



CONNECT

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CWU bids fond farewell to two Union stalwarts!



CONNECT

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Editorial

Dear Colleague,

The Officials and National Executive Council are presently going through lists of issues that have arisen as a result of Branch AGMs which were held throughout the country over the last couple of months. It is always an interesting process, as when notes are compared, it becomes obvious that there are certain trends in the various companies which repeat themselves over and over again at the general meetings. Our job now is to distil that information into the various issues and obviously then attempt to resolve them with the different companies. The advantage of this very valuable exercise is that we get the opportunity to hear first-hand about the issues that most affect our members, while at the same time it is always interesting to note the similarities of those issues from the various Branches throughout the country. I must admit while going around the country on the AGM circuit can be quite tiring, from my point of view, it is always rewarding and without exception, you always get a good reception and a fair hearing. I also sincerely believe that the practice of every member of every Branch of the CWU having an opportunity to meet an official or senior NEC member at their meeting is quite unique in the Irish Trade Union movement.

AGMs also gives the Officials and the Executive the opportunity to discuss the activities of your Union outside of day-to-day issues that affect each member. Attending those meetings and listening to members questions and comments forces us to think more deeply about our roles and our jobs within the CWU family.

It is surprising despite the coverage given in the Union magazine, how little members understand our involvement as a Union in European and World issues through our International affiliate, UNI Global Union. When I first attended an International meeting, then PTTI, in the early 1990’s the burning issue on the postal side was postal liberalisation. It was then the job of the postal committee to closely examine the proposed Directive and to respond to that Directive on the basis of issues that were particular to each member state and to put obstacles in the way of the Commission in reaching its objectives regarding the Postal Directive, which at the time would have been devastating for the

national postal services. It is interesting to note that when postal liberalisation was eventually implemented, it had been delayed over twenty-five years by the action of the Unions through its International association. More importantly, the Directive was watered-down, particularly in relation to areas like the Universal Service Obligation. That type of work in the Postal and Logistics sector continues to this day. We are presently involved in attempting to deal with Directives regarding regulation surrounding cross-border parcels and to employment legislation, in an attempt to stop the race to the bottom for workers in that industry. In parallel to that work, we are also involved in a Social Dialogue process through the European sectors of UNI Global Union which involve direct discussions with European postal and logistics employers.

A similar process takes place in the Telecoms sector, where our representatives have dealt over the years with the rapidly changing pace of technologies in the telecoms and IT sectors. It has been of immense benefit to this Union to be able to deal directly with International trade unions who in many cases, have gone through the changes before we have. Their experience has allowed us to avoid many of the mistakes others made in the initial stages. We are also involved in this sector through EU Social Dialogue directly with the employers and all travel and accommodation associated with Social Dialogue is paid for by the European Union.

The advantages of this International involvement are that we gain knowledge and expertise on changes that invariably happen in the larger countries before they happen here. We get an input from the International trade unions who are always happy to share those experiences with us and indeed on many occasions we have visited their home countries to learn directly from them. As a result, we have built up a store of knowledge and contacts which has enabled us to be ahead of companies here when looking at perspective change. Of course, it is also key that through that involvement we have been able to change proposed Directives to take into account the different demographics on the Island of Ireland. This element of union work is absolutely critical because once the Directives are passed through the EU Commission and Parliament, they are then due to be transposed as agreed into Irish Law.

Our work then becomes political in that we have

to deal directly with our own government and ultimately, our own Minister and Department. We often find ourselves in those discussions at an advantage, due to our work over many years in Europe and we have from time-to-time been able to use that fully to our advantage.

Of course, then we move into the Industrial Relations arena where we deal with the proposed changes through senior management. There is absolutely no doubt that at that stage our key negotiators are far more au fait with the proposals and their possible impact on members than the company side. We are also able to use that knowledge and information when dealing with the new multinational courier companies where we are now organised.

It is important for members to realise all the work associated with the above activities and to know that the work could not be undertaken without their support and indeed without their subscriptions. It is work in our industries that is not carried out by any other Unions on the Island of Ireland.

I sincerely believe that our international involvement has been of absolute benefit to all of our members and has allowed your Executive and Officials to argue effectively in relation to the direction that the companies have and are taking. None of that work could happen without members and branches carrying out the important day-to-day work of directly representing our members and without the branches continuing to point out to us issues that arise as these rapid changes take place. It is open to any member to follow our work in the international arena and there is much information in relation to our International affiliate on the new CWU website. You can also follow the work of UNI Global Union through its own website (www.uniglobalunion.org) and it is enlightening to see how many workers throughout the world are involved and from our own experience, it is gratifying to note that in our own industries those workers face, or have faced, the same problems that we face today.



*Steve Fitzpatrick,
General Secretary, CWU*

Shrinking reach of the broadband plan raises concern over its future

Major broadband announcements by eir and Imagine this week have led to new questions over the stuttering National Broadband Plan. Adrian Weckler (Technology Editor) explains what's going on and what to expect next. (Independent Online)



*Waiting game:
Many parts of rural Ireland are still lacking in high-speed broadband*

IS THE National Broadband Plan shrinking? This week, announcements from a number of telecom operators threaten to substantially reduce the size of the Government's 'intervention area', currently measured at 540,000 homes and businesses, or more than 1m people, in mostly rural areas.

eir said that it has already upgraded 30,000 extra homes in the intervention area as an overrun to the fibre-to-the-home build-out (to 300,000 rural homes) that it agreed with the Government two years ago. Announcing a major new upgrade to its overall national network, eir CEO Carolan Lennon said a further 50,000 of the intervention area will now be covered as part of a 1.4m home expansion plan.

This brings the size of the NBP intervention area down to 510,000 at present and 460,000 when (and if) eir completes its fibre-to-the-home upgrade.

Then Imagine chief executive Sean Bolger said that the company's wireless rollout to 1m Irish homes would include a whopping 400,000 homes in the National Broadband Plan area.

Cumulatively, these announcements could bring the overall number of rural homes down by over three

quarters, to under 140,000. So what's going to happen? Will the National Broadband Plan need to go back to the drawing board again? What's happening with the State-subsidised process at the moment anyway?

Here's an overview on where the National Broadband Plan stands at present and where it might be headed next.

1. What's happening with the National Broadband Plan at present?

The Department of Communications is still deciding whether or not to proceed to a 'preferred bidder' status with Granahan McCourt, the telecoms consortium which is the only remaining bidder in the Government's National Broadband Plan process. A decision on this has been waited on for almost four months. Sources close to the process say that it's still "weeks" away, although there is a possibility of a formal decision by the end of February.

If 'preferred bidder' status is conferred upon Granahan McCourt, the Government and that company will then move to sign a contract for the 25-year deal. This will see the Government commit to subsidising the build-out of

a (mostly) fibre broadband network to the ‘intervention area’ of 540,000 homes and businesses in mostly rural areas. At the end of the 25-year period, the company gets to keep the rural network.

2. Why is it taking so long?

This has been the overarching theme of the entire National Broadband Plan process, which is now entering its seventh year. The Government insists that it has to get the detail right, given the magnitude of what’s at stake: this is arguably the most ambitious broadband project in Europe. Politically, there are landmines everywhere if it gets sloppy. For instance, the last communications minister, Denis Naughten, was forced to resign after meeting the CEO of the bidding company Granahan McCourt on a number of occasions. Although an audit report cleared the process to continue, the Government was politically wounded. Sources say that it is determined not to prioritise speed over due diligence. One practical hurdle is that the documentation associated with the contract is said to run into thousands of pages.

3. Remind me why eir and Siro, the two biggest bidders for the NBP contract, pulled out?

Both eir and Siro said that they couldn’t see a business case as a private company, albeit for different reasons. Siro, the joint venture between Vodafone and the ESB, said that the Government’s deal with eir over connecting 300,000 of the (then) 840,000 homes identified in the ‘intervention area’ ruined the prospect of long-term viability for the project in its eyes. It pulled out in late 2017.

A few months later, eir also withdrew. Last week, the company’s CEO, Carolan Lennon, gave fresh insight into why.

“It was very, very complex,” she said. “A lot of extra cost came with that complexity, especially for us as the ex-incumbent. One example is that we couldn’t use our existing wholesale Open eir business, with 80 people and all its systems, to sell the NBP as a wholesale service. We would have been required to create another separate wholesale division with another team. We just couldn’t justify the complexity or the cost.”

Another reason, she said, was the sheer volume of detail in the contractual obligations.

“The contract we signed with the Government for the 300,000 rural homes ran to 40 pages,” she said. “That was our own money. But the contract for the NBP runs to thousands of pages. There’s a big overhead in reporting to the Government, too. That would drive cost. There was no business case we could make to say this was a good move for us. We spent over €7m on it before we withdrew.”

4. So what’s going to happen if the number of homes to be covered by the NBP shrinks? Does this jeopardise the whole thing?

The Government doesn’t think so, despite Imagine’s Sean Bolger suggesting that the State might not want to continue with a plan to subsidise a fibre-to-the-home broadband service in an area where his company will now build its own service.

Asked whether he would take legal action to stop the current NBP process, Bolger refused to rule it out but said that he did not think a legal battle “will arise”.

eir has a more benign view. “We won’t be taking any action [against the State, where its 80,000 homes may duplicate the state’s NBP footprint],” said Ms Lennon when asked this question. “We just want to get on with it,” she added.

The reason that the Government doesn’t think this is a threat is an assertion that its 540,000 figure is not set in stone. “With regard to the National Broadband Plan, the procurement process allows for changes to the map over the coming years in the event that new commercial plans are announced,” a spokeswoman for the department told the Irish Independent.

In other words, the 30,000 that eir has already covered may now formally be knocked off the NBP’s intervention area when the next formal appraisal is done. And the same thing could happen if Imagine’s planned build-out proceeds, especially if done in advance of the NBP being started.

The result is that even after the announcements from eir and Imagine, “the area identified as requiring a State-led intervention remains as set out on the high-speed broadband map for the purposes of the NBP procurement process” for now, she said.

But if either of these commercial plans from eir and Imagine don’t materialise in full or in part, the Government says that the NBP can accommodate that too.

“In 2017 as a direct result of this monitoring the department added a further 84.5k premises to the NBP State Intervention Area where commercial investment plans previously provided to the department had failed to materialise,” said the Department of Communications.

5. Will eir and Imagine definitely build these new promised broadband connections?

eir, which is promising the biggest overhaul, looks set to conclude its initial rural fibre rollout to 335,000 homes this June, even if that is six months late on its original commitment. It says that while it took two-and-a-half years to build 335,000, it will take five years to reach another 1.4m homes, as most of them are in urban or well-populated areas.

Imagine's roadmap is harder to gauge. It is now well-funded, having recently taken €120m in fresh finance from the investment firm Brookfield. It currently offers wireless broadband in some areas of the country. However, it ran into significant difficulties with WiMax, the wireless delivery service it previously hoped would become a national wireless service. A lengthy legal battle with Motorola ensued, while the WiMax service withered. Nevertheless, Mr Bolger has considerable experience in the Irish telecoms market.

6. Is eir's new fibre rollout really 'fibre'?

This time it is. Unfortunately, the company will have a significant challenge in getting people to believe that it

is really delivering fibre broadband - which is the highest currently available standard - instead of just a rebadged copper landline service. eir's difficulty here is that it has been marketing a product called 'eFibre' for some years. But this is nowhere near as good a service as actual fibre broadband. It uses a home's old copper landline to connect to a fibre line somewhere down the street (or on another street, far away).

As a result, many 'eFibre' connections are slow to the point of their homes being officially classed as deprived internet zones. eir's fibre-to-the-home product, by contrast, has no such problem. It is capable of delivering speeds of more than 1,000Mbps, far faster than most need.

KN Group and Circet to create market leader in European telecom infrastructure services

November 19, 2018 - kngroup.com/news



Circet, France's leading telecommunications network service provider and KN Circet ("KN"), a leader in the telecommunications network services market in Ireland and the UK, today announce a merger that will see the enlarged group become a major force in European telecom infrastructure services.

The combination of the two businesses will create a diversified player in European telecom services, offering full turnkey solutions across all network technologies in France, the UK, Ireland, Germany, Morocco and the Caribbean. It is anticipated that the company will generate sales in excess of €1.1bn in 2018.

Circet and KN already individually service numerous major network operators, and through this partnership will further increase the scale and expertise offered to their clients. The sharing of best practices across the

group will further help improve the services provided to the group's existing and new customers. The group will retain both historical brands and management teams in their respective home markets.

Philippe Lamazou, Chief Executive Officer at Circet, commented: "This is a transformative development for our company which will see Circet consolidate its position as the leading telecommunications outsourcing partner in Europe. We look forward to sharing know-how and best practice across our teams and further enhancing the solutions we can provide to our client base. With an expanded offering and geographical footprint, we are very well-positioned to capitalise on the significant growth opportunities we see across markets, underpinned by the stellar growth in data consumption, extensive fibre deployment plans and the continued international

investment in mobile networks. We are very pleased with this first step in our European expansion strategy. We very much welcome Donagh and his team into the Circet group, and look forward to continuing our expansion into new geographies”

Donagh Kelly, Chief Executive Officer at KN Circet, commented: “KN’s growth has been built on the hard work and loyalty of our staff, contractors and clients. I would like to sincerely thank all who have played a part in helping to establish the business as it stands today and look forward to its continued evolution in partnership with Circet under my leadership. We now have a platform from which to undertake some of the most ambitious network roll-out plans ever seen in Ireland, the UK and internationally.”

Michael Ogrinz, Partner at Advent International, added: “This first major step outside France for Circet just a few months after our initial investment is a great example of how our international network here at Advent can help bring together the best companies in a given sector. Circet and KN together will become Europe’s foremost telecom services company, and we very much look forward to continuing to help it achieve this objective.”

Circet was acquired by Advent International, one of the largest and most experienced global private equity investors in April 2018. Following the merger with KN, the shareholders of Circet will consist of Circet’s management team, KN’s management team and Advent International.

About Circet

Circet (www.circet.fr) is the number one provider of telecom infrastructure services in France, with annual revenues approaching €800m. Circet provides a wide range of services, including engineering, deployment, installation and maintenance services to telecom operators, covering both mobile and fixed technologies. Based in the south of France (near Toulon), Circet operates a network of c.75 local branches ensuring full coverage of the French territory, employs c. 3,200 people and works with more than 2,000 subcontractors. Circet’s customer base includes all of the major players within the French telecoms industry, including all of the French national telecommunications operators, local authorities and specialist rural deployment players, equipment manufacturers, tower companies, utility companies and the French government.

eir second quarter and half year results

Results in line with expectations, with continued growth in fibre broadband, postpay mobile, TV, sport and product bundling.

eir recently announced results for the second quarter and half year ended 31st December 2018 which were in line with expectations. Second quarter revenue remained stable year on year, while EBITDA increased by €19 million or 15% year on year and operating costs reduced

by €19m or 15%. The company saw further solid growth in its key performance indicators, with more customers connecting to eir’s fibre broadband, bundling products, and consuming more TV content and mobile data than ever before.

