

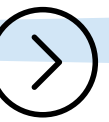
13th Biennial Conference 2026



CWU DIVERSITY & EQUALITY

Presented by Carol Scheffer

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Discrimination within the Irish Context

Employment Equality Based on the 9 Grounds

Gender

Civil status

Family status

Sexual
orientation

Religion

Age

Disability

Race

Membership
of the Traveller
community

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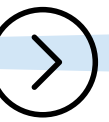


Key Focus



- Discrimination within the context of the Irish Workplace
- Focus of CWU Diversity and Equality Work
 - Mobilising women workers
 - Occupational Health from a Gender Perspective
 - Violence and Harassment in the world of work
 - CWU Sexual Harassment Campaign
- Work Life Balance initiatives
 - Addressing Remote Work

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1. Mobilising Women Workers

- Strengthening and mobilising women, particularly young women workers.
- 75% Male union
- Focus on legal entitlements
- Alleviate fear of enforcement of rights
- Women in leadership and taking up key roles in the CWU

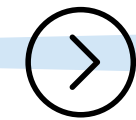
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Changing Landscape of Women's Rights

- Women were more restricted in career paths and often expected to leave work after marriage or children.
- Women university graduates on the up.
- It's not that rights are missing—it's that real-world outcomes aren't catching up.

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SLIDE TITLE

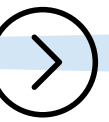


Equality Representatives Training



Respect US
Protect US
Pay US
cwu.ie - by your side

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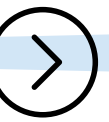


CWU Rule Change - Women's Representation

- Female trade union activists bring value to the negotiating table.
- Women bring diverse perspectives, experiences, and insights.
- CWU - Removed reserved seats and replaced with a system of proportional representation.
- Rule takes effect at BDC 2026.
- Using UNI Equal Opportunities 40 for 40 campaign & best practice in other unions.



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2. Gender Sensitive Occupational Health

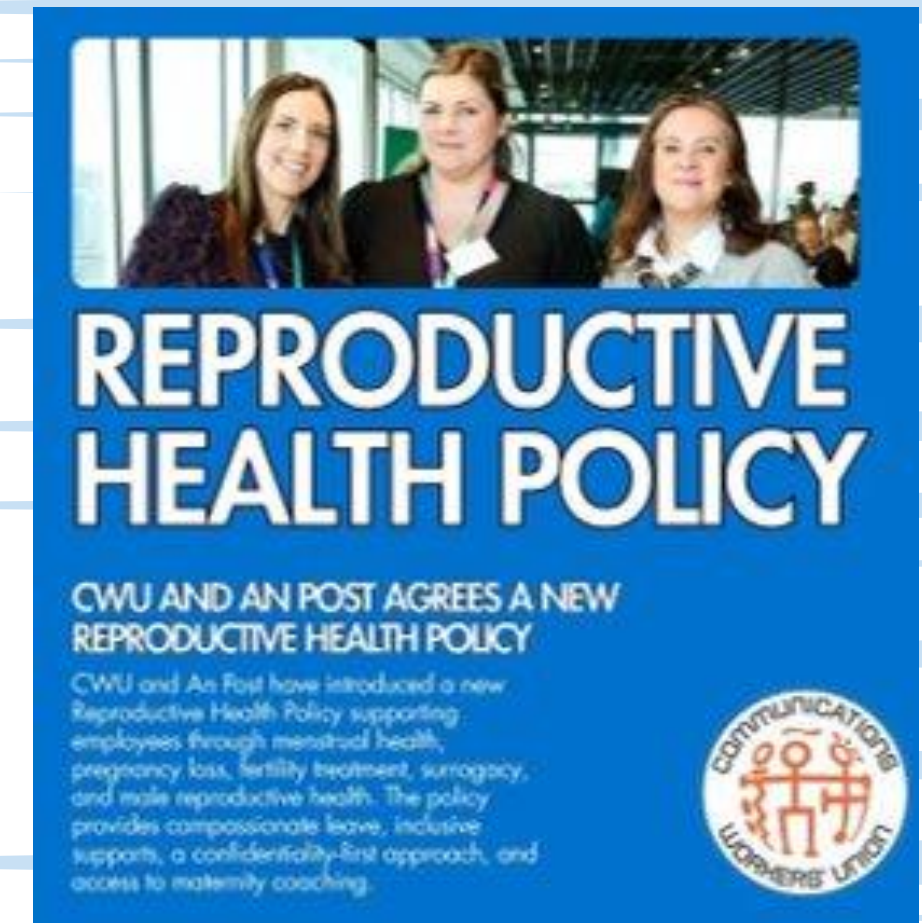
- Workplaces were historically designed around a male physiology
- From a trade union viewpoint, women's health from menstruation to menopause is not a "private issue" or a matter of individual resilience.
- It is a workplace issue, a health and safety issue, an equality issue, and a collective bargaining issue.

