

Member's Newsletter

September 2024



iSME
Irish **SME** Association



Dear member,

The Dáil reconvenes after the summer recess on 18th September. It looks like we will have a very compressed schedule ahead of what is shaping up to be a pre-election give-away budget on 1st October.

One issue we have made no progress on so far with Government has been that of [CGT Liability on the transfer of family businesses worth over €10m](#). We have argued that this is a fundamentally anti-scale-up measure, and is contrary to Government policy, but so far there has been no movement on the issue. However, if you think you or your business is affected, or if you are currently considering business transfer, you need to talk to your accountant or solicitor NOW. ISME will have an advice package available soon, but this is an issue you must start working on immediately.

While we were happy to welcome the Department of Enterprise [Seed Capital Scheme](#) this month, in reality we will need to see many more measures to promote and scale indigenous enterprise in Ireland. The US Presidential election is still a toss-up between two protectionist candidates, and there are worrying signs of a US recession. This could deal a big blow to Ireland's corporation tax figures. Government needs to champion local businesses as aggressively as it has foreign multinationals.

As we approach Budget 2025, we [remain concerned](#) that Government is considering an 8% increase in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) following the 12.4% increase last January. This is simply too great an increase to price into sales for most SMEs, especially those in the services and hospitality sectors, where we have seen significant levels of business mortality since the New Year. We are not in favour of Government hand-outs to assist businesses meet these increased labour costs; in any case, the hand-outs rarely approach even a fraction of the cost of the employment measures.

The [Planning and Development Bill](#) was to have been signed into law before the summer recess, and will be a priority for Government in the new term. However, ISME sees the passage of the [Defamation Reform Bill](#) as a top priority for the autumn term, especially for our retailers, who are the most frequent victims of vexatious defamation suits.

Lastly, we will soon be announcing the details of the ISME annual Lunch in Killiney Castle on Friday, 29th November. We promise you a great line-up and a very enjoyable afternoon for you and your staff, and we look forward to seeing you there.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neil O'Sullivan', followed by a stylized flourish.

- **Critical Care Training Ltd**
- **Guildea Print Ltd T/A 123 Print**
- **Lois**
- **Below the Line Training & Development Limited**
- **Kinetic Financial Advice Limited t/a MadeSimple**
- **Michael Tighe Engineering Limited**
- **A & T Drain Services Ltd. t/a Drain Doctor**
- **Elstan Engineering Ltd**
- **Sustainable Accounting Ltd**

Save the Date: ISME Business Lunch

Mark your calendars for the ISME Business Lunch on Friday, November 29th at Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel, Dublin. This exclusive event is the perfect opportunity to network and discuss industry trends with fellow professionals. Don't miss out on this chance to connect and collaborate. Save the date and don't forget to book your tickets [here](#).



Advertise with the bISME



The bISME is the official quarterly online magazine of ISME. The bISME is sent to businesses across the country and carries comprehensive editorial content including: news; interviews with leading business figures; ISME services and lobbying updates; member profiles; HR; finance; topical issues facing Irish SMEs; lifestyle articles; and lots more.

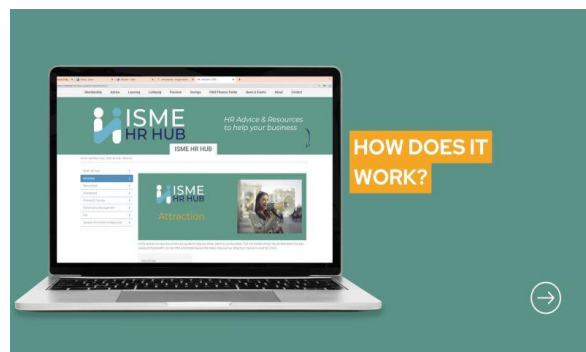
We are planning issue 26 of the bISME. If you would like to advertise in our online publication with a growing circulation, take a look at the rate card [here](#) and email us at marketing@isme.ie

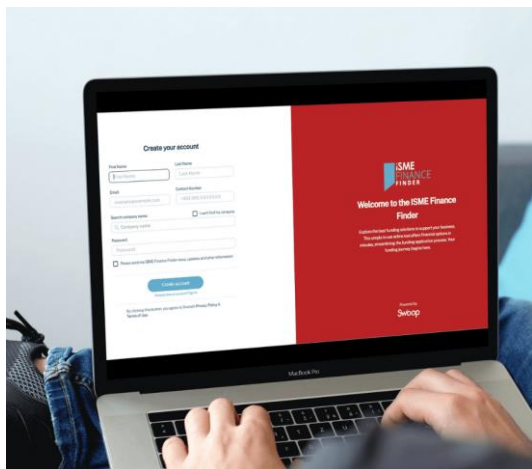
ISME HR Hub – your HR support

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.





