



# Member's Newsletter

October 22

**iSME**  
Irish **SME** Association



Dear member,

Budget 2023 has come and gone without anything substantial for SMEs. While the budget spending package, at €11bn, is enormous, the bulk of the spending has been aimed at tackling the cost-of-living issue and the energy crisis.

There is help for renters in the form of a €500 per annum rental credit. However, with a 97% flight of rental accommodation over the last 10 years, there are no supply-side supports for rental accommodation.

The ending of the 9% VAT rate in early 2023 is most regrettable, and an opportunity lost to address inflation in services costs. This will hurt a lot of our services providers.

The increase in the standard rate cut-off to €40,000 is long overdue and most welcome but will still mean that people earning €5,432 below the average industrial wage will be paying tax at the marginal rate.

There are no changes to the CAT or CGT regimes, but there is reform promised on the KEEP scheme, which has failed to function since its enactment.

The 10% levy on concrete products will severely impact the cost of construction at a time when construction input prices are already high.

The Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS) energy support of 40% is welcome, but may be insufficient to protect many retail, leisure, manufacturing and hospitality businesses over the next year. The TBESS is the only substantial direct support to SMEs in Budget 2023. We see businesses falling into three categories here: Those who can absorb energy increases (a minority, outside the energy-intensive sectors); those who can pass it on, which will be inflationary; and those who can do neither, which will be very challenged this winter.

On top of the lack of business supports or tax measures, we see 2023 as an expensive one for employers. Statutory sick pay commences in January, as does an 8% increase in the National Minimum Wage to €11.30/hr.

Despite our criticisms, by mitigating consumer losses through inflation, this budget will probably be welcomed by most. True reform must wait for another day!

Meanwhile, we're back on the road for the first time since February 2020 with our [ISME Roadshows](#). There is a lot happening, a lot for you to learn, so we look forward to seeing you there!

Lastly, we've done a huge amount of work to get our [ISME Finance Finder](#) up and running. Whatever your finance needs (or those of non-members you know) the ISME Finance Finder will quickly navigate you to the best available, most affordable finance solution for your business. Pass it on!



Avvio

AC Waste Disposal

Bunker Technology

CMS

Desktop Systems

DMC Consultancy

Moll Industries Ireland Limited

Olandi Engineering Ltd

Philip Brady Orthopaedics Limited

Ultravision Opticians Ltd

## **Stressed about rising business costs?**

Access up to 50% in  
discounts on business  
products & services  
with the **ISME ADVANTAGE  
Affinity programme**

**ISME members can save  
now on  
[www.isme.ie/advantage](http://www.isme.ie/advantage)**



## Roadshows in Kildare, Cork and Wexford during October

We enjoyed your two Roadshows in Dublin and Meath in September and were delighted with the interest and engagement of the businesspeople present.

There's more to come in October where we will be hosting events in the Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge, on **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 4.30-6.30pm**, in the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs in Cork on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 9.00-11.00am** and in the Brandon House Hotel in New Ross on **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October, 9.00-11.00am**.

### Programme

**ISME Update**

**Cyber Security for SMEs**

**HR Issues for Business**

**Pitch my business & Networking**



Please send in your questions or comments for the speakers while registering [here](#), particularly for the Cyber Security and HR discussions, so we can address issues that relate to your business on the day.

Each attendee will have a 2-minute slot to give an elevator pitch to promote their business. A great opportunity to network with fellow businesspeople in your area. Don't forget your business cards!

Everyone is welcome so please bring along your colleagues, clients or friends in business. Refreshments are provided at all events and it's free to attend.

