

Members' Newsletter

February 2025



iSME
Irish **SME** Association



Dear member,

We have clarity now on our Cabinet and on our Minister of State. We consider it a positive that the Enterprise Minister has not changed, as he was so recently appointed, the introduction of another would not have been a good thing in our view.

I have some individual news regarding the Minister's decision to appoint me to the [Low Pay Commission](#). Let me assure all members that I will make explicitly clear to the Commission the concerns of the SME community with national minimum wage policy.

As yet we have no update on the proposed increase of statutory sick pay to seven days, but you will hear from us as soon as there is a change announced.

You will have seen and heard a considerable amount of media reporting on changes to [hybrid and work from home](#) arrangements within the public service. Many more employers are reviewing policies that were established during the Covid pandemic. We will keep you abreast of any news on changes.

We are aware of very significant disruption to business suffered throughout the country, but most especially in the west of Ireland. If there are policy responses you believe ISME should be following up on, please let me know by email.

Although we have not yet been formally invited to participate, ISME will be a member of the Tánaiste's proposed [trade consultative group](#). That is why we asked you to reply to our International Trade Survey. If you have not completed it so far, we ask you to do so NOW! It will take you approximately 90 seconds to complete, and you'll find it [HERE](#).

As I advised last month, 23rd May 2025 is not just our AGM, it is the day on which our ballot for new national council members is counted. We look forward to having a refreshed National Council and Board this year, and we would like members interested in standing for election to make themselves known to us via membership@isme.ie

At time of writing, we do not know the results of the Seanad election to the Industrial and Commercial panel, but I want to take this opportunity of wishing Linda Murray and Matt Shanahan every success!

- **The Buff Day Spa**
- **Entity Insights Ltd (ta Entity Recruitment)**
- **Hanna McDonnell Marketing**
- **Arise (TU Dublin)**
- **TaxiFair Insurances Limited T/A TaxiFair**
- **McEniffs (Bundoran) Ltd T/A Allingham Arms Hotel**
- **Snoetica**
- **Coiffeur Salons Ltd t/a Dylan Bradshaw**
- **Bronwyn Conroy Group T/A BC Aesthetics / BC Barista**
- **Unio Wealth Management**
- **NOW Group**
- **Holiday Ireland Tours**
- **In Vogue Skin & Beauty**
- **DM Electrical Services**
- **Walsh's Bakery**
- **Houlihan Technology & Engineering Ltd.**
- **Integrated Learning Solutions Ltd t/a eBSI Export Academy**
- **Limerick Glass & Glazing Ltd**

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.

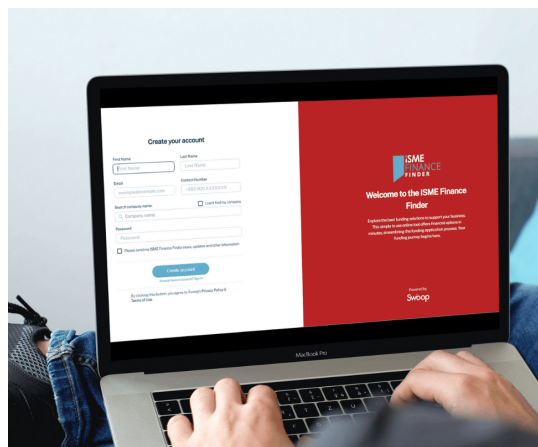
The Swoop team provide expertise and professionalism based on their deep knowledge of the lending market both in Ireland and in the UK. During the consultation they can address such key questions as:

- 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

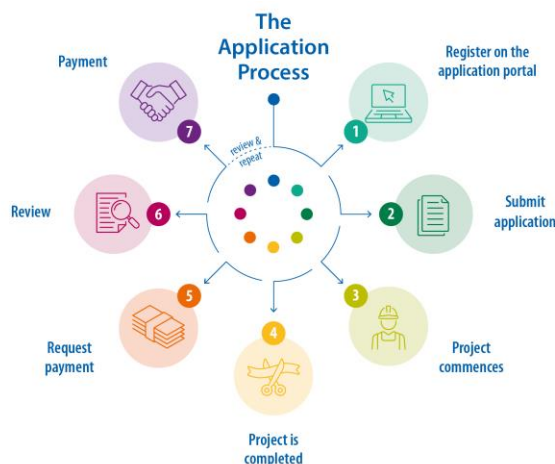
Visit the ISME Finance Finder [here](#).

