

# Member's Newsletter

March 2024



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



Dear member,

As we feared, we have reports of a great many small firms in significant difficulty as a result of the welter of labour-cost increasing measures that have hit since the New Year. However, what came as some surprise to us was that [the penny had finally dropped in IBEC](#) in February that SMEs were in trouble, and sought to represent themselves as doing something about it.

This concern by the representatives of big business, big semi-states and big universities is entirely bogus and we will be having none of it. We will be in touch with you in the next fortnight with a grass-roots campaign which ***we will ask you to take to your local political representatives just as soon as the referendums are out of the way on 8<sup>th</sup> March.***

The measures we intend to ask for your grassroots support on are:

- On the National Minimum Wage, the methodology of calculation must be amended to reflect the fact that 48% of the workforce are employed by public service or multinationals. Future increases in the NMW must not exceed CPI. In addition, the 8.8% rate of PRSI must apply to the entirety of the NMW.
- The farce that is IBEC pretending to represent the interests of small business must end. A senior trade unionist was good enough [to let us know on The Hard Shoulder](#) that IBEC didn't even mention the minimum wage at the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) last October. SMEs require pro-rata representation on LEEF and the Low Pay Commission.
- All legislation affecting labour and overhead costs for SMEs must be subject to the SME Test and regulatory impact assessment.
- The food service and grooming sectors require the permanent establishment of a 9% VAT rate. In addition, the 23% standard VAT rate is too high and should revert to its historical 21% rate.

These are very significant asks, which will be vehemently opposed by trade unions and the public service, which are essentially the same thing. We will ask you to make your voices heard in the lead-up to the local and European elections in June.

Your time to avail of the [Revenue Warehousing](#) scheme is drawing to a close on 1<sup>st</sup> May: by then you must repay your warehoused debt in full, or enter into a "phased payment arrangement" (PPA) with Revenue. We are delighted that Minister McGrath announced his intention to zero-rate the interest on PPAs.

I'm delighted to say that it's looking like a full house (again) for our rescheduled [30th Anniversary Lunch](#) on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Hopefully there's no bomb-scares this time! See you then!

**Doula Association of Ireland CLG**  
**Eurosales International Ltd**  
**Emerald Strategy Partners LTD**  
**Dream Digital**  
**ITM**  
**Textile Print & Embroidery Ltd**  
**Alec Drew - The Business Expert**  
**Hillstreet Quarries Limited**  
**Keane Insulation Contractors Limited**  
**Riptide Hardware ltd t/a Doors plus Floors**  
**Suir Clean Limited**  
**The Bodywise Clinic**  
**GEMU Ireland Ltd**  
**Dual Printing Company Limited**

## Three More Weeks To Go: ISME 30 Years Anniversary Lunch Rescheduled

Our highly anticipated 30th-anniversary business lunch that initially took place on 17th November 2023, had to be abandoned midway due to unforeseen circumstances. However, we are delighted to announce the rescheduled event on **Friday, 22nd March 2024 at Clontarf Castle Hotel. Reception at 12.30pm, lunch at 1.00pm.**

This rescheduled event will be attended by some 300 business owners and their staff to celebrate the founding of ISME in 1993. Comedian Barry Murphy will be on hand to provide Après Lunch entertainment, and there will be great opportunity to network with other members.

Paralympic Table Tennis Player, Motivational Speaker and Actuarial Analyst, Colin Judge will give the keynote address at the event. Tickets are now on sale and selling out fast.

Book your tickets [here](#).

We are looking forward to welcoming you again at Clontarf Castle this Month



**Join us for lunch to celebrate the 30th anniversary of ISME**

Friday, 22nd March 2024  
Clontarf Castle, Dublin 3

[BOOK NOW >](#)

## Watch Back: Employment Law Update Advisory

You can view the Employment Law Update webinar with Katherine McVeigh, Barrister-at-Law that took place on Friday 26th January, by clicking [here](#)

**Some of the areas we covered in the webinar are:**

- Protected Disclosures – amendments and recent case law
- Employment Status – self-employed our employee – implications for employers following the Karshan/ Domino's Pizza case. What does this mean for employers?
- Sick Leave – new legal obligations on employers and recent interpretation from the courts in two key cases
- Employees on probation – what does an employer need to know?
- Mandatory retirement ages – important recent developments in the courts
- Recent important case law





