

Waterford Crystal pensions dispute is referred to LRC



Former Waterford Crystal employee Maria O'Grady, organiser of the Walk For Justice, pictured at Ashe Road where the walk will begin on Saturday, August 23rd.

THE dispute over Waterford Crystal pensions is to be referred to the Labour Relations Commission (LRC), meaning the issue may be resolved before it goes to court.

Trade union UNITE has accepted an invitation to go to the LRC in the hope that a settlement can be reached in the long running dispute.

In 2013, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that the Irish state was in breach of its obligations under the terms of the EU Insolvency Directive to ensure that employees receive sufficient accrued occupational pension entitlements.

The case is currently before the High Court and is listed for hearing in January in response to the ECJ decision.

UNITE says it will engage "fully and constructively" with the LRC process.

UNITE Secretary Jimmy Kelly said he expects engagement with the LRC to commence this week.

"It is over five years since the closure of Waterford Crystal and well over a year since the European Court of Justice ruled that the Irish state had failed to protect the workers' pension entitlements," he said.

“Since then, the case has been making its way through the Irish courts, with all the delays and uncertainties involved in the legal process. Several former Waterford Crystal workers have died during the past five years without receiving the pensions to which they were entitled. “UNITE will be engaging fully and constructively with the LRC process, and we are hopeful that it will result in a just settlement. If it does not, we will continue to progress the workers’ case before the courts.” Meanwhile, a Walk for Justice in support of former Waterford Crystal workers and their pension entitlements will take place in Waterford on Saturday August 23rd.

“The LRC development is good news but the walk will go ahead regardless,” said organiser Maria O’Grady.

“The issue is very personal, especially for the families of former workers who are now deceased.”

The walk will begin at the Ashe Road entrance to the former Waterford Crystal site in Kilbarry.

Torches will be lit and a minute’s silence will be held in remembrance of deceased workers.

The walk will proceed to John Roberts Square where those in attendance will hear from a number of speakers.