

WBR GROUP

WHY CHOOSE A SSAS?

And is it better than a SIPP?

LAW | SSAS | TAX | ACTUARIAL

For many business owners, a pension is simply viewed as a way of saving for retirement. Whilst this is undoubtedly its primary purpose, the type of pension you choose can have a significant impact on both your long-term wealth and your business.

A Small Self-Administered Scheme (SSAS) is designed specifically for directors and owners of private limited companies. Like a Self-Invested Personal Pension (SIPP), it offers generous tax advantages, including tax-relieved contributions, tax-free investment growth and, in most cases, the ability to take up to 25% of your pension benefits tax-free from retirement age.

However, a SSAS goes much further by giving business owners greater control, flexibility and opportunities to integrate pension planning with wider business objectives.



A Pension Designed for Business Owners



Unlike a SIPP, a SSAS is established by a sponsoring employer and can have up to 11 members, often comprising directors, family members or key employees. At WBR Group, most SSASs have between two and five members. All members are trustees and they therefore control investment and all other decisions including the admission of new members, and appoint professionals to assist them.

This level of control enables decisions to be made quickly and often with the specific needs of the business in mind. We find business owners 'get' SSAS easily: the structure mirrors that of their business, where control and informed decision-making are the norm. In most SIPPs decisions are taken by the provider trustee and they will have their own internal rules, procedures and acceptable investments, sometimes far narrower than a SSAS.



Simple or Complex?

We consistently argue against those who say a SSAS is a complex product. Underneath the waterline, all pensions are legally complex and have a robust layer of regulation. A SSAS is a different proposition to a personal pension. The difference is not one of complexity, but of purpose and governance.

For advisers, this requires a slightly altered mindset. Rather than viewing the pension as a standalone investment wrapper, a SSAS should be considered alongside the client's business, tax and long-term wealth planning. It is a broader conversation, but not necessarily a more complex one. A conversation that we find many clients want to have.

In our experience, once advisers and business owners understand how a SSAS works, they often find it to be an intuitive and highly practical solution for owner-managed businesses.

Running a SSAS

A SSAS is an occupational pension scheme established with a bespoke trust deed. This is a wholly different structure and pension regime to a SIPP. We often say that with a SIPP the member is a passenger, whilst with a SSAS the member is the driver.

The administration of a SSAS is an important and on-going process to ensure it operates efficiently, remains compliant with all regulations and serves the best interests of the beneficiaries. Our SSASs are administered in house.

All trustee decisions must be unanimous and in addition to all members being a trustee, WBR Trustees Ltd fulfils the role of Professional Trustee. WBR aid all trustees in fulfilling their role.

For professional advisers WBR Group offers practical training and technical support to relevant staff and principals.

Contributions and Transfers-In

In a SSAS it is the sponsoring employer that makes the agreed and allowable contributions. These will be eligible for Corporation Tax Relief.

A SSAS can receive transfers from other DC schemes, and this is often the case on establishment.





Investing in Commercial Property

Both SSASs and SIPPs can invest in commercial property. However, where a property purchase involves more than one pension member, a SSAS often provides greater flexibility.

A SSAS enables members to pool their pension funds within a single legal ownership structure, making it easier to purchase larger commercial premises. It can also borrow to assist with the purchase, allowing many business owners to acquire the premises from which they trade.

The sponsoring company then pays rent to the SSAS at market value. This rent is generally deductible for corporation tax purposes and is received by the pension free of income tax, helping to build retirement wealth in a highly tax-efficient environment.

You are able to develop property once it is held within a SSAS. In many cases the SSAS can help fund the building or development works.

The single trust structure of a SSAS makes transfers on death, sale of the business or change of ownership far easier and more cost effective than other member-directed schemes.