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 ISME Affinity Partner

Take a look at the most recent addition to the ISME ADVANTAGE Affinity programme from ISME Member business Fexco. ISME Members can avail **No transaction fees** on all foreign currency payments and **Free FX Assessment** to identify and mitigate potential currency risks in your business. View all our Affinity programmes [here](#). ISME Members can access all offers when they log into the Members Area.



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.

New free service makes it easier for Irish businesses to access supports



Running a business isn't easy, There are lots of things that can get in the way of success. Rising costs, increasing competition, struggling to find the right talent, and not having the time to focus on the important things. It's not easy but accessing support should be. And it starts here.

Bringing together over 180 supports from 19 different departments and agencies, the new National Enterprise Hub is the single source for all government support for your business. With everything from simple, easy-to-access grants to expert advice and training, our website has all the information, all in one place.

And don't worry about not knowing what you need: our helpful team of trained advisors available online or over the phone ([\(01\) 727 2100](tel:017272100)) will guide you every step of the way. So, whether you've applied for supports before, or it's your first time, we're here to help you get started.

Support starts here, visit www.neh.gov.ie for more information.

ISME calls for reversal of cuts to National Training Fund in Budget 2025

ISME has urged the government to reverse cuts to the National Training Fund (NTF) in Budget 2025, highlighting a surplus of €1.3 billion, expected to reach €1.5 billion by year-end. Despite this, ISME's training budget was reduced in 2024, limiting their ability to meet demand. Funded by employers through a PRSI levy, the NTF supports workplace skill development, which is crucial as OECD data shows Irish adults lag in problem-solving skills. ISME warns that without increased funding in 2025, it may seek a levy suspension.



For more on ISME's appeal and its potential impact, read the full article [here](#).

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

Health & Safety Authority Update



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

- ❑ [Small Business Start-ups](#) : This short introductory course is suitable if you are starting a small business or have a new business. You will learn about the role of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the importance of managing safety, health and welfare in the workplace. The elements of a health and safety management system are outlined on the course and the main duties of employers and employees under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Risk assessment and meeting Safety Statement requirements for your business is another key part of this course.
- ❑ [Small Business – Employees](#): This short introductory course is suitable for employees that are working in a small business. The course outlines the main duties of employers and employees under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. It also addresses the impact of positive safety behaviour in the workplace. The course also includes key health and safety information required to keep you safe at work, including information on the roles of a Safety Officer and Safety Representative.
- ❑ [Small Business – Employers](#): This short introductory course is suitable for employers and the self-employed who are running a small business. The course outlines the role of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the general duties of employers under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Information on vulnerable workers, including those in a sensitive risk group is provided. Risk assessment and the Safety Statement, and reporting accidents to the HSA is also covered on the course. The content is suitable across all work sectors
- ❑ [Occupational Health and Safety Guidance on Vulnerable Workers in the Workplace](#) guidance is written for employers and employees in all work sectors, including agency workers, contractors, migrant workers, part-time and temporary workers, and gig workers.
- ❑ A new course [Vulnerable Workers: A short Course for Employees](#) is now live on hsalearning.ie. This short awareness-raising course is for employees, including those who are vulnerable workers. The course will also be helpful to employers and managers, supervisors, safety personnel, and to organisations or educational bodies that are helping vulnerable persons to prepare for the workplace.
- ❑ [Why a Health and Safety Inspector Calls to your Workplace](#) guidance explains to you what to expect when a HSA inspector calls to your workplace to carry out an inspection or an investigation. It also explains what we do with the personal data we are required to collect during our workplace inspections and investigations.



Understand LEO Energy Efficiency Grant and SEAI Grants

Venue: Unit 5 & 6, CHQ Building

Date: 11th September

Time: 10-12:00

Do you want to cut down on energy costs or meet energy saving targets? The Local Enterprise Office Energy Efficiency Grant and SEAI Grants have helped businesses make significant savings.

10:00-10:15 Sandra Reynolds, LEO

- Supports to develop a Sustainability Strategy
- Financial supports Energy Efficiency Grant update

10:15-10:30 Alison Donnellan, SEAI

- Steps to a Low Carbon Business
- Educational and Financial Supports for Businesses

10:30-12:00

- Business owners will have the opportunity to meet one to one with LEO representatives and SEAI representatives present and ask questions on how to apply for grants and understand what is eligible.

