CONNECT

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Tom Sheehan
Elected President
of CWU
2026 – 2028

CONNECT

Contents

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Editorial

Colleagues,

It is very pleasing to report the CWU held a very successful Biennial Delegate Conference in the Clayton Hotel Sligo, a most fitting place for us to gather. The Conference theme, *'Rise, Organise, Unionise!'* has never been more relevant. One hundred and thirteen years ago, the Sligo Dock Workers – before the Dublin Lock-Out, before the famous confrontation of 1913 – rose up in the face of exploitation. Their rallying cry then was simple and timeless, *"The great only appear great because we are on our knees. Let us Rise."*

Today, workers need to respond and assert-their power and capacity – to influence their wages, protect their working conditions and have their say in the decisions that affect their workplaces and their lives.

The business of Conference, the details of which are reported on in this edition of *Connect*, confirms the CWU organisation is certainly firing on all cylinders, buoyed up by membership growth, with delegates celebrating the excellent work and agreements we have collectively achieved on behalf of members.

Of course none of this could have been achieved without the hard work of all of our activists and I also acknowledge the loyalty and support of members, which enabled us to secure these agreements with companies.

We have a new National Executive Council for the next two-year term, elected under the new gender balance rule change, resulting in 9 women (38%) and 16 men. This is a great result, not just an example of the rule being successful, but also of the progression of women coming up through the Union onto the Executive. The change emanated from and was supported by the Women in Leadership Programme together with the mentoring which has assisted female activists to take up key decision-making roles both on their own local committees as well as NEC.

AI and the Tech Sector

Nowhere is the failure of the current industrial relations system in this country more starkly visible than at Covalen, where our members continue to take further strike action. They are forced to the picket line in pursuit of Union recognition and fair redundancy payments for the 720 staff losing their jobs. Our members at the Meta contractor, are a shining light in their determination to secure Union recognition and representation in the face of swinging job cuts, and a deliberate rigging of the statutory redundancy system to deny minimum levels of payments to those workers who are losing their jobs. The owners and employers should hold their heads in shame – shame on them.

The activities at Covalen are the tip of an iceberg of job losses caused by AI that is sweeping through the Irish economy, with Meta having announced a further 350 job losses.

The government has sought to reassure us that they are monitoring the situation. Unfortunately, the time for monitoring has well passed. The effects of AI on jobs are happening now and accelerating, mostly impacting on young workers. The tech sector in Ireland is undergoing profound changes and workers in this sector clearly see that the answer to this uncertainty, is to organise and unionise.

The CWU has sought urgent meetings with An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, and the Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Peter Burke TD, to assess the effects of AI on jobs, and to establish the rights of workers to organise, which must include a right-of-access for unions to workers at their places of employment. The CWU is also seeking reforms to statutory redundancy and an increase in minimum levels of payments.

The statutory cap is a miserly €600, introduced in 2004. Government must act now and respond to our demands for statutory changes and the right to represent workers in a collective redundancy. Employers, such as Covalen making €20 million, should not be allowed to simply dispense with the creators of their wealth, with a token-gesture offering, which frankly is an insult.

Costs of Living and Working Families

The persistent housing crisis, under-resourced health services and a sky-rocketing cost of living – highlighted in the recent fuel protests – are undermining the very modest expectations of working families and are particularly impacting younger workers and those in insecure or low-paid employment.

The recent fuel protests tell us something important: The frustration is real. The anger is justified. Workers who are hard-pressed, doing everything right, getting up, going to work, paying their taxes – cannot afford to heat their homes or fill their fuel tanks, which is a scandal. Workers have had their fill of this Government who have consistently pandered to the demands of business and organised (Yes, Organised) economic interests, while failing to implement broader measures to support workers and their families. This can't be allowed to continue.

Our Union fully supports ICTU's *"Quality Employment and Good Jobs"* agenda, which sets out a framework for legislative and economic measures to strengthen collective bargaining, improve job quality, address insecure employment and protect workers' living standards.

While the Government has an action plan, we need to see real progress and legislative changes. The budget and outcome of the fuel protests have impacted most negatively on workers, which is not an indication they are sympathetic to the issues we have raised. For this reason, Conference unanimously endorsed an Emergency Motion proposed by the National Executive Council, as follows:

Seán McDonagh
General Secretary,
CWU

Emergency Motion

1. Campaign alongside ICTU and affiliated unions for legislative and industrial advances that strengthen workers' collective rights, improve living standards and deliver secure, quality employment.
2. Demand meaningful Government action to protect workers' living standards, including:
   - Progress towards a living wage;
   - Real support for collective bargaining;
   - Tax relief measures for workers;
   - Enhanced remote and flexible working rights;
   - Tax relief for trade union membership;
   - Measures to support workers facing increased fuel, transport and household costs
3. Call on the Government to end the continued deference to employer vetoes and vested business interests at the expense of workers' rights, pay and living standards.
4. Reaffirm that strong unions, collective bargaining and worker solidarity are essential to achieving fair pay, decent work and social justice.

In the event of continued Government failure to address the cost-of-living crisis and strengthen workers' rights, support coordinated action across the trade union movement, in compliance with the Industrial Relations Act 1990, including national demonstrations, workplace protest actions and, where appropriate, coordinated industrial action up to and including strike action.

Despite all of this – or because of it – I am genuinely proud to report our Union is growing. Since our last Conference where we decided to invest and recruit Organisers and have invested further in additional recruitment. We reported a significant increase in membership , particularly in the new constituted Digital and Techworker Alliance (DATA) division as well as the Postal/Logistics division.

The CWU organisation is well-equipped for the challenges we face. The agenda is set and working with like-minded unions and with your support we can positively progress workers interests. Here's to a long hot summer.

Tech Workers Find Their Voice Through DATA

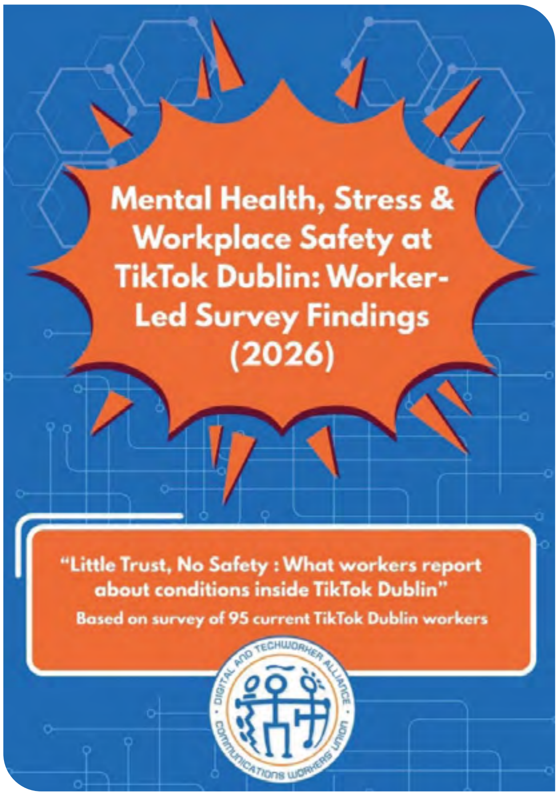
The past year has seen major growth in Union Organising across Ireland's Tech and Tech Services Sector, with the Digital and Techworker Alliance Branch playing a central role.

Teleperformance

Teleperformance has also become an important workplace for organising. As a major outsourced technology services provider, and part of a UNI Global Agreement, the securing of a collective agreement in Ireland is a strong result in the Irish context. Induction access has also been secured, showing that collective bargaining can be built and strengthened through workplace organising.

TikTok

In TikTok Dublin, 2025 marked the beginning of collective organising. Activity grew around unfair Performance Improvement Plans, the Company's 'Return to Office' mandate, and the need to protect workers who rely on remote or hybrid working. Members were supported by the CWU in making reasonable accommodation and flexible working requests, particularly where disability, caring responsibilities or work/life balance were affected.



Through collective pressure, public campaigning, members' meetings and organising training, TikTok workers pushed back on aspects of the RTO mandate and helped protect work-from-abroad rights. In early 2026, members also surveyed colleagues on stress and mental health at work. The results raised serious concerns about a toxic working environment, especially for Trust and Safety Staff. Members are now working towards electing Health and Safety Representatives and are also linking up with colleagues across Europe on establishing a European Works Council.

Covalen

Covalen, an outsourced service provider to Meta, has become one of the clearest examples of CWU organising in tech. Workers took industrial action in defence of fair treatment, dignity at work and collective bargaining rights. Shortly before Christmas, the Company announced that hundreds of jobs were at risk, with statutory minimum redundancy terms offered and many workers with under two years' service facing no severance at all.

That threat came after cuts to workplace supports, including hot meals, snacks, drinks, wellbeing time and other provisions. The result was a surge in CWU membership through the DATA branch. Legal Operations Staff took strike action in December 2025 over misclassification and unfair pay, with the dispute referred to the Workplace Relations Commission. Members then voted overwhelmingly for further industrial action, with strike days taking place in January 2026 at the Sandyford offices.

The demand is clear: union recognition, fair treatment and an end to the employer veto over collective bargaining. With hundreds of workers at risk, a rushed redundancy process and little or no compensation on the table, members have responded with protests, strikes and solidarity. The Branch is continuing to organise, including further strike action and a Dáil protest.

Digital and Techworker Alliance (DATA) Branch

The growth of tech sector membership was also reflected in the inaugural DATA Branch AGM and Techworker Forum, held in CWU HQ on 28 February 2026. The event brought members together to discuss workplace organising, the need for change in the sector, and how to build lasting worker power in tech.

The forum included a political panel on worker-led research, big tech power, media regulation, migrant worker organising and the role of unions in tech. Speakers included Dr Conor McCabe, Paul Murphy TD, Tiernan Kenny, Sinéad Gibney TD and Dr Daniel Gutierrez from Ver.di. Members also heard from United Tech and Allied Workers in CWU UK, which now has over 6,000 members.

Strategy discussions focused on communications, training and education, and building meaningful membership. Agreed next steps include creating a tech-wide online platform, organising tech organising fundamentals training, and establishing a committee. Motions were also opened up to all Branch members through an online vote.

Overall, the message is simple: tech workers are organising, they are building confidence, and they are no longer prepared to face major workplace issues alone. DATA has become a vital platform for turning individual concerns into collective strength.

Retirement Benefits

A report to Conference reviewed **defined benefit (DB) pension schemes** (An Post, eircom, Vodafone), highlighting how membership levels show scheme maturity.

COMPANY	ACTIVE MEMBERS	PENSIONERS	DEFERRED
eir	563	12716	1058
An Post	9093	8269	2653
Vodafone	43	709	273

Industry trends showed fewer DB schemes over time, improved funding health, and reduced equity exposure or movement to more secure assets. The report provided a 2026 market update, noting some geo-political pressure but overall resilience in pension funds. Finally, the report looked at **MyFutureFund (auto-enrolment)** that is aimed at workers without pensions.

It explained how it works: the employee contributions, employer matching, and government top-ups invested for growth. Eligibility, opt-out rules, and flexibility, were covered ensuring fairness and participation.

The report concluded that auto enrolment will improve retirement savings and reduce reliance on the State pension.

DC pensions

At the ecomms conference the focus was on the Defined Contribution Scheme (DC Scheme) and outlined that this type of scheme involves a set level of contribution by the employer and the employee. Contributions are invested for each member, and it is normal for investment options to be provided. The pension amount will be unknown until very close to retirement and will depend on the amount of contributions, the level of investment return and the cost of purchase.

In Defined Contribution (DC)schemes, it is the **contribution rather than the benefit** that is defined, the "risk" falls on the employee.

eir National Managers Branch

One of the main topics for eir Managers was Performance Management. eir decided to change the Performance Ratings for managers early 2026 that was very late in the day however to ensure payment of bonuses the CWU agreed to proceed however we would monitor outturns to ensure consistency and fairness. Main change was moving from 4 ratings to 3 and adjusting the Bonus percentages. Seems to be a simplistic approach however nothing is simple in eir and we need to keep a close eye on this throughout this year.

eir Facilities

Company will upgrade facilities at **157 sites** and remove them at **152 sites**. When complete, welfare facilities will be within **30km of all work locations**. Pilot sites (Boyle, Rathcoole, Enfield, Douglas) met **acceptable standards**. Roll-out has begun with planned **communication and engagement** to manage closures. Ongoing **monitoring is required** to ensure standards are maintained and cleaning is regular.

circet Ireland

On the delivery side of the organisation, work in a contracting environment is difficult and can be very pressurised. Most of our members are geographically dispersed and often work on their own. Members work on codes, where each job has its own separate code and payment attached. However, there is now an element of job security with various operator contracts agreed. As the rollout of NBI continues at a pace the volume of work available is moving to the west coast but requirements to travel should reduce when this spike in orders is completed.

On the network build side of the organisation available work is decreasing due to the nearing completion of NBI and IFN. This has led to redundancies in some areas. These redundancies are carried out in line with a collective agreement between the company and the CWU, which sets out the process and terms to ensure fair treatment of members.

Changes to poling rates, resulting from the move from IFN/NBI, is a concern for our members in the area.

The CWU intention is to progress towards a salary model for delivery and focus on building a representative structure that covers all areas of the business.

eir Networks

In early 2025, *eir* implemented organisational changes within *open eir* Networks, introducing new structures and reporting lines driven by business evolution, changing service delivery needs, new technology, remote working, and the wind down of major build programmes. This has reduced the long-term need for large-scale build resources while increasing reliance on contractors, leading to the creation of a Field Organisation and separate Design, Quality Assurance and Contractor Management structures.

The previous model, made up of overlapping units across design, build and contractor management, has been replaced with a streamlined structure focused on service assurance, quality and the use of external resources. This includes a smaller specialist design team, stronger contractor oversight, an integrated field organisation, and a reduced major projects function.

Storm Éowyn caused major disruption across the network, particularly in the South, Northwest and Midlands, with fault levels reaching 300–500% above normal. The damage included thousands of hazardous plant issues, significant fibre and copper faults, and over 1,500 poles down. In response, build work was suspended, staff were redeployed to repairs, overtime was introduced, and contractor support increased, with all efforts focused on restoring services.

With severe weather becoming more frequent, CWU has called for a full review of the storm response plan, including workforce resourcing, apprenticeships, contractor standards, and network resilience measures.

The apprenticeship programme, which saw 23 recruits in 2024, is viewed by CWU as essential to maintaining skills and service delivery. Concerns remain about staffing levels, reliance on copper networks, upcoming retirements, and increasing storm demands. CWU maintains that proper staffing must be prioritised and that a fully contracted field model is not acceptable.

The Company position is that fault levels are declining, with 160,000 faults cleared in 2025 and an expected further reduction, alongside a continued shift to fibre and a copper migration period of 12–18 months. The Company have stated that there will be no apprentices recruited in the immediate term.

The Helix Programme is a key part of a multi-phase IT transformation within *eir*, introducing an integrated IT service and operations management platform built on the existing Remedy system. It is designed to improve assurance processes and fault management by migrating multiple legacy systems into a single unified platform. Completed elements include IT fault-logging, change requests and access management, with future phases set to expand into Midas, Networks Remedy and RAN systems. Members from Dublin No.1 Branch have been actively involved in system testing and validation.

eir Customer Service Centres

Under the 33-month CWU pay agreement running from July 2024 to March 2027, improvements were secured for lower-paid members following the impact of minimum wage increases. The 2026 pay increases were front-loaded, with both January and July increases applied together in January 2026 for call centre agents, customer operations agents and retail staff. As a result, the full 2026 increase was paid at the start of the year, with the next increase due in January 2027.

