow even more plastic Kens. Every Ferrari driven, every yacht sailed, and every glass of champagne quaffed is yet another reminder that the rich exist purely to enjoy themselves. It is a daily assault upon decency, taste and the trade union movement itself. But you know what? Let them at it. Greed is good after all.

We may look at them and aspire to such levels of uselessness. We may envy their lives and wish for a crumb from their tables. We may wish for the nice car, the dream holiday or the fancy clothes. But wishing and hoping is all we may do. We are hampered by the



or a restrictive annual leave policy. Or are we?

Capitalists are out for profit so why not us? For a company, the profits gained off the backs of its workers goes directly into the pockets of shareholders so that they can enjoy the so-called good life. So, are we not allowed to think like capitalists? Are we not allowed to enjoy a little of the cream of life? Is it our lot in life to bow and scrape and be thankful for the opportunity to work? Why is it that when companies announce their profits they are patted on the back and congratulated by the mainstream media yet when a trade union looks to get a little extra for their members they are dragged through the muck? Greed is good but is seems that fairness is a four letter word.

Our comrades are being lambasted by the mainstream media in both Ireland and abroad. Both Mick Lynch of the RMT and Dave Ward of the CWU-UK in recent weeks have been berated by politicians, condemned



by reporters and worst of all maligned by their own members. Activists, officials and union leaders are first and foremost human. Humans try and humans fail. Its part and parcel of the role. You may say that failure is not an option, and I would agree, its not an option, its mandatory. The option is whether to let failure be the last thing you do.

The ongoing race between companies and trade unionists is not a sprint, its not even a marathon, it's a relay race. The baton must be passed on from activist to activist. The pace may slacken, the baton may fall but we must pick it up and carry on. And we must do this together. There will be a sea-change in the CWU in the coming years. The activists and leaders who carried the baton for forty years will be retiring and they will need fresh legs to carry on the race. There is untold, untapped strength in this Union. There are leaders too humble to admit it. There are activists too shy to come forward. There is strength in people. That strength builds institutions. Those institutions forge movements which create positive change.

Greed is good. You say it enough and you begin to believe it. So, I'm greedy but not for thousands of euros, no, I'm greedy for thousands of activists. I don't want to be able to move for union activists and leaders. I want standing room only at AGMs. Give me hours of fiercely contested elections. I want my head filled with debates and opinions and arguments. I want my phone to be hopping and my inbox to be full to bursting. I want it all. And when all the scrolls are passed one way and all torches passed the other then we can take all that energy and direct it towards the greedy capitalists. It all begins with you, with us.

In my view there are two kinds of people which should not exist in this world: billionaires and inactive trade unionists. Its doubtful you will be the first so please don't be the second.

CWU Appoints New Finance Officer



New Finance Officer, Gerry Martin

As you will be aware, the Fóla report recommended a review of the CWU finances including processes and procedures, which has been carried out over the last eighteen months by Stephen O'Kelly. This has now been completed and Stephen has moved on to his next project. The Union would like to place on record our thanks to him and wish him every success for the future.

In reviewing the finance and administration of headquarters Jelena Bogdanova has been appointed to the administration team and Gerry Martin has been appointed Finance Officer from November 2023.

Gerry is a qualified chartered accountant with strong experience across practice and industry, including organisations such as Intuition Publishing, Fingal County Childcare Committee and Francis Brophy Accountants.

As well as this Gerry ran his own sports business for several years in Dublin City Centre. Gerry brings a wide range of financial expertise to our team and we are delighted to have him join us and wish him well in his new position.

Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Retirements May to November 2023



Donal O'Brien, Rutland Place DSU



Martin Ryan, Ravensdale Rd (DSU 2)



Joe Stewart, Swords DSU with Branch Treasurer, Gerry Sexton



Brendan O'Toole (L), Ravensdale Road, (Dublin 2), receives his Union Scroll from local Representative, Billy Corcoran

Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Retirements May to November 2023



John O'Lone, Ravensdale RD (Dublin 2



Greg McQuerins (R) ,Whitehall, & Branch Officer, Davy Stapleton



Declan Bennett (L) (Ravensdale Rd), and local Representative, Robbie McKenzie



Brendan Laird (L), Fairview DSU & Branch Representative, Joe McDonald

Cyril Crowe Retires



Cyril Crowe is pictured here with his colleagues, taken on his last day of employment at Cashel DSU, after 40 years' service with An Post. The Tipperary Postal Branch wish Cyril a long and happy retirement.



Patrick Tuohy Retires



Patrick Tuohy is pictured here with his colleagues, on the day of his retirement from Cashel DSU, after 24 years with An Post. The Branch wish Patrick a long and happy retirement.

Christy Godfrey Retires

Christy Godfrey and his colleagues are pictured here, on his last day at Cashel DSU, after 44 years' with An Post. The Branch wish Christy a long and happy retirement.



Peter Loughney Retires



Our dear colleague, Peter Loughney, retired from Sligo DSU after 25 years' service. Peter is a keen Liverpool supporter and we hope he has plenty of visits going ahead to Anfield during his retirement.

