



**Dún Laoghaire-
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March 2020

Not so long ago, we talked about ‘Link for Change’, we didn’t realise how accurate that comment would be. Even though physical communication is limited, there is still a format for contact. We have platforms that we can connect, we have time now to develop our new ideas, we have technology that will help in this communication and most importantly, we can talk.

Websites can now be developed; video meetings will connect business’ and we will be accessing information on sites we never had time to do. Yes, our world has changed dramatically. There are new words in our conversations – self isolation, social distancing, Corona virus, pandemic, moral panic. If we lose connections with each other, we lose our voices.

There will be time to build up your business again, perhaps with new ideas, perhaps collaborating with new people. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber will help with those new connections and events needed to replenish what we had before. Networking has been a pillar of DLR Chamber, and we will get back to learning the best practice and to connect with the new emerging business community.

Community spirit is thriving and the support out there in our country is remarkable from neighbour to neighbour, friend to friend, stranger to stranger. Instead of physical contact, we have implemented more of a visual contact with each other. In time life will return and we will devour every piece of it and never forget this portion of time in our history. It will be talked and written about for a long time. For now, let’s communicate more, let make those important links and let’s support each other through this chapter of change.





REMINDER: Applications Open for Sustainable Business Impact Awards 2020

On **12 March 2020**, **Chambers Ireland** opened applications for the **Sustainable Business Awards**, the renamed Corporate Social Responsibility Awards, which celebrates the achievements of the business community in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Despite the ongoing uncertainty from the COVID-19 outbreak, Chambers Ireland encourages the business community to share their excellent work in CSR by applying for these Awards.

The Awards recognise the meaningful and high quality-work from companies through different Awards categories, including Environment, Community Partnership (divided into Charity, Volunteering and Community Programme), Workplace, Marketplace, CSR Communication, CSR by an SME and Diversity & Inclusion.

Ian Talbot, Chief Executive of Chambers Ireland, spoke at the opening of the renamed Awards,

“We have been running the Corporate Social Responsibility Awards for over sixteen years. In that time, we have seen many great companies with different projects receive recognition at this event. These projects have benefited the environment, communities, staff, charities and people both in Ireland and abroad.

Last year, Chambers Ireland decided to take leadership in aligning the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with our organisation strategy. To continue the process of alignment with the SDGs, from 2020 the Corporate Social Responsibility awards will be known as the **Sustainable Business Impact Awards**.

While the Awards categories and entry criteria will remain unchanged, we believe the new description will greatly improve our ability to evolve this concept further into the future, building on the success of all the work of previous winning and applicant companies.”

Theo Cullinane, BAM Ireland Chief Executive said,

“We have been a long-time sponsor of the CSR Awards and are proud to continue this partnership as the awards take this evolutionary step in becoming the Sustainable Business Impact Awards.



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We fully endorse that this enhancement is driven by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. BAM adopted a new sustainability strategy in 2016, driven by these global sustainability targets. As a result, we have set ourselves the target of having a Net Positive Impact on Climate Change, Resources and People by 2050, and are proud of our prestigious "A" rating on the global Carbon Disclosure Project. With the Sustainable Business Impact Awards championing the SDGs, we look forward to seeing the innovative initiatives that Irish businesses have implemented for a sustainable future."

The awards are sponsored by BAM Ireland and run in association with the Department of Rural and Community Development.

**Applications for the Awards are now open online
at www.sustainablebusinessimpactawards.ie**

The closing date for applications is [Thursday, 9th of April 2020](#).



GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS FOR COVID-19 IMPACTED BUSINESSES

The Irish government have issued several supports and practical steps that should be taken by businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following supports are available through the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection:

- Short-time work support for employees of businesses that need to reduce hours or days worked.
- Refund scheme for employers who have to temporarily lay-off staff and who are not in a position to make any wage payments to them.
- A new support payment has been introduced for the self-employed who have lost business and to those who have lost employment.
- A full range of grant supports will be available to firms to help with strategies to innovate, diversify markets and supply chains and to improve competitiveness.
- Regional supports for impacted firms to avoid mass lay-offs and buy time for firms to work through the short-term disruptions.

Additionally, the Companies Registration Office (CRO) have announced an amnesty for companies unable to file annual returns due to the Covid-19 outbreak. All Irish company annual returns that are due to be filed between now and 30th June will be deemed to have been filed on-time providing that all elements have been filed and completed by that date.



MICROSOFT STRESSES HEIGHTENED HACKING RISK AND IMPORTANCE OF 2FA/MFA WITH REMOTE WORKING

Microsoft has warned that companies need to take steps to protect their customers and their accounts, especially with remote working being more prevalent during the COVID-19 outbreak. It was reported that in January, 1.2 million enterprise accounts were compromised and this is now the monthly norm. Nearly all of these breaches could have been prevented by one simple security measure. The simplest way to prevent attacks in your business is to add 2-Factor Authentication (2FA) to the standard username and password access on all accounts even those that are not used often. The most basic form 2FA includes a one-time passcode sent to email or SMS. Even this has been criticised as too open to compromise but it is immensely better than nothing at all. The next level of security would include keys and authenticators.

