

**PRESS RELEASE 18TH January 2024**

**LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE WEXFORD NOW SUPPORTING OVER 235 SMALL BUSINESSES EMPLOYING 1,940 STAFF ACCORDING TO NEW FIGURES LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE WEXFORD CLIENTS CREATED OVER 328 JOBS IN 2023**

Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, has announced the annual results of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) for 2023 which showed that Local Enterprise Office Wexford supported companies created 328 jobs in 2023 with a net job increase of 177.

The net jobs created by Local Enterprise Office Wexford supported clients in 2023 was 177, which takes into account companies that amalgamated, ceased trading and those that transferred on to Enterprise Ireland.

The new figures show that the LEO Wexford financially supported 235 small businesses in their portfolio across the county these companies in turn employ 1940 people.

The total national figures for the Local Enterprise Offices across the country were announced with the LEOs now financially supporting 38,726 jobs across 7,167 companies. This is the most jobs the Local Enterprise Offices have supported nationally since their inception in 2014.

In 2023 there were 6,640 new jobs created by LEO client companies with a net job creation figure of 2,131. This was up 6% nationally on 2022 figures. From the jobs created, 82% were outside of the Dublin region.

The LEOs also provide substantial funded supports to thousands of other small businesses across the country with programmes such as the Trading Online Voucher, Lean for Business and Green for Business along with training and mentoring.

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**Minister of State Neale Richmond, John Magee, LEO chairman, Carol Gibbons from Enterprise Ireland, David Butler, MD of Quality Building Materials, Debbie Crowley, Funky Monkey, Sean Kehow, MD of Machinelab, Aoife & Seamus O'Reilly, Milestone Pavement Tech**

**Minister Neale Richmond, T.D.,** said; *“I have been fortunate enough to visit many Local Enterprise Offices and I have seen first-hand the superb quality of their mentorship and supports, and the impact they have on the businesses and entrepreneurs they support. These results are a testament to our Local Enterprise Offices; ten consecutive years of job growth is a major accomplishment that reminds us how crucial their support is both for new businesses, but also in helping existing businesses to grow.*

*“With 82% of new jobs created outside of Dublin, it is clear that our Local Enterprise Offices are supporting businesses right across Ireland. What is also evident is the resilience of Ireland’s fantastic small businesses that have continued to adapt to an ever-changing business environment.*

*”This Government is committed to backing business and will continue to work closely with small businesses, support their growth, help them to find new markets and to stimulate job growth and the Local Enterprise Offices have a key role to play here.  Today’s results show that we are moving in the right direction, and I have no doubt that our Local Enterprise Offices will be there to support businesses at every turn.”*

The Local Enterprise Offices were to the fore in supporting small businesses across the country in 2023, helping thousands to pivot online or adapt their products and services through a large suite of supports. They Local Enterprise Offices offering training and mentoring in a range of areas from financial skills and product innovation to starting your own business and maximising your presence online.

Breege Cosgrave, Head of Enterprise and Economic Development said***;*** *“The results announced today are a testament to the strength of Wexford’s small business community. When faced with adversity, they have adapted, pivoted, upskilled and did whatever it took to sustain and grow their businesses. Wexford is ranked second nationally in terms of net job creation and LEO Wexford have played a significant role in this achievement”.*

Commenting on behalf of Wexford County Council, An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Fleming said *“I am delighted to see Wexford LEO once again achieve outstanding job creation figures and is a leading light nationally. It is heartening to see that over 82% of net new jobs created were outside of Dublin and Wexford made a strong contribution to this figure”.*

Tom Enright, Chief Executive Officer said; *“Wexford is punching well above its weight consistently delivering strong job creation figures for the last 4 years. It is the close working relationship between Local Authorities and Enterprise Ireland that ensures that SMEs get the most appropriate supports in areas of greatest need in a timely manner. The key sectors showing growth are; Food, Engineering, Manufacturing with encouraging figures around Life Sciences and the Green Sector”.*

Carol Gibbons Head of Regions and Local Enterprise, at Enterprise Ireland said;*“2023 was a challenging year for business and these very positive employment results are a testament to the dedication and commitment of the LEO network across the country and the ambitious businesses it supports.*

*“Key to the success of the LEO network is the close relationship it fosters with both start-up and scaling businesses across communities.  Enterprise Ireland will continue to work closely with the LEO network in 2024 to ensure that all businesses can access the support and advice they need to start, grow and win in all markets.”*

The Local Enterprise Offices located in the local authorities and funded through Enterprise Ireland support thousands of small Irish businesses and entrepreneurs nationwide. Since their establishment in 2014 they have been for the first stop shop for entrepreneurs and small businesses and providing a range of supports including financial, mentoring, training and sector specific expertise to help guide businesses at any stage of their development.

They also run key initiatives to foster entrepreneurship across the country including Local Enterprise Week, National Women’s Enterprise Day, the Student Enterprise Programme and the National Enterprise Awards. The Local Enterprise Offices are also running a campaign encouraging small businesses to save time money and energy by availing of their competitiveness and productivity supports including Green, Lean and Digital for Business. [www.AllInADaysWork.ie](http://www.AllInADaysWork.ie) For more information on the Local Enterprise Offices go to [www.LocalEnterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)

**Ends**