

Member's Newsletter

December 2023

iSME
Irish **SME** Association



Dear member,

Firstly, I will start off with reference to the ICOB business support I mentioned last month. After representations from ISME and others, the Department of Enterprise has agreed to increase the commercial rates threshold from €20,000 to €30,000, which will bring a lot more SMEs in scope. We appreciate that there are many businesses affected which do not pay rates, but this issue remains a work in progress.

It was great to see so many of you at our 30th Anniversary Lunch in Clontarf Castle on 17th November. No one thought we would be evacuated after the starters because of a [suspected WW II bomb was found nearby!](#) ISME guests were not deterred, and it was great to see so many in good spirits after retiring to The Yacht bar afterwards.

We are talking with the hotel about our options, and whether we will reschedule the event to another date. We expect to take a decision on our next steps on Tuesday 5th December. As soon as we know, we will get back to you, but in the meantime, send any feedback, or your thoughts on a rescheduled anniversary, to neil@isme.ie.

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) comes into force in the New Year as follows:

- 1 January 2024 for public interest entities in scope of EU non-financial reporting rules (greater than 500 employees).
- 1 January 2025 for other larger companies and public interest entities (greater than 250 employees).
- 1 January 2026 for listed SMEs, with an 'opt out' possible until 2028.

This will impose increased reporting requirements on a growing number of businesses from next year. We encourage you to sign up to the Department's dedicated mailing list at csrd@enterprise.gov.ie in order to stay up to date with developments on the transposition of the directive in Ireland. While your business might not yet be in scope, **your customers may ask you to demonstrate compliance with some or all of the requirements.**

With our colleagues in the Local Jobs Alliance, we wrote to Minister McGrath in the Department of Finance seeking delay and amendment to the proposed [Revenue Enhanced Reporting Requirements](#). As soon as we hear back from the Minister's office, we will advise you of progress.

We are not satisfied that the new requirements are necessary, or that they can be easily delivered. We will therefore be coordinating with other trade groups to oppose them with the Minister for Finance.

As you will know from previous monthlies, there will be a significant increase in payroll costs from the 1st of January. We would be obliged if you would complete our [ISME Flash Survey](#), which is just seven questions long and will take you about two minutes to complete. We will use this data in our lobbying activity for e4h SME sector.

Don't forget- if you need money in the New Year, find the cheapest finance for your business using the [ISME Finance Finder](#). The latest tranche of funding under the Future Growth Loan Scheme will soon issue- don't be left behind!

Make sure you avail of the revenue small benefit exemption to reward your staff this Christmas- check out our latest gift card offering from [Me2You](#).

This will be my last note to you for 2023. May I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year from all the team in 17 Kildare Street! We're always in your corner!

Ballina Engineering Works Limited

Time Point Limited

Irish Removals & Storage

Hustle Coffee Company Ltd

An Even Better Place to Work Ltd

Allied Print Ltd

The Marketing Shop

Balreask Farms Ltd

Enable ISO

UNICEF Ireland

Solas

Electronic Recycling

Bandon Rewinds Limited

Insourc Recruitment

Phil Purcell Engineering Ltd

Eamonn Barrett International Transport Limited

SISGate PRO

James J O'Donnell General Engineering Works Limited

Insight Statistical Consulting

Renihan Refrigeration Ltd

Fitzgerald & Partners

O'Connor Coach Hire

Grenke Limited



Before (left) and after (right) the bomb scare during ISME's 30 years anniversary lunch

ISME 30 Years Business Lunch

ISME's 30 years Anniversary Lunch took place at Clontarf Castle on 17th November 2023. The discovery of a WWII bomb nearby led to the event's abandonment. Despite the setback, ISME NC Chair Marc O'Dwyer expressed gratitude to almost 300 attendees, staff and sponsors for their support and ISME CEO Neil McDonnell emphasised the resilience of SMEs in Ireland and the support ISME has offered to SMEs for the past three decades.

Co-founder and Chairman of Irish cloud and managed services company Ergo, John Purdy attended the event as special guest and addressed the lunch before evacuation. We are currently in talks with Clontarf Castle to explore options to reschedule the event. Stay tuned for updates but in the meantime, send any feedback, or your thoughts on a rescheduled anniversary, to neil@isme.ie.

