

SHOPFLOOR

OUR FESTIVE PLEA:

Please
be kind
to retail
workers
this
Christmas

MANDATE is asking members of the public to respect retail workers during the busy and intense Christmas shopping season.

And Mandate Interim General Secretary Jonathan Hogan emphasised the vital importance the issue has for workers in the sector. He told *Shopfloor*: "Retail employees deserve to work in dignity and with respect and in an environment that is free from violence and harassment."

● Continued on page 2



Respect retail workers this Christmas and all year round...

● From Page 1

“And this is especially so at Christmas, which should be a joyful time for all – but which can all too often be a time of great stress.

“We’re asking Christmas shoppers to keep

their cool and think of the person on the other side of the till.”

“Of course,” he added, “respecting retail workers should not only be for Christmas but for the whole year round.”

In the past Mandate has called on employers to implement a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding the safety, health and welfare of all workers.

Hogan continued: “We want them to boost customer awareness about this and we’d welcome prominent in-store and point-of-sale sig-

nage that sends out this clear message.”

In January, Ireland ratified the International Labour Organisation’s Convention No. 190, setting out a common framework for action to shape the future of the world of work, and in particular workplaces that are free from violence and harassment.

GOVT FINANCES

Budget 24 washout from out of touch Government

MANDATE has slammed Budget 2024 as a missed opportunity to use an “extraordinary budget surplus” of €10bn to implement a Living Wage, improve public services and deal with the housing crisis.

The union had earlier called for a range of measures, including:

- The removal of sub-minimum rates of the National Minimum Wage.
- The introduction of a Living Wage to replace the National Minimum Wage.
- The declaration of a housing emergency and the implementation of the key Raise the Roof policies.
- New legislation to allow workers to access more hours.
- Strong collective bargaining legislation to enable workers to increase their wages.

Speaking before the 10th October Budget, Mandate Assistant General Secretary Jonathan Hogan claimed the Government had a “once in a generation” opportunity to invest in public housing and address the cost-of-living crisis.



Jonathan Hogan: an opportunity squandered

‘Workers need investment – housing, healthcare, education, energy – and if they don’t see that happening, we can expect Govt parties to suffer in next year’s elections’

It came after Department of Finance statistics released earlier in the year showed the Government was set to reap a budget surplus of €10bn (£8.6bn) in 2023 – the equivalent of 3.5% of national income.

Mandate had expressed a hope the surplus would not be squandered through tax cuts for the few but be invested in improving public services

for all. The union had also called for the beefing up of trade union legislation particularly around the issue of collective bargaining rights.

Hogan explained that Mandate’s position on what the budget priorities should be followed extensive consultation, including dozens of surveys, with members over the past two years.

He added: “We’ve gone through almost 10 years of tax cuts since the austerity years and virtually nobody has benefited from them other than the highest earners.

“Workers need investment in the essentials – housing, healthcare, education, energy – and if they don’t see that happening, we can expect the government parties to suffer in next year’s elections.”

Unfortunately, when Minister for Finance Michael McGrath, and Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform Paschal Donohoe unveiled Budget 24 to the Dáil, its contents fell well short of what Mandate had

hoped for. Among other measures:

- The minimum wage was increased to €12.70 – more than a euro short of the Living Wage.
- Three €150 energy credits for every household – to be received between the end of 2023 and April 2024.
- A €400 winter lump sum for those on disability allowance or carer’s support, with fuel allowance recipients receiving a winter lump sum of €300.
- Weekly payments for working age recipients and pension payment increased by €12
- A one-off cut in student contribution fee by €1,000 for free fees students.

Mandate emphasised that Budget 2024 was an opportunity for the Government to recognise the social and economic threats facing our society and the planet but the failure to act shows how out of touch this government are with the challenges facing working people.



INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Global day of action to make Amazon pay

AMAZON workers again staged a massive international coordinated day of action on Black Friday, 24th November, which saw protests and strikes across 30 countries.

UNI Global General Secretary Christy Hoffman claimed the Make Amazon Pay campaign’s day of action – held on the busiest shopping day of the year – continues to grow in strength.

She said: “The movement to hold Amazon accountable keeps getting bigger and stronger. Workers know that it doesn’t matter what country you’re in or what your job title is, we are all united in the fight for higher wages, an end to unreasonable quotas, and a voice on the job.”

It’s the fourth year a global Black Friday protest has been held. Make Amazon Pay brings together more than 80 trade unions, civil society organisations, environmentalists and tax watchdogs.

The campaign is united behind a set of common demands – that Amazon pays its workers fairly, respects their right to join unions, pays its fair share of taxes and commits to real environmental sustainability.

This year saw strikes in UK, Italy, the US, Spain and Germany along with protests by climate activists outside Amazon Web Services (AWS) facilities in at least seven countries, including Ireland.

Thousands of workers also attended protests in 10 cities across India.

According to UNI Global Union, which based its claims on results obtained from a survey carried out earlier this year, Amazon’s intense performance monitoring has inflicted stress, pressure, anxiety, and a sense of mistrust among employees.

Feedback revealed that 51% of employees, across eight key countries, reported suffering adverse health effects, with some 57% citing deteriorating mental health as a result of Amazon’s intrusive monitoring.

Divisional Organiser John Carty told *Shopfloor*: “Our union fully supports the rights of workers to organise and calls on Amazon to recognise these workers’ chosen representatives. Mandate throughout its existence has been a campaigning union and, as such, we’re totally behind Amazon workers in their fight for decent pay and working conditions.”



UNI Global’s Christy Hoffman

PAY TALKS

Family-friendly benefits package for Eason's staff

MANDATE and SIPTU officials are to meet with Eason's management before Christmas with hopes high that a new pay and benefits package will be agreed.

Mandate organises at the Eason's shop in Cork, and represents 40 members there, while SIPTU looks after workers' interests at the books and stationery retailer's other outlets across the country.

Industrial Officer Organiser John O'Donnell told *Shopfloor*: "Obviously pay scales have been affected by the national minimum wage increase announced in October's Budget, and we are looking at these.

"There are also some very positive aspects to report about a new family-friendly benefits package. This will see the introduction of enhanced maternity and paternity benefits of up to 70% pay, and an increase to the death-in-service benefit of up to twice the annual salary.

"Added to that, they'll be a new corporate health plan to include free GP video and phone consultation, and free unlimited online prescriptions."

He added: "A deal has been agreed in principle, with hopefully one final meeting to take place before Christmas to get it over the line."



Eason's Patrick Street shop in Cork

Pay scale talks at Kellehers SuperValu

MANDATE has been in talks with management at Kellehers SuperValu in Cappoquin, Co Waterford, about the drawing up of a new pay scale.

The move was prompted by the rise in the national minimum wage to €12.70 announced in the 10th October Budget. This comes into effect on 1st January 2024.

Industrial Officer Organiser John O'Donnell told *Shopfloor*: "The previously agreed pay scale was majorly affected by the new rate but and we're hopeful that a new pay scale will be put in place for the New Year."

KANE McCARTNEY GROUP

SuperValu staff vote in favour of 5.5% deal

MANDATE members at five SuperValu supermarkets in Dublin have voted unanimously in favour of a new agreement that will see them pocket a 5.5% pay rise, backdated to 1st May 2023, along with a 10% staff discount on all purchases.

The deal follows a consultation the union carried out earlier this year with members at the Kane McCartney Group SuperValu outlets in Malahide, Donabate, Raheny, Killester, and Talbot Street.

Industrial Officer Greg Gaffney told *Shopfloor*: "This engagement with members helped us identify what their top priorities were and it shaped and formed what was subsequently negotiated with the employer's HR representatives.

"We held a number of meetings – which I would describe as intensive – but I was heartened that was then put before our members in June, met with their approval. There was a unanimous vote for the deal.

"I think it shows members realise that by joining Mandate they can make use of their collective bargaining power to secure and deliver decent pay deals as well as improvements to their terms and conditions of employment."

He added: "And I think the key message for non-members in retail employments is 'Join Mandate today and make work pay!'"

SPREADING THE MESSAGE...

Mandate builds on links with ISSU

MANDATE has confirmed that it is seeking to build on and strengthen its links with the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU).

It follows Mandate officials John O'Donnell and Greg Caffrey attendance at an ISSU Skills for Future Leaders event on 24th July in Dublin as well as a recent meeting with ISSU National Student Voice Organiser Maeve Richardson on 5th December.

John O'Donnell told *Shopfloor*: "It was second year running that we were invited to the Skills for Future Leaders event and it was a valuable opportunity for the union to cement a relationship with an organisation that represents a large segment of the population – young people at secondary schools.

"We're teaching young people the importance of trade unions and how powerful they can be in shaping their working lives for the better.

"The important thing for us is that thousands and thousands of these students will shortly be entering the world of work for the first time.

"And they will more likely than not be working in a sector that we repre-

sent – in retail. If we can educate them about the union before they get to that stage, hopefully joining Mandate will be at the front of their minds."

But O'Donnell warned that the consequences for trade unions could be "extremely dire" if that engagement with the next generation is not sus-



tained. He continued: "Such engagement gives us a platform to work with. It does not guarantee the future of this union or any other union for that matter but it better secures it.

"And we are hoping that we can nurture a whole new wave of eager young activists through this continuing relationship with ISSU."

Mandate's John O'Donnell with ISSU National Student Voice Organiser Maeve Richardson



Talks on pay for 2024 set to start at Kavanagh Group

REPRESENTATIVES of Mandate and the Kavanagh Group, which runs a number of SuperValu outlets, will meet soon to begin negotiating a new pay agreement for 2024.

The current deal ends on 31st December and it is hoped a new agreement can be put in place for 1st January 2024.