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Reproductive Health Policy – An Post

- Provides a foundation for supporting employees through various reproductive health experiences, including menstrual health, pregnancy loss, fertility, surrogacy, and male reproductive health.
- The policy includes:
 - **Compassionate support for pregnancy loss:** Up to five days' paid leave for the person who was pregnant, up to two days for a partner/surrogate.
 - **Fertility treatment leave:** Up to ten days' paid leave (employee) and up to five days (partner), with the option to apply retrospectively to protect privacy.
 - **Surrogacy supports:** Including 24 weeks' fully paid leave for the primary caregiver and two weeks for a supporting caregiver/partner.
 - **Confidentiality-first approach:** Health information handled only by trained manager and signposting to EAP and supports.
 - **Maternity coaching:** up to 3 sessions pre- or post-maternity leave.



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3 M's, Menstruation, Maternity & Menopause

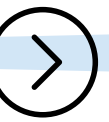
Menstrual pain, endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome, pregnancy-related conditions, perimenopause and menopause symptoms can significantly affect working life.

Employers have a duty of care. Risk assessments, temperature control, access to rest facilities, flexible scheduling, and proper sanitation are not privileges, they are workplace health measures.

Failure to act can push women out of the labour market prematurely, particularly during menopause when they are often at the peak of their skills and leadership experience.