Financial

Q2 EBITDA
€141 million

 **15%** YoY

- EBITDA growth of €19m YoY

Q2 Revenue
€322 million

 **0%** YoY

- Revenue stable YoY

Operational

670,000 fibre customers

 **13%** YoY

- 75,000 connections YoY
- 79% of Irish premises passed with fibre

Multi-play bundles

 **4 p.p.** YoY

- 31% of fixed households on 3P+bundles
- 297k eir sport customers, up 24% YoY
- 56% of consumer broadband base availing of eir sportv

557,000 postpay subs

 **7%** YoY

- 53% of customers now on postpay

Key Developments

- Commencement of €150 million mobile network upgrade
- Rural FTTH rollout now passed over 246k homes and businesses with super-fast broadband
- Voluntary leave programme successfully implemented, achieving targeted cost savings
- Insourcing of customer care, sales, and other functions nearing completion



27th February 2019

To: NEC, Scale A District Branch Secretaries and Scale C Branch Secretaries

Re: PC Pay Update

Dear Colleague,

As you might be aware the CWU has been in negotiations with eir senior management on the subject of Personal Contract (PC) pay since announcements were made by the CEO in October.

At that time, the company advised that there would be no pay increases for these staff which triggered a substantial response from PC members all over the country. On foot of this reaction the company agreed to discuss PC pay.

Following some tough discussions which required the direct intervention of the General Secretary and CEO, we can now announce the successful conclusion of a number of agreements which will see approximately 450 staff brought into scope with specific agreements for the next three years which will be ratified through the next Joint Conciliation Council (JCC).

This is a very significant and positive development for the CWU and the staff in the areas outlined below.

The sections include:

- SOMs
- FLMS
- Former Apprentices (within Openeir)
- Retail (shop) staff
- ITPP (CIO and CTO only)

In effect, staff in these sections will have the broad terms of the 2.7% remuneration increase applied to them each year for the next three years- variations that affect specific groups will be communicated to them more locally. The 2018/19 increase will be backdated to July 1st, 2018.


For those PC members who are not part of these groups we have secured a commitment that the company will issue a communication regarding the total remuneration including a pay element for the next two years (FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21). The proposed increases in the STIP bonus pay out, as announced in October, will apply for this FY 2018/19.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Fitzpatrick
General Secretary


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Staying SunSmart this summer:

Advice for workers, particularly those who work outdoors

By Kevin O'Hagan, Cancer Prevention Manager, Irish Cancer Society

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with almost 12,000 people being diagnosed in this country every year.

Most cases of skin cancer are directly caused by UV rays from the sun. Outdoor workers (including postal workers, door to door callers, drivers etc.), who spend most or a lot of their time outdoors are at a higher risk of skin cancer. That is why we are really delighted with the opportunity to partner with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions this year, to bring this message to workers across the country.

UV rays, which burn the skin, can be harmful from April to September, from 11 am in the morning until 3pm in the afternoon and it's important to remember that UV rays can be present on both sunny as well as cool and cloudy days.

Many people are great for taking care in the sun when abroad but not at home in Ireland. But it's just as important and it's needs to be part of our daily routine, particularly if we work outside. The Irish Cancer Society conducted research recently and found that 90% of the days between April and September had a UV level high enough to do damage to the skin.

For anyone who works primarily outdoors, it is



Kevin O'Hagan

even more important to be aware of sun protection. See the table below for our SunSmart code to stay safe in the sun.

Anyone who is working outdoors or spending a lot of time outside should take extra care if they have pale or freckled skin that does not tan or burns before it tans, naturally red or fair hair, blue, green or grey eyes, a large number of moles (50 or more), if they burn easily or if they or a family member have a history of skin cancer.

Generally, if you are working outside, the best piece of advice to follow is to try and organise your day around the sun's strongest rays. So if you can, get a lot of your work done before 11am or after 3pm and if you take a break during the midday sun, you should be able to avoid the highest UV levels.

And always remember to check your skin regularly. If you notice any changes at all, like a mole changing colour or shape, or a new growth or sore that doesn't heal in a few weeks, please talk to your GP. For any concerns or queries about cancer, contact the Cancer Nurseline on 1800 200 700 or visit one of our 13 Daffodil Centres nationwide.

For more information log on to www.cancer.ie

TO REDUCE YOUR RISK, SIMPLY FOLLOW OUR SUNSMART CODE TO STAY SAFE IN THE SUN.

1. Seek shade when UV rays are at their strongest – generally between 11am and 3pm.
2. Cover up by wearing a shirt with a collar and long shorts. Wear a hat that gives shade to your face, neck and ears.
3. Wear wraparound sunglasses. Make sure they give UV protection.
4. Slop on the sunscreen. Use sunscreen with SPF minimum 30 UVA protection (higher for children), 20 minutes before going outside and re-apply every two hours – more often if swimming or perspiring.
5. Be aware of and check the UV index – if it's higher than 3 then burning is likely.
6. Keep babies under six months out of the sun.

Will artificial intelligence kill the contact centre?

Does the automation of tasks mean some people will have to find a new way to work?

by Peter McGuire – Irish Times online



As artificial intelligence advances, it's likely we'll all be chatting with even more automated bots instead of humans.

YOUNG PEOPLE have stopped picking up the phone to complain. Instead, they're increasingly likely to do business over webchat, messenger or Twitter. As artificial intelligence advances, it's likely we'll all be chatting with even more automated and intelligent bots - even if they appear on the surface like a human customer service agent.

In February, the chief executive of Citigroup, Mike Corbat, suggested that "tens of thousands" of people who are currently working in their American bank centres are likely to be replaced by machines. A few days later, a report from two economists at University College Cork suggested that two in five Irish jobs might be supplanted by AI, with administration and customer service roles at particular risk, although another economist later suggested that their report was "overstated" and "fear-inducing."

So what's the reality for contact centre workers? What jobs are at risk? Might some new roles be created, or will people have to find a new way to make a living?

Dorothy O'Byrne is managing director of the Customer Contact Management Association (CCMA), which represents contact centre management and encourages knowledge sharing and continuous professional development in the sector. "Customer service has evolved with new social media and digital channels," she says. "Less calls are being handled and there is a lot of messaging, webchat and automation coming into contact centres. From our perspective, the industry is growing and thriving and the challenge is recruiting people. And as an industry, we embrace AI: it means that companies can do more in customer service, with the

simpler, more transactional activities supported through tech and the higher value tasks handled by more skilled advisers. Our members see opportunities to upskill staff to handle more complex queries."

O'Byrne says that their members are already using technology to engage with and understand their customers. "AI can do incredible things but you need to use data to establish patterns and knowledge, and this means we need people with data analysis skills. So the roles might change, and the operations might become more sophisticated but, even with the advances to date, we haven't seen significant job losses in the industry - indeed we're seeing more recruitment, particularly at eir."

Micromanagement

Ian McArdle, Telecoms National Officer for the Communication Workers' Union, represents workers in the postal, IT, telecoms and contact centre industries, and he's dubious about claims that increased automation won't lead to job losses.

"Telecom Eireann (the precursor of eir) once employed 15,000 people but, the advent of better technologies and more sophisticated platforms, that fell to 3,000. Pay in the sector is typically quite modest and it's usually considered to be entry-level work. It's quite heavily managed and that can make conditions quite difficult if a centre isn't well-run. Staff turnover can already be quite high. Automation can perhaps improve productivity and enhance the customer experience, but it can also lead to further micromanagement."

Intercom, an Irish firm that provides large and small firms with software that allows them to better

communicate with their customers, is one of the firms that is disrupting contact centres and reducing the need for staff. Des Traynor, Intercom's co-founder and chief strategy officer, says that traditional firms such as Domino's pizza are increasingly becoming internet businesses, while the movement of software firms like Adobe and entertainment companies like Spotify and Netflix into subscription models means that customer loyalty and relationships have become more important. "There's no point in getting a customer who leaves after a month. We knew that our tools could unlock customer relationships and loyalty, and our core intuition since launching intercom in 2011 - that every business needs this - has proved correct."

Photograph: Conor McCabe Photography



Des Traynor, co-founder of Intercom.

Younger customers in particular don't really want to pick up a phone anymore and expect to do their business by webchat and text. "Bots are able to do and more," says Traynor. "Things change: WhatsApp and text has disrupted voice calls and, indeed, tech-based chat - which didn't exist ten years ago - has changed how we communicate. The old 'call centre' with people on headsets is changed: today, we see a more quiet room with people talking to customer via messaging.

"Tech changes jobs, but while the numbers working in agriculture fell from 50 to just two per cent, we didn't see more unemployment, because new tech evolves jobs, it doesn't kill them. ATMs meant more bank branches opened, the cost of business decreased, productivity rose and more jobs were created. And nobody's calling for the abolition of cars as a way to bring back jobs in the horse and cart industry."

Barry Aldworth, a senior media officer with AA Insurance, says that tech and AI are already deployed in both of their Irish contact centres - and becoming more important. "The AA app is often the only way in which an AA member will contact us to report their breakdown. It tells us where they are and what's wrong, and we then have a mix of intelligent software and intelligent people to make sure we send the right resource. The customer can track us on the app in real time until we arrive. For our insurance, administration and customer service, we have technologies like web self-service, web-chat and web-bots. We see these becoming more important in the future but not directly instead of our contact centres. I suspect the mix will be different but right now and for

the foreseeable future, we are hiring staff, not just for these roles but across the board."

Humans still want to talk to other humans

Michael Madden, professor of computer science at NUI Galway and a principal investigator with the Insight Centre for Data Analytics, believes that humans still want to talk to other humans. "Empathy and comprehension are important for people, particularly if they've encountered a problem [with a product or service]," he says.

"Machines are still a far distance from replicating anything close to empathy or common sense. Tasks such as balance requests and transfers can be automated quite well but there are tasks that require common sense - such as picking up a mistake that leads to a transfer of €10,000 instead of €10 - which a machine is not going to pick up on. Computer systems can outperform humans in a clearly and crisply defined set of narrow fields, such as chess or Go, or reading handwritten digits to convey handwritten zipcodes to barcode. But they are nowhere near artificial general intelligence.

"Tasks get automated, not occupations. Our jobs are different from 15 years ago, but the predictions of mass unemployment or 20-hour working weeks have not come to pass; we are having this conversation at 7.45pm and are both working late. So I'm always skeptical of these claims."

McArdle, however, says that change is inevitable and we need to prepare for it. "It's hard to predict the extent of how jobs might be impacted, but automation has wiped out jobs and a lot of new jobs for younger workers are low-paid and cannot meet the rising costs of living. It means that we need properly funded lifelong learning so people who lose jobs can retrain, and good, decent employers who recognise collective bargaining rights."

Crunching the numbers: AI and contact centres in Ireland

60,000: the estimated number of people working in contact centres and shared service in Ireland*

Employers include: Fexco, Blizzard Entertainment, AIB, Sky Ireland, Paddy Power, Paypal, SSE Airtricity, eir, Virgin, Vodafone, Voxpro, Eishtec, Convergys

€29,652: - average salary in administration and support services roles

160: the number of staff working in the AA's administration, customer service and insurance contact centre

750: the number of in-house customer care jobs that eir intends to fill

450: the approximate number working at the Insight Centre for Data Analytics, an initiative between researchers at DCU, UCD, NUI Galway and other institutions, funded to the tune of over 100m and with over 80 industry partners

600: the number of people employed by contact centre disruptor Intercom, including at least 200 in Ireland

*according to CCMA research

WE ARE
Stronger
TOGETHER



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How the CWU Supports Women Members:

- Advice on flexible working
- Support on bullying, harassment and sexual harassment issues
- Advice on discrimination in the workplace
- Free online learning courses
- Advice on maternity rights
- Supporting women's rights at work
- Mentoring CWU women activists
- Promoting equal opportunities



UNION link

Online Learning:
Visit our platform and select a course on unionlink.org



- Do you want a quick and easy way to learn more about your union?
- Do you want to develop your knowledge and skills through online learning?
- If so, a Unionlink course is ideal for you.
- Please follow the instructions below for creating an account.

Unionlink login instructions

- To complete a course, you first need to register on Unionlink as a learner.
- The Unionlink address is unionlink.org
- To sign up for Unionlink you require a username and password. To get this you will need to create an account by filling out the “create account” form with your details.
- Some of your details will include your membership number so please ensure you have this at hand when creating your account.
- You will then be sent an e-mail with a web link that you click on to confirm your registration.
- If you do not receive a confirmation email within a few minutes, please first check your spam folder. If it’s not in spam, please send an email to support@unionlink.org and we will confirm your account.
- Once your account has been confirmed you can log in and select the course you wish to enrol on.
- If you are prompted for an enrolment key, then please enter the key as supplied by your Course Administrator or by emailing support@unionlink.org to request the key.
- If you encounter any difficulties, please refer to the registration FAQ on the front page of the website or email the helpdesk support@unionlink.org
- You can also contact Carol in CWU head office for further assistance.

Good luck and we hope you enjoy Unionlink!

SOME EDUCATION DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Equality Rep	April 10th & 11th
BS Stage 1	April 16th & 17th, May 14th, 15th & 16th
Chairperson	May 7th, 8th & 9th
Branch Officer	May 29th
Treasurer	May 30th
BS Stage 2	June 4th, 5th & 6th
Advanced Branch Officer	September 17th, 18th & 19th



G.S. Circular No. 07/19

INFORMATION

5th March 2019

Re: CWU Education Grant Scheme 2019

Dear Colleague,

The Union is pleased to invite applications for our Education Grant Scheme which is open to members and their dependants.

For the purposes of the CWU Education Grant Scheme, “dependant” is defined as :

- A child or adopted child of a member;
- The husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner of a member; and/or
- A person for whom a member is acting in the place of a parent (including but not limited to a child or adopted child of a member’s husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner).

The CWU Education Grant Scheme is made up of the following three categories:

1. Gaeltacht Awards

Up to 20 awards will be made each year for Gaeltacht students to help cover the cost of their participation in a Gaeltacht course. The grant will help cover course materials, tuition fees and accommodation for up to 22 days to a maximum value of €350. This payment will be made to those successful in the draw retrospectively on production of the course receipt. The Gaeltacht award is for courses held this **summer, 2019 only**.

2. Second Level Awards

Up to 30 awards will be made annually to second level students. Each award will be worth €400 to help with the purchase of schoolbooks and class materials.

Members studying for the Junior and/or Leaving Certificate as mature students can also apply for this award.

For those successful in the draw, it will be necessary to get the Union’s confirmation form signed and stamped by the secondary school confirming the grant winner is a student for the upcoming September 2019 term. The form will be provided by the Union to the grant winners.

3. Third Level Education Awards

The third level category will offer up to four awards annually. The award will be worth up to €2,000 for each year of study up to a maximum of four years. These awards will be made to Union members or members’ dependants involved in study or research at Diploma, Degree, Post-Graduate Diploma or Post-Graduate Degree level. In line with the aforementioned levels of study, if members are not sure which course they or their dependant will be doing they may indicate this on the enclosed application form as “to be decided”.

Members who have already commenced approved

courses can also apply.

Awards will be made on an annual basis for each year of study. Awards will not be given for a repeat year.

For those successful in the draw for the third level award, it will be necessary to provide documentation indicating acceptance onto the course by the college which confirms that the grant winner is a student for the upcoming 2019 academic year.

Application Criteria for the three Grant Scheme Categories:

1. The successful applicant must be in benefit when both the application and the payments are made and for the duration of the course as relevant.
2. For transparency purposes, applications must be made on the **current 2019** official form and no other version of the form will be processed. Photocopies of the forms and faxed copies are also acceptable.
3. The form must be dated and signed by the member applying.
4. Only one application per member, per dependant, per category will be accepted. However, members may enter each of the three categories if they or their dependants are attending the Gaeltacht, second level or third level institutions. (For example, if a member has more than one dependant in second level they should send in a separate application for each dependant).
5. Grants will be awarded by means of a draw which will take place at a date and time to be decided by the National Executive Council.
6. The decision of the National Executive Council on all matters relating to this scheme shall be final.
7. Grants will be non-transferable and must be claimed by **December 2nd, 2019**.

