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Your **money**

Future proofing your finances this autumn

As the days shorten and the evenings draw in, autumn is a natural time to pause and take stock. As we prepare for the colder months ahead, it can be a good time to hunker down and reflect on your financial resilience. Are your plans in good shape for whatever lies ahead – and are there steps you could take now to feel more confident about the future?

Establishing robust financial foundations is essential in times of economic uncertainty and elevated living costs. A recent study[1] found that essential bills, such as energy and food, have continued to increase for most people in 2025, although around a quarter of respondents reported that their housing costs have eased slightly.

Positive signs – but knowledge gaps revealed

Despite ongoing cost of living challenges, retirement planning is back on track for at least half the population. In this year's survey, only 43% of UK adults said their retirement plans and savings had been impacted by higher living expenses compared with 75% in 2024 – a positive shift.

Although this bodes well for long-term financial resilience, the report revealed a worrying disconnect. Seven in 10 people don't know the value of their pension pot and 52% have not considered how much money they need to fund their retirement.

Check in on your pension

Reviewing your contributions, underlying investments and whether your strategy still reflects your goals can help strengthen long-term security. Small adjustments today can compound into meaningful differences tomorrow.

Cash savings – need a boost?

The report paints a mixed picture when it comes to savings – the number of people going overdrawn after covering their living expenses has fallen, but at the same time there's a worrying lack of short-term savings. Building short-term resilience, in the form of a savings buffer, is important as this can help you withstand unexpected financial shocks.

Sow the seeds for security and success

Resilience is about balance – not letting current financial challenges derail your long-term planning. By taking time this autumn to review your pensions, savings and investments, you can feel more confident that your financial future is on track.

We can provide the support you need to move beyond short-term survival and build lasting financial resilience – helping you thrive with confidence in the years ahead.

[1]Royal London's Financial Resilience Report 2025

The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated. The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate Will writing, tax and trust advice and certain forms of estate planning.

Financial decisions – put your best foot forward

Perplexed by your pension? Seeking investment inspiration? Then why not head to your local park or forest for an energising walk. Autumn is a perfect time to kick some leaves and ideas around!

It's well known that being active, especially outdoors, helps us think more clearly. Research[2] shows that 38% of UK adults consider major financial decisions while walking. Others said their best ideas came while on holiday (33%) or even in the shower (21%)!

Whether you're planning for retirement, reshaping your savings, thinking about inheritance, considering your protection plans or preparing to pass wealth across generations, a mood-enhancing walk can help bring clarity. Walking not only clears the mind, but also boosts physical health by raising energy levels, lowering blood pressure and strengthening immunity. It's often in these quieter moments that the big financial decisions become clearer.

As you reflect, keep these guiding principles in mind:

- **Stay future-focused** – ensure your plans support long-term goals like retirement and family security
- **Balance risk** – make sure your decisions are aligned with your risk profile
- **Think beyond yourself** – reflect on how decisions may affect loved ones and future generations
- **Give yourself space** – stepping back often leads to better, calmer choices
- **Draw on trusted guidance** – to provide clarity, confidence and peace of mind.

If you'd like a sounding board for your next steps, we'd be delighted to talk (and walk you through) what's right for you and your individual circumstances.

[2]Standard Life, 2025

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Online fraudsters target UK investors

Social media finfluencers. Internet searches. AI chatbots. A growing number of people in the UK are turning to unregulated – and often unreliable – sources for financial advice.

A recent study[3] revealed that 40% of UK investors used social media to inform their financial decisions in the last two years, with 12% specifically turning to finfluencers – or financial influencers – who post on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

To protect investors from misleading advice, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is taking decisive action. Last year, it suspended, removed or blocked more than 1,600 websites suspected of promoting financial services without permission.

The regulator has also collaborated with tech giants, such as Google and Apple, to remove more than 50 financial scam apps in a bid to tackle fraud.

Avoid making an expensive mistake

The FCA crackdown targeted authorised firms too, with nearly 20,000 non-compliant financial promotions being amended or withdrawn in 2024 alone, compared with fewer than 600 in 2021. For some, however, the action has come too late. More than half of adults who have made financial decisions based on social media advice have lost money, according to data from one UK bank[4].