The Business Energy Upgrade Scheme is live

Minister [Eamon Ryan](#) [Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications](#) launched a new €50 million Business Energy Upgrades Scheme to support small and medium sized businesses to carry out energy efficiency upgrades.

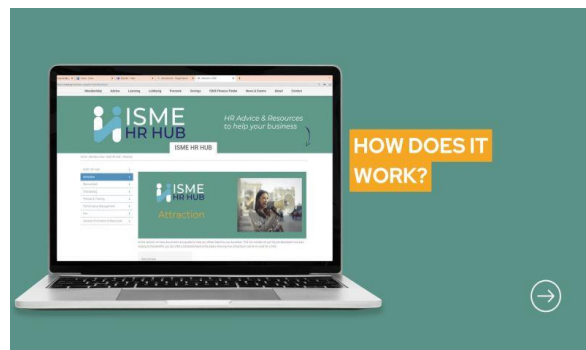
SMEs can now get immediate grant approval for a wide range of building energy efficiency and renewable measures including solar PV and thermal, heat pumps, fabric, and air handling upgrades. There is support available for design assistance and for optimising existing BMS systems.

Please find the link to the supports here: <https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants/rapid-approval>



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.

Save More This New Year with ISME Affinity Partners

Take a look at the most recent additions to the ISME ADVANTAGE Affinity programme :

ISME Members who are new to Fexco, can now avail **No transaction fees** on all foreign currency payments and **Free FX Assessment** to identify and mitigate potential currency risks in your business.



Davy offers a planning-led approach with a team of pension and tax specialists to help clients assess their options to avail of pension saving opportunities while they exist

Our new lead generation partner, **Lead Forensics** offers ISME members the ability to set up free tracking on their website(s) to uncover the 98% of website traffic that is currently being lost. There is no commitment to subscribe at this stage, and the report may highlight website traffic you previously did not know the origin of. In addition, ISME members can receive their first full months tracking completely free of charge, should they decide to sign up for the service after running the free test



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



ISME Surveys

➤ Q4 2024 Trends Survey

How did your business find the fourth quarter of 2024? 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 2024 [here](#).

Please share this survey with your network.

➤ Q4 2024 Bank Watch Survey

Please take our Bank Watch Survey for Q4 2024 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.



Advertise with The bISME

The second issue of bISME in 2025 is going to be out on March and we are taking ad bookings now for this issue. ISME Members get reduced rate on ads, find [out](#).

The bISME – Winter Edition out now!

The latest issue of bISME is out now to read and download online.

Take a look [here](#)



Key market events that influenced foreign exchange markets in January

- The U.S. dollar alternated between gains and losses as markets grappled with uncertainty surrounding any tariffs President Donald Trump may implement.
- [Toward](#)s the end of the month, the EURUSD traded at multi-week highs helped by encouraging German IFO (business climate index) data.
- Concerns about the UK's fiscal policy weighed on sterling early in the month.
- The pound hit a fresh five-month low versus the euro in late January as economic data and comments from a Bank of England (BoE) official led investors to increase their bets on future BoE interest rate cuts.
- Japan's central bank increased the cost of borrowing to its highest level in 17 years after consumer price rises accelerated in December.

What data and factors could impact on the major currencies in February?

- Thursday Feb 6th – UK interest rate decision
- Friday Feb 7th – US non-farm payroll data
- Feb 24th - European Inflation data
- Markets are very sensitive currently to any tariff related announcements by the US Government (and potential counter announcements by other governments)
- Changes in market sentiment regarding potential interest rate announcements by the US, UK and European central banks

As an ISME member, you have exclusive access to Fexco's dedicated account manager John Barry, who will help you with all your foreign exchange requirements.

