



TUF NEWS

News from the Trade Union Federation which organises members of SIPTU, Connect and BATU in the construction industry

February 2022

NEW CONSTRUCTION SEO WILL SEE WAGE RISES

A new Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for the construction industry has been agreed between representatives of employers and workers which will come into force in February 2022.

The SEO includes two sets of pay rises for all grades of construction workers. The initial round of increases will come into force on 1st February 2022, with a second round of improvements in pay in February 2023.

TUF and SIPTU Sector Organiser, John Regan, said: "The SEO structure is valuable not just for workers but for the industry in general as it takes wages out of competition in the tendering system and prevents rogue employers from undercutting the majority of decent employers."

"The SEO also provides a stable structure by which pay can be determined collectively, thus improving the terms for all workers across the entire industry", said TUF Organiser and Connect Assistant General Secretary, Brian Nolan. He added: "The value of this, in an industry where work is insecure and on a project to project basis, cannot be underestimated."

TUF Organiser and BATU General Secretary, Brendan O'Sullivan, said: "TUF representatives will be to the forefront in ensuring that construction and related workers get the full benefit of these new SEO terms."



TUF officials and activists take part in a protest highlighting non-compliance with construction industry agreements at the ABM site in Ard an Greine, county Wicklow, in July 2021. Photo by: Aofje Ní Shuilleabháin

PAY RATES

The following basic hourly rates of pay will apply in the sector from 1st February 2022 to 31st January 2023.

Craftsperson €20.52 per hour

Category A Worker €19.91
Category B Worker €18.47

Apprentice Year 1 - 33.33% of Craft rate

Year 2 - 50% of Craft Rate
Year 3 - 75% of Craft Rate
Year 4 - 90% of Craft Rate

An hourly rate of pay of €14.93 will apply for two years after entrance to the Sector to all New Entrant Operative Workers who are over the age of 18 years and entering the sector for the first time.

The following basic hourly rates of pay will apply in the sector from 1st February 2023.

Craftsperson €21.09 per hour

Category A Worker €20.47
Category B Worker €18.99

Apprentice Year 1 - 33.33% of Craft rate

Year 2 - 50% of Craft Rate
Year 3 - 75% of Craft Rate
Year 4 - 90% of Craft Rate

An hourly rate of pay of €15.35 will apply for two years after entrance to the Sector to all New Entrant Operative Workers who are over the age of 18 years and entering the sector for the first time.

FOCUS ON APPRENTICES

THE FUTURE IS SAFE IN THEIR HANDS

Apprentices are crucial to the future of the construction trades in Ireland and our Unions. Their involvement should be encouraged within our Unions at all levels and they should be fully aware of all entitlements due to them as apprentices. TUF News talked to some apprentices about their career choice.

APPRENTICE ELECTRICIAN REBEKAH DUNNE

I knew I wanted to be an electrician when I finished school in 2008. I found it very difficult to get an apprenticeship at that time as it was the start of the recession. I finally started my electrical apprenticeship in 2016. My apprenticeship allowed me to explore different paths and to become involved in various different events.



Apprentice electrician
Rebekah Dunne

Working with the team in the mechanical and electrical engineering company, Designer Group, I took part in designing and building a model that was an entry in the Generation Apprenticeship 2020 competition. Building this electrical and mechanical model, which was in the shape of a giant A, allowed us to use our creativity and ability to work as a team. During this process I learned new skills.

During my college phases in Technological University Dublin, I became involved in several projects such as ESTeEM (equality in science and technology by engaged educational mentoring) and Women Building the Future. In the latter project, we engaged with women in various stages

of their apprenticeship and met with women from prominent companies who spoke to us about their careers. I was honoured to be the Youth Delegate for Connect Trade Union at the Global Power Conference in Washington during my apprenticeship. These opportunities are a testament to my choice to pursue my trade which has opened so many doors for me.

APPRENTICE BRICKLAYERS GARY KETT AND JACK GREHAN

In 2021, Walls Construction apprentice bricklayers and BATU members, Gary Kett and Jack Grehan, received awards for achieving top place in their Phase 2 modules at Waterford and Limerick Training Centres.



Bricklaying apprentices Jack Grehan and Gary Kett working on a brick arch at the Bolton Street College Training Centre in Dublin.

Gary and Jack are employed directly by Walls Construction and their performance was confirmation of the value of direct PAYE employment as well as a credit to the BATU bricklayers who are passing on their skills to the next generation.

TUF News met the two apprentices in Bolton Street College in Dublin where they are continuing their

training. They explained intensive nature of their apprenticeships which involve seven phases of instruction over four years both onsite and in training centres. At all stages assessment of the apprentices' progress are overseen by their employers and trainers.

"It's hard work but you're constantly learning so I really enjoy it", said Jack. "You're learning a trade that you can do anywhere in the world and make a good living from."

