



17 November 2025

Mr Owen Reidy,
General Secretary,
ICTU,
31 – 32 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1.

Re: Automatic Enrolment – My Future Fund

Dear Owen,

As I'm sure you know, this Department is currently implementing the Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System known as My Future Fund. This system is legislated for under the Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System Act 2024 (the AE Act). It is designed to provide those employees in the Irish economy, who are currently without pension coverage, the opportunity to save for their retirement in a quality assured scheme. Therefore, from 1 January 2026, those aged over 23, under 66, earning in excess of €5,000 per 13-week period, and not already enrolled in a pension scheme operated through payroll, will be automatically enrolled in My Future Fund. My Future Fund will be operated and regulated by a new state body called the National Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings Authority (NAERSA).

On 14 October, as part of its announcement of the establishment of NAERSA, this Department issued a press release highlighting, *inter alia*, that it had come to its attention that a number of organisations were directly enrolling some of their employees in occupational pension schemes on the basis that this is now required by a change in law. That Press Release clarified that no such change in law had occurred. It also reminded all concerned that it is an offence to take any action that hinders or attempts to hinder an employee from participating in the My Future Fund scheme, and that any cases where employees are illegally obliged to join another pension scheme such that they are then prevented from accessing the My Future Fund scheme will be fully investigated. A copy of that Press Release is available online ([Minister Calleary formally establishes the National Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings Authority \(NAERSA\)](#)).

Notwithstanding this communication this Department understands that some employers intend to enrol employees, who are currently not participating in a company pension scheme, into such a scheme and to so do so with effect from the 1st January 2026 in order that the employees concerned are not automatically enrolled into the My Future Fund scheme.

In the normal course of events, if the employees concerned were being offered the same pension terms and benefits of other members already in the employer scheme, this might be a welcome development. However, we understand that in some cases the employees concerned are being compelled to join the scheme, including in circumstances where membership is not explicitly required under their contract of employment. We also understand that payments into these pension scheme consist solely of an employer contribution of about 1% of salary. Such a low contribution level is less than 30% of the initial contributions payable under the My Future Fund scheme and less than 10% of those that will ultimately be payable under that scheme. It is, essentially, a nominal contribution that is unlikely to yield any material pension benefit.

If the information set out above is correct it would appear that the extension of membership will result in employees not having access to the My Future Fund scheme but instead being compulsorily enrolled into membership of a scheme that is of marginal, if any benefit, to them. In this regard, as already mentioned above, it is an offence under Section 128 of the AE Act to hinder or attempt to hinder an employee from participating in the My Future Fund scheme.

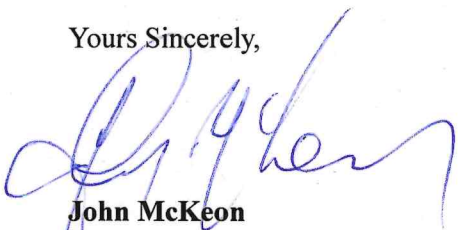
In addition, the Pensions Act and associated regulations promulgate specific disclosure requirements where prospective members are being enrolled in an occupational pension scheme.

Separately, it seems to this Department that employers pursuing such a course of action would need to provide their pension scheme administrator with the personal details of those employees being enrolled – if the employees concerned have not explicitly agreed to join the scheme and consented to the sharing of their personal information this may give rise to a breach of Data Protection law.

Finally, under the AE Act, it is a matter for NAERSA in consultation with the Pensions Authority to draw up standards, that may be promulgated by a regulation of the Minister, for the purpose of determining whether any occupational scheme qualifies as an exempt scheme under the Act. You may wish to note that such standards are under consideration and that a standard specifying a minimum contribution rate and other matters, including how employer contributions shall be assessed as being for the benefit of the worker, is likely to be set out in regulation in near course. As required under the Act such standards shall aim to ensure that the terms that qualify a pension scheme as exempt are at least as favourable to employees as those available through the My Future Fund scheme.

I would be grateful if you could bring the contents of this letter to the attention of your member unions so that they may be in a position to advise their own members should they receive any representations regarding the matters set out above.

Yours Sincerely,



John McKeon

Secretary General