Western Divisional Organiser John Carty told *Shopfloor*: "We

have a very clear idea of what members who work for the Kavanagh Group want. Nearly half of our members there – some 46% – took part in an electronic survey we put together earlier this year and that has given us a set of priorities that we will work to."

Unsurprisingly, pay was the top priority for respondents. More than 40% stated that they were

looking for more notice for work rotas, while just under 10% sought improvements to family friendly and health and safety at work policies. A small number of those who replied to the survey wanted an increase to their contractual hours.

Shop stewards joined with John Carty in organising a Zoom meeting to discuss the survey

results and to formulate a negotiating strategy based on the data.

Meanwhile, Mandate has appointed former IMPACT/Fórsa official Eoin Coates as the new Divisional Organiser for its North and West Division, and he will be involved in any future talks with the Kavanagh Group.

Carty said: "We wish Eoin all the



best in his new role and every success along with the shop stewards in their talks to secure a better deal with members working for the Kavanagh Group."

● Eoin Coates interview: p17



Mandate facing into next 30 years with confidence

“YOU need unions like Mandate to shine a light into the dark corners of exploitation and precarious work practices in the private sector – and we’ve been doing that consistently for 30 years.”

Lifelong trade unionist Gerry Light, who stepped down as general secretary of Mandate in September of this year, made the comments as he reflected on his three-year stint leading the union through “the most difficult years” of its history.

Gerry, who took over from previous general secretary John Douglas just as the Covid pandemic struck, told *Shopfloor*: “If I had a regret, it would be not having the opportunity to lead the union in more normal times. None of us knew the extent of the impact Covid would have on us as a retail trade union, but we knew it would be significant.”

He describes the last few years as being about “containment and restructuring” in the face of the pandemic and the impact of the closure of major retailers, such as Argos, Arcadia and Debenhams, along with the resulting loss of jobs and members.

“You were very much in a fire-fight on a fairly regular basis – but I went into the job with my eyes wide open. It felt like I was standing on a ship



All changed, changed utterly: Consequences of Covid – as in all aspects of life – has defined much of Mandate’s actions over the last three years...

Picture: Marco Verch (CC BY 2.0)

that was going to have a few more torpedoes fired at it!”

But Gerry thinks that a subsequent in-house restructuring exercise – “We didn’t bring in external consultants, we did it ourselves” – has left the

union “fit for purpose” and “much stronger in respect of resources and how we apply those resources in the future”.

“Covid created great challenges for us but also brought out some of the

best qualities within the union,” he noted. “Our staff and activists were instrumental in steadying the ship as we navigated our way through some turbulent times.”

Gerry also acknowledges that those years accelerated a major restructuring within the retail sector itself such as further technological advances in the automation of shop floors and warehouses, which in turn also led to downsizing and redundancies with a subsequent loss of membership.

When Covid restrictions were first brought in, Gerry hoped that one result of “those horrible, dark days” would be “a growth in solidarity and a greater sense of community” as well

as a “rethink of what really matters in life”.

Two years on, that early optimism has somewhat faded. “Did Covid deliver a greater sense of value in the eyes of the public or of employers of what retail workers do? Unfortunately, many were prepared to allow them slot back into the role that people always perceived them to be. If left unchallenged this would remain the case; however, it’s the job of the union to ensure that our members’ profile continues to enjoy the due recognition and respect that was afforded during the height of Covid in order for them to receive the

Continued Page 5

Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace

This one-day workshop is aimed at all Workplace Representatives who wish to improve their knowledge of bullying & harassment.

Course Content:

- Health and Safety in the workplace
- Bullying defined
 - Types of bullying
- Bullying and the law
 - Relevant legislation pertaining to bullying and harassment
 - Codes of Practice
- Prevention of bullying and harassment in the workplace
- Harassment defined
- Dignity at work
- Vicarious liability

- Anti-bullying policy
- Inappropriate behaviours and keeping a diary
- Resolution procedures
- The rights and duties of employees pertaining to bullying and harassment
- Sexual harassment and stress
- Constructive dismissal as a result of bullying and harassment
- Disciplinary procedures



For more info, contact your Mandate Official or Mandate Training & Learning Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

Mandate facing into next 30 years with confidence

From Page 4

best possible reward for their labour, going forward.”

He admits to harbouring a “long time frustration” about how the “voluntarist” model of industrial relations has hampered the way in which unions operate in Ireland.

Gerry explained: “The Constitution as it is written doesn’t give full vindication to either individual or collective rights of workers. It talks about rights of association. And the way that it has been interpreted through the years as a voluntarist model means that [employers] can opt out from the very start.”

“Unfortunately, far too many retail employers play the disingenuous game of recognising a person’s right to be in a union – but there’s no [legislative or constitutional] compulsion on them to deal with the union, and they know it. The reason for this resistance is clear in that they fear the power of workers acting collectively,” he added.

Gerry hopes this “dynamic will be shifted” with the out-workings of the Labour Employers Economic Forum (LEEF) High Level Working Group on Collective Bargaining which filed its final report last year.

Meaningful

“We’re close to something happening,” he admitted. “I don’t what it is. I just hope its meaningful and advances the statutory right of workers who want to be represented by a trade union in their workplace.”

Gerry also hits out at unions “unnecessarily fighting each other for every last member” and concedes it’s not good for the profile of the movement generally.

“When two or more unions go to war over a group of [potential] members, the workers sit back [and] somebody ultimately decides, but by that time a lot of those prospective members will have walked with their view of unions negatively tainted possibly for the rest of their working lives.”

Coming from a strong working-class background, Gerry points out that this has throughout his career informed his approach to getting younger people involved in union activism.

“We’re going to [as trade unions] have to get our fingers out to reach potential new blocs of members – especially young people – focusing on issues that matter to them such as the environment and the route to a just transition.”

He points out that many young people are employed in industries “such as the Googles and the Facebooks” rather than more traditional workplaces which is a problem for unions in terms of securing access and organising potential new members.

Gerry worries that too many of these young workers see themselves as part of “new world order” of “dispensable, fixed-term and short-term work contracts” where they think long-term pensionable jobs are a thing of the past. It’s up to the union movement as a whole to effectively challenge this perspective through proactive actions rather than aspirational words.

And he fears there is an ongoing



Gerry Light (above and right) at the launch of the Mandate commissioned *Smoke and Mirrors* report earlier this year, which he believes is a valuable piece of research. Smoking ban (left) was a Mandate-led initiative which had a global impact

“generational distancing” from trade unions and the accompanying denuding of density levels in workplaces across the board.

“I got my social justice values from my parents and the community in which I was brought up – but when you have a young person whose parents were not in a trade union because they didn’t see the value of being in a union, it becomes generational and makes it more difficult to make inroads to get them to join a union.”



He also believes that many workers see union membership in a narrow way – securing decent pay and additional holidays and that’s understandable however this view ignores the invaluable contribution and advancements that the union movement has achieved in broader social justice issues through the years.

Gerry cautions against officials “assuming they know what is best for the members.” His advice to anyone taking up a leadership role within a trade union is “always listen to the members” and “keep your ears as close to the ground as possible. Their agenda then becomes your agenda.”

On a more positive note, he expresses great pride in Mandate’s involvement in securing some major wins over the years

such as the workplace smoking ban, the passing of banded hours legislation and the union’s leading role in the anti-water charges campaign.

Gerry, a member of the Low Pay Commission for six years, points to Mandate’s campaigning on the sub minimum rate for young people on the National Minimum Wage as another example of how the union can use its resources and influence to bring about positive change.

He adds: “I’m pretty confident that this discriminatory rate will be removed in the not-so-distant future.”

Mandate’s *Smoke and Mirrors* report published earlier this year is also name-checked as a valuable initiative on the part of the union.

Gerry believes it is an extremely valuable piece of research: “That report got very good international recognition and we also got a commitment from Neil Richmond, the Minister for Retail, to send the banded hours legislation which has been in place since 2018 back to the Workplace Relations Committee for a review.

“Obviously during that review we’ll be seeking to introduce some of those [original] elements we had been campaigning on that wasn’t put into the original legislation.”

All in all, Gerry is optimistic about the future of the union: “Mandate is 30 years in existence next year and there are a lot of things we got right during the last three decades. I think Mandate is a union that is renowned for punching above its weight – and I know that as a union we’re highly respected within the trade union movement. We must face into the next stage of our evolution and the 2024 Biennial Delegate Conference in particular with a sense of renewal and confidence, so here’s to the next 30 years.”

As for his own life post-Mandate, he is currently undertaking “a bit of study at Maynooth University to fill the gap” and intends “brushing myself down and taking a bit of a breather and [then] see where I go in the New Year. Ideally, I would like to stay involved at some level working with the union movement and the voluntary/community sector.”

1,600 Dunnes workers sign petition for change...

MORE than 1,600 Dunnes Stores workers have signed a petition backing Mandate's pay and benefits claim lodged in September.

According to the union, the petition – signed by a significant number of Dunnes workers – demonstrates a “strong desire” to see a more forward-thinking approach adopted by the company in dealing with employee concerns.

The claim includes:

- A pay increase of €1.75 per hour for all Dunnes workers,
- Increased annual leave for all staff,
- Longer paid sick leave,
- Full-time jobs and additional hours for existing staff,
- Fair scheduling, and
- Paid maternity and paternity leave.

Mandate has written to senior management emphasising the urgent need to address these matters.

Interim Assistant General Secretary Lorraine O'Brien told *Shopfloor*: “The petition is a clear indication of the strong desire among the workforce for a fair and immediate resolution to the pay claim.

“The petition is not merely a list of signatures – it represents the voices of 1,600 Dunnes workers who are calling on the company to acknowledge and address their legitimate concerns.

