



**Gender and Health  
Stamp out Sexual Harassment  
Campaign**

## Gender & Health

- Gender is a fundamental factor that must be taken into consideration when negotiating and adopting policies and procedures to guarantee the safety and health of workers.
- We must recognise that social roles and responsibilities assumed by women and men in employment can have specific physical and mental risks.
- This requires specific control and prevention measures including gender specific risk assessments.
- Karen Messing - *The health of female workers. Is science Still One-eyed?*

## *Pain and Prejudice*



What Science Can Learn  
about Work from the  
People Who Do It

# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS IMPACTING WOMEN



**ANXIETY AND STRESS**  
From unequal division of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities



**PPE DESIGNED FOR MEN**  
Ill-fitting and less effective



**LIFTING AND STANDING DURING PREGNANCY**



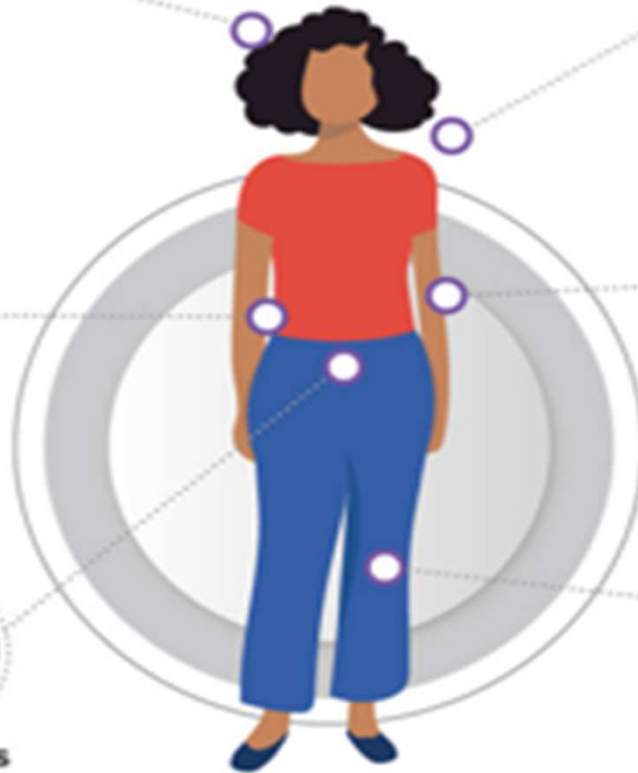
**HIGH EXPOSURE TO CHEMICALS**  
In female dominated jobs



**NIGHT SHIFTS**  
Impact on reproductive cycles (irregular periods, endometriosis, delayed conception)



**MSD (Musculoskeletal Disorder)**  
From repetitive tasks and poor ergonomics





## Questions to be asked

- How do we minimise work-family conflict for all genders?
- Should we have gender sensitive standards for physically demanding jobs?
- Should women whose cycles affect their well-being be allowed to vary production/participation in work according to cycle time?
- Do we force women to choose between equality and health?
- Should there be additional time off for women for fertility treatment, pregnancy loss, menopause and for their cycles?
- How do we minimise exposure to violence and harassment?