Review and Monitoring of Scheme

This scheme will be launched to coincide with the upcoming academic year from September 2018. Again, for the Gaeltacht award this refers to courses held this **summer, 2019**. The Union is committed to monitoring this scheme and it will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Education Committee considering the applications received, budgeting and requirements of members. Comments and feedback from members on the operation of the scheme is invited.

Members must ensure that they fill out the correct form for the relevant category. Also, due to the volume of forms received by Head Office it will not be possible to confirm receipt of individual applications on behalf of members.

It will be the responsibility of each member to ensure that their forms are returned on time to Union Head Office as late applications will not be accepted. In that regard we would ask members to post their forms directly to Union HQ. All forms must be returned to Union Head Office by **Friday, May 17th, 2019** to the following address: **Communications Workers’ Union, William Norton House, 575-577 North Circular Road, Dublin 1**.

Queries

Members who have any queries on the scheme or the application process are encouraged to contact Union Head Office directly for further assistance.

CWU GAELTACHT GRANT 2019 ENTRY FORM

I hereby declare that I am an in-benefit member of CWU and I wish to enter my application below for inclusion in the draw for the Gaeltacht Grant which is to take place in accordance with the conditions stipulated in CWU General Circular 07/19

(PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK LETTERS)

NOTE: Closing date for entries is Friday, May 17th 2019 and only successful applicants from the draw will be notified.

Name of Gaeltacht

Name of Applicant

Address

.....

Name of Union Member

Address

.....

Contact Telephone Number

Relationship to Applicant*

Place of Employment

Address

.....

Union Branch Staff Number

I agree to be bound by all conditions and decisions of the National Executive Council.

DATA PROTECTION:

The information collected here will only be used for the purpose of entering the Education Grant Scheme draw and will not be shared with any third-party. If you consent to the use of your data for this purpose, please sign the form below.

Signed: **Date:**

*** For the purposes of the CWU Education Grant Scheme, “dependant” is defined as:**

- A child or adopted child of a member;
- The husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner of a member; and/or
- A person for whom a member is acting in the place of a parent (including but not limited to a child or adopted child of a member’s husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner).

CWU SECOND LEVEL AWARDS 2019 ENTRY FORM

I hereby declare that I am an in-benefit member of CWU and I wish to enter my application below for inclusion in the draw for the Second Level Awards which is to take place in accordance with the conditions stipulated in CWU General Circular 07/19

(PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK LETTERS)

NOTE: Closing date for entries is Friday, May 17th 2019 and only successful applicants from the draw will be notified.

Name of Applicant

Address

.....

Name of Union Member

Address

.....

Contact Telephone Number

Relationship to Applicant*

Place of Employment

Address

.....

Union Branch Staff Number

I agree to be bound by all conditions and decisions of the National Executive Council.

DATA PROTECTION:

The information collected here will only be used for the purpose of entering the Education Grant Scheme draw and will not be shared with any third-party. If you consent to the use of your data for this purpose, please sign the form below.

Signed: **Date:**

*** For the purposes of the CWU Education Grant Scheme, “dependant” is defined as:**

- A child or adopted child of a member;
- The husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner of a member; and/or
- A person for whom a member is acting in the place of a parent (including but not limited to a child or adopted child of a member’s husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner).

CWU THIRD LEVEL AWARDS 2019 ENTRY FORM

I hereby declare that I am an in-benefit member of CWU and I wish to enter my application below for inclusion in the draw for the Third Level Awards which is to take place in accordance with the conditions stipulated in CWU General Circular 07/19

(PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK LETTERS)

NOTE: Closing date for entries is Friday, May 17th 2019 and only successful applicants from the draw will be notified.

Course Title

Educational Institute:

Duration of Course: No. of years remaining:

Name of Applicant

Address

Name of Union Member

Address

Contact Telephone Number

Relationship to Applicant*

Place of Employment

Address

Union Branch Staff Number

I agree to be bound by all conditions and decisions of the National Executive Council.

DATA PROTECTION:

The information collected here will only be used for the purpose of entering the Education Grant Scheme draw and will not be shared with any third-party. If you consent to the use of your data for this purpose, please sign the form below.

Signed: **Date:**

*** For the purposes of the CWU Education Grant Scheme, “dependant” is defined as:**

- A child or adopted child of a member;
- The husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner of a member; and/or
- A person for whom a member is acting in the place of a parent (including but not limited to a child or adopted child of a member’s husband, wife, civil partner or co-habiting partner).



Campaign to Boycott Eurovision 2019

Campaign comments on Sarah McTernan's announcement as the Irish entry

With the announcement of Sarah McTernan as Ireland's entry to the Eurovision in Israel, Palestinian rights campaigners held a lunchtime protest outside RTÉ Studios on Stillorgan Road on Friday 8th March. Campaigners handed in an additional 5,500 signatures to an online petition calling on RTÉ and Ms McTernan not to take part in the Eurovision, bringing the total number of signatures to over 16,500. The highly visual action featured a mock Apartheid Wall, and colourful flags, banners and placards, and saw some of Ireland's top musicians, singers and other cultural figures present.

Addressing her comments to the Irish contestant, Zoë Lawlor, a spokesperson for the Campaign said "While we congratulate Sarah McTernan on her selection, which is a great honour for her, we must unfortunately draw her attention to the call from Palestinian artists, journalists, LGBTQIA+ and civil society organisations for artists of conscience to refuse to take part in the Eurovision in Israel due to that state's ongoing brutal oppression of the Palestinian people."

Ms Lawlor appealed for Sarah McTernan to refuse to take part: "Ireland has a proud tradition of standing with the oppressed and against injustice and we sincerely hope that Sarah McTernan will take this opportunity to stand on the right side of history by listening to the Palestinian and international calls for a boycott. It would be a principled stand for freedom, justice, equality and a show of solidarity and empathy with the oppressed."

Ms Lawlor drew attention to Israel's atrocious human rights record as a reason for Ireland to refuse to take

part in the Eurovision: "Israel has an appalling human rights record, has repeatedly been accused of war crimes by the United Nations and human rights organisations, and routinely uses cultural events to whitewash its crimes against the Palestinian people. Just last week a UN Commission of Inquiry concluded that Israel likely committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in its attacks on unarmed protesters in Gaza last year. Israeli forces killed 183 Palestinians, including 35 children, journalists and paramedics, people who were demonstrating for their legally guaranteed Right of Return to the homes they were ethnically cleansed from in 1948. We believe that for an Irish artist to perform just down the road from where Palestinian refugees are being shot down by Israeli snipers should be absolutely unconscionable."

Ms Lawlor continued by pointing out the politicised nature of the contest: "The notion that the Eurovision in Israel is "non-political" is simply not credible, in fact Israel has made this year's Eurovision explicitly militaristic and political in nature. This is especially so as the contestants will be expected to perform in front of 500 soldiers from the Israeli military, and they will be staying in a village built on the ethnically cleansed ruins of the Al-Manshiyya quarter of Jaffa, whose indigenous residents are long-term refugees forcibly exiled by Israel. Furthermore, it has been reported that the Israeli state broadcaster will screen 'visual postcards' featuring locations in Israel's colonial settlements in occupied territories in Palestine and Syria, and attempt to 'normalise' these grave violations of international law."

Ms. Lawlor continued: "Furthermore, despite a supposed commitment to allow Eurovision fans to enter the state 'regardless of political opinions', Palestinian fans - whether from the occupied Palestinian territories or the refugee diaspora - are highly unlikely to be allowed entry to attend the contest, reflecting Israel's discriminatory apartheid system imposed upon Palestinians."

Ms Lawlor concluded by reiterating the widespread

support for the call for a boycott in Ireland: “The boycott call has been supported by over 16,500 people in Ireland, the Musicians Union of Ireland, Irish Equity and many prominent figures associated with former Eurovision contests, as well as respected public figures in the arts, humanities and human and civil rights

fields. In the region of 100,000 people all over Europe, including more than 100 LGBTQIA+ organisations, have called for a boycott, and most importantly of all, it is what Palestinians themselves are asking us to do. We ask Sarah McTernan to respect their call and refuse to take part in the Eurovision in Apartheid Israel.”

The CWU, at its Biennial Conference in 2018, passed a motion in support of the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) Movement, and the Union is calling on all members to add their support to this current campaign. To sign the online petition, please visit:

<https://www.ipsc.ie/eurovision/sign-the-irish-call-to-boycott-eurovision-2019-in-israel>

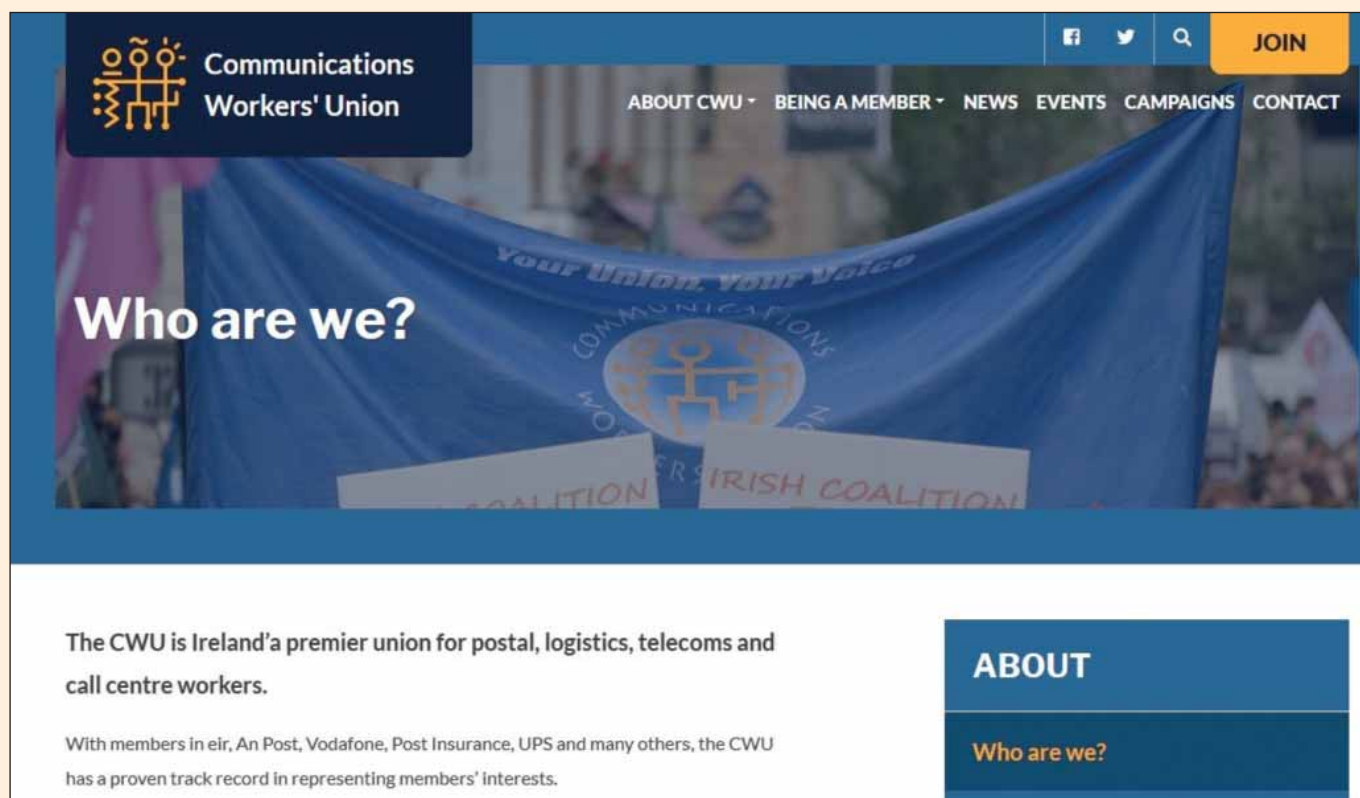
This petition is also accessible through the CWU’s Facebook page (CWU Ireland) & website.

REDESIGN OF CWU WEBSITE – MEMBER LOGIN

The CWU is delighted to announce that work on the redesign of the Union’s website is now complete and the site is now live. The old registration/login system has

been discontinued and a single members’ password will be utilised on the new site, which will be updated from time-to-time.

The current password is:
CwuCircularsPass



MEDISAN - My Story

by Tom Prendergast
Portlaoise Postal Branch Secretary

As I was training to do my 99th & 100th half marathons in 2016 I got a slight chest pain that turned into an procedure to have heart stenting. Thankfully I did not have the heart attack that I was told was imminent.

Once I was well enough, I began training again. I came across adverts for *Mo Running* events in a magazine and as the runs were in aide of men's health awareness month, I was very interested. The world organisers of the runs rename the month of November to *Movember*. The aim of the event is to promote men's health and awareness of certain health issues and to check themselves in the same way that women do regarding specific cancers.

I made the *Dublin 10k* event my goal to aid my recovery, which was very pleasing to achieve. I went on to complete my 99th and 100th half marathons and was over the moon. I then decided that I would do the *Movember* run every year, even if I have to walk them. I noticed that the *Movember* run also had an event in Belfast the day after Dublin run, so I decided I would also do that one.

In May 2017, I was in the early stage of diagnoses of an aggressive form of throat cancer. When all test and plans were made, treatment was not to commence until the week after the events. I went ahead and completed both events and I informed the organisers of my plight. Treatment commenced the week after and I went to hell and back, as the treatment was also very aggressive, a very long horrific experience. Fortunately I came out the other side and went on to make a full recovery.

Then in June 2018, to my horror, life threw another health problem my way: after having blood tests, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. As my treatment was not due to begin until early December, I decided to carry on with my training and I completed both *Movember* runs. The organisers of the event presented me with a *Movember Legends* medal for all my efforts during very difficult personal times. The treatment began a few weeks after the runs and went very well, and I completed 39 radiotherapy treatments.

The moral of this story, lads, is we all need to take responsibility for our own health and when things seem to be 'off' we should not ignore them: we should see a doctor and put aside any embarrassment we might feel or that macho voice telling you, "It'll be alright". With all my 3 major illnesses I had never once felt any major pain prior to treatment and they could easily have gone undiagnosed, and untreated, if they hadn't been caught in time, so don't take things for granted and take better care of yourself.

Very early in my time as a Union activist, whilst attending a training course, there was a section on the *Medisan* scheme available to CWU members. It was

presented as a very worthy scheme that would assist you and fellow contributors in times of financial difficulties whilst being treated for various illness, but something that you didn't want to have to access. I am so glad I joined this scheme as I have needed it to get through these difficult times and take the financial worry out of my experience. If you want to join this scheme please speak to your Union Branch Secretary, who will be able to help you, because you never know when you may need it. Hopefully you never do!



benefits you can afford

Affordable benefits
for only €1.50 a week

Spring Communications
POST eircom
Medisan

The advertisement features a photograph of a smiling female doctor in a white coat with a stethoscope, standing behind a smiling man and a young girl who are embracing each other. The background is a warm orange gradient. The text 'benefits you can afford' is written in a white cursive font at the top. Below it, the text 'Affordable benefits for only €1.50 a week' is displayed in a white sans-serif font. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo for 'Spring Communications' containing the logos for 'POST' and 'eircom', with the word 'Medisan' written below the circle.

