



MINISTER COUGHLAN SIGNS 15TH SEPTEMBER DEADLINE FOR PENSIONS INTO LAW

Provisions requiring employers to provide access to PRSAs for employees from the 15th September have been signed into law by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Coughlan.

From the 15th September employers who do not offer an occupational pensions scheme to all their employees will be legally required to provide access to a Standard PRSA for their employees.

Minister Coughlan said that the Pensions Board has been working closely over the last number of months with employer representative organisations to publicise employer obligations in regard to PRSAs.

However, she was concerned to ensure that all employers were aware of their duties in advance of the 15th September deadline.

"Employers have a crucial role to play in ensuring the success of the whole PRSA initiative by promoting the need for pensions coverage amongst their employees and by facilitating access to PRSAs in accordance with the legislation passed last year. In the circumstances, I have decided, in consultation with the Pensions Board, that each employer will receive a copy of the information guide on employer obligations which was launched in July," said Minister Coughlan.

Over 173,000 guides are being currently distributed to individual employers. Minister Coughlan said that she would encourage all employers to study the material they are receiving and to avail of the supports being offered by insurance companies, banks and



other institutions to enable them to comply with their legal obligations.

The Government is committed to raising the level of private pensions coverage amongst workers and PRSAs are one of the main instruments being employed in pursuit of this objective. said Minister Coughlan.

"The obligations being placed on employers in relation to PRSAs are seen as critical elements in ensuring the success of the overall initiative and, accordingly, it is essential that we achieve compliance and the situation will be monitored closely," added Minister Coughlan.

Employers who are found to be in breach of their obligations under the Pensions Act can face fines or imprisonment or both.

ENDS

28th August 2003