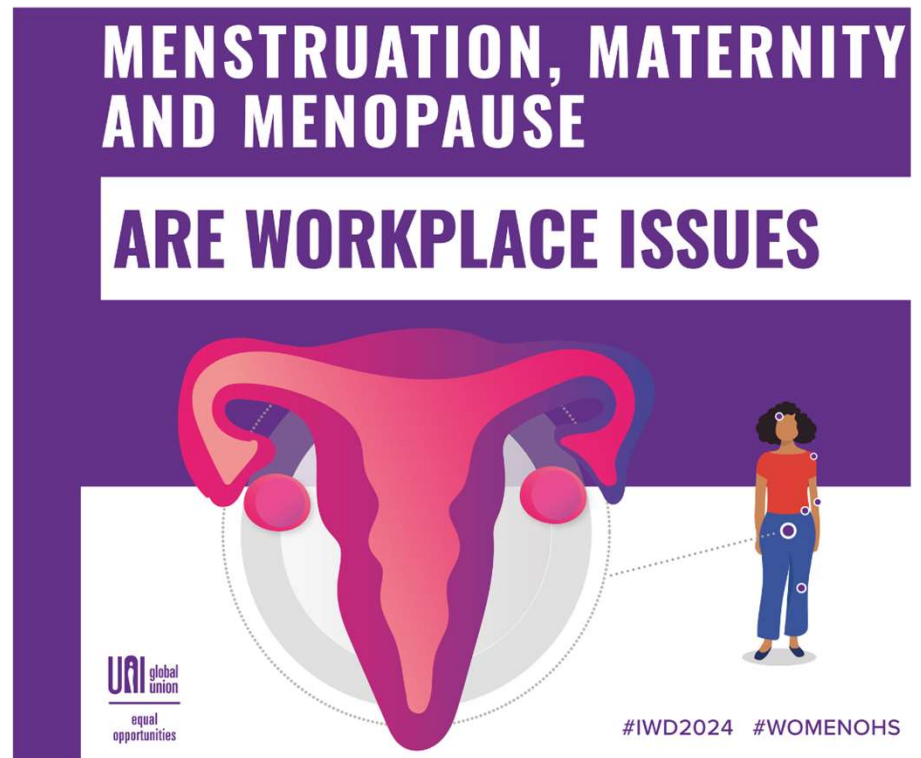
# Stop the Stigma

- 1 in 4 respondents have been diagnosed with a specific condition such as endometriosis, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), and many others.
- These can result in severe medical symptoms with over 70% of respondents taking time off work.
- Only 1% of workplaces currently have a menstrual welfare policy in place.
- Several workplaces are ill-equipped to deal with these health concerns.



# Three M's

- We must take essential steps to reduce inequalities and ensure that workplaces are inclusive for all.
- Although the three M's are all natural biological experiences, they remain taboo topics across many cultures and workplaces.



# Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work



<https://www.uni-europa.org/topics/ending-violence-harassment/>

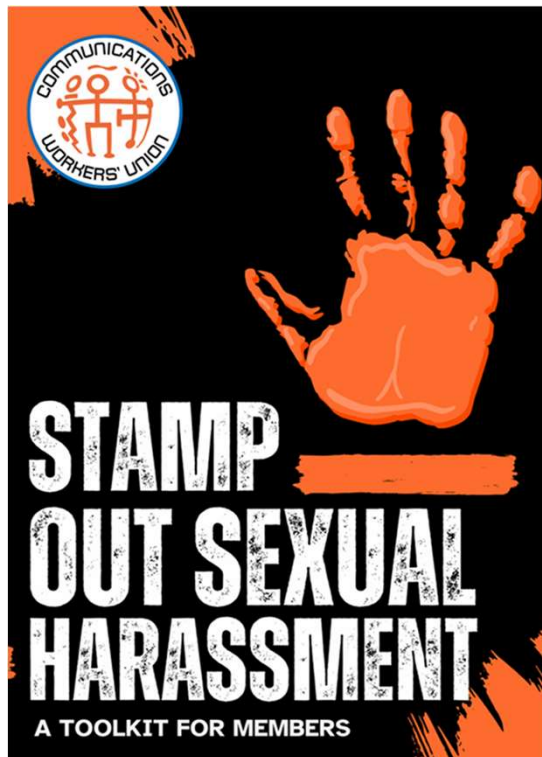


## Survey and statistics

- Gender based violence directed at female workers was the most widespread form of reported abuse in the workplace according to trade unions
- 76% reported forms of verbal harassment
- 53% sexual harassment
- 52 % threats or intimidation directed at female workers
- Issues in relation to third party violence leading to fear, anxiety, stress, and depression. This affects the capacity of workers to carry out their tasks effectively and reach their full potential at work.
- Reporting exists but appears to be infrequent.