Hundreds of new members in Regional Call Centres

As part of eir's overall strategy to insource customer facing areas it was decided that the work that had been outsourced to HCL, primarily in Dublin, would be undertaken by direct eir employees.

Difficulties with hiring and attrition in Dublin caused significant business challenges. While this is always a challenge in call centres, it was considered especially so in Dublin due to the cost of living. For these reasons, the company felt that basing its customer services facilities in the Regions would offer more stability.

Existing operations in Cork and Limerick were expanded and a new facility opened in Sligo with new hires in all three sites. Further, where there were existing HCL staff in Cork and Limerick, those members transferred their employment to eir.

The scale and speed of these changes have naturally created some issues for our members in this area. A Regional Sub-Group of the National Executive has been ratified to look specifically at these issues and has already

met with the company to progress them.

From the beginning Organisers, together with the local Branches, have been meeting with new staff in inductions and inviting them to join the union. We are delighted to report that the vast majority of these new staff made the decision to join the CWU. Furthermore, many of our new members have put themselves forward as activists for their area, with Section committees being formed and training planned.

The CWU would like to welcome the nearly 400 new members that have joined in the last few months, now working alongside our existing members who transferred from HCL.

This has been a massive undertaking for the Organising team, together with the local Branches, ensuring that every new member of staff is offered the opportunity to join the union and this effort will be required for the foreseeable future. Recruitment is ongoing in the three sites and we look forward to welcoming even more members into the union.

Vodafone Retail

Last year, the CWU successfully negotiated an improved targets structure for our members in Vodafone Retail. Members reported that the previous structure based on both store & individual targets were unachievable, resulting in a loss of commission payments.

Within the new structure, there is more emphasis on individual targets based on attendance & performance. The points multiplier was adjusted to include a 60% threshold which will help staff to reach commission during challenging sales periods. Members report that the new structures have improved their ability to earn commission payments.

The improved structure was achieved on foot of an extensive campaign by the Organising Department and the Vodafone Branch over the course of a year. Members were engaged on the issue through surveys and numerous store visits.

Recently, our members have reported some problems with the IT systems and the recording of sales. In order to gain accurate information on how these issues are affecting our members, a union survey was compiled. Organisers,

together with the Vodafone Branch, visited Vodafone Retail stores across the country to distribute the survey. These visits have been extremely positive with members not only engaging with the union on the issues but proposing potential solutions to be presented to Vodafone management.

Some of our members were not present on the days of the visits so, to ensure that every member had the opportunity to have their say, an online version of the survey was also created.

The Vodafone branch is delighted to report that many new workers in Vodafone have made the decision to join the union and we would like to welcome our new members to the CWU.

The Union's intention is to now engage in discussions with Vodafone Retail management with a view to dealing with the issues raised in the survey. The union wishes to thank all of those who participated in the survey and for providing their feedback and comments.

Members will be kept up to date on the progress of these discussions.



Ruairí Creaney Moves On

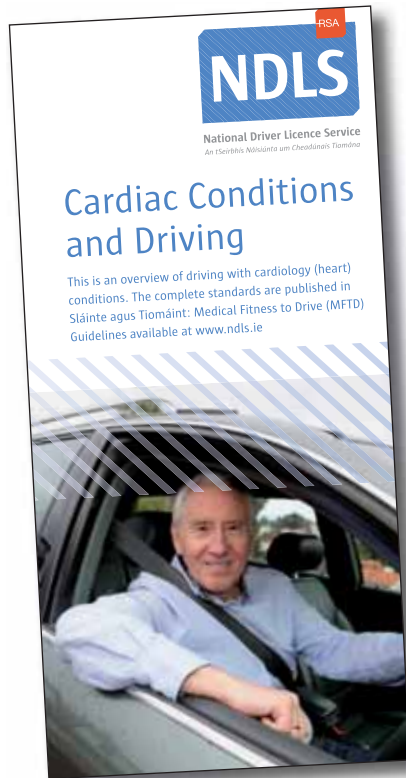
It is with regret that we report that Ruairí Creaney has moved on from his role with the CWU Organising team. Ruairí took up the position of CWU Organiser four and half years ago and has been an integral part of the Organising Team. During his time at the CWU, Ruairí was responsible

for recruiting, representing and training new members of the CWU. In addition, he ran numerous successful campaigns in BT, eir Retail and, most notably, for our members in the 999 service.

The CWU wishes Ruairí the very best of luck in his new role.

Driving for Work – Health Guidelines

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) and the National Driver License Service (NDLS) has issued extensive guidelines in relation to fitness to drive and the impact of certain illnesses, to make working drivers more aware of the main health issues that may affect them. This is to improve their ability to drive safely and we have set out below some of the main areas for your information.



Fitness to Drive

A driver needs to be both physically and mentally fit to drive. Drivers should inform their employer about any health issue or personal circumstance that may affect their driving. It is important to remember that fitness to drive can be affected by a range of issues such as Fatigue. Medical fitness, Stressful events, Eyesight, Alcohol/Drugs

The RSA in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority and An Gardai has developed guidelines, Driving for Work – Driver Health Guidelines which can be downloaded from the Road Safety Authority’s website www.rsa.ie.

Fatigue

Fatigue is the decline in mental and/or physical performance that results from prolonged exertion, lack of quality sleep or disruption to the bodies circadian or clock rhythms. A driver who is fatigued may nod off momentarily while driving with very serious consequences. Fatigue is a major contributory cause of fatal and serious vehicle collisions and incidents. They are usually severe because a driver who has nodded off momentarily cannot brake or take avoidance action while driving at speed.

MEASURES TO TACKLE DRIVER FATIGUE	
Make sure you are well rested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a sleep disorder get medical attention • Try and get a good night’s sleep before a long journey • Lack of sleep over a period of time can result in a sleep deficit which could cause you to nod off while driving • If you are continually tired, discuss it with your doctor
Avoid the most dangerous driving times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible do not drive at night or in the early morning hours
Reduce your driving time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take regular breaks every 2 hours on long journeys • Follow safe or legal limits on maximum driving distances and journey times • Comply with tachograph rules if you are subject to them (HGV and bus drivers)
If you feel tired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop in a safe location • Take a caffeine drink and have a short rest of nap for 15 to 20 minutes • If necessary, sleep overnight
Discuss concerns with your manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are concerned about your driving hours, journeys or schedules (including any planned training) or if you feel tired when driving, discuss these with your manager

Medical Fitness

All drivers are required to be medically fit for driving. This applies both to drivers using their own private vehicles and commercial or professional drivers. Drivers are classified as either Group 1 or Group 2. Group 1 includes motor cars for private use, motor cycles and tractors. Group 2 includes vans, trucks and buses used for professional and commercial use. Vehicles in Group 2 are regarded as a higher risk which requires a higher standard of physical and mental fitness on the part of the driver.

Medical Report Form D501

When applying for a driver licence to the NDLS for the first time or when applying for a renewal licence, your application must be accompanied by a medical report form D501 if you:

- are applying for a Group 2 driving licence (categories C, C1, CE, C1E, D, D1, DE, D1E)
- will be 70 years of age or more on the first day of the period for which the licence is being granted
- suffer from one or more of the of the listed disabilities or diseases e.g. epilepsy, diabetes
- are taking drugs or medications on a regular basis which would be likely to cause the driving of a vehicle by you to be a source of danger

In these situations, you are required to undergo a medical examination by a doctor who will complete the medical report form D501. The completed form will indicate:

- whether you are fit or unfit to drive
- the groups of vehicles you are fit to drive
- the period in years you are fit to drive
- whether any adaptations to the vehicle are required because of a physical disability you have
- whether you have a limb prosthesis/orthesis
- whether you need to wear corrective lenses

Patient Advisory Form

If you develop a medical condition which may impact on your fitness to drive in the intervening period between a renewal licence, your doctor may advise you to contact the NDLS to let them know of the condition. It is likely that the NDLS will then require you to provide a completed form D501.

In addition to the guidance issued by the Road Safety Authority the National Driver Licence Service has also issued guidelines on the following:

- Cardiac Conditions and Driving
- Diabetes and Driving
- Alcohol and Driving
- Medicines and Driving
- Sleep Apnoea
- Epilepsy
- Dementia

All drivers are expected to inform the NDLS, either when applying for a licence or renewing their licence, if they suffer from certain medical conditions or if they are undergoing treatment which may affect their driving ability. The list which is not exhaustive and is detailed on their website includes the following:

- Diabetes treated by insulin and or sulphonylurea tablets (your doctor can advise whether you are on these or not). The NDLS does not need to be informed if the condition is managed by other tablets and or diet
- Epilepsy.
- Stroke or TIAs (minor strokes) with any associated symptoms lasting longer than one month.
- Fits or blackouts.
- Any type of brain surgery, brain abscess or severe head Injury involving in-patient treatment or brain tumour or spinal injury or spinal tumour
- An implanted cardiac pacemaker.
- An implanted cardiac defibrillator (ICD). This is an electronic device which monitors your heart continuously. It is programmed to detect abnormally fast or slow heart rhythms.
- Repeated attacks of sudden disabling dizziness.
- Any other chronic neurological condition such as multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, Parkinson disease and Huntington's disease.
- A serious problem with memory or periods of confusion
- Persistent alcohol misuse or dependency.
- Persistent drug misuse or dependency.
- Serious psychiatric illness or mental health problems.
- Parkinson's disease.
- Sleep Apnoea syndrome.
- Narcolepsy.
- Any condition affecting the drivers peripheral vision.
- Total loss of sight in one eye.
- Any condition affecting both eyes, or the remaining eye if driver only has one eye (Not including colour blindness or short or long sight).
- A serious hearing deficiency.
- Any persisting problem with arm(s) or leg(s) which needs driving to be restricted to certain types of vehicle or those with adapted controls.
- Adaptation of the driver's vehicle because of a physical disability to enable you to drive.
- Severe learning disability.

Set out below is the guidelines given by the NDLS in relation to Cardiac Conditions and Driving which is an example of the guidelines available.

Vehicles and Categories

Vehicles are divided into two groups, however, for the purpose of assessing medical fitness of drivers the groups are based on the mental and physical demands

placed on the driver of the vehicle and on the potential danger in the event of loss of control by the driver.

The grouping of vehicle categories for driver fitness purpose is: -

Group 1 categories include the following license types AM, A1, A2, A, B, BE, or W i.e. motorcycles, cars and tractors (with or without trailers)

Group 2 categories include the following license types C1, C, C1E, CE, D1, D, D1E, DE i.e. trucks and buses (without trailer)

The vehicles in Group 2 are regarded as higher-risk vehicles which require a higher standard of physical and

mental fitness on the part of the driver. Group 2 standards are minimum standards and do not preclude employers setting higher standards in terms of the demands of the driving tasks encountered.

Cardiac Conditions and Driving

Generally, Group 2 drivers with cardiac conditions must stop driving for longer periods than Group 1 drivers – for example, after a seizure or a heart attack. If you develop a heart condition during the term of your licence, your doctor will advise you on when you can resume driving and whether you need to contact the NDLS. Below are some of the standards given in the Medical Fitness to Drive guidelines.

DRIVING A BUS OR TRUCK (GROUP 2)	
DRIVER GUIDELINES	
A heart attack (acute myocardial infarction)	You must stop driving for at least 4 weeks, and your doctor will advise you on when you can resume driving. You must notify NDLS
angina	If you have any symptoms – whether they are being treated or not – you must stop driving. You should not resume driving until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are free from angina symptoms for at least 4 weeks; You can satisfy the exercise or other functional test requirements and You have no other disqualifying conditions. You must notify NDLS
Elective angioplasty and/or stent	You must stop driving for at least 4 weeks. After that, you may resume driving if you can satisfy the exercise or other functional test requirements and you must have no other disqualifying condition. You must notify NDLS
Atrial fibrillation, cardiac arrhythmia	You must not drive if the arrhythmia has caused or is likely to cause incapacity. You may resume driving when the arrhythmia is controlled for at least 3 months and you have no other disqualifying conditions. You do not have to notify the NDLS unless there are distracting/disabling symptoms.
cardiomyopathy	You must not drive if you have any symptoms for example shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting, chest pain and pressure (angina), heart palpitations, swelling in the legs and feet (edema) and abdomen (tummy). You can only resume driving when your doctor is satisfied that you meet the criteria set out in the Medical Fitness to Drive Guidelines. You must have exercise testing every 3 years. You must notify NDLS
An implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD)	You must not drive. You must contact the NDLS and surrender your Group 2 licence

Continued overleaf.

Continued.

DRIVING A BUS OR TRUCK (GROUP 2)	
DRIVER GUIDELINES	
A cardiac pacemaker	You should not drive for 4 weeks after a pacemaker is inserted. You may resume driving after that provided you have no other disqualifying condition.
Open heart surgery (CABG)	You must stop driving for at least 3 months. You may resume driving after that provided your doctor(s) is satisfied that you meet the conditions set out in the MFTD Guidelines. You must notify NDLS
Successful catheter ablation for an arrhythmia that has caused or would likely have caused incapacity	You should not drive for 6 weeks.

Tips about resuming driving

- If you are in any doubt about your fitness to drive, consult your doctor.
- When you resume driving, take it in easy stages.
- Driving with a passenger can be helpful.
- Avoid heavy traffic and motorways until you know you can cope.
- Give yourself plenty of time for your journey.
- Do not drive for longer than 2 hours without a break.
- Try to keep calm and relaxed. If you find driving stressful, leave it for a while until you feel a bit better.

Know when to stop

You should stop driving if you experience:

- central chest pain, tightness or pressure that may spread to your jaw or arms,
- shortness of breath,
- excessive fatigue,
- dizziness, fainting, nausea or sweatiness.

If you experience any of these symptoms, it is your legal responsibility as a driver to stop driving and consult with your doctor who will try to help you manage your symptoms.

What if I don't agree that I should stop driving?

If your doctor tells you to stop driving and you disagree, you can get a second opinion. You must stop driving until the opinion has been completed and you get permission to drive again.

What will happen if I still drive?

It is important to strike a balance between mobility and safety. If you continue to drive against medical advice or ignore early warning symptoms, and evidence is found of this, it will affect your insurance, and the NDLS and Gardaí will take action to remove your licence.



MDN/Network-Joint Review

an post plans to automate the Parcels/Packets at Dublin Parcels Hub and Dublin Mail Centre. Arising from this, the CWU and **an post**, as part of the implementation agreement, has established a Joint Working Group to examine the impact of these changes, together with associated driving issues.

In line with the undertakings made to Conference the Joint Working Group will, in the course of its review, examine the following issues:

- Pay, Allowances & Subsistence
- Training requirements
- Tachograph Legislation
- Reserve drivers
- National MDN/Network changes

Postal Branches have been invited to submit nominations to the Group to CWU HQ by Friday 29th March 2019

In addition to the above, the specific company changes impacting on driving duties at DPH, DMC, Merrywell and Ravensdale Road, as summarised below, with the assistance of CWU HQ, will be dealt with by the DPAB and DPDB.

- Changes to Network and Dublin conveyance arrangements arising from the installation of automation machinery in DPH
- Consolidation of transport operations at the DMC (including DSU conveyance, Ravensdale Road garage and Merrywell operations)

In preparation for these discussions and to give effect to the Rationalisation Report adopted by the NEC, arrangements were made by the DPDB/DPAB to fill the reserved seats for members of the seceded Dublin Drivers Branch. This ensures CWU dedicated drivers retain an influence and real input to addressing any issues of concern.