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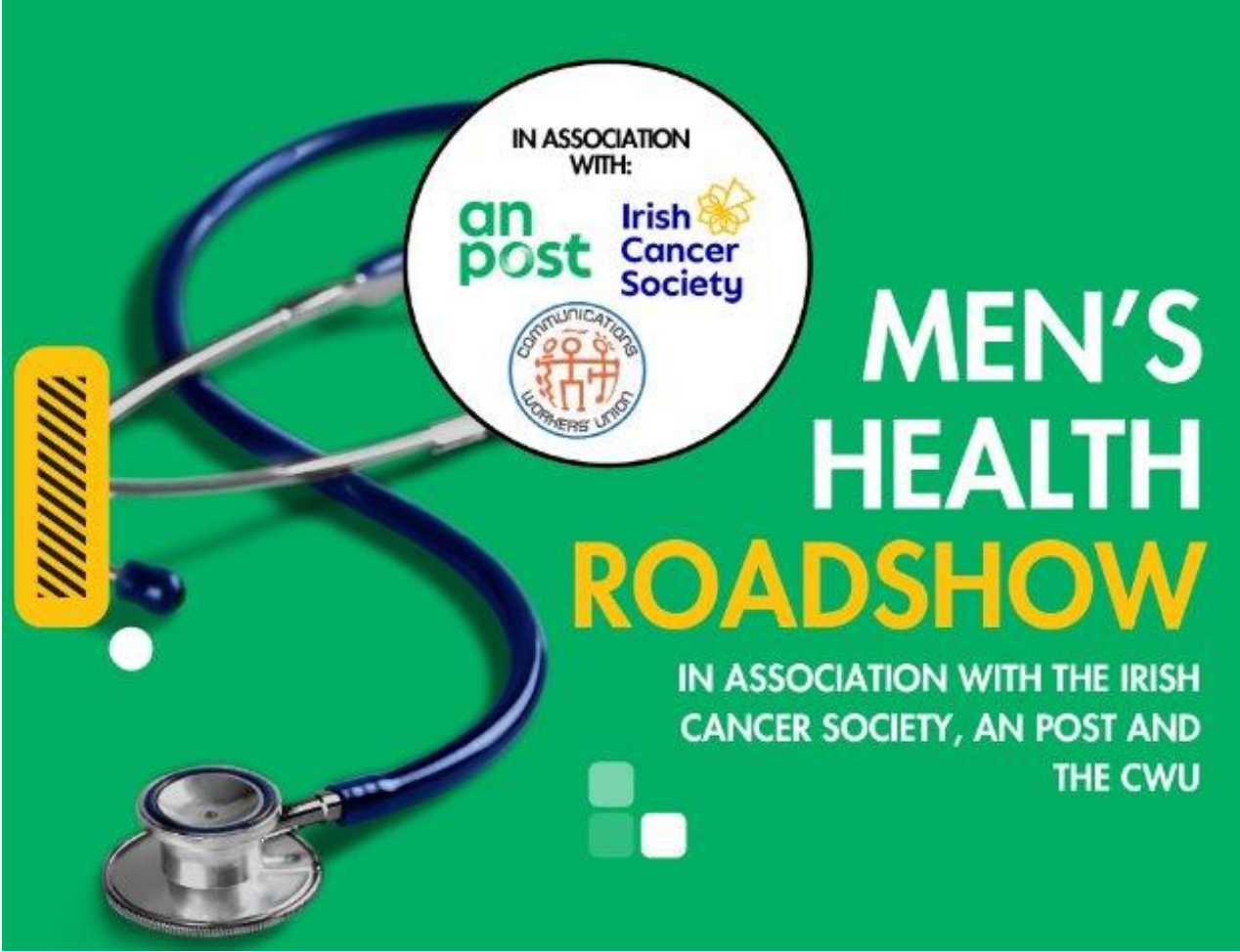


Health Issues – Breast Cancer Awareness

- Breast Cancer Ireland rolls out lunch and learn sessions with CWU.
- Raise awareness of breast health and to emphasise the importance of early detection.
- Alarmingly, every 29 seconds someone in the world is diagnosed with breast cancer.
- In telecoms we covered all the call centres and HSQ and in An Post we covered the EXO, Limerick DSU, Dublin Mails Centre, Portlaoise Mails Centre, Cork Distribution Centre, Athlone Mails Centre and Castlebar DSU.



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Violence and Harassment

- CWU negotiated 10 days paid leave for those affected by domestic violence in telecoms and postal
- Reassure, Respond and Refer
- Financial assistance with advance in salary
- Change in work location
- Flexible working options