“Our members firmly believe that Dunnes Stores, as a leading retailer and responsible employer, should align itself with the progressive approaches taken by other retailers in matters related to employee pay and benefits.

Crucial

“These enhancements are not just crucial for the well-being and retention of staff but are also instrumental in fostering a positive and productive work environment.”

Meanwhile, O'Brien explained the delay in delivering the petition to Dunnes Head Office.

She said: “We had initially planned to hand-deliver these petitions on 21st November as we have done in past campaigns. However, considering the recent bereavement within the Dunne family, we decided to postpone this action as a mark of respect. We extend our condolences at this difficult time.”



Picture: Mohd Fazlin Mohd Effendy 001 (CC BY 2.0)

Shop floor voices...

Patrick Killeen (Mayo), a member of the Dunnes National Negotiating Team, said: “What we're looking for is a flat rate increase of €1.75 per hour for all members of staff. I have been working for Dunnes for more than 10 years, the extra €1.75 would be a huge benefit to me – for mortgage payments and so on. It would mean a bit more security.

He added: “For this claim to be successful, we need every Dunnes worker to get behind the pay claim, to get active in their store, so that we can get this across the line. It's not just for our lives to be made better, it's for all future Dunnes workers as well.”

Stephanie Kenny (Sligo), a member of Dunnes National Committee, said: “Dunnes is a very profitable company making millions in profits every year, and I'm sure that they



Stephanie Kenny: 'Making millions in profits'



Patrick Killeen: 'Get this across the line'

can afford to pay their staff [a bit more]. Our sick pay scheme is inadequate – we should have learned from the pandemic that any retail worker should not be attending work when sick.”

She added: “A lot of staff have left in the past and the full-time contracts have never been given [out]. Even long-term staff members haven't had or even been given the

option to take up these full-time contracts.”

Cathy McLoughlin (Dundalk), a Dunnes National Committee member, said: “With the cost-of-living crisis and inflation eating away at wages we need a substantial improvement in pay within Dunnes. This can only be achieved with the support of all Dunnes workers.”

TALK TO US

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30 years of winning for workers

AS WE enter into 2024 and the 30th anniversary of the founding of Mandate, there is no better time to take stock of where we find ourselves as a collective of members and to renew our vows to build a better, stronger trade union for the next 30 years.

Mandate has been persistently to the forefront of positive change for workers over the last 30 years. Our members have demanded change which benefits ordinary workers across Ireland.

In our 30 years, Mandate members have engaged in the democratic institutions of their union to use our collective strength for the betterment of all.

- We were the founder of the right2water campaign that has saved our members a quite substantial sum of money in water bills over the last decade.

- Our union was a key driver behind the smoking ban in 2004 saving the lives of thousands of bar workers.

- We backed the referendum for marriage equality in 2017 and for repeal in 2018 providing for gay marriage and women's bodily autonomy.

- In 2019, we led the way and won the Employment Miscellaneous Provisions Act which banned zero-hour contracts in most instances and provided secure hours for all workers.

Mandate's contribution to these major campaigns cannot be underestimated, and it is true to say that our engagement on these issues has led to a fairer Ireland – one that we all can be a little proud of.

Now, as we enter into our 30th year of existence, we all, as members and as activists must commit once again to building a better and stronger Mandate so we can achieve more positive change for workers and members across Ireland.



Getting involved – how you can do your bit...

RIGHT NOW divisions around the country are holding their Local Council meetings seeking nominations for positions on the National Executive Council, Standing Orders Committee, Appeals Committee, and also for delegates to attend our Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) which will be held in Kerry next April.

At this conference, Mandate will formulate its national policies and decide what issues we should campaign on. We will debate motions

and changes to our rule-book. It is important that as many members as possible engage through their local union structures and attend our BDC. This union is nothing without the collective strength and wisdom of its members.

We need more activists and more activity to ensure Mandate grows at every level, in your workplace, in your Local Council, throughout your division and across the country. There is power in a union but that power is dependant

on the number of members and the number of activists. Mandate is your union. You own it. It will be as good as you allow it to be. So, get involved and argue for improvements. If you want to win higher pay, better family-friendly policies at work, if you want more investment in public services or more public housing so that your children won't have to emigrate, then strengthen your union and strengthen your voice. **BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN YOUR UNION.**

Denise Curran
Mandate President



Children at the Christ the King School in Nairobi's Kibera slum.

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Tesco talks facilitator appointed

FOLLOWING three exploratory meetings to discuss the structure and scope of future national pay and benefit negotiations – involving a sub-group made up of Mandate and SIPTU reps (both officials and shop stewards) – it was agreed to a company proposal that an independent facilitator be appointed to further the discussions.

What's in the claim...

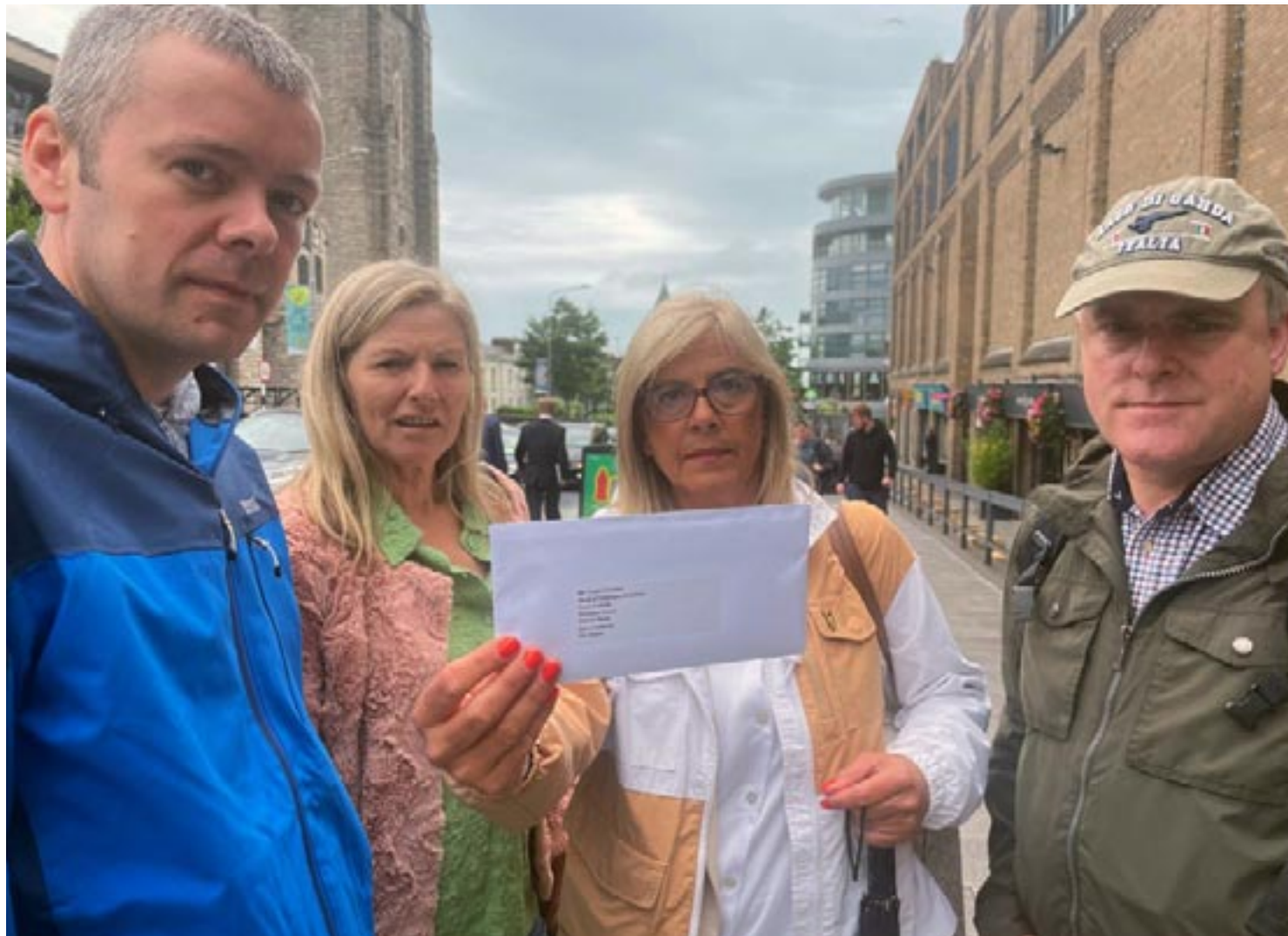
ON 10th JULY, Mandate served a pay and benefits claim on Tesco bosses. It's main features are:

- The implementation of a universal incremental pay scale that recognises the need for Tesco workers to be paid a starter rate in line with the Living Wage and which secures significant pay increases for all Tesco workers.

- This incremental pay scale should also reward long service within the company.

- The claim calls on Tesco Ireland to provide workers with access to full-time jobs and to allocate hours appropriately to current staff.

- Improvements to pension provision for new starters in the DC scheme, enhancements to family leave arrangements, increases to the staff discount card, pay equality and greatly improved work-life balance for staff.



Mandate President Denise Curran (second right) with Tesco shop stewards (from left) Ron McAndrew (Rathmines), Maria Greene (Balbriggan) and Owen Roberts (Killarney). Denise is holding the Tesco pay and benefits claim before it was submitted to Tesco management on 10th July

- The restoration of meaningful and respectful industrial relations at national and local levels with Mandate – in particular the restoration of long-established practices and facilities from which the company unilaterally withdrew. These were set out in previously negotiated collective agreements and the Code of Practice on Duties and Responsibilities of Employee Representatives.



CWU, FSU and Mandate have come together to develop **Unionlink**, providing members and representatives with an innovative way of accessing a variety of courses, so that they can 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!