Parcels/Packets Automation

an post has experienced fundamental changes in its Mails business, similar to those being experienced globally by other postal operators. While letter mail volumes continue to decline, parcels and packets volumes are increasing at a significant rate. In these circumstances, the company is required to refocus its automated processing capabilities away from letter processing to parcels/packets processing, which essentially remains a manual process. The Union has advocated for some time that the Company must invest in and grow the Parcels and Packet market. In more recent times the company has accepted this, and we are thankful at a point whereby we are increasing market share, which is protecting and maintaining employment.

In order to develop and grow the business further, the Union accepts the need to introduce new automated technology to ensure that **an post** has the technical capability to continue to grow its parcels and packets business and to outperform the market in which **an post** operates. To ensure our members interests and impact of the changes are fully dealt with, the National Executive Council has endorsed an implementation agreement, the main points of which, are as follows:

- Staff impact issues arising from the implementation of the Company's parcels/packets automation plans will be addressed with CWU under existing agreed procedures and agreements.
- There are two main areas of change to the existing parcels operations, the first being transitional

changes, which are being implemented to facilitate the erection of the automated machinery within DPH in 2019. Further transitional change will be required to facilitate implementation of new packet machine in the DMC in 2020.

- Future staffing levels at DPH & DMC will be agreed with the CWU three months after 'go live'. A joint working group will be established, to review data in relation to these areas on an ongoing basis, throughout the 12-week period.
- Operational changes to the MDN Network arising from the changes will be discussed and agreed with the CWU. A joint working group will be established to examine the impact of these changes. This review will focus on the following areas: training requirements, tachograph regulations, OWT impact, transport legislation, reserve driver requirements and pay.
- Implementation of automated machinery will impact on the staffing requirements as the move takes place from a manual to automated processing operation. The company will address these in the context of existing agreements with the CWU.
- The Company has previously advised that the Merrywell site will close. It will remain open as a temporary processing site, pending the implementation of automation, the Company will formally close this facility during the implementation period and undertakes to address staff impact issues with the CWU.

A WHOLE LOT OF REBRANDING GOING ON!

an post rebrands itself

When An Post CEO, Davy McRedmond, officially launched the company multi million euro rebrand, he advocated it was a momentous day for the postal service provider. Costing a cool 7 million, the design consultants dropped the wavy franking lines in favour of a fresh mint green on a pared back celtic type design. At the gathering in the circus like tent, pitched for the event in the central courtyard of the GPO Dublin, the rebrand was unveiled together with a redefined purpose with much aplomb.

“To act for the common good and to improve the quality of life in Ireland, now and for generations to come”

One critic in attendance pointed out this made no reference to the services provided by the company. The new purpose could more easily be attributed to the new Children’s hospital.

Staff were also more than perplexed as to how the expensive consultants reimagined this vision as it is more of an update of the Irish Proclamation unveiled over a hundred years earlier, rather than a Postal Service operator. This replaces the previous vision **“to provide a world class**

an
post



postal distribution and financial services with unrivalled local community access and global connection”.

However, the rebrand launch had suffered an embarrassing leak, when the Retail wing unveiled the new logo at Gurteen Post Office Sligo, a week before it was designated by Retail to close. Now aren’t they some Brand Ambassadors.

On the new Brand, the jury is out, with ultimately the customer deciding.

Other Postal Operators Mottos:

DHL: The Logistics company for the World

Royal Mail: To be recognised as the best delivery company in UK

Australia Post: Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday



*Seán McDonagh,
Deputy General Secretary, CWU,
in a Artic simulator at the
DHL Innovation Centre, Bonn.*

Group Cover

CWU Family Personal Accident Scheme

Member & Spouse/Partner & Children

The scheme provides cover in the event that a member, spouse/partner and/or child sustain accidental bodily injury. It is arranged by Halligan Insurances and is underwritten by AmTrust Europe Limited. If you already avail of the cover and have any queries or wish to join this scheme please contact Halligan Insurances on Tel: 01 879 7100.

Benefits	Member	Partner	Child
Accidental Death	€70,000	€70,000	€10,000
Permanent Total Disablement	€70,000	€70,000	€35,000
Loss of Limbs / Sight	€70,000	€70,000	€35,000
Loss of Speech	€70,000	€70,000	€35,000
Loss of Hearing	up to €70,000	up to €70,000	up to €35,000
Other Permanent Disabilities*	up to €70,000	up to €70,000	up to €35,000
Hospitalisation	€300 per week	€300 per week	€150 per week
Fracture to Arm (a full break of humerus, radius, ulna or wrist)	€750	€750	€375
Fracture to Leg (a full break of femur, patella, tibia, fibula or ankle)	€1,500	€1,500	€750
Burns covering 27% or more of the body	€6,000	€6,000	€3,000
Burns covering 18% to 27% of the body	€5,000	€5,000	€2,500
Burns covering 9% to 18% of the body	€4,000	€4,000	€2,000
Burns covering 4.5% to 9% of the body	€2,000	€2,000	€1,000
Temporary Total Disablement	€300 per week	€300 per week	Nil

* Continental scale defined in the Terms and Conditions.

Rates:  **Individual** (member only) **€1.65 per week**

 **Family** (member, partner & children) **€2.48 per week**

- For forms of permanent disablement not specified above the degree of disability will be assessed by comparison with the benefits payable for specific disabilities.
- When more than one form of disablement results from one accident, the benefit from each are added together but no more than €70,000 shall be paid.
- Permanent total disablement means disablement that prevents a member, spouse/partner or child from working in gainful employment of any and every kind.
- Hospitalisation shall be payable if a member, spouse/partner or child is an in-patient for more than 24 hours as a result of accidental bodily injury up to maximum 26 weeks.
- Temporary total disablement, which totally prevents a member from carrying out their occupation, shall be payable from the 27th week of disablement and for a maximum of 104 weeks. For back and neck injuries, including whiplash, benefit is payable from the 53rd week.
- Benefits are payable in addition to any other compensation you may receive from any other sources.
- All children are covered (including legally adopted and step children) as long as they are unmarried and aged under 18 years or under 23 years if in full-time education.

Operative time:

Cover operative 24 hours a day on a worldwide basis.

Principle exclusions:

Intentional self injury, suicide or attempted suicide, sickness or disease, fractures due to osteoporosis, any naturally occurring condition or degenerative process, any gradually operating cause, professional sports, hazardous sports, war, flying other than as a fare paying passenger.

The above is a summary of the cover provided by this policy. For full details of cover, terms, conditions and exclusions please refer to the Master Policy which can be inspected at Halligan Insurances, William Norton House, 575 North Circular Road, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 8797100 Email: info@halligan.ie.

Halligan 
INSURANCES

Arranged by Halligan Insurances

What is the CWU Group Life Scheme?

The CWU Group Life Scheme provides a lump sum payment in the event of death of a Member or Spouse once covered under the plan.

Tax Relief is allowed on the Members premium and in addition, it automatically covers your children (aged 1 up to 21) for €10,000 on premature death, at no additional charge.

CWU Members are eligible to join from age 18 up to age 60 can apply, and once accepted, can remain in the Group Scheme up to age 80, once premiums are paid and they remain a CWU Member.

The Member and Spouse are insured for the levels shown in the table below:

Age band	MEMBER weekly premium	CWU Member Benefit		Age band	SPOUSE weekly premium	CWU Spouse Benefit	
18 to 34	€3.89	€90,000	Active Member	18 to 34	€3.46	€70,000	Active Member
35 to 44	€3.89	€90,000	Active Member	35 to 44	€3.46	€70,000	Active Member
45 to 54	€3.89	€70,000	Active Member	45 to 54	€3.46	€60,000	Active Member
55 to 64	€3.89	€60,000	Active Member	55 to 64	€3.46	€50,000	Active Member
65 to 69	€5.05	€17,500	Retired Member	65 to 69	€4.04	€17,500	Retired Member
70 to 74	€5.05	€12,500	Retired Member	70 to 74	€4.04	€12,500	Retired Member
75 to 79	€5.05	€7,500	Retired Member	75 to 79	€4.04	€7,500	Retired Member

The Group Scheme is underwritten by New Ireland Assurance, one of Ireland's leading Insurers.

Members with a family

Why is it good for my family?

What are the key benefits for my family if I am covered under this Scheme:

- **It's good value.** The group premium was negotiated to provide the highest level of cover at a low cost, allowing members budget weekly.
- **You're being responsible.** When in employment, it is important to ensure your family has a financial safety net, should the worst occur.
- **It's universal cover.** Members, spouse and children are covered 24 hrs a day, 365 days a year, on a worldwide basis.

Members who are single

Why is it good for me?

I'm young and reasonably healthy, what are the key benefits for me under this Scheme:

- **You're future proofing.** Getting cover now while you're fit and well is important, because no one knows what tomorrow brings.
- **Change is constant.** Life moves quickly, where priorities about covering loans can quickly become providing peace of mind for your partner.
- **It's smart.** Having a level of life insurance in case of premature death by illness or accident makes sense.

Where can I get more info?

Help is at hand. For more details or to request an application form; contact the Group Scheme administrators, Halligan Insurances on 01 879 7100 or info@halligan.ie.

Employment Misc. Provisions Act 2018

Background

The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 became effective on the 4th March 2019. The Act contains some significant changes to employment rights legislation. Its introduction will result in a number of changes to the following Acts:

- Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994
- Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
- Workplace Relations Act 2015
- Unfair Dismissals Act 1997
- National Minimum Wage Act 2000

Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994

Effective from 4th March 2019, an employer must notify each new employee, in writing, within five days of commencement of employment, of the following core terms of employment:

1. the full names of the employer and the employee;
2. the address of the employer;
3. the expected duration of the contract, in the case of a temporary contract, or the end date if the contract is a fixed-term contract;
4. the rate or method of calculation of the employee's pay;
5. the number of hours the employer reasonably expects the employee to work per normal working day and per normal working week.

Employees who either

- do not receive statements of their core terms of employment within 5 days or
- who receive a statement that is deliberately false or misleading

.... may refer a complaint to the WRC and if it is upheld, they may be awarded compensation not exceeding four weeks' remuneration. The new Act also introduced new provisions to protect employees against penalisation for invoking their rights under the Terms of Employment and Information Act 1994.

Changes to the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997

Under the new Act zero-hours contracts are now prohibited in most circumstances. Section 18 of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 (OWTA) is amended to prohibit zero-hour contracts except in the following circumstances:

- Where the work is of a casual nature;
- Where the work is done in emergency circumstances; or

- Short-term relief work to cover routine absences for the employer.

All employees are entitled to know what their employer reasonably expects the length of their normal working day and normal working week to be.

A new minimum payment entitlement that will apply in certain circumstances is being introduced. This new minimum payment will be payable on each occasion an employee, to whom the Act applies, is called in to work and does not receive the expected hours of work. The minimum payment will be three times the national minimum hourly rate of pay or three times the minimum hourly rate of pay set out in an Employment Regulation Order (if one exists for that sector and for as long as it remains in force).

The already existing method of payment (at least 25% of the contract hours or 15 hours) continues to apply overall.

Banded Hours provisions

The new Act introduces a new right for employees whose contract of employment or statement of terms does not reflect the reality of the hours they habitually work. Where this is the case, employees are entitled to request to be placed in a band of hours that better reflects the hours they have worked over a 12-month reference period. An employee must be working for an employer for at least a year before making this request.

An employee may request, in writing, to be placed in the relevant band of hours. The employer has four weeks to consider the request. Employers can rely on certain defences to refuse an employee request such as:

- a. the facts do not support the employee's claim,
- b. significant adverse changes have impacted on the business (e.g. loss of an important contract),
- c. emergency circumstances (e.g. business has had to close due to flooding), or
- d. where the hours worked by the employee were due to a genuinely temporary situation (e.g. cover for another employee on maternity leave).

While employers are not obliged to place an employee on a banded hours contract from the outset, if an employee habitually work more hours each week than is provided for in their contract of employment or statement of terms of employment, they have the right to request to be placed in a band of weekly working hours that better reflects their actual working time under the new Act

Where the request is disputed or refused, the employee can refer a complaint to the WRC. If the complaint is upheld, the employer will be obliged to place the employee on the appropriate band of hours.

This provision came into effect from the 4th March 2019 which means existing employees who on that date

believe their contract does not reflect the hours they have consistently worked in the previous 12 months may make a request to be placed by that employer in a band of hours that better reflects the hours they have worked regularly.

The band of hours set out in the 2018 Act are:		
Band	From	To
A	3 hours or more	Less than 6 hours
B	6 hours or more	Less than 11 hours
C	11 hours or more	Less than 16 hours
D	16 hours or more	Less than 21 hours
E	21 hours or more	Less than 26 hours
F	26 hours or more	Less than 31 hours
G	31 hours or more	Less than 36 hours
H	36 hours or more	

Changes to the Workplace Relations Act 2015

Where a WRC Inspector encounters non-compliance in relation to the 5 Day statement obligations and where the inspector has reasonable grounds for believing that an employer has committed an offence, an inspector may issue a fixed payment notice as an alternative to initiating prosecution proceedings.

The new Act also creates the following criminal offences.

- (I) An employer who, without reasonable cause, fails to provide an employee with the Day 5 statement within one month of commencement of employment will be guilty of an offence.

- (II) An employer who deliberately or recklessly provides false or misleading information as part of the Day 5 statement will be guilty of an offence.
- (III) A person convicted of an offence under the new Act may be fined (maximum fine €5,000) or imprisoned for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.

Changes to the Unfair Dismissals Act 1997

At present, Adjudication Officers of the WRC do not have powers to compel witnesses to attend a hearing to give evidence in relation to cases taken under the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977 (the UD Act). The WRC has powers of witness compellability under other employment rights legislation and the amendment to Act will remedy this anomaly. The amendment provides that the evidence that a witness gives at an Unfair Dismissal hearing at the WRC or Labour Court is privileged. It further provides that a witness who is compelled to attend the hearing or provide relevant information, and does not do so, is liable to prosecution.

Changes to the National Minimum Wage Act 2000

Under the new Act wage rates for employees under 18 and those over 18 have been simplified and will be solely based on age. Trainee rates of pay have been abolished.

Age	Amount	% of nmw
Under 18	€6.86	70%
18 years old	€7.84	80%
19 years old	€8.82	90%
National Minimum Wage	€9.80	100%

CWUHQ "Team Awesome" recommend...



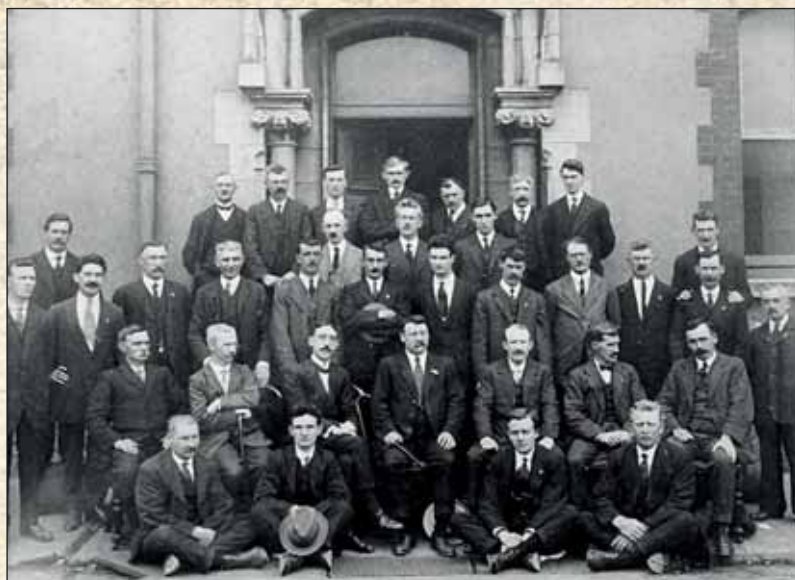
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anthonybrennan@abfitnessdublin.com

Shanowen House, Shanowen Rd, Santry, D9





The Soviet Committee

The Making of a Martyr – The Death of Bobby Byrne

*by Mike McNamara,
President,
Limerick Council of Trade
Unions.*

THE 21ST JANUARY 1919 was a memorable day in more ways than one, most notably because the first shots in the Irish War of Independence were fired that day when a group from the 3rd Tipperary Brigade of the IRA, headed up by Sean Treacy and Dan Breen, without the knowledge or approval of the G.H.Q., ambushed two policemen and seized a quantity of gelignite at Soloheadbeg in County Tipperary. Both policemen died in the ambush.

