



CONNECT

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*Introducing our next General Secretary,
Seán McDonagh*



CONNECT

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Editorial

Dear Colleague,

I find it difficult to write this editorial as it is the last editorial I will write in the Connect journal as General Secretary of this great Union. As is the norm with life, the past 17 years as your General Secretary have flown by at an alarming rate. It is a difficult stage in any person's life when they contemplate the end of their working life, particularly a working life which has been so consuming, but so rewarding.

It has been a particular honour for me to be your General Secretary for such a long period of time. It is hard to believe that the CWU is now 31 years old and that I have been your General Secretary for 17 of those years. I still recall clearly attending my first PTWU Conference in 1981 in the City Hall in Cork and little did I know of the exciting journey that was in store for me through our great Union. I could not have done my job, or indeed even aspired to this job, if I had not had the support of my long-suffering wife, Carol, and my two sons, Glen and Adam. There have been so many important family occasions missed due to work pressures, but their understanding and support was always a given at those times.

I could never have started on this journey in the first place if it had not been for the encouragement and support I received in Crumlin Delivery Office, where I started as a Postman following my earlier years as a Junior Postman. From my first day in that office, it was made clear to me that the real management of the business there was carried out through the Crumlin Branch of the POWU. There was clear Branch policy in the office that ensured everybody – from the junior to the senior man – was treated fairly.

My real political and trade union education however began with the now infamous 5-month 1979 Postal Strike. Soon after that strike, I was elected as Branch Secretary of the Crumlin Branch, along with my old comrade, J.B. Dowling, who was elected Chairman. This was a time of great change within the Union and saw the formation of the Dublin Delivery Offices Branch which became the biggest Branch within the

Union. The present iteration of that Branch – the Dublin Postal Delivery Branch (DPDB) – now has approximately 1,400 members spread over every delivery office in Dublin and the surrounding sub-offices, and still operates on the basis of the same democratic structures and procedures that were put in place so long ago. To this day I have remained a member of the Branch and attended almost all of their general meetings, and I am extremely proud to continue to be associated with the DPDB.

I commenced working in Union Head Office in 1994 covering the sick leave of the late Mick Fanning who sadly passed away some years later. I formally started employment with the Union in 1997 where I will be forever grateful to David Begg, our previous General Secretary, for giving me the opportunity. When I became General Secretary in 2004, the CWU was a divided house and we faced many serious challenges. I believe that we overcame most of those challenges and that we have built a strong, secure, successful CWU. I believe our Union's accomplishments in the areas of pay, conditions, and organising are as good, if not better than, what has been achieved by any trade union here or abroad. That work, over a long period of time, was carried out by a large team of people working here at Head Office and I can say with real sincerity that every official who worked with me during my tenure as General Secretary has gone above and beyond the call of duty; each and every one of them is due a debt of thanks for the success that our Union is today. I wish in particular to make special mention of two of those officials. Firstly, Terry Delany, who was my Deputy General Secretary for so many years and who constantly provided me with support and advice when it was badly needed and secondly, Charlie O'Neill, who was my Personal Assistant throughout all the early difficult years and without whom I would not have been able to function.

Of course, all our work is more than ably supported by the Head Office staff who have always gone the extra mile for our members and who are a fine group of people. They do have the advantage of being so ably led by Imelda Wall, Office Manager, who continues to be one of the

key people in the CWU.

I have also had the great pleasure of working with many National Executive Councils and Presidents, many of whom have become friends of mine. But the bottom line for any trade union is its membership and its Branches, and I want to personally thank each and every one of you for the support you have given me over many years. I particularly want to thank all of the Union activists in our Branches who make the Union tick and who make the Union what it is today. I look forward to the time when I can meet with as many of you as possible and we can sit around, have a pint and chat about old times.

Finally, I want to offer my sincerest congratulations to Seán McDonagh, who has been appointed as General Secretary designate by the National Executive Council. I have been a close friend and comrade of Seán since the mid-80s and I can say without fear of contradiction that he is one of the finest trade union officials I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I wish Seán and the Union every success into the future as the struggle of working people continues. I would also like to pass on my condolences to Ian McArde who, as I understand it, narrowly lost the contest to Seán and I believe it reflects on the strength of the Union when we had two such fine candidates applying for the position.

So once again I would like to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart. I intend to ensure a smooth transfer of power to the incoming General Secretary over the coming months to ensure that the members will see no lack or drop of service.

Stay safe and stay strong.

Ní neart go cur le chéile!



*Steve Fitzpatrick,
General Secretary, CWU*

Trade unions are back after a long absence

by Sarah O'Connor ©Financial Times

Covid and the rise of the gig economy are driving recruitment, but unions need to modernise, too



Photo Credit: James Ferguson

AT 21 YEARS OLD, Alfie already knows a fair bit about working life on the bottom rungs of the UK economy. He has worked in a seatbelt factory (“you’re just there to look after the machines basically”), a toilet paper factory and a popular coffee shop chain. But it never occurred to him to join a trade union until the pandemic hit.

Worried about the café’s policies on infection control, furlough and sick pay, he and a group of other staff began to share stories on Facebook. They set up a petition on a digital platform that connects workers and helps them run campaigns. It now has more than 37,000 signatures. Alfie has joined the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, which helped with the campaign.

“Thanks to the pandemic I think there’s going to be a massive resurgence in the idea of unions because so many people, especially young people, have realised how vulnerable they are to the whim of their employer,” he says. “They feel they haven’t got any power.”

If he is right, it would mean the reversal of a trend that has lasted more than 30 years and spanned most of the developed world. Since 1985, trade union membership has halved on average across OECD countries, while coverage of collective agreements signed at the national, sector or company level has declined by a third.

There is still huge variety between countries in terms of the importance and popularity of unions (4.7 per cent of employees in Estonia are members, 93 per cent in Iceland). But the majority of places have experienced a decline. Nowhere is this more evident than among the young. In 1995, one in five 20- to 25-year-olds in the UK were union members; now it is about one in 10.

There are now some reasons for trade unionists to be optimistic. When Boris Johnson, the UK prime minister, told people to go back to work after the first lockdown, the website that helps people find a trade union to join had more hits than ever before. Organise, the worker campaign platform, had fewer than 100,000 members this time last year; now it has more than 1m.

In an Amazon warehouse in Alabama, meanwhile, almost 6,000 workers are voting this month on whether to unionise. The impetus for the union drive is less about pay and more about the way workers are paced by robots and monitored by algorithms. It is a totemic battle for the US’s beleaguered

unions, which want to show they have a role in the 21st-century economy.

The politics have shifted in some countries, too. Joe Biden, US president, has warned Amazon not to intimidate workers in Alabama, and has already edged institutions such as the National Labor Relations Board in a more pro-union direction. New Zealand, which deregulated and de-unionised its labour market in the 1990s, is now planning a system where workers and employers will bargain to put a floor on wages and conditions across certain sectors or occupations.

This reflects a quiet change in economic orthodoxy. As Alan Manning, economics professor at the London School of Economics, says: “It’s incredibly popular among young economists now to think the balance of power between labour and capital has gone too far.” The OECD, hardly a hotbed of socialism, argues that collective bargaining “should be mobilised to help workers and companies face the transition and ensure an inclusive and prosperous future of work”. The organisation reasons that while important, laws and regulations are not as responsive as good industrial relations, particularly with regards to the deployment of automation or electronic surveillance.

The question is whether unions themselves are fit for the future. Some have adapted well to the changing needs of workers. Germany’s IG Metall, for example, has opened up to self-employed members and collaborated with Swedish white-collar union Unionen to help workers on “crowd labour” platforms. But others are stuck in the past, dominated by structures and work cultures from the 1970s that leave them with no high ground from which to criticise private-sector employers.

GMB, one of the UK’s big unions, commissioned an investigation by a lawyer last year into allegations of sexual harassment. The report said “bullying, misogyny, cronyism and sexual harassment are endemic” in the union, which was run like a series of “fiefdoms”. GMB, which published the investigation in full, says it will “face up to and tackle” the problems.

Platforms such as Organise and new start-up unions like the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain, unencumbered by old structures, have found ways to reach people that traditional unions have struggled to recruit, such as Deliveroo riders and other gig workers. IWGB has won some big legal victories, but its day-to-day work involves helping app workers with practical problems such as being deactivated with no explanation. While some traditional unions have sought to collaborate and learn from these new arrivals, others have treated them with suspicion or denial. “We’re just going to be eaten like Netflix ate Blockbuster if we don’t shake it up,” one trade unionist said.

The pandemic has prompted workers like Alfie to raise their voices and their sights. It means that unions have the best opportunity in decades to renew themselves and their place in the economy. Whether or not they seize it will be up to them.

Carol Scheffer (CWU Ireland) elected new President of the UNI Europa Women’s Committee



On April 26, the 6th UNI Europa Women’s successful Conference that gathered 118 unions participating from 33 countries with 167 delegates and 98 observers in total has elected its new President.

This year, the UNI Europa Women’s Conference took a very progressive approach by agreeing key strategic priorities for the upcoming four years. These strategic priorities highlighted the in-equality between women and men that persists in the world of work. Although the global female labour force participation rate continues at almost 50%, women continue to suffer more from occupation and sectoral segregation, to endure unequal distribution of unpaid care and household work, to be paid less than men for the same job and to endure different forms of violence at home and at the workplace.

Our strategic priorities featured three key areas that UNI Women will be concentrating on.

These are:

1. Violence and economic inequalities
2. Health inequalities
3. Digitalisation

The UNI Europa Women’s Committee will continue to work together to develop comprehensive strategies to protect women post COVID. This includes monitoring working conditions and ensuring that women’s issues are at the heart of the collective bargaining agenda. We recognise that Europe is an example of how diverse cultures can share common values and the European services sector trade unions are still at the forefront of the struggle for equality as they represent 65% of both the economic output and employment in the EU.

The UNI Europa Women’s Committee will deliver on the gender pay transparency and we will demand strict controls over violence in the home and at work.

code of conduct



Introduction

All members have the right to expect a quality service from their union, within the rules and the guidance laid down by the National Executive Council. Where a member feels that the union, its employees or its agents (e.g. solicitors) have not provided such a service, they have the right to complain and to seek a valid explanation of the union's actions. Valid complaints may also give the Union an opportunity to learn and improve its service to members.

In addition, any member or any Branch Committee may make a complaint against a member to the effect that that member has engaged in an action or activity which is in breach of the Rules of the Union or is guilty of conduct unbecoming that of a member. (Such conduct includes the failure to act in accordance with the instructions of the National Executive Council during the course of an industrial dispute).

The Union is a voluntary organisation and is hugely dependent on the volunteers who act as Branch Officers or Committee Members. These representatives take on these roles in addition to working for their employer and this should be recognised by all.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to set out a process where issues that arise in respect of

- discipline of members;
- complaints against Branch Officers or Representatives; or
- complaints against National or Regional Officers

can be addressed fairly and speedily in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Discipline of Members

From time to time a member may be charged under Rule 2.7 with:

- Acting in any way contrary to the rules of the Union, whether in their capacity as a

member or a Branch Representative;

- Being a party to any fraud or any misappropriation or misuse of its funds or property;
- Knowingly, recklessly or in bad faith providing the Union with false or misleading information relating to a member or any other aspect of the Union's activities;
- Inciting, espousing or practising discrimination or intolerance amongst members on grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation;
- Bringing about injury to or discredit upon the Union or any member of the Union, including the undermining of the Union, Branch or workplace organisation and individual workplace representatives or Branch Officers;
- Obtaining membership by false statement material to their admission into the Union or any evasion in that regard;
- Breach of the Union's policies on diversity, bullying and harassment in the workplace, which includes cyber bullying and harassment; and/or
- Making a vexatious complaint.

The above list is not exhaustive.

A charge under this Rule can be heard by a Branch Committee or by the National Executive Council. The National Executive Council may delegate the responsibility for investigating any such charge to a sub-committee of the National Executive Council. It would be the normal practice for such charges to be heard at Branch Committee level in the first instance. However, disciplinary charges deemed to be of a serious nature may be initiated by the National Executive Council.

A member charged under this Rule may be suspended by the National Executive Council from holding any office or representing the Union in any capacity pending its decision. In such circumstances a member shall be given

written notice of any such suspension as soon as reasonably practicable.

A member under disciplinary investigation or charged with a disciplinary offence, including Branch Officers and Branch Committee members, may not attend meetings of their own Branch other than as part of the disciplinary process.

Procedures for Disciplinary Cases

Cases initiated by Branch Committee

1. If a Branch Committee decides to investigate the conduct of any member under Rule 2.7 then it will establish a special sub-committee consisting of three (3) members of the Branch Committee. This sub-committee will be responsible for formally gathering relevant information and conducting a prompt preliminary investigation. They will inform the member concerned that they have been requested to undertake this investigation. The member concerned is expected to cooperate fully with the preliminary investigation and will be asked to provide the sub-committee with any relevant documents. The purpose of the preliminary investigation is to allow the sub-committee to gather factual information relating to any concerns or allegations against the member.
2. Following a thorough investigation and as soon as practicably possible, the sub-committee will determine whether the member concerned should be charged under Rule 2.7 and will present a report to the Branch Committee. If the Branch Committee accepts the report and decides to charge the member, then the Branch Secretary shall notify the member in writing of the charge(s), the penalties which may be imposed, and the date when the charge(s) will be heard which will be at least fourteen (14) days after the date of the notice.
3. At the hearing the charges against the member shall be presented by the Branch Secretary.
4. The member has the right to either attend the hearing or they may choose to submit a defence in writing.
5. The member under charge may be accompanied by another member of the Union.

Their role is to support and assist the member concerned.

6. If the member fails to either attend the hearing or submit a written defence, then the meeting will proceed to deal with the matter in the member's absence.
7. Following consideration of the matter by the Branch Committee and if by a majority they find the member guilty, then it may impose one of the penalties provided by in Rule 2.7.1:
 - a. Prohibited from attending Union meetings for a given period;
 - b. Removed or suspended from office, prohibited from holding office or participating in any way in Branch or Union administration for a given period;
 - c. Deprived of some or all of the benefits of membership for a given period;
 - d. Suspended from membership for a given period;
 - e. Expelled from membership of the Union.
8. The member will be advised of the decision of the Branch Committee by written notice sent to their address by registered post and the member will be advised of the right of appeal.
9. The Branch Secretary will inform the National Executive Council of any decision made and that the member concerned has been advised of the right of appeal.

! APPEALS PROCESS

1. The member concerned shall have the right of appeal against a decision of the Branch Committee to the National Executive Council.
2. Any appeal must be submitted to the General Secretary within twenty one (21) days of the notice to the member advising of the outcome of the investigation and the penalty imposed.
3. If an appeal is submitted, the National Executive Council will establish a sub-committee consisting of at least three (3) members of the National Executive Council.

4. The appeal to the sub-committee may be by way of an oral hearing or a written submission by the member.
5. The member shall have the right to be accompanied to the appeals hearing by another member of the Union.
6. The sub-committee may reject, accept the appeal in whole or in part or vary the penalty imposed.
7. The report from the sub-committee will be submitted to the National Executive Council and if accepted, the member will be advised of the decision by written notice sent to their address by registered post.
8. The decision of such an appeal is final, subject to Rule 2.8.2.

Cases initiated by the National Executive Council

1. The National Executive Council may decide to investigate the conduct of any member under Rule 2.7. If so, it will establish a special sub-committee consisting of three (3) members of the General Purposes Committee. They will be responsible for formally gathering relevant information and conducting a prompt preliminary investigation. They will inform the member concerned that they have been requested to undertake this investigation. The member concerned is expected to cooperate fully with the preliminary investigation and will be asked to provide the sub-committee with any relevant documents. The purpose of the preliminary investigation is to allow the sub-committee to gather factual information relating to any concerns or allegations against the member.
2. Following a thorough investigation and as soon as practicably possible the sub-committee will determine whether the member concerned should be charged under Rule 2.7 and will present a report to the National Executive Council. If the NEC accepts the report and decides to charge the member, then the General Secretary shall notify the member in writing of the charge(s), the penalties which may be imposed, and the date

when the charge(s) will be heard which will be at least fourteen (14) days after the date of the notice.

3. At the hearing the charges against the member shall be presented by the President.
4. The member has the right to either attend the hearing or they may choose to submit a defence in writing.
5. The member under charge may be accompanied by another member of the Union. Their role is to support and assist the member concerned.
6. If the member fails to either attend the hearing or submit a written defence then the meeting will proceed to deal with the matter in the member's absence.
7. Following consideration of the matter by the National Executive Council and if they find the member guilty, then it may impose one of the penalties provided by in Rule 2.7.1:
 - a. Debarred from attending Union meetings for a period as decided;
 - b. Removed from office, suspended from office, debarred from holding office or participating in any way in Branch or Union administration for a period as decided;
 - c. Deprived of some or all of the benefits of membership for a period as decided;
 - d. Suspended from membership for a period as decided;
 - e. Expelled from membership.
8. The member will be advised of the decision of the National Executive Council by written notice sent to their address by registered post and the member will be advised of the right of appeal.



