

uniteWORKS

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for Ireland

EQUALITIES

Mind the pay gap



Unite regional women's committee at an ICTU/European Parliament reception to mark International Women's Day in Ireland

To mark International Women's Day a delegation from Unite attended ICTU's annual women's seminar at Liberty Hall in Dublin.

The delegation led by Unite's Irish Women's and Equalities officer, **Taryn Trainor**, heard that women workers have been hardest hit by the collapse of domestic demand following the onset of the recession in 2008, according to new research.

Dr Michael Collins of the Nevin Economic Research Institute said women still in the workforce were worst hit because they were over-represented in the sectors that suffered most from the 26 per cent fall in domestic demand.

Dr Collins said that high concentrations of women in low paid and precarious employment also contributed to ongoing gender inequality and the gender pay gap.

"The gender pay-gap persists in Ireland. Women earn on average 14 per cent less than men and this widens further when they have children. Clearly, the issues of low pay and precarious employment must be addressed if we are to make any tangible progress on reducing gender inequality.

"In this context, the provision of decent work and a living wage is of great significance. Sustainable recovery and more equal societies cannot be built on the back of precarious employment and low wage jobs," Dr Collins said.

NHS

Francis - could happen in NI

In response to the Francis Report on the crisis at Mid Staffs Hospital, Unite in Northern Ireland has grave concerns that what was exposed by this investigation is but a step away from happening in any health trust here.

Unite's **Kevin McAdam** commented, "The frightening aspect is that we in the health service in Northern Ireland are only too close to the scenarios described. While Unite accepts there is an effective mechanism of monitoring in place through

the regulatory quality and improvement authority, the union believes this body must be funded and resources improved to ensure its role continues to ensure the safe delivery of health to the community.

"The underlying message that comes out of this report is that you cannot operate a health service where costs are not measured by demands and needs of clients. This basically does not stack up."

Language learning opps



Unite Translink members in the north west of Northern Ireland are being offered the opportunity to engage in language upskilling classes, aimed at providing the basic introductory skills for staff to welcome and assist visitors during the 2013

Derry/Londonderry City of Culture events.

Supported by the Culture Company, the 2013 City of Culture organising team, the training will see college lecturers visit Translink premises to deliver 12-week conversational language

programmes in Italian, Spanish, French and Irish.

Commenting on the arrangement, a spokesperson for the College added that the partnership is evidence of its growing upskilling provision for local businesses. NWRC's training has also

been supported by the two main trade unions who act on behalf of the employees at Translink, UNITE and TSSA. Unite learners who complete the training will be presented with certificates of achievement following their studies.

ORGANISING

Organising victories!

Congratulations to Unite's organising unit in Northern Ireland after recording two recruitment successes.

Full recognition rights were accepted by Mel Davison Construction (MDC), a maintenance contractor with the Northern Ireland housing executive, based in Belfast and Portadown; and the Pallet Centre in Mallusk.

The organising unit were called in to help after members at MDC called in to Unite's Community office in East Belfast and warned that lay-offs were pending. Alerted by the news, the union's Ireland regional secretary, **Jimmy Kelly** and regional co-ordinator Jackie Pollock contacted the housing minister's office and informed Minister McCausland of Unite's concerns after it was noted that the workforce had undergone a number of TUPE processes during the last 18 months. The union also met with the CEO of the housing executive.

While this was happening the organising unit began a major 'sign up' campaign within the company. The MDC management came to the negotiating table while the workforce concerns on a number of issues, were expressed by the union.

MDC agreed to withhold the impending lay-offs while agreeing to a full voluntary recognition agreement with the union. The company has also agreed to hold talks to cover health and safety. Unite officials meanwhile are returning to the housing minister's office to outline its concerns over the TUPE process.

Full recognition rights have been negotiated by the union at the Pallet Centre, Mallusk, after workers approached Unite outlining a number of issues. Shop stewards and health and safety reps have now been elected. Unite is also now in pay talks with the company.

Why we are fighting Croke Park 2



PA Photos

General strike call – ICTU protest against bank debt in February

“The implementation of Croke Park 2 will have a very damaging impact on the economy and jobs, and as a result will struggle to have any beneficial impact on government finances at all.

“That is the verdict based on the experience of austerity measures since 2008. Over that time and until the end of 2011 there were €14.6bn in spending cuts and tax increases. On the same cash basis GDP fell by €23.6 bn.