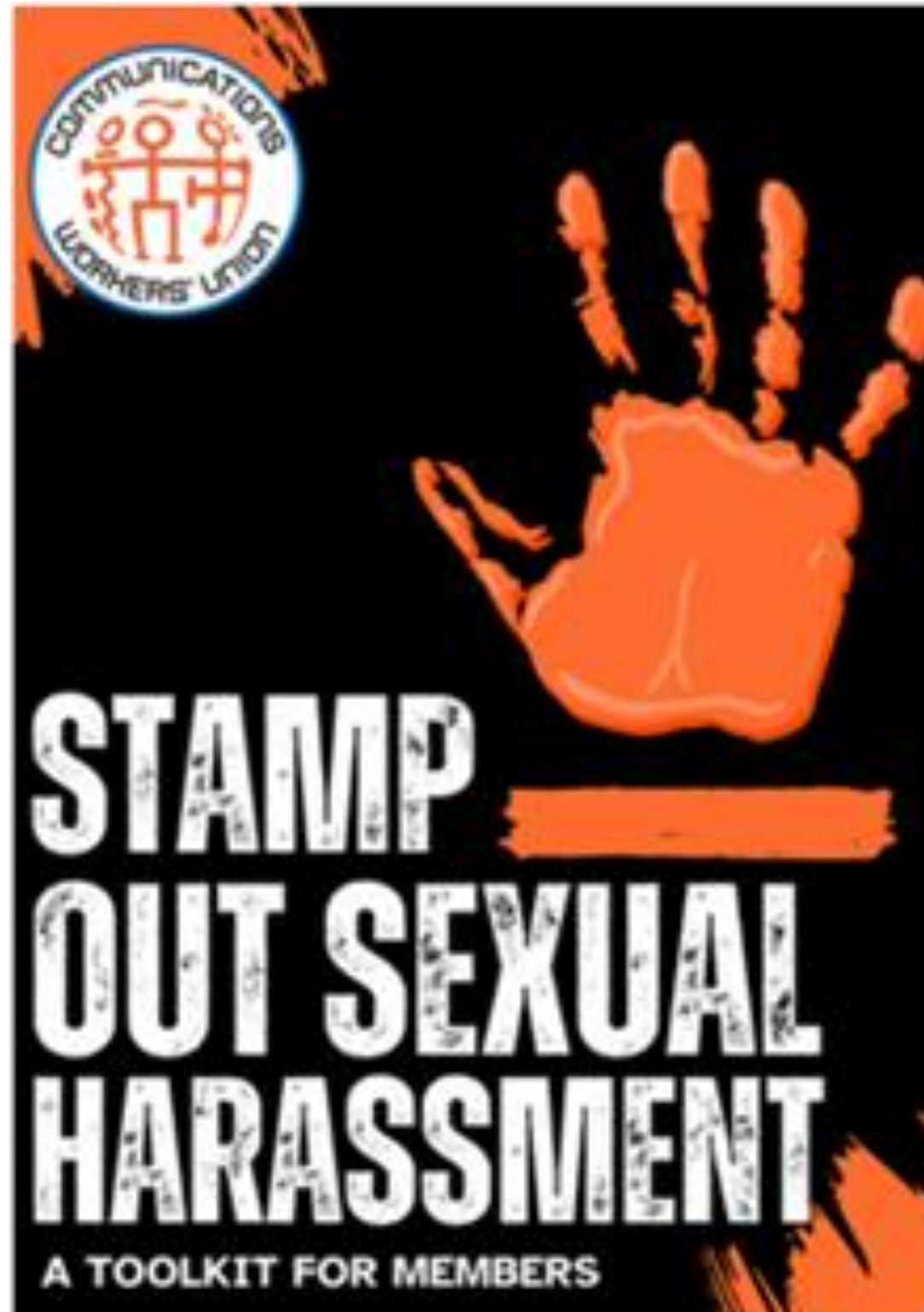
Covid-19 and domestic violence

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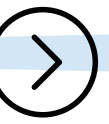


CWU Stamp out Sexual Harassment

- Guidelines for Members
- Incident log for members to track complaints
- First Responder Checklist
- Downloadable posters
- Trade Union Guidelines on how to represent members
- New training for representatives
- Stamp Out Sexual Harassment – CWU Campaign & Toolkit



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Remote Work

- Challenges
- Five day return to work mandates
- Poor legislation
- Heavily stacked in favour of the employer



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Next Steps

- **We are working with AsIAM** to become accredited as an autism friendly union.
- **We are organising and mobilising women workers** by strengthening union and employer structures to ensure women's voices are at the bargaining table.
- **We are making sure that collective agreements are gender sensitive** with stronger provisions for, flexible working arrangements, and safeguards against discrimination and harassment.
- **At a local level trade unions are representing on equality issues** ensuring that rights on paper translate into real change in the workplace.
- **We are fighting back** against the backlash on DEI.
- **We want your feedback**

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THANK

YOU

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