APPEALS PROCESS

1. The member concerned shall have the right of appeal against a decision of the National Executive Council to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions
2. Any appeal must be submitted to the General Secretary within twenty-one (21) days of the notice to the member

continued overleaf/

continued/

advising of the outcome of the investigation and the penalty imposed.

3. Any such appeal will be heard by a committee appointed by the Irish congress of Trade Unions.

Complaints against Branch Officers or Representatives

Any member or members who are unhappy with the service provided by their Branch Officers or Branch Representatives should, in the first instance, raise their concerns with either the Regional or National Officer. If the member concerned is unhappy with the outcome, they may refer the matter to the General Secretary or Deputy General Secretary. If the matter is still not resolved, the General Secretary may refer the issue to the National Executive Council.

In investigating the issue, the President shall seek a report from the local representative, the Regional or National Officer, the Deputy General Secretary/General Secretary, or any other person connected with the issue. The National Executive Council will establish a special sub-committee consisting of three (3) members of the General Purposes Committee. They will carry out a preliminary investigation. They will inform the member concerned that they have been requested to undertake this investigation and will following investigation issue a response to the member concerned.

The member, if still unhappy, may seek to have this matter reviewed. Any request for a review should be submitted to the President within twenty-one (21) days and should specify the grounds on which the member is appealing against the finding of the sub-committee. The National Executive Council will consider the case and the details of the appeal, and issue a decision which will be final.

Complaints against Regional or National Officers

If a member or Branch Officer/Representative wishes to make a complaint regarding the service provided by a Regional or National Officer, they may do so in writing to the

General Secretary. The General Secretary will seek reports from all those involved and following investigation will issue a response to either the member or Representative involved. If the member/Representative is unhappy with the decision they may appeal to the National Executive Council.

If a member/Representative wishes to appeal this outcome they should indicate in writing to the General Secretary within twenty-one (21) days specifying the reasons for the appeal. The National Executive Council will establish a special sub-committee consisting of three (3) members of the General Purposes Committee. They will carry out a preliminary investigation. They will inform the member/Representative concerned that they have been requested to consider the appeal will following investigation issue a response.

The member/Representative, if still unhappy, may seek to have this matter reviewed. Any request for a review should be submitted to the President within twenty-one (21) days and should specify the grounds on which the member is appealing against the finding of the sub-committee. The National Executive Council will consider the case and the details of the appeal, and issue a decision which will be final.

Vexatious Complaints

Vexatious Complaints are a form of abuse. They have the potential to hurt and disrupt another person's life that could have a negative impact on them and cause them psychological injury. Members will not be penalised for making a complaint in good faith. However, if it is found that the complaint is vexatious, then the member concerned could be charged with a breach of Rule 2.7 as detailed above.

If you have any queries regarding this document please contact Union Headquarters on: **018663000**

or email **info@cwu.ie**

or post to:

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An Post workers: 'I fear that I will bring Covid-19 home with me'

Post men and women balancing pressurised work
with homeschooling and family life

by Geraldine Walsh, Irish Times Online

There are few more challenging times in a person's life than the birth of a baby. These challenges increase when giving birth during a pandemic with insurmountable restrictions and strict guidelines. Throw in the pressures of one parent being an essential worker and an incredible stress is added to an already worn family dynamic. Shane Wakefield, who has worked for An Post for 24 years, and his wife, Stephanie, rode this wave last year after the birth of their twins, Bonnie and Ava.

"The twins were born early at the end of November and were in NICU" – the neonatal intensive care unit – "for five weeks," Wakefield says. "During this time I continued to carry out my duties, all the while visiting the twins in the hospital in the morning and back again in the evenings. Stephanie had an emergency C-section and was unable to drive, so there was a lot of pressure. It was difficult to juggle everything."

With an older daughter, six-year-old Holly, Shane and Stephanie formed a bubble with close family members to share the inordinate pressure of caring for their older child alongside supporting their babies in the NICU, while Stephanie also recovered from pregnancy and birth and Shane continued to work a pressurised job. While family members looked after Holly, the couple visited the twins in the NICU during these extraordinary times, balancing the difficulties of such an uncertain time.

"It was extremely stressful, both physically and mentally, on both of us," says Wakefield. "The uphill struggle we faced due to Covid-19 was nothing like we had ever experienced before. Stephanie had to go to every antenatal appointment on her own, which was hard for me also, as I wanted to be part of the experience.



Stephanie and Shane Wakefield with twins, Bonnie and Ava, and six-year-old Holly

I have empathy with anyone going through this situation during the pandemic.

"We have heard the horror stories of women giving birth alone but thank God I was lucky enough to be with Stephanie for the birth of our twins. We couldn't thank all the staff in the National Maternity Hospital enough for taking such good care of our girls and supporting us through that time. It was a long road, but thankfully the twins were brought home just after Christmas and are thriving."

Throughout his career with An Post, Wakefield says, the postal service has faced a lot of challenges, but nothing compares to the current situation. These challenges have individually hit the employees,

affecting their personal experiences. The emotional challenges, the sacrifices made, and the imbalance of homelife is difficult for so many of us. The commitment provided by our essential workers during this time should never be underestimated. And their personal familial situations should not be ignored.

"Due to the pandemic work has been increasingly pressurised," says Wakefield, "as obviously An Post are under huge pressure with deliveries, packages, etc, as more people are working remotely and shopping online. As a father of three I am constantly worried and concerned about protecting myself and my family and keeping us all safe from Covid-19. An Post have put in place protective measures, including staggered hours, to protect staff. Personally, I ensure I wear my mask at all times and take all other proper precautions.

"I have the added worry of newborn, premature twins and Holly at home. Stephanie is on maternity leave from the public service and is currently home looking after

Postal Update

the twins and trying to homeschool our six-year-old. As I am the only one leaving the house at the moment, my worry is that I will bring Covid-19 into our home unknowingly.”

While Wakefield can happily switch off from his essential role in An Post and dive back into family life when he comes home, he worries about the effect the restrictions have on his family. Wakefield is conscious that family members have yet to meet the twins and Stephanie is consistently at home alone with newborn twins while undertaking the heavy task of homeschooling. While he is undoubtedly grateful for his job, he says that his most important role is as a parent and keeping his family safe.

“As the schools are closed I worry about how this is affecting Holly,” he says. “She is missing her school friends and weekend activities. We were lucky that Stephanie was able to work from home before going on maternity leave, which was the only way we could manage childcare during the pandemic. But family life has totally changed, as it has for everyone.”

Parents on the frontline

Yvonne Twohig runs a very hectic post office in Cork. A mother of two – she has a 14-year-old who is caught up in an exam year, and a 19-month-old who has lived most of her life with restrictions and face masks, and hasn’t had the chance to socialise and play with other toddlers – she is aware of her duty to protect not only herself but also her three staff, who rely on her leadership. Her husband is at home providing care for their children during the Level 5 restrictions and school closures.

But Twohig has found the balance of life has become unduly unstable as navigating the pandemic has created additional, complicated layers. “It’s working all day in the post office where I’m trying to keep my staff safe and also trying to keep all the customers that come through the doors safe. And then home in the evenings doing schoolwork as we have a Junior Cert in the house. I’m

worried that he’s missing out on so much like meeting his friends and interacting with other people. He does a lot of his schoolwork through Microsoft Teams, and I also have the app on my phone so I can monitor it. But I still worry, so I’m making sure he’s doing all his schoolwork and studying enough for his exams.”

Parents will recognise this worry as it’s sadly common as we face the challenges of ensuring our children receive an adequate education. “He’s very laid back about studying,” says Twohig. “So I worry sometimes I’m pushing him too much, but I know it’s for his own good! It’s hard mentally on them. He has not been mixing with his peers or seeing his grandparents, cousin, aunts, and uncles.”

Twohig, like many parents on the frontline, is split between meeting working responsibilities and continuing to carry the load. Having created a connected team in her office, she is comfortable in knowing that if anything family related were to happen she has their support. But the stress of running a business at this time is exhausting.

“We are an essential service for the community,” says Twohig. “And we provide so many services. I enjoy my job, but this year it has been particularly challenging. Every day when I go home I fear that I will bring Covid-19 home with me. But I’m there to provide a service and people forget that we are trying to do our best in these

circumstances, and we have families that we worry about too. I am looking forward to going home in the evening and being able to walk in the door without having to disinfect myself.”

Having recognised the exhaustion the pandemic, working outside of the home, and in a busy, risk-associated environment,

Twohig ensures family time is met. “But there’s only so many walks you can go on.” she says. “But I do feel it has made us stronger as a family. In all, I hope people appreciate us at the post office and support us.

“In many ways, we are like a social bubble for some people, as we are the only contact that they have on a weekly basis. Mentally all of this is hard, but I think it will make us stronger. We’ve gotten this far and hopefully with the vaccines there’s hope.”



Yvonne Twohig, who runs a post office in Co Cork



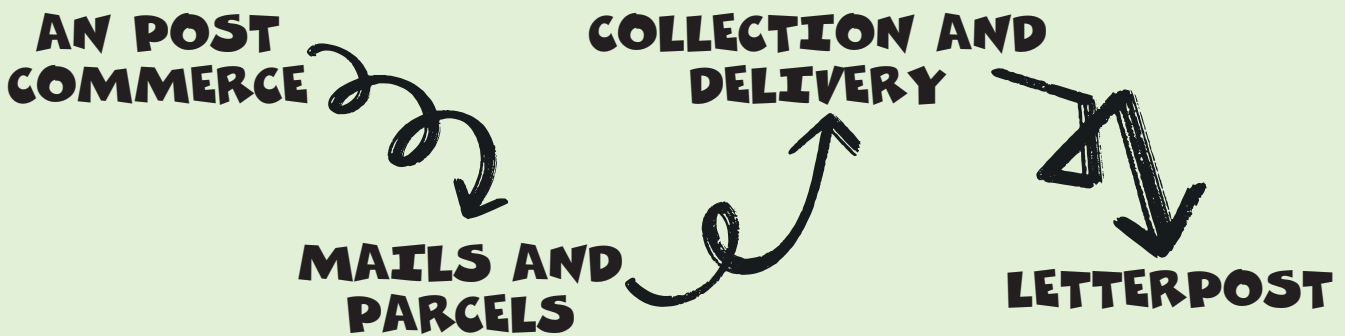
Is An Post CEO talking Rubbish?

An Post considering plan to collect packaging from doorsteps

According to a recent Sunday Independent article, An Post CEO, David Mc Redmond, while mulling over his cornflakes box, is contemplating collecting packaging from doorsteps. A huge increase in parcel deliveries because of Covid, has meant a massive rise in the amount of packaging, which is just one of the pandemic-related bumps on the company’s road to greener pastures.

“We’re conscious that we’re leaving a lot of packaging

on doorsteps and we’re asking ourselves if there is a way we could take it away too,” said David McRedmond, An Post’s chief executive. An Post has been throwing itself into the challenge of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 but the pandemic saw its emissions rise. Delivery staff at the company were not impressed with the suggestion that they were leaving items on doorsteps or they could be repackaged or recycled as bin men.



Changing from one word to another is the order of the day at the An Post World. The mails business has evolved to become an post commerce. Prio/Eco, the introduction of alternate day delivery model, is retitled Eco-Next Day. In our world it’s one of the same things, “deja poo”.

Eco/Next Day

Reintroduction of first- and second-class mail streaming has been deferred until February 2022. So where do we go from here, now that’s a great question. Test and Learn is the answer. In the next few months Test & Learn exercise models will pop up at four DSUs to trial

new equipment, reconfiguration of benches and route designs. These will inform how the delivery network can change to meet the changing profile of mail.

Cork City DSU

They say Cork is different, but not in An Post World. The Littleisland Super DSU, has been relabelled Cork City DSU with its first new inhabitants being Cobh. That’s certainly extending the boundaries and may well legitimise claims of Cork being the real capitol. Consolidation of North/South and Littleisland DSUs including Cobh is targeted to be completed by end of July.

Launch of Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control Policy

At the end of March, 2021, the Company launched their policy entitled 'Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control'.

This policy is a welcome development and was produced on foot of a claim from CWU establishing the requirement to address domestic abuse as a workplace issue.

We have seen during the COVID pandemic a rise in the incidence of domestic abuse as those impacted may be isolated with their perpetrator during lock down. We must also recognise that with the increase in remote work, the home has become a place of employment. The CWU was very aware of these factors but we also long recognised before the pandemic that domestic violence is a workplace issue, as there has always been the risk that it can spill into the work environment. This can occur if the victim is intimidated by the perpetrator during working hours – for example, if they are in receipt of abusive phone calls, texts and so on. There is also the possibility that the perpetrator can turn up at the place of employment putting the victim and even work colleagues at risk. We must also be aware that both the victim and the preparator could have the same employer and accordingly protective measures must be put in place.

The An Post policy on Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control is very comprehensive and recognises the detrimental effect of domestic abuse on families, as well as acknowledging it as a workplace issue. Accordingly, the workplace must be a safe environment for all employees and therefore the Union collaborated with the Company on a policy to protect employees.

The purpose of the policy is as follows:

- Break the silence about domestic abuse and coercive control
- Assure all employees that the workplace is a safe environment to access help
- Assist employees in obtaining informed and meaningful supports as early as possible
- Confirm that all disclosures relating to domestic abuse and coercive control shall be managed in a sensitive manner
- Support the retention, safety and wellbeing of staff affected by domestic abuse and coercive control
- Promote a respectful and safe workplace environment that does not condone or excuse domestic abuse and coercive control.

The policy emphasises the Company's duty of care towards its employees and was drafted not only in collaboration with the group of unions but also with LGBT Ireland, Men's Aid, Safe Ireland, and Women's Aid.

We hope that this policy will not only raise awareness of domestic abuse and coercive control but will also assist impacted employees to seek the assistance that they need. A full list of supports and resources is listed in the policy.

An Post finds recipient for letter addressed to 'Artist in Wool'

Helle Helsner had featured in Irish Times
but sender wasn't sure exactly where she lived

by Gemma Tipton © Irish Times Online, May 2021



Aidan O'Reilly wanted to order a blanket of Donegal wool from Helle Helsner.

DURING LOCKDOWN, I have often wondered which I love most: An Post or the internet? The former has brought surprises, catch-up cards, treats – and the occasional bill; while the latter has let me escape, explore and find out more. While digital communications are often pitched as the enemy of good old-fashioned letter writing, it's hard to imagine life without either, and sometimes they can come together to make something beautiful happen.

In March of this year, after realising how much my nice yellow mug cheered me up, I asked a group of people to pick the thing that did the same for them, to share with Home and Design readers. Emily Connell of Ballinspittle's Chalk & Easel chose her Donegal wool blanket, by Helle Helsner, which she described as a "beautiful handknit hug". We had lovely feedback from the piece, as some people evidently looked fondly at their treasured objects, while others began to dream of new ones.

And then a letter arrived. Or rather, PJ Hunt, relief postman covering the Ballinspittle district, received a letter addressed simply to: Helle Helsner, Artist in Wool, Ballinspittle. He didn't know the name.

"You get a few letters from time to time," says Hunt. "You just don't know who they're from. We do our best, but we don't always find everyone."

Not one for giving up, Hunt brought the letter with

him when he went home for lunch.

"I thought 'Artist in Wool' might mean something to my wife, Marion, and daughter Melanie. So the next thing, out came the computer, and my daughter found her."



Postman PJ Hunt enlisted the help of his wife, Marion, in the search for an address for Helle Helsner.

Helsner, who lives further west, takes up the story: "I work as a sculptor, but I like to knit. I like to have my hands busy. I call myself the CEO of Knitflix. Anyway, this is the thing, I got a phone call from this guy, and he said 'I'm the postman...', so I told him 'I'm up in Patsy

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Healy's old house' – that's how you find people round here."

The letter proved to be from Aidan O'Reilly, asking for a Donegal wool blanket.

"I was born in Killybegs, and I am around this life since 1936. I am in no hurry," he wrote. "Knit at your own speed."

Delighted, Helsner got stuck in.

"I got in touch with Aidan, and we had a chat. The wool comes from up around Killybegs, and I've been working on it ever since. It's ready to go in the post tomorrow. Aidan sends lovely letters," she adds, saying "I love that the postman made an effort."

O'Reilly is ready too.

"I live in Dublin now, but I'm originally from Donegal. I go back there, to pick up my Irish. I wanted a blanket to throw over a bed, but she also mentioned throws and shawls. I tense up with choice," he admits, so he left the colour to Helsner. "I swim in the sea every day, will I use the blanket for that? That's what I'll do."

He tells me about his daughters, also now due their own Helsner blankets.

