

Member's Newsletter

March 2023



iSME
Irish SME Association

Dear Member,

We are thankfully seeing some level of decline in wholesale energy prices, and prices generally, as we enter March; but these have yet to manifest themselves in reductions in energy bills.

We were glad to see the extension of the [TBESS](#) for a further three months, a decrease in the price hurdle to 30%, and an increase in the monthly amount that can be claimed from €10k to €15k. However, we have yet to see the new guidelines, and the previous [Revenue Guide](#) was 122 pages long- not including the 89 page guide to reading your bill! We have had many member queries on the issue, and it is clear a lot of you are very angry at the complexity of the scheme. Please let us know how the revised scheme works.

The recent report in the Business Post that [Large Energy Users](#) (paywall) were subsidised by consumers in their electricity bills since 2010 will not surprise many of you - but it is shameful that both the Department of Enterprise and Ibec sought continuation of the subsidy.

We were glad to see the 9% VAT rate extended for six months, but we're not happy that there is any talk of reverting to the 13.5% at all. Both of Ireland's VAT rates are too high by comparison with (most of) our EU neighbours. Our consumer costs are now the highest in the EU, having overtaken Denmark last year. We have a good case to get the 23% standard rate reverted to the 21% rate that we had until the Great Recession, and at 9%, our reduced rate is still mid-table in Europe. Please keep reminding your local TDs that SMEs (particularly services) would hugely benefit from extension of the 9% rate to all services.

After a lot of hard work by the National Council, we are finally in a position to update our corporate governance documents to get them up to date. You will shortly be formally notified of an EGM to ratify our new constitution on 28th March at what will be a hybrid EGM.

It is almost time for our biennial election to the ISME [National Council](#). We have a number of members of the current council who will be standing down this year, and we are keen to get replacements of equal calibre. Ballot papers will be circulated to you soon but remember you cannot stand for election or vote for another member unless you are a paid-up ISME member.

Don't forget- if you need money, use the [ISME FINANCE FINDER](#)!

With 16 state agencies now having the power to conduct an enforcement raid in your premises, we have completed a Dawn Raid Protocol to assist members. Of course the best preparation for a dawn raid is to make sure you never have one, the fact is that a business which has done nothing wrong can be raided on the basis of a complaint. You will find our new dawn raid protocol in the Members' Area [here](#).

I'm delighted to say that we're back on the road for our [ISME Roadshows](#) 2023. We're trying to visit those towns we missed last year, in addition to our events in the main cities of course. Each roadshow follows the format of a briefing on current policy matters, a technical or HR topic of general interest to employers, and a Pitch my business introduction for members to sell to each other. We look forward to meeting you very soon.



APSC Consultancy Services Ltd

Bill Save

Bluestream Environmental

Carroll's Tours

CES Environmental Services Ltd

CJ Auto Parts & Tyre Centre

Kingston Refrigeration & Electrical Services
Limited

KPI Services Limited

Matrox Europe Limited

Merek Mitt

Mourne Antiques & Jewellery

Sensory Research Ltd

Veritas Chartered Accountants & Reg
Auditors

Xelda

ISME ROADSHOWS

ARE BACK FOR 2023

ISME Roadshow series

We are delighted to continue our Roadshow series in March, April and May visiting more towns and counties in Ireland. The programme will include an address by ISME's CEO, Neil McDonnell, Learning & Development news, HR Update, discussions and talks by guest speakers about key topics for SMEs and local business owner will share their business story. Each session will finish with **Pitch my business** – our networking event allowing business representatives to give a 2-minute pitch and network with fellow business people.

Refreshments are provided at all events; admission is complimentary and all businesses are welcome to attend.