The key takeaway from this informational and sustainability advice clinic is that the businesses walk away with a greater understanding of the difference between supports from the LEO and supports from SEAI and what is relevant to their situation.

Booking link: [Understand LEO Energy Efficiency Grant and SEAI Grants](https://www.localenterprise.ie/energy)

Green Business Supports

Ireland has a target to reduce carbon emissions (greenhouse gas emissions) by 51% by 2030, and to achieve a climate neutral economy by 2050. (source: Government Report). The sectoral emissions ceilings (SECs) agreed in July 2022 put in place targets for each sector to achieve this. The target for the enterprise sector is to reduce emissions by 35% by 2030. In order to do this, businesses are encouraged to invest in a greener future, through sustainable products, services and business models.

Whether your business is big or small, it is important to reduce emissions and promote sustainability in how you work. Click [here](#) to find a number of training, mentoring and financial supports for companies trying to reduce their carbon footprint

Events

NextGen | Digital Summit 2024, Thursday, 5th September, Croke Park, Book [here](#)

DigiMarCon Ireland 2024, Thu 5th – Fri 6th September, The Westin Dublin Hotel, Book [here](#)

Understand LEO Energy Efficiency Grant and SEAI Grants, Wednesday 11th September, CHQ Building, Book [here](#)

The Retail Support Summit, Wednesday 25th September, Dynamic Space, D18, Book [here](#)



TO LET!

Are you (or someone you know) looking for a city-centre office? ISME has an own-door, own-Eircode basement office at 17 Kildare Street available for immediate occupation.

1,300sqft.

Enquiries to **Neil McDonnell** (neil@isme.ie)



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



Is your company subject to a Sectoral Employment Order or Employment Regulations Orders?

There are currently 4 Sectoral Employment Orders or Employment Regulations Orders in place across the following industries:

1. Construction Sector
2. Contract Cleaners
3. Early Learning and Childcare Sector
4. Security

1. Construction Sector:

The Construction Sector has been subject to Sectoral Employment Order for a number of years. The most recent Order came into effect on 18th September 2023. Details of this Order are available on the ISME HR Hub

Who is covered by the SEO

There are 2 criteria which decide who is covered:

1. The employer must operate in the construction sector, and
2. It applies to employees who work in the sector and defines their roles into specific classes; apprentices, new entrant operatives, construction operative or craft person.

The SEO defines what activities place an employer within the construction sector and what experience and qualifications place a worker in a particular employee class.

While this SEO came into effect on 18th September 2023, minimum rates of pay and other conditions were revised under the order effective 5th August 2024.

Full details of the revised pay rates and conditions can be found [here](#).

2. Contract Cleaners:

Contract Cleaning Industry 2024 (ERO) came into effect on the 1st June 2024.

Who is covered by the ERO

Workers employed by undertakings engaged in whole or in part on the provision of cleaning and janitorial services in, or on the exterior of, establishments including hospitals, offices, shops, stores, factories, apartment buildings, hotels, airports and similar establishments.

Full Details of the current rates of pay and benefits under this agreement can be found here: [Contract Cleaning - Workplace Relations Commission](#).

3. Early Learning and Childcare Sector

The Early Learning and Childcare Sector ERO came into effect in 2022 with increased minimum rates of pay effective from 24th June 2024.

Who is covered by the EROs

The Orders apply to:

- Early Years Educators and School Age Childcare (SAC) Practitioners
- Lead Educators (Room Leaders) and School Age Childcare (SAC) Coordinators (including graduate rate)
- Deputy / Assistant Managers
- Centre Manager (including graduate rate)

Minimum rates of pay based on role and age are defined under this ERO and available here: [Early Learning and Childcare Sector - Workplace Relations Commission](#)

1. Security Industry

A new Employment Regulation Order (ERO) for the Security Industry, came into effect on 1st July 2024. This sets the statutory minimum rates of pay and other conditions for persons employed in the security industry sector.

Who is covered by the ERO

This Order applies to workers employed as security operatives employed by a security firm.

There are many factors to be considered as part of this ERO which go beyond minimum rates of pay. A full breakdown of the details of this ERO is available from the WRC website [here](#).

The full Statute can be downloaded from our HR Hub:

<https://isme.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Security-Industry-ERO-2024.pdf>

What next?