"I have an affinity with the idea of them. Of Killybegs, and of Donegal wool. It pulled on my heartstrings.



Helle Helsner with one of her blankets.

Photograph: Jakub Walutek

"An Post is brilliant," he concludes.

"They are fantastic. Winter and summer a postman called Ken walks down my lane wearing his shorts. He never misses a delivery, he knows everyone's name. He looks out for everyone, they're a great tribe of people."

It's a lovely thought: that as we've all been isolated in different ways, there are still hidden threads connecting us – whether digital, woolly, or bearing a stamp and a postmark and whatever sort of address.

AN POST SUPERANNUATION SCHEMES –

Trustee Changes

Retirement of Chairman Paddy Gallagher

Chairman of the An Post Superannuation Schemes, Paddy Gallagher, recently announced his retirement after having served for more than eighteen years. A former Secretary of the Diageo Ireland Pension Fund and past President of the Irish Association of Pension Funds he steered the scheme through many difficult and turbulent times. Paddy shared his unique set of skills and professional expertise that he acquired over a very long career with his fellow Trustees. He leaves the fund in great shape with assets valued at a lifetime high off nearly €4 billion. The Members of the Schemes, CWU and An Post are extremely grateful for his commitment and time throughout which his motto being, it's the members money and we must always act to protect it in their interest. We wish him rude good health and happy retirement to Paddy and his family.

An Post Board appoint new Chairman

An Post Board recently announced the appointment of Michael Madden as Chairman of its Superannuation Schemes. Michael is no stranger to the CWU as he has previously served as a senior consulting actuary and partner at Mercer for over 20 years, where he acted as advisor to the An Post Schemes for many years. We wish him well in his new position and although he has a very hard act to follow we have every confidence of Michaels skills and expertise in facing the challenges ahead.

New Trustee Appointed

CWU also acknowledges the appointment of Norma Marnane as a Trustee to the Superannuation Schemes, who has also been appointed as one of the Company nominated Trustees. Norma is currently assigned to the Financial Directorate area of An Post and comes from a strong family background with the company, where many will remember with fondness her Dad Bill, former Regional Manager South.



Managing to Work with COVID-19

Meeting weekly, via Microsoft Teams, CWU and An Post review and monitor all aspects of working with COVID-19 to maintain essential services, while ensuring health and safety measures remain in place. Level 5 restrictions in place since Christmas are at the point of being cautiously relaxed in conjunction with the successful rollout of the vaccination programme. However, the requirement for masks, social distancing, staggered attendances and hand sanitisation will remain in place for some considerable time. While great progress has been achieved and good grounds for optimism, now is not the time to let our guard down. Below we have set out an update on a range of issues discussed with An Post.

COVID Leave

Since the outset of the pandemic, we agreed with the Company that anyone either diagnosed with COVID, symptomatic and awaiting the outcome of a test or close contact of a confirmed case would be placed on paid special leave. The absence is not recorded as sick leave. In addition, we agreed that employees required to self-isolate by medical professionals are placed on paid special leave. They are required to provide a note from their Doctors advising that they have an underlying medical condition and as a result are required to self-isolate.

As the roll out of the vaccination programme continues the Company are reviewing the circumstances of approximately 96 employees that remain self-

isolating on medical advice due to an underlying medical condition or because of a health issue of a family member. HR Managers will contact those employees to see if their circumstances have changed. Any decision about the continuance of paid special leave will be based on medical advice from Occupational Health and the employee's own Doctor. The Union intends to keep this under review and CWU Regional Officers are available to assist members.

Vaccination Programme

The following is agreed in relation to the vaccination programme.

Receiving Vaccine

In the majority of cases the employee will have no control over the timing of their vaccination. If an employee is scheduled to attend for vaccination at a time when they are due to attend for work and once, they provide advance notice they will be given paid time off to attend for the vaccine. The amount of time off will vary depending on the time of the appointment and the location of the vaccination centre. In the majority of cases, it will be possible for employees to attend for work either in advance or subsequent to their appointment. The absences will generally be less than 3 hours and will be recorded as local leave. Where the absence exceeds 3 hours it will be recorded as Paid Special leave. Anyone availing of time off to attend for a vaccination may be requested to provide proof of vaccination.

Adverse Reaction

There may be circumstances where individuals experience a reaction to the vaccine, and this may range from mild in most instances to a severe reaction in a small number of cases. If an employee experiences a reaction (COVID related symptoms such as an elevated temperature, muscle aches or soreness) they should stay away from work until the symptoms have subsided). In most cases this will be for a day or two and such absence will be recorded and paid for as a period of sick leave. This will be reviewed in the light of experience. If the employee has a severe reaction which results in an extended absence, then these will be reviewed on a case by case basis and consideration will be given to applying Paid Special Leave to such cases.

Infection Prevention and Control Measures

It should be remembered that while the vaccination programme will improve things it will not lead to wholesale change overnight as it will still be some time before we are all vaccinated. It is important in that regard that we don't let down our guard. The best way to prevent the spread of COVID 19 in the workplace is to continue to practice physical distancing and adopt proper hand hygiene. In that regard even as employees are vaccinated, the Company will continue to operate the measures it has put in place to mitigate against the risk of transmission of the virus in the workplace – hand washing, social distancing, mask wearing and staggered attendances and all employees including those vaccinated will be obliged to comply with these measures.

Returning to the workplace

While the majority of An Post employees have continued to attend the workplace during the pandemic a significant number were required to work remotely and have remained working from home for the duration of the pandemic to date. The Union will review with the Company on an ongoing basis the requirement to continue remote working. It would however appear that a resumption in the workplace is likely until late summer.

Training during COVID

As the restrictions in relation to COVID 19 ease the requirement for training will increase particularly to allow for annual leave during the summer period. Discussions are ongoing at the time of writing and we would expect that local discussions should commence in the next couple of weeks between the Local Branch and the Manager to determine the training requirements for the remainder of the year.

The Company assured the Union that they have taken all necessary precautions to minimise any potential

risks while training staff with any employee engaged in training required to wear masks and gloves and use sanitiser. The Company will also be respectful of any concerns an employee may have in relation to training and they will deal with any concerns appropriately. There is however an acceptance that training needs to recommence to ensure resources are in place for the summer months.

Health and Safety Training

Under Health and Safety Legislation the Company is required to ensure that staff are trained to ensure that they are competent to carry out their role safely. There are no exemptions or relaxation in place in relation to employers statutory requirements under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 or any of the associated Regulations at this time. This is kept under review by the Health and Safety Authority and the Road Safety Authority on a regular basis and if further guidance is issued the Company will abide by it.

Driver Training

Where a driver has previously completed driver training, they will not be expected to attend refresher training even in circumstances where the training expiry date may have lapsed. This will remain in place until the current restrictions are eased and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. However, where a driver has not completed driver training this will be considered essential training and they will be expected to complete the training. The Company has advised that they will be respectful of individual staff member's concerns.

Driver CPC

The Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) periodic training has been identified as an essential service and CPC centres remain open. Drivers with scheduled training should attend as normal for their CPC training and if attending they are exempt from Level 5 travel restrictions.

The RSA put in place an extension for drivers who had a Driver CPC card due to expire between 1st February 2020 and 31st August 2020. They have also advised that given the extraordinary circumstances of COVID 19 that professional drivers who hold a valid Driver CPC card with a future expiry date will not be penalised if they have not completed their annual training by 9th September 2020.

Due to the continued Covid-19 situation, with effect from 6 March 2021 Driver CPC cards will be further extended by EU Regulation. This means that Driver CPC cards that expired or will expire between 1 September 2020 and 30 June 2021 will be extended by 10 months. In addition, Driver CPC cards that expired during the initial period 1 February 2020 and 31 August

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2020 (which were extended for 7 months) and will fall to expire again during the period 1 September 2020 and 31 March 2021 will be extended again for 6 months or until 1 July 2021 whichever is the latest. The RSA has provided the following examples:

- A driver with a CPC card that expired between 1 February 2020 and 31 May 2020 who has not already renewed their card will now have a new expiry date of 1 July 2021.
- A driver with a CPC card that expired between 1 June 2020 and 31 August 2020 who has not already renewed their card will be extended by 13 months (which includes the previous extension)
- A driver with a CPC card that expired/is due to expire between 1 September 2020 and 30 June 2021 will have an extra ten months added to their expiry date.

Manual Handling Training

As stated, above employers retain the responsibility to ensure the safety, health and welfare of their employees and must take all reasonable measures to ensure this happens. In relation to manual handling training employers are expected to continue to provide it to employees with a priority given to those who are most at risk. We have agreed that employees who have previously completed manual handling training will not be expected to attend refresher training. However, those employees who have not previously completed any manual training will be expected to attend training. Up to date Public Health advice on preventing the spread of COVID-19 will be taken into account when providing this training.

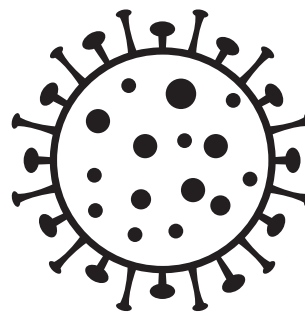
Safety Reps Training

Safety Representative Training is taking place online and is provided by CPL. As the details of courses become available, we will provide the details to Branches.

First Aid Re-certification

PHECC is responsible for the provision of First Aid Certification and they have advised that if a Responder's certification has expired between March 2020 and July 2021 they may complete the refresher course to maintain certification. A new responder course will need to be completed for any PHECC responder certification that has lapsed after 31st July 2021 date.

The Health and Safety Authority acknowledge that the First Aid Regulations require employers, based on a risk assessment, to have sufficient first aid equipment and trained first aiders in the workplace. The Regulations do not specify the training standard, duration of training and retraining and recertification periods but the Authority will continue to recognise first aid responders existing FAR certification during the COVID-19 pandemic while they wait to be recertified. Those first aiders can continue to administer first aid in the workplace.



An Post – Employee Assistance Programme

We were pleased to advise of the launch of the An Post Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in March of this year. This service is available 24/7 and is provided by **Spectrum.Life**. The Company engaged with the Union and the Occupational Health and Support service, to provide reliable supports through the EAP.

Services on offer range from nutrition and fitness, financial wellness, mental health promotion and counselling. Furthermore, the EAP will complement the existing services provided by Occupational Health & Support team.

The service is confidential and is free of charge to An Post Employees and their families.

We encourage our members to register with the service. Further information can be found on the **Post People App**.

Employee Health & Wellbeing



Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is here to help. We provide free and confidential counselling services to support employees and their family members with health, financial, social concerns including personal or family challenges.

We're available 24/7, 365 days a year and offer:

- Counselling
- Emotional Wellbeing Support
- Consumer Advice
- Legal Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Life Coaching
- Career Guidance
- Mediation
- Fitness & Nutrition Advice

Contact the EAP:

Freephone: 1800 903 542

Wellbeing Platform:

<https://anpost.spectrum.life>

(Organisation Code: **AnPost**)

Our EAP complements our Occupational Health Support & Services (OHS) & (OSS) which provides expertise on fitness for work, bereavement counselling, mental health & stress, rehabilitation back to work and supporting employees to overcome difficulties that are affecting their working life.

Email: ohsreferrals@anpost.ie



An Post Joint Conciliation Council

Notwithstanding the hurdles presented by COVID, the CWU has progressed a number of claims with An Post. Considerable progress has been achieved on a number of issues and a focused effort to finalise issues at the Joint Conciliation. Set out below is an update on some of these issues.

Revamp of Transfer List

In April 2016 the Monitoring Group issued a Determination which recommended the Company review and revise the terms of the Transfer Scheme in Mails and Parcels to reflect changes required to ensure it is fit for purpose in a modern employment environment. This has been the subject of discussion with the Company since and we expect to finalise this policy in May.

The policy will address the following:

- The policy will cover all operational grades up to the level of Working Leader.
- Any employee will be able to apply for a transfer once they have completed probation (six months in employment)
- When determining whether a vacancy is filled either by utilisation of the transfer list or the appointment of a temporary member of staff consideration will be given to the date of continuous employment of the temporary staff member and the date the employee applied for inclusion on the transfer list.
- Seniority on a transfer list will be determined by the date of application for inclusion on the list.
- The maximum number of offices an employee can apply for inclusion is five offices.
- Seniority is not retained when availing of a voluntary transfer.

Once this policy is finalised it will be issued as a GS Circular.

Retirement Age

The Maximum Retirement Age within An Post is currently 66 years of age. It was scheduled to change to 67 in 2021 but the Social Welfare Act signed on 22 December 2020 changed that. This means that there is no provision in legislation to provide for a further increase to the State Pension Age and new legislation will need to be passed if the Maximum Retirement Age is to change. In order to examine this issue, the Government

has established a Commission on Pensions which is tasked with examining this issue and is due to report to the Minister by 30th June 2021. CWU outlined its views to the ICTU, and they have made a comprehensive submission on behalf of the Group of Unions

The Company has confirmed that they will apply the same criteria to requests from employees to work beyond age 66 as formerly applied for extensions beyond age 65.

Retirement Policy

To address concerns regarding the manner in which the Company administers retirements, the Union sought agreement on a retirement policy. The priority being to ensure a consistent approach to retirement and requests for extended employment beyond the maximum retirement. Discussions on this policy have now concluded with the policy containing the following:

- How Normal Retirement Age is calculated
- The interaction between the Company and retiring employees in the lead up to retirement with employees to be met 12 months before their NRA and MRA.
- A Pre-retirement course to be offered to all retiring employees before they retire.
- The policy recognises that some employees may change their mind in relation to either retiring early, on their NRA or in relation to seeking an extension.
- A request to extend an employees retirement age will be considered in the following circumstances:
 - o To ensure specialised roles and specialised knowledge are retained within the Company where this is needed.
 - o To ensure that the role/job continues to be performed during any handover/recruitment phase and to ensure no interruptions/gaps in the role/job.
 - o To ensure continuity of service, knowledge and standards in particular projects undertaken by the Company.
 - o To meet employee requirements to prepare better for retirement or to improve pension provision.
- Each case will be considered on its merits with the following taken into account when considering an application for extended working.

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- o Each individual's circumstance and their ability to give regular and reliable service.
- o The need for intergenerational fairness i.e., allowing younger workers to progress.
- o Creation of a balanced age structure within the Company
- o Succession Planning
- o Motivation and dynamism through the increased prospect of promotion
- o The continuing need for their role
- o Consideration of any risks from a health and safety perspective to the employee or others.

At the time of writing, we are finalising with the Company how the policy will be communicated and particularly how they will deal with the large number of employees who have not received a pre-retirement course. Once this is finalised the policy will be incorporated into a GS Circular and distributed to all Branches

Temporary Rehabilitation Rate (TRR) / Pension Rate

CWU has secured agreement with An Post the company will provide details in a letter to employees before they are placed on Pension Rate of Pay, having exceeded sick leave payments. This letter will include the following:

- The date and rate on which they will go on reduced pay.
- A copy of the circular setting out the rules that apply.
- Advising employees that they may be entitled to extended sick pay associated with critical illness and who they should contact.
- Advising of CWU assistance if they have any concerns.

Review of Pensions

A key component of WRC pay deal is an agreement to address the widening gap between base pay and pensionable pay which short of 10%. The WRC agreement provides for the following:

The Union's and the Company, should, mindful of the term of the current pension's agreement to 2023, review the current situation regarding pensions by the end of 2021. In particular, such review should consider the sustainability of the widening gap between base pay and pensionable pay. Any proposal in that regard should be subject to Departmental approval.

The Unions immediate priority is to have this widening gap addressed by year end and most certainly in advance of pay increases due from 1st January 2022. CWU intends to focus its resources to address this in conjunction with a number of issues that remain outstanding from the existing pension accord.

JCC Diversity Sub Committee

Dignity at Work

A new Code of Practice (COP) was signed off by the Government in December 2020. In addition, the Health and Safety Committee of ICTU has drawn up guidelines for activists on how to assist those involved in bullying cases.

Previously both the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) had COP's and this new COP updates and upgrades these codes and is a replacement for the previous Codes. This was developed with input from the ICTU and IBEC.

Based on the above the Union and the Company have agreed to review the existing "Dignity at Work" Policy. In reviewing the policy, the Union intends to avail of the guidance contained within the Code of Practice 's mentioned above. In addition, we will also raise concerns expressed by members and Union Representatives who have operated the Policy and Procedures since it was last reviewed.

Discussions on the review of this policy are continuing and it is hoped that these will be finalised shortly. The new policy will adopt when of the points from the Code including:

- Increased emphasis on the informal approaches to dealing with bullying cases including a secondary informal approach which brings a problem- solving approach to bullying cases.
- It will also stress that the interchangeable use of the words bullying and harassment can lead to a misunderstanding of what one relates to and they are legally distinct concepts and a behaviour can be either bullying or harassment but not both.
- Distinguishes bullying form other inappropriate behaviours or indeed appropriate workplace engagement.
- Clear definitions of what bulling and harassment are.

