

ISME NEWS

ISME launch legal challenge for pension equality

ISME is raising funds for a legal challenge to force the creation of a fair system for private sector pension savers. By way of crowdfunding, ISME intends to raise €500,000, with the support of our Members, so far we have raised over €11,000. Our three objectives are:

1. Tax relief for private sector pension savers must be maintained at the current marginal rate of taxation
2. Private sector workers mustn't be discriminated against via the "income ceiling" on contributions
3. Many public sector pensioners enjoy pensions that would require a fund far in excess of the current €2m "standard fund threshold" (SFT) even though they do not have to fund their pension. Yet higher-earning private sector workers are financially penalised if they save more than €2m of their own money for their pension.

Find out more, please share and donate to the [challenge here](#)

International Trade Support from ISME

ISME offers cost savings, support and information to member businesses or associations that are involved in importing and exporting or have an international client base.

Saving money with our Affinity programmes - TransferMate offer no transfer fees on standard money transfers over €1,000 for your business and staff, email tmoylan@transfermate.com or log into the members area to sign up online. Get 30% discounted exchange rates and more with Clear Currency by emailing info@cleartreasury.co.uk. View all ADVANTAGE Affinity programmes [here](#).

If your business has been impacted by Brexit, please visit [ISME's Brexit portal](#) with a section on [Importing & Exporting](#). Find out about the [grants & loans](#) available, access [resources](#) and watch [Brexit Q&A webinars](#) with customs, legal and business experts.

Visit [Doing Business Abroad](#), our online resource can be used to help you develop new market opportunities. Each page contains key information on the chosen country including: embassy information, Enterprise Ireland offices, VAT & taxes, travel links and much more.

Energy Management workshops

SEAI are offering a free 'Introduction to Energy Management' course for SMEs. This is an online workshop designed to help you understand how much your business is spending on energy and what energy-saving measures you could implement to reduce consumption and cut your bills. The course consists of 2 one-hour sessions, with an optional follow-up phone call from an energy advisor.

Find out more [here](#) or email business@seai.ie if you are interested in attending an online Energy Management workshop.

ISME NEWS

HSA launches Guidance on Working from Home for Employers and Employees

The Health and Safety Authority has published *Guidance on Working from Home for Employers and Employees*. The Guidance will enable employers and employees to understand their responsibilities when planning agreed ongoing remote working arrangements, under safety, health and welfare law. This will become more important as we emerge from COVID-19 and the economy opens up again in the coming months.

Remote working as an agreed arrangement between employer and employee, needs to be planned for, in order to work well for both. There are responsibilities under safety, health and welfare law for both parties and employers owe the same duty of care towards employees working remotely as they do to those who are based at the office / business location. It is important to distinguish between working from home on a temporary basis, as a necessity during the pandemic, and the requirement for a more planned approach for those seeking to implement and agree on-going remote working or blended working arrangements.

The Guidance sits within a new 'Remote Working' area of the HSA website and gives advice and information on a range of connected topics such as ergonomics, remote working stress and frequently asked questions for those working remotely on a temporary basis during COVID-19.

The Government's [National Remote Working Strategy](#), published in January, aims to ensure that remote working is a permanent feature of the Irish workplace and will change the nature of where, how and when people work. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has also produced a [list of guidance](#) which employers will find useful on remote working as there are a range of areas and impacts to be considered. [Remote Working: HSA Guidance on Working from Home for Employers and Employees](#)

VAT Rate Change in March

Please note that from 1st March 2021, the 21% VAT rate will return to 23% rate, full details [here](#).

ISME is asking the government to consider maintaining the lower rate beyond the 28th February date set for the conclusion of the lower rate. The 9% and 23% rates were originally introduced as temporary measures in 2011, to alleviate the previous economic crisis.



Shop local for Mother's Day and Easter

We will be continuing our Shop Local ...not just for Christmas campaign with a focus on 2 key shopping events in Spring – Mother's Day and Easter. We encourage members particularly those in the consumer space to participate. Calling florists, gift & craft retailers, food & drink producers selling direct to customers, fashion retailers plus we can offer vouchers for hairdressers, beauticians, hotels, restaurants and more. Browse the listings [here](#)

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Promote your business with ISME

Advertising with ISME is an effective way to reach Owner / Managers of Irish SMEs. Members can advertise in our online publication **The bISME**, the next issue is due out in Spring 2021. You can advertise for free through the [Shop Local](#) and [Back to Business](#) campaigns. If you wish to receive members rates and more details on promotional opportunities please email Marketing@isme.ie



1-to-1 Advice & Support from GMIT

If you have an idea for a new product or service, and need support to develop it, The team at the Medical and Engineering Technology Gateway, Galway are here to advise and support you in developing your idea. This FREE one-to-one consultation will take you through the process from start to finish. They are part of a nationwide network of Gateways, each with their own set of expertise and we can help you find the right partner to support your needs. Talk with them on Wednesday March 10th or Thursday March 11th and find out more. Book your session [here](#). To see how they can help you visit www.metcentre.ie or contact Sharon White at sharon.white@gmit.ie or 091 742329.

Wellbeing Live from Laya Healthcare

Laya Healthcare have developed Wellbeing Live – all free and all live. Take a look at their portal [here](#) and if you want to further support for your employees, we would encourage you to take a look at our Wellness Programme with Laya Healthcare [here](#). Laya ran an expert-led discussion on 17th February on the implications of Ireland's COVID-19 vaccination roll-out for employers. The discussion was chaired by Newstalk's Jonathan Healy with panellists Jennifer Cashman, Employment Partner, Ronan Daly Jermyn, Professor John Gallagher, Managing Director, Cognate Health and Sinéad Proos, Head of Health & Wellbeing at laya healthcare. You can view the webinar [here](#).

COVID-19 Hub for ISME Members

ISME have developed an online Members only hub with tools and templates to help guide you during this difficult time. Included in the COVID-19 page are explainers and links to all government schemes, HR resources, best practice advice and supports.

Access by logging into the Members Area of the website [here](#)