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3 November, 2026

Welcome to the SFA ezine.

In this edition we are highlighting a notice to small business owners in Dublin, two new offers added to our Member Advantage Area, an update on Water Tariffs and much more.

*For this edition we have a total of **ten articles and two recommended events**. Please click **Read in web browser** on the top right corner to make sure you see all of them and enjoy your read.*

Director's Note



Today and tomorrow, a delegation from the SFA is attending the annual SME Assembly in Dublin. This is the EU's flagship event for SMEs as it brings together business leaders, policy specialists, and Government representatives from across the continent.

It is also one of the key events of Ireland's Presidency of the EU. The SFA delegation will be engaging with key European policy stakeholders to highlight concerns related to rising business costs, regulatory burdens, access to finance, public procurement and challenges related to AI.

This Friday, the SFA will be hosting its Annual Lunch at the Round Room in the Mansion House where I will be having a fire-side chat with entrepreneur Gavin Lavin, founder of VIT-HIT. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you there for this much anticipated (sold out yet again!) event.

The applications for the SFA National Small Business Awards have now closed. I would like to thank all those companies that have entered the awards which showcases the best and the brightest of the small business community. The SFA will announce the finalists in due course.

Finally, the SFA is closely monitoring the situation regarding the public sector pay talks which have so far failed to reach an agreement between Unions and Government. As it stands, there is likely to be a public-sector 24-hour strike next week on the 12th of November. While talks are ongoing between the parties and an independent body in a bid to resolve the row, it is unclear if a resolution will come ahead of the prised strike day next Thursday.

Notice for Dublin City Business Owners: Meeting of European Political Community (EPC) in Dublin 12th and 13th November | Business owners within the security cordons about access and business continuity

Ireland will host two high level summits in Dublin next week. On Thursday, 12 November, a meeting of the European Political Community (EPC) will take place in the Convention Centre, followed by a dinner in the National Gallery of Ireland. On Friday, 13 November, an Informal meeting of EU Heads of State or Government will be held in the Convention Centre. Information on the summits is available on EU Presidency Events - Garda and Community Information. These events will require significant security measures and will impact public transport users. Every effort will be made to minimise disruption to the public and to businesses, while policing these important events safely and successfully.

Member Advantage Area: New Offers Added



We are delighted to announce two exciting additions to the Small Firms Association Member Advantage area: **BidReview** and **Future Direct**. Members can now access advanced tender evaluation tools with bidReview to win more contracts, alongside specialist immigration and corporate visa consultancy with Future Direct to secure key international talent. These practical, exclusive member benefits are designed to help your small business grow and compete successfully. We are looking forward to welcoming more member offers in the new format next year! If you are interested, please fill out this form.

Explore Member Advantage Area

New Retirement Legislation: What Small Businesses Need to Know



The Employment (Contractual Retirement Ages) Act 2025 came into effect earlier this year and introduces a new right for employees to remain in employment beyond their contractual retirement age.

Employers should ensure they understand the new notification requirements and review existing retirement policies and procedures in light of these changes.

MEMBER ONLY: Read full article

BusinessEurope position paper on startups and scaleups



Last week, BusinessEurope published position paper on priorities for European startups and scaleups,whihc details necessary conditions for startups and scaleups to stay and grow in Europe.

It has been shared with the leadership of the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, the Irish EU Presidency, and the European Investment Bank. The paper was covered by Politico Fair Play newsletter last week.

Read full article



Join now and get TWO MONTHS OFF your membership fee

WRC Awards Compensation After Unlawful Probation Extension



A recent WRC decision serves as an important reminder that employers cannot solely rely on contractual wording when extending probationary periods. The case highlights the need to comply with the statutory requirements introduced under the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Regulations and to ensure that probation reviews are properly documented.