Gary said that the involvement of his Union was crucial to not only the proper running of his workplace but also the maintenance of the trade. He said: "You know when people are not getting the proper training onsite. There are some sub-contractors who only look upon apprentices as cheap labour and are not ensuring they are doing the on the job learning which is crucial to their apprenticeship."

The apprentices said that the lack of emphasis in some non-union workplaces on learning the skills crucial to their trade was obvious when groups of apprentices are brought together for phases of their education in training centres. Jack said: "When I was on Phase 2 it was obvious that some people did not know how to use their trowel properly. This is

because they aren't getting the proper opportunity to learn from the bricklayers they are working with onsite."

He added: "It's crucial for the future of our industry that people join the Union."

Gary said: "On site you don't get to take your time. When we are learning in a training centre we take our time and get good practice but if you come in without the onsite practice you won't be able to do it. You get a book which has to ticked off to cover your time working onsite but it really needs to be checked more by Solas."

Jack said that once qualified his trade will provide him with great opportunities. We mostly do bricks but we are learning blocks as well so I'll be able to do everything, walls, arches, all types of work. Even though you can see that there is different styles of work in different countries it's still the same basic skills. You can take your skills anywhere."

"It's a good job being a bricklayer", Gary said. "It also opens up future opportunities. After we qualify we could even go back to college again and become a site manager or even a lecturer."



TUF officials and activists take part in a 'Red Card' protest against non-compliance with construction industry agreements at the Cunningham Contractors site in Ballyfermot, Dublin, in March 2020, days before the implementation of pandemic restrictions. *Photo by: Aoife Ní Shúilleabháin*

CORK CONSTRUCTION WORKER SECURES €2200 PAY OUT FOR SEO NON-COMPLIANCE

A Cork based construction worker secured a decision at the Workplace Relations Commission that he must be paid €2200 by his employer for its failure to include him in the Construction Workers Pension Scheme (CWPS).

Enrolment of workers by their employer in the CWPS is a requirement of the Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for the construction industry.



SIPTU Organiser
Pearse McCarthy

SIPTU Organiser, Pearse McCarthy, said: "I first made contact with the subcontractor involved in this case in late 2019 concerning SEO compliance in relation to rates of pay. Eventually union representatives made contact with the main contractor who was very helpful in providing information and assistance to resolve outstanding matters.

"At this time the sub-contractor confirmed that it would now comply with the SEO rates of pay and pay all monies owed retrospectively. We also had conversations to explain that the responsibility lies with the employer with regard to all aspects of the SEO, including the registration for CWPS which includes pension contributions, death in service benefit and sick pay.

"A SIPTU member employed by this subcontractor contacted the union in the summer of 2021. He informed the union that no pension contributions had been made on his behalf by his employer. This precluded him from receiving sick pay while on sick leave.

"Following the failure of direct attempts to get the employer to meet its obligations the case was taken to the WRC which found in favour of our member."

Pearse added: "There are huge negatives for workers when they cannot access sick pay. This benefit through the CWPS is currently €44 per day. The sick pay benefits provided by the scheme are in addition to any sickness, illness or invalidity benefits payable by the State through the social insurance system.

"There are also huge negative consequences for families in the event of a worker's death in service. The death in service benefit is €100,000 when the scheme is complied with."

TRADE UNION FEDERATION CONTACTS



SIPTU

Construction Sector Office

Silvana Finn 01 8586409
Confidential Line: 01 8588210
John Regan Sector Organiser 087 6776807
Andrew Mc Guinness 087 6935703
Pearse Mc Carthy 087 0578139
Stephen Lewis 087 6576956
Henry O'Shea 087 0515080
Mary Mc Elligott 087 9239610
Rhonda Donaghey 087 2909709
Rory Hawkins 087 7804293

Liberty Hall, Eden Quay,
Dublin 1

For information email:
construction@siptu.ie



BATU

Head Office

01 8301911/
01 8301280
Brendan O'Sullivan 087 274 2894
Andy Smith 087 2518016
Carl Whelan 087 0662154

13 Blessington Street,
Dublin 7

For information email: union@batu.ie



CONNECT

Construction office

Anna Farrell 01 8719903
Brian Nolan 01 8747047 ext. 4/5
Thomas Faulkner 01 8747047 ext. 4/5

6 Gardiner Row,
Rotunda, Dublin 1,
D01 Y183

For information email:
construction@connectunion.ie

JOIN ONLINE

SIPTU

To join online go to:
www.siptu.ie
Confidential Line:
01 8588210

BATU

To join online go to:
www.batu.ie
Hotline:
01 8301911/01 8301280

CONNECT

To join online go to:
www.connectunion.ie/membership/
Hotline:
01 8719903