View the dates and locations below:

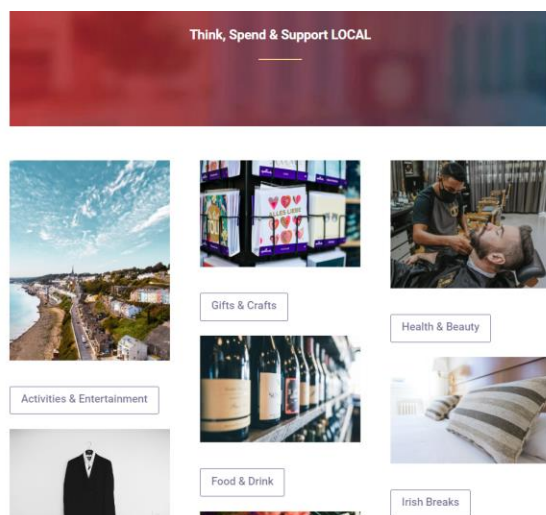
Register [here](#).

- Wednesday 22nd March, 8.00-10.00am, Buswells Hotel, Dublin.
- Wednesday 29th March, 9.00-11.00am, Glenside Hotel, Drogheda.
- Wednesday 19th April, 4.30-6.30pm, Horse & Jockey Hotel, Thurles.
- Thursday 20th April, 9.00-11.00am, Silver Springs Hotel, Cork City.
- Wednesday 24th May March, 4.30-6.30pm, Killishin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- Thursday 25th May, 9.00-11.00am, Treacys Oakwood Hotel, Shannon.

Click [here](#) to find out more and [register for free to attend](#).

Shop Local in March

With Mother's Day on 19th March and St Patrick's celebrations running from 16th March, we want to continue our Shop Local campaign for gifts, day trips, entertainment and holidays. Browse our portal [here](#) for gift ideas or things to do and Think, Spend & Support LOCAL. Don't forget ISME Members can add a listing for free, just click [here](#), and upload your details.



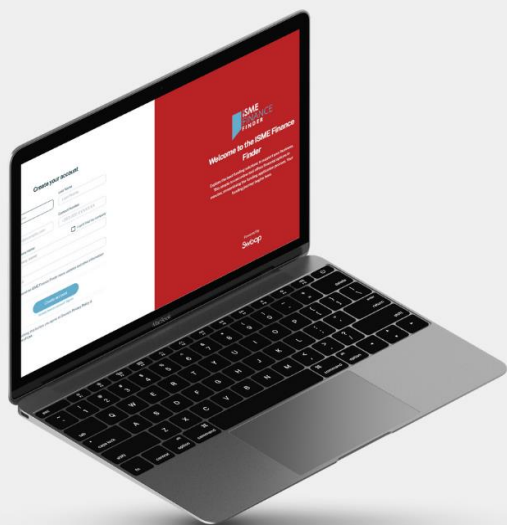
Personalised in-house training for ISME Members

Training and development programmes provide a host of benefits. They enhance employee performance, boost productivity, reduce employee turnover and improve company culture. This is why ISME Skillnet are now offering an increased volume of personalised training engagements for our members at their place of work. We are available to develop bespoke training tailored precisely to your requirements, making in-house training not only cost-effective, but also beneficial to a company's strategic plans.

ISME Skillnet can co-fund in-house training, reducing the costs of training by up to 50%. We have a carefully selected panel of certified expert trainers, business coaches and mentors with deep sectoral experience and domain expertise.

Adam Weatherley, ISME's Learning & Development Manager said: "We welcome the budget increase to be able to provide bespoke training for our members. We can increase our strategic training provision to Irish SMEs to keep them competitive on a national and international basis".

If you would like to discuss your requirements with the ISME Skillnet team, please email skillnet@isme.ie.



ISME Finance Finder

To support businesses in accessing funding the ISME Finance Finder, powered by Swoop Funding, has updated and improved its online platform by introducing cashflow and forecasting tools, banking and accounting system integration, as well as equity funding. Register [here](#) now to explore the funding options available or to start a conversation about how much you could raise through equity.

Your funding journey starts now by going to www.isme.ie/finance-finder

New Affinities launched

With rising costs and the pressure on businesses to reduce spend, ISME continue to provide saving to its Members with its ADVANTAGE Affinity programme.