In August 2024, *eir* announced plans to outsource elements of customer support to an NJJ site in Portugal. CWU did not support this decision, citing concerns around cost-driven outsourcing, risks to customer service improvements, and potential reputational impact. Following engagement with Management, the Union secured commitments on protecting Irish sites, terms and conditions, and service standards. Since then, no changes have been made to members' terms and conditions, while the Portugal site has faced challenges in reaching staffing targets.

Call volumes have declined across all centres due to AI tools, system improvements, and lower fault levels. Headcount has reduced by approximately 160 staff through natural attrition, with roles not backfilled. The off-shoring target has not been met, raising questions about sustainability. After a six-month freeze, recruitment resumed in Limerick, Sligo and Waterford, reflecting ongoing operational demand, and CWU continues to monitor staffing, recruitment and service levels.

eir Retail/FOTS

In November 2024, eir engaged Field Management Ireland (FMI) to provide additional sales representatives for FOTS, driven by recruitment and retention challenges as well as rapid growth in fibre availability, with 1.5 million homes passed over the previous two years. FMI staff are deployed on a needs basis where there are insufficient directly employed FOTS staff and are paid the same base salary and commission as eir employees. CWU secured commitments that there would be no reduction in directly employed FOTS headcount, no adverse impact on current or future members, and continued recruitment of direct employees, and the Union continues to closely monitor the arrangement.

CWU secured front-loaded pay increases for retail staff in January 2025 and January 2026. In January 2025, both the January and July increases were paid together in one payment, resulting in a 3.5% increase for Retail Sales Consultants. In January 2026, further engagement took place following increases to the minimum wage, with the January and July 2026 increases again combined into a single payment. The next pay phase is scheduled to apply in January 2027.

Since the last Conference, CWU organisers John Bohan and Shane Murphy have visited all 70 eir retail stores nationwide, engaging directly with members on the shop floor, listening to concerns and providing Union support. Key issues raised included staffing levels, sales targets and workload, and health and safety. Engagement covered both members and non-members, helping to raise awareness of workplace rights and the support available through CWU. The outcome was strongly positive, with high levels of engagement, a significant number of new members joining the Union, and a reinforcement of the importance of a visible Union presence in eir Retail.

PhoneWatch

Across 2024 and 2025, CWU secured a range of pay improvements in PhoneWatch, including annual basic pay increases of 3.75%, increases to KPI banding and shift allowances, and improvements to on call payments for field staff. In 2024 this also included an additional annual leave day. In 2026, a further 3% increase was applied to pay, KPI banding and allowances, alongside changes linked to the introduction of night tasking, including expanded progression ranges and a commitment to maintain these, subject to agreed KPIs. Night tasking duties are to be shared across staff and are under ongoing review, alongside a broader review of ARC pay structures.

A permanent opt-out agreement was secured in 2025 for a small number of members on pre 2013 contracts who wished to move away from a commission based model, reflecting concerns about performance pressures.

Significant issues were raised by members in relation to travel time, with a Union survey highlighting widespread impacts on work/life balance, safety and wellbeing. Findings showed high levels of stress linked to unrealistic scheduling, with many members reporting inaccurate travel estimates and pressure to complete work within tight timeframes. In response, the Union secured agreement with Management on improved travel time modelling, including new Dublin and non-Dublin profiles that better reflect peak travel conditions, with further work ongoing.

Separately, an issue arose where average commission payments had not been included in annual leave calculations. Management issued six months' back pay, and the Union is continuing engagement with the Company on the issue.

eir Branch Secretaries Day

eir District Branch Secretaries

The *eir* Branch Secretaries Day agenda outlined a structured training and engagement event focused on strengthening union organisation, communication, and recruitment activity within *eir*. This was followed by a key presentation on the current state of the Union in *eir*, addressing membership levels, ongoing induction activity, gaps in coverage, and preparations for upcoming pay negotiations, alongside a targeted branch recruitment strategy.

The afternoon sessions were practical and skills-based, featuring a mapping exercise to identify membership opportunities and training on effective one-to-one conversations and objection handling. The event concludes with clear follow-up actions, emphasising recruitment as an ongoing priority within branches and outlining structured supports from Head Office, including data, resources, and regular review mechanisms to support branch development.

Frank Joyce

Pat Sheridan

Fiona Woods

Delegates listening to the Seminar

eComms Sectoral Committee members 2026
Patrick Duggan, Sabrina Kirwan, Adam Kavanagh, Tom Sheehan, Fiona Woods, Deborah Flannery, Alan Dempsey and Adam Farrell.
Missing from photo Caroline Schween.

Postal Sectoral Committee 2026

(Back row) *Sean O'Donnell, Neil Quinn, Deirdre Medlar, Maurice Noonan, Jackie McNamara, Radoslaw Pyciarz and Paul Syder*

(Front Row) *Paul Pender, Martin Duffy, Mickey Wall, Ellen Moore, Tony Harnett, Tara Ravenhill and Dave Sheehy. Missing from photo: Des Hopkins and Lesley Sheridan*

Route Evaluation Agreement

The CWU has reached agreement with An Post on a new Route Evaluation Process, designed to bring fairness and consistency to how delivery routes that are in difficulty are assessed across all DSUs.

Every Postal Operative is aware that routes don't stand still and that no route is the same on any given day. Changes in parcel volumes, traffic conditions, new development, and workload pressures can all impact whether a route remains achievable within its designed time.

This agreement ensures that:

- There is a clear and standardised process to review routes;
- Decisions are based on objective data;
- Members have a formal mechanism to raise concerns;
- The Union is embedded in the process from start to finish.

Importantly, it also confirms that evaluations are about the route rather than the individual operative.

When Can a Route Be Reviewed?

If a route is no longer achievable within the design time, members have the right to request a route evaluation.

To qualify for an evaluation, at least one of the following criteria needs to apply:

- The route exceeds its design time consistently (16 out of 20 days);
- Regular overtime or late finishes are occurring;
- The route has consistently exceeded the design volume (16 out of 20 days);
- There is significant parcel growth or workload fluctuation;
- Or, where there is a genuine and substantiated concern, even if the above thresholds aren't met.

This ensures that both sustained workload issues and emerging problems can be addressed.

How the Evaluation Works

The process is built on a 20-day data model based on the agreed standards for each product type which provides a balanced and representative picture of the route:

- Data is taken from Monday to Friday over four weeks;
- Consecutive days will be used where possible;
- When consecutive days are not possible the missed day will be substituted like for like (Monday for Monday);
- It uses real operational systems, including:
  - AIRS (mail volumes);
  - Track & Trace (barcoded items);
  - Telematics (delivery duration).

The evaluation examines:

- Actual route duration versus designed time;
- Mail and parcel volumes;
- Stop patterns, delays and route deviations;
- Rate of delivery compared to the designed route.

Appeals and Representation

If your application is denied or the outcome is disputed:

- You have the right to appeal the decision;
- Appeals go to the Regional Manager;
- Appeals should include additional evidence or information to support your case.

The CWU strongly encourages members to engage with their Local Representative throughout the process.

Union Involvement and Oversight

A key part of the agreement for the CWU is the commitment that:

- CWU representatives and DSMs will be trained in the process;
- Joint participation is built into controlled mail counts and verification exercises;
- The agreement will be reviewed annually or earlier if required.

This ensures ongoing Union oversight and the ability to challenge issues as they arise.

Important Notes for Members

- Route evaluations take place between February and September due to operational constraints;
- Requests must be submitted in writing with clear reasons;
- Where home-garaging applies, routes must temporarily return to the unit during evaluation.

This agreement represents an important step forward in ensuring that workloads are measurable and fair. As part of the agreement, a video explainer of the evaluation process is under production and will be available to Postal Operatives on the An Post App.

An Post Joint Conciliation Council

The Joint Conciliation Council in An Post is the internal industrial relations forum whereby the Group of Unions: CWU, AHCPS and Forsa and An Post Management progress claims and policies. It meets on a quarterly basis or more often if required. It also has a number of Sub-Committees and set out below is a summary of some of the issues under discussion at these Committees.

Health and Safety Committee - Consultation

Under Health and Safety legislation employers must plan for employee consultation and participation. These arrangements allow employees to be consulted on the steps taken to safeguard their safety, health, and welfare and on measures to check how effective the safeguards have been.

Within An Post we have a number of collective agreements which cover the following areas:

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

These were introduced in 2017 and have not been reviewed since. It is opportune that we now review these agreements based on changes to legislation and guidance introduced by the Health and Safety Authority. The Union's agenda for the review is:

- Increased role for Safety Representatives;
- Operation and effectiveness of the Safety Committee;
- Training including refresher training for Safety Representatives;
- Escalation process;
- Timely response to issues raised.

If any Safety Representatives have any comments or concerns in relation to their role they should contact **patkenny@cwu.ie**.

SunSmart

The number of people diagnosed with skin cancer is increasing rapidly. It is the most common cause of cancer in Ireland accounting for almost 13,000 cases annually. Exposure to UV radiation is the main risk factor for skin cancer and this is emitted naturally from the sun. However, it is also the most preventable form of cancer.

Outdoor workers are exposed to a 2 – 3 times higher amount of UV radiation than someone who works indoors. Over-exposure to UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage as well as skin cancer.

In order to communicate the risk to employees we have agreed a policy with the Company which is designed to protect outdoor workers from the harmful effects of UV radiation. This policy was relaunched in the middle of May with an article on the An Post app highlighting the 5 S's:

In line with previous years, sunscreen is available and should be used. The remaining stock from 2025 was distributed to all DSUs with new stock ordered for 2026 available as well. Lip balm has also issued to all DSUs. We have also agreed to trial two types of sun hats in Galway and Tralee DSU.

Outback Hat

Product Code: PP23149

100% heavy washed cotton, Flat top, Protection against sunlight - UPS50+, Elasticated cord size adjuster with toggle, Chin strap with leather toggle, Mesh eyelets, Press stud side turn-ups, Conforms to BS 8466. One size.

Organic Cotton Bucket Hat

Product Code: PP37512

100% Organic Cotton Twill, Protection against sunlight - UOF50+, Unisex styling, Stitched ventilation eyelets, TearAway label. Available in sizes: S/M and L/XL

They will have the An Post logo affixed for purpose of the trial. However, as this is just a concept trial – the exact type, colour & branding will need to be agreed before a sun hat option progresses to Mails Uniforms issue stage. We are hopeful that an agreed hat will be available from next year as part of the uniform distribution.

Psychosocial Risk & Work Positive Trial

The Union continues to highlight Occupational Health and Safety concerns in relation to Psychosocial risk and stress. According to a new global report by the International Labour Organisation 840,000 people die each year from health conditions linked to psychosocial risks, such as long working hours, job insecurity and workplace harassment. It is important therefore that we put as much emphasis on mental health risks as we do on safety risks when assessing the workplace.

Psychosocial risks arise from poor work design, organisation and management as well as a poor social context of work and they may result in negative psychosocial, physical and social outcomes. The management of psychosocial risks is vital to creating a workplace that supports mental health. We have agreed a Mental Health Policy with the Company and while we see this as an important first step in supporting those with mental health difficulties this needs to be supported by practical steps such as measuring and assessing psychosocial risk in the workplace.

In order to measure and assess the risk in the workplace we have agreed to pilot the HSA's Work Positive Tool in the Customer Contact Centre and the State Savings Contact Centre. This is a free and easy to use and confidential psychosocial risk management process. It provides feedback on workplace stress, employee psychological wellbeing and critical incident exposure in the workplace. It helps organisations:

- Identify psychosocial risks and opportunities across your workforce
- Comply with current health and safety legislation
- Develop an effective health and wellbeing action plan
- Improve employee engagement and performance
- It is based around a simple four stage process:
  - **Prepare -** Build a business case, secure commitment and establish your steering group.
  - **Measure -** Identify risk and opportunity within your workplace using the survey tools.
  - **Action Plan -** Explore and prioritise the key actions, develop your action plan.
  - **Review -** Review progress and revitalise your Action Plan.

Prior to its commencement, a Presentation was made to the Branch Representatives in the areas and subsequently a Working Group was set up including Local Managers, Union Representatives and HR Representatives, with a fortnightly schedule of meetings. In order to drive participation, Elaine Murphy from the Health and Safety Authority organised information webinars which included Q and As.

While we are still awaiting the results, we were advised that 95% of staff in the State Savings Call Centre and 59% of the Contact Centre replied to the survey.

Review of Term Time

As you are aware, the Company issued revised arrangements for Term Time for 2026. Given that we didn't receive any proposals until December 2025, the National Executive Council accepted the revised arrangements for 2026, based on it being the best achievable to ensure Term Time Leave remained available for 2026. This was on the basis that the Company would share the details of the 2025 review, and we would carry out a full review of the Company costings

The Company since has provided us with the details. In 2025 882 people availed of Term Time compared to 985 in 2024. 91% of those availing of it took 4 weeks or less. The Company has advised that the cost of Term Time in 2025 was €312,167.15. The details are contained in the chart below:

Area	Number	Salary Savings	Salary Costs	Other Costs (Overtime)	Total Cost
		€	€	€	€
Commerce	782	1,789,866	1,155,182	1,321,248	-686,569
Corporate Centre	22	272,723	11,070		261,653
Retail	78	357,937	245.19		112,749
Total	882	2,420,527	1,411,446	1,321,248	312,167

The Company has also highlighted several other issues of concern to them including:

- The management of Leave in the summer months is a skills and capability gap for many Managers.

- Managing Term Time Leave over the summer months is a challenge to areas with large numbers of applicants.
- Hiring temp replacements for Term Time is a challenge in today's climate (near full employment). But issues such as the nature of the role changing and getting quality staff on short contracts also pose problems.
- Impacts to service in Commerce – increase in routes covered by overtime, increase in the number of routes part or not covered. Drop in Due Delivery Date Performance Percentage (DDDP %) on barcoded deliveries over the summer period.
- Retail noticed service levels drop, longer queue times for customers (but no data measures available)

We have asked the Company to provide details of the number of applications etc. for 2026 to examine numbers approved, rejected etc. We are currently preparing a response based on feedback from Branches and we intend to highlight the following:

- We dispute the Company position in relation to overtime, as we believe that the individuals recruited to cover Term Time were instead used to cover Sick Leave thereby increasing the costs.
- Delays in approving Term Time and advertising for replacements made it difficult to secure replacements in some offices.
- The Union feels that a "one size fits all" approach is not fair. For example, smaller offices may be able to accommodate 4 weeks' Term Time, whereas larger offices may only manage 2 weeks. It is suggested that decisions on Term Time be made on an office-by-office basis, allowing the DSM to approve additional Term Time applications.
- We need to raise the age.

Discussions are ongoing at the time of writing.

Reproductive Health Policy

We recently concluded agreement with the Company on a Reproductive Health Policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance to managers on how to manage employees who have women's health issues and at the same time reduce stigma, discrimination and embarrassment related to women's health issues at work.

The policy acknowledges and supports a range of experiences and conditions and will focus on supporting employees and their partners, and managers, as well as fostering a culture of understanding, respect and inclusion across the Company.