“This means that for every €1 in austerity measures the economy contracted by €1.6 as workers and businesses, pensioners and others responded to government cuts by making cuts in their own spending and investment. If the response to Croke Park 2 follows that pattern, the economy will contract by about €1.6bn.

“This will lower living standards and hurt jobs way beyond the public sector. Every public sector worker is a consumer of private sector goods and services. Private sector businesses will cut back on investment even further if demand for their products is declining.”

This damning indictment of the Croke Park 2 Proposals is not a political statement as some would accuse us of in

opposing the deal. They are the words of international economist and former senior adviser to Citibank, Michael Burke.

They reflect a set of proposals designed for politics and against the interest of every Irish member of the Unite trade union, every other trade union and indeed every citizen of the state.

Unite is fighting for a rejection of the proposals. We have spoken at members rallies around the country alongside other unions who share our view. The interest of union members are first, foremost and our only concern.

Those interests are best served by rejecting Croke Park 2 and resisting any attempt to force them through legislation that would attack the very heart of the way in which workers are treated in this country.

Jimmy Kelly
Unite regional secreta

FINANCE

Unite slams bank workers' wage attack

Unite, representing 10,000 workers in the financial services sector in Ireland has condemned the lack of consultation prior to publication of the recent Mercer Report into bank pay scales. Unite said it will resist attempts to force lower paid bank workers to bear the brunt of a 10 per cent cut in wage and pension costs.

“The report suggests that many of the financial cuts should fall on lower paid workers below management level,” said Unite regional officer, Colm Quinlan.

“At the start of the bank crisis Government believed what it

was told by bank management seeking to protect its own position. It appears that no lessons have been learned and to rub salt in the wound, workers who were affected as much if not more than anybody else are told they should feel grateful for being ‘saved’.”

Unite members will be considering the impact of the report and the government’s suggestion of cuts. It will also look at how the pending review of pension schemes can possibly be deemed as fair and independent.



Justin Tallis/reportdigital.co.uk

Osborne 'crippling' NI economy

"Austerity imposed cuts by the coalition government is crippling the Northern Ireland economy and leading its people into a triple-dip recession", Unite has claimed.

Responding to the latest GDP figures by the office for national statistics, Unite regional secretary **Jimmy Kelly** said, "Chancellor Osborne should heed these figures which show the UK is spiralling into further decline because of his government's harsh attack on the nation's social structures.

"Osborne should also heed the latest international monetary fund's stark warning that his government's 'slash and burn' policies are harming the UK economy. Even the leader of the Lib-Dems **Nick Clegg** is now calling for a moratorium on the cuts.

"Unite has constantly opposed these measures. It has now become clear that this self-immolation of the nation's and Northern Ireland's social infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of job losses has resulted in a flat-lined economy.

"Major funding of capital expenditure for the rebuilding the UK infrastructures that includes social housing projects should be included. Northern Ireland and the UK economy needs an immediate kick-start which will improve the private sector and help the drive for new jobs."

Need help? Contact Unite Ireland,
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Cork workers in Examiner jobs plea

Workers at WebPrint in Cork are calling on management at the Examiner and Evening Echo newspapers to engage in talks about reviving the print contract which the firm held for the past seven years.

The workers are supported by Unite, of which most of the 50 workers are members.

When the Examiner went into and straight out of receivership in March, WebPrint's contract was ended with no notice and workers have been placed on short time. Many now are in fear of losing their jobs.

"The contract was torn up and the printing of the papers moved to Dublin and the Irish Times," said Unite regional officer, **Brendan Byrne**. "The Examiner has a long history and affinity to Cork and we are calling on management to talk to WebPrint about how the contract can be reinstated, even if at a reduced rate.

"Local reps and local people should also lend their weight to this campaign. If these jobs are lost it will be a blow to the whole Cork community and it can be avoided."

NIHE loss blow to social housing

Unite Northern Ireland housing executive (NIHE) members have voiced their concerns about the future of social housing provision.

Unite's **Joanne McWilliams** said, "The proposed splitting up of the NIHE is effectively handing the role of social housing to the private sector. NIHE has been starved of public funding for many years which has meant that no new housing stock has been added to its portfolio.

"With more than 40,000 people on the waiting list for homes this lack of investment is a critical blow to ease the housing shortage."

She added, "Unite NIHE members are concerned about their future in the proposed new set-up. We're demanding a meeting with Minister McCausland and NIHE senior management to voice our concerns."