Pictured I to r: Gary Devins (PO), Mark Fowley (PO), Francis Elliott (DSM), Mark Cawley (W/L), Ronan Elliott (W/L), Pat Feeney (PO), Peter Loughney, Michail Rozycki (PO), Neal McKenna (W/L), Peter Parkes (PO), Kieran Rushe (IAO), and Ken Henry (PO).



Pictured at a Retirement Presentation for Dave Burtenshaw and Leslie Hayden of the Postal Maintenance Branch are (I to r): Maurice Noonan, Seán McDonagh, Dave Burtenshaw, Leslie Hayden, and Gus Hayes.



John Bradley Retires

Pictured receiving his Union Scroll from CWU Headquarters is John Bradley, Buncrana DSO.

John retired from An Post on 14th March last. He had 30 years' service in An Post, during which he delivered the mail in the Buncrana area of Inishowen.

The Union Scroll was presented by his two colleagues, John Henderson and Winifred King. The Lifford/Inishowen Branch of the CWU would like to wish John all the best on his retirement.

Keeping it in the Family

Frank Downes recently retired from FM Downes and the insurance business.

Frank had put a succession plan in place long beforehand with Libby as the Managing Director for some time now, giving Frank more time on the golf course. Fancy a round?

The CWU wishes him a long and happy retirement.





30 years' a-"Mondaying"

Christy Brannigan celebrating 30 years of the Monday Club

The Monday Club celebrated 30 years' "Mondaying" recently, with a function held in Home Farm Football Club to mark the occasion. Among the many guests that attended were representatives from Belfast Postal Branch of CWU Northern Ireland, colleagues from Liverpool and retired members from An Post. We were delighted to welcome the General Secretary of the Communications Workers Union of Ireland Mr Seán McDonagh to our celebration. Many congratulatory messages were read out on the night. Most of them from the medical fraternities who deal in Mental Health and Wellbeing. These organisations see that gatherings and meet-ups such as the Monday Club is a great way for people to have a weekly forum to meet up to sing and chat. This is so important in life and brings a sense

of community, particularly as we get older. They see it also as a way of staving off depression and loneliness. For some people the weekly get-together may be the only time they get out of the house. For me, I see all of this as an extension of what we learned as Union activists growing up in the P+T.

I know there are still a lot of like-minded retired members out there who could start their own Monday Club. Also our "Choir of Sorts" were asked to sing at the National Conference on Mental Health/Wellbeing in Clayton Hotel Dublin on 9th November and we were given a fantastic warm reception. Finally, I would like to send a special thanks to all of you who supported the Monday Club throughout its 30 years and look forward to the next 30 years.



Martin Flanagan Retires

Martin Flanagan recently retired from Crossmolina DSO after 40 years' service. He is pictured receiving his Union scroll from Deirdre Medlar NEC. The Ballina Postal Branch wish Martin a long and happy retirement.

Malachy McCarron Retires

A Retirement Presentation was made to Malachy McCarron, Ballina Postal by Deirdre Medlar NEC. Malachy was a member of the Union for 23 years and served as Chairman for 10 years. The Branch wish Malachy every good wish for this retirement.





Brendan Conlon Retires

Brendan Conlon retires after 22 years' service to An Post as a Post Office Clerk and member of the Dublin Postal Clerks Branch. He is pictured here being presented with his Union Scroll by Willie Mooney, NEC.

Gerard Plunkett Retires



Pictured Front row (I to r): Pat Kelly, Geraldine Flynn, Gerard Plunkett, Emily Murphy, Michael Connolly, and Tom Fitzpatrick. Middle row: David Madden, Liz Flanagan, Norma Jean Follard, Noel Heneghan, Liam O Boyle, and Chris Brennan.

Gerard Plunkett from Ballyhaunis D S U was presented with his Union Scroll after 30 years' service. To mark his retirement from An Post, Gerard was joined by family members and colleagues at a most enjoyable evening at a Retirement Function in The Clock, Ballyhaunis.

Andrew Cummins Retires

Congratulations to recently retired Andrew Cummins, Branch Manager, Thurles. Andrew is pictured being presented with his Union Scroll by Vinny Kilroy, NEC member, and both of Limerick/Waterford Managers Branch.



Alan Quinn Retires



Alan Quinn (Moundelvin Cloonfad), a Ballyhaunis-based Postman, retired on Friday 29th September after 34 years in service. Alan was joined by his colleagues and retired colleagues at the DSU Ballyhaunis on his last day, where he was presented with his Union Scroll by CWU Branch Representataive, David Madden. The Branch wish Alan and long and healthy retirement.

 Front row, I to r: Joe Byrne, Liz Flanagan, David Madden, Alan Quinn, Pat Kelly, Geraldine Flynn, and Norma Jean Follard.
Back row I to r: Liam Lyons, Tom Fitzpatrick, Liam O Boyle, Michael Connolly, Helen Byrne, Tom Murphy, Chris Brennan. Noel Heneghan, Willie Broderick, Gerard Plunkett, Emily Murphy, and David Murphy.