- **Reduce your cross-border payments costs**
- **Protect your business from currency volatility**

Discover the benefits to your business without an obligation to trade!

>>[Tell Me More](#)>>

Health & Safety Authority Update



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

- ❑ [Annual Review of Workplace Injuries, Illnesses and Fatalities 2022–2023](#) report presents the Annual Review of Workplace Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities for 2022- 2023. In preparing this report, we recognise the importance of providing reliable and up-to-date statistical information as an evidence base for decision-making.
- ❑ [A Short Guide to Health Surveillance in the Workplace](#) aims to assist employers and health professionals working on their behalf in understanding their legal requirements regarding health surveillance in the workplace. It also highlights the key elements to consider when implementing a health surveillance programme.
- ❑ [Employing Apprentices: Safety On the Job](#) information sheet is written for people who employ apprentices. It provides a summary overview of how employers should fulfil their duties as an employer and protect apprentices, who may be more at risk of injury and ill health.
- ❑ [Safety On the Job for Apprentices](#)- This information sheet is written for Apprentices. It provides some essential tips to help Apprentices stay safe and healthy as they start their career.
- ❑ [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

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



Social Media Fest 2025

Social Media Fest 2025 is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9th, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Maldron Hotel near Dublin Airport. A "Masterclass for Success" is also planned for the evening of Tuesday, April 8th, from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM.

The event will feature a lineup of expert speakers, including Fiona Harrold, Anita Wong, Louise McDonnell, Samantha Kelly, and Esther Ocampo. Topics to be covered include:

- How to create a lead magnet that converts followers to customers
- How to create a successful podcast for a global audience
- Strategy
- Turning followers into clients
- Video repurposing to create impactful content
- Optimising your content (SEO))

Tickets are currently available for purchase [here](#).

The event has partnered with "It's Good to Talk," a Wexford-based organization offering affordable professional counseling and support services to the community.

For more information, including ticket purchases and sponsorship opportunities, please visit the official website: <https://socialmediafest.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





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.

ISME Skillnet & UCD Professional Academy

[View Course](#)

HR Essentials for SME's

Tuesday 25th Feb 2025 onwards

[View Course](#)

MS Excel Advanced

Tuesday 11th March

[View Course](#)

Introduction to Canva

Thursday 20th March

[View Course](#)

Excel: Dashboards And Data Visualisation

Wednesday 26th March

[View Course](#)

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
FIND THE FULL LISTING





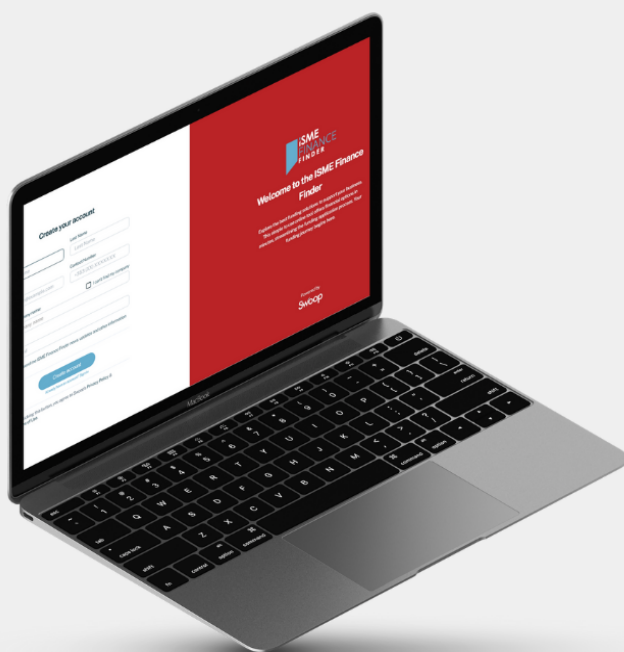
Do you want to...

start or expand your business?

improve cashflow?

acquire a business?

purchase property?



If so, your finance journey starts here

isme.ie/finance-finder