Sign up for HR Updates

Did you know that you can get updates regarding current employment legislation changes and HR Topics both employers and HR Practitioners should be aware of straight into your inbox as a member of ISME for free?

The ISME HR updates is a channel for immediate communication with members. The team will only send you useful and relevant updates regarding legislation change and updated content on the ISME HR Hub. This will assist your company to stay well informed on your legal requirements relating to HR.

To sign up, please click [here](#) and input your email address and you will be automatically registered for our updates.

Sign up for HR Updates

ISME Finance Finder: Free 30-minute Consultation Available

The ISME Finance Finder, powered by Swoop, is offering a **free 30-minute one-to-one consultation clinic**. The consultations are provided on a no obligation and confidential basis.

The Swoop team provide expertise and professionalism based on their deep knowledge of the lending market both in Ireland and in the UK. During the consultation they can address such key questions as:

- Who are the key players?
- What does it mean for your business?
- What small business loans or funding is available for SMEs?

Plus

- They can advise and review your business's specific requirements?

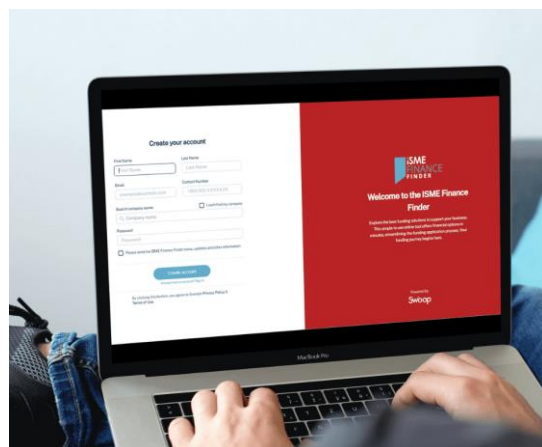
You may want to start or expand your business, improve cashflow, refinance debt, acquire a business, purchase property, stock or invest in a new market...then there are funding opportunities available to you.

Now may not be the time to apply for a loan but the Swoop team will look at your business to see if it's loan-ready or give advice on what you need to do before applying for funding and show you the options available.

There are 3 ways to connect and set up your free consultation:

- Click [here](#) to fill out a form
- Email isme@swoopfunding.com
- Phone +353 1 270 7658

Visit the ISME Finance Finder [here](#).



New Affinity Programme

Take a look at the most recent addition to the ISME ADVANTAGE Affinity programme from ISME Member business [Me2You](#)

Order over €5,000 and get €50 gift card free. Other offers include discounted acceptance rates for all new ISME member merchants/retailers joining Me2You gift card.

Me2You is Ireland's exciting multi-store gift card offering amazing choice with **thousands of partner stores and many exclusive spending environments**. It is brought to the market by **Retail Excellence Ireland** to help support the Irish retail industry and Irish jobs. It is welcomed by many fantastic & exclusive retailers such as **Tesco, Smyths Toys, Applegreen, Avoca & thousands more nationwide**.





ISME Surveys

➤ Q2 2023 Trends Survey

How did your business find the second quarter of 2023? In an ever-changing business environment, we want to hear from you on how your organisation has been impacted by completing our Trends Survey for Q2 2023 [here](#).

Please share this survey with your network.

➤ Q2 2023 Bank Watch Survey

Please take our Bank Watch Survey for Q2 2023 based on your experiences of accessing finance and engaging with lenders [here](#).

The Bank Watch Survey provides us with the latest up to date information on SME's access to finance. The findings of these surveys will be circulated to media and will feed into relevant groups and committees ISME sit on. Reports will also be uploaded to the ISME website, view previous reports [here](#).

Please share this survey with your network.

➤ FLASH SURVEY: ISME minimum wage increase impact

2024 will see a number of legislative changes to your payroll costs, the largest of which will be an increase in the National Minimum Wage of 12.4% on 1st January.