Bullying at work can never be acceptable. The Union believes that all workers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. Any form of bullying or harassment is unacceptable and can never be condoned. Work related bullying can lead to work related stress and ill health.

It is our intention to finalise the reviewed Dignity at Work Policy in the next few weeks and as part of the finalisation of this policy we will be agreeing the communications process as well as the training requirement. It is also our intention to provide our activists with training on the policy as well as adapting the Congress Guidelines to An Post.

Statutory Leave available to Parents

As legislation is amended in relation to statutory leave available to parents the Company issue circulars given

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effect to the change in legislation. This can create confusion as it means there are a number of different circulars dealing with similar issues. With that in mind we proposed to the Company one policy document which would list all of the leave available to parents. This document would include Parental Leave, Parents Leave, Paternity Leave and Force Majeure Leave. This has now been agreed and will be issued as both a Company and Union Circular shortly. A summary of the leave available is detailed below:

Leave Type	Who can avail of it?	How long is it?	Is it paid?
Parental Leave	Parents and guardians of children under 12 years of age	A maximum of 26 weeks	No it is unpaid
Parents Leave	Parents and guardians of children under 2 years of age	A maximum of 5 weeks	Parents benefit from the state may be available but the Company does not top up this leave
Paternity Leave	New parents of children under 6 months (not the mother of the child) and must be taken within 6 months of the birth	2 weeks	Paternity benefit is payable from the state and An Post will top this up

Other JCC Issues

Weather Warnings

Discussions in relation to the review of the adverse weather policy have been ongoing for some time. Of primary concerns to the Union was the issue of weather warnings and to ensure clarity for members when weather warnings are issued. A new policy has been agreed and this will be circulated over the next few weeks and will include:

- An acceptance by the Company that extreme weather events can impact on an employee’s ability to report to work.
- A statement that the Company will take guidance

from the National Emergency Coordination Group and Met Eireann.

- Details of what is meant by the various weather warnings.
- A statement that the Company may make a decision to suspend services during a red weather warning.
- A commitment that the Company will keep itself up to date with Met Eireann forecasts and warnings, Government Agency advice and will advise all its staff through appropriate communication channels (e.g., email, text, phone or it’s Post People App) as to its plans regarding what action and procedures must be taken prior to, and during, an adverse weather event.
- Agreement that should a decision be made at any stage to suspend normal operations at a local, or national level employees scheduled to attend work in locations affected will be recorded as having given their scheduled attendance for the period of suspension.
- Where normal operations are continued during a Weather Warning employees are expected to attend work as scheduled.
- Where however, because of localised conditions affecting them, an employee is unable to attend work as scheduled due to circumstances outside of their control, their line manager should be advised as soon as possible. The employee may then choose from one of the following options:
 - o Work from home or an alternative Company location
 - o Avail of Flexi Leave
 - o Use any annual leave carried over
 - o Annual Leave
 - o Advance of annual leave
 - o Unpaid leave
- Extended period of closure
- Role and responsibilities

Remote Working

Discussions are ongoing and we are awaiting a final draft from the Company which will require further discussion.

Right to disconnect

The right to disconnect refers to an employee’s right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work-related electronic communications, such as emails, phone calls etc during non-work hours. The WRC has published a Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect, and we have sought the introduction of a policy in An Post . The Company are agreeable to this and we will be commencing discussions shortly.



Forward Through Collective Bargaining – Organising

Seán Mc Donagh,
Deputy General Secretary
CWU Ireland

Colleagues,

At the outset, I extend the very best wishes to you all from CWU Ireland and that you stay safe in these most extraordinary dangerous and difficult times. Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the value of workers and Unions leading the way in maintaining essential services, whilst ensuring full protections for workers and the general public alike. It has also confirmed, what my fellow countryman Mike Ryan of the World Health Organisation has said, that it is not just the virus that is killing people, it is the lack of access to health care by the underprivileged in a deeply inequitable society.

Our values are not confined to dealing with issues at times of crises, and we must continue to work tirelessly to vindicate the rights of workers through collective bargaining. A fundamental right that successive Irish Governments have denied its citizens. A position that was underpinned by a 2007 Supreme Court judgement known as the Ryan Air case. However, I am happy to say that some progress has been made in the intervening period, including ironically, Union recognition at Ryan Air, and there is scope for further optimism.

Can I also, compliment Uni Europa for proceeding with this Conference remotely, embracing and utilising technology to ensure we continue to promote our message and values, advance our cause by sharing our knowledge and experiences. **Communication is key.**

The theme *Forward Through Collective Bargaining* together with the slogan to *Reinforce our Collective Bargaining Power*, are timely as we prepare for a successful future post COVID. I salute UNI leadership for promoting this event.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which CWU Ireland is a very active supporter, developed a policy document entitled *No Going Back - A new deal toward a safe and secure future for all*. This excellent work in summary advocates for a fairer society in which Unions are best placed to deliver on behalf of their members. At its core is the requirement for legislation that ensures the Right to Collective Bargaining, and access to work places, to organise. It calls for an end to bogus self-employment practices, insecure work arrangements, and the right to a Living Wage. As I alluded to earlier, I

am confident the hard work and the endeavour of the collective will advance our cause, and we must not rest until our objectives are achieved. **We should not settle for less.**

With regard to the Organising Strategy, which I fully support, we must at every level seek to defend, expand, build and rebuild. Collective Bargaining is not a panacea for all our issues, as we strive to create a strong and successful Trade Union movement. In our struggle there are two markets, employers and employees. We must win the hearts and minds of workers as the power of collective remains central to recruitment. Work place activity is key to maintaining membership levels. Workers must see the Union as an essential presence in successfully resolving their particular problems.

Success depends on commitment, appropriate structures, resources combined with a determined and relentless focus at all levels. Organising is a top priority, it is an obligation.

To quote Nelson Mandela “*It always seems impossible until it is done*”

Thank you – Stay Safe and Well.

KN Branch Update

Branch Structure

The CWU needs an effective Branch Structure to deal with local issues and prepare the Branch for the future. The structure, outlined below, will ensure that our members get the representation they deserve. As you can see we have a number of vacancies that we need to fill. If there are members interested in taking up a position on behalf of your colleagues, please contact your **Branch Secretary**.

When we have the area representatives we can then commence committee training, implement meeting schedules that will help generate and address communications from our membership and to HQ if required.

AREA	NAME	CONTACT	BRANCH COMMITTEE
Kerry	Ger O'Sullivan	086 0284276	
Clare/Limerick	Paul Davy	086 0258053	
Sligo/Donegal	Joe Cox	085 8688585	
Cavan/Dundalk	1 rep	vacant	
Portlaoise/Kildare	1 rep	vacant	
Dublin North	1 rep	vacant	
Dublin South	1 rep	vacant	
Wicklow/Wexford	Andrew Hayre	086 0849062	
Waterford/ Kilkenny	1 rep	vacant	
Cork	Anthony Morrissey	086 0258171	
Tipperary (Hoist Crews)	Tom Burke	085 1743396	
DUG Crews	Daniel Kelly	085 8061899	
Networks Dublin- Poling	Darren Rigney	086 0493977	
Networks Dublin	1 rep		
Networks Rural	1 rep		
Networks Rural	1 rep		

COVID 19

During COVID 19 the aim of CWU was to keep people in work – there was pressure from members to move to the COVID payment however the CWU position was to keep members in work and **working safely**.

PPE was an issue, early on, particularly in KN Networks.

During the year KNIS used the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) as outlined by revenue guidelines. They informed the CWU and committed to refund monies earned above the TWSS and not seek monies where payment was under the TWSS.

They outlined the formula they proposed to CWU and it was in line with other areas where we have representations. Recently they have agreed to pay the employees tax liability against the TWSS.

Note while this was in place they continued to pay members up to 70% of their wages where work-streams had ceased.

KN Installs - Rate Card Review

Following IFN rate issue in early 2020 –the company stated that IFN was a new urban product from eir and that new prices were in place (following change in eir ownership to French owners NJJ). We met the company and after a number of meetings we agreed to look at the entire rate card with a commitment from the company that there would be an overall % increase to average earnings. This was the case in previous years.

A group was set up and the CWU nominated members to the group.

Difficulties with the Terms of Reference (TOR) of group and an understanding what was required delayed the commencement, however in mid-2020 we received a presentation from KNIS management. The presentation outlining the new codes and based on comparison with old codes it showed an average increase overall. We took away the information and because the scope was so large we requested a smaller group size to allow us understand the data better. At the same time, we started discussions on other improvements to T&Cs such as annual and sick leave improvements, PMR improvements and additions, pension scheme etc.

In February this year a package was communicated to staff and the CWU are of the view that the overall package is beneficial to members. The new rate card promises average increases to members overall. The package also included:

- Bonus annual leave additions
- Income protection changes
- Life Assurance – Death in Service – now 4 times salary
- Pension improvements
- Subsistence payment changes.

It is our intention to monitor implementation of the new rate card to ensure that the company's promise of an average pay increase is delivered on. Your Branch Reps have gathered initial data to address with the company.

We will follow up with a survey of all members in relation to rates and other member issues to inform our next steps.

KN - Networks

We have started discussions on improvements to member's terms and conditions. Talks are at an early stage but our view is that they are going well and there should be something in place over the next short timeframe.

A new Performance Management System was introduced in the Networks area recently that has the potential for our members to achieve up to a €3000 bonus over a full year. The range of payments are €0 - €600 per quarter plus €0 - €600 for the full year. The CWU will monitor this implementation and any issues our members encounter.

PhoneWatch Pay Increase and Annual Leave Challenges

CWU members in PhoneWatch were awarded a 3.25% pay increase on January 1st 2021, in line with the agreement reached on pay terms last year. The CWU PhoneWatch branch welcomed this development in what are very challenging circumstances.

For the duration of the current lock down, our engineer members in PhoneWatch have been restricted in the work they are permitted to do under the public health guidelines, as they applied at the time. Whilst agreement had been reached, through discussion, on average commission payments to maintain members' earnings as much as possible, some other steps needed to be taken in conjunction with this to ease the pressure on the business.

The branch made a decision, in the interest of protecting jobs and incomes, to accept proposals from the company that Field Operations staff take a number of days annual leave while restrictions apply. It was also agreed that restrictions on annual leave allocation in the months after restrictions are lifted would apply. In exceptional circumstances, where is need for leave due to family engagements e.g. weddings, this would be looked at on an individual basis. Annual leave would continue to accrue in the normal way.

New Company HR/ Payroll Platform - ODOO

As you know by now eir introduced a new HR system – ODOO – to replace Core HR in December 2020. Following the launch our members were faced with non-payment of overtime, subsistence, mileage, expenses, medical expenses etc. along with issues in relation to annual leave, sick leave, TIL, overtime calculation and hours etc. and the introduction of the epayslip.

Since January 2021 the CWU have engaged with the company to address the problems our members were faced with. As we write most of the issues are resolved or nearing resolution. We would like to thank the working group of Pat Sheridan, James Crowley and Donal O'Driscoll that worked on our member's behalf to fix the problems the introduction of the new system created.

As we pointed out in our recent circular to members:

“The CWU has made it clear that this approach to system changes is not acceptable. Members should not have to endure adverse financial impacts because of a rushed transition.

Although we note the company commitment to a robust testing regime for future HR releases, where there is a direct staff impact, it is imperative that our members do not suffer the consequences of a commercial decision by the company again. If we find ourselves in that position again there will be a reaction.”

Where members have an issue with their pay we encourage them to contact Payroll in the first and if it is not resolved to progress it through your Branch.

Updated eircom Defined Benefit (DB) Schemes Guide (Members Booklet)

The Trustees of the Defined Benefit Pension Funds have produced an updated guide to the eircom Defined Benefit Schemes. The information presented in the guide is provided to give members an overview of the eircom Main Superannuation Scheme 1988 (the “Main Scheme”) and the eircom Spouse's and Children's Contributory Pension Scheme 1988 (“the Spouse's and Children's Scheme”). The guide also provides details of recent changes in the administration of the Scheme and provides updated contact details in this regard.

The Guide can be downloaded from the eir Intranet Site – Internal news – 16/03/2021

eir PPE Trial

Purpose

“Dickies” who currently manufacture PPE to eir’s supplier are ceasing operations in Europe, UK and Middle East and are concentrating their efforts in the U.S. This now leaves eir with no option but to trial certain pieces of PPE from our supplier in the next number of weeks. Following on from discussions at the eir National Health Safety and Wellness Committee it has been agreed to propose to hold a field Trial of the affected PPE.

The items that have to be trialled are:

- Body warmer
- Trousers
- Shell Jacket

The three new manufacturers are Mascot, Tranemo and Regatta.

Each trial member will be given nine pieces of PPE (3 body warmers, 3 trousers etc...) to compare against each other and provide feedback and their recommendation.

This feedback will be assessed by a sub group of the eir National health and wellness committee when the field trial ends. The feedback will be in the form of a feedback sheet via Google docs and be easily filled out from the participant’s electronic devices.

Next Steps

Once agreed, we will need the names of 9 people to cover all districts in eir, also their addresses and PPE sizes as soon as possible to get this trial started at the earliest opportunity.

The trial will take 3 – 4 weeks to complete (once agreed). This will allow trial participants to compare the makes of PPE against each other and give their recommendation of one over the other.

Openeir Drop point Agreement – CWU

The CWU and Openeir have agreed the closure of the Cavan and Tullamore Drop Points (D.P.) and the distribution of workloads across the remaining D.P.s. This agreement secures the work of our D.P. members and keeps this work “in-house” for the foreseeable future.

It was agreed to fill the vacancy in the Limerick D.P. through competitive interview. In summary the agreement includes:

- Closure of Cavan and Tullamore D.P.s – It is proposed to close Tullamore end of May 2021 and Cavan end of June 2021.
- Redistribution of work across remaining D.P.s – (see attached)
- Securing D.P. work in- house
- Any future work peaks will be addressed through additional resources (personnel or overtime)
- Vacancy in Limerick D.P. will be filled.
- Work transition from Cavan/Tullamore will be managed and resourced using D.P. personnel.
- Daily delivery schedules will reflect distance to travel.
- Monitor implementation

Redistribution of Cavan and Tullamore Deliveries

Cavan DP locker locations	Count of Locker	new serving Drop Point
EIR ARDEE EXCHANGE	2	Clondalkin
EIR BAILIEBORO EXCHANGE	1	Clondalkin
EIR CASTLEPOLLARD EXCHANGE	4	Clondalkin
EIR DROGHEDA	17	Clondalkin
EIR DUNDALK EXCHANGE	16	Clondalkin
EIR KELLS EXCHANGE	2	Clondalkin
EIR MULLINGAR AEH	11	Clondalkin
EIR MULLINGAR EXCHANGE	5	Clondalkin
EIR NAVAN AEH	23	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL DROGHEDA	1	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL DUNDALK	1	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL MULLINGAN	1	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL NAVAN	1	Clondalkin
EIR TRIM EXCHANGE	5	Clondalkin
EIR BALLYMAHON EXCHANGE	1	Galway
EIR LONGFORD AEH	21	Galway
EIR CAVAN AEH	32	Sligo
EIR CLONES EXCHANGE	2	Sligo
EIR MONAGHAN AEH	15	Sligo
EIR MONAGHAN EXCHANGE	1	Sligo
Total	162	

Tullamore DP locker locations	Count of Locker	new serving Drop Point
EIR CELBRIDGE EXCHANGE	1	Clondalkin
EIR KILDARE EXCHANGE	11	Clondalkin
EIR NAAS AEH	20	Clondalkin
EIR NEWBRIDGE EXCHANGE	1	Clondalkin
EIR PORTLAOISE AEH	39	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL NAAS	1	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL NEWBRIDGE	1	Clondalkin
EIR RETAIL PORTLAOISE	1	Clondalkin
EIR BIRR AEH	12	Galway
EIR RETAIL TULLAMORE	1	Galway
EIR ROSCREA EXCHANGE	6	Galway
EIR TULLAMORE AEH	15	Galway
EIR RATHDOWNEY EXCHANGE	1	Limerick
EIR THURLES EXCHANGE	17	Limerick
EIR ABBEYLEIX EXCHANGE	1	Waterford
EIR ATHY EXCHANGE	6	Waterford
EIR CARLOW EXCHANGE	10	Waterford
EIR CASTLEDERMOT EXCHANGE	2	Waterford
EIR RETAIL CARLOW	1	Waterford
Total	147	

Tech Mahindra Staff Transfer to NTT

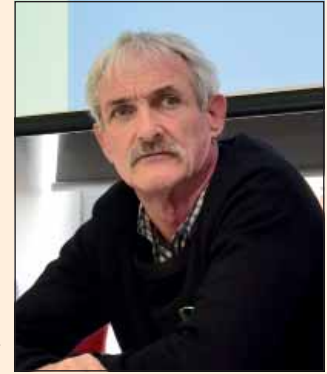
Arising from a decision by eir not to renew their IT support contract with Tech Mahindra a number of CWU members were transferred to NTT as well as a group of staff who are returning to eir.

