

Members' Newsletter

May 2025



iSME
Irish **SME** Association



Dear member,

This note marks the final month of the 2025-2027 National Council, and our new National Council members will be declared by our auditor at our AGM on 23rd May.

This time of year is very busy from a lobbying point of view because there is an expectation from the Department of Enterprise that we will complete our pre-budget submission by the end of the month of May. I am working on this with the Policy Committee at the moment, but if you have specific issues you wish to see addressed in the pre-budget, please get on to me asap.

The main policy issues ISME is managing on behalf of members are:

- The consideration of the minimum wage rate 2026, which the Low Pay Commission is due to make a recommendation on in 10 weeks.
- The ongoing cost of insurance issue, which successive legal reforms have not reduced. Minister of State Robert Troy has announced a consultation on this issue.
- The issue of collective bargaining, about which there is a live consultation at the moment.
- Energy costs, which continue in Ireland at the highest pre-tax level in the EU.
- The reform of the defamation act, where the reform bill is before the Dail at present.

We were pleased to welcome Minister Peter Burke's intervention on the "Living Wage" issue in April. He has recognised that the changing circumstances of world trade are likely to negatively impact our budgetary and economic situation, and has slowed the impact of cost increasing measures on business. He is also setting up a Competitiveness Action Plan, recognising that Ireland's competitiveness has been eroded in recent years due to multiple factors.

On a personal note, and on behalf of members and the National Council, I want to thank Marc O'Dwyer for his stewardship of ISME over the last two years. His stepping down as ISME Chair coincides with the sale of his business Big Red Cloud. We all wish him well for his future ventures.

You will receive notification of the AGM very shortly, and I hope to see as many of you as possible in the Iveagh Gardens Hotel in Dublin on 23rd May for the election of our new National Council.

Dental Tech Group

Bankz Hair and Beauty

Bookkeeping Academy of Ireland

Valerie's Hair Studio

Colleen Irish Travel

Blynk Drinks

Buff Beauty

Forward Electrical Ltd.

SmartHost Limited

Hunt Office Technology Limited

The Cultured Food Company

IPC Digital Media Ltd

Business For Finance

Leonard Engineering (Ballybay)

Ready for the next ISME 2025 Webinar Series with Fexco?

ISME are delighted to introduce this essential webinar as part of the **ISME 2025 Webinar Series**, featuring keynote speaker **John Barry, Payments & FX Consultant at Fexco**.

With global uncertainty on the rise, ignoring currency risk is no longer an option—even for smaller businesses. Join ISME and Fexco for this essential webinar where we'll show you how SMEs like you can navigate currency volatility to protect your cash flow with simple, effective tools.

Date: Thursday 29th May 10.00am- 11.00am

Register for the free webinar [here](#)



Mitigating Foreign Exchange Risk in Turbulent Times

An ISME Webinar With
John Barry, Payments & FX Consultant at Fexco

Thursday, 29th May 2025
10AM-11AM



www.isme.ie | marketing@isme.ie

ISME Annual General Meeting 2025- Join us!

We're delighted to invite our members to the ISME Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025, taking place on **Friday, 23rd May at 10:00 AM** in **The Iveagh Suite, Iveagh Garden Hotel, 72–74 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 (D02 Y282)**.

As 2025 is an election year for ISME, this AGM will include the election of a new Board and National Council. We're also inviting our members to join us for a valuable networking opportunity with fellow business owners, industry peers, and the ISME team.

Please note: Attendance is free, but tickets are limited to 100 and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Date: Friday, 23rd May 2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Venue: The Iveagh Suite, Iveagh Garden Hotel, 72–74 Harcourt St, Dublin 2, D02 Y282

Lunch: Light lunch served after the meeting

Tickets: Free – limited to 100 attendees

Register for free [here](#)

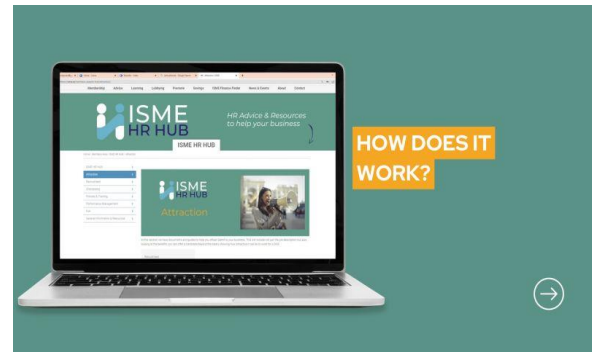
We look forward to welcoming you to a morning of insight, connection, and community.

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 addition to the ISME ADVANTAGE Affinity programme :

For the next two months (until end of May) ISME members can subscribe to **The Business Post** just €75 for the year, after that, the standard price of €99 per year applies. This is your chance to stay ahead with expert analysis, market insights and in-depth reporting to help businesses grow.

