



# When You Are the Business

*No employer, no EPF, no company medical card. Why the self-employed carry more risk than anyone — and how to build the safety net nobody is building for you.*

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If you run your own business, freelance, drive, trade, or sell — you already know the freedom. Fewer people notice the quiet trade you made to get it. An employee has an invisible support system funded by someone else: EPF contributions, SOCSO, often a company medical card, paid sick leave, and an income that continues for a while even on a bad month. When you work for yourself, every one of those has to be built by you, or it simply doesn't exist.

## The three gaps

- » **The retirement gap.** No employer contribution means no automatic EPF. The EPF's voluntary **i-Saraan** scheme exists — with a government incentive of up to 15%, capped at RM500 a year — but participation is low, at roughly 0.7 million people. Budget 2026's **i-Saraan Plus** adds matching contributions of up to RM600 a year (RM6,000 lifetime) for gig and informal workers.
- » **The income gap.** If you don't work, you don't earn — there is no sick leave and no salary continuation. For most self-employed people this is the single largest exposure, and it is completely invisible until it isn't.
- » **The medical gap.** No company medical card means the first serious hospital bill lands directly on the business's working capital, at a time when the business is also losing its most important worker: you.

## Coverage is improving — but slowly

Malaysia has been closing part of this gap. The **Gig Workers Act 2025** came into force on 31 March 2026, covering over **1.6 million workers** and making PERKESO (SOCSO) contributions mandatory for platform gig workers, with the government covering 70% of contributions for first-time registrants in year one and 50% in year two. Even so, SOCSO's 2025 data showed **fewer than 20% of gig workers registered** under the earlier voluntary scheme.

These schemes are a floor, not a plan. SOCSO's benefits are meaningful but modest; i-Saraan's incentive is capped at RM500 a year. If your household runs on RM8,000 a month, neither will hold your family's lifestyle steady through a serious illness.

1.6 mil+

workers covered by the Gig Workers Act 2025

&lt;20%

of gig workers registered under the earlier voluntary scheme

~0.7 mil

participants in EPF's voluntary i-Saraan

## The risk that gets overlooked: you are a business asset

If you employ people or have a business partner, your exposure doubles. Your death or disability doesn't only stop your household income — it can stop the business that pays several households, trigger the recall of business loans you personally guaranteed, and leave your partner running a company alongside your grieving family. Business owners insure premises and stock, and leave uninsured the one asset the whole enterprise runs on.

*“You've insured the shop, the van and the stock. Now insure the person all three depend on.”*

## Building the net, in order

The sequence for a self-employed person is the same Wealth Pyramid as everyone else — it just has to be built entirely by you:

### STEP 1 — PROTECT THE EARNER

#### Medical, critical illness and income protection first

A medical card such as **PRUMillion Med 2.0** (annual limit up to RM8 million, no lifetime limit) or **PRUValue Med** replaces the company card you never had. **PRUMy Critical Care** pays a lump sum on diagnosis — for a self-employed person this is not a bonus, it is the salary continuation nobody else provides. Sized properly, it buys you the one thing an employee gets free: time to recover without the business collapsing.

### STEP 2 — BUILD THE RETIREMENT NOBODY IS FUNDING

#### A private retirement layer above i-Saraan

Because no employer is contributing, the discipline has to be structural rather than optional. **PRUCash Enrich** pays guaranteed annual cash payouts plus a guaranteed maturity benefit; **PRUCash Double Reward** starts payouts at 3% of the basic sum assured and **doubles them to 6% from policy year 6**; **PRUElite Flex** pays a guaranteed annual income up to age 100 that you can take as cash or reinvest. Premium-based saving suits irregular income better than willpower does — and the EPF's own benchmark of **RM390,000 basic / RM650,000 adequate at 60** gives you a target to aim at.

## A note on irregular income

The most common objection I hear from business owners is “my income isn't stable enough to commit”. That is exactly backwards — unstable income is an argument for a protected floor, not against it. In practice we size commitments against your **lowest reliable months**, not your best ones, and build flexibility in. A plan you can sustain in a bad year is worth far more than an ambitious one you surrender in year three.

Bring three things to a Wealth Planning Cashflow session: a typical month's income, your fixed commitments, and any existing cover. Thirty minutes will show you where your gaps actually are.

## Let's talk about your numbers

No pressure, no obligation — just a conversation about what you read here, or about your own numbers. Every article on MyVintej can become a conversation.

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### Sources & further reading

- RinggitPlus (Budget 2026) — i-Saraan Plus, SOCSO coverage and social protection measures
- SOCSO / PERKESO (2025 data) — gig worker registration rates; Gig Workers Act 2025 (in force 31 March 2026)
- EPF / KWSP — i-Saraan voluntary contribution scheme and incentives; Retirement Income Adequacy Framework benchmarks
- Prudential Assurance Malaysia — PRUMillion Med 2.0, PRUValue Med, PRUMy Critical Care, PRUCash Enrich, PRUCash Double Reward, PRUElite Flex

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