After comprehensive negotiations with the assistance of the Dublin No. 1 branch, agreement was reached to facilitate this transfer.

Initially the branch had to issue an instruction to the affected members not to co-operate with the knowledge transfer that was critical to progressing the programme. This instruction was lifted after a number of members meetings took place, which helped to shape the final agreement that was reached.

As a result of this, enhanced exit packages were confirmed for ex-eir staff as well as for one former Tech Mahindra member. In addition, there is 3 months' pay for staff who volunteer to go on the first day post-transfer and a €2,000 ex-gratia payment, subject to co-operation with the shadowing process. The CWU will be recognised by NTT as the trade union for future negotiations.

JCC – New Staff Side Secretary



Tom Sheehan

At the Executive meeting in April, it was agreed that Tom Sheehan, Cork District Branch, will be the new JCC Staff Side Secretary for the Group of Unions. Tom replaces John Egan, Dublin No. 1 Branch, who filled this position until his sudden passing in December.

John represented the Group of Unions with distinction and during his tenure, the collective bargaining coverage of the JCC was significantly expanded to include new groups of staff, such as retail and call centres. He leaves an all-too-short but impressive legacy behind him.

Tom is a long-standing member of the National Executive. His involvement with various sub-groups of the NEC, providing him with a unique understanding of the challenges faced by our members in new sectors, included in the expanded JCC as well as the more traditional graded areas already comprehended.

CORE UPDATE

Project Diamond

The Core sub-group of the Executive has been working to ensure that the terms of the collective agreement that was reached last year are fulfilled. To that end, the Core Build function has now ceased, and the impacted staff have been redeployed and promoted.

Four training positions were advertised and are on course to be filled in the coming weeks, with offers being made to the successful candidates. In addition, the agreed ex-gratia payment is being processed in the coming weeks, which will conclude this aspect of the agreement.

Engagement with the sub-group will continue, in order to deal with issues as they might arise. The Union side has expressed its concern that the

programme is behind schedule which could impact staff who have not opted for the voluntary leaving programme. Discussions on this matter will continue, as we monitor the progress of the project.

Core Trainee Technician Positions

The CWU welcomed the decision by the Company to increase the number of staff that will be recruited under this scheme to forty-five over the next three years, with an initial intake of twenty. These positions have been advertised and the Company is working through the substantial number of applicants that have come forward, with a view to beginning the interview process very soon.

Significant Pay increases achieved in Customer Care Centres

Following months of engagement with eir, we are pleased to report meaningful and comprehensive improvements to pay and bonuses for members in the three Customer Care centres in Cork, Sligo and Limerick.

As you will no doubt be aware, the customer service provided by eir has been the subject of much debate and publicity in recent times. It has long been the view of the CWU that the high levels of attrition from the centres was a key factor holding back the ability to deliver world class customer service. Similarly, it is union policy that all members should enjoy a Living Wage.

To this end, a working group was established between members of the Regional Sub-Committee and the business to progress those key items that would deliver for our members and for customers services to:

- Increase agent motivation via Rewards & Recognition
- Eliminate remuneration as a driver of attrition
- Increase attractiveness of eir in the recruitment market
- Create alignment between agent interest with bonus payments/customer interest/eir's interest
- Reward tenure

The four main items identified by the Union were base pay, bonuses, pay for Senior Agents and a loyalty bonus.

We are pleased to announce that all four items have been addressed in the comprehensive overhaul of remuneration in the centres.

The new remuneration model includes:

- Increased base pay for Agents, Senior Agents and Team Leaders
- Clear, achievable bonus structure – based on 3 key KPIs
- Introduction of standalone ‘Attendance Payment’ for agents

- Introduction of a ‘Loyalty Bonus’
- * OTE 12.5% above the living wage

For Agents -

(See **4 Pay Elements** Below)

Summary -

1. Increased base pay to €22,000 per annum (new & existing agents)
2. New bonus structure - 15% (20% CVM) based across 3 KPIs
3. New attendance payment of €1,700 per annum spread out equally over 13 pay periods
4. New Loyalty bonus based on tenure to be recognised at:
 - 12 months: €500
 - 18 months: €500
 - 24 months: €1,000

All employees will benefit -

- If current base salary is under €22,000, all staff will receive the appropriate increase to bring them to €22,000
- If salary deficit to €22,000 is less than the 5% of current bonus then 5% will be added to their current base salary
- If you have already received the previous pay deal you will see base go to €22440

Bonuses -

- Performance bonus eligibility of 15% for agents based on achievement of 3 core KPIs
 - » Average Call Handling Time (AHT)
 - » Productivity
 - » Repeat Calls (Same Day repeats)
- CVM agents will be eligible for 20% performance bonus based on the achievement of 4 core KPIs

4 Pay Elements

1. Base Pay	2. Bonus	3. Attendance Payments	4. Loyalty Bonus
Improvement to base pay for new and existing Agents	15%* paid monthly based on 3 KPIs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHT • Same Day Repeat • Productivity 	Work your scheduled hours to & receive a monthly payment totalling €1,700 per annum (Gross)	Loyalty bonus after 12 months, 18 months & 24 months

Telecoms Update

- » Average Call Handling Time (AHT)
- » Productivity
- » Repeat Calls (Same Day repeats)
- » Churn target

Attendance Bonus -

In addition to the Performance Bonus, members will have the opportunity to earn a further attendance payment of €1,700 gross per annum paid equally over 13 pay cycles.

Loyalty Bonus –

- Complete 12 months of service from relevant effective date - payment of €500
- Complete 18 months of service from relevant effective date - payment of €500
- Complete 24 months of service from relevant effective date - payment of €1,000
- 12 and 24 month payments can be taken as €500 one4all tax free voucher

To see how this affects the different roles:

Care Agents -

Remuneration for a new Care Agent	BASE	BONUS	ATTENDANCE PAYMENT	Annualised Total	Loyalty Bonus
Current Remuneration for a new Care Agent	€20,000	20% / €4,000	€0	€24,000	
Revised Remuneration - Example timeline for a Care Agent					
Day 1	€22,000	€3,300	€1,700	€27,000	
Pass Probation	€22,440	€3,366	€1,700	€27,506	
Month 12	€22,440	€3,366	€1,700	€27,506	+€500
Pay Deal	€22,815	€3,422	€1,700	€27,937	
Month 18	€22,815	€3,422	€1,700	€27,937	+€500
Month 24	€22,815	€3,433	€1,700	€27,937	+€1,000

Senior Agents -

The new starting salary for a Senior Agent will be €24,000 per annum plus a bonus of 15%

(Potential of up to 17% increase e.g from minimum base)

Example - Remuneration of a Care Senior Agent	BASE	BONUS	ATTENDANCE PAYMENT	ANNUALISED TOTAL
Current	€20,450	20% / €4,090	€0	€24,540
Revised Remuneration	€24,000	15% / €3,600	€1,700	€29,300

Team Leaders -

The new starting salary for a a Team Leader will be €31,000 per annum plus a bonus of 15%. (Potential of up to 11% increase e.g from minimum base)

Example - Remuneration of a Care TL	BASE	BONUS	ANNUALISED TOTAL
Current	€28,000	20% / €5,600	€33,600
Revised Remuneration	€31,000	15% / €4,650	€35,650

Additionally, there is to be new and continued investment in training and upskilling:

New Knowledge Management - Upskilling & Knowledge in life

- Developing knowledge Management to identify skills and training requirements
- New L&D programme
- Investing in L&D to support agent progression and development
- Training needs assessment and up-skilling road map for Agent & TL by line of business

Leadership Training

- Continued Investment in Team Leader and Senior Agents in a Leadership Programme (level 6)

Finally, as part of the continuing assessment and modernising of systems being used by agents, a number of obsolete systems will be taken offline, and agents will be fully trained and integrated with the Care teams.

Continued improvements –

As part of the agreement for a 2.7% pay increase already won for the Centres is 2020, members in these areas are now included in overall collectively bargained pay discussions in the business going forward, meaning that they will receive the benefit of the currently agreed 3 year pay deal on top of what has been outlined above

and will continue to be included for future collectively bargained pay deals into the future.

Ever since eir decided to bring customer services back in house, it has been the Union’s stated goal to progress pay and conditions significantly and quickly. **This substantial overhaul of pay and benefits, coming on the back of previous pay increases for the centres, represents a real achievement for our members and demonstrates quite clearly the benefits of Union membership.**

It is through members’ ongoing engagement that we can continue to work to improve the lives of everyone in the Union.

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Vodafone Retail

The retail sector has been a very challenging environment this year with stores remaining open for essential services only. This has made engaging with members quite difficult. Traditionally at this time of the year, the Branch Secretary and the Organisers would visit stores to meet with members to discuss with them the issues they face in their workplace. These interactions are essential as the feedback from members not only identifies the issues that need to be addressed but often how to address the issues themselves.

As in-person store visits have not been possible, the Vodafone Branch, in conjunction with the Organising department, decided to set up remote store visits and invited members to Microsoft Teams meetings on a store-by-store basis in order to maintain engagement with members.

Although nothing replaces a face-to-face conversation, engagement on the calls has been excellent and we have received some very valuable feedback and insight into what life is like in stores during level 5 restrictions.

Vodafone Retail decided to reintroduce targets in January at a time when Covid cases were at their highest and restrictions at their tightest which caused members to raise their concerns. Those concerns were raised with the Company and subsequently targets were removed for January and February.

In March, the Company again introduced targets. The Branch engaged with the Company again and although the Company insisted the targets stay in place, the Branch reached agreement that a safety net be put in place to

ensure that no members were left behind. Fulltime employees will receive a guaranteed commission of €200 while part time employees will receive €100 whilst still having the capacity to earn more should they reach their targets. It was also agreed that targets be set at a fair level.

The recent closure of Carphone Warehouse has posed the most recent challenge. The Company have anticipated extra footfall in stores on the back of this and have raised targets to match the expected footfall. Members have come under pressure with the new high targets and the Branch is currently engaging with the Company on this.

Members will be updated of any future developments.

Vodafone - Mountainview

The effects of the pandemic are set to bring changes in Mountainview that will outlive the current restrictions. On return to the office, Vodafone have opted for a 60/40 return to the office with 60% of the working time spent at home and 40% spent in the office. While the finer detail on this hasn't been finalised, it has been broadly welcomed by our membership. The Branch feels the arrangement offers a better work/life balance and opens the door to recruiting for Mountainview outside the traditional Dublin base.

The Branch looks forward to continuing to engage with members across the business in the coming months.

eir Direct Sales

Over the last number of weeks, eir have recruited new staff for Direct Sales roles. Due to the current restrictions, CWU organisers are unable to conduct union inductions in person. A temporary measure was agreed with management to conduct an online union introduction. The CWU arranged for a half hour slot during remote training.

In the absence of our traditional in person group union inductions, the purpose of these online CWU introduction sessions is to continue to meet new workers at the beginning of their employment and explain the benefits of union membership. Following the sessions, each new worker was contacted and arrangements were made for them to join the union.

To date, CWU organisers have conducted two introductions session with new Direct Sales staff, this arrangement will continue until restrictions are lifted and normal face to face union inductions can resume.



Planning Ahead

The Union would like to remind members that they should actively plan for the future and be aware of what benefits are available to them now and in the event of injury, illness or death. In that regard, the Union would recommend that all members examine the following with regard to their own personal circumstances.

Making a Will

Members are permitted a FREE first consultation with the Union's solicitors to make a Will. We would recommend to members to include information on any of the CWU and/or Halligan Insurances schemes which your estate may be eligible to make a claim from.

If you would like to arrange a meeting with the Union's solicitor, please contact your Branch Secretary, who will request a letter of introduction from CWU Headquarters on your behalf.

CWU Mortality Grant

The estate of members and retired members may be eligible to receive a Mortality Grant from the Union. We recommend that you nominate a receiver by writing to CWU Headquarters, including their name and your relationship to that person. You can change this nomination, as required.

Halligan Insurances AVC

Some members may be paying an additional contribution to be part of the Halligan Insurances AVC. We recommend that you advise CWU Headquarters in writing if you are paying into this scheme to avoid any delays in processing eligible claims to your estate.

Halligan Insurances Personal Accident Cover

Members have the option of paying an additional contribution for themselves and/or their family to be part of the Personal Accident Cover Groupscheme. This scheme has a range of benefits available for injuries resulting from accidents and also an accidental death benefit.

Halligan Specific Illness Cover

Members have the option of paying an additional contribution for themselves and their family to be part of the Specified Illness Groupscheme. This scheme has a number of benefits available for a wide range of serious illnesses. Children under the age of 24 are covered for free. Cover is provided to members and/or their partners up to the age of 65.

Taking some time to make a record of the above may be helpful to you or your family in the future.

Sickness Benefit Levy

The National Executive Council has agreed a Levy on Sickness Benefit claims as follows:

- €1 per weekly payslip
- €2 per fortnight payslip
- €4.16 per monthly payslip

i.e. A member submitting two weekly payslips will have €2 deducted from their benefit payment.

This Levy has been agreed in accordance with Rule 2.3.6, which states:

The National Executive Council has the power to impose a special levy on some or all of the membership to augment any of the Funds provided for under these Rules or for any other purpose deemed to be appropriate by the National Executive Council.





STRONGER TOGETHER

CONGRESS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions



Workers' Memorial Day Ireland

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has taken the lead for many years in marking **International Workers' Memorial Day (IWMD)** which takes place every year on the 28th April. This is an important date nationally and worldwide for anyone with an interest in the safety, health and welfare of people at work when we remember people killed or injured at work.

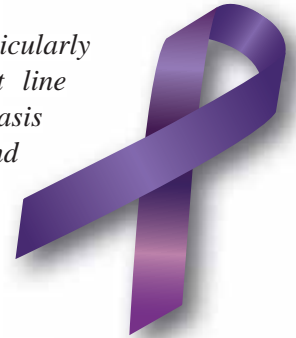
The CWU has always supported this International Day of Remembrance and we have a plaque in our Garden dedicated to the memory of those killed, injured or made ill as a result of their work which was unveiled on Workers' Memorial Day 2014.

In addition to marking Workers Memorial Day on Wednesday we should also recommit to safer workplaces. Through congress we are adapting the European Trade Union Federation slogan for IWMD: - "Workplace Health & Safety – it's your right".

In 2020, 53 people were killed in workplace accidents in Ireland while many more suffered life-changing injuries. Steve Fitzpatrick, the General Secretary of the CWU speaking on Workers Memorial Day stated:

"On Workers Memorial Day we remember all of those who have been killed, disabled or injured at work. The theme for Workers' Memorial Day this year is "Workplace Health and Safety – it's Your Right". The Trade Union movement has provided strong leadership throughout this pandemic in doing everything possible to protect workers. COVID 19 has highlighted the requirement for strong and robust health and safety policies. Last year 53 people died as a result of accidents at work. This is the highest figure for a number of years and happened while a substantial part of our economic activity was closed. This figure does not include the countless workers in Ireland and across the world who died as a result of COVID 19. With the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions the CWU through its involvement in the ICTU Health and Safety Committee has organised a number of online events including an online broadcast via the Congress website and social media, which will include a wreath-laying at the Garden of Remembrance, an emotional poem about loss recited by front-line healthcare workers, and a message from Dr Mike Ryan of WHO. On this day let us take

the opportunity to particularly remember all those front line workers who on a daily basis put themselves at risk and have worked with such dedication throughout the pandemic."



Workers' Memorial Day represented an opportunity to remember those we have lost and celebrate the contribution of those who continue to work to make us all safer. With the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions the ICTU Health and Safety Committee held an online ceremony at the Garden of Remembrance. A memorial wreath was laid by Minister Damian English. In addition, a poem, written by Sue Waltz, and dedicated to all workers who have gone before us and who we remember on Workers Memorial Day which was read by two frontline workers from Beaumont Hospital, Jacinta Shields and Martin Doyle.

The Plan

- I am your
- Mother Father
- Sister Brother
- Child Partner
- Lover Friend
- Today, I planned to
- Take a walk See a friend
- Tell a joke Give a smile
- Pay a bill Play a game
- Take a ride Kiss a cheek
- Hug a child

I didn't plan to . . . Die today
. . . but I did

I planned to
 Go to work Build a bridge
 Pave a road Fix a pipe
 Teach a class Save a life
 Paint a room Write reports
 Enter data Work the line
 Wire buildings Walk the iron
 Erect the steel

Please think of me
 Just once today When you
 Fulfil your plans
 I am your
 Mother Father
 Sister Brother
 Child Partner
 Lover Friend

I didn't plan to ... Die today
 ... but I did

I didn't plan to ... Die today
 BUT I DID ...