The policy will acknowledge and support a range of experiences and conditions including the following:

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
Reproductive Lifecycle	• Menstrual health (e.g. dysmenorrhea, heavy bleeding) • Chronic reproductive conditions (e.g. endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), adenomyosis)
Reproductive Health Challenges (female)	• Pregnancy loss (including miscarriage, stillbirth, ectopic, molar pregnancy, termination for medical reasons) • Fertility challenges and assisted reproductive treatments (e.g. IVF, IUI, egg/sperm preservation) • Surrogacy
Reproductive Health Challenges (male)	• Sperm quality, mobility & morphology • Varicocele (enlarged veins in the scrotum) • Reproductive tract blockages

As part of the policy we have agreed the following leave arrangements:

TYPE OF LEAVE	DURATION	ELIGIBILITY	CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS	KEY NOTES
Pregnancy Loss Leave	Up to 5 days' paid leave per calendar year.	Employees experiencing pregnancy loss (including miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, or termination for medical reasons), **and their partners.**	No medical certificate required for up to two consecutive days.	• Full or half days; confidential; • Recorded as Bereavement Leave. • Applies to both the person who was pregnant and their partner.

TYPE OF LEAVE	DURATION	ELIGIBILITY	CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS	KEY NOTES
Fertility Treatment Leave See also: Retrospective Fertility Treatment Leave	Up to 10 days' paid leave per calendar year.	Employees undergoing fertility treatment (e.g. IVF, IUI, egg/sperm preservation). Partners also eligible.	No medical certificate required for up to two consecutive days	• Full or half days; • Recorded as Special Leave; • Confidential; • Supports physical and logistical needs; • Signpost to specialist services.
Surrogacy Preparation Leave	Up to 10 days' paid leave per calendar year for preparatory arrangements.	Employees becoming parents through surrogacy, including primary caregiver and **non-primary caregiver**.	*Supporting documentation confirming surrogacy arrangement and your role.	• Full or half days; • Confidential; • Recorded as Special Leave; • Supports medical, legal, and travel needs. • Leave entitlements apply regardless of surrogacy location.
Surrogacy Leave	24 weeks' fully-paid leave commencing on the DOB of the child. Additional unpaid leave may be available upon request. **2 weeks' fully paid leave**	Primary caregiver employee. **Non-primary caregiveir employee.**	Formal written request for leave incl. intended start date, copy of surrogacy agreement & medical documentation & declaration confirming your role.	• Recorded as Special Leave. • Minimum four weeks' written notice before the due date of birth of the child is required.

We welcome agreement on this policy and commend An Post for the proactive manner in which they approached this issue.

A copy of the policy can be assessed at
www.anpost.com/Working-with-An-Post/Employee-Policies

Uniform and Workwear

The current design of the uniform is in place for some time, and we have agreed with the Company that there is a requirement to make improvements to it. The intention is to improve the material to make them more work wear friendly while also protecting the wearer from harmful UV rays.

The Company has advised that the tender process to appoint a new uniform supplier for An Post has now been successfully completed following a comprehensive evaluation of capability, quality, value, and service delivery.

As part of the tendering process the Company conducted a full review of the Union with a view to improving the comfort and functionality of it. As a result an upgraded uniform range will be rolled out to all staff in Q1 2027.

Some of the improvements include:

- Improved garment ergonomics for better fit and mobility;
- Performance-oriented tops for breathability and flexibility;
- Modern headwear options for varying conditions;
- Layering flexibility with quarter-zip mid-layer;
- Purpose-built trousers for durability and movement
- Functional accessories supporting daily tasks;

- Gender-specific garments for improved comfort and representation
- Contemporary styling aligned with modern workwear standards

The revised uniform will be trialled in Arklow in July addressing issues such as fit etc. and the Union both at local and national level will be actively involved in the trial.

an post

PO Uniform Comparison – **Male**

Please note: AI-generated images may not reflect exactly the final garment.

an post

PO Uniform Comparison – **Female**

Please note: AI-generated images may not reflect exactly the final garment.

Appointments and Contracts

Employment Contracts, permanent appointments and banded hour contracts continue to be the subject of ongoing discussions with An Post. The way these are administered remains of concern. However, following representations from the Union the Company has agreed that future recruitment will be on a permanent basis. In order to do this there is a requirement for a further examination of all temporary contracts with a view to regularising them with existing temporary staff.

Temporary staff will in the future be only utilised for truly temporary requirements such as illness, maternity, short-term increases in volumes, peak etc.

We have agreed that any expiring contract between now and the end of June can be extended by three months to allow the Company to carry out the required steps in determining baselines, required contracts etc. Once the baselines are agreed temporary staff will be appointed to permanent roles in line existing agreements on seniority. Discussions are ongoing and we will keep members informed of any developments.

The EU Delivery Act: Why It Matters for Ireland and Our Postal Service

The European Union is currently developing new legislation commonly referred to as the **EU Delivery Act** – a proposal that has the potential to significantly reshape how parcel and delivery services operate across Europe. For Ireland, an island nation with a strong tradition of public postal service provision, this legislation is of critical importance, not just for consumers, but for postal workers, communities, and the future of An Post as a public service.

Ultimately, the EU Delivery Act seeks to merge the Postal Services Directive and the Cross-Border Parcels Delivery Regulation in response to the rapid growth of eCommerce and parcel delivery, alongside the increasing dominance of large multinational platforms and private operators.

While innovation and efficiency are often presented as the driving forces behind these changes, the CWU believes that fair work, public service obligations, and social cohesion must be at the centre of any new regulatory framework.

A Public Postal Service Matters

An Post is part of the social fabric and plays a unique role in Irish society. It is more than a delivery company; it is a national infrastructure, providing universal service, supporting rural and remote communities, and offering unionised employment with decent terms and conditions. In many areas, the local post office remains a vital social and economic hub.

All of this was evident during the pandemic when An Post workers kept communities connected, checked on elderly and vulnerable customers and delivered items such as fitness equipment and DIY products which provided people with a welcome focus or distraction during the lockdowns.

The CWU has long warned that unregulated competition and platform-based delivery models risk undermining this public service. Without strong EU-level rules, there is a danger of a "race to the bottom" on pay, conditions, and employment standards within the postal courier sector. Such a scenario leaves public operators carrying the cost of universal service obligations while private companies avoid and are exempted from such costs enabling them to maximise their profits at the cost of workers and communities across Ireland.

The EU Delivery Act must therefore strengthen, not weaken, the principle of universal service, ensuring that high-quality postal delivery remains available to everyone, regardless of where they live.

Workers' Rights at the Centre

Across Europe, the parcel and delivery sector has become increasingly fragmented. Bogus self-employment, cascading subcontracting chains, and algorithmic management are now common features of the industry. These models shift risk onto workers, erode collective bargaining, and weaken health and safety protections.

For Irish postal workers, this trend is deeply concerning. The CWU believes the EU Delivery Act must establish clear labour standards, including transparency around employment status, fair pay, and the right to organise. Regulation should reward operators who invest in their workforce – not those who cut costs by driving down standards.

CWU Support for UNI's "Save Our Post" Campaign

The CWU Ireland is proud to support UNI Global Union's **"Save Our Post"** campaign, which calls for strong public postal services, decent jobs, and fair regulation in the face of rapid market change. The campaign highlights the fact that postal services are essential public goods and should not be sacrificed to short-term commercial interests.

Through UNI, postal unions across Europe are standing together to demand that EU policymakers recognise the value of public ownership, social dialogue, and collective bargaining. The CWU fully endorses this approach and believes that Ireland's voice must be part of this wider European movement.

In line with these principles, the CWU has made several submissions to the EU consultation process on the Delivery Act.

As the Act progresses through the European Parliament, legislators are faced with a clear choice: They can allow market forces alone to dictate the future of delivery services, or they can insist on a model that values public service, decent work, and is underpinned by social inclusion and cohesion.

Clerical Administration Conference Update

The Clerical Duty Application Process (CDAP) remains a key issue. Discussions on baselines are still ongoing, but progress has been painfully slow. Members are still looking for proper movement on career paths, training and development, and clerical pay remains very much unfinished business.

On retail office conversions, some work has now been completed. Tallaght, Tipperary, Roscommon and New Ross have all been converted. Rathmines is due to be completed in June 2026, while Phibsboro is still to be confirmed. In the retail business transactions increased by 4.2% to €85.3 million in 2025, FX buyback has been successfully launched, and parcel post has seen a major 75% uplift

Government policy continues to recognise the importance of the post office network. Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021–2025 states that the Government remains fully committed to a sustainable post office network as a key part of economic and social infrastructure in both rural and urban areas. Funding of €30 million was agreed in 2022, and the last Budget included €75 million over five years. This funding is only available to the contract offices, company offices receive no government support.

The move to EXO was initially completed in 2023, but there are still unresolved problems, particularly around buildings and facilities. State Savings is also due to move to EXO, but there is no confirmed timescale for that yet. The local branches have been working hard to build union density in this area especially against the backdrop of headcount management and a proposed reduction of 200 posts.

HR Transformation went live in September 2024. Email addresses have now been supplied to all staff and will be used for communications. Discussions are still ongoing about what staff can access through HRMS. Payroll is also changing, as the current system will be out of support by the end of 2026. Work on the design of a new system began in July 2025, with Oracle Payroll forming a key part of the wider HR systems architecture. The company has also identified a number of areas it says need to be simplified.

The TV licence issue remains uncertain. RTÉ licence fee income dropped by €29 million to €123 million last year, with a further decline expected in 2026. A Technical Working Group has lodged its draft report with Government, and it is now subject to cross-government observations. However, Minister O'Donovan does not appear to be in any hurry, so it remains unclear how RTÉ funding — and the wider impact on the business — will play out.

There has been major progress on Clerical Representation. As part of the rationalisation process, the Regional Clerks Branch has now been established. Its AGM took place on 30 January, with multi-site and hybrid arrangements in place. Standing Orders have been agreed, Branch Officers are NEC members for the first year, and a Branch Committee has been elected. The new Branch covers 25 counties and will work closely with the Dublin Clerks Branch.

Together, the two Branches now provide a national platform for Clerical Members. There are plenty of challenges ahead, including staffing, contracts, conversions, career paths, training, unresolved transformation issues, communications and member surveys. But the structure is now in place, and the focus must be on using it to deliver real progress for Clerical Members.

An Post Commerce Business Solutions (APCBS) Pay Update

CWU Officials alongside Local Union Representatives have negotiated a new pay agreement for APBCS members who operate out of Kilruch in Co. Clare. The negotiations took place on-site in April and involved the input of members to finalise the more complex aspects of the agreement.

The pay agreement, effective 1st April 2026, provides for a 5% pay increase over 21 months along with a €650 tax-free voucher. The agreement also provides for some operational alterations to the Saturday attendance arrangements.

The payment dates are as follows:

- 1st April 2026 – 2% increase
- 1st July 2026 – 1% Increase
- 1st Jan 2027 – 2% increase
- October 2026 - €650 tax free voucher

The overwhelming majority of members (89%) voted in favour of the agreement by way of a ballot which was conducted on-site to facilitate as much member participation as possible.

We wish to acknowledge the role of the new CWU Representative in Kilrush – Leann Cusack, who played a central role alongside her members in achieving this positive outcome for staff. This agreement demonstrates that you are ***"Better in a Union"*** and we would encourage all our APCBS members to speak with any of their colleagues who are not members and get them to sign up to the CWU.

Clearing the Fog Over An Post Pension

The **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport** recently convened a meeting to review the *An Post Superannuation Scheme*. Unfortunately, **CWU** could not attend as it was held at the time of our Biennial Conference in Sligo. However we made a submission, a copy of which is reproduced in this edition of *Connect*, and confirmed our availability to attend on an alternative date.

Bizarrely the meeting proceeded in the absence of An Post Group of Unions and ignored the successful strategy executed by the Unions led by **Seán McDonagh, CWU General Secretary**. With the Accord in place we have engineered highly successful payouts in the past five years for the 17,000 members of the scheme, for pay and pension increases.

CWU Achievements

- Since 2021 we have secured an accumulative **26.9%** pension increase.
- Employees and Retired Staff received the **very same** increases.
- Pay & Allowances are at **100%**
- The Accord is in place as a collective agreement, **88%** in favour.

The Minister for Communications Patrick Donovan TD has

– **Delayed** unnecessarily approval of the agreed payments

– **Discriminated** against workers retired on ill health

The CWU strategy in relation to pensions was again endorsed by delegates to the Conference in Sligo. Our approach favours that all pensioners should be treated equally and ensure they get the **same** level of pension increase regardless of whether they are pre- or post-1984. In this regard we have not represented any grievance to An Post to treat pre 84 pensioners more favourably, as An Post is fully compliant with existing agreements.

Are some pensioners more equal than other pensioners?

We are aware there are a small number of individual cases under appeal to the Minister. Should any of the individuals be dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the option to refer the matter to the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman.

Their belief is there is a legal loophole in Section 46 of the 1983 Post & Telecommunications Act which was enacted over forty years ago, that can override a modern, legally-binding collective agreement. The reality and application of the 1983 Act is, eir and An Post, are mandated to provide conditions not less favourable than the Civil Service, prior to the split.

The legal advice confirms that it is not a future guarantee and in simple terms it sets a minimum floor, protecting conditions exactly as they stood on the 31st December 1983. In the absence of a viable legal case to win in the Courts, some have chosen to invest in the generosity of the political establishment,

This foggy vision risks upsetting vulnerable, low-income pensioners for deep disappointment as inevitability the political doors will close, leaving pensioners let down and abandoned. The tragedy is they are being sold a promise that is entirely hollow.

More or less favourable with Civil Service

Outside of the Four Courts and Dáil Eireann, there are two key comparisons whereby An Post staff and pensioners have not been treated the same as the public service.

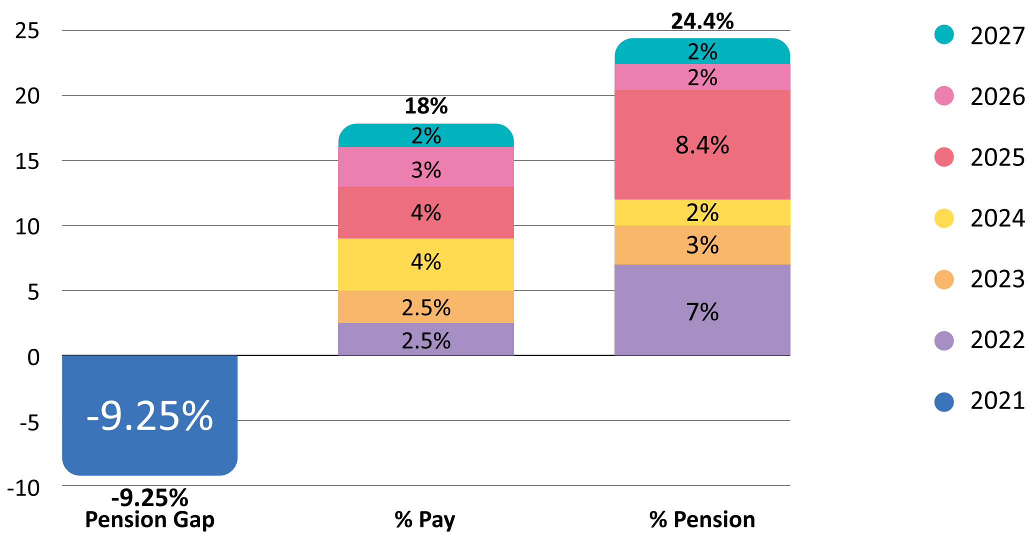
Benchmarking Pay Awards 2002, did not apply to semi state companies including An Post. However, An Post staff received a 12.5% Change Allowance, which in percentage terms was higher, albeit not consolidated. Pensionability of this remains as it was from the outset at 83.67%.