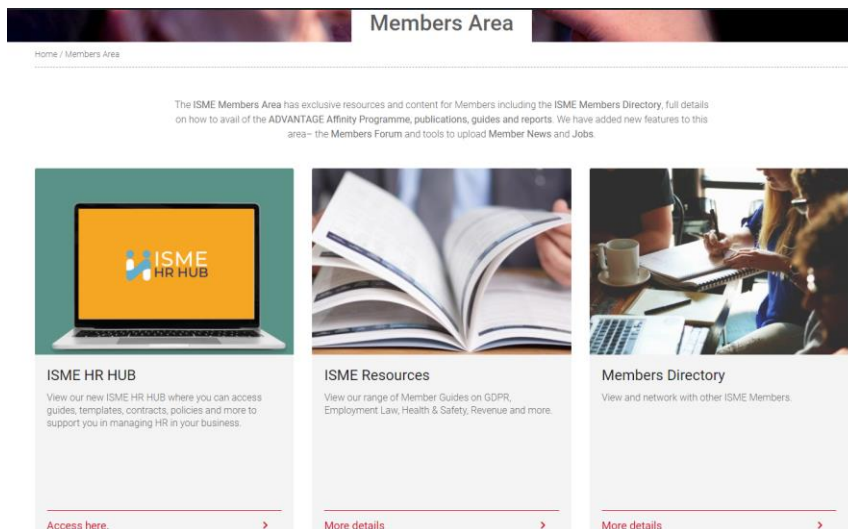
Please answer this ISME FLASH SURVEY of seven questions, which should take you no more than two minutes. We will forward a copy of the results to all who complete this survey.

Take the survey [here](#).

Dawn Raid Guide

“Dawn raid” is the colloquial expression given to an unannounced inspection of a company’s premises, usually as part of an ongoing investigation by regulatory or law-enforcement authorities. Any company, no matter its size, may be subject to a dawn raid. Dawn raids are usually triggered by a complaint e.g. from an employee, customer, competitor, an anonymous tip, or an individual subject to investigation by a state agency. You can download our Dawn Raid Guide in the Members Area [here](#).





ISME HR Hub – your HR support

To support Members to deal with the ever-changing world of HR and employment law, we have created a portal to give you access to guides, templates, contracts, policies and more to support you in managing HR in your business. We have curated the information based on the HR Life Cycle: Attraction, Recruitment, Onboarding, Policies & Training, Performance Management and Exit.

You can also find information from government agencies and other third parties in our General Information & Resources page, links to the top downloads and view our selection of blogs including Statutory Sick Pay FAQs and EU Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions.

To find out how it works and looks, click on the video about the portal [here](#). To use the ISME HR Hub log into the Members Area, click on the top left button.

Think, Spend & Support LOCAL For Christmas And Beyond



We are currently running a *Christmas Think Local Shop Local* campaign encouraging people to Think Local for holidays, activities, entertainment and shopping. ISME Members can advertise for free so please add your details [here](#) if you would like your business featured or to update your existing ad in our [Shop Local portals](#). To find out more please contact marketing@isme.ie



Save Time, Money and Energy: All in day's work with you LEO

For small businesses, every day is a busy day with new challenges.

But keeping your business competitive and productive is much easier with the help of your Local Enterprise Office.

Simply click on the link below and enter a few contact details and your Local Enterprise Office Advisor will be in contact to find the best support for your business to start saving time, money and energy: www.allinadayswork.ie

New Courses Available from the HSA

➤ New Ergonomics Risk Assessment Course

A new course Introduction to Ergonomic Risk Assessment is now live on hsalearning.ie. This course is intended to raise awareness and provide an overview of ergonomics and its relationship to the risk assessment process.

The course is available at: <https://hsalearning.ie/mod/page/view.php?id=36>

Please also note the suite of supports developed by the HSA in the Manual Handling/Display Screen Equipment space. For more, please see here: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/manual_handling/

➤ Health and Safety in the Workplace for Apprentices

The **Health and Safety in the Workplace for Apprentices** course is now live on hsalearning.ie Please see:

<https://hsalearning.ie/mod/page/view.php?id=1536>

The course provides a general overview of safety, health and welfare and the key areas that apply to apprentices at work.

The course is free and takes 20 minutes to complete. A certificate is available on completion of a short assessment at the end of the course.

Health & Safety Authority Update

The HSA are delighted to have reached a huge milestone with [BeSMART.ie](https://www.besmart.ie) with over 100,000 users.