There are various levels of 2FA or MFA (multi-factor authentication) that should be utilised to protect your business and its customers.



PRESS RELEASE FROM AIB GROUP



23rd March 2020

Update on AIB Group supports for customers through COVID-19 crisis

AIB has revised and updated its measures and supports to help customers through COVID-19. Customers can find updates, contact details, and further information at www.aib.ie/covid19.

- From today, AIB, EBS and Haven have made available an online process, allowing customers to access a three month payment break (moratorium) on home mortgage, personal and SME loans. Application forms are available now at www.aib.ie/covid19; www.ebs.ie/covid19, and www.havenmortgages.ie/covid19
- For SME customers, AIB is also providing working capital support and the rescheduling of loan payments for impacted customers. Information is available at www.aib.ie/covid19.
- We continue to waive contactless payment fees. This also applies to Apple Pay, Google Pay and Fitbit Pay Contactless transactions, which are not subject to the contactless payment limit of €30 in most merchants. AIB is working with the industry to increase this limit to €50 for Contactless Card transactions which is expected to become effective over the coming weeks.
- AIB has suspended the planned introduction of maintenance and transactions fees for customers who keep a minimum balance of €2,500 per fee quarter. Customers who received correspondence from the bank can disregard the changes to fees and charges advised.
- Our AIB and EBS branches remain open to our customers, except for those locations on campuses that closed following advice from the health authorities.
- Priority banking time is allocated for our older and more vulnerable customers from 10am until 11am each morning. We are asking our other customers to plan their branch visits outside this time.
- We are maintaining physical distancing in our branches and increased cleaning operations of branches, self-service machines and ATMs in line with HSE recommendations.

Chief executive Colin Hunt said “AIB recognises the extraordinary pressure on families, individuals, businesses and communities as a result of the sudden disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. All AIB’s staff and systems are focussed on supporting our customers and economy through this unprecedented crisis. To that end we have in place a range of robust measures designed to buttress customers against the enormous challenges now facing us. I urge anyone experiencing difficulties to contact the bank as early as possible.”



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A LETTER ON STATUTORY REDUNDANCY AND THE EMPLOYER REFUND SCHEME



Regina Doherty TD
Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Aras Mhic Dhiarmada
Dublin 1

23 March 2020

Re: Application of Statutory Redundancy and Employer Refund Scheme

Dear Minister Doherty,

Chambers Ireland would like to acknowledge the efficient response of the Government, and your Department in particular, to the COVID-19 pandemic and we welcome the opportunity to continue to engage in discussions with you and your officials as we look to fight this crisis.

In our communications to Government, our network of chambers is calling for as much certainty and flexibility as possible from the State and its agencies in its dealings with business, many of whom are SMEs, who are experiencing extremely adverse disruption to supply chains, loss of customers and workforce illness.

Statutory Redundancy

Concerns have been raised by members in relation to the operation of statutory redundancies during the COVID-19 crisis and the impact of statutory redundancies on employers in these unprecedented circumstances.

For example, if an employee is placed on short-time or temporary lay-off and this situation continues for (a) 4 consecutive weeks or more, or for (b) 6 weeks in a 13 week period, under the current legislative framework, the employee may give notice to their employer of their intention to claim redundancy under the Redundancy Payments Acts.

It is our view that the current application of short-time and temporary closure should be exempted from the normal application of the Redundancy Payments Act. If it is not, then this legislation could have a detrimental impact to business across the country within the next 4 weeks.

The objective of many of the measures introduced by Government in the past number of weeks is to help employers and employees through the crisis. We must avoid a situation where businesses suffer additional negative impacts because of the unintended consequences triggered through statutory redundancy. All actions taken at present should not only support business through the crisis but also help them to re-establish their business following the end of the closure periods. Therefore, it is proposed that:



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- a) The right of employees to claim redundancy if on lay-off for 4 consecutive weeks should be suspended during this crisis and, instead, employees should be able to call on government welfare supports for the duration, or
- b) alternatively, employers should be able to claim a full 100% rebate of any redundancy payments made to employees, bearing in mind that the length of time it takes to secure this rebate is vital for companies being able to keep afloat.

Employer Refund Scheme

We have been keeping in close contact with your team in respect of the Employer Refund Scheme and the operation of the "Pandemic Payment" for businesses who have had to temporarily close in response to the crisis. Last week, we highlighted that many businesses were hoping to "top-up" payments to staff, above the €203 and were under the impression that they too would be eligible for a refund. When this was found to not be the case, this was extremely distressing to our members, many of whom had already paid wages or had promised wages, under the assumption that part of these payments would be covered by the State. The inability to claim the refund, in cases of top-ups, would compound the issue of reduced cash-flow for many businesses.

We welcome news from your Department on Friday evening (20 March) that a solution has been found to this problem and that more information on the procedure for facilitating top-ups would be circulated this week. We remain at your disposal for communicating information to business as information becomes available.