Critically, An Post staff or pensioners were not comprehended by the Financial Emergency Measures (FEMPI) which resulted in pay and pension cuts for Civil Servants.

Separately, the An Post Accord Agreement is a collective agreement with less than 12% opposed in a ballot. Since then, over 4,700 have retired, the overwhelming majority of which democratically accepted the terms of the Accord Agreement.

Advocating now for more favourable terms for pre-1984 employees would result in existing employees and post-1984 pensioners having to pay for it.

As part of the next Triennial Review, due in the final quarter of 2028 the Union will review further the pension cap and explore changes to the state pension offset. However, the outcome of any discussions is contingent on the fund remaining in good health.



GROUP OF UNIONS – An Post | eir

Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport

Chaired by Deputy Alan Kelly TD
12 May 2026

Dear Chairman Kelly and Members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport,

The Group of Unions regrets that scheduling conflicts — coinciding Delegate Conferences for CWU and Forsa, and an international conference commitment for AHCPS — prevent personal attendance at the Committee's hearing on 13 May 2026. We respectfully request that the Committee receive and consider this written submission in lieu of an oral presentation. We remain available to attend on an alternative date at the Committee's convenience.

Who We Are

The Group of Unions — comprising CWU, Fórsa and AHCPS — collectively represents over 13,000 workers across An Post and eir, as well as thousands of retired members of both organisations. In total, approximately 30,000 current and former employees are members of the pension schemes covered by this submission.

13,000+	~30,000
Workers Represented	Pension Scheme Members

The Group of Unions holds three Trustee seats on the An Post Pension Scheme and four Trustee seats on the eir Pension Schemes, giving us direct fiduciary responsibility for the welfare of scheme members. These trustees are a mix of active and retired members of the schemes and ensure strong worker representation on the respective schemes.

Background: The Pension Schemes

Both the An Post and eir pension schemes have their origins in the public service, predating the establishment of both companies on 1 January 1984. When An Post and Telecom Éireann were set up under the Postal & Telecommunications Act 1983, the terms of the existing schemes — including a requirement for Ministerial approval of pension increases — were carried forward. That requirement made sense at the time. It no longer does.

While pension increases for retired members are not automatic, in practice every pensionable pay increase agreed for serving staff has also been extended to retirees. The process for agreeing those increases involves the unions, company management, scheme trustees and their appointed actuary, Mercer. The schemes operate under Pension Accords which cap annual increases — at 2% or CPI (whichever is lower) at An Post, and 2.5% at eir or CPI (whichever is lower).

The Group of Unions is a strong and committed supporter of both Accords, which are collective agreements following a ballot of members. They provide a robust financial safety net for scheme members and are regarded by the Group of Unions as a critical long-term pillar of scheme stability — not a temporary measure. Retention of both Accords is also supported by expert professional Actuarial advice, the Companies, Scheme Trustees, and the WRC/Labour Court.

With the Pension Accord cap in place, the Group of Unions has secured a cumulative increase of 24.4% in pensions since 1st January 2022.

Governance Has Moved On — The Law Has Not

Since 1984, the governance landscape has changed fundamentally. The State's financial exposure to both schemes has been extinguished. The Pensions Authority now exercises full statutory oversight. Both schemes are governed by their respective Trustees, supported by professional actuarial advice. Boards are accountable to their respective ownership structures.

The key milestones that have rendered Ministerial sign-off redundant include:

- The Minister for Finance has discharged any ongoing financial liability for both schemes.
- The Pensions Authority was established with full regulatory responsibility and oversight.

- Pension Accords — negotiated and actively supported by the Group of Unions, Trustees and Companies — are in place at both companies, capping annual increases and protecting scheme sustainability. The Accord at An Post was put to members and accepted by ballot; the Group of Unions considers both Accords essential and would strongly oppose any move to remove or weaken them.
- The Accord's annual caps are confirmed as long-term measures by actuarial advice, the Labour Court, New ERA, successive Ministers and the Pension Authority.
- Trustees' statutory responsibilities are now codified in legislation.
- At An Post, the Board — appointed by the Minister — is the governing and accountable body. At eir, the Board and shareholder NJJ carry joint responsibility.

Despite this, the Minister for Communications retains the legal power to block or delay agreed pension increases for tens of thousands of retirees — a power that is no longer necessary, appropriate or efficient.

Critically, the Postal & Telecommunications Act 1983 does not require approval from the Department of Public Expenditure. The involvement of that Department in the process has no statutory basis.

The New ERA Problem

Making matters worse is the involvement of New ERA, the government's economic advisory body, in the approval process.

New ERA has no professional expertise in occupational pensions. Its involvement duplicates work already completed rigorously by departmental officials, the scheme Actuary, Trustees and Company Boards. It adds delay, cost and bureaucratic friction to what should be a straightforward process — without adding any meaningful scrutiny or protection.

Advisors should inform decisions — they should not become another gate in an already over-gated process. The Minister bears political responsibility for approving agreed increases, and that decision should rest with the Minister, not be outsourced to an advisory body with no pensions mandate.

Real Delays. Real Consequences.

The Group of Unions wishes to place on record the unacceptable delays that have characterised the Ministerial approval process, and the human cost of those delays.

The Six-Week Non-Answer

Following representations made by CWU, Minister O'Donovan's Private Secretary took six weeks to respond — only to state that *"it is not possible to set out the specific timeframe within which the decision-making process will be concluded."*

This is not good enough. Pensioners whose income depends on an agreed and overdue increase deserve better than an open-ended non-answer from a Minister's office.

Recent Approvals — Too Long in Coming

Minister McConalogue TD did ultimately meet with Union Representatives following sustained pressure over delays, and approved the following increases:

- **eir:** A 2.1% pension increase effective 1 July 2025.
- **An Post:** A 6% increase effective 1 January 2025, plus a further 1% from 1 June 2025.

We welcome those approvals. But we should not need to fight for them. Both schemes are financially robust, the increases are agreed by all relevant parties, and the actuarial and governance work is done well in advance. The annual re-examination of the same ground, reaching the same conclusions, is a waste of public resource.

A Case Study in Dysfunction: Superannuation on Health Grounds

Perhaps the starkest example of the cost of Ministerial delay concerns An Post staff who retire on health grounds.

The Minister for Communications took two-and-a-half years to respond to a request from An Post for approval of superannuation payments to staff retiring due to ill-health. Approval came only on the eve of a ballot for industrial action. Even then, retrospective application of the approval for those already affected remains unresolved.

The numbers make the delay even harder to justify:

60 People Directly Affected	**<€10,000** Annual Cost to Fund

The An Post Pension Fund is valued at over €3 billion, with a confirmed surplus of €571 million. The cost of correcting this injustice is trivial. The delay was not.

In failing to act, the State is standing over discrimination against workers who retired due to illness — in breach of its own legislation.

What We Are Asking the Committee to Do

The Group of Unions asks the Joint Committee to examine and act on the following:

1. Ensure the Schemes remain financially healthy and sustainable for current and future members.
2. Maximise pay and pension benefits for serving employees and extend increases to retired members without delay. This includes the approval without delay of a further agreed increase of 2% from the 1st January 2026.
3. Establish a statutory maximum of 8 weeks for Ministerial approval of agreed pension increases — replacing the current open-ended process.
4. Examine whether the requirement for Ministerial approval under the 1983 Act remains necessary, given the governance infrastructure now in place, and consider appropriate legislative reform.
5. Remove New ERA from the pension increase approval process, where it serves no clear regulatory or expertise-based function.
6. Secure Ministerial approval — with retrospective effect where appropriate — for agreed changes to superannuation entitlements for An Post staff retiring on health grounds.
7. Prepare for the outcomes of the next Triennial Actuarial Reviews with a streamlined and time-bound approval framework already in place.

The workers and retirees of An Post and eir have given decades of service. They are not asking for special treatment. They are asking for agreed increases to be approved in a timely, transparent and respectful manner. As things stand, the system fails them — and it does so unnecessarily.

We thank the Committee for its attention to this submission and remain available to provide further information or to attend a future sitting.

Submitted on behalf of the Group of Unions at An Post and eir:

Seán McDonagh
Principle Staff Representative
CWU | Forsa | AHCPS
12 May 2026

FÓRSA

AHCPS Association of Higher Civil Public Servants

An Post Insurance Branch Pushes for Pay Increase as Cost-of-Living Pressures Bite

The Branch recently carried out a cost-of-living survey among members, and the results were very clear: workers are feeling the pressure.

A huge 94% of respondents said their wages have not kept up with the rising cost of living, while 92% said the situation is having a negative impact on their mental health. On top of that, 89% felt the company is not doing enough to financially support staff during what continues to be a very difficult period.

The issue has become even more urgent as the current pay agreement expired on 1 April. Initially the company refused to engage meaningfully on a new pay plan, leaving members understandably frustrated and disappointed.

The Branch quickly responded. A Members' Meeting was held in weeks before Conference and was very well attended, including by a number of new members. Encouragingly, a new committee member has also come forward, showing that members are becoming more active and involved.

The Branch conducted a petition of staff calling for fair treatment, proper engagement, and meaningful support for members facing real cost-of-living pressures. It worked. The Company has now changed its position. Before, there was no appetite to discuss a new pay deal until later this year and then, only if the conditions were right. Now however, following the petition the company has come back to negotiating table, and discussions on a new pay deal are underway.

An Post Branch Secretaries Training Day 16th April.

Postal Branch Secretaries at Seminar.

The agenda for a structured training day for Union Representatives began with a welcome and introduction led by General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, followed by a session on key organisational issues such as Branch Rationalisation, the USO and EU Delivery Act, and leadership changes, delivered by National Officer, Diarmuid O'Connell. The focus then shifted to the practical role of the Branch Secretary, including approaches to handling both individual and collective issues, facilitated by National Officers, Carol Scheffer and Pat Kenny.

After lunch, the programme moved into interactive elements, including training exercises based on scenarios, and sessions on mapping and objection handling. The day concluded with an update on the pay ballot, and closing remarks led by Seán McDonagh.

Carol Scheffer, National Officer, presents to the Seminar.

John Tansey, John McLean, Maurice Noonan, Tara Ravenhill and Des Lernihan.

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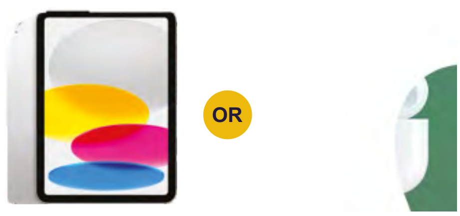
- A simplified application form is available to eligible CWU members under the age of 45 who are joining the plan for the first time between 1 April 2026 and 30 June 2026*.

Limited time offer

NEW MEMBER PRIZE DRAW

Every new CWU Life Plan member will be in with a chance to win either 1 of 2 iPads or a pair of Airpods. Promotion valid from 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026.**



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Covalen Workers Organise Against Mass Redundancies

CWU members at Covalen have mounted a rapid and determined collective response following the announcement of over 720 proposed redundancies affecting workers employed on contracts delivering services to Meta.

The proposed job losses represent the second major redundancy process within the Company in six months and have created significant fear and insecurity among workers already dealing with the pressures of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

But the response from workers has been equally significant.

Organised through the CWU's Digital and Techworkers Alliance (**DATA**), workers moved rapidly from workplace conversations to collective action. Emergency meetings were organised, employee representatives elected, public protests launched, and strike action initiated within weeks of the announcement. More than 150 workers joined the Union in a single week as the campaign escalated.

The industrial action itself marks an important moment for the Irish trade union movement. The strikes at Covalen are believed to be among the first major organised strike actions within Ireland's outsourced tech and content moderation sector — an area long viewed as exceptionally difficult to organise due to outsourcing structures, fragmented workplaces, high turnover and precarious employment.

Against the backdrop of Ireland's restrictive industrial relations framework and weak collective redundancy protections, the speed with which workers organised and mobilised has challenged long-standing assumptions that tech workers are unwilling or unable to organise collectively.

The dispute has also highlighted wider political and regulatory questions around outsourcing, AI-driven restructuring and worker protections in the modern economy.

The CWU has criticised the stark contrast between the Government's response to redundancies affecting directly-employed Meta staff and its response to the significantly larger redundancy process affecting outsourced Meta workers at Covalen.

Following redundancy announcements at Meta, Minister for Enterprise, Peter Burke, publicly stated that *"Government will have your back"* and confirmed that IDA Ireland would engage closely with Meta regarding the impact of the job losses. In contrast, repeated requests from CWU for Government engagement regarding Covalen workers have gone unanswered.

The Union argues that the dispute is exposing how existing labour protections fail when applied to outsourced, AI-affected workforces. While employers are required to engage in consultation processes, Irish law provides no effective statutory right to trade union involvement during collective redundancy consultations and no meaningful mechanism requiring employers to negotiate to reach agreement with workers or their representatives on alternatives, mitigation measures or enhanced terms.

The CWU has called for urgent Government engagement and a formal review of collective redundancy protections in Ireland, including trade union involvement in redundancy processes; stronger mechanisms for meaningful collective engagement during consultations, including trade union access; protections within outsourced employment structures; and the development of a national strategy to address the impact of AI-driven restructuring on workers and employment.

The campaign has extended well beyond the workplace itself. Workers have protested outside Dáil Éireann, secured significant media attention, launched a national open-letter campaign, and received strong support from delegates at the CWU Biennial Delegate Conference in Sligo, which unanimously adopted an emergency motion in solidarity with affected workers.

At the centre of the dispute remain a number of core demands from workers and their representatives, including enhanced redundancy terms, meaningful collective negotiation, mitigation measures to reduce job losses, and the removal of restrictive "cooling-off" periods preventing workers from accessing future employment within the sector.

For many involved, the Covalen dispute now represents something larger than a workplace conflict. At a time when outsourcing, artificial intelligence and technological restructuring are reshaping workplaces across the economy, the dispute is becoming a wider test of how workers organise, defend themselves and build collective power in the changing world of work.

Teleperformance

May marked an important moment for organising in the tech sector. Our organisers made use of an agreement reached with Teleperformance in Ireland which allows for access to inductions. Teleperformance is currently hiring in large numbers and starting to take a foothold in the sector as a primary provider of content moderation.

Over 50 employees were met over four days. Inductions were held in the Company boardroom, meeting with new hires, sometimes within hours of starting with the Company. Add to this that employees have to leave their belongings, including mobile phones and wallets, in secure lockers at the start of their shift, the result is a challenging organising proposition. Nevertheless, some very good conversations were had, and some important relationships have been created.

Importantly, workplace leaders were identified, organising meetings with several teams outside of work hours. These meetings proved very productive, with members joining and having organising conversations.

Both inductions and organic engagement will continue as we continue to build our presence in the Company.

TikTok

A recent wellbeing survey conducted with Tik Tok workers revealed stark results. Employees were feeling the pressure of working in a “toxic environment”. Unfortunately, our members report that this environment has descended further into toxicity. Management have embarked on a mission to reduce headcount further. Employees are being placed on performance-improvement plans, using questionable metrics. They are then told that they have a choice to see out their PIP, with only one real outcome and at the same time are offered a severance package to leave.

This, together with threats of mass layoffs, has left the overall morale of members very low.