# Launch of Stamp Out Sexual Harassment Campaign



- Guidelines for Members
- Incident log for members to track complaints
- Membership briefing document
- Trade Union Guidelines on how to represent members
- First responder checklist for Representatives
- New training for representatives



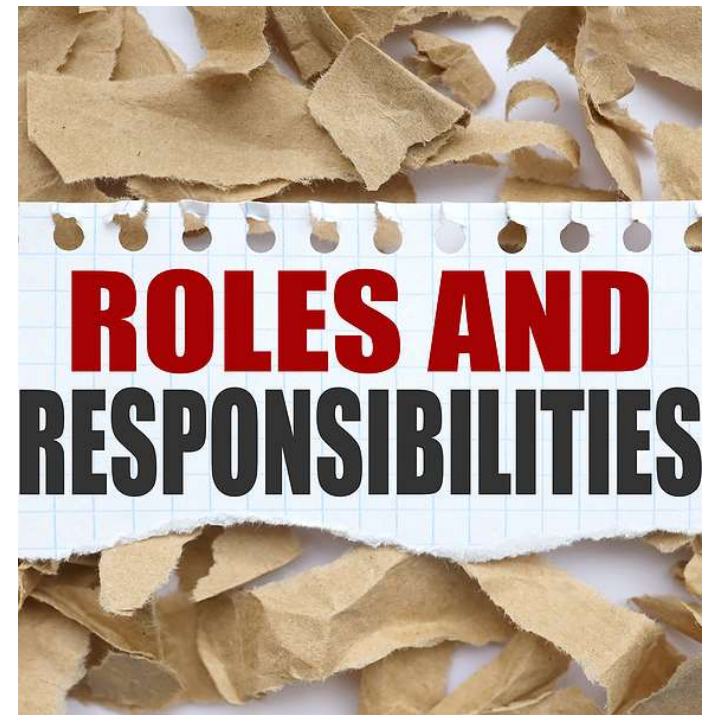
## Rationale for our Campaign

- Create a safe environment whereby those affected can feel comfortable speaking about the issue.
- Assist impacted employees in getting the appropriate support in a confidential manner.
- Address Union role in effectively preventing sexual harassment by seeking working environments that support the dignity of our members and representatives.
- Address serious issues regarding under reporting.

# Aims of Members' Toolkit

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- The campaign has been designed for members who have queries or concerns around sexual harassment.
- It addresses all the key issues such as identifying sexual harassment, liaising with union representatives, addressing complaints and getting the necessary supports.
- To help members and trade union representatives identify what sexual harassment is, to know how complaints should be dealt with, to understand its impacts and effects, and to prevent sexual harassment and protect workers.
- Outlining roles and responsibilities towards the prevention of sexual harassment.





# What the Law Says

## Understanding Sexual Harassment



“The Employment Equality Act 1998- 2015 (EEA) defines sexual harassment as ‘any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.’”

## What the guide covers

- Employment Equality Legislation as well as the Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
- Examples of sexual harassment
- Gender based violence
- Sexual coercion
- Sexual harassment V Sexual assault
  - Civil case reporting to Gardaí





# Forms of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can take many forms.

Physical  
conduct

Verbal  
conduct

Non-verbal  
conduct

Gender-based  
conduct



Not an exhaustive list



# Role of Employers

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The law states that your employer has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment for you at work.

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The employer is responsible for acts of sexual harassment committed by any of their employees and third parties such as customers and contractors.

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The employer must show that they have the procedures in place for dealing with sexual harassment and that they are dealt with effectively.

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This means that no matter how good their procedures are on paper, if they are ignored then it is the employer who is to blame for the acts of sexual harassment committed by its employees and third parties.

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It is your employer's responsibility to address the complaint and to resolve the matter accordingly.