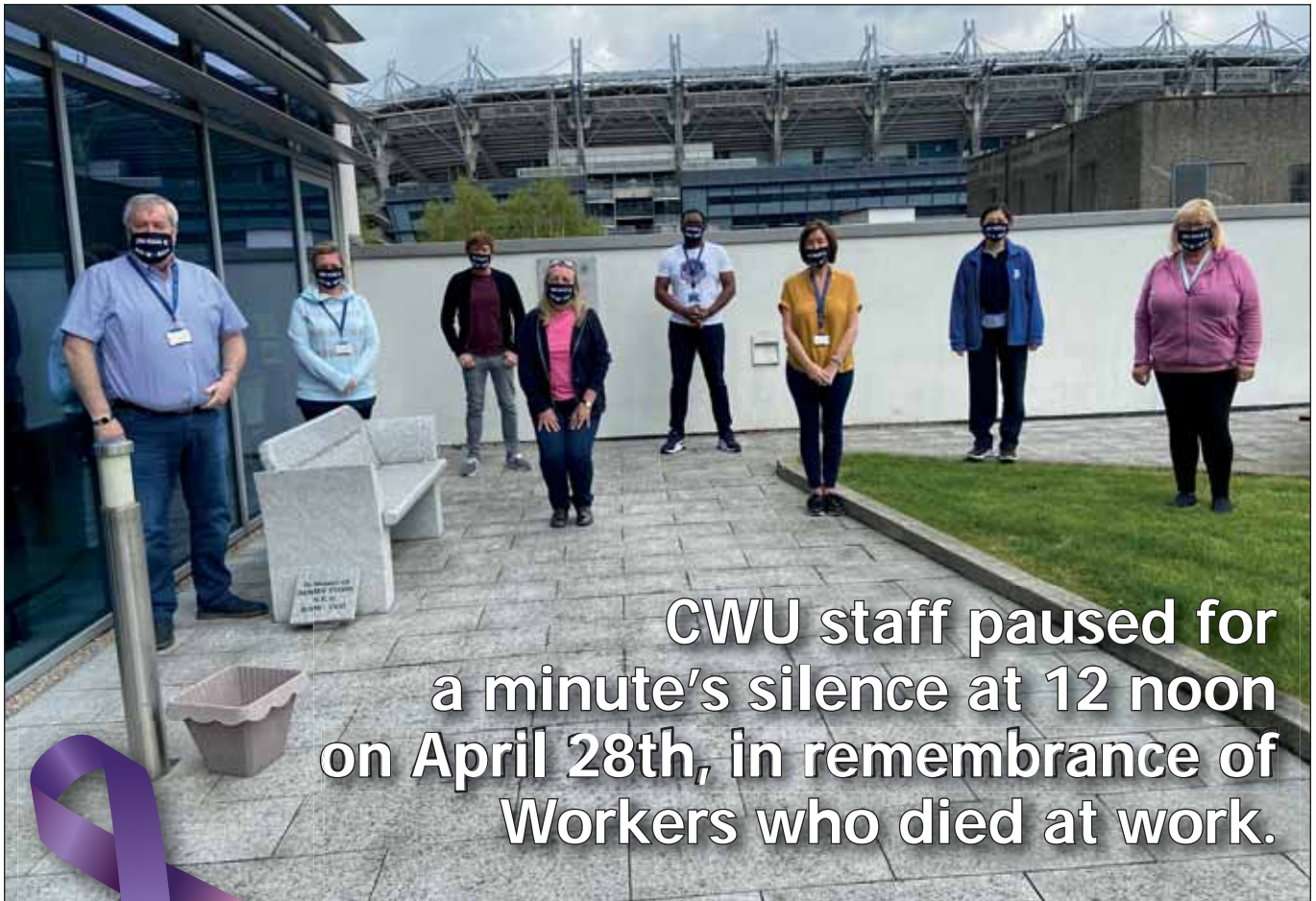
Speaking at the event Dr Mike Ryan of the World Health Organisation praised the courageous battle being fought by health care workers across the globe and those who have sacrificed their lives. Dr. Ryan thanked them for “their selfless and tireless contributions and for providing critical, professional and emotional support for families and hope for communities”. Commenting on the imminent return to the workplace of more people, he said “we must caution against rushing into the transition with any false sense of security due to increased vaccines.”



**Workplace
 health & safety**

**IT'S
 YOUR
 RIGHT**

**CONFEDERATION
 SYNDICAT
 EUROPEËN
 TRADE UNION**



CWU staff paused for a minute's silence at 12 noon on April 28th, in remembrance of Workers who died at work.



Workers were urged by Congress to pause for a moment at mid-day on April 28th, to remember those killed or injured or made ill in the workplace. There was an online ceremony at the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin, which was streamed via the Congress website.

A memorial wreath was laid by Minister Damien English, and the ceremony included a poem about loss recited by frontline healthcare workers Jacinta Shields and Martin Doyle.

In a message to mark International Workers' Memorial Day, Dr. Mike Ryan of the World Health Organisation praised the courageous battle being fought by health care workers across the globe and those who have sacrificed

their lives. Dr. Ryan thanked them for "their selfless and tireless contributions and for providing critical, professional and emotional support for families and hope for communities". Commenting on the imminent return to the workplace of more people, he said "we must caution against rushing into the transition with any false sense of security due to increased vaccines."

The theme for the day chosen by European Trade Unions and adopted by ICTU was 'Workplace Health and Safety- It's Your Right'.

Congress General Secretary Patricia King said, "Workers' Memorial Day represents an opportunity to remember those we have lost, and those who continue to work to make us all safer". Official figures show that 53 people died in workplace-related accidents last year, the highest number in many years, and this does not include 15 healthcare workers who have died since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and many tens of thousands of workers in all sectors who have contracted the disease.

Speaking after the wreath-laying ceremony Damien English TD Minister for Business, Employment and Retail said many workers have provided a service to the State during the Covid-19 pandemic, often at great personal risk to themselves. It was a time to remember those who have lost their lives and also those who were injured or suffered illness, he said.



www.unionlink.org

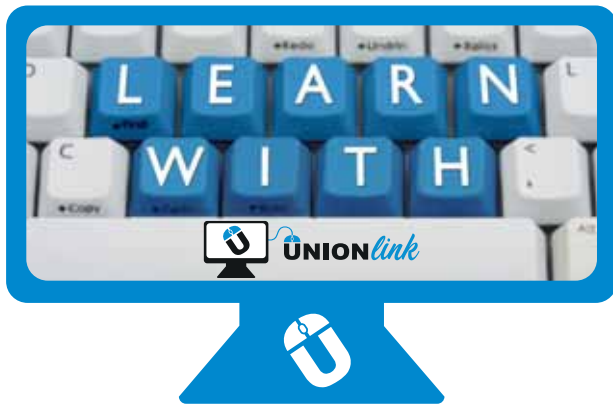
**financial
services
union**



**MANDATE
ORGANISING &
TRAINING CENTRE**



Online Union Learning



UNIONlink – Online Trade Union Training

The CWU, FSU and Mandate have come together to develop online learning courses that will assist our members and representatives in developing their skills. Through Unionlink, all members in our sectors have an innovative way of accessing a variety of courses. Education is an important part of the Union agenda: It not only enhances personal abilities, it also builds self-confidence. Unionlink assists members and representatives to create their own pathway to learning, while at the same time contributing to Union aims.

If you want to explore the online learning world, then Unionlink is for you!

How UNIONlink helps our Members

We believe that all our members should have the opportunity to develop their skills at a time and a place that suits them. With Unionlink this is possible as you can complete courses 24 hours a day, be it on your tablet, computer, laptop or smartphone. All courses are **free of charge** and are designed to be engaging and interactive.

Some examples of the types of courses that can be accessed are:

- Stress Management in the Workplace
- Mindfulness
- Understanding Trade Unions
- Sexual Harassment
- Whistleblowing
- Political Economy
- Getting to Know Your Computer

You can also download a Unionlink certificate, once you have successfully completed your chosen course.

Helping Members develop their skills

We have been assisting members and representatives to avail of learning opportunities for the last number of years. We can help you to develop your skills and create a greater awareness of courses that you might like to avail of through Unionlink. Unionlink supports a variety of e-learning courses. We have also set up partnerships with other learning providers to deliver a wider range of quality courses. This, in combination with our own expertise, has allowed us to establish a valuable online learning platform for all our members.

How UNIONlink helps our Representatives

To be a successful Union Representative, there are core skills that you must develop. As part of the Union Representative training package, you will have access to several online courses that will ensure that you are familiar with your role, which will then be developed further as part of the classroom training. This blended learning approach ensures that our representatives have every opportunity to contribute to their Union and make a difference to our members' working lives. The content of our representative courses reinforces the ethos of the Trade Union movement, while at the same time being an advanced way of representative learning.

Some examples of the types of courses for Union Representatives include:

- The Role of the Representative
- Organising and Recruitment
- Industrial Relations
- The General Data Protection Regulations
- Understanding Union Conferences

What do I do next?

- Go to our Unionlink website www.unionlink.org
- Register on Unionlink as a learner
- You will require a username and password to create an account
- Have your membership number at hand when creating an account
- Once your account has been confirmed by email, you can log in and select the course on which you wish to enrol
- Some courses require an enrolment key, which will be provided by your Union

UNION *link* support

Contact your Union's Education Officer or email support@unionlink.org for technical assistance, or if you are prompted for an enrolment key.

Your Education Officer can also advise on what courses would suit you and how you can further develop your skills.

You can access the
UNIONLINK WEBSITE
by scanning the
QR code here with your
smartphone camera.



You can find out more about
Unionlink by accessing this
INTRODUCTORY VIDEO
by scanning the QR code here.





Gaeltacht Draw Cancelled for Summer 2021

You will be aware that due to **COVID restrictions** all Gaeltacht courses for this summer 2021 have been cancelled and accordingly the CWU draw for this award has also been cancelled.

Following a discussion with the CWU Education Committee, it has been decided to reallocate the Gaeltacht grant amount towards the second level scheme **thus creating 17 extra second level awards.**

The 3rd level grant is unaffected.





G.S. Circular No. 11/21

INFORMATION

21st April 2021

Re: CWU Education Grant Scheme 2021

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 ~~A~~

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, 2021 only**.

Please note that should Gaeltacht courses not go ahead this summer due to COVID restrictions, the CWU draw for this award will be cancelled. In that regard, the CWU Education Committee will reallocate the Gaeltacht grant amount towards the second level scheme thus creating 17 extra second level awards.

The 3rd level grant is unaffected.

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 2021 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 to a **maximum** value of €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 or for transition/advancement to another course.

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 2021 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 2021** official form and no other version of the form will be processed. Photocopies of the forms and faxed copies are 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 3rd, 2021**.

Review and Monitoring of Scheme

This scheme will be launched to coincide with the upcoming academic year from September 2021. Again, for the Gaeltacht award this refers to courses held this **summer, 2021**. 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, June 4th, 2021** 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
SECOND LEVEL AWARDS 2021
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 11/21

(PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK LETTERS)

NOTE: Closing date for entries is Friday, June 4th 2021 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 2021
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 11/21

(PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK LETTERS)

NOTE: Closing date for entries is Friday, June 4th 2021 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).

Right to Disconnect Essential for the Future World of Work



Recently the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) launched their Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect. According to the Code, the ‘Right to Disconnect refers to an employee’s right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work-related electronic communications, such as emails, telephone calls or other messages, outside normal working hours’. This Code applies to all types of employment, irrespective of whether the employee is working from their home, working remotely or is in a fixed location.

CWU Submission

The CWU as part of the consultation process on the code produced a submission to the WRC highlighting what we believed was relevant as best practice. The CWU recognises that the world of work has changed considerably in recent times with remote work becoming a common feature for many. Remote work and digitalisation have brought many advantages to employers and employees alike such as reduced commuting times, increased flexibility, and the opportunity to secure a better work life balance. Remote work has also created some disadvantages as the line between work and personal life has become very thin with many employees continuing their working day outside of normal office hours. The culture of being “constantly connected” has resulted in many employees feeling pressured to work late and over weekends. This can lead to the deterioration of mental and physical health which in turn impacts family and personal life. Furthermore, these difficulties are particularly relevant for those with caring responsibilities who tend to be women and who continue to work from home while looking after their families.

The Right to Disconnect is required to establish those essential boundaries between work and personal life to enhance working conditions for all employees. We also

recognise that Remote Work is not the only factor as the Right to Disconnect applies to all types of employment irrespective of where the employee is based.

Provisions of the Code

The overall purpose of the code is to provide practical guidance and best practice to employers, employees, and their representatives in relation to the Right to Disconnect.

The Code outlines various employee and employer obligations in line with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 and other relevant pieces of legislation. It promotes assistance to any employee who feels under pressure to work longer hours than those agreed in their terms and conditions of employment. The code also provides guidance for addressing workplace issues arising from the Right to Disconnect.

Essentially the code highlights that the Right to Disconnect as three main elements as follows:

1. The right of an employee to not routinely perform work outside normal working hours.
2. The right to not be penalised for refusing to attend to work matters outside of normal working hours.
3. The duty to respect another person’s right to disconnect (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal work.

What is next for the CWU?

The code states that ‘Employers should engage proactively with employees and/or their trade union or other employees’ representatives as appropriate to develop a Right to Disconnect Policy that takes account of the particular needs of the business and its workforce.’ In that regard the CWU will engage with relevant employers on the provisions of the Code and how it will

Equality Update

operate in the workplaces of our members.

We believe that introducing the Right to Disconnect may involve an organisational culture change as well as changes to work practices. This needs to be managed and communicated carefully at individual and organisational level.

Furthermore, the CWU advocates effective communication and monitoring so that the code is fully implemented and operational. Internal supports such as EAP services and engagement with union reps will be

important as well as regular monitoring and evaluation in line with the experiences of the employee and best practice.

Members with comments and feedback should send these to Carol Scheffer by email to carol@cwu.ie

Our thanks to UNI Professional & Managers as well as UNI Equal Opportunities for their guidelines and assistance in this area.

The full code can be accessed from the WRC website www.workplacelrelations.ie

Citizen's Assembly makes Significant progress on Gender Equality and Collective Bargaining

On April 24th, the 99 members of the assembly on gender equality put forward robust measures for a programme of change that is a welcome development. The recommendations established cover a wide range of areas such as changes to the Constitution, politics and leadership, caregiving, childcare as well as domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

Some of the main recommendations are as follows:

- On childcare to move to a publicly funded and regulated model over the next ten years.
- Make paid leave for parents during the first year of the child's life non-transferable and that lone parents would have the same leave amount as a couple.
- To insert a new article into the Constitution referring to gender equality and non-discrimination.
- Replacement of the clause in the Constitution that refers to a woman's place being in the home. The terminology instead would be non-gender specific and would recognise the value of care at home and in the wider community.
- For carers that they would have a pay structure to include sick pay and pension to acknowledge their level of skills.
- On domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, to address gender power dynamics, to appoint a victims/survivors' commissioner to advocate for a voice of these victims/survivors and to appoint specialist training for judges and lawyers

regarding the treatment of victims.

- In elections that gender quotas, be extended by the end of 2022 for candidates running in local, European and Seanad elections. These quotas would be extended from 30% to 40% and would also apply to men.

The Chair of the Assembly, Catherine Day, stated, 'The recommendations the citizens agreed don't just call for incremental change. They call for big changes that can make Ireland a better and more gender equal place to live for all of us.'

Legal right to collective bargaining recommended by Citizens Assembly

The Citizens Assembly on Gender Equality made a very significant 'priority recommendation' on the establishment of a legal right to collective bargaining on April 24th.

This was one of a number of other welcome recommendations made that day which included improved pay and working conditions for care workers, an increase in the minimum wage to the living wage, gender pay gap legislation and hourly gender pay gap targets.

Under the heading 'Support Employment Contract Security' 96.7% voted in favour of establishing a legal right to collective bargaining to improve wages, working conditions and rights in all sectors. Under the same heading there was an equally strong vote in favour of additional resources for the Workplace Relations Commission for more effective enforcement of current employment legislation..

2020 Pay Deal Finally Reaches a Conclusion with Labour Court Supporting CWU

The 2020 pay deal finally came to a conclusion recently when the Labour Court supported the CWU's understanding of the WRC Recommendation. Any of our members who were left short will receive any

monies owed to them in the May payroll.

At present we are about to commence our 2021 pay discussions and hopefully they will not be as long drawn out as the last two.



