



September may mean back to school for many, but for the pensions industry, it also marks the start of a cross-industry awareness effort, with numerous industry campaigns running over the course of the month to help raise awareness of the key pension issues, and give members a safe space to quiz industry professionals.

This year's campaigns are bigger than ever, with three campaigns running over the next month: Pensions Awareness Week 2024, the Pay Your Pension Some Attention campaign's third year, and Pensions Dashboards Week.

Work is already underway and announcements are trickling in ahead of the big launch day, with the pair behind this year's Pension Attention campaign confirmed to be Gemma Collins and Iona Bain.

In addition to this, communications organisation Pension Geeks recently announced that Royal London will be its new partner for Pension Awareness Week 2024.

The campaign, originally established by Pension Geeks, will run from 9 September to 15 September and will feature live, digital TV shows. Pension Awareness Week 2024 marks the 11th year for the campaign, with sessions set to cover a number of key topics, including pension transfers, getting ready for retirement, and closing the gender pensions gap.

Speaking to *Pensions Age* about this year's campaign, Pension Geeks head

Raising awareness – and maybe even contributions?

➤ ***Pensions Age* takes a closer look at the pensions awareness campaigns running in September, and why it's so important to get savers engaging with their pensions**

geek and Pension Awareness founder, Rachel Parkinson, said: "At Pension Geeks, we can see that there's a lot of uncertainty building around people's futures, especially their pensions.

"After the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis that has ravaged people's ability to save, there's more political uncertainty about what will happen to pensions in the future. In a world of inconsistency, volatility, and uncertainty, we're the bedrock. A household name. The go-to place that people think about when they want their pension questions answered.

"People trust us to deliver high-quality, reliable, financial education. And we do it all for free. We put financial wellbeing first, because even the smallest change today can breathe life into a retirement tomorrow."

This focus on financial wellbeing and rebuilding saver trust is clearly needed, as understanding, trust and engagement with pensions remains low. It is also particularly crucial now, given the rapid rise of influencers and unofficial advice from social media figures.

One recent video on my social media, for instance, highlighted opting out of your pension as a 'payslip hack' to help people get more money, warning that 'if you're paying into a pension, this will actually be costing you money that could be invested or go into your pocket'. As backwards as that may sound to many in the industry, savers often simply still don't think of their pension pot as theirs and may not realise the extent of the mis-

information or misunderstandings being shared on social media.

Whilst the cost-of-living crisis has placed growing pressure on household finances, most simply cannot afford to opt out of their pensions, with analysis from the World Economic Forum estimating that the UK's pension gap will rise from £6 trillion to £25 trillion by 2050.

But improving pensions awareness and trust in the industry could make changes to encourage workers to save more, such as increasing the auto-enrolment (AE) minimum contributions, more agreeable for workers and help avoid a surge in opt-outs.

After all, you're more likely to give up some of your hard-earned pay if you know exactly where that money is going, how you will be able to access it, and how it is being looked after in the meantime.

This is especially important given this September will also mark the one-year anniversary for the Private Member's Bill to extend AE, which cleared parliament in September last year.

Whilst hailed as a move that is expected to ensure that "millions across the country can save more and save earlier", the bill has yet to have any tangible impact, with promises of a consultation never quite making it over the line.

This September is a chance to make sure that savers not only are aware of pensions, but understand them and trust the teams in charge of them – and maybe even save a bit more into them.

➤ **Written by Sophie Smith**