MEMBER ONLY: Read full article

European Chemicals Agency Consultation



The SFA would like to make you aware that the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has launched a public consultation on a scientific report concerning occupational exposure limits (OELs) for copper (EC 231-159-6) and its inorganic compounds. The consultation provides stakeholders with an opportunity to submit comments, data and scientific information to support the work of the Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) in developing its opinion on appropriate occupational exposure limits for copper and its inorganic compounds.

Read full article

SFA IN THE MEDIA

Five technology trends changing how Irish businesses operate @Irish Examiner

Water Tariff Update



On 1 October 2026, new CRU-mandated commercial water and wastewater tariffs took effect to support a €13.62 billion national infrastructure program through 2029. Commercial bills will rise by an average of 9.4% annually, with all legacy discounts removed.

While volumetric water rates have generally stayed flat or decreased, fixed standing charges have risen sharply - with large wastewater connections increasing by over 136%.

MEMBER ONLY: Read full article

Guidance on explosives precursors



Due to the implementation of the EU Regulation on Explosives Precursors the Department of Justice have forwarded information and guidance explaining some restrictions being placed on the supply and use of certain chemicals which occur in many products sold in all retail outlets. As an explanation an explosives precursor is a chemical substance that could be used to make explosives illegally and these have been used in various terrorist attacks in the EU, including those in Paris in 2015, Brussels in 2016, Manchester and Parsons Green in 2017 and Lyon in 2019.

MEMBER ONLY: Read full article

European Court of Auditors (ECA) Special Report 24/2026: EU funding for innovation and competitiveness published



The report assesses the effectiveness of the European Union's Horizon 2020 (H2020) funding program—specifically its "industrial leadership" priority, which had a budget of approximately €17 billion (2014–2020). The audit evaluated whether this funding successfully supported innovation, technology transfer, market uptake, and the scaling-up of innovative companies, particularly SMEs.

Read full article

CCPC Survey



The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) are seeking feedback on the best way to communicate with businesses. Arising from that, the CCPC have created a short survey to help improve future CCPC business engagement. The survey will take 5 minutes to complete and can be found below.

Take the survey

UPCOMING EVENTS



Absence Management - A Practical Guide for Employers: An SFA Webinar in partnership with ViscaCare (formerly Gewardz Health)

Wednesday, 25 November | 11 to 11.30AM | Online

Employee absence can have a significant impact on businesses, affecting productivity, employee wellbeing, management time and overall business performance. Join the SFA and ViscaCare, formerly Gewardz Health, for a practical webinar exploring the key aspects of absence management, including employer obligations, absence-related legislation, policy considerations and more. The session will also examine the cost of absence and the proactive steps employers can take to support employee health.

Ideal for business owners and managers, this webinar will provide practical guidance on managing absence effectively while supporting employee wellbeing and maintaining compliance.

Register now



SFA Members Christmas Evening | Decoding the Market: Practical Economic Clarity and Strategy for the Year Ahead

Tuesday, 8 December | 5 to 7PM | SFA, 84/86 Lower Baggot Street, D02 H720

Join fellow SFA members for our annual Christmas Evening - a festive gathering combining warm hospitality with high-value business insight. Celebrate year-end achievements over festive food and drinks while networking with fellow small business leaders and enterprise peers.

The highlight of the evening features an engaging **fireside chat between SFA Director, David Broderick, and renowned economist, broadcaster, and author Susan Hayes Culleton, CFA**. Susan will decode key market trends, cut through economic noise, and share practical, actionable growth strategies to help your business navigate and thrive in the year ahead.

MEMBER ONLY: Register now

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Contact us today via 01 605 1776 or book a meeting with a member of our team via this link to make sure you are availing of everything that is available to you. We are here to help and will be delighted to guide you through our resources.

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

We hope you have enjoyed your read and, as always, we'd love to hear from you about any queries you may have, issues you wish to have raised with Government or other stakeholders and your ideas on how we can improve the business environment for us all.

Please contact me on tel: 01 605 1530 or e-mail: david.broderick@sfa.ie, check our LinkedIn or visit our website.

Kind regards,

David Broderick
SFA Director

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