Also on the 21st January, 1919, a young man named Robert Byrne, a postal clerk who had been sacked from his job at the GPO in Limerick some two years earlier having been observed attending the funeral of the late suspect the Fenian John Daly, was Court Marshalled at the New Barracks in Limerick, charged with having in his possession a Webley revolver and an assortment of ammunition at his mother's house on the 31st December, 1918.

Both Byrne's Court Martial and the Soloheadbeg ambush coincided with the first meeting of the new Dáil. The death of the two policemen is widely regarded as the beginning point of the War of Independence, when a new type of guerrilla war was waged by the Irish volunteers.

"Drastic Sentence on Limerick Man" – this was how the sentence to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour imposed on Bobby Byrne was reported in the press on 3rd February, 1919. Byrne immediately set about the task of organising the prisoners to campaign for political status within the prison. On the 5th February, 1919, sixteen prisoners claiming political status barricaded themselves in their cells and set about smashing up the furniture, all the while the prisoners sang Republican songs, much to the amusement of the large crowds who gathered on the streets outside. The cause of the disturbance was the refusal of the prison authorities to class them as anything but ordinary criminals.

The response of the authorities was swift and brutal: prison visits were cancelled and the prisoners were shackled to their beds and given little food or water to

sustain them. The Trades Council set about informing the public of the plight of the prisoners and protested at the treatment meted out to the prisoners. They also produced and distributed a copy of the *Jail Infamy* throughout the city. Their protest was ignored and in the days that followed the prisoners went on hunger strike to secure their objectives.



After three weeks refusing food, Bobby Byrne was transferred on 12th March, 1919, to the Limerick Workhouse hospital, in a very weak state. The Board of Guardians of the hospital were furious that the prison authorities wanted to retain Byrne in lawful custody while in hospital and declared that, while in their care, he would be classed as a free man. This, however, did not deter the authorities from placing a jail warden and several armed police at the No 1 Men's Ward where he was being treated.

The local IRA units were already secretly planning to rescue Bobby from the workhouse hospital, under the direction of commandant Peadar Dunne. A meeting was arranged at the drill hall in Gerald Griffin Street, where five volunteers from each company was selected to carry out the plan. Sunday the 6th April was the date agreed

upon, as this was when the public were allowed to visit the patients.

None of the battalion officers were to be in attendance and it was agreed that only two of the unit was to be armed, namely Michael Stack and Jack Gallagher. The rest of the men - who numbered twenty in total - were to pose as visitors and infiltrate the wards around the main ward. A car was arranged to spirit Byrne from the scene, once his escape from custody had been made good.

On 6th April, 1919, the plan to liberate Bobby Byrne was put into action. Volunteers took up their positions posing as visitors to gain access to the vicinity on the No. 1 Men's Ward, which was located on the first floor. At 3pm, on the sounding of a whistle, volunteers rushed to Byrne's bedside. A message had already been relayed to him to alert him to the proposed escape by an earlier visitor. Constable Spillane and Constable O'Brien, who were sitting at either side of the bed, drew their revolvers. Constable Spillane fired at Byrne, who was trying to get out of the bed, but was too weak to move. Spillane then threw himself down on top of the prisoner to stop his escape. Pandemonium ensued and then one of the raiding party fired at Constable Spillane while the other guards were overpowered and tied up. Constable O'Brien soon freed himself and as he approached the fleeing party, he was shot and killed whereupon he was then relieved of his firearm.

On reaching the outside, the raiding party could not locate the escape carriage (the car was needed in Tipperary). It later transpired that due to the last minute change of plans, the carriage was sent to the morgue entrance by mistake. It soon became apparent that Byrne was wounded and bleeding profusely. They led him out to the main gate of the hospital which was located on Shelbourne Road, where they enlisted the assistance of a Mr John Ryan, who took them on his pony and trap to his home in Knockalisheen. The volunteers pleaded with Mrs Ryan to leave Byrne rest there until they came back for him later in the night. Byrne was then brought to an upstairs bedroom. During the following hours, his condition worsened and a doctor was sent for.

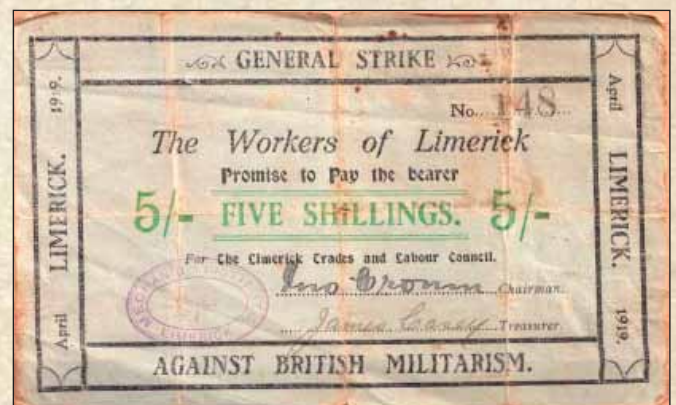
A Doctor Holmes, who was the district practitioner, attended and described Byrne's condition as hopeless. As he attended the dying man, the doctor enquired as to who had shot him. Byrnes, who was vomiting blood, replied that it was "*the man that got shot*". Then turning to the doctor, Bobby Byrnes spoke his last words when he said "***This is what is going to do it for me doctor, isn't it***"... "***I am not afraid to die in any case***". Robert Byrne died that evening at approximately 8.30pm in the presence of two doctors and a priest, his mother, Annie, his aunt, Emily Crowe, and other relations who had gone out to Knockalisheen on being informed of the situation. They were all arrested that evening and brought to William Street Police Station for questioning. Large numbers of people descended on the streets around William Street Police Station, as police and armoured cars were drafted

in to the city.

Robert J. Byrne was laid to rest in Mount Saint Lawrence cemetery on 10th April, following requiem mass at St. John's Catholic Cathedral, where an estimated crowd of 10,000 mourners attended the removal and lined the streets as the cortège made its way through the city to his final resting place. The coffin was carried all the way by bearers from The Irish Volunteers and members of The Trades Council. As the funeral cortège passed the household bazaar on William Street, a number of British Army officers standing on a plinth observed the procession and salute the Tricolour-draped coffin as it made its way to Mount Saint Lawrence cemetery.

Shots were fired over the grave, but otherwise the procession passed off peacefully. It was kept under the watchful eye of the military authorities, who had warned that anything in the shape of a military formation at the funeral would be immediately stopped. Lines of steel helmeted troops took up positions away from the main route of the procession and other troops were held in reserve at a number of barracks throughout the city in readiness for any emergencies, while all the time two military planes flew overhead.

At the inquest into his death, it was found that Robert J. Byrne had been shot by a police revolver, whilst trying to effect his escape from custody. As the first casualty in the Irish War of Independence on the republican side, the circumstances of his death defined him as a Martyr to the cause of self-determination for the Irish people. What followed in the days and weeks after his death become known across the English-speaking world as The Limerick Soviet.





10

Long-Term Effects of Poor Sleep

*submitted by Katlyn Eriksen
katlyn.eriksen@eagremail.com*

While everyone struggles with sleep at one stage or another, for some people it happens every night – meaning poor sleep is now an endemic problem. According to Mental Health Ireland, around 20% of Irish people suffer from insomnia alone – with many more sleep disorders also recorded. But what are the consequences of poor sleep for those who experience it?

1. Posture issues

Sleeping poorly on a difficult surface is a recipe for contortion and awkward positions, and the consequence of this is bad posture. Often, the solution to this is to invest in a comfortable, body supporting bed base – and with futons available for smaller spaces, there's no need to compromise on comfort if your bedroom isn't so big.

2. Depression

Researchers from the University of Warwick and Fudan University recently found that the parts of the brain which cover sleep, emotion and sense of self are linked – suggesting that bad sleep could well lead to depression, or vice versa.

3. Interpersonal relationships

If you sleep next to a partner or a child on a regular basis, bad sleep could cause a build up of resentment to those around you. This, in turn, could cause mental health issues and relationship strain down the line – so it's worth tackling early.

4. Weight gain

Poor sleep can lead to weight gain, too. Researchers at the University of Colorado discovered that if you sleep 5 hours per night even just for a week, you could gain an average of two pounds!

5. Premature ageing

Bad sleep can lead to physical and aesthetic changes, too. When we sleep, the human growth hormone – or HGH – is released to help our cells get back to full strength. Without enough sleep time for this to happen, early onset ageing can occur.

6. Risks to driving

If you experience significant long-term sleep deprivation, it may not be safe to drive. One American study

discovered that sleeping under four hours per night gave drivers an 11 times higher risk of crashing compared to those who got seven hours!

7. Sexual health

Poor sleep can lead to a loss of libido, too. This can in turn have consequences for self-esteem, mood and reproductive health – so it's important to tackle.

8. Food consumption

Did you know that if you sleep less, your cravings for sugary and fatty foods go up? One study by the American Journal of Nutrition found that sleeping properly led to a 10 gram reduction in sugar intake, so it's pretty significant.

9. Anxiety

Sleep is important for helping us to process the events of the day and file them away accordingly. If your brain doesn't have time to do this, it's more likely that you'll simply dwell on your problems once you wake up.

10. Unknown problems

Sleep is still not fully understood in the medical community, and its exact purpose isn't yet known for sure. So by not getting enough of it, you may well be denying yourself other health benefits which have not yet been discovered.

Poor sleep is something that far too many Irish people have to go through on a regular basis. And from bad posture to mental health problems, there are lots of potential consequences. So if this is something that is happening to you, it's certainly worth going to visit your doctor about it and getting a diagnosis.



STRONGER TOGETHER

CONGRESS

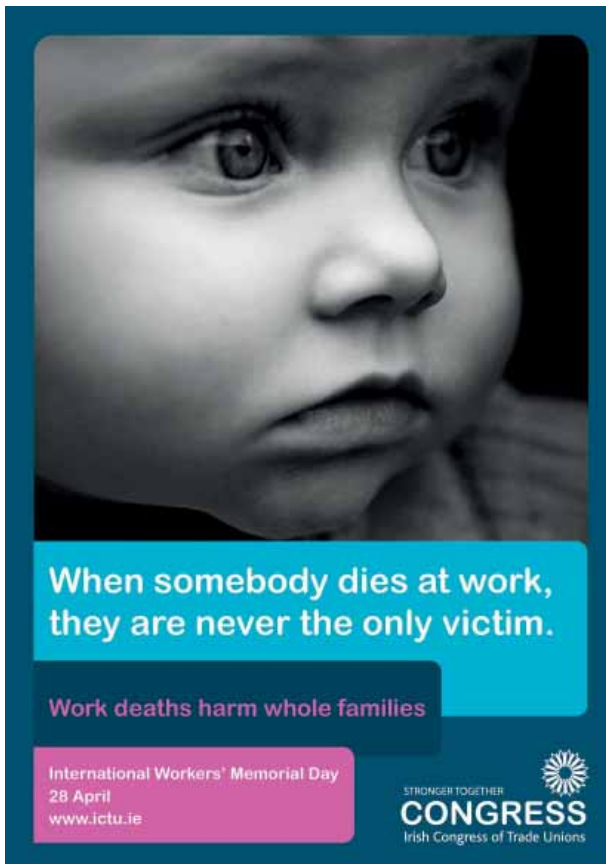
Irish Congress of Trade Unions



Workers' Memorial Day Ireland

Remember the dead,
fight like hell for the living

Friday, 28th April, 2017



Workers' Memorial Day

use the motto based on the words of Cork-born Mary “Mother” Jones – Remember the dead; fight like hell for the living. Trade unions have been the crucial force in the past in protecting workers and raising the bar to ensure people can return home safe and well after their day’s work. There is no room for complacency, and we all need to work together to achieve this objective.

Congress is asking all of its affiliated unions, trades councils and the Congress Centres Network to get involved in marking the day. While April 28th falls on a Sunday this year, there are still many ways in which you can contribute. Congress has made available some resources, including the logos and posters, and suggestions as to what unions might do at <http://bit.ly/WMD2019>.

The CWU has always supported this International Day of Remembrance and in 2014 we hosted the event in CWU Head Office and a plaque dedicated the memory of those killed, injured or made ill as a result of their work, was unveiled by ICTU General Secretary, David Begg. This year it is our intention to get involved by:

- using the national Workers’ Memorial Day Ireland logo on our website, social media presence, presentations, email signatures and displays in the weeks leading to 28 April
- Print and display the memorial poster in as many workplaces as possible
- Circulate safety and health messages throughout workplaces and review risk assessments and update Safety Statements
- Promote the day on **Websites/Social Media/Newsletters** use the hashtag **#WorkersMemorialDay** and use the poster suggested along with our own message
- Publish an article in Connect highlighting the day

April 28th presents an important opportunity to remember and to consolidate everyone’s focus around a single day.

For everyone with an interest in the safety, health and welfare of people at work, Sunday 28th April is an important date nationally and worldwide when we remember people killed or injured at work. Congress has marked **Workers’ Memorial Day** for many years, with trade union events being held in Dublin and Belfast. In 2015 our commemoration was given official backing in the Republic when the government called on the HSA, employers and public bodies to join with Congress in making the day a truly national event henceforth. This joint cooperation has continued every year since.

While every year we still have too many people who die in accidents at work – 37 died in 2018 in the Republic – many more are affected by occupational illnesses. Some of these prove fatal while countless others suffer from both physical and psychosocial disorders arising from their work. Alongside our commemoration therefore, we also try to use the day to create awareness and to commit ourselves to creating safer workplaces. This is why we

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CWU Added Benefits

A Guide to making claims from various CWU Funds



The CWU has valuable added benefits for its members, which include the Medical Benefit Fund, Social Benefit Fund, Hardship Fund, Mortality Fund and the Orphans' Pension Scheme. On the following pages there will be an explanation of how funds operate, along with the procedure to follow if you wish to make a claim from any of these Funds.

MEDICAL BENEFIT FUND

This is an additional contribution fund and is NOT covered by your normal Union subscription. The current rates to participate in the Medical Benefit Fund are: €3 per week; OR €6 per fortnight; OR €13 per month.

Members may make one claim in each category below and, subject to the limits outlined, the treatment date must be within a 12 month calendar year. All expenses must be claimed in the year that the expenditure is incurred and there is no retrospection of claims. There is a cut-off date of the second Friday in January for receipt of claims for the previous year; no claims with receipts dated the previous year will be processed after this under any circumstances.

Dental Grant	Up to €305.00
Optical Grant	Up to €152.00
Surgical & Medical Appliances	Up to €152.00

All claims must be made using the official claim form and sent to Union Head Office. Claims for children up to the date of their 18th birthday only; you must include date(s) of birth for any claims relating to your children. Original receipts are required for processing. These receipts will not be returned; you may need to copy your own receipts for tax purposes before submission.

