

Employee Benefits Consultancy

Our corporate services



Wren Sterling's experienced advisers are there to guide your employees and help them make good financial decisions, through a coordinated financial education programme. Employees and directors with more complex financial advice requirements can count on the expertise of our private client team.



According to a recent report from Scottish Widows², 37% of those aged 18-21 feel their employers should provide information about how to budget for retirement, more than any other age group.

There's no doubt that the role of the employer has changed and those that offer financial education services can position themselves positively in the labour market.

The workforce is changing too, with vastly different goals emerging between generations from those planning for imminent retirement to millennials struggling with university debt and scaling the housing ladder.

1 in 4

employees are suffering with financial problems that are so severe that they are affecting their performance in the workplace¹

46%

of those aged 65-69 feel their employers should provide information about the state pension²

£4k

People could face a £4,000 per year shortfall between their pension savings and desired retirement income³

6 in 10

people have put off saving more into their pension because they don't understand the system³

1 www2.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2017/01/11/money-worries-affect-productivity-of-one-in-four-uk-employees.aspx

2 reference.scottishwidows.co.uk/docs/SW-2016-Workplace-pensions.pdf

3 pwc.blogs.com/press_room/2015/09/wider-pensions-reform-needed-to-tackle-pension-savings-shortfall-.html

Why choose us?

We specialise in all aspects of employee benefits strategy so we see the whole picture and ensure every aspect of our financial advice supports our clients' goals.

1. We're the experts

We're experts in all key corporate areas: pensions, financial education, workplace benefits and protection. Through the breadth of our client base, we work with some of the UK's biggest corporates right through to the SMEs that provide the heartbeat to the UK economy.

2. Committed to our clients

All our advisers are committed to developing long-standing relationships that achieve our clients' business objectives.

3. Our expertise

We deliver expertise in the areas of financial planning that make the biggest difference to the wellbeing of all employees. Our financial education service means employees grow to understand their own finances better and in turn, associate that with the effort their employers make to support them.

4. Our network of advisers

Our nationwide network of corporate advisers is supported by a team of qualified central services and administrators based in seven offices across the UK.

5. Our longevity

Our deep relationships with providers gives us quick access to decision makers, while we instinctively know who is well-placed to meet your unique requirements.

6. Multiple channels

Where employees are interested in personal financial advice we can also support them directly through our private client advisers.

7. Our independence

Our independence allows us to recommend products from across the market giving our clients greater choice, ensuring our advice is truly independent and always in the best interest of our clients.

8. Trusted

We are trusted advisers with a strong reputation, so the majority of our corporate business is referred to us through third parties such as general insurance brokers, accountancy practices and pension lawyers.





Who we work with

We work with businesses of all sizes from SME through to blue chip, advising them on their employee benefits strategy and bringing financial education to their workforces.

You can read more about their experiences in this brochure. We also work with 10 UK building societies, providing in-branch and telephone advice to thousands of building society members across the UK.

Employee benefits advice for businesses

Our offering is wide-ranging and designed to cover your entire employee benefits requirements.

Financial education

We recognise that employers of differing sizes have different requirements, so we're flexible on how we deliver our educational programmes. We have a series of core workshops designed for individuals at different life stages to increase their confidence when making financial decisions:

- Financial education for all ages (ages 18 - 40)
- Mid-life money MOT (ages 40 - 55)
- Retirement planning (ages 55+)

We also have a series of presentations focusing on the following topics:

- Understanding your workplace benefits
- Pensions and saving for retirement
- Understanding salary sacrifice
- Understanding your personal allowances
- Budgeting and managing your money
- Graduate finances and student debt
- Debt management
- Savings and investments
- Redundancy clinic
- Executive financial planning



Auto enrolment review and recommendations

Auto enrolment is part of business life and although the initial rush to set up a scheme has subsided, there are still key decisions for firms to take. This includes deciding whether their current scheme offers value for money for employees, whether appropriate governance is in place and whether all associated processes are compliant.

Employee benefits advice

A successful employee benefits strategy sets businesses apart from the competition. It's an opportunity to show employees that they are valued, to increase engagement and provide tailored services for executives.

With any corporate relationship we begin with a review of our client's existing benefits strategy and policies, establish what's important and work towards ensuring a return on investment.

We've got services suitable for the whole corporate market – from auto enrolment with guaranteed acceptance, to executive services like SIPP and SSAS and personal pension reviews.



Flexible benefits

Flexible benefits creates added value for your workforce. To simplify the process of selecting benefits and communicating them to your workforce, we've partnered with a preferred supplier to host your Total Reward Statements and suite of benefits. Our consultancy recommends the right providers for your employee benefits and these are selected from the whole of the market. We're also on hand to deliver implementation and ongoing communications support to ensure your investment in benefits lands with your employees and secures their engagement.

Ongoing corporate governance

The Code of Practice on Governance issued by The Pension Regulator requires a robust governance process to ensure the pension scheme is meeting both the employer's and employees' needs on an ongoing basis.