Presentation Skills *Getting your message across effectively...*

Course Content: This one-day training course is designed to give you the tools and techniques that you need to prepare and deliver presentations effectively. Beyond focusing on what you should do, you will also learn about the most common presentation pitfalls and how you can avoid them. In advance, you will be asked to prepare and deliver a very short presentation on any topic of your choice. Thereafter, your presentation will be reviewed for the purpose of giving you supportive and constructive

feedback on your style of presentation. This will enable you to develop and improve both the content and delivery of your presentation(s), whilst increasing your confidence and surmounting the fears commonly associated with presentations.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of this training course participants will be able to:

- Appreciate and apply the art or skill-set associated with effective presentations, enabling them to become better presenters/communicators.

- Understand the necessity of taking **CONTROL** of the (i) material, (ii) the nerves and (iii) the audience, to ensure maximum impact for their presentations.
- Improve their presentation content, structure, delivery and use of visual aids.



For more info, contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

INTER-CONTINENTAL BALLISTIC PROTEST!



AMAZON Teamsters Jessie Moreno and Brandi Diaz (above right) – who have been on strike for an amazing five months in sunny Palmdale, California – joined more than 1,000 GMB members employed by the online retailer for a Black Friday stoppage in cloudy Coventry. But the wet weather didn't dampen their spirits. Jessie said: "Amazon workers are taking action around the globe to

fight for the good jobs we deserve. In the US, my Teamster siblings and I are on strike against Amazon's unfair labour practices. We have taken our picket line across the country and now we're joining our colleagues from around the world to demand respect, fair wages and a workplace where our health and safety are a priority. Amazon is no match for the power of its workers united!"



7% rise over 2 years at Heaton's/Sports Direct

FOLLOWING negotiations with Heaton's/Sports Direct management earlier this year, Mandate brokered a 7% pay increase which runs over two years. Some 5% of the package was backdated to 1st January 2023 with the balance of 2% to be paid in January 2024.

Divisional Organiser Mandy Kane told Shopfloor: "We were also able to secure extra service days bringing the maximum to five days for those staff with 25 years service with the company."

Sports Direct took over the Heaton's network of stores in 2016 and, since then, the firm has continued to honour collective agreements made with the union prior to the takeover.

Mandy again issued an appeal to those staff not in the union to join Mandate. She said: "Our voice would certainly be considerably strengthened if we were able to boost that number – which would benefit all workers at the retailer. I would appeal to Mandate members at Heaton's/Sports Direct to invite their non-unionised colleagues to join with us."

BWG foods

MANDATE will be starting pay talks with management at BWG Foods early in the New Year as the current agreement ends on January 31st.

That deal saw employees at the wholesale retailer earning under €539 a week get a 7.5%, while those earning more than €539 received a 5% rise.

ICTU welcome for new right to five days paid domestic violence leave

CONGRESS has welcomed the new right to five days paid domestic violence leave – which came into operation on 27th November – as a "significant safeguard".

In a statement, that coincided with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25th November, an ICTU spokesperson said: "Trade unions have been raising awareness of domestic violence as a workers' issue for many years and have successfully negotiated paid leave at the enterprise level.

"Congress and our affiliated unions were happy to work hand in hand with domestic violence civil society groups in the lead-up to legislating for this significant new right.

"We believe that it will make workplaces supportive environments for



Picture: Marco Verch (CC BY 2.0)

workers experiencing domestic violence and will enable employers to retain talent and ensure the safety of all in their workplaces.

"We welcome the commitment to review the Act and to give serious consideration to extending the duration of leave to up to 10 days a year.

"None of the collective agreements negotiated by trade unions with em-

ployers are as low as five days and indeed many don't even specify a specific number of days.

"This payment is a significant safeguard for victims of domestic violence, the vast majority of whom are women. It will assist them in retaining their economic independence in extremely difficult time in their working lives."

Sub-minimum rates treat young workers as second-class citizens – they have to go!

IN FEBRUARY 2022, the Low Pay Commission (LPC) was asked by Leo Varadkar the then-Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment to examine the issues around retaining or removing the sub-minimum youth rates that apply to the National Minimum Wage.

At the time, he wrote: “Recently there has been some debate relating to youth rates of the National Minimum Wage, including a Private Member’s Bill which seeks to remove such rates.

“I am aware that the Commission has examined and reported on this topic in 2017 but I now feel it necessary to revisit the issues involved. In this context I would ask that the Commission examine the issues around retaining or removing the youth rates and to make recommendations on the subject.”

Previously, in 2017, the Low Pay Commission undertook a review of the sub-minimum rates that then applied to the National Minimum Wage. It recommended abolishing the training rates and simplifying the youth rates by moving to age-related – as opposed to experience-based – rates.

The Commission’s recommendations were accepted by Government and were introduced as part of the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018.

Currently in Ireland employees aged 20 years and over are entitled to receive 100% of the National Minimum Wage; while employees aged 19 years are entitled to receive 90%; employees aged 18 years are entitled to receive 80%, and employees under 18 years of age are entitled to receive 70%. (See Table 1)

Mandate has, along with political parties, lobbied for change in how the statutory legislation is applied, which

Picture: Stephen Day (CC BY-SA 2.0)



allows for the discriminatory practice of paying a worker less simply because they are under 20 years of age.

Mandate has attended the Oireachtas, highlighting these inequalities and has also joined forces with political representatives, Unite trade union, and students’ unions in campaigning for such rates to be abolished.

Added to that, the Union has consistently called for the introduction of a Living Wage to replace the National Minimum Wage and has insisted that any attempt by Government to continue this discriminatory pay practice based on age is unacceptable.

Mandate’s Interim General Secretary Jonathan Hogan called on all young workers to lobby for change

Table 1

	Category of Worker	Effective from 1st Jan 2023	% of minimum wage
Adult Rate	Experienced adult worker	€11.30	100 %
Age-based Rates	Aged 19	€10.17	90 %
	Aged 18	€9.04	80 %
	Aged under 18	€7.91	70 %

and to demand equal treatment over how these legislative entitlements are applied.

He also thanked those political parties, trade unions and civil society

organisations that have joined Mandate in calling on the Government to abolish the practice immediately.

He said: “No worker should be penalised or marginalised simply be-



Interim General Secretary Jonathan Hogan

cause of their age. The rise in utility bills, rental accommodation, food inflation and additional costs associated with travel/commuting, cost of living generally has also impacted young workers.”

Hogan claimed it was “delusional” to think that young workers were somehow not impacted by these challenges.

“The reality is that many young workers support the family home. Young workers require all the supports in order to give them a sustainable and positive equal opportunity in the future – not to be penalised further or treated less favourably than any other person simply because of their age.”

He added: “The Government’s role should be to ensure that all young workers are supported through effective social economic policies that facilitates an equal opportunity in life.”



Mandate’s Gerard Halligan (back left), Jonathan Hogan and John O’Donnell (right) at the PBP press conference on ending wage discrimination based on age in June

Mandate backing for PBP’s equal pay bill

DESPITE it not being passed, Mandate had given its prior backing to the People Before Profit’s National Minimum Wage (Equal Pay for Young Workers) Bill 2022 when it went before the Dáil in June.

The Bill set out to end wage discrimination against young workers, and earlier in the month, representatives from Mandate, Unite, UCD Students’ Union, and USI had attended a PBP press conference to launch this important piece of legislation.

The Minimum Wage (Equal Pay for Young Workers) Bill 2022 sought to amend the National Minimum Wage Act 2000 to end minimum wage pay discrimination for workers under the age of 20.

At the launch, PBP TD Paul Murphy said: “There is no justification for paying young people less than the minimum wage. These people are doing the same work as their colleagues in the same workplace and yet it’s legal for them to be paid even less than the minimum wage. That is completely unjust.”

Fellow PBP TD Richard Boyd Barrett added: “Not only does this discriminate against and exploit young people, it is used to put downward pressure on wages for older workers and to reduce hours for older workers on higher wage rates. An end to this discrimination against younger workers would be a win for all workers.”

SALE OF ALCOHOL BILL

Recommendations in Committee report welcomed but Govt needs to act on them

Picture: Maria Eklind (CC BY-SA 2.0)



MANDATE has welcomed a number of recommendations contained in the Joint Committee of Justice report into the new Sale of Alcohol Bill 2022, which was launched in Dáil Éireann on 9th November.

The Government first published details of the draft legislation in October 2022. Minister for Justice Helen McEntee in bringing forward the Bill said its aim was to reform the current antiquated system, parts of which are on based on 200-year-old laws.

Earlier this year, Mandate General Secretary Gerry Light (who has since retired) and Dublin North Divisional Organiser Jim Fuery appeared before an Oireachtas hearing on the legislation. At the 31st January meeting they presented a detailed submission on behalf of the union, which represents thousands of bar workers across the state.

Mandate underlined the need to make the safety and wellbeing of bar staff a key legislative priority and insisted the union was open to a “constructive and positive realignment of the sector”.

Committee members were told that bar work was a “high-risk occupation” where staff had to deal with “unnecessary levels of aggression”. Mandate called for the “assaulting, threatening, abusing, obstructing or hindering [bar] workers” to be made a statutory offence.

Mandate also said there should be a greater focus on collective bargaining in the sector.

Gerry Light told TDs: “We would be saying of employers [that if they] continue to interpret the voluntarist nature of the industrial relations

system like that, the state has to step in and put [in place] a robust statutory collective bargaining rights for workers.”

Jim Fuery said parts of the report “ticked all the boxes for us” which he described as “focal points” of the union’s presentation before the Committee in January.

He singled out four recommendations for particular praise. These were:

Recommendation 17 – The Committee recommends that an entitlement to statutory collective bargaining rights for workers be guaranteed, which may be necessary arising from this legislation.