Introducing our newest programmes from ISME Member businesses Zendfast and PLUGGED.

Delivery Services

Zendfast, an Irish premium technology-based courier business are offering ISME Members **10% discount** on their range of delivery services nationally and internationally. They provide same day and next day delivery throughout Ireland, as well as a worldwide courier service. To find out more about their delivery service view their video [here](#) and view offer details [here](#).

Legal Resources & Support

PLUGGED's Smart Business Legal Hub provides support covering HR, GDPR, Health & Safety, Data Security, Debt, Intellectual Property and more. The resources available include how-to videos, step by step guides, checklists, legal templates and business legal health check, with direct access to a business and employment lawyer. ISME Members can get access to legal advice and support with two options:

1. HUB Access Plan: Unlimited access for 1 year for €280 (+VAT) to the HR Hub (no legal support included in this plan). Members under this plan will receive a 20% discount on any legal support fees
1. HUB Access with Legal Support (Premium Plan): **15% discount** to unlimited and unrestricted access to information, support and to a business and employment lawyer, view the rates [here](#).

To see how it works you can get a demo of the system, find out full details [here](#).

View all our Affinity programmes [here](#). ISME Members can access all offers when they log into the Members Area.



Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on Challenges Facing Small and Medium Enterprises

ISME CEO Neil McDonnell and National Council Member Elaine Dunne attended a meeting of the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on Challenges Facing Small and Medium Enterprises on 1st March. You can read the opening statement to the committee [here](#) and watch back [here](#). We would encourage you to contact your local TD or Minister regarding any of these issues affecting your business. You can find your local TDs [here](#).

Energy Support

ISME has created an Energy Support section on the website with information, updates and advice to help your business during the cost of energy crisis and useful advice and supports from the SEAI. You can view [here](#).

Other useful links include:

- [Energy Supports for Business](#)
- [Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme \(TBESS\)](#)
- [Climate Toolkit 4 Business](#)

SEAI Briefings on energy efficiency

SEAI ran a briefing for SMEs on the available educational and financial support for businesses embarking on their energy efficiency journey. You can view it [here](#).

[Meet the SEAI team at the SEAI Energy Show](#) on 29th-30th March in the RDS, Dublin, full details [here](#).

Useful Resources from the HSA

Active worker engagement in safety and health reaps dividends for a company and ensures greater protection for all. This can be done by consulting with workers, training and appointing Safety Representatives. Please also see the Safety Representatives Resource Book available [here](#) and the short introductory 2-minute video available on the [HSA YouTube channel](#).

See the new Fire extinguisher safety checks information checks [here](#) and view other useful information sheets [here](#).

The first phase of the Personal Injuries Resolution Board Act 2022 to commence

Minister of State Dara Calleary TD has signed the order to commence the first phase of provisions of the Personal Injuries Resolution Board Act 2022 which came into operation on 13th February 2023.

The commencement order means that from 13th February 2023:

- Where a claim proceeds to litigation a PIAB assessment that has been accepted by a respondent will have the status of an offer of tender payment. This means where the court award is not greater than the value of the PIAB assessment, the claimant will not recover their costs and will generally be liable for the respondent's costs as well.
- PIAB will have additional time to assess claims where an injury is yet to settle rather than releasing to litigation and will also assess claims of a wholly psychological nature.
- It will be an offence to supply false information to PIAB who is empowered to disclose information to an Garda Síochána.
- PIAB will deepen its research, analysis, and information awareness roles.

Full details available [here](#).

Back in Business Mentoring & Coaching programme continues in 2023

We are delighted to be able to run our free mentoring programme for ISME Members again in 2023. Over the past two years we successfully delivered a powerful programme providing mentoring and coaching to small and medium sized businesses. Find out more [here](#).

ISME has created an Energy section on the website with information, updates and advice to help your business during the cost of energy crisis and useful advice and supports from the SEAI. You can view [here](#).

Advertise with ISME

We are planning issue 21 of the bISME. If you would like to advertise in our online publication with a growing circulation. Take a look at the rate card [here](#).