**Sponsored by ISME Skillnet**

### October-November Roadshows:

Wednesday 12th October, 4.30–6.30pm, Keadeen Hotel, Co. Kildare

Thursday 13th October, 9.00–11.00am, Clayton Hotel Silver Springs, Cork

Wednesday, 26th October, 9.00–11.00am, Brandon House Hotel, New Ross, Co. Wexford

Wednesday 9th November, 9.00–11.00am, Limerick Strand Hotel, Limerick

Wednesday 16th November, 4.30–6.30pm, Athlone Springs Hotel, Co. Roscommon

Thursday 17th November, 9.00–11.00am, Maldron Hotel Galway, Co. Galway

**To find out more  
and book your free  
space visit [here](#)**





## Budget 2023

ISME has expressed its disappointment at the lack of direct support for SMEs in Budget 2023. While welcoming the positive measures announced on 27<sup>th</sup> September to tackle the rising cost of living, we are concerned that the measures announced to support businesses may be insufficient to protect many retail, leisure, manufacturing and hospitality businesses over the next year. Read our summarised notes on Budget 2023 [here](#).

## ISME thoughts on the Commission on Taxation and Welfare report

ISME's main concern about the Commission on Taxation and Welfare report issued on 14th September, is that its only or overriding brief is the acquisition of further revenue, while at the same time the Exchequer appears to be incapable of securing efficient and effective expenditure of State revenues. The Commission's proposals to reform the R&D Credit, the KEEP and EII schemes are welcome and long overdue, and should be actioned in Budget 2023.

We welcome the proposal to replace commercial rates with a site value tax; this has been an ISME policy position for many years. We welcome the fact that the Commission calls for an end to the inequitable 3% USC surcharge on high-earning self-employed people. ISME calls for this levy to be extended to all workers earning over €100,000.

The Commission's proposal to levy a small PRSI charge on all income is wise, and aligns with ISME's policy to seeking a 2% rate of PRSI on weekly earnings up to €440 per week and a 6% PRSI rate on marginal earnings above €440 pw. The change would increase the take-home pay for all full-time workers earning less than €880 per week.

The current DIRT rate of 35% is very high. The Commission proposes to increase it to the marginal taxation rate plus USC, which would increase it to 51% for high-earning self-employed persons. This is nonsensical.

To read full details about ISME's response click [here](#)

## ISME out and about

(Right) ISME CEO, Neil McDonnell speaking at a September Roadshow in the Lucan Spa Hotel Dublin



(Down) ISME L&D Manager Adam Weatherley attended a Health Stores Ireland workshop in September



(Right) The ISME Membership team at Biz Expo on 29/9



## ISME in the news

In the media in September some of the topics covered were:

- Budget 2023
- Sterling Crisis
- Report of the Commission of Taxation and Welfare
- Minimum Wage
- ISME Roadshows 2022
- Public Sector Pay

You can view and listen back to a selection of ISME's media coverage [here](#).

## ISME Finance Finder

Explore the funding options available to SMEs with our new product, the ISME Finance Finder powered by Swoop Funding. This online tool offers loan choices to SMEs in minutes, streamlining the funding application process. For a start-up or a business looking to expand, improve cashflow, refinance debt, acquire a business, purchase property, stock or invest in a new market, the ISME Finance Finder will provide easy access to the funding opportunities available to them. The platform can also be used to secure funding for big ticket items such as vehicles, buildings, and equipment through the Asset Finance option. **Your funding journey starts now by going to [www.isme.ie/finance-finder](http://www.isme.ie/finance-finder)**

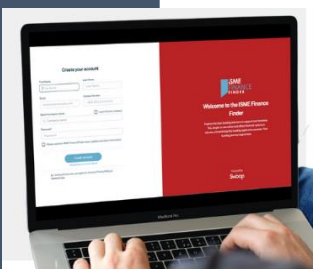
During October we will be releasing a series of videos about this online portal such as What's involved in setting up an account? How to apply? What types of funding is available? How does the application process work? View our Q&A videos with Andrea Reynolds, CEO with Swoop Funding [here](#).

## Want to be in the media?

We frequently get requests from local and national media to talk to our members about their businesses or key issues that are impacting them. If this would interest you, please contact [marketing@isme.ie](mailto:marketing@isme.ie)

## ISME Wellness Programme

ISME partners with Laya healthcare and their health & wellbeing provider, SpectrumLife to provide 24/7 Mental Wellbeing Support Programme (EAP) for ISME Members. We offer unlimited access for your employees and their families to a 365 freephone EAP service, accessible via website, app, or live chat. The cost for up to 30 employees is €500 + VAT and each subsequent employee €9 per employee. Find out more [here](#).