THE LABOUR COURT
An Chúirt Oibreachais

CD/21/11

RECOMMENDATION NO. LCR22392

CCc-165089-20

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACTS 1946 TO 2015
SECTION 26(1), INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
ACT, 1990**

PARTIES:

**UPS IRELAND
(REPRESENTED BY IRISH BUSINESS AND
EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATION)**

- AND -

**200 DRIVERS, DRIVERS HELPERS AND
WAREHOUSE OPERATIVES (REPRESENTED
BY CWU)**

DIVISION:

Chairman: Mr Geraghty
Employer Member: Ms Connolly
Worker Member: Mr Bell

SUBJECT:

1. Pay Claim for 2020.

BACKGROUND:

2. This dispute could not be resolved at local level and was the subject of a Conciliation Conference under the auspices of the Workplace Relations Commission. As agreement was not reached, the

dispute was referred to the Labour Court on the 12 January 2021 in accordance with Section 26(1) of the Industrial Relations Act, 1990.

A Labour Court hearing took place in a virtual setting on 9 April 2021.

UNIONS ARGUMENTS:

1. The Union contend that a 2.75% rise should apply to all other people who are below the top point of the scale. This is what is provided for in the agreement between the parties. There is no provision in the agreement for the application of a lower increase of 2.25% for people who are below the top point of the scale, as sought by the Employer.
2. The Union requested that the matter be referred to the Labour Court for a recommendation on the interpretation of the agreement between the parties at the WRC.

EMPLOYER'S ARGUMENTS:

1. The Employer states the parties to this dispute have already reached an agreement in the WRC, which was later clarified by the WRC.
2. The Employer agreed to refer the matter to the Labour Court for clarification.
3. The agreement between the parties provides for a new shortened incremental scale, a 2.75% pay increase for most staff who are on points below the top of the scale and for increases of 2.25% for staff whose pay is above the maximum point applicable to them. Due to the shortening of the scale, there are 88 members of staff in receipt of pay that is above the appropriate point of the pay scale applicable to them. The correct increase applicable to them is 2.25%.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Court notes that an excellent agreement that is fair to all parties was reached after protracted

negotiations and accepts that both parties approached these discussions in good faith.

It is regrettable that some of the specifics of the agreement gave rise to a divergence in understanding as to the agreement's application and the Court hopes that this will not damage the future relationship between the parties.

There was one specific issue put before the Court for clarification. The Court approached the issue on the basis that it was not being asked to offer any comment on the merits or otherwise of the particular provision but, rather, simply to give an interpretation as to its meaning. On that basis alone, it seems to the Court that a reasonable interpretation of the language used in the agreement suggests, at face value, that there is one maximum on a pay scale and that is the top point of the scale. This concurs with the view expressed to the Court by the Union.

The Court recommends that the Employer should apply the agreement in accordance with this interpretation. The Court recommends further that in the negotiation of future agreements the parties should ensure that there is mutual understanding of, and agreement on, all details of the application of specific provisions for the avoidance of a recurrence of the circumstances of this case.

Signed on behalf of the Labour Court

Tom Geraghty
Deputy Chairman
12 April 2021

NOTE

Enquiries concerning this Recommendation should be in writing and addressed to Therese Hickey, Court Secretary

Employees, not sole traders

The CWU have highlighted members' growing concern with the Company's expansion of the OSP model. The CWU are actively supporting the campaign to bring in legislation to outlaw bogus self-employment in our industries. The Union strongly believe that these workers are employees and not sole traders.

The Following are the CWU Reps in our Depots:

Dublin: Jonathan Donnelly
(Branch Secretary and NEC)
Derek Lynch (Chairman)
Keith O'Neill (Treasurer)
David Cassin (Committee
and Clerical Rep)
Robert Cosgrave (Eco Hub Rep)

Cork hub: Danny O'Donovan (Branch Rep.)

Shannon hub: Jerry Mahoney (Branch Rep.)

Waterford: Dale Browne

Billpost:

There are ongoing discussions around pay and roster changes at Billpost in Kiltrush. A number of our Members availed of the Voluntary Severance Packages at the end of April and we would like to wish them all the best in their futures.

DPD Members Update

After representations from the Union all outstanding upgrades have been awarded.

The Union and the Company are having ongoing discussions regarding new rosters for Operatives and Supervisors. The Local Committee will update you on any progress made.

Thankfully we have seen a continued growth in our membership in Athlone we would like to welcome our new Members and thank our Committee for their efforts in recruitment.

THE CAMPAIGN TO HAVE CHRISTMAS

"NO XMAS POST."

By William Kane.

In Christmas Day in 1935, I was working as a Postman in Phibsboro' District Office, Dublin. The Inspector in charge was a Mr. Fred Parkes, and the Assistant Inspector was a Mr. Ted Slater. My walk was Church Street, three other men were also on this walk, they were Joe Scock, Tommy Delaney, and Kevin Lawless. We had a Branch of the Post Office workers union in the Office, I was Chairman of this Branch, the other officers were Jack Ryan, Branch Secretary, and Paddy Kelly Branch Treasurer.

Every inch of the Postman's Office was taken up with sorting Benches, and in normal times every Bench was in use, so that when the extra Christmas temporary staff was employed, extra accommodation had to be acquired. This problem was solved by the Post Office renting a large corrugated iron shed in western square, which was situated at the rear of the District Office. Entrance to this Square was by a laneway from Phibsboro' Road, some yards from the Office. During the year this shed was among other uses, used for storing cattle prior to their export. However the shed was vacant at Christmas, it was cleaned out, and fitted out with Sorting Benches to accommodate three walks, Church Street, with four men, Phibsboro' Rd. with three men, and Prussia Street, with three men. This provided some relief regarding space in the main Office.

As there was no heating, nor were there any windows in this shed, lighting and heating was provided by overhead electric fittings. While the Branch Committee did not approve of this accommodation, they did not object to it, as there was no alternative.

Our normal hours of duty was from 6 A.M. until 10.45 A.M. and then from 2 P.M. to 5.15 P.M. During those hours of duty we performed three deliveries, an Irish, an English, then a Agency delivery. Following the Midday delivery, we made a collection from the Pillar Boxes, and the sub offices on the way back to the District Office. On arrival at the D.O. we faced and sorted the collected mail before 5.15 P.M. at which time it was dispatched to the sorting office in Pearse Street, Dublin.

On Christmas Day, we attended for duty at 4. A.M. and worked throughout the day preparing deliveries for the temporary staff. I had two temporary men to help me. We were due to have a final delivery around 3 P.M. At that time the Postmen were to divide the walk between themselves and the temporary men, and go home when the delivery was completed. That was the only time we left the office on Christmas Day; with the exception of an interval of 40 minutes for a meal, and 20 minutes to attend Mass at Saint Vincent's Church which was located near the District Office. We attended 8 A.M. Mass, after which we had our meal interval, and resumed duty at 9 A.M. that day. So we were looking forward to the 3 P.M. final dispatch.

On that particular 1935 Christmas Day, it was coming near to 4 P.M. and the mail for the final delivery had not arrived at the D.O. We phoned the sorting Office, Pearse St. and asked the reason for the delay. We were told the incoming mails were late, and that they were doing their best to expedite the dispatch.

We then requested Mr. Parkes to seek permission that we have another 40 minutes interval so that we could go home and have our Christmas dinner around 4.30 P.M. as our meal would be ready for us at that time. This was refused, so we phoned Mr. William Norton, who was the General Secretary of the P. O. W. Union, at his home in Ballsbridge. His wife answered the phone and told us he was not at home. We then phoned some of the neighbour Branch Offices, James's

DAY OFF – LEST WE FORGET

Street D.O. and Fairview D.O. to see what they were doing. Both Branches were in sympathy with us, but were not prepared to take any action. Then we phoned the Controller of the Dublin Postal District, following this call Mr. P. P. Mc Menamin came to the Office, and listened to our case, but would not consider the idea of letting the men go home for a meal. He said many of the men might drink too much, and not return to the Office to do the final delivery, but he promised to return to the Sorting Office and send up the mail that was ready. In the meantime he said we could have an interval of 20 minutes to have a meal in the Office. Our reply to that was, we had no food, then he told Mr. Parkes to knock up a local grocer, and obtain some Bread, Jam, Tea, Sugar and Milk. We did not agree with that suggestion. So he sent instructions to have the mail that was ready sent to the District Offices. The mail duly arrived, and we were dispatched on the final delivery at 4.30 P.M. So it was near 6. P.M. when we got our Christmas Dinner that day.

On resumption of normal conditions after Christmas, we arranged for a Branch Deputation to meet Mr. Norton at the P.O.W.U. Headquarters at 52, Parnell Square, Dublin, at 5.30. P.M. when we had finished our duties in the District Office. Mr. Norton received the Deputation which consisted of the following, W. Kane (Chairman) J. Ryan (Hon. Sec.) and P. Kelly, (Branch Treasurer). We asked for the Abolition of work by Postmen on Christmas Day. The General Secretary gave us no satisfaction, he said we must be joking, as we could not dispose of a tradition in that way. He also said, that Postmen looked forward to collecting their Christmas Boxes on that day. We replied that he was completely out of touch with the situation. Mr. Norton, then told us that Railway, Tramway Men, and Milkmen and many others worked on Christmas Day without any complaint. So we left the meeting, telling him that we intended to take the matter to the next Annual P.O.W.U. Conference, where we would submit a motion for consideration. Accordingly at the 1936 Conference, the Phibsboro D. O. Branch tabled a motion for the Abolition of work in the Post Office on Christmas Day. We got great support from many of the Country Branches, and the motion was carried by a big majority when it was put to the vote.

When the resolution was submitted to the Post Office, the Secretariat raised no objection, as it meant great saving of money for them.

The mail in December 1937 carried the following slogan, :-

NO XMAS DAY DELIVERY - POST EARLY IN THE WEEK.

So, in 1937 for the first time Irish Postmen could enjoy their stay at home with their family on Christmas Day.

The Campaign to Have Christmas Day Off

We received the above report from Sheila Ahern recently. It is an account of working in Phibsboro District Office on Christmas Day in 1935 by William Kane who was the Branch Chairman at the time. Also mentioned in the article is Paddy Kelly who was Treasurer of the Branch and who is the Grandfather of Sheila. Given its significance we thought we would highlight the campaign to have Christmas day off for postal workers.

The campaign took off in 1930 when news came through that Postal Employees in Canada would be given the day off. This was followed in January 1931 by news that the American Postal Service was following suit. The American Postmaster- General was quoted as saying "No group of employees in this country is more entitled to a full day's rest with their families on Christmas Day than the postal workers."

The editor of An Dion writing in the same article stated "This instance, and the other which we quoted last month from Canada, ought to bestir our administration

to set about making Christmas Day something other than the test of physical endurance which it still connotes for Post Office workers here."

Later that year at the Annual Conference held in Limerick a motion submitted by Cavan and amended by Dublin Postal Indoor was passed calling for the abolition of all postal work on Christmas Day. In the Conference Report in 1932 it was reported that the matter was raised in the Dail in April by William Norton during discussions on the Post Office Estimates. He made a strong plea for its abolition. The Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Joseph Connolly, stated that he though the Department ought to abolish Christmas day work if at all possible and assured William Norton that his leanings were in that direction.

Following this discussion, the National Executive Council wrote to the Minister and after protracted correspondence received a response in February 193.

The Minister indicated that he:

...had the whole matter thoroughly examined and finds that there are many difficulties in the way of meeting your wishes.....,I am to say that the Minister understands that the great majority of the staff finish duty quite early on Christmas Day and are thus enabled to spend the evening of the festival with their families. While the Minister is anxious to do what is possible to reduce their attendance on Christmas Day, he is afraid that the other inconveniences that would follow the complete suspension of work on that day would not permit him to accede to your request.

Further motions seeking its abolition were passed at the Annual Conferences in 1933 and 1934 in the name of Fairview Branch and Dublin Telegraphs. The campaign continued without much progress. In August 1934 the Minister advised that he “ *is satisfied, after full consideration, that the suspension of Christmas Day deliveries would be generally and strongly resented by the public.*”

Further correspondence in November 1934 advised that the Minister had given instruction that correspondence arriving by the mail boat on Christmas morning is not to be included in the Christmas Day delivery. This he suggested should result in a materially earlier completion of deliveries and release of staff from duty than would otherwise be possible. This did not have the desired effect.

In December 1934 a poem appeared in An Dion written by JJ Hughes, a Boy Messenger, entitled “*The Absentee*”

Holly and Ivy grace the walls,
The house is bright and gay;
A festive air o'er all prevails,
For now 'tis Christmas Day

Yes, Christmas Day has come at last,
And with it comes good cheer;
The fun is furious and fast –
It comes but once a year.

The household down to dinner sit,
And all enjoy the feast,
With merry jokes and fun and wit
Till eating they had ceased

Then suddenly I miss a face
That usually is there;
A vacant chair – an empty place –
Where can he be; oh, where?

Dear reader, do not be alarmed,
At guessing you're a novice;
He's working hard, he is not harmed,
He works in the Post Office.

In early 1937 discussions were re-opened with the Department. In a debate on the Post Office estimates William Norton highlighted the plight of staff in one particular office in the city which were not unlike the experience in Phibsboro in 1935.

He advised:

“At one particular office in the city the staff were required to work for 17 hours on Christmas Eve. They finished at 10pm on Christmas Eve and were required to come back on duty at 4am. – a working period of 17 hours – a gap of six hours – and then a fresh attendance at 4am. At 7.40 am they received a relief of 40 minutes for the purpose of having a meal. They were then required to work until 5, 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening without a second meal. There was no further relief for dinner provided. That was on Christmas Day.

In September 1937 the front page of the *Postal Worker* (as the magazine was then known) announced a successful outcome of the Union's campaign with agreement to suspend Postal work for a trial period of three years. In December 1937 a second version of the poem from JJ Hughes was published. He now worked as a Postman in James Street:

Holly and Ivy grace the walls,
Tis Christmas time again;
Whenever this, our great feast falls,
It brings goodwill to men.

So let's get round the festive board,
Enjoy ourselves this day,
And let us all with one accord
Forget the daily fray.

And drink a health unto the time
We slaved this holy season,
Till in our cry that twas a crime
The Post Office saw some reason.

So to all our colleagues in the “Post”,
A Happy Christmas all!
And of your leisure make the most,
I'm sure you'll need it all!

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Billpost Retirements



Rosaleen Fitzpatrick and Geraldine Maloney, both members of the Billpost Committee, pictured on their retirement.



Mary Flanagan pictured on her retirement



Mary Nolan, who was a stalwart of the Union for many years, pictured on her retirement

Postal Operative, Jeffrey Hirst, Swaps Post for Paint



Jeffrey Hirst, a Postal Operative in the Galway Mail Centre, swaps post for paint when he finishes his shift heading to his home studio in the Burren Co Clare. A talented artist, Jeffrey's distinctive style is making waves on the Irish arts scene.

Jeffrey describes himself as an Abstract Artist with strong influences from Impressionism. Working mainly with acrylics on canvas, his work has references to pop culture, music and celebrity, while his abstract images are influenced by the Burren landscape around him. Several works are imprinted with finds from the wild, a mixed media (combining paint with materials) of twigs, stone and heather, adding light and shade to his work.

'I don't watch too much television so I find influence from my vinyl records. Certain pieces of music feed my imagination. I have the musician Baxter Dury on constantly at the moment'

With a unique visual identity, Jeffrey's work has been exhibited and sold in galleries at home and abroad.

'I have showcased work mainly in the UK from post college exhibitions to the IKON Gallery in Birmingham. 'I produced a charity four piece to auction for the victims of the Manchester bombing and have provide artwork for the Jewish Art Society in New York for National Holocaust Remembrance Day. My last show was at The Gallery Cafe in Gort which went well, says Jeffrey.

Born in the UK, Jeffrey grew up with a fascination for Art Galleries from an early age. 'I loved art classes at school messing with paint, ink, charcoal and pencils'. He studied graphic design in Birmingham before passing an exam for Solihull Art College.

'After my studies I wanted to travel. My Mother used to live in New York so I gravitated to the New York art scene. Artists Jean-Michael Basquiat, Keith Haring and the wonderful Andy Warhol were massive influences. Whenever I'm in the city i usually end up in Central Park with my notebook trying to create images in my mind for my canvas.



Now happily living in the West, Jeffrey enjoys his role with An Post. ' I work nightshift and have great colleagues who are very supportive. I keep a good work-life balance and always give 100% to everything I do.

' My weekends are my time for working on my pieces but I can get in the zone and do a couple of hours before work weekdays. You have to focus and be as professional as you can,' he says.

With the world beginning to open up, Jeffrey is hoping to see his work back on gallery walls soon. I'm in discussions with a Galway City gallery, which if it comes off will be very exciting. There is also a hotel in Ennistymon in Co Clare which has shown interest in putting some pieces in their art gallery which is located in their restaurant.

With a newly launched website, www.jeffreyhirst.ie, he is busy selling pieces and working on new commissions.