ISME in the news

ISME featured in the media this past month speaking about the following subjects:

- Cost of living measures
- Energy crisis
- Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS)

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

March Events

Women inSTEM Summit 2023, Wednesday, 15th March, 7.30am–3.30pm, Croke Park, Dublin, Book [here](#).

National Construction Summit, Tuesday, 21st March, 9.00am–4.00pm Sports Ireland Campus,

Blanchardstown, Dublin, Register [here](#).

SEAI Energy Show, Wednesday Thursday & Friday, 29th–30th March 9.00am–6.00pm, RDS, Dublin, Details [here](#).

Irish Association of Pension Funds Spring Conference, Thursday 30th March, 8.30am–12.30pm, Convention Centre Dublin, Book [here](#).



ISME
Irish **SME** Association

Concerned 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



New Legislation Explained:

EU Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions

The European Union (Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions) Regulations 2022 (the 2022 Regulations) became law on 16th December 2022. Given all the legislative changes in recent weeks you would be forgiven for not noticing this one. It is however a key piece of law that makes amendments to the following Acts:

- Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994
- Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
- Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003
- Workplace Relations Act 2015

This EU Directive aims to improve working conditions in the European Union by promoting more transparent and predictable employment while ensuring labour market adaptability.

Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994

The “Day 5” statement has been amended to now include additional information relating to:

- The duration and conditions relating to a probationary period, if applicable.

In addition to this, a number of items that were previously part of the written statement to be provided within two months, must now be provided as part of the “Day 5” statement:

1. The place of work or, where there is no fixed or main place of work, a statement specifying that the employee is employed at various places or is free to determine his or her place of work or to work at various places;
2. The title, grade, nature or category of work for which the employee is employed or a brief description of the work;
3. The date of commencement of contract of employment;
4. Any terms and conditions relating to hours of work (including overtime);
5. The training, if any, to be provided by the employer.

Separately, all other terms of employment required to be given to the employee under the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994 are now required within **one** month.

Finally, any change to the information provided must be notified to the employee by or before the day the change takes effect. This was previously one month after the change has occurred.

Up to now, probationary periods have been a matter for employment contracts and not subject to statute.

Probationary Period

With effect from 1 August 2022, in situations where an employee is subject to a **Probationary Period** at the commencement of employment, that period shall not exceed six months, except in limited circumstances as provided for in the regulations. In those limited exceptions the maximum period may be extended to no more than twelve months.

A watch out in relation to this change is that if perhaps you have an employee who commenced employment before the 16th December 2022 and was subject to a probationary period longer than 6 months, and has completed at least 6 months service with you, their probation will now expire on 1st February 2023, if that date is earlier than the end of the contractual probationary period.

Parallel Employment

The Directive ensures that an employer shall not prohibit an employee from taking up employment with another employer, outside of the work schedule established with the first named employer. An employer shall not subject an employee to adverse treatment for taking up employment with another employer.

Mandatory Training

Where an employer is required by law or collective agreement to provide training to an employee to carry out the work for which they are employed, such training shall be provided to the employee free of cost and shall count as working time. Where possible, this training should take place during working hours.

Organisation of Working Time Act 1997

Section 17 of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 (OWTA) is amended by section 13 of the 2022 Regulations to provide that:

- As well as the minimum notice period specified in the OWTA, a work assignment now must take place within the reference hours and days notified to the employee as part of their written terms.
- Where the notice of a work assignment provided to an employee is not within the minimum notice period of 24 hours or the work assignment is to take place outside the reference hours and days, the employee has the possibility to refuse the work assignment without adverse consequences.