Recommendation 18 – The Committee



Then General Secretary Gerry Light, flanked by Dublin North Divisional Organiser Jim Fuery, speaking on the Sale of Alcohol Bill before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice in January

recommends that current vacancies on the Workplace Relations Commission be filled as soon as possible, or that experienced staff within trade unions be enabled to carry out health and safety inspections of workplaces and ensure compliance with workers’ rights.

Recommendation 19 – The Committee recommends specific legislation be introduced making it an offence to abuse or mistreat bar workers, and/or that there be effective enforcement of current legislation covering assaults, to protect bar staff.

Recommendation 20 – The Committee recommends that the relevant resources and structures be put in place to ensure that sufficient transport services are provided to cover the extended licensing hours. An examination should also take place to assess how to improve the provision of late-night public transport services, particularly in rural towns and areas throughout the

country. Jim Fuery told *Shopfloor*: “Bar and licensed trade workers are very vulnerable workers; they are constantly faced with verbal abuse and threats of physical violence. Due to the dilution of collective bargaining rights in this sector the rates of pay, terms and conditions, and a safe workplace for these workers has deteriorated over the last number of years.

“Added to that, many were laid off during Covid, depriving them of a living.

“Mandate welcomes the recommendations, but these recommendations must be enacted into law.

“It’s time for government to ensure that employers engage with the union in collective bargaining processes to bring the sector up the standards required to provide a safe workplace with well-paid jobs for all licensed trade workers.”

Effective Teamwork *Where and how you fit in...*

Course Content: This one-day training course is designed to help course participants to acquire the necessary knowledge and to apply the appropriate skills and behaviours considered essential to the development of a harmonious and successful team. That is, it will enable the building of stronger relationships with the team, as team members get to know each other better and create the foundations for a high performing group or team. Having established one’s preferred team roles – and its strengths and

development needs – the course addresses the five main dysfunctions of a team and how they can be successfully overcome.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of this training course participants will know:

- What role(s) they are best equipped to perform in a team.
- How to overcome a lack of trust among team members.
- How to engage in constructive conflict.

- How to follow a clear, concise and practical guide to using the five dysfunctions of a team as the basis for improving team relationships and effectiveness.

- What is required to realise the potential of teamwork.



For more info, contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

6% pay rise for Connect admin staff

ADMIN staff working for Connect Trade Union, represented jointly by both Mandate and SIPTU, have accepted a two-year pay deal, worth 6% over two years.

Ken Reilly, the Mandate official involved in the negotiations, told Shopfloor: "After a series of engagements between the parties, a proposal was brokered that we were happy to endorse and put to members in a ballot."

The proposal was for a 3% pay rise, backdated to 1st April 2023, and a further 3% to be applied from 1st April 2024, to expire on 31st March 2025.

Reilly said: "The employer has to be commended for full engagement in the process, and the final outcome was a fair and equitable agreement, leading to a significant pay rise, and one which was subsequently accepted by the majority of aggregate members."

Meanwhile, Colette Collins, Mandate's rep at Connect, has since retired. Reilly added: "Colette was a stalwart presence at Connect and a fountain of information and without her input, these negotiations may not have been such a success. She will be sorely missed."



TDs Louise O'Reilly and Mark Ward met with Mandate officials and members at the union's Dublin HQ to discuss the worsening security situation in the city centre



CITY CENTRE SECURITY

SF TDs hear of members' fears

THE horrific stabbing attack on young children in Parnell Square East on 23rd November – sparking a night of serious rioting – has focused great attention on safety in Dublin city centre.

But fears over the number of assaults in central Dublin and general street criminality have grown in recent months.

During the summer, Mandate's Dublin North Division received an invite from Sinn Féin to meet with TDs Louise O'Reilly and Mark Ward to give workers the opportunity to highlight their safety concerns about working in the city centre.

Mandate members and Officials attended the meeting at Mandate Head Office on 15th August, which followed a series of physical assaults in the city centre during the summer – including a number of high-profile attacks on tourists.

Divisional Organiser Jim Fuery told *Shopfloor*: "We underlined to the TDs that action needed to be taken to deal with the ongoing abuse of retail staff, threats to workers generally including actual physical assaults.

"We also called for safe transport to be provided for workers travelling within the city and for those commuting to and from city centre stores to satellite towns."

The TDs outlined their plans and

support for better protections for workers and for safer public transport provisions.

Louise O'Reilly, Sinn Féin's spokesperson on workers' rights, said that after hearing from Mandate members it was clear the safety in the city centre had "deteriorated".

"They say they don't feel safe coming to or going from work. And what's worse is, many of them were telling us that they don't feel safe sometimes in work and that instances of anti-social behaviour and violence are on the rise."

She claimed that workers' voices "had been absent from the discussion" around the issue.

"We know that when a high-profile incident happens, there's a lot of talk about it, and then the talk recedes and these workers feel like they get forgotten about."

O'Reilly promised to engage with employers' groups "to see if they can do more" and vowed to "keep the pressure on the government" to increase the Garda presence on the streets to combat the problem.

"Retail workers are telling us very, very clearly that the visible Garda presence is what they feel they need to keep them safe going to and coming from work as well as safe in their workplace," she added.

Effective Meetings

Course Content: This one-day training course is designed to give participants an understanding of the essentials associated with effective meetings. It will cover a range of pertinent issues, including the committee members' roles, planning/preparing for meetings (including agenda preparation), 'best

practice' minute-taking, the management of challenging behaviours and scenarios at meetings and post-meeting assessment tools that are designed to enhance meetings for the future.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of this training course participants will understand:

- The roles and responsibilities of the 'model' Chairperson/Facilitator, Secretary/Recorder and the other meeting participants.
- How best to prepare tailored agendas efficiently and effectively.

- How to facilitate productive discussion via tactful questioning, active listening, appropriate acknowledgements, considered clarifications and succinct summaries.
- The importance and the art associated with the assignment of follow-up tasks or responsibilities and agreement on and the application of deadlines.
- The process for effective participation and decision-making, as customised to and agreed upon by the meeting group for the attainment of consensus.
- How to effectively manage and resolve challenging behaviours, situations and meeting attendees.



For more info, contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

Mandate lodges pay and benefits claim with SuperValu-MOPI bosses

MANDATE has formally lodged a pay and benefits claim with SuperValu-MOPI management for next year as the current agreement is set to expire on 31st January.

In preparing a detailed claim, Mandate was able to take an accurate sounding of workers' concerns after initiating a national survey of the approximately 2,000 members who work for the retailer.

Divisional Organiser Keith Pollard told *Shopfloor*: "Our members responded to the survey in their droves. Their feedback and responses greatly helped the national shop stewards and the officials on the National Team in developing the terms of our members' pay and benefits 2024 claim." He added: "And, of course, I'd

like to thank every one of our members who took the time to complete the survey."

Feedback from the survey was presented to a well-attended national shop stewards meeting at Mandate Head Office on 7th November.

Pollard said: "We considered the results of the survey and after much deliberation and debate we unanimously agreed on a set of key 'asks' to put in the claim.

"These are: a pay increase that reflects the cost-of-living crisis; an increase in staff discount; and equal access to banded hours across all stores."

A National Negotiating Team for the upcoming talks was also elected at the meeting. National Team

members Claire Dore (Walkinstown); David King (baker rep, Swords); Johnny Murphy (Swords); Mark Ryan (Waterford); Martin Mahony (Blanchardstown), Dublin reserve team member Paul Tomney (Rathborne); country reserve team member Robert Kelly (Limerick), join Mandate Interim General Secretary Jonathan Hogan, Divisional Organiser Keith Pollard and Industrial Officer Organiser Ken Reilly to make up the team.

Pollard added: "A number of dates for the negotiations to start have been agreed and members at SuperValu-MOPI will be kept fully updated as the talks progress."

TWOHIGS SUPERVALU

Deal agreed after 'robust but cordial' negotiations

MANDATE members at Twohigs SuperValu outlets in Askeaton and Abbeyfeale, Co Limerick, have voted unanimously to accept an 18-month agreement that will see them receive a 5% pay rise as well as an increase to 15% on the Real Rewards discount scheme.

Mandate Industrial Officer Caroline Clifford told *Shopfloor*: "We served a claim in August as the agreement was set to expire at the end of September. We met with the company and their external HR adviser on 12th October to discuss the claim."

"They reverted to me a few days later with a 3.5% pay offer and an increase from 10% to 15% on the in-store discount scheme. We made it clear to management's representatives that such an offer would not secure our recommendation to put before our members."

"Following further discussions with the HR adviser, Mandate was able to broker an increased pay offer from the company of 5%."



The shop stewards approved the new offer and it went to ballot in late October before being accepted unanimously by our members."

Ms Clifford described the negotiations to hammer out the deal as "robust but cordial".

She added: "While the company emphasised their own economic concerns such as energy costs and lower sales due to food inflation, they did concede that low paid workers had been hit very hard with similar concerns – such as the increasing cost of everything and continuing high inflation levels."



Divisional Organiser Keith Pollard

Christmas trading arrangements agreed

CHRISTMAS trading arrangements have been agreed with SuperValu-MOPI and all members informed. Shop stewards will have received hard copies for display on in-store union noticeboards. Divisional

Organiser Keith Pollard said: "We'd encourage all our members to familiarise themselves with the terms

of the arrangements. If any member has any queries about these arrangements, they should contact their local Mandate shop steward or union official." He added: "On behalf of the Mandate-MOPI Team I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our SuperValu MOPI members a very Merry Christmas."



