



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

Employer News - 17 January 2014

## **3,500 more employers backing workplace pensions**

Automatic enrolment began in October 2012 and is rolling out from the largest to smallest employers across the UK. All employers, including charities and the public sector, must comply with the new law by assessing their workforce and automatically enrolling eligible workers into a suitable pension scheme.

More than two million workers have begun saving into a workplace pension scheme as a result of automatic enrolment, according to latest figures from The Pensions Regulator.

Pension's Minister Steve Webb said: "Over 3,500 employers so far are helping us to create a fairer society by ensuring that pensions are no longer the preserve of the few. The message to employers is: make sure you're ready for the date your workforce joins those already in."

The [Pensions Regulator website](#) has more information including a free planning tool to help employers.

## **Free online seminar for new businesses**

DWP and HMRC are running a live [webinar](#) - an online seminar you can attend without leaving your desk - to help anyone thinking of starting their own business. The **free** hour-long event is a chance to get help and advice on self-employment and question the expert presenters.

The date for the webinar is Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014, 11am-12 noon. You must [register to attend](#).

HMRC offers a wide variety of digital support for new businesses including live & recorded webinars, tax related help & support e-mails, tax information videos on YouTube and much more. Find out more about [what HMRC has to offer small businesses](#).

## **New Enterprise Allowance helps to kick-start more than 32,000 new businesses**

From 'Tasty Pastry' to 'Gadget Cabin', the [New Enterprise Allowance \(NEA\)](#) has helped enterprising jobseekers to become aspiring entrepreneurs and set up 32,520 new businesses.

NEA has been extended **until 2016** and the [latest figures](#) published in December 2013 show that around 2,000 new businesses are being set up every month with the help of NEA, 7,500 of which have been started by people aged 50 or over.

Minister for Employment Esther McVey said: "Starting your own business takes guts and passion. We're seeing tens of thousands of people coming off benefits to set up their own company and creating a new enterprise generation. Budding entrepreneurs also need support and advice if they are to turn their ideas into a successful business, which is what NEA helps to provide."

## Flexible working plans will bring benefits to business

Business and employees are set to benefit from proposed new rules which allow all employees to be able to request flexible working.

The Government's [new flexible working proposals](#) intend to extend the statutory right to request flexible working to all employees by autumn 2014.

The changes mean employees employed for at least 26 weeks by the same employer will be able to make one request in a 12 month period to work flexibly.

There are many different types of flexible working, ranging from part-time working, compressed hours or just varying start and finish times. Benefits to businesses adopting flexible working include access to a wider pool of skills and talents in the workforce, increased productivity and improved recruitment and retention rates.

[Research by the Department for Business](#) estimates that the anticipated benefits to business include:

- Higher productivity (£36.8m);
- Lower labour turnover (£8.4m), and
- Reduced absenteeism (£1.4m)

## Youth employment

Growing numbers of employers are receiving support to help young people into work. DWP has launched videos on YouTube that show how the [Youth Contract](#) is giving young people the skills and experience that employers need.

The sector-based work academies [employer](#) and [young person](#) videos give information about combined training and work experience.

These [employer](#) and [young person](#) videos explain how wage incentives can give employers financial help towards employing an 18-24 year old.

And the work experience [employer](#) and [young person](#) videos show how business can provide a positive experience of the working world.

## Introducing the Health and Work Service

With more than 130million working days a year lost to sickness absence, the Government commissioned an independent [review](#) to look at ways of reducing costs and getting people back

to work. Some of the review's accepted recommendations are:

- Abolition of the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Percentage Threshold Scheme (PTS) and the associated SSP record-keeping requirements from 6 April 2014. This will provide greater flexibility for employers in maintaining sickness absence records and reduce regulatory burdens. However, employers will still be required to maintain Statutory Sick Pay records for Pay As You Earn (PAYE) purposes.
- Reinvesting the PTS money to fund the introduction of the Health and Work Service (HWS).

This will be a free, independent occupational health advice service available to all employers, employees and GPs. It will:

- Give GPs access to work-related health support for their patients
- Support employers to better manage sickness absence and reduce sick-pay costs
- Provide expert advice to employees on sickness absence to assist their return to work and be less likely to go on to claim health-related benefits.

Read the [full Government response](#) to the Health at Work Review.

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