



Conor Patterson, President of Newry Chamber of Commerce; Donal Keane, First Derivatives; Shaun Moore, Bank of Ireland Global Markets; Pat Byrne, Bank of Ireland Regional Manager NI and Frank Boyle, Bank of Ireland Senior Commercial Manager at Bank of Ireland 'Global Markets and Cross-Broder Trade' Enterprise Seminar in Bank Bar in Newry.

in "Show Your Business" initiative across 19 Bank of Ireland branches in Northern Ireland: Belfast (High Street, Lisburn Road and Ormeau Road), Derry (Strand Road, Waterside and Shipquay Street) Newry, Enniskillen, Glengormley, Downpatrick, Magherafelt, Maghera, Cookstown, Draperstown, Omagh, Castlederg, Strabane, Belleek and Lisnaskea.

In Belfast the exhibitors included cycling specialist Bike Dock, the food company Cookie Box and the internationally renowned Belfast-born artist Rita Duffy. Elsewhere, local jet-ski and boat dealer Kilmore Jetworks was among several businesses promoting products in Lisnaskea, while Newry exhibitors included renewable energy heating systems firm, Alternative Heat, elegant cafe 'Olive', and exclusive fitness centre Sculpt. In Cookstown exhibitors included ladies retailer B-Dazzle, and Funky Kids.

The first Bank of Ireland Enterprise week in Northern Ireland was such a tremendous success that a waiting list has been created for businesses wanting to participate in the next Show Your Business event. Bank of Ireland is currently planning another Show Your Business Week for later this year.

### Across Northern Ireland

Five free of charge advisory events hosted by Bank of Ireland took place in Belfast, Derry, Newry, Omagh and

Magherafelt providing free advice and guidance on issues such as innovation and entrepreneurship, cross-border trade, the impact of economic changes on business and funding for local enterprise. Over 400 businessmen and businesswomen attended the local Enterprise Breakfasts or Enterprise Evenings.

Along with learning from the speaker's insights and experiences, the advice events also gave SME's the opportunity to meet with leading industry experts. Guest speakers included senior Bank personnel, local business service providers (accountants and solicitors), successful local entrepreneurs, and industry experts such as Richard Moore from Children in Crossfire, Steve Orr from Northern Ireland Science Park and Donal Keane from First Derivatives.

### Genuine Support

Pat Byrne, Bank of Ireland's Regional Manager for Northern Ireland, said: "The feedback we are getting from businesses and local communities highlights the importance of offering such tangible help, advice and information, to local SMEs as well as supporting the financial needs of viable businesses through challenging times.

"As I mentioned before, smaller companies have a pivotal role to play in sustaining and growing the economy of Northern Ireland and all the evidence

points to the existence of a strong and dynamic SME sector. Since Bank of Ireland launched its Essentials for Business package of finance and advice for new and existing small businesses almost two years ago we have assisted more than 3,000 people, well exceeding our target of signing up 100 new businesses a month."

When asked what being open for business actually meant, Pat Byrne stated:

"Many businesses still perceive credit as unobtainable. Our message to them is that if you have a viable business – with a good business plan, sound knowledge of the market and a capacity to meet repayments – we will support your financial needs. We have a number of funds available to assist SMEs including the Essentials for Business package, and our recent £10 million European Investment Bank loan facility."

"Bank of Ireland's commitment to the SME sector remains steadfast and we continue to approve four out of every five loan applications we receive. We've also been focused on supporting customers in difficulty, making sure we have our most experienced bankers available to help businesses in areas such as working capital requirements."

*To find out more information about Enterprise Week, read articles and see podcasts please log onto [www.bankofireland.co.uk/business-banking/enterprise-week-ni](http://www.bankofireland.co.uk/business-banking/enterprise-week-ni) or [www.allaboutbusiness.ie](http://www.allaboutbusiness.ie).*