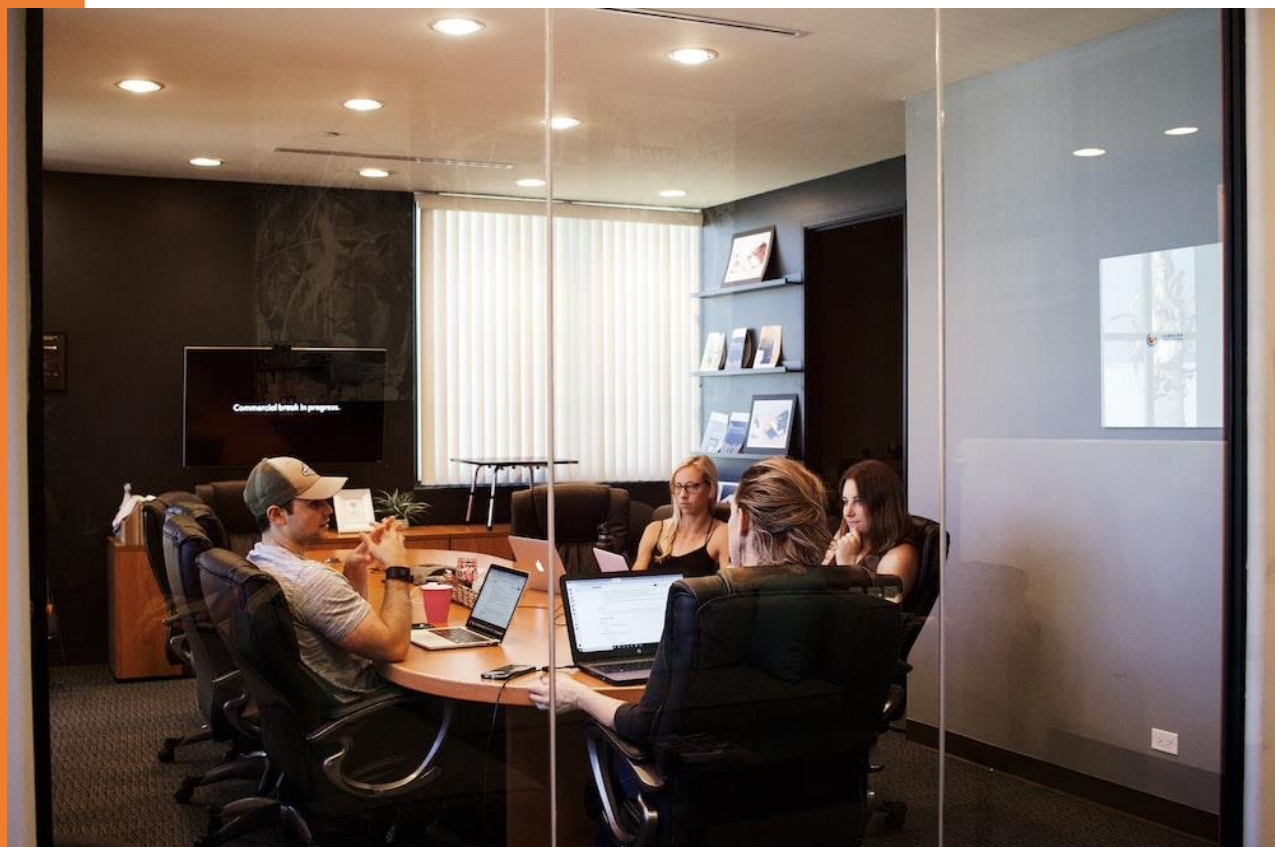
Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003 - Probation Periods for Fixed-Term Workers

- Where a fixed-term employee has entered into a fixed-term contract with an employer which provides for a probationary period, the length of such probationary period shall be proportionate to the expected duration of the contract and the nature of the work.
- Where a fixed-term contract is renewed for the same functions, the contract shall not be subject to a new probationary period.

Workplace Relations Act 2015 - Complaints to Workplace Relations Commission

Section 12 of the 2022 Regulations amends Schedule 5 of the Workplace Relations Act 2015 to allow the Workplace Relations Commission hear a complaint in relation to these amendments. We recommend that Employers review their contracts of employment in light of these provisions to ensure that they are amended to comply with the provisions of the Regulations, and that the expiry of any probation period on 1 February 2023 has been caught.

