Auto-Enrolment Pension Scheme – My Future Fund (Ireland, from January 2026)

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Eligibility and Participation

Q: If an employee is paying into a private pension themselves, are they still eligible for auto-enrolment?
A: Yes. Even if you already have a private pension, you will still be automatically enrolled into My Future Fund if you meet the age (23–60) and income (€20,000+) criteria. You can choose to opt out later if you don’t want to contribute to both.

Q: If an employer is paying into an existing pension scheme but the employee is not contributing, is the employee eligible for Auto-Enrolment?
A: Yes. Employees must be enrolled into My Future Fund unless they are already in another qualifying workplace scheme where both employer and employee contribute. If the employee isn’t contributing, auto-enrolment will apply.

Q: If an employee has a PRSA (Personal Retirement Savings Account) in place, are they exempt?
A: No. Having a PRSA by itself does not exempt someone. Unless the PRSA is part of a qualifying workplace scheme (with employer contributions), the employee will still be auto-enrolled.

Q: If an employee has a PRSA set up outside the company, will they still be required to enter the scheme until they can opt out after 6 months?
A: Yes. The system will auto-enrol them if they meet the eligibility rules. They can then opt out during the opt-out window.

Q: If an employee earns above €80k, are only the first €80k subject to auto-enrolment?
A: Yes. Contributions are only applied to earnings up to €80,000.

Q: Is the €20,000 earnings threshold applied to temporary or part-time staff?
A: Yes. Auto-enrolment is based on annual earnings. If a staff member earns less than €20,000 a year, they won’t be auto-enrolled automatically.

Q: If you have staff all working part-time and none earn €20k, do they have to auto-enrol?
A: No. They won’t be auto-enrolled. However, they can opt in voluntarily, and if they do, they will still receive employer and government contributions.

Q: Can a person over 60 be part of the scheme?
A: Yes, they can opt in voluntarily (they won’t be auto-enrolled). They will still benefit from employer and government contributions if they join.

Q: What about employees under 23, or those earning under €20k?
A: They won’t be auto-enrolled, but they can opt in if they wish — and they’ll still receive employer and government contributions.

Q: Does Auto-Enrolment apply to charities, non-profits, family businesses, and small companies?
A: Yes. All employers in Ireland — including charities, non-profits, and businesses with just a few employees — must operate auto-enrolment once it starts.

Opting Out and Re-Enrolment

Q: If an employee opts out after 6 months, what happens to their contributions?
A: They will be refunded their own contributions. However, the employer and government contributions are not refunded — those stay in the fund.

Q: If an employee opts out, when are they re-enrolled?
A: They will be re-enrolled after 2 years, at the next re-enrolment cycle, provided they still meet the eligibility criteria.

Contributions and Tax

Q: As there is no tax relief on contributions, will the pension be taxed again when you receive it at 66?
A: Yes. Pensions from My Future Fund will be treated like other pensions in retirement: you may take a tax-free lump sum (up to certain limits) and then the balance is taxed as income. The government top-up replaces upfront tax relief, so you still get support, just in a simpler way.

Q: Are employer contributions taxable if the total is below the maximum contribution limits?
A: No. Employer contributions under auto-enrolment are not treated as taxable benefit-in-kind. They simply go into your pension.

Q: Is auto-enrolment based on gross or net pay?
A: It is based on gross pay (before tax).

Q: How will the money (employee, employer, and government contributions) be paid?
A: Employers will deduct contributions through payroll, just like tax. Employer and government contributions are then transferred along with the employee's portion into the central system. The process will be similar to how PAYE/PRSI/USC payments are remitted.

Q: For the 1.5% contribution rate in year one, is this inclusive or exclusive of employer and government contributions?
A: It is exclusive. Each party contributes separately: Employee: 1.5%, Employer: 1.5%, Government: 0.5%. So the total going in is 3.5%.

Existing Company Schemes vs. Auto-Enrolment

Q: If we move to a master trust scheme for all employees, can we avoid auto-enrolment?
A: Yes, if your master trust meets the qualifying scheme rules (both employer and employee contribute at least the minimum required). You cannot force employees to join, but you can make membership a condition of employment for new hires if clearly stated in contracts.

Q: Do employees lose out on employer contributions if they stay in a PRSA instead of auto-enrolment?
A: Yes. Unless the PRSA is part of a qualifying scheme with employer contributions, they would miss out on the mandatory employer contribution under auto-enrolment.

Q: For private group schemes, do employers have to match contributions in the same way as auto-enrolment?
A: Yes. If the scheme is to be considered a qualifying alternative, it must at least meet the minimum employer and employee contribution levels set under auto-enrolment.

Q: If a company pension scheme is not available to all staff, can the employer direct employees towards a PRSA?
A: Employers can offer PRSAs, but unless they contribute to them, those employees would still be auto-enrolled into My Future Fund.

Q: If an employee is contributing to their own PRSA via payroll, how are they handled?
A: They will still be auto-enrolled unless the PRSA is a qualifying scheme with employer contributions. They may then need to choose whether to continue their PRSA or rely on auto-enrolment.

Administration and Employer Obligations

Q: Do you have to add employees as soon as they start, or can you wait until they complete probation?

A: Auto-enrolment applies from day one of employment if the employee meets the eligibility rules. Probation periods don't apply.

Q: How quickly do new employees need to opt in if they want to?
A: They can opt in at any time if they meet the age and earnings rules.

Q: Is it the employer's job to provide employees with information about their fund, or will Revenue/Government handle that?
A: The central auto-enrolment system (run by the State) will provide employees with information about their fund, contributions, and account. Employers only need to handle payroll deductions and reporting.

Q: How will the information about age and date of birth be provided?
A: Revenue systems will supply the data to the National Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings Authority (NAERSA), which will operate the scheme.

Special Cases

Q: Seasonal and event-based companies — how is the €20k threshold assessed?
A: It is based on expected annual earnings. If an employee is projected to earn €20k or more, they must be auto-enrolled, even if their earnings are seasonal or irregular.

Q: If an employee is already in a private pension, can they also join auto-enrolment?
A: Yes. They will be auto-enrolled if eligible, even if they are in another pension. They can then decide whether to continue in both or opt out.

Q: Can someone top up their own PRSA after joining My Future Fund?
A: Yes, they can continue to contribute separately to a private pension if they want to save more. Tax treatment of those additional contributions will follow normal pension tax relief rules.

Q: Does the government contribute to a group scheme?
A: No. Government top-ups only apply to My Future Fund. Group or private schemes operate under the traditional tax-relief model.