Introduction

Nest Insight, together with the School of Economics at the University of Nottingham, welcomes applications for a 2-year Postdoctoral Research position. The successful candidate will be employed on an interim basis by NEST and will join a joint NEST – Nottingham research initiative led by Professor John Gathergood at the University of Nottingham and Professor Neil Stewart at Warwick Business School focused on investigating the impact of automatic enrolment into pensions on consumer financial outcomes.

Partnership overview

NEST, the UK National Employment Savings Trust, is the workplace pension scheme set up by the UK government in support of the government's automatic pension enrolment programme. In the UK firms are obliged to provide workplace pensions, and the NEST scheme allows them to discharge their automatic enrolment duties. Established in 2010 and now with over 6 million members, NEST is playing a critical role in helping people save for their retirement - many of them low to moderate earners who may be saving for the first time, and moving jobs frequently.

In 2016, NEST established the NEST Insight unit, a collaborative research and innovation group developing insights and practical solutions to improve financial wellbeing in retirement for the 'DC generation'. We do this through an ambitious programme of research, events and publications, delivered in partnership with academics, think tanks, government and the industry. From its origins two years ago, NEST Insight has become a leading and respected voice in the sector.

The School of Economics at the University of Nottingham is one of Europe's leading economics schools, consistently ranked within the Top-40 economics schools worldwide and the Top-10 schools in the UK. The School hosts the Network of Integrated Behavioural Science (NIBS), a joint Nottingham-Warwick-University of East Anglia research initiative in behavioural science. The postdoctoral researcher affiliated to this project will also join the NIBS research community.

Research overview

NEST Insight is conducting a range of research to investigate the impact of automatic enrolment into pensions on consumer financial outcomes. The successful candidate will work across a number of projects, using detailed administrative records, together with field trials, to address a number of key research questions:

- How does auto-enrolment affect consumer credit portfolios, such as usage of credit card debt?
- Would consumers benefit from having auto-enrolment into short-term savings facilities alongside long-term retirement savings?
- How has auto-enrolment increased overall retirement saving preparedness in the UK?

Collaborators on this programme of work include David Laibson (Harvard University) and Brigitte Madrian (Brigham Young University). Outputs will include academic research papers for publication in journals in economics and finance, together with policy outputs.

Role description

The following are essential requirements for the post:

- A PhD (or close to completion of a Phd) in economics, finance, business and management, behavioural science, or a related discipline.
- Evidence of advanced skills and training in applied econometrics and statistics.
- Evidence of advanced skills in applied microeconomics and public economics.
- The ability to engage and manage relationship with key stakeholders, including individuals in government departments, agencies and the private sector.
- The ability to work in a professional, collaborative environment.

The following are preferred for the post:

- Previous experience at design, and/or analysis of natural experiment and field trial data.
- An understanding of modern behavioural economics, including 'nudge' and the economics of automatic enrolment.
- Evidence of advanced skills and training in machine learning techniques.

Please note that prior knowledge of retirement saving vehicles and pensions policy in the UK is not required for this position.

Any informal enquiries relating to this position should be directed in the first instance to Professor John Gathergood (john.gathergood@nottingham.ac.uk).

Role requirements

Experience and technical skills

The employee will be able to demonstrate the following experience and technical skills:
- Experience and a relevant qualification in a related area of research: economics, finance, statistical analysis, social research, psychology or behavioural science
- Knowledge and experience of project management disciplines
- Experience of co-ordinating and delviering projects with several diverse components

Personal attributes required

The role will require someone with the following personal attributes:
- Exceptional flexibilty and a willingness to engage across the team to support the work programme as necessary: the role will not suit someone looking for a very tightly defined remit
- Exceptional organisational and time management skills. This role will involve a changing workload so the ability to prioritise and then deliver is essential
- Outstanding professional attitude
- Self-starter, able to demonstrate a high level of initiative and flexibility
- Focused on continual improvement

- Strong attention to detail
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and emotional intellgence; calm and comfortable working with a wide range of people
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills
- Understanding & evidence of influencing skills

Differentiators

This is a rewarding and exciting role for someone seeking to develop a career in applied research into financial behavour. Our research will make a difference to millions of low- and moderate-income retirement savers, and our activity has a high profile across the public policy community and the pensions industry, as well as inside NEST.

To apply for this position, please click here.