Pictured at the launch of *Labour History in Irish History*, a compilation of essays celebrating 50 years of the Irish Labour History Society (ILHS), held at Charlie Byrnes bookshop in Galway on 15th November. From left: Gerard Halligan (Mandate Organiser), Liz Hackett (retired Roches Stores shop steward, Galway, former treasurer, secretary, and first ever female president of the Galway Council of Trade Unions), Gabriel McMorrough (retired Roches

Stores House Committee member, Galway, and Mandate delegate to the GCTU), Eoin Fox (Marks and Spencer shop steward, Galway, member of Mandate's NEC, and current GCTU President), Pat Hardiman (Retired Roches Stores shop steward, Galway, GCTU treasurer and former president of the Council, as well as being a former member of Mandate's NEC), John Carty (Mandate Divisional Organiser) and Eoin Coates (Mandate Divisional Organiser).

Wonderful resource highlights labour's role in Irish history

REVIEW By Tish Gibbons

LABOUR History in Irish History is a celebration of 50 years of the Irish Labour History Society and, indeed, it is the uniqueness of that society which is reflected in the uniqueness of this publication.

Like the ILHS membership, the contributors come from all walks of life. Yes, there are professional labour historians, researchers, and students, but also trade unionists, politicians,

teachers, and journalists – which again probably contributes to the uniqueness of its structure.

There are 12 major essays: a history of the ILHS itself; two which focus on rural events and two on class issues. Essays 5, 6 and 7 follow chronologically from a chapter on trade unions in the 19th century; to the 1913 lockout and then the rise and fall of the Workers' Republic 1916-1925. Equality and gender issues are the focus of two main essays

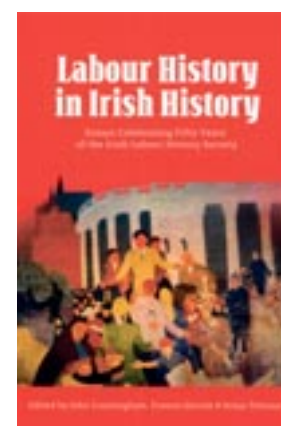
while the final two focus on more recent history and concludes with President Michael D Higgins' stirring contribution on the future of trade unions.

What's unique then is that each of these major essays is followed by a couple of shorter pieces, case studies which focus on events or individuals within the time frame of the major essay.

For example, the major essay on rural labour 1850-1950 is accompanied by a

piece on Nixie Boran of Castlecomer. The 1913 essay is accompanied by the wonderfully titled 'What was the racket with Rosie Hackett'. Another unusual feature is the inclusion of photographs of some interesting objects held by the ILHS in its archives: some banners, minutes books, sashes – even a clay pipe!

It is a wonderful resource for teachers and students of labour history in particular, but also, I think, of social history and politics.



Mandate sets out stall at uni campuses

MANDATE officials extolling the benefits of being in a trade union took part in two very successful engagement events with students at UCC and UCD in recent months.

Divisional Organiser Pearse McCarthy was invited to attend 'Union Week' at UCC Students' Union in early October. He set up stall on campus and provided passing students with loads of useful information about workplace rights while at the same time accentuating the positive aspects of being in a trade union and why it matters so much.

Just over a month later, Mandate Divisional Organiser Michael Meegan joined Industrial Officer Organisers John O'Donnell and Ken Reilly in flying the flag for Mandate at UCD Students' Union's 'Trade Union Week' in mid-November.

They were joined by a number of other trade unions, including SIPTU, IFUT, Unite, Fórsa, Financial Services Union, ASTI, Praxis, INMO, and Connect, in stalls on the concourse and dotted throughout the campus.

According to the organisers, the aim of the two-day event was to "amplify the impact of trade unions and celebrate the strength found in collaboration" and to "build a community that values and supports every member".

John O'Donnell told *Shopfloor*: "We were given tables on both campuses to engage with passing students and had prepared a special leaflet for them detailing basic rights.

"What we found is that many of these young people didn't actually know about their statutory entitlements – such as rest breaks, overtime



'What we found is that many young people didn't know their statutory entitlements – such as rest breaks, overtime etc – which flags up how important it is to get that sort of info out there'



Industrial Officer Organisers Ken Reilly and John O'Donnell at the Mandate stall in UCD Students' Union. Divisional Organiser Pearse McCarthy (left) at UCC

etc – which flags up how important it is to get that sort of information out there.

"Of course, we engaged with them about the importance of being in a trade union. We would say 'OK, these are your statutory rights, but our job is to build on these rights'.

"We emphasised that in the majority of employments where Mandate organises and is present, the terms and conditions for workers are far superior to these statutory entitlements."

John said the students were "very receptive" to their message.

"A lot of them work part-time at the weekends to try to make ends meet while they're in college full-time on the rest of the week.

"I found it somewhat troubling that a lot of international students were less aware of their rights than their Irish-born counterparts, and makes me question if their lack of awareness is being exploited by employers" he added.



Mandate seeking to engage with HR at iconic Galway deli

IT'S hoped there will be better times ahead for staff at the well-known McCambridge's deli and fine foods store in Galway after a period of upheaval in the business.

The store was sold by the McCambridge family in September 2022 after nearly a century of trading in Shop Street.

The sale was a share transfer from Furbo Sandfield Ltd (trading

as McCambridge's of Galway) to Cedarglade Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of Musgrave Ltd). However, as it was a share transfer, the provisions of the EC's Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings Regulations 2003 (TUPE), did not apply. But when Musgrave Ltd took ownership of Furbo Sandfield in November 2022, those TUPE

regulations did start to apply.

Divisional Organiser John Carty told *Shopfloor*: "As the dust has now settled over the issue of the original share transfer, meaning no change of employer, and the subsequent Musgrave Ltd takeover – which was a change of employer – with its TUPE implications, Mandate wants to engage with the new HR manager to seek a long

overdue pay increase."

He added: "It's absolutely vital that those staff at McCambridge's who are not currently members of Mandate join with colleagues who are. Having a strong union presence strengthens our hand around the negotiation table which benefits everyone. Working together we can secure better pay and terms and conditions."

Assertiveness At Work

Course Content: This one-day training course is designed to aid attendees in standing up for their rights, without being inappropriately aggressive. It is designed to help participants to express their thoughts, feelings, wishes and needs in a courteous, tactful and appropriate manner. 'Assertiveness' is encouraged as the most appropriate route to take in most situations, as it far exceeds passive or aggressive behaviour in terms of enhancing the prospects of attaining one's goals and the maintenance of ongoing cordial and productive relationships. In one's capacity as a Mandate representative or employee, it is a basic

requirement that you express relevant needs and desires in an appropriate manner. So, this course is designed to enable attendees to interact with others in an open, transparent, and appropriate manner, without doing damage to or infringing on the rights of others.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of this training course participants will know how to:

- Make an appropriate and positive impact when communicating with others.
- Use the right style of behaviour to help (rather than hinder) you in the attainment of your goals and aspirations,

thus achieving your outcomes in a positive manner.

- Distinguish between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.
- How to manage your emotions, remain calm and reduce stress during potentially conflictual situations,
- How to think and conduct yourself assertively.'



For more info, contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

Usdaw survey reveals 42% of UK retail staff faced threats in past 12 months



Checkout confrontation: detail from poster produced by Australian retail workers union SDA highlighting the issue of customers' bad behaviour and its impact on staff

A NEW survey from UK retail workers' union Usdaw has found that 42% of respondents had been threatened by a customer or customers in the past 12 months.

And these shock results will come as no surprise to Mandate members who have to deal with similar behaviour here on a daily basis.

The survey, released as part of the union's Respect for Shopworkers Week held each year in mid-November, also found that:

- 65% have experienced verbal abuse, and
- 5% were assaulted.

Some 60% of these incidents were triggered by shoplifting and two-thirds of those were linked to addiction.

Commenting on the survey results, Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It is shocking that two-thirds of our members working in retail are suffering abuse from customers, with far too many experiencing threats and violence.

"Six in 10 of these incidents were

THESE are some of the comments shopworkers shared when responding to Usdaw's survey:

● "Man spat on me when I confronted him for trying to steal coffee from us. Get drunk people who try to steal, swearing at myself and other colleagues."

● "Regular shoplifter threatened me and another staff member, said not to try anything because he had a knife."

● "Shoplifter went to hit me and another said they were going to cut my throat. Had a band of

shoplifters coming in being aggressive, rude and threatening"

● "Abuse from youths on a daily basis - threats and violence from shoplifters under the influence of drink and drugs."

● "Challenged a thief and was pushed and swung at. A shoplifter punched the window next to me and said it would be my face next time."

● "Involved in an armed robbery and attacked with a machete. Had items of stock thrown at me by customers."

triggered by theft from shops, which is clearly the result of a 25% increase in police-recorded shoplifting."

Above all, Lillis, originally from Co Antrim, claimed the survey showed that shoplifting "is not a victimless crime".

He said: "Theft from shops has long been a major flashpoint for violence and abuse against shopworkers. Having to deal with repeated and persistent shoplifters can cause issues beyond the theft itself like anxiety, fear and in some cases physical harm



Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis

to retail workers.

"Our members are reporting that they are often faced with hardened career criminals in their stores and much of the abuse they suffer is from those who are stealing goods to sell on, often to fund an addiction."

Helen Dickinson, who heads up the employers' group British Retail Consortium, said the Usdaw survey flagged up the "shameful levels of abuse" directed at retail workers.

Calling on the UK government to protect

shopworkers, she said: "We need a new statutory offence of assaulting, threatening, or abusing a retail worker. This would act as a deterrent and provide a clear message that Government will not tolerate this behaviour."

Mandate Divisional Organiser Jim Fuery, calling for similar action from legislators in Ireland, said the survey results "sadly do not come as a surprise to Mandate officials".