## Non-domestic Microgeneration Grant

The SEAI Non-Domestic Microgeneration Grant (NDMG) provides financial assistance to help businesses and other sectors to install solar PV panels to generate electricity on site. This technology reduces commercial electricity costs and increases security of supply, while enhancing a positive sustainability image. Grants of up to €2,400 are available for systems up to 6kWp (Approx. 16 Panels or 25m<sup>2</sup>) with a potential of savings between €2,000 - €3000 annual electrical costs (depending on installation size and current utility rates). This grant is available to businesses, the agricultural sector, public sector bodies, schools, community centres and non-profit societies

Further details are available here: [SEAI Non-domestic Microgen Grant](#)

## Support Scheme for Energy Audits

SEAI's Support Scheme for Energy Audits (SSEA) offers SMEs a €2,000 voucher towards the cost of a high quality energy audit. In most cases, this will cover the total cost of the audit. Application to the scheme is easy, with automatic approval for eligible businesses. Businesses applying to the scheme must spend at least €10,000 on energy per year at the site being audited. An energy audit is an important step for businesses that want to save money, save energy, and enhance their brand. An energy audit may be carried out on buildings, processes, or systems and it is a three-step process which involves preparation, a site visit and reporting.

Eligible businesses can find out more and apply: [SEAI Support Scheme for Energy Audits](#)

## What do you think about the Right to Disconnect?

The European Commission is conducting a study to understand how new working habits prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic can affect workers' wellbeing and productivity. They are particularly interested to know the views of employers on the **Right to Disconnect** (the right of workers to 'switch off' from work when not on duty). The study is being carried out by [Visionary Analytics](#) and [Notus](#) at the request of European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The study will contribute to the debate on a possible policy response to new challenges for workers and employers. This is a unique opportunity to share your experience, which will directly inform policy-making and thus will be very valuable.

The survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete, please click [here](#) to share your views.





## Why moving to eInvoicing makes sense

New research has found that only one in four SME businesses are aware of eInvoicing as a means of improving cash flow, increasing cybersecurity and simplifying business operations. The cost of doing business is on the rise, so you need to:

- Be competitive across all markets – both at home and abroad
- Improve your cash flow
- Simplify your business operations

**But what is eInvoicing and how does it work?** Join host Garrett Harte on 4<sup>th</sup> October at 12.30pm when a panel of experts including ISME's CEO Neil McDonnell, Ken Halpin, Celtrino, Joanne Clarke, Deloitte and O'Connor, Beta Digital will discuss how eInvoicing can:

- Support your growth plans in these challenging times
- Allow *all* your trading partners to trade with you digitally
- Help reduce your operating costs, improve cash flow and mitigate against cybercrime

Register today [here](#).

## Reduce costs with ISME

We had added more ways for ISME Members to reduce their costs and get added benefits for their business by adding four new programmes in 2022.

We are delighted to offer the following savings to members:

- **35% discount** on AA membership for Roadside Rescue, Home Start & Rescue (cover for company membership only)
- **30% discount** on website development and design subscription from XYZ
- **20% discount** on a range of HR Services from MSS 'The HR People'
- **10% discount** on dental services with Dublin Dental Clinic
- View all our Affinity programmes [here](#).

## Q2 Bank Watch Survey

Available now is our Q2 Bank Watch Survey 2022 where we ask you to share your experiences in accessing and managing your finances in the second quarter of this year. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey [here](#).

The findings of this survey will be circulated to media and will feed into relevant groups and committees ISME sit on. The report will also be uploaded to the ISME website. All our surveys inform our lobbying on your behalf to Government so it is vital we capture as many experiences as possible.