## 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.

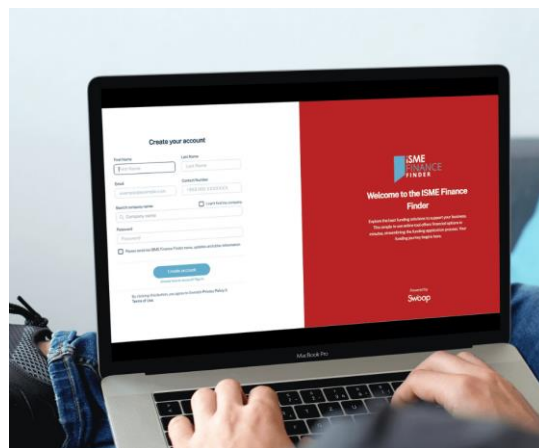
The Swoop team provide expertise and professionalism based on their deep knowledge of the lending market both in Ireland and in the UK. During the consultation they can address such key questions as:

- 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](mailto:isme@swoopfunding.com)
- Phone +353 1 270 7658

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



## ISME Surveys

### ➤ Q4 2023 Trends Survey

How did your business find the fourth 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 Q4 2023 [here](#).

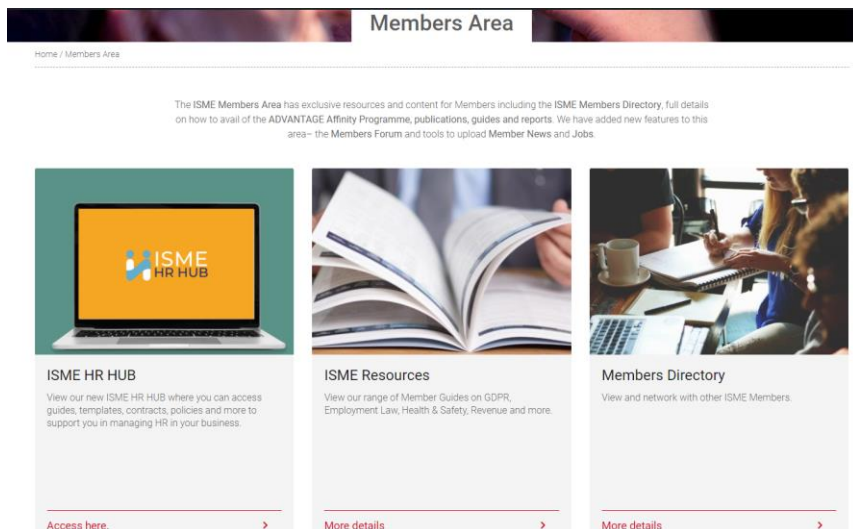
Please share this survey with your network.

### ➤ Q4 2023 Bank Watch Survey

Please take our Bank Watch Survey for Q4 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.



## 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.

## 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 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](https://isme.ie/isme-wellness-programme)



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority

- ❑ A new course '[Protecting Vulnerable Workers](https://hsalearning.ie)' is now live on [hsalearning.ie](https://hsalearning.ie). The course is accessible from a new topic titled 'Vulnerable Workers' on [hsalearning.ie](https://hsalearning.ie). This course is targeted at employers/managers/supervisors – across all sectors. It includes a definition of vulnerable workers (VWs), examples of VWs, some profiling around specific cohorts, accident data (including HSA accident trends data 2013 to 2022), an explanation of vulnerability and some indicative personas. In addition, we have a useful checklist which provides examples of what a prevention approach looks like.
- ❑ New information sheet on occupational noise is written for employers and employees to raise awareness and control the risk of workplace noise. It is applicable to all sectors. Many thanks to Declan Foster, Mairead Wall, Shara Smith and Helen Hourihane. Please see: [Sound matters - Occupational Noise](#)
- ❑ **New Topic Page on Human Factors:** [Human Factors - Health and Safety Authority \(hsa.ie\)](https://hsa.ie)
- ❑ [Vulnerable Workers Information Sheet](#) is written for employers, managers, and supervisors. The purpose of this information sheet is to raise awareness around vulnerable workers, employer responsibilities in relation to protecting vulnerable workers, and protection practices.
- ❑ [Vulnerable Workers Topic Page on HSA Website](#) provides some high-level information about vulnerable workers and some signposting to key resources.
- ❑ The HSA are delighted to have reached a huge milestone with [BeSMART.ie](https://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.