Any Employers operating in these sectors are bound by the terms of the SEO / ERO.

Employment contracts should reflect the terms of the SEO / ERO applicable to your industry. ISME has prepared Contract of Employment templates for each agreement.

These templates are available on our website: <https://isme.ie/members-area/hr-hub/recruitment/>. Here you will also find a downloadable copy of each SEO or ERO for the four industries.

Any breaches of an Employment Regulation Order may be referred to the Workplace Relations Commission for appropriate action.

For further information or support on this or any HR matter, ISME Members can contact the HR Advice Line via HR@ISME.ie or 01 6622755.



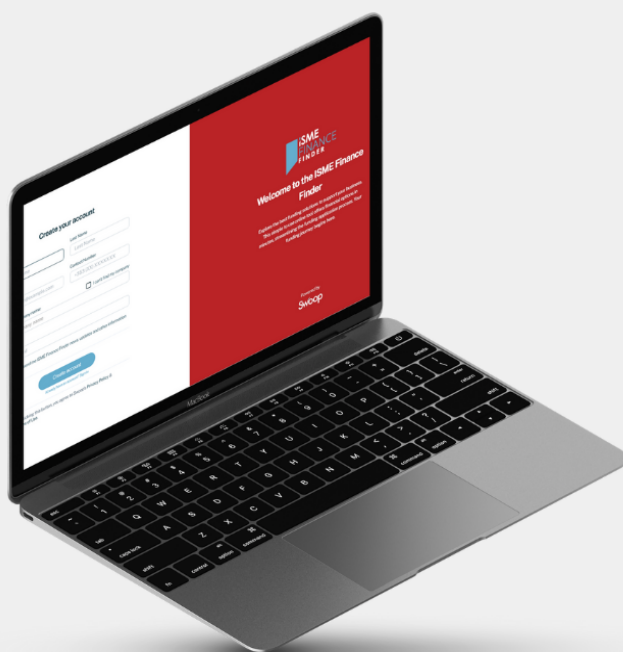
Do you want to...

start or expand your business?

improve cashflow?

acquire a business?

purchase property?



If so, your finance journey starts here

isme.ie/finance-finder

The EU AI Act for Businesses webinar



The EU AI Act is a significant legislative initiative aimed at regulating artificial intelligence within the European Union. Proposed by the European Commission in April 2021, it is designed to ensure that AI technologies are deployed safely and ethically, balancing innovation with public safety and fundamental rights.

Join us on the morning of 10th October to hear Julie Galbraith, a partner of Eversheds-Sutherland and Head of the Employment Law Department, who will take us through the key fundamentals of the Act.

[BOOK YOUR TICKETS](#)

The key points for discussion:

- The new EU AI Act – what this means for businesses.
- Examples of how businesses are currently using AI in both employee and customer facing contexts (EG for Recruitment and Employment / Contacting customers).
- What are the key considerations surrounding the use of AI for these purposes.
- Day to day uses of AI that businesses should be aware of in their existing systems, and potential new uses of AI.
- AI in a data protection and IP context.
- Q&A session

About your presenter and AI expert Julie Galbraith:

Julie Galbraith is a Partner and Head of Eversheds-Sutherland's Employment Law Department. She advises clients on all aspects of the employment relationship from recruitment to termination. She works with public and private sector clients on contentious and non-contentious employment issues to deliver on the business needs of our clients. She advises HR, legal and business teams on a multitude of day-to-day and strategic issues such as disciplinary, grievance, performance management, equality, data protection, TUPE and termination of employment matters.

Chair of the Employment Law Association of Ireland (ELAI) and successfully lobbies on behalf of employment lawyers and employers to the WRC for reform. Julie was also recently appointed to the GAA's Central Appeal's Committee reflecting her experience in administrative law and procedural best practice.



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.

UPCOMING COURSES:

COURSE	DATE	VIEW COURSE
Introductory Certificate in Bookkeeping using Big Red Cloud	Join Anytime	View Course
Planning & Budgeting in Accounts	Join Anytime	View Course
HR Essentials for SME's	From Monday 2 nd Sept	View Course
Certified Leadership Programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emerging Leadership Development Programme• Frontline Managers - Leadership Programme	Monday, 16 th Sept	View Courses
Introduction to Canva	Tuesday, 17 th Sept	View Course
Customer Service and Complaints Handling	Thursday 19 th Sept	View Course

SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND
THE FULL LISTING