Assaults

He told *Shopfloor*: "Our members have long been running the gauntlet of verbal abuse, threats and assaults. Our members have faced aggressors with hammers, knives and, indeed, guns on occasion.

"The lack of security in many stores leaves our members vulnerable to such abuse and assaults when at work.

"Mandate believes that specific legislation should be introduced making it an offence to abuse, mistreat or assault retail workers."

BALLOT

2-yr deal brings 'certainty and stability'

A PROPOSED pay agreement put to Mandate and SIPTU members at Calor Gas has been accepted by a large majority of those balloted.

Mandate Divisional Organiser Michael Meegan expressed some hope that the deal will bring "a level of certainty and stability to both staff and the company".

He told *Shopfloor*: "It was a hard fought proposal that the members welcomed and will afford them a substantial pay increase as well as extra holidays in the form of service days."

The two-year deal – worth 8% over two years – comes after an earlier set of pay proposals was rejected by workers at Ireland's leading gas supplier.

According to Michael, it followed a number of "long and detailed" meetings between management and both unions. After that rejection, a joint



referral was made to the WRC for conciliation, followed by a series of conciliation meetings.

The new deal, which was brokered out of those discussions, comes in two phases – a 4% pay rise in basic pay will apply to all staff members from 1st February 2023 (with all back pay and monies processed by the end of the year), and a further 4% pay increase from 1st February 2024.

The agreement will expire on 31st January 2025.

On top of the increases to basic pay, staff at Calor Gas, employed on or before 1st January 2023, will also been given a tax-free €1,000 voucher in December 2023 through the Small Benefits Exemption scheme, while those employed on or before 1st July 2023 will pocket a €500 voucher.

In December 2024, staff will receive a further set of vouchers to the same amount and under the same conditions. No alternative Christmas payments will be made to staff in those years.

Added to that, staff can expect a boost to their annual holiday entitlement with some receiving an extra two days and other one day. The company also agreed to an additional additional one-off annual leave day to be taken by the end of 2024.

DAA

New round of pay negotiations set to start early in New Year

A NEW round of pay negotiations on behalf of Mandate members employed by DAA will begin again early in 2024.

In September, members at both Cork and Dublin airports unanimously accepted an offer tabled by DAA on a restructuring of the agreed Performance Development Reviews system jointly negotiated by Pearse McCarthy of the Southern Division, Jim Fuery of the Dublin North Division and the House Committees which will come into effect from January 1st, 2024.

The offer saw pay increases ranging from 3.42% to 7.98%.

A new starter rate of €14.67

was also agreed with first anniversary increases of €1.17.

Members who meet the agreed performance criteria will receive a guaranteed 65c per hour increase from Year 3 and a further 65c for each year up to and including the final review year, Year 7.

Divisional Organiser Jim Fuery told *Shopfloor*: "This new agreement brings certainty to our members regarding agreed increases each year following a successful review and also introduces a new starter and anniversary rates which gives the opportunity of a rate of €15.84 per hour after one year's service."

'Powerful nations doing nothing' to stop Gaza horror

MANDATE President Denise Curran has urged the Irish government to do all in its power and use its influence both within the EU and across the world to bring about a ceasefire in Gaza and justice for the Palestinian people.

She made the call "as a shop worker and a mother" to a packed Gaza-Palestine solidarity event at the Glasshouse Hotel in Sligo on 16th November. Organised by the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, attendees also heard contributions from Sinn Fein and PBP representatives as well as Dr Salem Gharbia who spoke on behalf of the local Palestinian community.

Denise said "all the world" was seeing what was happening in Gaza and yet the "powerful nations" were "doing nothing to stop it".

She pointed out that the 11,000 Gazan civilians who had lost their lives [up to that point] were equivalent to "more than half the population of Sligo being murdered in a month".

Underlining the support of the Irish trade union movement for the people of Gaza and Palestine, she continued: "The Palestinian people have asked us to support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Campaign. They have asked us to apply economic pressure on the Israeli government by simply choosing not to purchase goods from Israel."

She continued: "During times like this it is easy to feel helpless, and powerless. But there are millions of us who through our small individual actions can make a massive difference. Let's shop with our conscience and only support companies who do not support apartheid, war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing. Free Palestine!"



A massive crowd assembles close to the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin on 18th November to protest at the ongoing onslaught by Israeli forces on Gaza. Mandate had called in advance on all its members to support the demonstration

Gazan native Dr Gharbia told the capacity audience it was "hard to put into words what life is like now" in his homeland. "All communication is lost, no access to food or water, and all the hospitals are out of service.

"The madness intensifies as there is no safe place amidst the widespread devastation, nothing is spared, mosques, churches, hospitals, schools and the UN shelters – nowhere is safe.

"Us being here in this meeting is important, for we stand with humanity and justice and we join with people worldwide in calling for the ending of the Israeli attacks on Gaza."



Mandate President Denise Curran (third from left) with other speakers at the Gaza-Palestine solidarity event held in Sligo on 16th November. From left: Cllr Arthur Gibbons, Cllr Declan Bree, Dr Salem Gharbia and Brian O'Boyle

NUJ condemns unprecedented death-toll of journalists in Gaza

THE National Union of Journalists (NUJ) has reiterated its horror at the mounting and unprecedented death toll of journalists in the Israel-Palestine conflict, with the number of journalists killed in Gaza, Israel and Lebanon (as of 6th December) standing at 67.

The vast majority of casualties are Palestinian journalists who continue to work round the clock in the face of ongoing Israeli air strikes, reporting the impact of the conflict.

At a time when access to information and news is vital, the ability of journalists to report safely is more important than ever yet Israeli military commanders have refused to take explicit steps to protect journalists covering the war in Gaza, action that is in breach of their obligations under international law.

The NUJ has pressed the International Criminal Court to expedite its investigation. Formal complaints were lodged in April and September 2022,

including dossiers of evidence that demonstrate systematic targeted attacks of journalists in Palestine by Israeli forces. NUJ General Secretary Michelle Stanistreet said: "As of this week, the death toll of journalists over the past two months now stands higher than the total media casualties during 20 years of conflict in Vietnam. Gaza's journalists remain the only ones providing coverage of what is happening in their neighbourhoods, a responsibility for which they pay a terrible price."

She continued: "The acts of terror carried out by Hamas on 7th October were despicable. The reports of targeted sexual violence from witnesses and women survivors are horrific. The collective punishment and bombardment of Palestinian civilians is barbaric. All hostages should be immediately released with a mutual cessation of violence and a permanent ceasefire declared."



NUJ members mourn slain journalists killed in conflict zones worldwide at a vigil in Dublin in November 2023

Mandate's new Divisional Organiser with sights set on securing wins for workers...

Eoin Coates, Mandate's new Divisional Organiser in the North and West Division, wants to get back to what he likes to do best, representing members, "getting his hands dirty", and securing wins for working people.

In doing this, he's stepping into the role formerly held by Ciaran Campbell and Eoin Griffin, who moved to pastures new late last year.

Eoin – aged 31 but who jokes that he's "going on 45" – comes with an international pedigree as a trade unionist. He was until late October running the Aviation Department at the European Transport Workers Federation in Brussels which represents over 5 million members.

"The International stuff is very nice," he told *Shopfloor*, "but even when I was there, I always told people, 'you have to stay in touch with the needs of your members while you're here' in order to represent members. I'm looking forward to getting back to being on the ground."

The decision to move back home was sealed by a new arrival in the family.

"We had a baby 10 months ago. I was hemming and hawing about going back to Ireland but the baby was the kick in the arse I needed!"

Before Brussels, the Mullingar man worked for the International Transport Federation in London for a couple of years.

Further back, Eoin started off his working life as cabin crew in Ryanair in 2011 before shifting to Aer Lingus about a year later.

Negotiator

"I started getting involved in the union as a shop steward for Aer Lingus cabin crew initially with IMPACT, covering both Dublin and Shannon Airports. I was a negotiator and later assistant secretary on the Cabin Crew Committee."

While flying with Aer Lingus, he kept his feet firmly on the ground by doing a part-time Masters degree at the Irish Centre of Human Rights in the University of Galway (then NUIG).

"I was studying international humanitarian law and peace operations," he said. "I did a lot of work on the 'Jasmine Revolution' in Tunisia, and the impact the labour movement had on it, and – more broadly – about labour's impact in peace building."

Eoin is well used to coping with challenging situations at work. Taking up his new position in Brussels he had to deal with the devastating impact Covid was having on the aviation industry.

"By the time I took over the role, all aviation had effectively stopped, so I think we had around 100,000 members – airport workers, cabin crew, pilots, air traffic controllers – out of work across Europe. It was fairly chaotic. Members in the national unions in their own countries



Eoin Coates, Mandate's new Divisional Organiser in the North and West, cut his teeth as an IMPACT negotiator at Aer Lingus

mitigated as many of the job losses as possible. It was a busy time – but difficult nonetheless. It was one of those occasions when you have to learn fast."

Eoin accepts that retail sector has also faced challenges post-Covid such as increasing automation.

"In my own previous sector you had the use of self-service check-ins at airports – it's the same idea as self-service checkouts in shops. But whatever they try to bring in, it's up to us to deliver the best place to work and good jobs for our members.

"The challenge is what they'll try and do is simply to replace workers with machines, but it cannot be done. You can reduce the workload but you can't say people are done, machines are in."

Straightforward

His approach to the job at hand is straightforward.

"I've always believed that we're here to give the workers a share of the profits. If the employer says they're going to make more profits – that's great but we're also going to increase the share [of those profits] to our members. It's as simple as that."

But Eoin is also aware that there's work to be done in the North and West, particularly with recruiting new members into the union.