We can provide a governance process that includes setting up a governance committee, chairing the meetings and producing the Governance Report on an annual basis. In addition we can review the performance and suitability of the default investment fund, ensuring employees are getting the right messages to encourage them to save for retirement.

Salary exchange

Salary exchange or salary sacrifice is often misunderstood by employers and employees, but it can be a powerful benefit for both parties. Our experts can talk you through available benefits including child care vouchers and additional pension contributions and we'll keep you updated as legislation changes to ensure you remain compliant.

Importantly, we can then convey the benefits, and risks, of salary exchange to your employees. We do this for many of our clients, often in tandem with other financial education topics like retirement planning.

Private medical insurance

Our Private Medical Insurance (PMI) unit offers specialist advice to satisfy Corporate, SME and individual demand, and extends to dental, travel and employee assistance programmes. We will review, recommend and implement the most attractive healthcare package based on your requirements.

PMI is a benefit that will be both understood and appreciated by employees. From an employer's perspective this benefit will help attract and retain good quality staff and maintain a healthy workforce, as well as satisfying their overall duty of care.

Health and wellbeing

Looking after your employees' health and wellbeing can directly contribute to a more engaged and efficient workforce. Every workforce has its unique challenges and stress levels but by providing a workplace environment that enables a healthy lifestyle, you can try to mitigate some of this impact on your employees and raise their performance levels at the same time. However, if you embark on a strategy to encourage healthier living, it is important that this strategy is relevant and appropriate for your employees.

A successful health and wellbeing strategy requires research, engagement, time and commitment from employer and employees. Wren Sterling's experts can help you build this strategy and implement it so it has a long lasting and positive impact on your workforce.

Group risk

Regularly reviewing your group risk provision is good business practice. Our independence means we compare providers from right across the market to secure the most appropriate scheme for your business at the most competitive price.

Furthermore, we help our clients realise all the benefits of Group Risk schemes, which often go unused, including management training, absence management and employee assistance programmes.

What our clients say

We specialise in long term client relationships. This gives us the opportunity to guide our clients as they go through the business cycle, ensuring they are getting value for money from their corporate financial planning decisions.

We help businesses of all sizes from sole traders, contractors, startups, SMEs, corporates and right through to FTSE giants.

“AstraZeneca have worked with Wren Sterling for a many years, in a number of different areas, from support to employees affected by a Corporate Pension exercise to Pensioners considering taking up the offer of a Pension Increase Exchange. Our employees and pension scheme members value the independent advice and support they receive from Wren Sterling, whilst we value their responsiveness, can do approach and collaborative working practices.”

Rob Hamer, UK Benefits Manager, Astra Zeneca



“Poundstretcher contacted Wren Sterling to review its auto enrolment arrangements. Since Bryan Stott came to meet us we’ve been able to dramatically simplify our processes. Bryan has also recommended a more appropriate provider, making auto enrolment easier for us to administer and saving the business money every month.”

Hemant Patel, Finance Director, Poundstretcher



Our other services

The unexpected happens in every walk of life and protecting our clients' effectively is critical. Through a comprehensive review of your current arrangements and our deep knowledge and relationships with providers, we will recommend the right mix of products to protect your business.

Key person protection

The death or critical illness of a key employee can be destabilising and cause your business to have to operate differently.

In more serious cases it may also damage profits, customer relations, and potentially the financial stability of the business. The provision of a capital lump sum, can give you valuable breathing space to take stock of your situation and plan sensibly.

Shareholder protection

Safeguarding the future of the business should a shareholder die or become critically ill is vital for other shareholders, as well as employees and other dependants. This protection ensures a smooth conclusion to any business succession problems, minimises the impact on the business and provides the shareholder or their family with the true worth of their shares.

Relevant life policy

A relevant life policy is a single life plan taken out on the life of an employee by an employer. The plan provides death-in-service benefits and is designed for either individual members who require life cover over and above the company scheme, or employees in small businesses that have no scheme.

Business continuity

When an unforeseen event brings day-to-day operations to a halt (anything from a natural disaster to a data breach), an organisation needs to recover quickly and continue to provide services to its clients. Failure to have a disaster recovery plan in place can put the organisation at risk of high financial costs, reputation loss and risk to employees and clients alike.

Private client services

Wren Sterling offers a full independent financial advice service to individuals, executives and business owners. Our ongoing service ensures the plans we recommend remain fit for purpose and adapt to our clients' changing circumstances. Our private client services include:

- Retirement planning
- Investments
- Protection
- Final salary pension transfer advice
- Inheritance tax and legacy planning
- Profit extraction and exit strategies
- Dividend strategies
- Executive pension planning, including lifetime and annual allowance management

Corporate clients can be introduced to private client consultants based around the UK, so please speak to your corporate consultant for an introduction or a copy of our private client brochure.



