

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

30 November 2018 7 December 2018



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at 00:01 on Thursday 26 January 2017.



Tuesday 4 December 2018

Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Peter Fitzpatrick asked the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation if further initiatives are planned to assist small and medium enterprises to confront the threat of Brexit; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Heather Humphreys: My Department and agencies provide extensive supports to ensure that businesses are prepared for Brexit and will continuously monitor the evolving Brexit impacts and requirements of businesses.

Enterprise Ireland offers a range of supports for small and medium enterprises to prepare for Brexit including the Be prepared Grant, a grant of up to €5,000 to assist in preparing an action plan for economic shocks such as Brexit. Enterprise Ireland has also held several Brexit advisory clinics throughout the country.

As a response to a key challenge cited by many companies, Enterprise Ireland will shortly be rolling out a new Customs Insight online support to demystify customs procedures. This will be available for

any company to use whether they are Enterprise Ireland clients or not. The course will highlight the responsibilities of companies and will explain some of the main customs procedures and documentation involved.

As Chair of the Retail Consultation Forum, I have prioritised supporting the retail sector to develop their online capability and enhance their competitiveness, and I recently launched a new pilot Online Retail Scheme with a fund of up to €1.25 million which will be administered by Enterprise Ireland. The scheme will support retail businesses of 20 employees or more under the areas of research, strategy development, implementation and training who are ready to strategically grow their online capability. The first call opened on 24 October and will close on the 5 December. There will also be a second call in 2019.

The 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) nationwide are the 'first-stop-shop' for anyone seeking guidance and support on starting or growing their business. The LEOs have organised various events to enable companies to learn about the potential impacts of Brexit.

An additional €5 million in Budget 2019 has been allocated to enable the LEOs to support a broad range of indigenous micro-enterprises prepare for Brexit. This funding will be used for complementary training and awareness programs to support firms throughout the country, in all regions, in the area of both import and export customs implications and procedures.

InterTradeIreland (ITI) is planning to expand the range of supports offered as part of their Brexit Advisory Service in 2019. The new initiatives will include a 'Start to Act' voucher, valued at €5,000, which will augment their 'Start to Plan' vouchers. The Brexit Advisory Service will also increase its digital learning delivery, making content available in an online training environment that can be conveniently accessed by SMEs.

An additional €1 million funding has been allocated to ITI in 2019 which will enable the body to engage with more of the companies that are seeking support through the Brexit Advisory Service, as well as meeting demand in existing programmes which are all designed to promote and support cross-border trade.

Source <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-12-04a.18&s=cross+border+2018-11-30..2018-12-07#g20.r>

Wednesday 5 December 2018

Department for Health

Lisa Chambers asked the Minister for Health the contingency action he and the HSE are taking in the context of the United Kingdom possibly leaving the European Union without a deal; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Simon Harris: The Government's overriding priority at present is to work towards the finalisation of the draft Withdrawal Agreement and the political declaration on the EU-UK future relationship.

However, any Brexit scenario will mean considerable change and impact for Ireland. Government Departments and Agencies are undertaking extensive and detailed Brexit preparedness and contingency work. Co-ordination of this whole-of-Government response to the UK withdrawal from the European Union is being taken forward through the cross-Departmental coordination structures chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Contingency planning for both a “central case” and for a “no-deal scenario” bringing together the detailed work being undertaken by individual Ministers and their Departments on issues within their policy remit is well advanced. Its focus is on the immediate economic, regulatory and operational challenges arising.

My Department, the HSE and other Health Agencies have been taking forward detailed Brexit preparedness and contingency work related to the impacts in the area of health of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, with or without a deal. A number of issues are being examined and contingency planning for a range of eventualities is underway. A key issue will be to ensure that there is minimum disruption to health services and that essential services are maintained on a cross-Border, all-island and Ireland-UK basis.

Of particular relevance to citizens is the work on the Common Travel Area to ensure that the arrangements by which Irish and British citizens can live, work and access public services in each other’s countries will continue into the future in any Brexit scenario.

In a number of key areas the appropriate response and mitigation will be at EU level and the Government is continuing to engage actively with the Commission on areas of priority for Ireland. The Commission has flagged the particular impact of Brexit on Ireland in its recent contingency planning communications.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-12-05a.113&s=cross+border+2018-11-30..2018-12-07#g115.r>