Funding Your Business



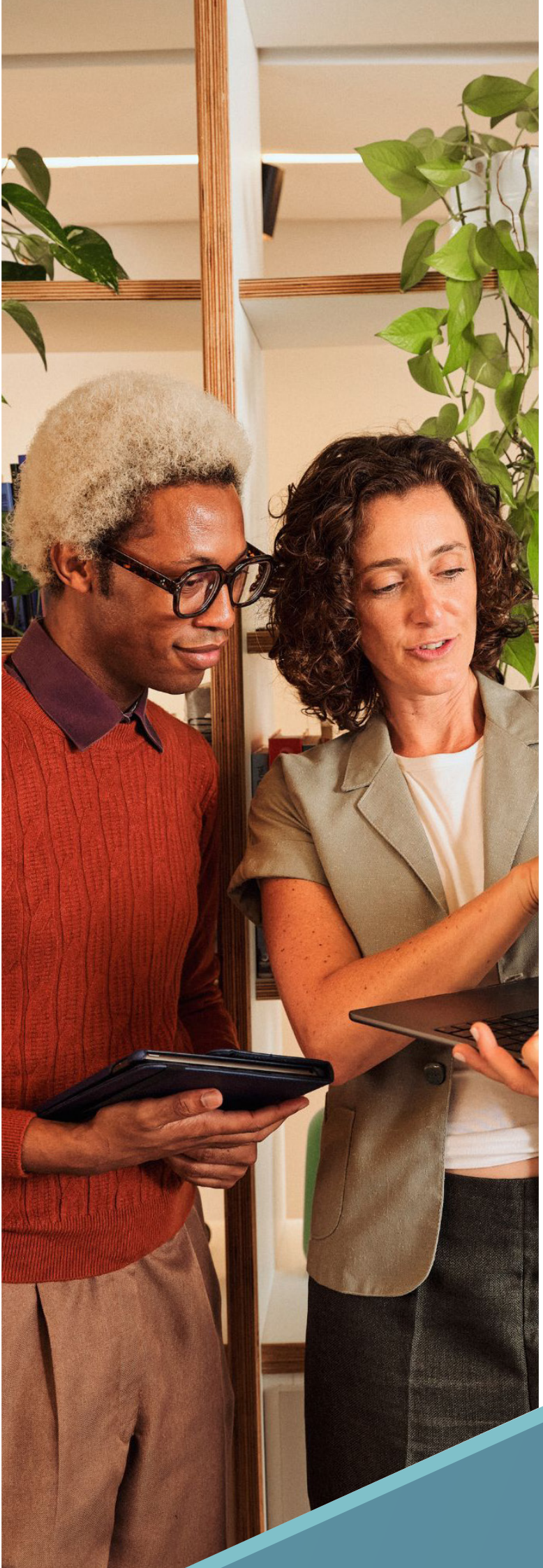
Perhaps the best-known feature that distinguishes a SSAS from a SIPP is the ability to lend money back to the sponsoring employer.

Subject to HMRC rules, a SSAS can lend up to 50% of its net asset value to the sponsoring company, provided the loan is secured with a first charge on an acceptable tangible asset, repaid over a maximum of five years and charged at an appropriate commercial rate of interest.

For growing businesses, this can provide an alternative source of finance without approaching a bank. Importantly, the interest paid on the loan goes back into the members' pension fund (gross) rather than to an external lender.

WBR Group generally see loan backs as a benefit of having a SSAS, not a reason to set one up initially (with transfers-in from existing money purchase pensions).

A SIPP cannot provide a loan back facility.



Greater Investment Flexibility

Whilst SSAS & SIPPs offer a broad investment choice, SSASs can also be used for more sophisticated investment strategies.

Subject to pension legislation, HMRC rules and where appropriate, approval from the WBR Investment Committee, a SSAS can hold a wide range of investments including commercial property, deposits, collective investments, discretionary portfolios and certain private company investments.

The trustee structure also allows members to make investment decisions collectively and respond more quickly to opportunities.

Defined Benefit SSAS Opportunities

For some business owners, usually cash-rich and profitable companies, a Defined Benefit SSAS can provide opportunities that are not available through conventional pension arrangements.

WBR Group are the architects and leading provider of DB SSAS in UK. These schemes are registered with HMRC and can receive up to 2.5 times the contributions allowed in a DC environment.

A DB SSAS uses the rules relating to defined benefit schemes and our actuaries calculate a permissible target pension from which a contribution is agreed. The contribution is usually an allowable deduction for Corporation Tax in the hands of the sponsoring employer.

A DB SSAS is not a final salary scheme and the sponsoring company has no hidden future liabilities.

Further details and benefits available on our website.

When Might a SIPP Be the Better Choice?

A SIPP remains an excellent pension for many individuals, particularly employees or self-employed professionals who simply want a flexible investment pension without the additional responsibilities of acting as a trustee.

If your objectives are limited to building a retirement fund through mainstream investments, a SIPP may provide everything you need with relatively straightforward administration.

For single members, a SIPP is also likely to be a more cost-effective option (than a SSAS).

Why Choose a SSAS?

A SSAS is about much more than retirement planning. It is a strategic financial tool that enables business owners to combine pension planning with business growth, commercial property ownership, tax planning and succession planning.

For entrepreneurs, family businesses and owner-managed companies, it offers a level of flexibility and control that few other pension arrangements can match. When used appropriately and alongside professional advice, a SSAS can become an integral part of both your business strategy and your long-term (family) financial planning.

For those who simply want a pension, a SIPP is often an excellent solution. But for those who want their pension to work alongside their business, a SSAS can provide opportunities that are simply not available elsewhere.



About WBR Group

We're proud to be:

- 5-Star rated by Defaqto and Moneyfacts (2026).
- Three times winner of Best SSAS Provider (2026, 2025 and 2023) - ILP Moneyfacts Awards.
- Winner of Innovation Award 2026 - ILP Moneyfacts Awards.
- Commended for Service Beyond the Call of Duty 2026 - ILP Moneyfacts Awards.

Further, our AKG B- (Effective) rating provides independent opinion on our financial strength and operational sustainability. Assessed alongside comparable specialist providers, it supports advisers' due diligence processes and reflects WBR Group's stable and established operating position.













If you have any questions, need support, or require our communication in a different accessible format, please get in touch - we'll be happy to assist you.

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WBR SSAS is a trading name of companies within the WBR Group Holdings Limited, company registration number 14899100; registered office 5A Dominus Way, Meridian Business Park, Leicester, LE19 1RP

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