He said: "There's a big job to do on the membership front and a lot of work to do with the Local Councils. I also hoping we can launch a campaign centred on investment in the region over the next few months and before next year's BDC."

Eoin added: "All in all, I'm just looking forward to getting my hands dirty and getting to know people and starting to achieve things in a region that has a lot of potential."

'I'm looking forward to getting my hands dirty, getting to know people and starting to achieve things in a region that has a lot of potential'

Pictures: ITF, DAA



BALBRIGGAN



HEADFORD RD, GALWAY

DotCom protests

PROTESTS were held outside Tesco stores across Ireland during the summer in support of DotCom pickers and drivers.

DotCom departments are where staff pick online orders from the shop floor and deliver them to customers.

Tesco management sought to impose changes to rosters which it has been estimated could cost DotCom pickers and drivers between €3,000 and €4,000 a year. A 12,000-name people petition calling on Tesco bosses to reverse the move was handed into the retailer's Gresham House HQ in Dún Laoghaire on 11th May.



CABRA

CLEARWATER



DUNDALK

Workplace Union Representative Training

This 2-day blended learning Workplace Representative Training Course is for Workplace Reps. The course aims to provide information, skills & knowledge to assist them in their role.

Course Content:

- The role of the Workplace Representative
- Terms and Conditions of employment
- Employment Law
- Dealing with workplace Issues
- Workplace organising
- Communication - critical thinking and decision making
- Organising and chairing meetings
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Political and Social Studies
- Supporting union campaigns & collective action
- Agreeing actions to build a stronger union in the workplace
- Recruiting members and building a strong union in the workplace



For more info, contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training & Learning Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

Training & Development

This Training & Development course is designed to enable learners attain the skills, knowledge and confidence to organise and deliver training and development in a range of organisational contexts.

Course Content:

- Learners should be able to recognise best practice in adult learning and development.
- Appraise different learning styles
- Conduct training needs analysis
- Design training to meet identified needs
- Prepare training programmes
- Develop lesson plans
- Identify learning outcomes and put in place relevant methods to access learning
- Develop and use a range of teaching materials
- Evaluate training and development interventions.



For more info, contact your Mandate Official or Mandate Training & Learning Centre on 01-8369699 or email Amanda Blake at ablake@mandate.ie

Free GP visits for all children aged 6 and 7

IT DOESN'T matter how much you earn or how much money is coming into your household.

The only requirement is that your child is aged under 8 and living in Ireland.

If your child is aged under 6 and already has an Under 6s GP Visit Card, it will automatically be extended. You do not need to reapply. They will have free GP care up to their 8th birthday

If your child has a medical card you do not need to apply. Your child can already visit their GP free of charge.

What the Under 8s GP Visit Card covers

The Under 8s GP Visit Card covers your child for:

- free visits to their doctor
- free out of hours urgent care
- free GP home visits
- free assessments at age 2 and 5
- care for children with asthma
- Medication costs are not covered.

Check if your GP is taking part

Before applying, you must first check if your GP is taking part in the scheme.

The list of GPs providing under 8s GP Visit Card services is available at this link: <https://bit.ly/41g0cPM>

If your GP is not taking part in the scheme or can't take any more patients, you will need to pick another GP from the list.

How to apply

To make an application you will need:

- Your PPS number
- Child's PPS number
- GP's name
- You can make an online application at or

You can apply by post. Application forms can be downloaded at this link: <https://bit.ly/41f6cZI> or phone **0818 22 44 78** to order an application form in the post.

Next steps

After receiving your application, the HSE will email your child's details to your GP. If your GP is not accepting registrations electronically, you will receive your child's

registration details. Bring it to your GP to and you post it back to the HSE.

Once this process is complete, your GP will get the details and you will get your child's card within a few days.

Further Information

If you need help with your application you can contact the GP Visit Card service.

National Medical Card Unit – GP visit cards
PO Box 11745
Dublin 11

Phone: **0818 22 44 78** or LoCall **01 864 7100**

Email: clientregistration@hse.ie



OBITUARY

Former IDATU President Doreen O'Keeffe 'missed by all who knew her'

FORMER IDATU President Doreen O'Keeffe, who played a key role in the negotiations that led to the formation of Mandate in 1994, passed away, aged 83, during the summer.

Doreen, who died on 18th August, was a proud trade union activist who worked at the M&S Mary Street store in Dublin.

Elected president of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Union

(IDATU) in 1992, she was the first woman elected to that role in 70 years, following Cissy Cahalan who was president from 1922 to 1924.

Doreen was part of the negotiating committee for the IDATU when it merged with the Irish National Union of Vintners', Grocers' and Allied Trades Assistants (INUVGATA) to form Mandate.

A Mandate spokesperson said: "We

recognise and honour Doreen's invaluable contribution to the lives of retail workers throughout Ireland as a trade union activist and she will be missed by all who knew her."

Merger

In her address to members in December 1993 just before the merger of IDATU and INUVGATA was completed, Doreen said: "The worldwide

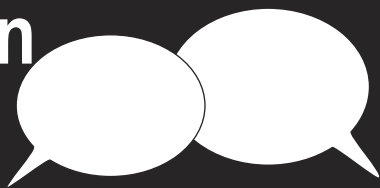
economic recession has brought lower living standards, less job security and increasing casualisation in employment. There are no shortages of employers who will cynically exploit these conditions for a quick buck.

"But together we have coped as well as any and protected our members in a very hostile environment. We will work with good em-

ployers to maintain and increase permanent jobs with better pay and conditions, while campaigning to get the Government to provide minimum legal standards for everyone in employment.

"Our union is here to improve and defend the living standards of all members. We are here to help you and united we shall move forward with confidence."

Negotiation Skills



This one-day workshop in Negotiation Skills is for Workplace Representatives who wish to improve their knowledge of conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

Course Content:

- The 'unwritten rules' or 'conventions' associated with the bargaining / negotiating process.
- The key criteria for successful negotiations.
- Getting the stages of negotiation right: preparing, opening, bargaining and closing.
- Effective preparation and planning for successful negotiations.
- The skillset or attributes of an effective negotiator.

- The key roles in the negotiation Team.
- Identifying and deploying the right bargaining strategies and tactics.
- Negotiating styles and strategies.
- Adopting a collaborative approach to ensure trust, rapport and long-term gains for both parties.
- How to distinguish win: win from win: lose and lose: lose negotiation outcomes.

Health & Safety

This course for Health & Safety Reps will help the participant to promote and maintain Safety and Health in the workplace. The course outlines the roles and functions of a Health & Safety Rep.

Course Content:

- Safety and health legal system
- Role of the safety representative and safety committee members in the safety consultation
- Communication skills for the safety representative and safety committee
- Hazard identification & carrying out risk assessments
- Interpreting & implementing the safety statement
- Carrying out safety and health inspections
- Sources of safety and health information
- Risk control and safety and health management at work

Learning outcomes:

- To understand the concept of workplace Health and Safety.
- To be familiar with core legislation in the area of Safety, Health and Welfare
- Understand and gain basic competence in hazard identification and risk assessment
- Recognise the factors influencing workplace health, safety and welfare
- Apply Health & Safety principles and procedures in the workplace
- Promote a safety culture in the workplace.

Make your voice heard

How to join Mandate:

Joining Mandate is easy and can be done in two ways:

- Go to www.joinmandate.ie and complete the online form. Payments will be made via your debit card and can be weekly or monthly.

- Complete the physical application form which you can request to have posted to your address by scanning the QR code to the right of this page and send it back via free post to our office. Payments will be made via direct debit and will be monthly.

Getting Involved in the union:

Being an active Union member helps to strengthen your union and ensure that workers' voices are heard. Here are some ways that you can get involved:

- **COLLECTIVE ACTIONS:** When issues arise in your store talk to other workers and try to gather support for the grievance. The more people involved, the stronger the case can be. Consider organising a meeting, survey or a petition to demonstrate the level of concern among employees. Find out more about grievances and complaints in Dunnes by clicking <https://tinyurl.com/DunnesGrievanceComplaint>.

- **ATTEND UNION MEETINGS:** Mandate holds regular meetings where members can discuss issues affecting their workplace and the union. Attending a meeting is a great way to meet other members and get involved in the unions activities.

- **JOIN COMMITTEES OR LOCAL COUNCILS:** Mandate have committees that focus on specific areas such as the Youth Committee campaigning on issues affecting young people, Dunnes National committee campaigning on issues affecting Dunnes workers etc., and local Union councils that focus on issues in your area. Joining a committee or local Union council can help you to develop your skills and knowledge and make a difference in your workplace.

- **TAKE TRAINING COURSES:** Mandate offers a range of training courses to its members, from basic employment law to advanced leadership skills. Taking a course can help you take a leading role in the union and become a more effective advocate for workers' rights.

- **CAMPAIGN FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS:** Mandate campaigns for better pay, improved working conditions, and stronger job security for its members. Getting involved in a campaign is a great way to make a difference in your workplace and contribute to the wider labour movement.

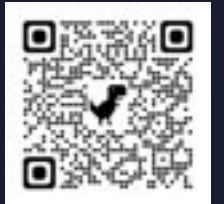
A campaigning union:

Mandate's successful campaigning in Dunnes has shown the importance of a strong union in securing better pay and working conditions for workers. However, every non-member in the company weakens our collective voice and our ability to improve working conditions further.

It is for this reason we actively engaging with non-members to encourage them to consider joining the union, in order to empower them to stand up for their rights and make a positive difference in their workplace.


If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact us at dunnesworkers@mandate.ie.


Scan in this QR code, type in your details and we'll get back to you...



DECENCY FOR DUNNES WORKERS

www.dunnesworkers.com

 /DecencyForDunnesWorkers

 @DunnesWorkers

For more information email us at: dunnesworkers@mandate.ie