



Retail Forum Working Group Minutes: Future of Retail – Digitalisation and Skills

6 September 2023

Meeting 7

CHATHAM HOUSE RULES APPLY

Attendees: Appendix A

Minutes: The minutes from this meeting are to be agreed under Silence Procedure and will be available on www.enterprise.gov.ie

Item 1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees.

Item 2: Presentation from Retail Ireland Skillnet

Roisin Woods of Retail Ireland Skillnet gave an overview on the Skills4 Retail EU project- an Erasmus + Partnerships for Innovation Funded project, bringing together 29 partners, that will focus on fast-tracking the 'Triple Transition' of green, digital and resilience in the retail sector. The project's goal is to design a new Retail Skills Strategy and VET Training Programme that will address the urgent and emerging skills needs of retailers in the key areas of Digital, Green and Resilience. The Retail Section is to circulate the slides following the meeting.

Item 3: Presentation from .IE

Oonagh McCutcheon gave an update on .IE research into the web health of Retail Excellence member websites (over 500). The research focused on Analytics, UX, marketing, security and e-commerce. Findings highlight that there are further opportunities to utilise chat facilities on websites and also further opportunities for retailers to have carts on their websites – only 46% of surveyed retailers had carts. The Retail Section is to circulate the slides following the meeting.

Comments Arising from two presentations

- Members thanked Retail Ireland Skillnet and .IE for their informative presentations.
- Member commented that learnings from colleagues about retail operations and structures across Europe is welcome and the Skills4Retail project enables this.
- Member commented that improving efficiencies through digital means and AI will be needed to counteract the impact on retailers of the increase in the living wage.
- Member commented on .IE findings and how it points to the importance to have a requirement checklist/plan for e-commerce managers when developing a platform.
- Member commented that cost of introducing some of the e-commerce tools could be prohibitive for a lot of smaller retailers.
- .IE pointed to weare.ie blog post that contains approx. 20 productivity tools for smaller businesses.
- Member welcomed .IE report and asked that the findings be promoted widely.

Item 4: Working Group Actions

The Chair reviewed each of the Digitalisation and Skills draft actions of the 2023-2024 Retail Forum Work Programme with members and asked the Group for feedback on these actions or any further actions.

Comments Arising

- Member commented that the proposed half-day workshop under action 7 of the draft work programme is a valuable proposition.
- Secretariat informed the members that they will be contacted regarding possible dates for the Workshop in due course.

No further feedback received from members on the Digitalisation and Skills Work Programme actions. The Chair asked Group to contact Retail Unit should they consider anything further.

Item 5: Update from DETE Digital Policy Unit

Ross Church and Sarah Bealin provided an update on the development of the Digital Portal, which is due to be completed by Q3 2023. They also updated the group on the work being done across the Department to streamline the voucher offerings for businesses, including for retailers.

Item 6: AOB

Sean Carlin updated the Group regarding a webinar on personal safety for people working in retail. He was invited to share details with the Retail Section for onward dissemination to retail stakeholders.

Retail Section
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
8 September 2023

Appendix A

Retail Forum Working Group: Future of Retail – Digitalisation and Skills

Attendees

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (Chair)	Marian	Cassidy
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment – Digital Policy Unit	Sarah	Bealin
Chambers Ireland	Shane	Hughes
Eason	Lisa	O'Brien
.IE	Oonagh	McCutcheon
Independent	Cathy	Kearney
Retail Ireland Skillnet	Roisin	Woods
Retail Ireland Skillnet	Sean	Carlin

Apologies

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Primark	Michelle	Whelan
Retail Excellence	Jean	McCabe
Kilkenny	Brian	Howe
ICTU	Gerry	Light

Presenters

Organisation	First Name	Surname
Retail Ireland Skillnet	Roisin	Woods
.IE	Oonagh	McCutcheon
DETE	Ross	Church