'Moving to The Burren made me hungrier to produce pieces of art. I work hard to develop paintings that speak both to me and others. I hope my artwork gives people a feeling of optimism with my bright, fresh and colourful approach.



Tadgh Byrne Retires



Tadgh Byrne retired recently from Bray Postal. He is pictured here receiving his Union Scroll from Branch Secretary, Darren Clucas.

Fergus Wheeler Retires



Fergus Wheeler retired recently from Greystones DSU. Here he is pictured with his colleagues, who all wish him a long and happy retirement.

John Curtin Retires



John Curtin (Johnny Cuz) retired after 45 years and 7 months to become a full time gardner (by his own admission).

John was a long standing and proud member of the Cork District Branch where he served as Youghal section secretary/chairman for 25 years. He also served on the CWU Standing Orders Committee as Chairman/Member and helped to run many successful Delegate Conferences over the years.

He is a valued friend to all that know him. John mistakenly thought he could play pool and was once accused of being a Bailiff (**figure that one out!**). We wish him well in his beloved garden.

John Broderick Retires



John Broderick, Dublin Postal Managers Branch, pictured during his recent retirement, when he was presented with his Union Scroll. We wish John all the best for a long and happy retirement.



Michael Moloney Retires

Michael Moloney retired from Openeir, Limerick District, on Friday 29th January, having joined the P&T on 11th August 1980 in Charleville, Cork. He began working in a three-man fitting unit and over the next 40-plus years, he worked in all areas of the job, ending up on the South West fibre team.

Throughout his time working, Michael was a strong member of the Union and he served as Chairman of his local section, Rathluirc.

We wish Michael, his wife, Debbie, and family a long and happy retirement.

Bernard Chadwick Retires

Bernard Chadwick retired from eir in October, after 47 years working in the P&T, Telecom Éireann, eircom and eir.

Bernard was always active with the Union, serving as the local section Chairman and committee member for many years.

He now has the time to enjoy his hobbies of fishing and playing cards. We would like to say any thanks to Bernard for all the great memories he gave us working together and we wish him a long and happy retirement.



Mick Murphy Retires

Mick Murphy retired in Mallow DSU today. He began work with An post in 1984 and has been on his Banteer route for 31 years. All in Mallow DSU would like to wish Mick the best for the future and a happy and healthy retirement.

Mick's good friend, Roy Cronin, presenting him with his Union Scroll

Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Retirements



*Michael Walsh,
Crumlin DSU*



*Peter Keegan (right),
Fortfield*



*Gerry Kelly,
DSU 2*



*Mary Barclay,
Fortfield DSU*



*Patrick Weafer (left),
Rathmines*



*Joe Corcoran,
Whiteheather DSU*

Dublin Postal Delivery Branch Retirements



Noel Adamson (former Assistant Secretary and Worker Director), Swords DSU



Bernard Heffernan (centre), Ballsbridge DSU, being presented with his Union Scroll, by Sean O'Donnell (Branch Chairperson) with Andy Keehan (Branch Rep).

Sean Connolly Waterford District Branch Retirements



Pictured l to r: Paddy Hally, Declan Fennessey (retiree), who received his Union Scroll, and Maurice Power

Pictured l to r: Paddy Hally, Michael Ryan, Tom Houlihan (retiree January 2020), who received his Union Scroll, Michael O’Riordan, and Pat Sheridan.



Carrick-on-Shannon Retirements



Pictured on their last day on duty in Carrick -n-Shannon HQ from l to r are: Sean O’Rourke, Chris Gannon, Christy Graham, Brian Lee and Gerry Beirne.

Dublin No 2 Branch Retirements



Richard Armstrong has retired after 48 years' service at eir. He joined P&T in 1972 at the age of 15, starting out as a Telegram boy. He ultimately chanted his career over to plan design, where he remained for the 25 years.

Richard also had a distinguished career in the FCA and was a volunteer for over 40 years, retiring as a Commandant in 2014. The Radetzky March, selected by work mates, was played on RTÉ Lyric fm's "Marty in the morning" just for Richard.

(Photograph at Ship Street exchange by Pat Kilroy)



Richard Armstrong eir Plan/ Design receiving his CWU Scroll and Badge from John Dunleavy, NEC member, Dublin No.2.



Ben Smith eir Plan/ Design receiving his CWU Scroll and Badge from John Dunleavy, NEC member Dublin No.2

Michael Burke, who recently received his Union Scroll in Santry Exchange, with Frank Semple and Declan Doyle.john



It was Retirement Day for Joe, after 47 years of top quality service since joining the Department Of Posts and Telegraphs in 1974. Joe expressed his good wishes to current colleagues and retirees, for their friendship and support over the time spent at work and he is now looking forward to a busy family life.

Presentations were made of the CWU Scroll by Dublin No.2 Secretary, Frank Semple, and the CWU Gold Badge and a gift by Dublin No.2 Committee Member, Adrian Cronin. Joe also received a gift from Paul Tornsey, retired, at Rochestown Telephone Exchange. (Thanks to Jim Ryan, our official photographer on the day.)



Congratulations to Aidan Hanley, B.Sc.

Paul Hanley, Cork Area Postal Managers Branch, is rightly proud of his son, Aidan, who qualified with a B.Sc. in General Nursing. Aidan is now working in a clinical lead position with the HSE Contact Tracing Team having worked on Covid wards in Tralee General Hospital during the peak of the pandemic.

Paul and Aidan also wish to convey their thanks to the CWU for the financial assistance provided through the Education Grant Scheme



Congratulations to Ruth and Nigel Dungan on the birth of their beautiful baby daughter, Lottie!



John Egan RIP



The past year and a bit will go down in the annals as one of the worst periods in living memory. For most people, this will be summed up by the various hardships caused by the Corona virus pandemic. For the Dublin No. 1 branch of the CWU, it will be seen as the time when our friend and comrade John Egan passed away. John had been Branch Secretary for fifteen or sixteen years and was the driving force within the branch. He had also become the eir staff-side secretary to the JCC group, was deeply embedded in the Core networks and Retail groups and during the pandemic he became a Lead Worker Rep. He was known throughout the union, and further afield, as a safe pair of hands. There are a lot of people whose working life is safer, more rewarding and more secure due to his involvement in the CWU. Indeed there are a lot of people still employed who would not be, if it were not for John's influence.

They're the bare facts of it. It's the kind of thing you could read that on a plaque somewhere. Nobody is indispensable, or so they say. Institutions are generally self-healing. Life goes on. John's various roles will be filled and things will go on as before. Except they won't really.

On top of all the aforementioned good stuff, John was great craic, a great friend and above all a decent human being. I know how devastated his family were, and how much he meant to the branch, the union and all his buddies in St. Pauls football club. He had a lot of friends and I'm not trying to speak for them all, they can do that themselves.

I have to deal with things in my head, in my way,

and for me, I'm proud to say that I could call John a friend. I called him a lot of other things as well, but that's maybe for another day. My little world is a much worse place since he died. In saying that, I don't think it has really sunk in yet. He has become something like a phantasmic version of Schrodinger's cat – he's kinda here till I think about him and realise that he's actually gone. There are still times when I say to myself - *'I must give Egan a ring about that'* – maybe on hearing a juicy bit of gossip or the latest off-the-wall rumour, or indeed when someone asks me a hard question.

I miss the times when we'd guffaw our way down in the lift to the car-park after some meeting or other – *'did you see the head on your man when you said so-and-so, Jaysus I thought he was going to explode'*. Nights at conference or after the AGM when the luminaries of the No. 1 branch were installed in some licensed premises, laughing ourselves silly, planning to take over the world and talking pure and utter shite. Every time I hear someone order a Carlsberg, I'll think of him saying *CarlsBurg* (Probably!) He was, as they say some man for one man. At the moment I can't help but feel like Watson without Sherlock, Butthead without Beavis or Pinky without the Brain.

This whole pandemic business has put the kibosh on our funereal customs and traditions and how we deal with loss. Maybe we'll be able to get together soon to celebrate and remember lost comrades. It can't come quick enough.

See you on the beach, big man, you bring the *CarlsBurg*.

Alan Keely RIP

10th May 1982 - 3rd May 2021



It is with a heavy heart that the Dundalk Postal Branch learned of the sudden passing of our work colleague, Committee Member and dear friend Alan Keely on Monday the 3rd of May one week short of his 39th Birthday. Alan transferred from the Balbriggan DSU to Dundalk in 2011. His immediate bond with the staff in Dundalk was no surprise, considering his family's connection to Dundalk FC, with his Dad, Dermot, a previous player and manager of the club.

Following in his fathers' footsteps Alan was also a recognised League of Ireland footballer with Shelbourne, Waterford, and Finn Harps, which was great for the Dundalk Postal Branch Football team, who reaped the rewards whenever we played. It's fair to say Alan had a special place in the Dundalk office. He had a connection with many like no other: he loved to chat, enjoyed a good slagging and kept everything positive. He was always up for a night out and a bit of craic too; I don't think he ever missed a function or any of the charity football events we held, since he joined us in Dundalk.

Alan was also an active member of the committee where his input helped shape many a good decision in the office. The sadness in Dundalk DSU on Tuesday morning was overwhelming - this is a pain that is not going to go away for a very long time, but the memories will last forever.

On behalf of the Dundalk Postal Branch and the Communications Workers' Union Nationwide, our

sincere condolences to Maria, Alan's partner, his children, Mia and Daniel, his parents, Dermot and Olive, brother Peter and his extended family and friends.

Goodbye our dear Friend. A life cut too short - until we meet again. You have left a blessing on us all for knowing you. Thank You Big Al.
Ar dheis de go raibh a anam

Big Al'

With the energy of the wind
And the brightness of the sun
Like a mighty bearded warrior
You lifted everyone.

In the cold and dark of winter
Through sleet and hail and rain
With our hearts and heads defeated
You lifted us again.

We'll not forget your beaming smile
Your wonderful, endearing wit
We're blessed to have shared some time with you
We just wish there was more of it.

Summer is on the horizon
But it's nothing more than a token
To the men and women of Pearse Park
Whose hearts are forever broken.

Colleague, comrade, mentor, and pal – There was only ever, one Big Alan Keely!

Gerry Quirke RIP

The news reached us just before St Patrick's Day that Gerry had lost his long battle with Cancer, it was and still is hard to believe we won't see his cheeky smile again.

I first got to know Gerry when we came on to the NEC together at the end of the last century and although there was the obvious language barrier we soon became great friends not least because we both shared the love of the few tunes.

Gerry like his father before him served our Union with great distinction, from his time on his beloved Cork District Branch to his time as President of the CWU he always acted with the members in mind, he was also very active in the eir Credit Union and was on the ESOP Board.



I was lucky enough to have played in sessions with Gerry all over the world, his box playing was top class but was often just a way to get to talk to people and Gerry always seemed to attract the strangest mix of people to his Company, despite playing all over the world he was never happier than when playing and yapping in The Kilmichael or The Spaniard.

He was very proud of his West Cork roots, he wrote beautifully of his childhood in the area. He also was a great supporter of Cork hurling and held a strong distain for Kerry.

To his partner, Olive, his sons, Brendan and Killian, and to all his family and friends, we in the CWU share your loss. *Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís.*

Members who passed away during the Pandemic

As a result of the recent pandemic, we contacted all branches and asked them to bring us up-to-date with news of our members and friends who had passed away during this difficult time. The purpose was to ensure members were kept informed of the latest bereavements of friends in the Union, whose funerals we may not have been able to attend, due to lockdown restrictions.

On behalf of the National Executive Council and all our members we wish to pass on our sincerest sympathies to the families and friends of all those who died.

The following is a list of those members who sadly passed away during the Pandemic. May they Rest in Peace.

MEMBERS WHO PASSED AWAY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Caroline Maunsell, Athlone Telephones
Eamon Waters, Ballina Postal (former NEC)
Martin Sweeney, Ballina Postal
Peter Langdon, Ballina Postal
Patricia Rabbett, Ballina Postal
Noel Dee, Ballina Section Sligo District Branch
Michael Kelly, Carrick on Shannon (former NEC)
Pat Sharkey, Castlerea & District

Margaret Kerrigan, Castlerea & District
Robert Redmond, Clonmel Postal
Michael Scannell, Cork Area Postal Mgrs
Thomas Archer, Cork Area Postal Mgrs
Daniel Dennehy, Cork Area Postal Mgrs
Gerry Cuirc, Cork District Branch (former NEC & President)
Thomas Dunphy, Cork Outdoor Branch
Sean Gallagher, Cork Postal Drivers

continued overleaf:

Continued:

MEMBERS WHO PASSED AWAY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Geroge Callis, Cork Postal Drivers
Thomas Taylor, DPAB
Martin Mulligan, DPAB
Michael Maguire, DPAB
Patrick, Barry, DPAB
James Bishop, DPAB
Cathal Lynch, DPAB
James O'Keeffe, DPAB
Mary Woods, DPAB
Michael Richard Brady, DPAB
Joseph Cooper, Dublin Postal Delivery
Eoin Boylan, Dublin Postal Delivery
Anthony Grogan, Dublin Postal Delivery
Noel Vaughan, Dublin Postal Delivery
Noel Lynch, Dublin Postal Delivery
Margaret T. Compton, Dublin Postal Delivery
Patrick Owens, Dublin Postal Delivery
Daniel Stapleton, Dublin Postal Delivery
Alan Smyth, Dublin Postal Delivery
Dominic Tierney, Dublin Postal Delivery
Cathal Lynch, Dublin Postal Delivery
Paul O'Rourke, Dublin Postal Delivery
Richard Carrick, Dublin Postal Delivery
Joe Martin, Dublin Postal Delivery
Paddy Doyle, Dublin Postal Delivery
Peter Keating, Dublin Postal Delivery
Joe McCormick, Dublin Postal Delivery
Fergus Walsh, Dublin Postal Delivery
Tommy Adamson, Dublin Postal Delivery
Robert Maguire, Dublin Postal Delivery
William Holoweed, Dublin Postal Delivery
Noel Lawlor, Dublin Postal Delivery
Paddy Byrne, Dublin Postal Delivery
George Crowther, Dublin Postal Delivery
Michael Kerrigan, Drogheda District
Michael Faulkner, Drogheda District
Hugh Brady, Drogheda District
Eugene O'Neill, Drogheda District
John Egan, Dublin No 1
Gerry Doyle, Dublin No 2
Fran Johnston, Dublin No 2
John Mulhern, Dublin No 2
Terry (Patrick) McComiskey, Dublin No 2
Tony Ward, Dublin No 2
Richard O'Reilly, Dublin No 1
Elizabeth Lambert, Dublin Postal Clerks
Edward Paul Dowling, Dublin Postal Clerks
Frank Duffy, Dublin Postal Clerks
Sean Edward Scanlon, Dublin Postal Drivers

Philip Scallan, Dublin Mails Managers
Eileen Sweeney, Dublin Prof & Mgrs
Alan Keely, Dundalk Postal Branch
John Carney, Eir Managers
Patrick Leacy, Enniscorthy Postal
Aidan Hourigan, Former Assistant General
Secretary
Joseph Davin, former SDS Branch
Daniel O'Neill, Galway District Branch
John Keane Snr, Galway Postal
Martin Qualter, Galway Postal
John Guihen, Galway Postal
Frankie Williams, Galway Postal
Caroline Maunsell, Galway Postal
Thomas Deegan, Kilkenny Postal
Bill Walsh, Killarney Sth Kerry
Eamon McCarthy, Kilmallock & District
Darren O'Shea, KN Circet
Michael McLaughlin, Lifford Inishowen
Derek K O'Shea, Limerick Branch
Gerard Counihan, Limerick District
Pat O'Keeffe, Limerick District
Frank O'Connor, Limerick Postal
Denis O'Connell, Mallow Postal
Jackie McQuillan, Monaghan
Jimmy Keenan, Monaghan
Joan Gallagher, Navan Postal
Martn Carberry, Portlaoise District
Paul Philip Kehoe, Portlaoise (Naas Area Mgrs)
Concepta Phelan, Portlaoise (Naas Area Mgrs)
Bridget Fitzgerald, Sean Connolly Waterford
Branch
Tom, Molloy, Sean Connolly Waterford Branch
Rodger, Murphy, Sean Connolly Waterford
Branch
Joe Reddin, Sean Connolly Waterford Branch
Tom Kelly, Sean Connolly Waterford Branch
Tommy Cassin, Sean Connolly Waterford Branch
Frank Walsh, Sean Connolly Waterford Branch
Leo Harrison, Sligo District Branch
Josie McCarrick, Sligo District Branch
Michael F. Hannon, Sligo District Branch
Carmel Duffy, Sligo District Branch
Teresa Loftus, Sligo District Branch
Paul Mac Giollaebasbuic, Sligo District Branch
Thomas Hickey, Thurles Postal
John David McCann, Total Splicing Solutions
Gareth Kane, Vodafone Branch