

News

FINANCIAL ADVICE

Are You Auto-Enrolment Ready?

As the introduction of Ireland's auto-enrolment pension scheme approaches, both employers and employees must prepare for the changes ahead.

Starting on September 30, 2025, the scheme, named "My Future Fund", will automatically enrol around 800,000 workers aged 23-60 who earn over €20,000 annually and, do not already have a workplace pension. This initiative aims to supplement the State pension, providing greater financial security in retirement, but it also brings new responsibilities for businesses and workers alike.

Auto-enrolment is designed to ensure that more employees are saving for retirement. Employees will contribute a set percentage of their salary to a pension scheme, which will be matched by their employer, and the government will add a top-up contribution. This provides workers with an additional income source to supplement the State pension, currently €277 per week, which they will begin receiving at age 66.

Employers must participate in the scheme, meaning that from September 2025, they will need to contribute to a pension plan for all eligible employees who do not have an existing pension. While employees can opt out of the scheme after six months, they will be re-enrolled every two years, with the option to opt out again.

Contributions to the scheme will come from the employee, the employer, and the government. Initially, both employees and employers will each contribute 1.5% of the employee's gross salary, increasing gradually to 6% over a 10-year period. The government will start by contributing 0.5%, rising to 2%. Contributions are capped at €80,000 of gross annual salary, and employees cannot contribute more than this threshold.

The contribution rates for auto-enrolment will be phased in over the first 10 years of the operation of the scheme: employee contributions will start at 1.5% of gross pay; in year four they will increase to 3%; in year seven they will increase to 4.5%; in year 10 they will increase to the maximum rate of 6%

Employers must ensure their payroll, finance, and HR systems are equipped to handle the new requirements.

This includes notifying eligible employees, processing contributions, and staying updated with any legislative changes to remain compliant.

The penalties for non-compliance could be significant, including financial fines and potential prosecution. It is crucial for employers to start preparing well in advance of the 2025 deadline to avoid these risks.

The introduction of auto-enrolment means that many workers who might not have contributed to a pension will now have a financial safety net for their retirement. For lower-income workers in particular, this scheme could provide essential support in their later years.

However, there are concerns about whether the scheme will provide enough benefits. Unlike traditional pensions, auto-enrolment follows a more rigid structure, and employees will not be able to contribute beyond the capped amount. Additionally, the tax implications when drawing down their pension must be considered.

If your business already has a pension plan in place, you are in a strong position. Employees who are actively contributing to an existing scheme will not be automatically enrolled in the new system.

This simplifies compliance and shows your employees that you are supporting their financial futures helping you to retain talent.

One area where there has been limited clarity is how auto-enrolment benefits will be taxed when employees retire.

The government has announced that 25% of the pension fund can be drawn tax-free, while the remaining 75% will be taxed. The details are still being finalised, but it is expected to align closely with existing pension tax rules.

Employees will benefit from the government top-up during their working years, but they need to plan for tax implications when they begin withdrawing from their pensions. The government also suggests that additional retirement options, such as annuities, may be developed. With auto-enrolment less than a year away, businesses can get ahead by the following detailed below.

Reviewing current pension schemes: Employers should assess their existing pension plans to ensure they are competitive and compliant with the new regulations.

Preparing payroll and HR systems: Update systems to handle requirements to avoid a last-minute scramble before the deadline.

Communicating with employees: Employers should inform their workforce about what auto-enrolment means for them.

The introduction of auto-enrolment is a significant shift in how pensions are managed in Ireland. By preparing now, employers can ensure compliance, while employees can look forward to greater financial security in retirement.

Sligo teed up for Major Golf Tourism Conference



ABOVE: Pictured at County Sligo Golf Club prior to the IGTOA conference is Paula Scallan, Director of Sales & Marketing Radisson Blu Hotel Sligo, An Cathaoirleach Sligo County Council Cllr Declan Bree, David O'Donovan, General Manager of County Sligo Golf Club and Karen Dunne, Sales Manager at County Sligo Golf Club.

SLIGO hosted a prestigious golf conference this week dedicated to inbound golf tour operators and golf tourism stakeholders, bringing together leading experts, operators, and enthusiasts from across the golf industry in Ireland.

The event shone a spotlight on Sligo's growing reputation as one of Ireland's premier golf destinations and underscored the vital role golf plays in the local tourism economy.

As home to three world-class links golf courses—County Sligo Golf Club at Rosses Point, Enniscrone Golf Club, and Strandhill Golf Club plus two beautiful inland courses at Castle Dargan and Tubbercurry, Sligo offers golfers an unparalleled experience set against the backdrop of stunning coastal landscapes and rugged beauty.

These courses are not only a major draw for domestic and international golfers but are integral to the region's tourism industry, contributing significantly to local businesses, from hotels to restaurants and tour providers.

The conference offered an invaluable platform to showcase Sligo's unique golf offerings to an important audience and further strengthen Sligo's position as a must-visit destination for golfers worldwide. It took place at the

Radisson Blu Hotel and County Sligo Golf Club.

Golf tourism plays a critical role in Sligo's economy, attracting visitors from the United States, Europe, and beyond. As one of Ireland's most scenic and welcoming regions, Sligo's links courses are renowned for their challenging designs, breathtaking views, and warm hospitality, making them a must-visit for any golfer seeking an authentic Irish golfing experience.

The influx of international visitors generated by golf tourism creates opportunities for local businesses, with increased bookings for accommodation, dining, and guided tours.

This conference, dedicated to inbound golf tourism, is a unique opportunity to promote these exceptional golfing facilities, highlighting the region's charm and potential to attract even more visitors.

An Cathaoirleach of Sligo, Declan Bree, shared his excitement for the conference: "Sligo's links golf courses are nothing short of extraordinary, offering golfers an unforgettable experience amidst the natural beauty of the Wild Atlantic Way. We are delighted to welcome these leading tour operators to our region and show them first-hand

what makes Sligo such a special destination for golfers. Visitors from around the world will be amazed by the stunning scenery, the world-class quality of our courses, and the hospitality that awaits them. We look forward to showcasing the best of Sligo during this important conference."

Executive Director of the IGTOA Barry Maye highlighted the prestige of the event and the opportunity that it presented for Sligo. He said: "We represent the leading golf tour operators in Ireland along with many companies that form the wider golf tourism industry.

"We want to position Ireland as the best golfing destination in the world and Sligo rightly should be showcased for the outstanding golf experience that it provides. We are honoured to bring our event here and look forward to enjoying everything Sligo has to offer."

This conference was not only an exciting event for Sligo's golfing community but also a major opportunity for the broader tourism sector.

By welcoming key international players, Sligo aims to cement its place as a world-renowned golf destination and attract further investment and tourism to the region.

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