Efforts are well underway however to elect Safety Representatives, who will have legal entitlements to engage with their colleagues on workplace safety issues and also with management. A lot of work has also been put in with European colleagues on establishing a European Works Council within Tik Tok that will bring further access and engagement rights.

It is also evident in this work with members that even in the face of maltreatment and burnout, their determination has not waned, and they are determined to make positive change in their workplace.

CWU President 2026-2028

Tom Sheehan, from Mallow in County Cork, has been elected CWU President for the next two-year period. Tom (62) has spent his career with eir, working across the Access Network, Core Network and IT. He joined what was then the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in 1981 as a trainee technician and has been a CWU member since his very first day in the job. A long-standing activist within the union, Tom has served as Secretary of the Mallow Section of the Cork District Branch since 2003, joined the National Executive Council in 2014, and has been elected at every Conference since. In 2021, following the untimely death of his colleague John Egan, he was appointed Staff Side Secretary at eir. At the 2024 Delegate Conference in Galway, Tom was elected Vice-President of the CWU.

Commenting, new CWU President, Tom Sheehan, said:

"It is a tremendous honour to be elected President of the CWU, a Union I have been proud to be a member of since the first day of my working life. We have a clear and urgent mission ahead of us: to continue building and investing in our organising work in the workplace, and to defend every worker's right to organise and to be represented by their trade union.

I am acutely aware of the challenges facing workers right now. CWU members at Covalen will strike again this Friday, 15th May. They are defending their rights in the face of devastating job cuts. They have my full personal support and the full support of this Union. We stand with them!

I want to thank the delegates for placing their trust in me. I am fully committed to leading an effective union – one that is true to its core beliefs and unwavering in its mandate to work on behalf of its members."

CWU Vice-President 2026-2028

The Conference also elected Ellen Moore from An Post as the new Vice-President of the CWU for the next two-year term. Ellen, who is based at the Portlaoise Mails Centre, has been a CWU member since 2000 and has served in a range of Branch leadership roles over the years, including Chairperson and Branch Secretary. She has been a member of the National Executive Council since 2008 and was elected as a Worker Director on the Board of An Post in 2024.

Retired Membership Changes

The National Executive Council decided to make changes to the Retired Membership scheme for reasons outlined below

At the year ended 31st December 2025 there were **2,214** in the Retired Members' Section. The membership fee is currently €50 per annum. As of today, it has increased further to **2,277**.

The existing benefits include:

- Mortality Grant of €1,270 to next of kin;
- Connect magazine;
- Legal aid (first meeting with Union solicitor free of charge);
- Access to FM Downes & Halligan group schemes.

In April 2022, the review of CWU finances by Fóla consultants outlined the payment is not sustainable into the future. At the time membership was **1,842**. To address the liability the Finance committee recommended increasing contributions to €100 per annum from 2023 and to review the subscription rates every two years thereafter. This was recommended on the basis that the liability for Mortality Grants amounts to €2.34m. However, the proposed approach was rejected by the NEC.

The financial liability has since increased significantly to approximately **€2.9m**. and the Auditors has advised we need to take steps to address this or, alternatively make provision for the payment liability in our accounts. As of now, each retired member would need to contribute for over 25 years to cover the cost of the next of kin grant.

To address this financial liability the following changes will apply:

- Abolish Mortality Grant of €1,270 to next of kin.
- For members paying yearly subscriptions, cease payment of the grant from their renewal date **on or after 1st June 2026**.
- For new applicants and members paying weekly/**monthly** subscriptions, cease payment of the grant from the 1st June 2026.

The NEC is conscious that many retired members have been loyal members of the CWU and will therefore give favourable consideration to a grant for individual hardship cases.

Revised Membership Subscriptions Cap

The National Executive Council, having reviewed the membership subscription, has decided to make changes to the contribution ceiling for scale A,,B and C contributions.

Currently the contribution rates provides for a 1% contribution of basic pay, which includes a 20% contribution to the Social Benefit Fund and €0.13 to Distress Fund and €0.13 to Charitable Fund or €0.13 to Distress Fund.

The following table sets out the current rates:

	Current Base Cap	Plus	Maximum Contribution
Scale A	€9.35	€0.13	€9.48
Scale B	€9.35	€0.26	€9.61
Scale C	€9.35	€ –	€9.35

The new rates to apply as set out below:

	Proposed Base Cap	Plus	Maximum Contribution
Scale A	€9.48	€ 0.13	€ 9.61
Scale B	€ 9.48	€ 0.26	€ 9.74
Scale C	€9.48	€ –	€ 9.48

The following are the reasons for the change:

1. This ceiling/cap is in place for over 20 years and a review is justified, taking into consideration inflation and pay increases.
2. One base rate of €9.48 should apply to all Scale A, B and C members.
3. The existing rate will continue to the 31st December 2026.
4. The new rate will apply from the 1st January 2027 and thereafter linked to pay increases in eir.

Retired CIÉ Staff Set for First Pension Increase in nearly 18 Years 'in coming weeks'

Over 6,000 former staff to receive pension increases of up to 5% under proposals approved by Ministers

by Martin Wall, Irish Times Online

Former CIÉ employees protesting outside Heuston Station in Dublin in 2024, calling on the Company to increase their pensions. Photograph: Sam Boal/Collins Photos

More than 6,000 retired staff who formerly worked for the State-owned CIÉ bus and rail companies should receive their first pension increases in nearly 18 years in the coming weeks, Minister for Transport Darragh O'Brien has indicated.

Ministers last week approved proposals to reform the pension arrangements in the CIÉ group – a move that marks a significant step towards the provision of increases of up to 5 per cent for the retired transport personnel.

There will now be a formal observation period of about 28 days in relation to the statutory instruments covering the proposed pension changes, which have been authorised by O'Brien and Minister for Public Expenditure Jack Chambers.

Under the reforms, which were negotiated between the group and trade unions a year ago, about 6,400 retired staff who had worked in Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Bus Éireann as well as the CIÉ holding company, would receive the increases.

O'Brien told The Irish Times in a statement on Sunday that the agreement between unions, workers and management marked "a major milestone in securing the long-term sustainability of the CIÉ pension scheme, ensuring it is placed on a solvent and stable footing for the future".

"Importantly, it will also deliver long-overdue benefits for retired members, who will receive increases to their pensions for the first time in many years."

"The process will be completed in the coming weeks and the benefits of the agreement will then be fully realised," he said.

Under the reform proposals, the precise increase for pensioners would be calculated on a sliding basis depending on the date of retirement of the individual concerned.

Former staff who retired on or before December 31st, 2020, would receive a 5 per cent pension increase, with those who retired in 2021 getting 4 per cent, while those who retired in 2022 are in line for a 3 per cent rise.

It is also proposed that a new "pension protocol" will be put in place – similar to the arrangement in other commercial State companies – to determine increases that may apply in future years.

Under the proposals, which follow lengthy talks between the CIÉ companies and trade unions, existing defined benefit schemes would be closed to new entrants.

It is understood the CIÉ group, which comprises Irish Rail, Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann, will provide about €30 million to fund the cost of the rise for retired personnel who last received a pension increase in 2008, with the Government providing "a letter of support" for the proposed pension deal.

Retired staff have been campaigning for years for a pension increase, citing the rising cost of living. O'Brien told the Dáil in March last year that the pension schemes operated in the CIÉ group had a deficit of about €371 million and that the scheme actuary did not believe that a pension rise was affordable.

Chief executive of the CIÉ group Stephen Kent told The Irish Times in an interview in March that if the pension arrangements had continued unchanged, estimated liabilities could have reached €4 billion in the next 10 years.

"Now that is clearly unaffordable. That is an existential threat.

"We have a scheme open to defined benefits and that is completely at odds to what's happening in the rest of the semi-State sector. Secondly, at the moment here, the group has just over 13,000 employees. If you take the last year alone, across the group – largely because of all of the expansion – nearly 700 people have joined. But the more the company continues to expand, the more you continue to expose yourself to potential risks."

UPS Pay Discussions 2026 Update

A key objective of the Union is to win pay increases that ensure UPS members are recognised for the key role that they play in the Company's success. The strategic approach to pay negotiations over the last number of years has ensured that objective has been delivered and has resulted in UPS workers in Ireland being among the best paid in the sector – and rightly so!

This did not happen by accident – it is the result of determined negotiations, strong organisation, collective bargaining, and the ongoing work of CWU members over many years.

This year's negotiations have been challenging and take place against a complex backdrop. Inflation has impacted workers across Ireland, particularly when it comes to energy prices. At the same time, UPS management have argued that the Company is also feeling the impact of those increases resulting in higher operating costs, which is understandable given the nature of the business.

The current negotiations are therefore about consolidation as well as progression. They are focused on ensuring that UPS workers continue to lead the sector in terms of pay, benefits, and overall conditions of employment whilst ensuring the long-term sustainability of jobs.

Our goal is not simply to achieve short-term gains, but to ensure that UPS continues to set the benchmark for pay and conditions across the industry. In a sector where pay levels can vary significantly and outsourcing is rampant, protecting this standard is essential for both current members and future workers.

The current impasse in discussions is centred around the Union's position where we are seeking a pay increase – with no strings attached – and the Company's position that a pay increase above last year's level of 2.8% must be funded from efficiencies within the business to ensure their competitiveness within the sector.

In the postal update of this magazine, you will see that the main comparator within the sector - An Post, has accepted a 5% pay increase over two-years which is the equivalent to 2.5% per year and falls short of what is on the table for our members in UPS.

This reality alongside the fact that between April 2022 and April 2026 inflation has risen by 16.5% while pay has rien by 17.2% with a further pay increase to be finalised, represents a significant negotiation challenge if the pay discussions were referred to a third party at the WRC.

Once discussions are finalised, the final pay proposal will be put to a ballot of members for them to either accept the pay proposal on offer or reject it. In the event agreement is not possible, referral to the WRC will be the next step with no certainty of a timeframe or outcome.

DPD Kerry Members Back Pay Deal After WRC Process

CWU members in DPD Kerry have voted to accept a new 2026 pay agreement, bringing a positive resolution to an ongoing dispute with Dynamic Delivery Limited who operate the DPD franchise in Kerry.

The deal delivers a 7% pay increase over one year and a €750 tax-free voucher, representing a solid outcome following prolonged negotiations and Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) engagement.

The dispute arose after the CWU, working with Local Representatives, lodged a pay claim on behalf of members. Talks at local level failed to produce agreement, with the Company citing affordability concerns. The issue was then referred to the WRC under the agreed procedures.

In November 2025, the WRC issued an interim proposal, accepted by the Union, which provided:

- A €500 once-off voucher;
- A commitment to re-engage in early 2026 under WRC guidance.

This kept momentum in the process and secured an immediate benefit for members. Upon re-engagement, further negotiations led to the final proposal which was accepted by way of a ballot of members.

The one-year pay agreement comprises the following:

- 7% pay increase effective 1 April 2026;
- A €750 tax-free voucher.

The outcome reflects the strength of collective action and effective representation. Credit is due to Branch Representative, Ken Rice, for his role throughout the negotiations. This result shows what can be achieved when members act together and utilise their collective power at the negotiating table.

DPD Ireland Expands Operations to Manage Growth

DPD Ireland is currently undertaking significant expansion across its logistics network, including the the opening of a second sortation hub in Dublin and the rollout of its new PickUp Out-of-Home parcel locker delivery service. While these developments are reflective of the strong growth within the sector, they also highlight the need to ensure that workers' rights and protections are not left behind.

DPD is increasing its processing capacity with a new hub on the Naas Road to cope with parcel growth and to support the already busy Athlone operation. The Company expect the new site to be operational in time for peak 2026.

The Union is currently in discussions with the Company to extend the representation rights in place in Athlone to workers in the new Dublin hub. These rights have provided an important framework for engagement, ensuring that workers have a voice on issues affecting their working conditions.

The Company are also introducing a new PickUp locker network which is part of a growing trend across Europe, where delivery points are consolidated into a central locations by delivery companies and will have a significant impact on delivery models within the sector.

The Company's €10 million investment will see up to 1,000 parcel lockers and collection points installed nationwide by 2027 and will be located in high-footfall areas such as transport hubs, petrol stations and retail outlets.

As the sector evolves – with increased automation, new delivery models, and greater reliance on flexible labour the role of the Union becomes even more critical. Securing fair terms and conditions and proper recognition will be central to ensuring that workers benefit from the DPD Ireland's continued success.

Communications Workers' Union

SCAN THE QR CODE

STAMP OUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A TOOLKIT FOR MEMBERS

Sexual Harassment as a Critical Union Issue

Workplace sexual harassment remains a serious and widespread issue facing workers across Ireland. A 2025 CSO report found that younger workers aged 18–24 are disproportionately affected, with 16% experiencing sexual harassment at work. Furthermore, previous research by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in 2019 found that 1 in 5 workers had experienced workplace sexual harassment. Alarmingly, many workers reported staying silent about these incidents due to fear of retaliation, damage to their careers, or loss of employment. From a union perspective the underreporting shows that we must take action to protect our members as it is highlighting the need for safer reporting mechanisms, and collective action through our Union.

The CWU was pleased to be complete the final stage of our *Stamp Out Sexual Harassment Campaign* at BDC. The Union has taken a very strong stand on the issue to ensure our members are aware of their rights and our Representatives are equipped to deal with issues as they arise.

Speaking about the launch of our materials, National Officer, Carol Scheffer, stated, *"No worker should have to choose between their dignity and their livelihood. The fact that so many workers stay silent out of fear shows exactly why trade unions are essential to stand collectively against harassment, challenge abuses of power, and ensure every workplace is safe, respectful, and accountable."*

When it comes to highlighting sexual harassment as a key workplace issue, the CWU has its finger on the pulse. Our Union opposes all forms of workplace discrimination, as per the nine grounds of the Employment Equality Legislation and this includes the unacceptable behaviour that is sexual harassment. We have developed the following:

Members Toolkit

We previously highlighted that we have a **Members' Toolkit** which covers key issues such as identifying sexual harassment, liaising with Union Representatives, addressing complaints and getting the necessary supports. The toolkit will also help members identify what sexual harassment is, to know how complaints should be dealt with, and to understand its impacts and effects.

The Incident Log

The incident log can be used for those who wish to formulate a complaint as this can be very difficult when experiencing this unwelcome behaviour. The incident log is a template for the relevant information including the dates, times, locations, details of any incidents, if there were any witnesses or any supporting documentation.

First Responder Checklist

Another addition to the campaign is the development of our First Responder Checklist. In many situations, the union representative may be the first responder as in the first person the member approaches about their experience. To provide appropriate support and ensure a sensitive response, we have highlighted various steps as part of the checklist.

Representative Guide

This document was launched at BDC. This guide provides information on Employment Equality legislation and the Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work issued by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). Both the legislation and the code aim to protect employees and offer clear guidance on addressing sexual harassment.