Please be advised that Asthmatic Inhalers are **not** covered under Surgical & Medical Appliances, as these relate to medication.

Laser Eye Surgery is **not** covered under the Optical Grant.

Under Surgical & Medical Appliances, the following items will be paid on a once-off basis (not yearly) to a maximum of €152.00 (this list is not exhaustive):

- Hearing Aids
- Wheelchairs
- Nebulizer machines
- Lifts on shoes - inside soles (medically prescribed only)
- Blood Pressure machines (medically prescribed only)

- Surgical Stockings (medically prescribed only)
- Please note, under no circumstances will medication, prescriptions, and/or doctor/ consultant's fees be paid.*

MEDISAN

The illnesses catered for by the Fund usually necessitate prolonged treatment. The Fund provides assistance for members suffering from Tuberculosis, Psychiatric Illness, Cardiac Disease, Renal Failure, Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn's disease, Insulin-dependent Diabetes, Diseases of the Central Nervous System, Cancer and Addictions. With the ever-increasing cost of medical attention and treatment you will find yourself faced with considerable financial strain apart altogether from a possible reduction in pay if you are unfortunate enough to contract any of these illnesses. Membership of Medisan gives you affordable benefits for only €1.50 a week.

Membership of the Fund will assist towards the following:

- Income assistance during periods of reduced pay
- Assistance towards the cost of surgery and other treatment
- Assistance towards consultations and drugs
- Assistance towards the cost of counselling and therapy
- Assistance towards the cost of convalescence
- 50% match up of VHI shortfall up to a specified maximum.

While it is true that you, like the majority of members, may never require the assistance of the Fund, you will be helping your less fortunate colleagues who do, and ensuring help for yourself should the occasion arise.

Your spouse/partner and children can also benefit — the fund will assist with the payment of the cost of maintenance in an approved facility.

A copy of the rules of the Fund may be had on application from Ray Lawlor, 5th Floor Telephone House Marlborough Street Dublin 1.

SOCIAL BENEFIT FUND – SICKNESS SCHEME

This is a benefit that is available to CWU members paying 1% of basic pay and offers financial assistance during periods of long-term sick leave. The Social Benefit Fund is financed through an allocation of 20%

of subs from each member paying 1% of basic pay. Due to the declining number of members in this category, combined with an increase in members claiming from the Fund, the Sickness Scheme has been running at a deficit. This is unsustainable and contrary to the rules of the Union. To address this issue, the NEC examined a number of possible options and, *to avoid a situation where the Scheme must be closed*, has agreed a change to the operation of the Sickness Scheme as follows:

This payment may be paid for a **maximum of 12 months in any period of 4 years** in accordance with the following scale:

1 - 4 months	Up to 70% of basic pay
5 - 8 months	Up to 65% of basic pay
9 - 12 months	Up to 60% of basic pay

The above change will be implemented from the 1st January 2019. The existing claimants already in benefit will continue to be comprehended by the old criteria.

Payments will cease after this period except in the most extreme of hardship circumstances. Applications for continuation or otherwise of Social Benefit outside of this period will be considered on their merits by the NEC Finance Committee, which will make a recommendation to the National Executive Council. The decision of the National Executive Council on such applications will be final.

To make a claim from the Social Benefit Fund, a member must request a form, through their Branch, and submit it along with **ALL** of the following supporting documentation:

1. Consultant's Report
2. Payslip showing **FULL PAY**
3. Medical Certificate(s) covering the date(s) of absence
4. **ALL** payslips showing reduced pay to date

Once your application has been approved and processed, you are required to submit weekly/monthly payslips and a Medical Certificate which covers the absence. If you do not provide a Medical Cert which covers the same period as your payslip(s), your claim will not be processed. **The responsibility for submitting the requisite documentation on time and in full rests solely with the individual member; CWU Head Office will not chase up documentation.**

The Table below is an **example** of how Social Benefit is calculated for a member on Pension Rate of pay and is for information purposes only (i.e. the figures are not specific to any individual claim). Payment is made on a fortnightly basis by Electronic Fund Transfer and a monthly basis by cheque.

A member is only entitled to make one claim from either the Social Benefit Fund or the Medisan Fund; you cannot claim from both Funds at the same time.

PERSONAL ACCIDENT COVER

This is an insurance scheme offered through Halligan Insurances. This has unfortunately become cost prohibitive for the Union. To that end, the NEC has agreed that this benefit can no longer be offered as part of your Union membership.

However, enclosed herewith is information on the rates should you wish to take up Personal Accident Cover for yourself and/or your family. The Union encourages members to purchase this policy, as it is very good value for money.

Additionally, there is another group scheme available through Halligan Insurances which you may wish to join – CWU Group Life Scheme – information on same is also enclosed. The rates for both of these schemes are offered at discounted prices as part of your CWU membership and I would urge members to give consideration to joining one or both.

While it is regrettable that we have found ourselves in a position where we have to reduce some of our benefits, these decisions have not been taken lightly and the impact on our members has been to the fore at every stage of the evaluation. To ensure the longevity of the CWU in the years to come, these changes form part of an overall cost-saving exercise that will hopefully see the Union in more secure financial standing and allow us to continue to work for the betterment of the lives of our members, both within the workplace and in society as a whole.

The NEC will closely monitor the Union's financial position over the coming 12 months with a view to hopefully restoring benefits, which, of course, will be contingent on increased membership numbers.

Basic Pay	€530.00		
70% of pay	€371.00	€742.00	2x 70% of basic pay
Less Social Welfare	€193.00	- €386.00	2x Social Welfare
Less wk1 pay	- €35.00		Payment from Company WEEK 1
Less wk2 pay	- €35.00		Payment from Company WEEK 2
Social Benefit due		€286.00	



Ray and Jimmy Retire in Style

At a function held in the Gingerman Pub, Steve is pictured with Ray and Jimmy.



President, Mike O'Connor with Margaret & Jimmy Hegarty.



President, Mike O'Connor with Chris and Ray Lawlor.



Collette Hill, Jimmy and Eileen Sweeney.



Ruth, Lorraine, Pascal, Imelda and Sandra.



Pascal, Laura, Ray and Fionnuala.



Ray and Terry.



Yvonne Heffernan and Jimmy.



Jimmy and eir CEO, Carolan Lennon

CWU People



Natalie, Ray, Fiona & Deirdre from ICTU.



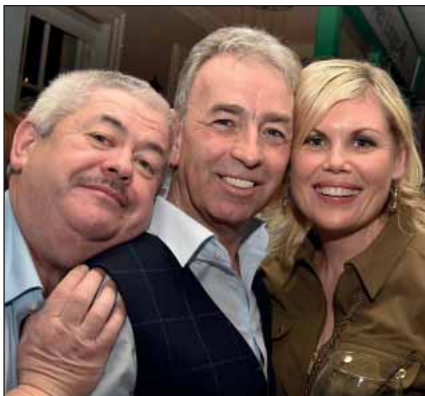
Jimmy and his family.



Paddy, Mickey, Christy and Ray.



Dave, Pascal, Jimmy and Laurence.



Pascal, Ray and Sarah.



Brendan and Eileen Moorhouse.



Ray, Anne Marie, Gary and Chris Lawlor.



Jim McCann and Jimmy



Mary Ryan and Marie Dean



Ray and Imelda.

Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund



Paul, Ger and Jarlath make a presentation to Carol at Cope Galway from the Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund.



*Tom and Jarlath make a presentation from **The Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund** to **Ballinakill Community Alert Group** of which Damien was a founding member.*



Martin, Pat and Sean make a donation to The Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund on behalf of the Claremorris Postal Branch at their AGM on February 22nd.



Nora Daly, Galway Postal, makes a presentation on behalf of the Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund to Karen of Cillian's Rainbow Trust.

If you wish to contribute towards the Damien Tuohy Memorial Fund, donations can be made to:

BIC UL SB IE 2D

IBAN IE 40 ULSB 9853 8012 1634 18

Or by post to the Trustees at:

Galway DSU, Tuam Road, Galway.

The Trustees wish to thank branches and individuals for their donations to the Fund thus far and endeavour to pay tribute to Damien by continuing to support worthy causes in his name.

Johnny Boner Retires

A presentation was made to Johnny Boner at his last AGM in Tralee before his retirement from the North Kerry Postal Branch.

Johnny is pictured here (centre) with John Delaney (Thurles), on the left and Mikey Wall (on the right).





Carrick-on-Shannon CWU Branch Retirements

A party was held recently in Cryan's Bar, Carrick-on-Shannon, to mark the retirement of two local Postmen: Paddy Lavin, who had 44 years' service, and Hubert Flynn, who had 40 years' service.

Paddy worked in Dublin for 7 years before returning home in 1981, while Hubert started in Carrick-on-

Shannon, then worked 4 years in Galway and 1 in Ballinamore before returning home in 1984.

The photo shows work colleagues with Paddy Lavin receiving his Union Scroll from John Tansey, Regional Officer, and Hubert Flynn receiving his Union Scroll from Sean Murtagh, Branch Secretary.

Damien Byrne Retires



Damien Byrne being presented with his Union Scroll by Dave Sheehy, Branch Secretary, Dublin Postal Clerks Branch.

Martin Murphy Retires



Martin Murphy UPS being presented with his Union Scroll by Willie Day, Branch Secretary. For many years Martin delivered the parcels to CWU HQ and we wish him well on his retirement.



Brendan Patton Retires

Brendan Patton is pictured receiving his CWU Retirement Scroll from Michael Gallagher (Branch Secretary, Lifford/Inishowen Branch).

Brendan started work as a clerk with **An Post** in January 1980, and worked in Lifford for many years, eventually ending up in PostPoint for the last nineteen years. His last day of service was on the 28th December 2018.

On behalf of the Branch and the Union, we would like to wish Brendan and his family all the best for the future.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions Retired Members' Seminar, Belfast



Pictured at the recent Irish Congress of Trade Unions Retired Members' Seminar in Belfast were: Paddy Costello, Margaret Jenkins, Joe Guinan and JJ Higgins



Joan Crookes Retires

Joan Crookes, Post Office Clerk and member of the Dublin Postal Clerks Branch, is pictured receiving her Union Scroll from Willie Mooney, following her retirement after 46 years' service.

Hugh Mannion Benefit Fund says "Thank you"!



The organising committee of the **Hugh Mannion Benefit Fund** wishes to thank all who so generously supported our fundraisers.

We would like to thank the branches, sections members and the social clubs for the huge response to our appeal. We sold over three thousand tickets all over the country. We received great support from the branches and social clubs. Thank you for your generous donations

We thank all the air suppliers who responded with generous sponsorship.

A special thanks to all those who promoted our efforts and those who helped with ticket sales.

We also thank those who organised the sponsored

walk on the pilgrim route from Athlone to Clonmacnoise and all who helped on the day.

Last, but by no means least, we thank Lecarrow Benevolent fund for its support and Lecarrow Gun Club who donated the proceeds of their clay pigeon shoot and raffle.

Hugh, Berna and family are totally overwhelmed by the support received from so many serving and retired members.

Regards
Kevin Coyle
Secretary

Mullingar Retirements

There were great celebrations in the Mullingar Transport Office as two long-serving employees retired on Friday 28th December 2018. Christy Martin and Mary Morrissey had almost 80 years' service between them. There was a lovely atmosphere in the Transport canteen as work colleagues and retired work colleagues gathered to wish Christy and Mary well in their retirement. The Mullingar Branch would like to join with everyone in

wishing health and happiness to Christy and Mary in their retirement.

In addition, Martin Conway, Enfield DSU, has left the Company. He had a relatively short career in **An Post** of only five years during which time he became very popular. Martin will be missed by all his friends and colleagues who wish him the best of luck, health and happiness in his new career.



Branch Secretary, Barry Carr, presenting Christy Martin with his Union Scroll.



Branch Secretary, Barry Carr, presenting Mary Morrissey with the Union Scroll.



Branch Secretary, Barry Carr, presenting Martin Conway with the Union Scroll.



Cork Mail Centre AGM

John Boner, Regional Officer, and Steve Fitzpatrick, General Secretary, attending the Cork Mail Centre AGM held in February, 2019.

Portlaoise Retirements



Noel Guilfoyle Naas Section has retired after 43 years' service with eir. He was presented with his Union Scroll by Section Secretary, Willie Kelly, and Branch Secretary, Frank Joyce.



Ger Fox Naas Section has retired after 41 years' service with eir. He was presented with his Union Scroll by Section Secretary, Willie Kelly, and Branch Secretary, Frank Joyce.



Ger Nolan, Roscrea Section, has retired after 40 years' Service with eir, during which time he was the Branch Representative on the National Executive Council. He was presented with his Union Scroll by Roscrea Section Secretary, P.J. McNicholas, and Chairman, John O'Carroll.

Tesco - Carrick-on-Shannon Picket Line

The photos below were taken from the picket line outside Tesco in Carrick-on-Shannon on Saturday 22nd December.

The local branch of the CWU gave the striking workers €300 as a gesture of support in a presentation

made by John Tansey, Regional Officer (Postal). The photos were taken by Gerry Faughnan, of Gerry Faughnan Photography. Gerry is a former CWU Section Secretary for Carrick-on-Shannon and Branch Secretary, Sligo District.



John Tansey, Regional Officer (Postal) (centre left) making a presentation on behalf of the An Post Carrick Branch of the Communication Workers' Union to striking Tesco workers' representative, Jason Kavanagh, Mandate Committee member, in Carrick-on-Shannon. On the right is Martin Kenny, TD.



John Tansey and Sean Murtagh (standing, third and fourth from left) supporting the striking Tesco workers at Carrick-on-Shannon.



Sean Murtagh, CWU Branch Secretary, alongside a number of his CWU Colleagues from Carrick-on-Shannon Delivery Office, Martin Kenny, Sinn Féin TD Sligo/Leitrim, and Luke 'Ming' Flanagan MEP Midlands North West.

Dublin Postal District Branch Retirements



*Albert Cullen,
Fairview*



*Mick Walsh,
Ballyfermot DSU*



*Michael McVeigh,
Fortfield*



*Emonn McNally,
Dublin 2*



*Paul Williams,
Blanchardstown*



*Peter Fitzpatrick (right),
Fortfield*



*John O'Flaherty,
Dublin 2*



*Ronnie Murray,
DSU 2*



*Christy McBride,
Clondalkin DSU*



*Gerry Breen,
Crumlin DSU*



*Ray Barry,
Blanchardstown*

Retirements from an post Castlebar Retail and DSU



Pictured (front row) at a recent retirement function for An Post employee and Postal Operative, Des Dunne, are his family: Kevin, Helena Dunne and Elaine. (Back row) Sean Corley, Manager An Post, Stephen Lynch, Chairman CWU, Deirdre Medlar, National Executive CWU, John Tansey, Regional Coordinator CWU, and Michael Brophy, Branch Secretary CWU.

Pictured at a retirement function for Balla Postal Operative, PJ O'Brien, who served the Balla area for 36 years are: Michael Brophy, Branch Secretary CWU, Sean Corley, Manager An Post DSU, making a presentation to PJ O'Brien, and Stephen Lynch, Chairman CWU, Castlebar.



Pictured following their retirement from An Post Castlebar are members of the Castlebar Postal Branch Communications Workers' Union who were presented with their Union Scrolls. (Front row) Des Dunne, Breege Griffin, Deirdre Minogue and PJ O'Brien. (Back row) Robert Melody, Treasurer, Stephen Lynch, Chairman, Deirdre Medlar, National Executive CWU, John Tansey, Regional Coordinator CWU, Sean Corley, Manager An Post DSU Castlebar, and Michael Brophy, Branch Secretary.