- [Psychosocial Risk Assessment: Guidance for Exposure to Sensitive Content](#) was developed by the Health and Safety Authority and the State Claims Agency. It was developed in order to assist organisations employing people in roles which expose them to sensitive content as part of their assigned duties or other employees who are unexpectedly exposed in their role.
- [Exposure to Sensitive Content Risk Assessment Template](#) was developed by HSA to support organisations employing people in roles which expose them to sensitive content.
- [SunSMART Employee Information sheet](#) is written primarily for employees and safety representatives to raise awareness about the risk of skin cancer from sun exposure.
- [New Code of Practice for Indoor Air Quality](#) provides practical guidance as to the observance of the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 299 of 2007), as amended by S.I 255 of 2023. This Code of Practice comes into operation on 26th May 2023. Notice of the publication of this Code of Practice was published in Iris Oifigiúil on 6th June 2023.
- [Use Chemicals Safely – Read the Label information sheet](#) provides information about how to read the label on containers – in particular, understanding the dangerous properties of a chemical. The information sheet also provides information about hazard pictograms.
- [Using Chemicals safety at home and in the garden information sheet](#) provides guidance about the safe use of chemical in both the home and garden.
- [Information Leaflet: Risk Assessment of Chemical Hazards](#) is intended to help employers in assessing the risks that relate to chemical agents in the workplace and in determining adequate precautions or control measures to safeguard health and safety.

ISME taking bookings now for ads in the 2024 Wall planner

We will be printing and distributing our popular 2024 ISME Wall Planners to the membership before the end of the year. We offer advertising space on the planner, a great B2B tool which will be distributed to all ISME Members nationwide. There are four sizes available for advertising, and as always, ISME Members receive a discounted rate. Book your spot now as they sell fast.

Download the spec [here](#) or email marketing@isme.ie for more information



SEAI Energy Supports

The Government announced in July approved amendments to the existing Non-Domestic Microgeneration Scheme, to extend supports to a wider range of businesses and non-domestic applicants. The Non-Domestic Microgen Grant provides financial assistance to help businesses, farms, schools, community centres, or other non-profit organisations to install Solar PV panels to generate electricity on site.

Always get advice from a registered professional. Before you commit to purchasing and installing upgrades or investments, check if there is an SEAI grant available [here](#).

SEAI run a series of briefings throughout the year on how your business can save money and energy this year, find out more [here](#).

Healthy Workplace

The Healthy Workplace Framework is a government strategy to enhance the health and wellbeing of Ireland's workers. A committee led by the Department of Health and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment oversaw the development of this Framework and set the strategic direction for workplace policies and programmes to enhance the health of workers.



A new Healthy Workplace website was recently launched and features interactive tools to facilitate the delivery and evaluation of health and wellbeing initiatives in workplaces of any size. This website aims to be the one-stop-shop for everything you need to make your workplace a Healthy Workplace. It is designed to cater for the needs of public and private organisations and is targeted towards members of staff from Wellness/Health Promotion, Human Resources, Occupational Health, Health & Safety, decision-makers in senior management, and employees hoping to champion a Healthy Workplace.

Find out more on <https://healthyworkplace.ie/>

ISME in the news

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

- Christmas Shop Local Campaign
- Dublin Riots
- New Government PRSI Policy
- ISME 30 years

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

Events

- **The Irish Marketing Conference 2023**, Wednesday, 6 December, Zendesk EMEA HQ, Dublin 2, Book [here](#)
- **The European AI Conference 2023**, Tuesday, 12 December, HubSpot House Dublin, Dublin 2, Book [here](#)
- **Ireland eCommerce Summit**, Tuesday, December 5, Conrad Dublin, D2, Book [here](#)

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



Work Christmas Party Season

“Tis the Season to be.....Cautious”

Employers may be liable for incidents that occur at the Christmas party regardless of whether it takes place outside of the workplace or normal working hours. Please be aware that Employers may also find themselves liable for complaints of inappropriate behaviour like insulting conduct and unwanted sexual advances, etc, which may have occurred as a result of excessive alcohol consumption during the event.