## InterTradelreland announces 2022 Seedcorn regional finalists

Eight companies are set to be €20,000 richer following the regional finals of this year's InterTradelreland Seedcorn Investor Readiness Competition. 24 up-and-coming companies will go head-to-head to win in the 'New Start' and 'Early Stage' categories, including 18 companies from across the Dublin, Munster and Connacht & Leinster regions.

### Dublin

In the New Start category, the Dublin regional finalists include; Botfiler Limited, DigiBar and Mettacomms/PR Training Academy. The Early Stage category includes Capella Workplace Solutions, EpiCapture Limited and VelENT Medical.

### Munster

In the New Start category, the Munster regional finalists include; Great Island Films, PlayerStat Data and Worldwide Composite Services Ltd. The Early Stage category includes Addaptiv Design & Manufacturing Ltd, Lia Therapeutics Limited and MyGug Limited.

### Connacht & Leinster

In the New Start category, the Connacht & Leinster regional finalists include; Esker Fields, ITUS Secure Technologies and Vyra Ltd. The Early Stage category finalists includes ByoWave, Lifelet Medical and Stratos Medical.

Connor Sweeney, Seedcorn Programme Manager at InterTradelreland, said: "I'm delighted to offer my congratulations to this year's regional finalists. Succeeding to this stage is a testament to the high standard of the finalists business plans and I look forward to seeing them progress through the competition."

The eight regional winners will take home a €20,000 cash prize and progress to the all-island final of InterTradelreland's Seedcorn Investor Readiness Competition, which will take place on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November. The finalists will then compete for €50,000 or €100,000 as either category or overall winner.

## InterTradelreland Q4 events

**InterTradelreland Go-2-Tender Supplies and Services Workshop** Tuesday & Wednesday, 11th & 12th October & 8th & 9th November, 9.30am – 1.00pm

**InterTradelreland Equity Advisory Clinic** Thursday, 17th November, 8.30am - 3.30pm

**InterTradelreland Go-2-Tender Health Sector Workshop** Wednesday & Thursday, 23rd & 24th November, 9.30am – 1.00pm

**InterTradelreland Go-2-Tender Construction Workshop** Tuesday & Wednesday, 29th & 30th November, 9.30am – 1.00pm

**InterTradelreland Go-2-Tender Successful Collaborative Tendering Workshop** Tuesday & Wednesday, 6th & 7th December, 9.30am – 1.00pm

See all event listings [here](#).



## Limited spaces remaining for Skills connect programme

ISME Skillnet are offering two industry-led and fully funded programmes for people who are not in employment, subject to eligibility criteria and the availability of places. If you are currently not in employment and wish to upskill or reskill, click [here](#) to see if you are eligible.

The programmes we are running are:

[Digital Marketing & Strategy Diploma](#)

[Office Administration and Management Diploma](#)

## Have you applied for your free business mentor?

If you are a private sector business based in Ireland with between 5 and 250 employees, you are eligible to participate in the ISME Back in Business initiative.

Business coaching and mentoring is a proven, highly effective method to review, improve and grow a business but it is costly.

Our panel of experienced mentors and business advisors have either sectorial or domain expertise. They have been through ordeals that many businesses are going through themselves. Therefore, offering to share their experience allows the development of a trusted partnership, and set a confident path to success.

Apply for your mentor [here](#)

### Digital Marketing & Strategy Diploma

Develop the skills to explore a career in a sector with greater employment potential.



### Office Administration & Management Diploma

Develop the skills to explore a career in a sector with greater employment potential.



### Back in Business Mentoring & Coaching Programme

## Probation Management

The Probation period is the company's opportunity to ascertain if the employee has the correct skills to complete the role that they were hired for. It is the start of the employee life-cycle and should be the foundation of the employment relationship for years to come. Given the skills and staff shortages all our members have been experiencing in recent times now more than ever it is critical that robust and regular Probation Reviews ensure that the employee and the manager have the opportunity to identify and resolve any issues. ISME would recommend that the new starter is met with at these key points:

- End of the first week
- End of the first month
- End of the third month
- End of the fifth month

Open communication and feedback from both the employer and employee's perspective is crucial. It is vital to ensure that feedback given is done so in a professional manner and is objective and factual. Ensure that all Probationary Reviews are documented for your records, and it would be recommended to follow up in writing to the employee with notes from the meeting.