This guide aims to provide representatives with the following:

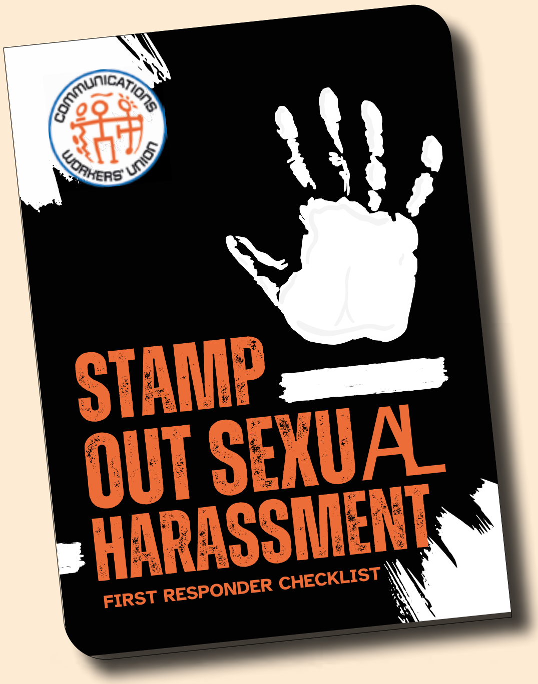
- A clear definition of sexual harassment at work and who may be affected;
- An overview of the legal framework on sexual harassment under the Employment Equality legislation;
- Guidance on representing members and handling allegations of sexual harassment.

Representing a sexual harassment case requires careful preparation, sensitivity, and a strong understanding of workplace policies and relevant legislation. This guide has been created to support Representatives by providing information and direction when dealing with sexual harassment issues. Training will also be provided as appropriate for Representatives.

Getting more information:

Hard copies of all of the referenced documents are available from Union Head Office and can also be downloaded from our website as follows:

https://www.cwu.ie/campaigns/stamp-out-sexual-harassment/



Downloadable posters for staff notice boards have also been designed to make getting access to our materials much easier. Hard copies are available as well as online downloads, available from the URL below:

https://www.cwu.ie/campaigns/stamp-out-sexual-harassment/

CWU Supporting Men's Health

At the beginning of this year, the CWU hosted a Men's Health Seminar in Union Head Office. The Seminar was jointly sponsored by Medisan and featured presentations from the Marie Keating Foundation and from Carmel Doyle, CEO of the Oesophageal Cancer Fund.

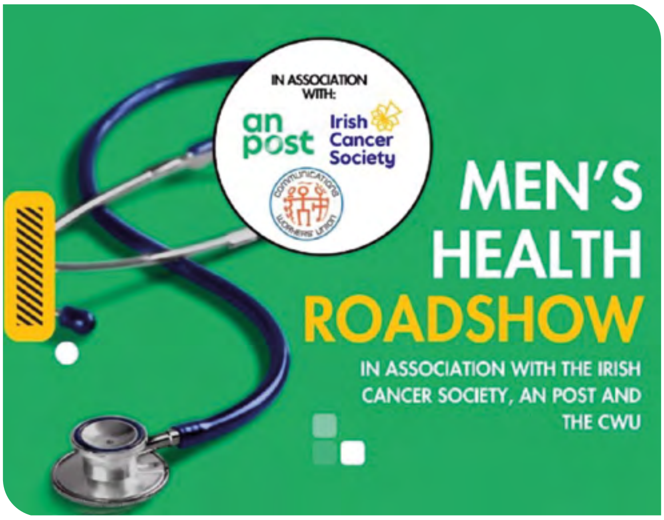
The CWU has also partnered with An Post and the Irish Cancer Society to launch a Men's Health Roadshow. Research shows that men often delay seeking advice or help around health issues. The Roadshow aims to increase awareness, encourage early checks, and reduce preventable illness. While we placed a special focus on men's health, all were welcome to attend to create awareness. The Roadshow has covered various regions and gave further awareness on men's cancers from prostate to skins cancers through the direction of the Irish cancer society.

There is considerable research to show that men often delay seeking advice or help around health issue and too often one week leads into the next with concerns being brushed off, checkups delayed and small problems are ignored until they become bigger ones.

We were also delighted to have the Irish Cancer Society on site for the Biennial Delegate Conference. We set up a Lunch and Learn session which was well-attended, and we also had a stand for delegates to visit so as to get more information on various health issues.

The message we have for **all** our members is that it is really important that you make the time for your health and to get the relevant check-ups.

We are hoping that on foot of all the work that the Union has done in the area of women and men's health, it would encourage members to think differently about their mental and physical health, ask questions and take action.



To all our Members:

MAKE TIME FOR YOUR HEALTH AND GET THE RELEVANT CHECK-UPS.

Wear your UNION BADGE

Get into Print!

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

email: **imelda@cwu.ie**

or post to: **Imelda Wall**
Communications Workers' Union,
575 North Circular Road,
Dublin D01 TR53

CWU Education Grant Winners, 2026

GAELTACHT WINNERS

PARENT/GUARDIAN	BRANCH	AWARDED TO:
Eilish Courtney	Dublin No.1	**Eabha Ryder**
Noel Rubotham	Dublin No.1	**Oliver Rubotham**
Patricia King	Dublin Postal Clerks	**Laura B King**
Carl Doyle	Dublin Postal Delivery	**Yasmin Doyle**
Anthony Heary	Dublin Postal Delivery	**Aaron Heary**
Jonathan Costello	Dublin Postal Delivery	**Sam Costello**
Ashley D Wholihan	Galway Postal Branch	**Clara Wholihan**
Seán Heslop	Kildare Postal Branch	**Kate O'Dwyer**
Ryan Kinsella	Midland Postal Branch	**Rose Kinsella**
Thomas Tully	Northeast Postal Branch	**Mattie Tully**
Eamonn O'Hagan	Northeast Postal Branch	**Jamie O'Hagan**
Brendan Deignan	Northwest Postal Branch	**Siofra Deignan**
Maresa Walsh	Portlaoise Postal	**Maresa Walsh**
Elaine Dowling Lalor	Portlaoise Postal	**Niamh Lalor**
Bronagh Campbell	Regional Clerks Branch	**Maeve Campbell**
Jonathan O'Brien	Regional Clerks Branch	**Saoirse O'Brien**
Sinéad O'Meara-Glynn	Regional Clerks Branch	**Liam Glynn**
Nicola Bourke	Regional Clerks Branch	**Emma Bourke**
Lisa Kavanagh	Southeast Postal Branch	**Katy Kavanagh**
Jacqueline Carter	Waterford Postal Branch	**Conor Kirwan**

PRIMARY LEVEL AWARDS

PARENT/GUARDIAN	BRANCH	AWARDED TO:
Regina Martin	Athlone Postal	Riona Martin
Mykola Boldoriev	DPAB	Nazar Boldoriev
Joseph Anthony O'Neill	DPAB	Oisin O'Neill
Eoin Horan	DPAB	Charlie Horan
Barry Leonard	DPAB	Skye Leonard
Joshua Joseph Gama	DPAB	Jayden Chirwa Gama
Paul Maher	DPAB	Anna Maher
Shane Wakefield	DPDB	Bonnie Wakefield
Mark Roche	DPDB	Cameron Roche
Derek Caulfield	DPDB	Harlow Caulfield
Ian O'Reilly	DPDB	Fabha O'Reilly
Paul Donnelly	Dublin Mail Mgrs	Grace Donnelly
Mark McConnell	Dublin No.1	Grace McConnell
Caomhán Ó Conghaile	Galway Postal	Eibhlin Ni Chonghaile
Seán Hanley	Galway Postal	Conor Hanley
Jennifer Cloonan	Galway Postal	Ruby Greelish
Sean T O'Connell	Kerry Postal	Luca O'Connell
Sharon McDonnell-Harris	Kerry Postal	Zack Harris
Michelle Farrelly	Kildare Postal	Sarah Murphy
Kevin Bradley	Kildare Postal	James Bradley
Gillian Behan	Kildare Postal	Daniel Behan
Glen Mills	Kildare Postal	Bobby Mills
John Armstrong	Mayo Postal	Sofia Armstrong
James Monaghan	Mid Northwest District	Aida Monaghan
Enda Moran	Mid Northwest District	Doireann Moran

Kevin Connolly	Midland Postal	Muireann Connolly
Gavin Kenny	Midland Postal	Layla Kenny
Colm McCormack	Midland Postal	Eoghan McCormack
Kenneth T O'Hagan	Northeast Postal	Fiadh O'Hagan
Micheal Pritchard	Northeast Postal	Jackson Pritchard
David Farrell	Northeast Telecoms Branch	Dean Farrell
Kevin Fogarty	Portlaoise Postal	Alex Fogarty
Padraig Wallace	Portlaoise Postal	Evan Wallace
David Cole	Portlaoise Postal	Olive Cole
Annette O'Toole	Regional Clerks Branch	Annalise O'Toole
Brendan O'Donoghue	Regional Clerks Branch	Lauren Burke
Julia O'Connell Murphy	Regional Clerks Branch	Evie O'Connell
Tony Manicle	Tipperary Postal	Ewyn Manicle
Arthur O'Dwyer	Tipperary Postal	Sally O Dwyer
John Finn	Waterford Postal	Daniel Ozanski Finn

SECOND LEVEL AWARDS

PARENT/GUARDIAN	BRANCH	AWARDED TO:
Regina Martin	Athlone Postal	Kian Martin
Amy Barclay	Athlone Postal	Caragh Fox
Patricia Doyle	Athlone Postal	Gemma Turley
Brian McKenna	Cork County Postal Branch	Mia Kate McKenna
Maeve McCarthy	Covalen	Clara Koc
Barry Flanagan	Dublin Mails Managers	Max Flanagan
Alan James Browne	Dublin Managers Branch	Hannah de Brún
Paul D'Arcy	Dublin Postal Amalgamated	Eoin Darcy
Damien Rooney	Dublin Postal Amalgamated	Evan Rooney
Julianne Molloy	Dublin Postal Clerks	Tadhg Molloy
Joseph Ward	Dublin Postal Delivery	Katie Ward
Jonathan Costello	Dublin Postal Delivery	Sam Costello
James Nolan	Dublin Postal Delivery	Julia O'Hallaron
John Dolan	Galway Postal Branch	Sarah Dolan
Ronald Headd	Galway Postal Branch	Hannah Headd
Seán Hanley	Galway Postal Branch	Jack Hanley
Kathlyn Roche	Kerry Postal Branch	Jack McElligott
Luke Telli	Kildare Postal Branch	Kacie Telli
John Paul Dunne	Kildare Postal Branch	Kyle Dunne
Martin Flynn	Midland Postal Branch	Aoibhe Flynn
Patrick McCabe	Midland Postal Branch	Fionán McCabe
Darren Fitzgerald	Midland Postal Branch	Mollymai Fitzgerald
Sharyn McDaniel	Northeast Postal Branch	Seán Mcdaniel
Alister Ross	Northeast Telecoms Branch	Sophia Ross
Alan Browne	Regional Clerks Branch	Saoirse Browne
Michael Keogh	Regional Clerks Branch	Ruth Keogh
Mark Lowry	Tipperary Postal Branch	Sorcha Lowry
Brendan Ryan	Tipperary Postal Branch	Ben Ryan
Lorraine Browne	Western Regional Managers	Indee Rose Browne Rickard
Anthony Oliver Kelly	Western Regional Managers	James Kelly

THIRD LEVEL AWARDS

PARENT/GUARDIAN	BRANCH	AWARDED TO:
Caroline Nestor	Athlone Postal	Ciara Murphy
Marc Holbrook	eir Managers Branch	Tess Downey
Rose Shiels	Obelisk	Melissa Shiels
Ivan Byrne	Regional Clerks Branch	Rachel Byrne

Biennial Conference – Sligo 2026

CWU Headquarters Team with Vice President of PPSWU Jaser Mali leading a chant of Free Palestine to mark ICTU Workplace Day of Action for Palestine.

Ian McArdle,
Deputy General Secretary.

General Secretary, Seán Mc Donagh, talks with RTÉ.

President, Frank Donohue, congratulates
President, Tom Sheehan.

Team Awesome!

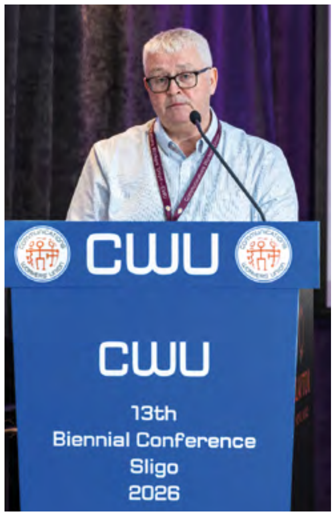
Own Reidy, General Secretary, ICTU, joins in the
call for Free Palestine.

Pictured left
Carol Scheffer and
Laura McKenna

Pictured right
Pat asks Diarmuid to
pick his horses!

John Clarke

Outgoing Chair of the Finance Committee, Pascal,
gets a Presentation from Seán



Pat Kenny

A number of Delegates line up to speak on Motions.

Brian Halligan, John Chaney and Mel take a Coke break.

Benefits of being retired – Fnib shows Jock and Charlie how to vote!

Paul Kennedy.

Willie Mooney and Bill Colfer.

Patrick Duggan.

Mike O'Connor, John Donoghue, Joe Maher and Owen O'Reilly.

Northeast Telecoms Branch Delegates.

Mid-Northwest District Branch.

Dublin Managers Branch.

Sarah Preston and Clare Delaney.

Ellen Moore.

Pascal Connolly.

Paul Hurley and Gerard Lynch.

Dublin Amalgamated & Dublin Mails Managers.

Ken Rice, Brendan Duff and Shane Egan.

Tony Farrell.

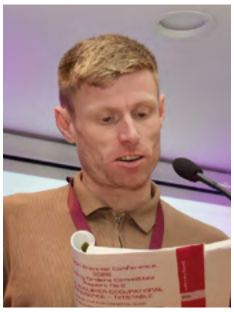
James Davies.

John Bohan.

Carmel HIggins and Clare Brady.

Gary Ellis.

Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Delegation.

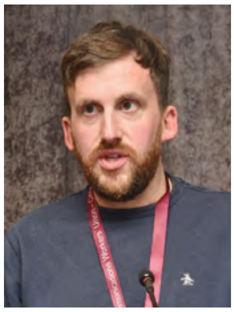


Andy Keehan.

Richie Edgeworth.

Kildare Postal Branch.

Mick Lonergan.



Daniel Murray.

Portlaoise Postal Branch.

Dublin No. 1 Branch Delegates.

Participants at Men's Health Seminar.

Caroline Schween, John Donoghue, Shane Murphy and Owen O'Reilly.

Jackie McNamara and Tommy Guilfoyle.

Cormac O'Dalaigh and Shane Murphy.

Regional Clerks Branch Delegation.

Paul Hehir and Paul Pender.

Arkadia Jacob, Owen O'Reilly, John Bohan and Seán McDonagh.

Seán Berry.

Joanne Brosnan and Paul O'Sullivan.

Standing Orders Committee

Delegates at BOC Opening Session

Cormac O'Dalaigh National Officer Retires

Cormac pictured with his wife, Myra.

Beginning his career in the Posts & Telegraphs (P&T), Cormac joined the organisation as a postman in September 1983, starting in Sherriff Street before transferring in 1989 to Rathmines Delivery Office — proudly regarded as Dublin's premier delivery office.

His commitment to Union representation emerged early. In 1990, he joined the local committee in Rathmines and was Office Representative in 1997. His leadership expanded further in 2000 when he was elected Vice-Chairpersons of the Dublin Postal Delivery Branch, a role that also encompassed serving as Welfare Officer. That same year, he was elected to the National Executive Council (NEC), winning re-election at every Conference until his appointment as a National Officer.

Throughout his tenure on the NEC, Cormac served on every Sub-Committee, with particular enjoyment and pride in his many years on the Education Committee. His dedication to the Union was recognised nationally when he was elected Vice-President of the Communication Workers' Union in 2010 in Wexford, followed by his election as CWU President in 2012 in Galway.

