

Best practice case study

Adopting a broad communication strategy at St Mungo's Broadway

LESSONS LEARNED

- >> Communicate as early as possible, especially if staff do not have existing pension provision
- >> Utilise a variety of communication methods, though the personal touch is often preferable
- >> Engage third parties such as unions as another communication channel

"Initially I didn't relish the thought of having to get to grips with auto-enrolment," says David McIlhare, former Head of HR Operations at St Mungo's Broadway, a charity which supports homeless people in England. "However, once I had got stuck into it I enjoyed the experience and it stimulated thinking about pensions across our organisation."

In David's view, benefit and reward management is an area that is becoming more important for all organisations: *"All people – even younger workers – are becoming aware of the need to save something for their future, and so pensions is rising up the agenda for everybody."* Because of this, the way auto-enrolment was communicated to the 1,300 staff St Mungo's Broadway was incredibly important. *"Our intention was always to communicate with staff about how the changes we needed to make would affect them right from the outset. Only about 20% of staff were already in a pension scheme, so we needed to allow time for those who had previously shied away from making decisions about pensions to consider the implications of auto-enrolment."*

St Mungo's Broadway opted for a broad communications strategy. *"We put information on our intranet on a monthly basis such as frequently asked questions (FAQs), we then wrote to staff on an individual basis explaining the changes we were making, and also communicated through the employee union forum."*

What advice would David pass on to other organisations looking to implement auto-enrolment successfully?

"The most important thing to get right in any change process is communication. All aspects of communication should be used: often face-to-face and group meetings are a better way of communicating than emails or the intranet. The human touch has a greater impact."