The Business Post

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



The Spring Issue of the bISME is Here!

Dive into our latest edition featuring Derek Foley Butler, FCA and discover how GRID Finance is transforming SME lending in Ireland, Neil McDonnell ISME CEO discusses SME Resilience Amid Global Shifts, OSSM talks about how the right technology can empower small and scaling businesses, ISME HR Team advices on Maternity Leave & Employees' Protections for Postponement. Plus, insights on SME Matters 50X Programme, rising civil litigation, and more!

Read and download [here](#)

ISME Urges Measured EU Response to US Tariffs Amid Concerns for Irish SMEs

ISME (the Irish SME Association) is calling for a strategic and balanced response from the EU to the tariffs announced this week by the US in order to protect Irish business interests and avoid unnecessary economic harm. Government met with trade representatives on 4th April to consider next steps in addressing the US tariffs issue.



ISME says the impact of the US tariffs reaches far deeper into the Irish economy than exporters alone. In a February 2025 survey of ISME members, only 11% of SMEs reported exporting directly to the US. However, over a third of Irish SMEs provide goods and services to US multinational companies based in Ireland. Alarmingly, 16% of those firms say their US multinational customers account for more than half of their total turnover.

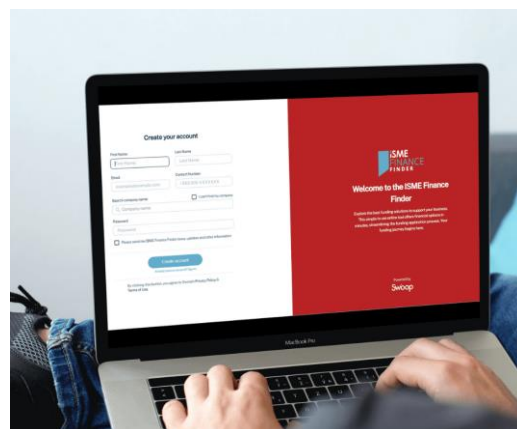
Read more [here](#)

Streamlined Funding Access for Irish SMEs with ISME Finance Finder

The ISME Finance Finder, developed in partnership with Swoop Funding, is an online platform designed to streamline access to finance for Irish SMEs. It offers a centralized solution for businesses seeking funding options to start, expand, improve cash flow, refinance debt, acquire assets, or invest in new markets.

Key features include:

- **Comprehensive Funding Options:** Access to loans, equity, grants, and asset finance tailored to various business needs.
- **Expert Guidance:** Support from a team of funding specialists to assist with queries and application processes.
- **Application Tools:** Provision of templates and resources to facilitate funding applications.
- **Dedicated Support:** Availability of a hotline and email support five days a week for funding-related inquiries.
- **Regular Updates:** Finance updates and alerts to keep businesses informed of new opportunities



Additionally, businesses can avail of a complimentary [30-minute one-on-one consultation](#) with Swoop's funding experts, offering confidential and obligation-free advice.

For more information or to begin your funding journey, visit the [ISME Finance Finder](#).

Health & Safety Authority Update

- ❑ [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. The content is suitable across all work sectors

In relation to safety management, please see the following:

- [Safety Management Made Simple](#)
- [Director Responsibilities, Safety Leadership & Safety Culture](#)

In relation to OSH and workplace learning, please see the following:

- [OSH Learner Pathway / Journey](#)
- [OSH Training Requirements & Approach](#)
- [Employee OSH Training Journey](#)
- [OSH in Education and Training Providers](#)

Key events that influenced foreign exchange markets in April

- On April 2nd, President Trump announced a series of sweeping tariffs which had a dramatic impact on markets
- The European Central Bank cut interest rates for the 7th time in a year, lowering its deposit interest rate by 25 bps to 2.25%
- UK inflation fell to 2.6% in March, down from 2.8% in February, increasing pressure on the Bank of England to cut interest rates
- President Trump criticised Fed Chairman Jerome Powell for not cutting US interest rates
- Amid the economic and political uncertainty, and concern about the potential impact that tariffs will have on world economy, the US dollar continued to weaken with the euro reaching 3-year highs against the greenback

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

- Friday May 2nd – European unemployment rate and core inflation year on year
- Friday May 2nd – US Non Farm Payrolls (employment data)
- Wednesday May 7th – US Fed interest rate decision
- Thursday May 8th – Bank of England interest rate decision
- Tuesday May 13th – US core inflation year on year
- Wednesday May 21st – UK core inflation rate year on year

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](#)>>



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**



Gender Pay Gap Reporting

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 requires employers to report on their Gender Pay Gap across a range of metrics, as set out in the Regulations. The Gender Pay Gap is the difference between the average hourly earnings for all men and the average hourly earnings for all women. The purpose of this reporting is to encourage organisations to acknowledge and reflect on the company Gender Pay Gap, the causes behind it and to reduce or eliminate any gaps. The below article will outline the main reporting requirements and provide an update on the changes introduced this year.