## HSA Events



The HSA will be hosting a National Conference on Safety Representatives in Dublin Castle on the 12th of November 2024.

All current Safety Representatives, employers, training organisations, instructors, professional health, and safety practitioners, those interested in occupational health and safety and anyone with occupational health and safety responsibilities are welcome to attend the conference.

The conference will include keynote speakers, panel discussion and round table discussions.

Click [here](#) to book your spot and learn more.

### 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/>

### SEAI Online Workshop

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland is running a free online workshop to teach the basics of implementing energy management within your business.

This workshop will be delivered by one of Ireland's leading energy experts and will take you through the six steps to creating an energy action plan which will help you implement energy management practices in your business, save money, become more energy efficient and resilient to rising energy costs.

The workshop is taking place on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm-4pm. To learn more and register your interest please click [here](#)

### Taoiseach unveils stamp marking 50 Years of Guaranteed Irish

An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar unveiled An Post's new national stamp celebrating 50 years of Guaranteed Irish supporting Irish businesses on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February.

Designed by Dublin-based CI Studio, the stamp captures the essence of Guaranteed Irish in a simple and playful way, with the iconic symbol rendered in gold. A hand selecting the green dot over the 'I' represents the act of choosing to support businesses and jobs in Ireland. The 'N' rate €1.40 stamp covers postage across the island of Ireland and the stamp and specially designed first day cover envelope are available from 8<sup>th</sup> February at [www.anpost.com/shop](http://www.anpost.com/shop) and selected post offices nationwide.



### Events

**Drone Summit 2024**, Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March -Saturday 2nd March, RDS Arena, Book [here](#)

**Food Sustainability - Time to Change**, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Red Cow Moran Hotel D22, Book [here](#)

**IFEX**, Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March -Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March, Titanic Exhibition Centre, Belfast, Book [here](#)

**SEAI Energy Show 2024**, Wednesday March 20 - Thursday March 21, RDS, Book [here](#)

**National Construction Summit 2024**, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April , Sport Ireland Campus, Blanchardstown, 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](http://www.isme.ie/advantage)**





**The ISME Skillnet** 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.

**Speaking with Confidence**

Thursday, 7th March

[View Course](#)

**Effective Telephone Sales**

Wednesday, 20th March

[View Course](#)

**Business & Email Etiquette**

Tuesday, 26th March

[View Course](#)

**Beginner VAT**

Monday, 8th April

[View Course](#)

**Intermediate Vat**

Wednesday, 10th April

[View Course](#)

**Advanced VAT**

Monday, 15th April

[View Course](#)

**Business Tax 101**

Wednesday, 17th April

[View Course](#)

SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
FIND THE FULL LISTING







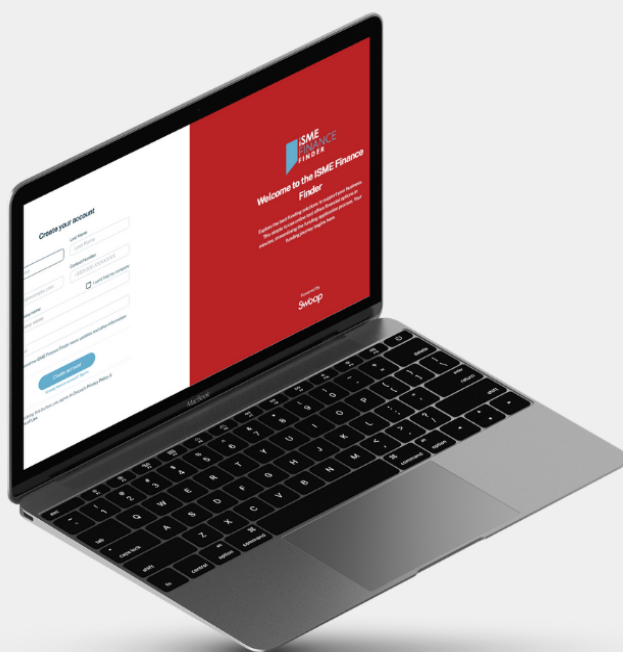
# Do you want to...

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)