We are available to brief you on developments as they unfold in local economies across our network. Please do contact me directly to discuss any matter raised within this letter, or any other matter as it arises.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Talbot
Chief Executive

www.chambers.ie

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GOVERNMENT ACTION ON COMMERCIAL RATES DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH AND MORE ACTION MAY BE REQUIRED AS CRISIS EVOLVES, SAYS CHAMBERS IRELAND

Earlier this week, Chambers Ireland and our nationwide network of chambers called on Government and all State bodies to be flexible and responsive to the needs of their business and economic partners, so that we may ensure business continuity through this crisis.

In particular, we called on Government to ensure that businesses that are in sectors which have had to close entirely are not charged rates for the duration of these closures. As this may create a funding issues for our Local Authorities throughout the country, we also called on central Government to step in to support our local government by bridging the resulting gap in expected Rates returns.

Today's announcement (20 March 2020) by the Government, offers some relief to businesses who have had to close in recent days but as this crisis evolves, an extension of this deferral will be required.

Speaking today, Chambers Ireland Chief Executive Ian Talbot said,

“The extent of the crisis we are facing is still uncertain. Businesses that closed over the weekend and since then, have no idea when normal trading conditions might resume. Recovering from this shock will be an enormous task and every assistance possible must be made.

Because of this, Government must commit to extending the Rates relief to correspond with the duration of the crisis. Government must also ensure that sufficient monies are made available to local authorities, as and when needed, so that essential local services can continue to be funded.



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It is crucial that this announcement is implemented and communicated consistently and equitably across all local authorities and that there is a clear understanding amongst local officials as to how it will be applied. There must be a level playing field for all businesses across the country.

It is essential that all sectors that have been adversely impacted benefit from this deferral and will continue to benefit from flexible, sincere engagement from state officials.

As cash-flow will be critical to surviving the crisis, we reiterate our call to all Government Departments, agencies, Local Authorities, State and Semi-State bodies to pay invoices at the earliest opportunity. Government must take the lead on this and make a clear statement on the urgent necessity that all State bodies settle all outstanding bills promptly.”



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What a fantastic turnout for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber and Women in Business Alliance (WIBA) annual International Women's Day event held in Royal Marine Hotel.

The theme this year was 'Link for Change' and all speakers voiced the importance of supporting each other and introducing yourself to your guest beside you. You just never know how influential that introduction might be. The inspirational speakers today were Paula King Colm O'Brien Gaia Ferreira Mary McCaughey. All sharing their fantastic stories and insights into what influenced and inspired them on their very diverse paths in business.

President of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Chamber Aileen Eglington mentioned a Chinese word she came across called Guanxi meaning networks or connections. She said there are so many opportunities in the room today and through the DLR Chamber and events like this we can continue to support each other in business. By Yvonne Reddin



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It was a proud moment for Osborne at the Great Place to Work Awards last night as the company were named in the top 3 Best Workplaces in their category at the Great Place to Work Awards last night.

As an organisation, Osborne strive to create a culture where every single member of the team feels valued and incredibly proud to be part of the Osborne Family.

This award and recognition are extra special for Osborne as it is based on feedback given to GPTW by the entire Osborne team. This is the third year in a row that Osborne has featured in the top 10 Best Workplaces List and the 1st year to feature in the prestigious Top 3.



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“Row Man of the Year 2020”

Pat Neil former DLR Chamber President May 2016 – May 2018.

Congratulations to Pat who received recognition & acknowledgement for his civic and social duty and support over the years.

Presented by Mr Jeramiah Murray who is currently the President of Westland Row Past Pupils Union and Jeramiah is ex-President Bar Council of Ireland.



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Long Term Sick leave

HR and health & safety expert Peninsula handles countless calls from employers on long-term sick leave each day.

Many employers don't know how to handle the issue or have been caught off-guard in the past. Others don't even know if they have sickness policies in place.

As a result of the constant queries, Peninsula has put together an article that takes the headache out of handling long-term sick leave.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



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With all that's going on right now, it is important that we keep up with our exercise routines. Regular physical activity can relieve stress, anxiety, depression and anger. You know that "feel good sensation" you get after doing something physical, think of it as a happy pill with no side effects! Your Gym or Group class may be shut down. As a Professional Trainer and under the current health guidelines, taking all the necessary precautions I can visit your home and bring all the equipment we'll need to give you a good workout. I am also providing online workouts with a new Virtual Training Programme. To avail of Virtual Training, simply book a time slot that works for you, then we can Zoom, FaceTime or WhatsApp video call for our Virtual Training session.

Contact Cathy 0868758744.

www.womenontherun.ie



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Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil

Local Enterprise Office



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Checklist of preparatory actions in responding to COVID-19

Business Continuity Planning – Checklist of preparatory actions in responding to COVID-19.

The link and checklists on this [here](#) provide information and identify a range of issues for enterprise to consider in responding to a COVID-19 outbreak.



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Dr. Therese Moylan teaching us “What history can teach us about female entrepreneurship”





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Stuck for time? Eating on the run? Let us help.



A week's supply of meals including breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. For just 135€ includes delivery around South County Dublin.

Contact Cathy 0868758744.

www.womenontherun.ie



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