Don't hesitate to contact our HR Team on HR@ISME.ie or on 01 6622755.



ISME Wellness Programme

Partnering with Laya healthcare and their health and wellbeing provider, Spectrum.Life

Offering ISME Members a **24/7 Employee Assistance Programme**, with unlimited access for members, their employees & families to:

- 24/7 EAP service accessible via website, app, or live chat
- Up to 6 sessions of face-to-face counselling
- Video/telephone counselling
- Support across finance, legal, mediation, parenting coaching, life coaching & more

Special Member Rate:

€500 + VAT (fixed cost per year) for up to 30 employees. Each subsequent employee €9 + VAT per employee per year

Learn more here:

isme.ie/isme-wellness-programme



The ISME Learning & Development service is here to help both the business owner and their employees. Whether you are looking for a short learning event, or something more detailed, you will find it here. ISME Members can receive up to 40% discount for ISME Skillnet training, view courses below.

Introductory Certificate in Bookkeeping using Big Red Cloud

[More info](#)

Certificate in SME Management
Dates: 08-02-2023 to 12-04-2023

[More info](#)

Microsoft Excel Advanced
Dates: 15-03-2023 to 15-03-2023

[More info](#)

Customer Service and Complaints Handling
Dates: 13-04-2023 to 13-04-2023

[More info](#)

Beginner VAT
Dates: 17-04-2023 to 17-04-2023

[More info](#)

Optimising a Digital Marketing strategy for SMEs
Dates: 18-04-2023 to 18-04-2023

[More info](#)

The Complete Digital Marketing Journey
Dates: 18-04-2023 to 21-04-2023

[More info](#)

Creating a Performance Max advertising campaign for an online shop

Dates: 19-04-2023 to 19-04-2023

[More info](#)

Intermediate VAT
Dates: 20-04-2023 to 20-04-2023

[More info](#)

Effectively measuring an SMEs Digital Marketing performance
Dates: 21-04-2023 to 21-04-2023

[More info](#)

Advanced VAT
Dates: 24-04-2023 to 24-04-2023

[More info](#)

Business Tax
Dates: 27-04-2023 to 27-04-2023

[More info](#)

Microsoft Excel Refresher Essentials
Dates: 03-05-2023 to 03-05-2023

[More info](#)

Microsoft Excel Intermediate
Dates: 09-05-2023 to 09-05-2023

[More info](#)

PLUS more on www.isme.ie/learning





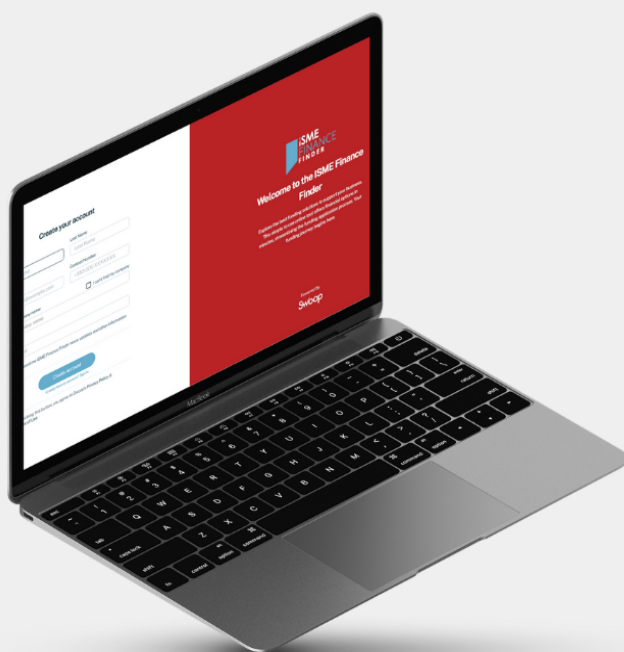
Do you want to...

start or expand your business?

improve cashflow?

acquire a business?

purchase property?



If so, your finance journey starts here

isme.ie/finance-finder