

Sex abuse claims 'on rise in Ireland since Weinstein allegations' - says top employment lawyer



Harvey Weinstein (Anthony Devlin/PA) ¹

Gordon Deegan

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- Email

A top employment lawyer has said that sexual harassment in the workplace is "endemic".

Richard Grogan was commenting after the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) made the highest award available - two years salary or €46,000 - to a woman who was sexually harassed while working for a car parts company.

The woman lost her job as a receptionist after refusing to have sex with the company owner at a Christmas party.

She was also subjected to a "vile act of sexual innuendo" on a company live web chat forum.

However, Mr Grogan said this case "is just the tip of the iceberg".

"We are talking about women being effectively physically assaulted, about inappropriate touching, and we are talking about not only requests, but demands for sexual favours."

The Dublin-based lawyer said some men in senior management positions viewed the sexual harassment of women in junior positions as "an acceptable perk of the job".

Mr Grogan said that he had seen "a significant increase" in the number of women coming to his firm in recent months to make sexual harassment claims.

<https://www.independent.ie/business/sex-abuse-claims-on-rise-in-ireland-since-weinstein-allegations-says-top-employment-lawyer-36747497.html>

He credited women speaking out against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein as the reason why more women were coming forward.

"Employment solicitors are seeing a significant increase in sexual harassment claims.

"It was always there and coming through the doors - it just seems to have increased significantly.

"I think the Harvey Weinstein revelations have empowered some women to speak out at what has been inappropriate behaviour over a considerable, long period of time.

"What comes across to me is that the majority of women who bring these cases are not looking for a cheque, they are looking for it to stop, for appropriate action to be taken against the perpetrator, and for them to have a safe working environment going forward."

Mr Grogan said sexual harassment cases "are now the norm rather than the exception" and that "claims are, generally speaking, being settled because they are so bad".

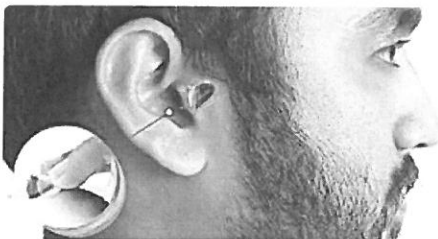
He said clients often present "clear tangible evidence" of what is going on - emails, texts or photos - to support their claims.

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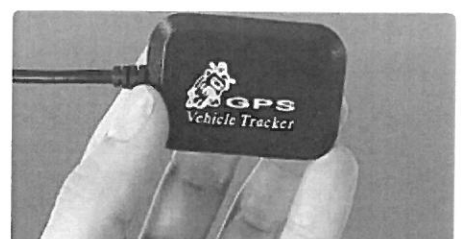
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