It would also be important to note that if the probationary period lapses and management has failed to schedule the probation meetings, it is considered that the probationary period was passed. This can be a big challenge as the company will need to start from scratch by putting the employee on a PIP or considering disciplinary action in relation to unacceptable performance.

## Extending a Probationary Period

In the event that a Probationary Period has been unsuccessful, but the company believes that the individual has potential to improve and meet expectations, the process can be extended. It would not be advisable for the extension to exceed the 11-month service duration time point. Monthly Reviews are recommended during the Probation Extension Period. These Reviews should be constructive and offer relevant supporting mechanisms to the employee. The key reason being that at 12 months service an ex-employee can take an Unfair Dismissal's Claim to the WRC with sanctions up to 2 years remuneration.

## Exposure if the employee has less than 12 months service

Whilst there is no risk under the Unfair Dismissals Act, there is under the following Acts hence why a paper trail regarding Probationary Reviews is advisable.

- Industrial Relations Act
- Protective Disclosure Act
- Employment Equality Act

While the company may be justified in their decision to terminate a new starters employment contract if they are not meeting the expectations of the role, without a record of efforts taken to support an individual it could be difficult to defend at a third party.



## **Misconduct**

During an active Probation Period it is common for the full Disciplinary process not to apply. Breaches of company policy can be taken in account and discussed at the aforementioned Review Meetings. Where possible the employee should be given corrective actions and potentially the Probation Period extended. If there has been a significant breach, the company may be warranted in ending the employment but after due process has been applied.

## **Congratulations – you have successfully passed your Probationary Period**

Probationary Reviews are not only for the new starters that are not reaching the company's expectations. Studies show that strong performing individuals want feedback on how they are doing. If an employee is, reassure them of their status or they may look elsewhere. Ensure that positive feedback and achievements are highlighted also.

Whether the employee's probation period has been a success or unsuccessful, there is a variety of templates to assist with navigating the process on the Members Section of the ISME website.

**For more information on this topic or any other HR Support please don't hesitate to contact [HR@ISME.ie](mailto:HR@ISME.ie)**





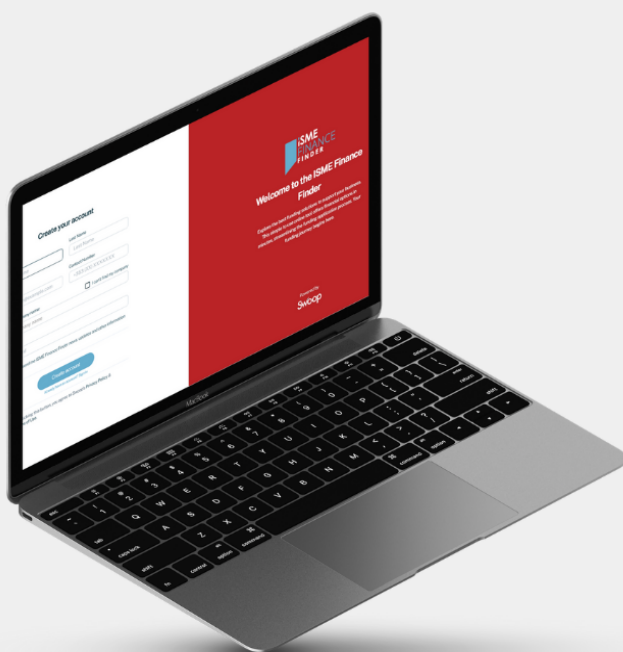
# Do you want to...

start or expand your business?

improve cashflow?

acquire a business?

purchase property?



If so, your finance journey starts here

[isme.ie/finance-finder](https://isme.ie/finance-finder)