How our financial education programme works

Whether you require initial consultancy or full support throughout the year, we can combine our services for you:

- Workforce demographic analysis
- Employee benefits audit and recommendations
- Communications and engagement programme
- Financial education strategy consultancy
- Workshops, seminars, webinars
- Senior executive financial planning consultations
- Retirement advice for your workforce
- Understanding employee benefits programmes

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Scope your requirements

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Workforce demographic analysis

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Results and recommendations

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Benefits review and implementation

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Ongoing financial education programme and communications

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Access to Wren Sterling's private client team



Delivering financial education

We recognise that employers of differing sizes have different requirements, so we're flexible on how we deliver our programmes.

We have two broad categories of financial education topics we can provide, helping employees at different life stages, or with a need for education on a particular topic.

“Wren Sterling provides consultancy services for our pension scheme, which gives us peace of mind that we're looking after our employees' interests now and in the future. They have provided workshops for members approaching retirement and a series of one to one clinics, focused on improving understanding of pension options, and our employees know there's an option to get personal financial planning advice from Wren Sterling if they want it.”

Nottingham Building Society

By topic

1. Designed for segments of larger populations
2. Focused on topics highly relevant to individuals
3. Broad range of standard topics designed for employees of all ages, life stages and wealth

By life stage

1. Designed for smaller populations
2. Can be delivered in a day
3. Option for individuals to follow up with financial adviser after the session

By life stage

All ages financial education

Starting off with budgeting through to IHT and Wills, this one-stop programme will cover all aspects of workplace financial guidance for your employees.

Our advisers are also able to signpost additional sources of information and programmes can be configured to reflect the unique make up of your workforce. For example care fee planning for older workers and accessing benefits outside the workplace for younger workers.

Mid-life MOT for ages 40-55

At the mid stage of working life, employees are well-placed to plan for the rest of their lives and this session walks through the key financial decisions coming up and how to prepare for them.

Retirement planning for ages 55+

A comprehensive session focused on every aspect of retirement planning for employees over 55 including pension options, keeping active in retirement and cashflow planning – showing employees when their money might run out and how to make sure that doesn't happen.

By topic

You can select individual sessions to run from these topics below. Bespoke sessions can also be created to meet your organisation's unique requirements.

Budgeting
and
managing
your money

Graduate
finances and
student debt

Mortgages

Savings and
investments

Pensions
and
saving for
retirement

Flex
windows

Understanding
your
workplace
benefits

Redundancy
clinics

Debt
management

Understanding
salary sacrifice

Executive
financial
planning

Your personal
allowances



By topic continued

Budgeting and managing your money

Basic overview of making sure you stay in the black every month and tips for saving money through savings and pensions, plus shopping around, including utility switching.

Graduate finances and student debt

A focus on balancing income with paying off student debts and building longer term savings goals.

Mortgages

Getting on the housing ladder, remortgaging, getting the best deal and downsizing. Wren Sterling works with John Charcol, a leading independent mortgage intermediary, to help people with specific requirements.

Savings and investments

Understanding the differences between savings and investments, their risks and rewards and why people save and invest.

Understanding your workplace benefits

Workshop covering the workplace pension, group risk benefits and soft benefits like discount shopping.

Flex windows

Raising the profile of your flex window to engage employees and encourage them to take advantage of their benefits. Best run in conjunction with Understanding your workplace benefits.

Pensions and saving for retirement

Simplifying pension saving and demonstrating the advantages of saving early. Also covers options for workers over 55 who can access their pensions.

Your personal allowances

Helps people understand their allowances and entitlements to make their money go further.

Redundancy clinics

Gives people at the risk of redundancy, or those definitely being made redundant, a breakdown of their entitlements and guidance on investing their settlement and how to make sure they are protecting loved ones when they no longer have access to workplace benefits.

Debt management

Debt is a major concern for the UK's employed population, with a third saying that financial concerns are their single biggest worry. This session covers where to find advice and options for refinancing debt, including introducing third parties who specialise in this.

Understanding salary sacrifice

Salary sacrifice can offer extra value to employees by paying for childcare vouchers, company cars and adding to their pension pots. The tax savings need explaining though as they're not immediately obvious.

Executive financial planning

Executives and company directors can have different financial planning requirements to the rest of the population so this workshop caters to those requirements. Topics include the lifetime and annual allowances, dividends and the advantages of arranging protection via the company.



Our values

Wren Sterling is a nationwide independent financial planning business that specialises in all aspects of investments, protection, and retirement planning. Our values are at the heart of everything we do, and how we deliver our service.



Cares

Wren Sterling cares for its clients, colleagues and the communities in which they work.

We work with integrity and discipline to do what's right.

Knows

Wren Sterling knows how to solve its clients' most complex problems.

We celebrate knowledge and ensure all our clients benefit from our deep expertise and insight, all of the time.

Acts

Wren Sterling acts to think fast, move swiftly and decisively.


We have the entrepreneurial drive to empower our people. modernise our business and deliver better solutions for clients.

Delivers

Wren Sterling delivers on the promises it makes to its clients and to each other.

We expect to be judged and rewarded based on our reliability and our results.





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Nottingham Building Society

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