Given that most employees perhaps have not seen each other a day-to-day basis, serious catch ups are on the cards, however with alcohol in the mix we would recommend taking **Pre-emptive Action** prior to the party/get together to ensure that it's a good night for all and there are no unsavoury issues or Grievances to deal with on the post-party Monday morning....

Pre-emptive Action

As employers you don't have the automatic entitlement to take disciplinary action following an incident at a work-related event, because employees have a reasonable expectation that what they do outside of working hours is not subject to company disciplinary rules. However, employers can take the following steps:

- Ensure all employees are aware of clear policies on bullying, harassment, email and internet use and disciplinary procedures.
- Issue a Memo to staff in advance of the event to ensure they are aware of the company's expectations of conduct that they may be subject to disciplinary action for unacceptable behaviour.
- Remind staff to drink alcohol responsibly and in moderation.
- Consider arranging transportation for employees to and from the event to reduce the likelihood of drink-driving and help ensure that employees get home safely.
- Employers should ensure that the venue is safe and appropriate, bearing in mind its suitability for any disabled employees.
- Managers are advised to avoid work-related discussions at all costs.
- Coach managers on how to respond to any unwanted conduct that may occur at the event.
- If any inappropriate behaviour occurs, investigate all complaints promptly upon return to work, making reference to the memo mentioned above.
- Work colleagues should avoid placing images from the Christmas Party on social media, but if they do, it should only be after securing the permission of every colleague included
- Absence Management – where the Christmas party falls on a day when employees will be required to attend work the following day, employers should communicate to staff not to be at work under the influence of alcohol so that they do not endanger their own or another person's health and safety at work.

Be mindful that some employees still may not be comfortable with an in-person Christmas Party, so be mindful of individual concerns and perhaps offer an alternative if an employee makes you aware that they are feeling this way.

It is undoubtedly nice to give back to your employees, as well as a team-building opportunity for employees to mark the festive season however whilst out in a group setting employees are still representing the company and should conduct themselves in a manner that is in line with the company Dignity & Respect Policy. It is advisable to remind employees of this using some of the pre-emptive measures above.

For more information on this topic, a copy of the Memo mentioned above, or any other HR Support please don't hesitate to contact HR@ISME.ie

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. ISME Members can receive up to 40% discount for ISME Skillnet training, view courses below.

Introductory Certificate in Bookkeeping using Big Red Cloud

Ongoing until Sunday, 31st December

[Find out more](#)

Special Offer: ISME Skillnet & UCD Professional Academy

Ongoing until Sunday, 31st December

[Find out more](#)

IPICS ISME Skillnet Supply Chain – Certificate in Planning

Tuesday 7th November – Sunday, 31st December

[Find out more](#)

**FIND THE FULL LISTING ON
WWW.ISME.IE/LEARNING**



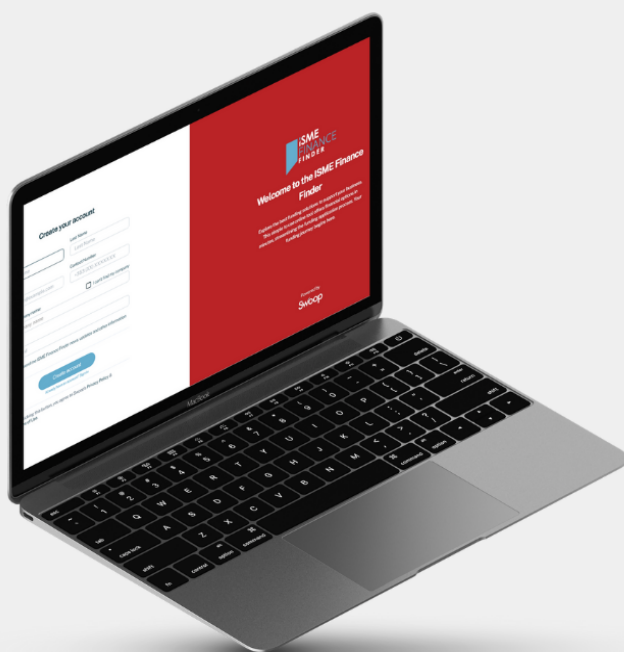
Do you want to...

start or expand your business?

improve cashflow?

acquire a business?

purchase property?



If so, your finance journey starts here

isme.ie/finance-finder