Retirements from an post Castlebar Retail and DSU



*Pictured at a recent retirement function for **An Post** workers and members of the Communications Workers' Union are Stephen Lynch, Chairman CWU, Deirdre Medlar National Executive CWU, making a presentation to Breege Griffin, Deirdre Minogue, receiving a presentation from John Tansey, Regional Coordinator CWU, and Michael Brophy, Branch Secretary CWU.*



Brian Harnett, DPDB, Retires

Brian Harnett retired from Rutland Place in January and was surprised in Union headquarters on his last day of service. Brian has delivered the post to HQ for many years and was a welcome addition to the CWU team.

Here he is pictured with Deputy General Secretary, Seán McDonagh, on his last day. Seán thanked Brian for his loyal service as a customer and for being a long-time Union member. The staff in HQ are genuinely sorry to see him retire but we wish him every happiness in his retirement. As Brian often says on his way out the doorUp the Dubs!

Carlow Postal Branch Update



Carlow Postal Branch Reps, Ray Timmons and Scout Brennan, pictured with Mick Whelan, who received his Union Scroll upon his retirement.



Mick Ryan, who retired with 33 years' service, being presented with his Union Scroll at the recent Carlow Postal Branch AGM with Branch Secretary, Ray Timmons.

Billy O'Connor Retires



Billy O'Connor retired in February after 15 years' service. He is pictured here with his colleagues on his last working day at Cashel DSU.



Mark McNally RIP

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Mark McNally, Dublin Postal Delivery Branch.

James "Jimmy" Byrne RIP

It was with great sadness we learned of the sudden and untimely death of our colleague and friend James "Jimmy" Byrne, Jimmy joined the P+T in January 1979 and worked in the Carlow area for most of the next 40 years up until his death in November 2018. Jimmy was an active and respected member of the C.W.U. Portlaoise District Branch where he was section chairman in Carlow and a member of the committee for the past 20 years, during which time



he attended many conferences. Jimmy was well liked and respected by both colleagues and managers on the many teams he was on. He always had a smile on his face and ready to lend a helping hand whether asked or not, and if you wanted information or advice on the latest model of car be it a Mercedes or a Skoda no better man to ask. Jimmy will be sadly missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

Ar dheis dé go raibh a anam.

Jacqueline Griffin R.I.P.

The CWU was deeply saddened to learn of the tragic passing of Jacqueline Griffin on the 24th January 2019. Jackie, as she was fondly known, was an active and respected member of the Nightline Branch of the Union and was held in extremely high regard by her colleagues.

In her time as a Union member, Jackie demonstrated a deep commitment to improving the conditions of workers



in Nightline by regularly attending Union meetings on her own free time and highlighting issues on behalf of her colleagues.

There is no question, she will be warmly remembered and sadly missed. On behalf of all CWU members, we wish to extend our deepest sympathies to her family, friends and work colleagues in Nightline.

May she rest in peace.

Michael T. Moran RIP

Our dearest friend and former workmate Mick Moran sadly passed away in October 2018. Mick left the Union on his retirement in January 2018 after 40 years' service in various disciplines i.e. jointing, training, PQO etc. Mick also spent a number of years in the UK on contract work.



He will be best remembered for his generosity, friendship and wonderful sense of humour; he was without doubt a larger than life character in the Dublin No 2 Branch

He will always remain in our thoughts. May he rest in peace.



Book Review by Eileen Casey

(poet/editor/publisher)



The Lea-Green

Fiery Arrow Press

Responding to the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh, fifty years since his passing.

In November, 2018, Offaly poet Connie Roberts read her poem 'My People' at the Boston College Conference, 'Towards Transitional Justice'. Offaly born, Roberts spent her childhood in various institu-

tions, experiences she wrote into poems which subsequently won her The Patrick Kavanagh Award (2010) with her debut collection, *Little Witness* (Arlen House). Although a fellow Offaly woman, it wasn't until July of this year I met Connie Roberts for the first time in a quaint teashop on the Lower East Side, New York. It was my pleasure that day to hand over her contributor's copy of *The Lea-Green Down*, an anthology of response poems to the poetry of Patrick Kavanagh which also includes the Kavanagh originals. Her response poem takes its title from Kavanagh's version, using his visual template to create a scaffolding for a contemporary work, brimming with social and political energies. Roberts speaks for those who have suffered abuse, asking the question; "Can you blame them for wanting/wrongs righted?" In similar vein, Jean O'Brien's 'Child' in response to Kavanagh's 'To a Child' is dedicated to the lost children of Tuam's Mother and Baby Home. Her closing lines are prophetic in light of the government's recent decision to exhume and identify these children: 'The unforgiving sky is full of stars/the dome of dank earth/is full of missing children./Hush, we know you are lost child/we will find you.'

Throughout *The Lea-Green Down*, which features over sixty contributing poets (established, emerging and those publishing for the very first time) are responses which take the Kavanagh originals as a starting point. As President Michael D. Higgins said in a speech he made at The Kavanagh Centre in Inniskeen in 2014, it's a fact "that if you wanted insight into the truth of Irish existence, you had to turn to literature." Such truths are in abundance between the pages of *The Lea-Green Down* in poems that offer insight into a rapid changing Ireland fifty years on from the death of Patrick Kavanagh, himself a poet who never shunned the hard truths.

The plan to publish this anthology through my small, independent press, Fiery Arrow, was put together in mid-2017. I wasn't sure however, if the idea would gather

momentum. It would require a fair amount of commitment, not only from myself, but from a range of poets (I wanted to be as inclusive as possible). Right from the beginning, there was huge enthusiasm for the task. The first poem came to me within hours, the Kavanagh poem, 'The Weary Horse' ably responded to by Joan Power's 'The Garden'. Her entreaty to Kavanagh regarding the redemptive power of language is in her opening lines 'Oh pour me poetic redemption, Paddy/to ease this new banality of living/stripped of wonder or beauty./Pass me the bones of your words/for there is no chink of light/no wink and elbow language of delight/only the Babel of Google/to barrow my brain/with dreeping dung.'

The arrival of *The Beast from The East* ensured the work got done. While the country ground to a halt, poets all over the land were revisiting the works of Kavanagh and being beguiled anew. Though the storm raged, I received a blizzard of new poems. Reading those poems as they came in was nothing short of miraculous. They kept me warm although temperatures dropped.

The Lea-Green Down as title was ready made in one of Kavanagh's early poems, 'Ploughman': 'I turn the lea-green down/Gaily now,/And paint the meadow brown/With my plough.' It's a perfect metaphor for how the poetic process itself turns the lea-green of imagination into poetry, the pen being the plough. Included in the collection is a poem and a significant essay by Gerard Smyth in which he makes the point that "To the young poets who gathered around him in Dublin in the 1960s, Kavanagh transmitted a new message: the need to push the boundaries of Irish poetry, the necessity of renewing tradition rather than echoing it." Smyth's poem 'Carnaross: A May Evening', in response to 'Inniskeen Road: July Evening', describes a typical evening of dance in a country setting. Evocative lines include: 'Later when the singer is gone, his wild accordion/back in its box, his songs will linger/and those still standing continue to dance/to the ghost of a tune that's an old country waltz.'

Mary O'Donnell's 'The Blackbird, God Almighty and Allah', mourns and remembers the dead children of Syria, murdered by Bashar al Assad. Her powerful poem begins: 'There you are again this bitter spring,/taking position at crown of birch./You hold forth like God Almighty,/or Allah, fresh arrived to change terrible places/to green-shook and calm.' Geraldine Mills in 'I keep Looking',



Book Review continued.

describes a mother's anguish over a daughter lost to the streets, her lines renewing Kavanagh's rhythms: 'Every young girl I see/in school uniform or knee-torn jeggings/might some day say to me/I am still your daughter.' Pat Boran's 'Pocket Watch' comes in response to 'Gold Watch' and describes memory as a museum, filled with things "he can't let go of or that won't let go of him". Lani O'Hanlon's 'The Traveller's Wife' (in response to Kavanagh's 'Tinker's Wife') describes a man from the travelling community coming to her door after the death of his wife. He is offered a pancake in lieu of money, an offer he refuses because 'She loved them you see./He'd always take one out/to her waiting/in the white van,/all honeyed up/and warm from the pan.'

Una Agnew, Kavanagh Scholar and Academic, has been a steadfast supporter of this publication. Agnew launched the collection in her customary articulate way and also contributed a poem 'Swans on the Canal', a response to 'Lines Written on a Seat on the Grand Canal, Dublin'. Agnew's reflection on Kavanagh's being commemorated near water is lyrical and moving: 'And bridges resonate with filtered light/Shedding a fractured aura on the waters/That carry myths and legends of your past/And bring you home in triumph, safe at last.' 'In Memory of my Mother' is a poem where Kavanagh remembers going to the market town of Carrickmacross with his mother, a poem where imagination is described as 'the oriental streets of thought'. Ivy Bannister's 'In Memory of my Sister' takes Kavanagh's poem as the starting out point of her journey to reclaim the sister that she tragically lost in a plane crash, September 1998. The poem begins: 'It's on the Atlantic coast/that we meet – you float in /on the waves, your face lit/by this magic place./Where salt embraces strand,/water washes our feet,/and there behind you/the tow headed children/you longed for/rise from the sea.' Both Kavanagh and Bannister use memory in devastating ways to recapture what's been lost. Both poets however, heal the pain of loss through the redemptive gifts bestowed through language. Kavanagh takes his mother again through the shops and stalls and markets while Bannister melts away the 'bruised black past' through the act of recalling.

As a poet, how do I relate to Kavanagh? Poems like 'A Christmas Childhood' and 'Ploughman' remain personal favourites, sharing as they do, glimpses of the divine. Kavanagh's railing against institutional structures reminds me of another poet I would always want to read, William Blake. Kavanagh shared with Blake the desire to show reality as it was and not in a sentimental way (which Kavanagh abhorred). Thus, 'The Great Hunger' (published by Horizon in 1942) reveals the devastation and loneliness of trying to eke out a living from the land (through the prism of a lone voice, Paddy Maguire). The sonnet I respond to in

like kind is 'Come Dance with Kitty Stobling.' In *Praise of the Dance*, contrary to Kavanagh's 'No, no, no,' opens with 'Yes, yes, yes.' 'In Praise of the Dance' writes the source of my first poetic rhythms, my mother's sewing machine. 'I left behind my mother's rhythmic Singer sounds/Her quick-quick-slow-quick time, her patterned rows.'

While there are over 60 poets in *The Lea-Green Down*, it's fair to say that if resources allowed, I would have liked to publish a much larger work. There are unintentional omissions. Trying to catch what Kavanagh once described as "a standing army" of poets would prove futile in this instance. But that said, the poets who are here represent every county in Ireland and they have undoubtedly succeeded in creating a legacy which will stand the test of time.

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Poets included in the *Lea-Green Down* are as follows:

Jane Clarke/Pat Boran/Gerard Smyth/Brian Kirk/Nessa O'Mahony/Clairr O'Connor///Gavan Duffy/Doreen Duffy/Mae Newman/Tony Shields/Tony Bardon/Mairide Woods/Marie Gahan/Geraldine Mills/Susan Connolly/Enda Coyle Greene/Maggie O'Dwyer/Susan Condon/Tanya Farrelly/David Butler/Brigit Eoin Flynn/Niamh Byrne/Larry Scully/Trish Best/Joan Power/Georgina Casserly/Anne Marron/Lani O'Hanlon/Ann Leahy/Anne Fitzgerald/ Grace Wells/Celia de Freine/Ruth Timmons/Harry Clifton/Eileen Casey/Trish Nugent/Paul Maddern/Maria Wallace/Derek Fanning/Jim Hyde/Mary Guckian/Phil Lynch/Pauline Fayne/Chris Allen/Breda Joy/Rosemarie Rowley/Connie Roberts/Georgina Casserly/Lani O'Hanlon/Mary O'Donnell/Jean O'Brien/Doreen Duffy/Eithne Lannon/Gerard Smyth/Ivy Bannister/Christine Broe/Colm McGlynn/Derek Fanning/Michael J. Whelan/Orla Grant-Donoghue/Liz McSkeane

The Lea-Green Down owes a debt of gratitude to all its contributing poets, Offaly County Council and South Dublin County Council, The Patrick Kavanagh Resource Centre, Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan, Una Agnew, Gerard Smyth, designer Eoin Flynn and artist Paul McCloskey for his cover image of Kavanagh, 'Man and Poet'.

The inclusion of Patrick Kavanagh's poems is by permission of The Patrick Kavanagh Trustees via The Jonathan Williams Literary Agency. The Kavanagh Poems are taken from 'Collected, 2004' edited by Antoinette Quinn and span the years, 1929 -1959.

The Lea-Green Down is available in Dubrays Book Shop, Grafton Street, Dublin and Shop Street, Galway, Amazon, Books Upstairs, Kenny's, Galway and The Patrick Kavanagh Resource Centre, Inniskeen, County Monaghan.



Book Review by Adrienne Power



Dirty Little Secrets

by Jo Spain

Withered Vale is a small exclusive gated community on the outskirts of Wicklow. It got its name from an over diligent farmer trying to kill pests who managed to decimate all that was growing on the land. Six luxury houses are built in a horseshoe semi-circle in the vale and bought by the

privileged few. Except for Olive Collins who had already been on the land living alone in her little cottage. Now No 4 in the Vale.

One day, young Cam points out to his mother a swarm of bluebottles hovering around the chimney of the house. The gruesome discovery is made of the body of Olive Collins. Her remains had been lying in her home for 3 months and none of her neighbours had noticed. Now a can of worms is opened, and all the dirty little secrets begin to pour out.

Detectives Frank Brazil and Emma Childs are assigned to investigate. Frank is due to retire shortly and is hoping for a case that is open and shut. Emma is young and up and coming. They both have their work cut out for them with the neighbours of the aptly named “vale”.

Each of the characters are given their own chapters and viewpoints, including Olive, the dead woman,

who is gossipy, interfering and maliciously picks on the vulnerabilities of the people around her. She has plenty of fodder to choose from right on her doorstep.

This is a very enjoyable read. You get invested in a lot of the characters, especially the two detectives, Emma and Frank, who become a great team with their different strengths and weaknesses. The kids in the story were wonderful too - the Solanke Twins, Wolf and Lily-May as well as Cam and Holly.

You find yourself as a reader rooting for some and hoping the others get their comeuppance. It is a wonderful psychological story of how some people can help others, and some can nearly destroy themselves and others. Jo Spain has a great way of describing the Ireland of today. I was relieved that it wasn't a grossfest like some thrillers, or full of action scenes you cannot necessarily follow, or overlong and full of annoying preachiness. She just tells it as it is.

Some of the descriptions of the hippy couple and their “cardboard brownies” and “fragrant tea” were hilarious.

A favourite theme for me in fiction is the threat from within, which I thought was portrayed well in this thriller.

Jo Spain is like a modern Agatha Christie and I wish her some of the same success that Agatha had. This is a highly impressive thriller, balanced and well-constructed. It is a great addition to the currently popular Domestic Noir and a thoroughly compulsive read.

*Personally, I love a good ending -
and this had the perfect one!*



SOME BOOKS
LEAVE US FREE

AND
SOME
BOOKS



MAKE US
FREE

Ralph Waldo Emerson