# Role of Employers

- **Policy:** Must have clear policies and procedures collectively bargained with the Union.
- **Training:** Provide regular training for all managers and staff, particularly to Line Managers who may have to address complaints.
- **Implementation:** Make sure complaints are addressed and followed through to resolution including formal investigation as required.
- **Action:** Take appropriate disciplinary action or retraining as required.
- **Follow up:** Monitor to ensure that the harassment stops, and that the victim feels supported.





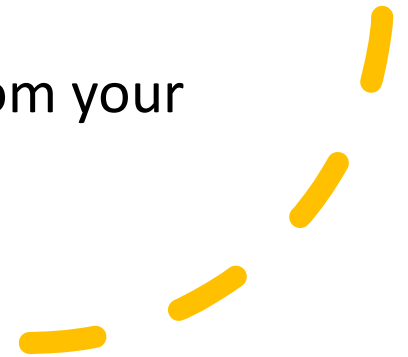


# Role of Union Representatives

- If a member comes to the Union for help, they must be given clear advice, appropriate representation, and guidance on how they can take action.
- All CWU representatives are obligated to undergo training to understand equality and diversity issues.
- They will be issued with guidance on how to deal with sexual harassment sensitively and confidentially.
- Union Representatives should know how to signpost members to appropriate supports.
- All Representatives can get support from Union Head Office.

## Message to Members

- You are not to blame
- You must not feel that this is acceptable
- You have the right to get the unwelcome behaviour stopped
- You have the right to complain
- You have a right to confidentiality
- You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- You have the right to support from your Union



# Reporting Sexual Harassment

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- Protections provided by the Employment Equality Legislation
- Duty of care by the employer
- Be familiar with company process and procedures
- Support by the Union representative
- Details on how to make a complaint
  - Approaching the alleged perpetrator
  - Informal and formal approaches



## Incident Log

- Our advice to members and witnesses is to keep a record of complaints as soon as they arise.
- Keeping a written log will assist members in tracking important details and dates.
- We have developed a template for the relevant information including the dates, times, locations, details of any incidents, if there were any witnesses or any supporting documentation.



# Incident Log

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT INCIDENT LOG FORM

Date of Incident:	
Time:	
Location:	
Name of person complained of:	
Detail of Incident (e.g. offensive comment(s)/conversation(s), looking/leering, sexual contact incl. touching, inappropriate messages at work via Email, FB, WhatsApp, X, Instagram etc.).  Please provide as much detail as possible:	
Names of any witnesses. They are those that you asked to make a log of the inappropriate behaviour/ incident:	
List of any supporting evidence (e.g. e-mails, text messages, CCTV or other documentation):	
What did you say and/or do following the incident? Did you report the incident or talk to anyone about it?	
What effect did the incident have on you (i) at the time? (ii) afterwards?	

# Questions Members have



- What if the person complained of says it was just a joke?
- When and where can sexual harassment occur?
- What will happen if there is a formal investigation?
- If I make a complaint, will my employer treat me less favourably?
- What to do if you are a witness to sexual harassment?

# Union Events

- The Union takes all incidents of sexual harassment very seriously.
- We have a Code of Conduct to address complaints of this nature which is available from Union Head Office.
- Members can seek additional assistance from their local Union Representative or Union Head Office as required.
- Union also has a Professional and Courteous Behaviour Policy.





## Key Elements & What we have learned

- Unions must lead the way in establishing robust policies through collective bargaining.
- Both Company and Union must take into consideration national legislation and best practice guidelines.
- Engagement with NGO's is key to determine best practice.
- The **toolkits** must be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to reflect changes to legislation, viewpoints of members and those responsible for implementation.
- There must be a proactive system in place to allow victims to claim supports through their employer and their Union.
- Workplace culture must foster support, openness and a safe environment for members and those who complain of sexual harassment.
- Training is essential for those responsible for implementing the guidelines.



# Further Information & Next Steps



- Design and delivery of Union Representative Guidelines
- Roll out of new union training in 2025
- For further information please see
- [Campaigns Archive - Communications Workers' Union](#)
- Thank You!