Following a secondment to CWU Headquarters to cover long-term sick leave, he was appointed a National Officer in 2015, having responsibility for the Postal and Courier sector, which he served with distinction until his retirement.

Outside the Job

Outside of his professional duties, Cormac has always been deeply involved in community-focused work and advocacy. He has managed football teams, bringing leadership and mentorship to local sport. He served for many years on the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde in Ranelagh, contributing to the governance and development of the school community.

He is also the Chairman of , an organisation that advocates on behalf of individuals impacted by the State caused Hepatitis C virus. His work in this area reflects his long-standing commitment to justice, support, and fair treatment for those affected by systemic failings.

In all of his activities he has cultivated great relationships with members, representatives and management, utilising his excellent communication skills of story-telling and great humour.

We wish Cormac, Myra and sons Seán & Fionn every good health in retirement and acknowledge with deep appreciation his long and loyal service to the Communications Workers' Union.

Mar a deir an seanfhocal, "Tá neart san aontacht" — agus is léir gur neartaigh sé an ceardchumann agus muid uile trína chuid oibre agus a dhíograis thar na blianta. Le dea-ghuí don todhchaí, go n-éireoidh leis ar an mbóthar.

Workers Want Unions — It's Time the Law Caught Up

Two significant new policy papers recently published by the Irish Congress of Trade Union (ICTU) have placed collective bargaining, union organising and workers' rights firmly at the centre of the debate on the future of work in Ireland.

The papers focus primarily on the need for new legal rights allowing workers to access trade unions in workplaces, arguing that Ireland's current industrial relations framework leaves workers and their unions subject to an effective employer veto, restraining workers' rights to organise, communicate with their union and build collective bargaining structures.

The reports argue that this situation is increasingly out of step with Ireland's European peers, international developments and with Ireland's obligations under the EU Adequate Minimum Wages Directive, which requires member states to actively promote collective bargaining coverage.

Importantly, the papers reject the idea that declining union density reflects a lack of interest in unions among workers themselves. Instead, they point to growing evidence that large numbers of workers — particularly younger workers — continue to want collective representation and collective bargaining, but face significant structural barriers when attempting to organise.

Alongside workplace access, the ICTU has also renewed the case for the reintroduction of tax relief on trade union subscriptions as part of wider efforts to support union membership and collective bargaining. While a relatively modest measure in itself, the proposal forms part of a broader argument that public policy should actively support collective organisation and social dialogue.

For many CWU members, the issues raised in the papers will feel immediately familiar.

Recent disputes, including the ongoing campaign involving workers at Covalen, have highlighted many of the realities described throughout the reports. Workers in outsourced and platform-adjacent sectors often face fragmented workplaces, precarious employment structures and limited opportunities for collective engagement.

Yet the experience at Covalen also demonstrated something else: where workers are provided with support, structures and leadership, collective organisation can develop rapidly, even in sectors long viewed as difficult to unionise.

The dispute exposed the practical difficulties workers still face when attempting to organise collectively in Ireland. Workers and union representatives were forced to build structures and campaigns under intense pressure and within a system that continues to place significant obstacles in the path of collective organisation.

Many of the issues identified in the ICTU papers — limited workplace access, fragmented employment models and weak collective bargaining structures — were visible in real time throughout the dispute.

The workplace access paper argues that in practice, workers attempting to organise are too often pushed into holding meetings outside workplaces in cafés and car parks rather than being able to engage openly and safely within their workplaces themselves. The paper also points to growing evidence of anti-union hostility and union-busting practices directed at workers and union activists attempting to organise collectively.

These issues have been central to the wider Respect at Work campaign, which has increasingly focused attention on the gap between workers' formal right to join a union and the practical barriers many still encounter when attempting to exercise that right.

The CWU has played a leading and active role in that campaign alongside SIPTU, Mandate and the FSU, consistently highlighting the need for meaningful organising rights, stronger collective bargaining structures and real protections for workers seeking union representation.

The campaign has helped place issues such as workplace access, anti-union behaviour and collective bargaining reform firmly onto the national industrial relations agenda. It has also reinforced a wider point running throughout both Congress papers: the problem in Ireland is not that workers do not want collective representation, but that too many structural obstacles continue to stand in their way.

The CWU continues to strongly support ICTU and its ongoing efforts to advance this agenda nationally, including through the development of policy proposals, campaigning work and engagement around Ireland's obligations to promote collective bargaining and protect workers' organising rights.

As the CWU continues organising in new sectors shaped by outsourcing, platform work and technological change, the issues raised in these Congress papers are likely to become increasingly important for workers across the country.

The experience at Covalen demonstrated that workers still want solidarity, collective voice and union organisation. The challenge now is whether Ireland's industrial relations system will evolve to properly support those workers in exercising those rights openly, safely and effectively.

CWU PEOPLE

Tom O'Connells Retires

Tom O'Connells (pictured centre) celebrates his retirement after 48 years' service in the Tralee section of Limerick District Branch. To his left is Michael Meade, Newcastlewest Section Secretary, and on his right isJer Daly, Branch Secretary.

Thomas Nee Retires

On Tuesday 24th February, Thomas Nee retired from Castlerea DSU after 30 years. We wish him health and happiness in the next chapter of his life.

Tom Byrne Retires

Southern Manager's Branch retiree, Tom Byrne PAM (right), celebrated his retirement last February at a function in Abbeyleix. Here he is pictured with his wife Mary and Tony Cahill in the Centre.

Frank Attends Tokyo Seminar

Ex-President, Frank Donohoe, attended a joint UNI/JPGU Seminar in Tokyo last January. Frank, representing the CWU, gave a presentation on the future of the Postal Industry in Ireland and the Postal Services Directive in Europe.

Bill Colfer Completes Multisport Festival Sprint Plus

Congratulations to Former Regional Officer, Bill Colfer, on completing the Castle Lough Cutra Multisport Festival Sprint Plus with a 1.2 Km Swim, 41.3K Bike and 7.5k Run. Jarlath Heneghan was ther to support Bill over the line.

Elin Larson Completes Tokyo Marathon for Family House Charity

Elin Larsen, Uni Global Union ran the Tokyo Marathon for Family House Charity on 1st March 2026

Bernard Meehan Retires

Bernard Meehan, who retired at the end of December, pictured with Paul Comiskey, Branch Chairperson, Dublin Managers' Branch, having been presented with his Union Scroll

Jim Mulcahy Retires

Jim Mulcahy, who retired on April 17th, is pictured with Des Lernihan Branch Secretary , Dublin Managers' Branch, having been presented with his Union Scroll and Pin.

John Larkin Retires

Our wonderful friend and colleague, John Larkin, retired from Castlerea DSU on December 13th after 37 years' service. He is pictured with his wife, Bridie (photo on left), and friends and colleagues (photo on right). Congratulations on your retirement, John – enjoy the next chapter!

Pat Corcoran Retires

Pat Corcoran, South Midland Postal Branch and formerly Birr Roscrea Branch, is pictured on his retirement, having received his Union Scroll. Best wishes for a happy retirement, Pat!

Larry Doyle Retires

Vincent Kiroy from NEC and Southern Regional Managers' Branch presents a Union Scroll to Larry Doyle, who work in CAD in Wexford DSU. Larry retires with 51 years' service. We hope he has a long, happy and well-deserved retirement

Colette Linehan Retires

Colette Linehan, Limerick Postal Post Office Clerk, National Returns Letter Centre retires after 41 years' service. Colette was joined by colleagues and well-wishers to say a fantastic farewell both on site and at Paul Flannery's Bar on Shannon Street in Limerick on Thursday March 19th and on Friday March 20th! Happy Retirement, Colette!

Paul McElhinney Retires

Pictured receiving his Union Scroll from Seamus McLaughlin (Branch Chairperson) on his last day of service with An Post (Burnfoot DSO) is (L to R) Paul McElhinney and Seamus McLaughlin. Paul delivered the mail in the Carndonagh area of Inishowen for the past 30 years. The Lifford-Inishowen Branch would like to extend best wishes to Paul on his retirement.

Mid Northwest Branch Retirements

Both Brendan and Jimmy are long-serving Branch Officers of the Galway District Branch, prior to its amalgamation with Sligo and afterwards up to their retirement. They are wished the very best by the CWU and their families, friends and work colleagues.

Brendan Moran Retires

Brendan Moran being presented with his Union Scroll by Branch Chairman, Enda Moran.

Jimmy Gavin Retires

Jimmy Gavin being presented with his Union Scroll by Branch Chairman, Enda Moran.

Biennial Conference Retirement Acknowledgements

Billy Thompson Retires

General Secretary, Seán Mc Donagh, presents Billy Thompson, Assistant General Secretary AHCPS, with a clock on his retirement from the JCC. We wish Billy a long and happy retirement.

Pat Delaney Retires

Standing Orders Vice-Chairman, Mick Dineen, presents outgoing Chairman, Pat Delaney, with a clock on his retirement. We wish Pat a long and happy retirement.

Michael Gallagher Retires

Deirdre Medlar NEC and Regional Clerks Branch Secretary presents Michael Gallagher former Lifford Inishowen Branch Secretary with a clock on his retirement. Michael and his guitar will be missed.

Frank Burke Retires

Tale of two Clerks! Pat Kenny, Staff Side Secretary of JCC, presents Frank Burke, former Dublin Mails Managers Branch Secretary, NEC, Worker Director with a clock on his retirement.

Jim McCarron Retires

Outgoing Chairman of Standing Orders Pat Delaney presents Jim Mc Carron former Drogheda District Branch and Standing Orders member with a clock on his retirement.

Billy O'Sullivan Retires

Paul O' Sullivan, Acting Branch Secretary Kerry Postal, presents Billy O'Sullivan with a CWU Clock for his service to the Branch over the years. Billy is now in the Regional Clerks Branch.

Joe McDonald Retires

Joe McDonald marks his retirement and is presented with his Commemorative Clock by CWU President, Frank Donohoe. Joe will be sorely missed by all of us in Head Office. He has always been someone we could rely on when the need arose, offering his support with professionalism, warmth and good humour. His friendly smile and positive spirit have been a constant over the years. We wish Joe a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

Portlaoise Postal Branch AGM and Retirements

Donn White, Vice-Chairperson, presenting the Union Badge and Scroll to Bernie Hoey.

Heathcliff Maher, Branch Secretary, presenting the Union Scroll to Joe Lynch.

Donn White, Vice-Chairperson, presenting the Union Scroll to Denis Dempsey.

Heathcliff presenting to Patrick Wilson

AGM
Special Presentation for Long-Serving Branch Committee Members

Long-serving Branch Committee Members, Clare Delaney (left) and Sadie Fox, being presented with a gift of appreciation from Heathcliff Maher, Branch Secretary of Portlaoise Postal Branch, at our AGM.

Dublin Postal Clerk Retirements

Branch Secretary, Dave Sheehy, presented the Union Scroll to the following retirees:

Kieran Cryan

Philip Gleeson

Stephen Dornan

Mary Mc Gloin

Paul Coleman served over 10 years on the Branch Committee

Danny Hoare served on the Branch Committee and was also a member of Standing Orders Committee

Galway Postal Branch Retirements

Adrian Acton receives his Union Scroll from Vincent Knight, CWU Representative, accompanied by all his colleagues in Clifden DSU to mark his final day of service.

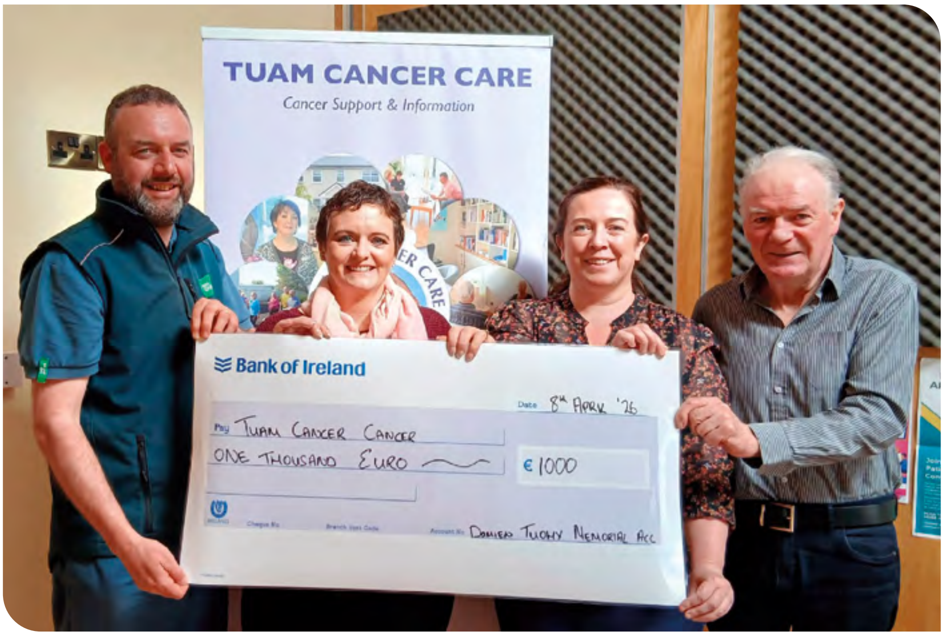
Paul Pender, Galway Postal Branch Secretary,presented Joe Coen with his Union Scroll, marking his retirement following 42 years' service.

Mike Glynn with colleagues, Kieran O Halloran, Stephanie Collins and Barry King, Oughterard, on Mike's final day of service.

Galway Postal Branch Donates €1,000 for Irish Kidney Society

Ger Thompson, Galway Postal Branch Treasurer, donates €1000 on behalf of the Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund to the Train Station, Galway, for their fundraiser for the Irish Kidney Society.

Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund Donates €1,000 for Tuam Cancer Care



Damien Corcoran, Galway Postal Branch, along with his wife, Noreen, and Jarlath Heneghan, present Tuam Cancer Care €1000 on behalf of the Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund.

Mary Coleman Retires

On Monday 27th of April, Mary Coleman, Castlerea DSU, retired. She is pictured with her colleagues and DSM, Padraig Hughe,s who presented the Cú Chulainn Statue in recognition of her service to An Post through the years.

Well done to Mary for her her hard work and dedication over the years. We hope you enjoy your well-deserved retirement.

South Midland Postal Branch Retirements

Peter Cleere Retires

Peter Cleere, South Midland Postal Branch, retired from Kilkenny DSU after 19 years of service. He served the people of Borris County Carlow during his time as a Postal Operative.

As per most of the recent retirees, Peter was well-liked by colleagues and customers and he will certainly be missed. He is wished well in his retirement by all at Kilkenny DSU.

Pictured is John McClean, Branch Secretary (left) who presented Peter with his Union Scroll.

Pictured above, Peter is joined by his colleagues to give him a great cheer and best wishes for his retirement.

PJ Farrell Retires

PJ Farrell retires after 37 years' service. PJ was previously Branch Chairman at Kilkenny Postal and a long-time Committee Member. PJ was well-liked by colleagues and customers alike. Pictured is PJ (on the left) who was presented with his Union Scroll by John MaClean, Branch Secretary.

Pictured above, PJ is joined by his colleagues to give him a great cheer and best wishes for his retirement.

Joe Dillon Retires

Joe Dillon. retires after 48 years of service.
Joe was opular with all colleagues and customers and he will be missed by all. He is pictured (on the right) receiving his Union Scroll from John MacLean, Branch Secretary.

Pictured above, Peter is joined by his colleagues to give him a great cheer and best wishes for his retirement.

