

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Since substantial allegations of sexual misconduct by film mogul Harvey Weinstein first hit 'The New York Times' headlines last October, more and more claims of sexual harassment have been gathering momentum in Hollywood.

The curtains have now been raised for the whole world to see, and it's a stark reminder that sexual predators in every sector of industry (not just the world of cinema and theatre) have used both their power and influence over those whom they have abused for far too long.

So, it will be interesting to see if the proposed amendment by ICTU to existing employment legislation here in Ireland will be what its general secretary Patricia King has termed the "potential game changer and a major step forward for those suffering such abuse on workplace sexual harassment" on this side of the Atlantic.

ICTU's aim is to ensure stronger protection for such people and to help remove the barriers to reporting such abuse. Last November, the trade union issued proposals to the Minister for Employment Affairs Regina Doherty that sexual harassment reports should be elevated to the status of 'protected disclosures' – as opposed to 'workplace grievances'.

The proposals to amend current employment legislation by Congress also followed its publication of 'Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015: A Guide for Trade Unions', authored by former Chair of the Labour Court, Kevin Duffy, BL. This now provides a comprehensive guide to taking employment rights cases in the Republic of Ireland, in light of the 2015 Workplace Relations Act.

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5 NEWS UPDATE

March sees the publication of new ISO 45001 standard for occupational health and safety management systems * FM Ireland returns to Dublin's RDS on 6-7 March * International Congress on Occupational Health (ICOH 2018) takes place on 29 April 4-May at the Convention Centre * Gardai want tougher sentences for attacks on officers * €700m annual cost to Exchequer in lost working days due to arthritis and MSD.



11 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Facilities Management (FM) Ireland returns to Dublin's RDS on 6 & 7 March, and this year the free-to-attend exhibition and conference will celebrate its 10th anniversary.



12 IOSH NEWS

Ensuring that the right people are in place to make the right decisions on fire safety in high-rise or complex buildings is vital to prevent a repeat of tragedies such as Grenfell Tower fire, according to the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).



14 SPECIAL REPORT

The latest 'Irish Workplace Behaviour Study' has produced a more accurate estimate of ill-treatment in the workplace by using a behavioural checklist methodology. The study, which was funded by IOSH, involved researchers from NUI Galway, the University of Limerick, Plymouth University and the Health Promotion Research Centre.



18 WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has proposed that an amendment to existing employment legislation will ensure stronger protection for people suffering workplace sexual harassment and to help remove the barriers to the reporting of such abuse.



20 FARM SAFETY

Teagasc and the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) have signed a 'Joint Initiative Agreement' to promote farmer safety and health for the next three years. The initiative aims to provide safety and health research, training and advisory support to farmers.



22 NISO NEWS

NISO is holding a number of regional workshops to provide feedback on entries submitted for last year's All-Ireland Occupational Safety Awards, to give pointers on completing submissions for 2018, and will also offer advice to first-time entrants to this year's scheme.



25 LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Longford County Council became the first public sector body to win the Silver Award at NISO 26th Annual Occupational Safety Awards in 2017, and the win for Longford represents a major breakthrough for local government.

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26 OPERATION ENABLE

A multi-agency initiative, which has been targeting the unauthorised use of disabled parking bays, has seen over 400 fixed charge notices issued for parking offences since its rollout in February 2017 in Dublin. It's been so successful that other towns and cities such as Cork, Galway, Limerick and Tralee have replicated the scheme with similar results.



31 EURO NEWS

New estimates of the cost of poor occupational safety and health (OSH) have revealed that worldwide work-related injury and illness result in the loss of 3.9 % of GDP, at an annual cost of roughly €2,680 billion. EU-OSHA Director Dr Christa Sedlatschek said the new estimates have showed that the economic case for OSH has never been stronger.



32 UK NEWS

Sixth consecutive Gold Medal at RoSPA Awards 2017 for packaging firm * Body cameras should be worn by refuse collectors for their own protection, claims waste management agency * Mental health services cutbacks leave staff vulnerable to patient violence * Sharp rise in work-related stress compensation cases among teaching staff in Scotland.



35 DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE

Following a commitment by the Canadian Federal Government to legalise recreational marijuana in July, many workplaces are concerned about the implications this change may have on occupational health and safety.



38 INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Employers in Western Australia are increasingly sitting in on employee medicals * Nairobi construction boom blamed for high accident and fatality rate among young men in Kenyan capital * Seven in ten nurses in Japan feel exhausted, according to Japan Federation of Medical Workers' Unions * Singapore aims to reduce workplace fatalities to less than one death per 100,000 workers in 10 years' time.



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