Reporting

Reporting began in 2022 and is being continuously extended to smaller organisations. Organisations need to calculate the data for employees using a “snapshot date” in June each year. The reporting period is the 12-month period immediately before and including this snapshot date.

This year is no different and will introduce a mandatory reporting expansion of the legal obligation to report on the Gender Pay Gap. Gender Pay Gap reporting will now apply to employers with 50 or more employees from June 2025.

The data must include the following:

1. The differences between the:
 - Mean hourly pay and the median hourly pay of male and female employees
 - Data on bonus pay
 - Mean part-time pay and median pay of part-time male and female employees
 - Mean pay and median pay of male and female employees on temporary contracts
1. The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.
2. If a gap is identified:
 - a. A report explaining the reasons why a Gender Pay Gap exists within the organisation.
 - b. Details of the actions the organisation plan to take to reduce or close the gap.

Reporting Portal

Minister Norma Foley, Minister for Children, Disability and Equality announced that a gender pay reporting portal will be launched this year. Details of this portal are not yet available but will be in the coming months. The aim of this portal will be to encourage organisations to address pay disparities, and the intention is to replace the requirement for organisations to publish reports on their own websites.

Employers with 50 or more employees will now be required to publish a Gender Pay Gap report on this portal. This portal simplifies the process of Gender Pay Gap reporting by merging reports from all private and public sector organisations onto one accessible database. The portal will be fully searchable by members of the public. This year there is a shift whereby employers will now be required to publish their report in November instead of December.

In advance of this year's reporting deadline ISME recommend that all members in this category begin to collate the data, conduct internal audits, review pay structure, engage with employees and review internal relevant policies to ensure they all promote equal opportunities.

For further information on how to calculate Gender Pay Gap metrics, please refer to the below links:

- [how to calculate the gender pay gap metrics.](#)
- [Employment Equality Act 1998 \(section 20A\)\(Gender Pay Gap Information\) Regulations 2022](#)

As always, if you require any support with HR or Employment Law you can contact the ISME HR Team on 01 6622755 Option 2 or via HR@ISME.ie. Members also have access to the ISME HR Hub which provides further guidance on this topic.



The ISME Skillnet service is here to help both the business owner and their employees.

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

MS Excel Advanced

Thursday 8th May

[View Course](#)

Effective Telephone Sales

Tuesday 13th May

[View Course](#)

Speaking with Confidence

Tuesday 13th May

[View Course](#)

LinkedIn Training

Wednesday 14th May

[View Course](#)

Jason Cooper B2B Sales

Workshops for SMEs

Wed 21st May & Thurs 22nd May

[View Course](#)

Effective Communication & Influencing Skills Programme

Wednesday 4th June

[View Course](#)

Introduction to Canva

Thursday 5th June

[View Course](#)

Instagram for Business

Monday 16th June

[View Course](#)

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
FIND THE FULL LISTING





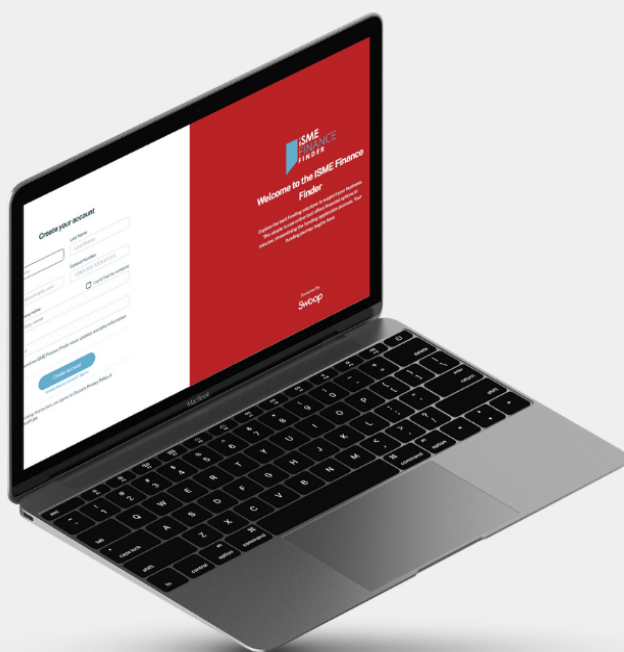
Do you want to...

start or expand your business?

improve cashflow?

acquire a business?

purchase property?



If so, your finance journey starts here

isme.ie/finance-finder