Forever Friends:
Frenchpark Post Office, Co. Roscommon Reunion

Pictured (Front Row): *Noreen McGarry, PJ Mc Garry* ***(Back Row):*** *Muriel Moran, Yvonne Mitchell, Kieran McDermott, Pat Mitchell and Michael Timon.*

Mary Devitt Retires

Mary Devitt Ennis Postal Branch retired on 29th May 2026 after 47 years' service with An Post. Mary is pictured here being presented with her Union Scroll by Gill Burns, Regional Clerks Branch.

The Monday Club Needs You!

Monday Club Members: Christy Brannigan, Paddy Redmond (RIP), and Mickey O'Connor.

Christy and Mickey, Our Double Act, were missed at Conference this year for their social skills keeping the troops entertained.

What is the Monday Club all about?

It began 33 years ago with two lifelong friends who worked in the post office, when one of them took early retirement due to a health scare. They had been involved in arranging a lot of social activities and realised that for some people, retirement can be a traumatic time, with suddenly too much time on your hands, especially if you have been socially active with people. The two friends decided to meet up every Monday afternoon for a chat and continue their friendship.

Word soon got around about these popular friends meeting up in a bar. (Christy being the first to arrive). Gradually there was a build-up of friends calling in for a drink and a chat, until soon a bigger venue was required. Home Farm Football Club was selected and so on a Monday the birth of an idea became the **Home Farm Monday Club**.

In someways it is a lifesaver for many who have found retirement a bit difficult to adjust to. It has helped people who may have had little or no contact with anyone or who lived alone to develop relationships and form strong friendships. When COVID hit, it was even harder, so a WhatsApp Group was set up to stay connected with each other. Then they began to meet up in the local parks for short walks and a chat.

Music and song, as well as friendship, is the main ingredient for our continuity over the last 33 years, with entertainment all provided by the members of the Monday Club. And, out of all this was born ''a choir of sorts''. The Choir has performed at various events connected to An Post. We have sung at funeral services for members and their families who have passed away. The choir perform in many care homes in the Dublin area, which brings immense pride and joy to all of us.

Day trips are organised for members of the Monday Club and our annual weekends away are very popular. We hold a special Mass each January for deceased members of the club and invite families along to enjoy the atmosphere and refreshments provided, compliments of the Monday Club.

In addition, wse hold many fundraising events, dinner, raffles, etc and the Choir do some carol singing outside the GPO in Dublin's O'Connell Street, with the monies raised going to Saint Luke's Cancer Hospital Fund.

In my humble opinion, all the above has benefited our members in some small way. But none of this would have happened were it not for the great friendship of Michael O'Connor and the late Patrick Redmond (Porry). What we do is excellent for mental wellbeing. I am sharing this story with you, to encourage other retired colleagues to come along and join us or to maybe start up something of their own. The Monday Club meet in the bar in Home Farm Football Club from 3.00 p.m. – so why not call in and say hello?

Former Wexford Postman Returns with Re-opening of Japanese Karate Dojo

by Alan White - Journalist – Irish Independent Online

A Wexford-based man with decades of experience training adults the art of Japanese karate, has made his return to the world of teaching after re-opening his karate school earlier this year.

Vincent Kilroy, who is 60 years old, officially returned to teach the wider community the art of Japanese Shotokan karate with his new school called, *Craanford Shotokan Karate Dojo* in Gorey, Co Wexford.

"I just wanted to pass on all this knowledge and experience that I've gained through the years and that was my motivation for starting the club, it's just for pure enjoyment," he said.

Japanese Shotokan karate is a traditional martial art, known for its linear movements, powerful and explosive strikes aimed at self-defence and character development.

Vincent's love for the art began in 1980 while at school, where the class were given a preview of Shotokan karate. *"A friend of mine and a couple of guys did a demonstration in the youth club at school. Then he introduced me to his instructor and the journey started from there.*

"And I was also terrible at football, all my mates were great and I was brutal. I just took up karate and I seemed to adapt to that pretty well," Vincent added.

He formerly trained karate enthusiasts in south Wexford, with Glynn Shotokan karate club established in 2002, before focusing on his work as manager of the post office in Gorey, where he retired after 43 years of service in 2025.

While he didnt teach he continued to train privately, honing his skills. *"The beauty of the art is that you can train all your life, you can train on your own for a period of time because there is so much to work on.*

"I've always trained but I hadn't taught in a long time and you need to be able to commit – if you open a club you need to be there at least twice a week," he said.

Not long after his retirement, with a four degree black belt, he began teaching in January 2026, where he trains those from the age of 18, to his oldest trainee who is 64 years old.

He further said the art is tailored to each person and is not limited to age, where they learn Japanese terminology catered to each learned movement. *"People of all ages can do it, some trainees had trained karate before and were delighted because there's hardly any karate in Wexford.*

"You adjust it to what your body's capable of doing. Obviously, a 64-year-old is not going to be throwing kicks like an 18-year-old would but that's the beauty of the art," he added.

Vincent's latest school has seen great success following its first grading ceremony, where all learners received a double grading. "Everyone got a double grade which was an unbelievable achievement.

"The grading examiner was a B7 degree black belt, who travelled up from Cork and he just said at the end of the grading that 'the double grading is a testament to your instructor for the standard that you showed'. It's nice to get a compliment," Vincent added.

Craanford Shotokan Karate Dojo is affiliated with International Japan Karate Association and train every Tuesday and Thursday in Craanford Community Hall.

Grading examiner Sensei Brian Toomey with Vincent Kilroy of Craanford Shotokan Karate Dojo.

Suicide Remembrance Walk

On an early Saturday morning last May, at 04.15, approximately ninety staff of PMC took to the road for a 4.6km walk to remember colleagues Enda and Tom who had lost their lives through suicide in the past 6 months. The idea was the brainchild of John Loughlin and Ron Stewart. It was massively supported by all staff plus the social club & CWU threw their support behind it too.

Also remembered on this walk were former colleagues, Brenda, Gretta and Seanie, whose candles were extinguished far too early.

It was a beautiful walk which raised over £2,215 for SOSAD. PMC Staff – hold you heads high.

To the Staff & Managers of PMC, we applaud each and everyone of you for your dignity and respect and for the wonderful spirit you have shown in our darkest days.

A fitting remembrance was set up at our "Memory Seat" by Dina & Christine.

Damian Byrne RIP

Photo: Ray McManus/Sportsfile

Damien Byrne, captain of St Patrick's Athletic, celebrates the Saints' League of Ireland Premier Division title win with supporters at United Park in Drogheda, Co Louth back in April 1990.

A hero of St Patrick's Athletic and a man dedicated to Irish football, the Dubliner's life – cruelly cut short by dementia – was celebrated as he was laid to rest recently.

By David Kelly Chief Sports Analysis Writer
Irish Independent Online

They called him Granddad, first on the pitch, later off it.

Within a dressing-room of younger footballing peers who proudly deferred, then in the living room of his cherished home surrounded by loving devotion.

Two dates defined him. Easter Monday, April 16, 1990 when he led the resurrection of St Patrick's Athletic.

And June 11th, 2005, when he and his beloved Caitríona welcomed the first of three grandchildren.

Yesterday, they all bade farewell to this quiet giant, taken far too soon.

A sombre morning mourning the pain of life, but stoically celebrating the joy of life.

"Don't just mourn his passing," says Philip, his son and himself a fine footballing chip off the finest block, in a Church of the Sacred Heart in the Yellow Walls parish of Malahide, where the seats are all taken and the terraces are thronged.

"But celebrate a wonderful life cut cruelly short by dementia."

A deeply private anguish cuts like a knife; that those who knew him so intimately could not themselves be known in the final agonising weeks in the loving care of the wonderful staff at Talbot Lodge.

Yet still, despite the tears and torment, the happy memories reside within broken souls, of a doughty defender who enraptured hearts home and away, and hearts claimed at his fireside hearth.

He spent his life in devotion to a football faith, where humility and habits were a watchword for a professional approach in an amateur age.

And he had a fierce faith in devotion to community and religion, an usher in the church where he now lies, and a commanding, yet caring presence in the parish, bounding on daily walks and issuing buoyant greetings to all those he knew, and many more he did not.

In his day job as a postman, his commitment to service was a passion play too. Like the DHL sponsors' jersey on that famous 1990 day, it was true that Damien Byrne always delivered.

Book Review by Colin Moore

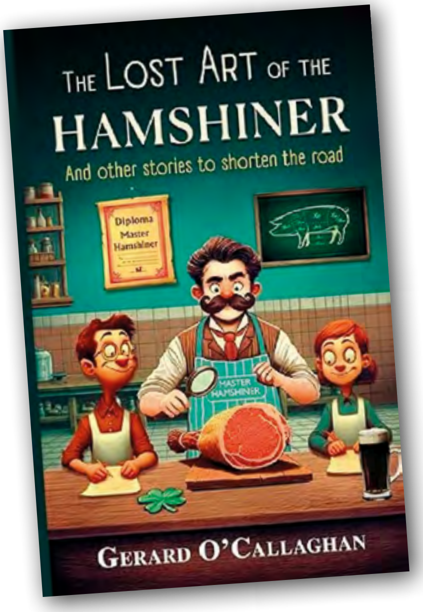
THE LOST ART OF THE HAMSHINER

by Gerard O'Callaghan

ISBN: 978-1-0369-1829-3

Available online at:

https://www.buythebook.ie/product/the-lost-art-of-the-hamshiner/



The Lost Art of the Hamshiner is a witty and richly humorous story collection that captures the charm of an Irish town and the curious rhythms of public service life, during the mid to late twentieth century.

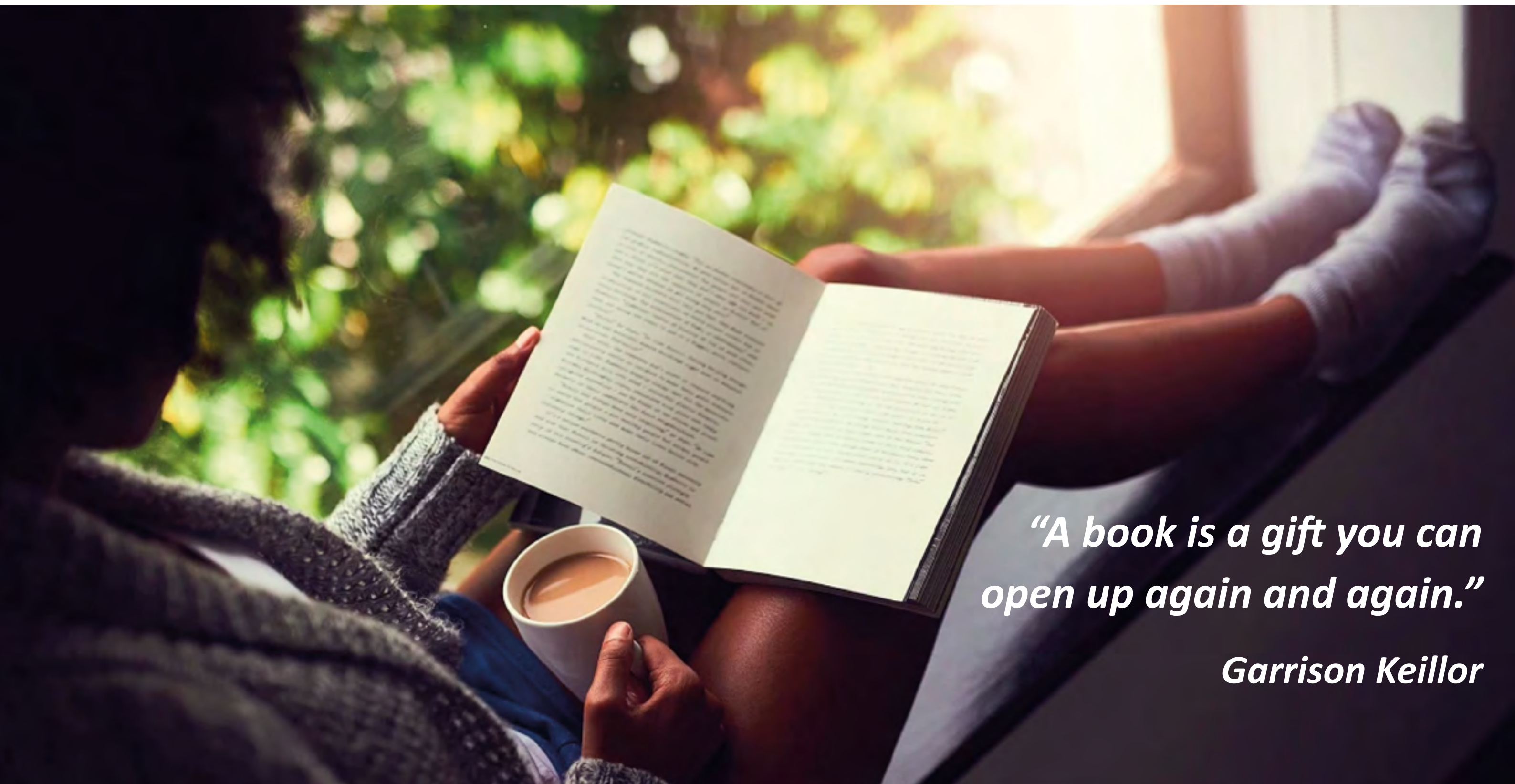
In fifty-two stories, blending fact and fiction with satire and affection, Gerard O'Callaghan recalls post office days, childhood in Mallow, and the unique souls who coloured everyday life. Strange rituals such as cannibalising bicycles appear alongside a doggie delivery at the post office door, which had to dealt with according to the rules.

The book title comes from the fictitious trade of the Hamshiner, which was created from a conversation in the office canteen about ham sandwiches.

The book contains six parts, entitled Men at Work, Quirky Tales, Religious Roguery, Sounds of Home, Boyhood's Fire and Forays into Fiction. These stories are a loving tribute to a disappearing Ireland, full of warmth, wit, and the magic of everyday absurdities.

A humorous walk down memory lane, for those of us of a certain vintage, and particularly for ex-public service folk. This book is full of funny situations and wonderful anecdotes, that will remind you of simpler times. One thing is certain, it will definitely entertain and cheer you up!

A Humorous Walk Down Memory Lane!



Book Review by Terry Delany

COMPLICIT: Britain's Role in the Destruction of Gaza

by Peter Oborne

Published by OR Books (2025)

Fearlessly forensic, this incendiary indictment from one of Britain's most celebrated political journalists lays bare the full extent of British complicity in the destruction of Gaza.

In a gripping narrative informed by original reporting, Peter Oborne tells how Britain's Conservative and Labour Parties converged to back Israel's criminal assault, and by doing so, occupying a disturbing common ground with the far right.

Rather than challenging the political cartel, British media colluded in its misrepresentations. The shocking result was that, as British authorities helped Israel set Gaza as well international law aflame, almost everything the public was told about this momentous conflagration was untrue.

When citizens still turned out in their hundreds of thousands to demand a ceasefire, roiling the nation's politics as they stay faithful to the ancient British tradition of popular protest in defence of liberty, the political-media machine bared its fangs. The investigative reporting in this book exposes the methods by which peaceful demonstrations were smeared as "hate marches".

Formerly Chief Political Commentator at the *Daily Telegraph* and *Spectator*, Oborne knows the British establishment from within. In this book he names names and provides receipts. His demands is accountability — for atrocities, and their accomplices.

Fearlessly Forensic Investigative Reporting!