Larry O'Beirne Retires

Larry O'Beirne, Postal Operative Boyle DSU, retired from An Post on 15th September 2023 after 40 years service. He started in the Central Sorting Office in Sherrif St in 1983 where he spent three years before moving to Roscommon where he spent the next ten years finally returning to Boyle in 1996.

The photo shows Larry receiving the CWU Retirement Scroll from John Tansey Regional Officer at a packed function to mark his retirement in Henry's of Cootehall.



Barney and Breda Foley ready to respond!

Barney Foley and his wife, Breda, who are both active members of the North Louth First Responders Community. Barney is also Branch Secretary, Drogheda District Branch.

How much is that doggie in the window, woof woof?

Lilian O'Doherty really lives up to the motto.... The mail must get through!

Lilian says she couldn't resist taking a picture of this lovely dog and while he might look a tad vicious to some, she was reassured by the owner that he's a pure pet. The picture was taken on Lilian's daily route in Mangerton, Muckross, Killarney, Co Kery.



CWU Sponsors Kevin Sexton



CWU recently sponsored Kevin Sexton, Limerick Postal Branch, and members of Limerick Combat Gym who represented Ireland at the W.K.A European championships in Scotland. Members of this team brought home an impressive total of 8 gold, 14 silver and 7 bronze medals. Brilliant and Great Job Folks!

CWU Welcome Michael Halligan, our newest recruit into the Retired Members Branch of the Union



Cork Postal Branch Retirements



Eugene O'Sullivan Retires

Recently retired member, Eugene OSullivan, of Cork Postal Branch, who was a cleaner in CDC Cork, formally South city DSU Cork, was presented with his Union Scroll by Branch Officer, Steve Tully.

We wish Eugene a very happy retirement.

Eve O'Callaghan Retires

Cork Postal Branch member, Eve O'Callaghan from North city DSU Cork, retired recently. She was presented with her Union Scroll by Branch Officer, Eamonn Browne.

> Eve is pictured here with Eamonn and her daughters, Emily and Isobel.



Blast from the Past!



Telecom Eireann staff came together in the Regency Hotel Dublin recently. Why? Because they were all Technician Trainees in 1971. They came from far and wide to celebrate 25 years since they were "The Class of '71"



Mick Kelly is anxious to contact anyone who attended this event. If you were one of the attendees or knows how to contact someone who attended the event, can you please contact Mick on 087 236 3522.

Book Review by Adrienne Power



THE DRIVEWAY HAS TWO SIDES by Sara Marchant Published by Fairlight Moderns



Delilah moves to a small cottage of East Coast United States. She is an avid gardener and sets about with obsessive eagerness in working on the garden. The Islanders are wary of this young female intruder, who upsets things when she befriends the Island's Sheriff, a recent widower. Sheriff Ted also has a passion for gardening until he meets the delectable Delilah.

Sharing the driveway with the cottage is a large yellow house where another stranger to the island lives. A man called Anton, who only ever leaves the island once a month, goes for early morning runs but otherwise has nothing to do with anyone on the island.

Both Delilah and Anton, with their mysterious pasts, keep their distance even though they share a driveway. This all changes with the advent of summer when the tourists descend to park or block their driveway like locusts! The two band together. Delilah to protect her precious garden from the locusts and Anton to preserve his privacy.

This is a delightful story about escape, renewal and finding salvation in the simple joys of living

A short & sweet read!

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

Garrison Keillor

Book Review by Adrienne Power



MISSING WORDS by Loree Westron Published by Fairlight Moderns

Jenny works as a Postal Sorter for Royal Mail. It is 1980's Britain in the middle of the Miners Strikes. One day she comes across a postcard with an insufficient address in the Isle of

Wight. The postcard captures her imagination. It is of a beach scene of white sand with azure sky and palm trees with a wooden hut and an empty deck chair in front as if waiting for someone to arrive. The message on the card is addressed to Deborah asking for forgiveness from Michael. He mentions he will be at his sisters until the end of August. He knows if he does not hear from her by then that it is all over. Jenny takes the card rather than letting it go to dead letters. Reading the words: "Life is nothing without you", lingers in her consciousness. She knows she is being reckless. If she was seen taking the card, her job is lost.

Jenny's own world is crumbling. Everything is unstable around her. Her daughter is almost nineteen and moving further away from her each day. Her husband Simon is also distant. Life has become trivial. She wished she could move backward in time to when life was simple and complete.

A plan takes shape as Jenny decides to deliver the card and reunite the couple before all is lost. She has that day, the following weekend, and the long bank holiday weekend to find Deborah. She sets off on the Ferry with her bicycle.

In her mission to reunite the couple, she resurrects her own life.

While Mrs Thatcher talks on the television about Truth and Hope, Jenny's search becomes her own quest for Truth and Hope.

A little gem!



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Fairlight Moderns are small books.Especially for the busy lives we lead today!They are beautiful little volumes and light to carry.They are like literary box of chocolates!

www.fairlightbooks.co.uk