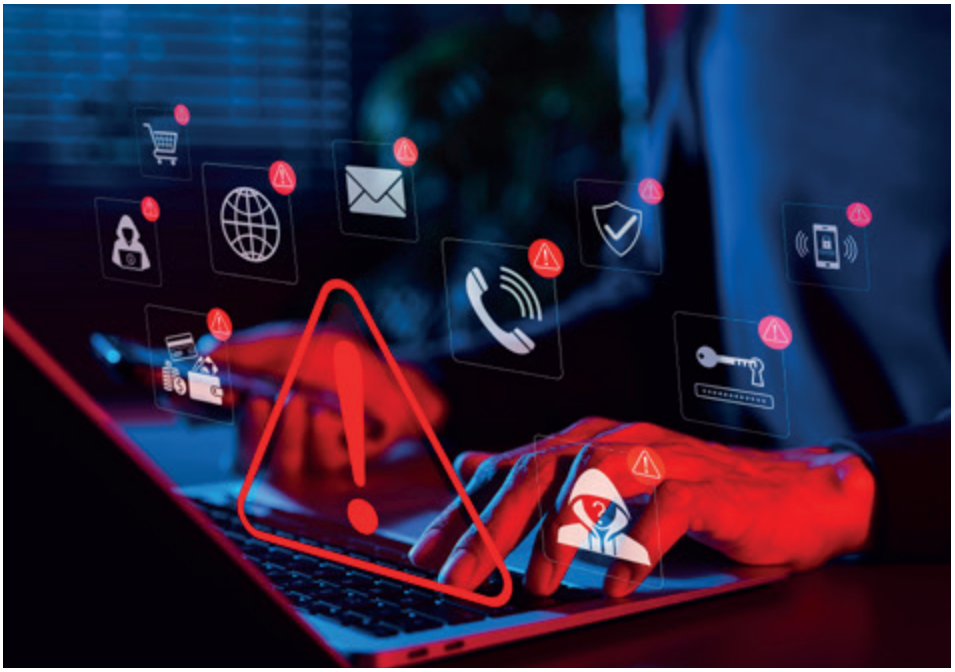
Scammers now impersonating the FCA

In the first half of the year, the FCA have received 4,465 reports of fraudsters impersonating the regulator, with 480 of the victims losing money[5]. The advice is clear – be suspicious of unsolicited calls, texts, emails or offers. The FCA would not ask people to send money, bank account details, passwords or PIN numbers and does not use WhatsApp, other messaging services or automated calls to contact people.

Stay safe, stay informed

With so much unregulated content, advice online and sophisticated scams, even experienced investors can be caught out. You need to be on your guard. We're here to guide you through and help you make professionally advised, confident, informed choices to benefit, not jeopardise your financial future.

[3]Fidelity International, 2025, [4]TSB, July 2025, [5]FCA, 2025



IN THE News

A midlife dip in financial confidence

Research[6] has found that there's a dip in financial confidence when Brits reach their 50s. Only 33% of people aged 50-59 feel positive that they will retire comfortably. This is the lowest of any age group, with 49% of young adults and 46% of over-60s feeling confident about retirement. The research explores how altering our mindset about ageing can help people face the future – both mentally and from a financial perspective.

Brits missing out on important money conversations

Talking about finances is a taboo for many UK adults, although younger generations may be pushing for change. Research[7] has found that Brits are more likely to discuss politics and current affairs (50%) at the dinner table than finances (29%). However, Gen Z (42%) and Millennials (36%) are more inclined to broach the topic of money than Gen X (23%) and Baby Boomers (21%). Despite their willingness to have financial conversations, 31% of Gen Z and 28% of Millennials still feel uncertain about managing their money. Investing is even more of a taboo, with 52% of all survey respondents saying they wouldn't discuss this topic with anyone.

State Pension age review

In the summer, the government launched a consultation on the future of the State Pension age, which will include the benefits of linking the State Pension age to life expectancy. The State Pension age is currently 66 and is set to rise to 67 by 2028 and 68 between 2044 and 2046. The review is due to conclude in 2029.

[6]Aegon, 2025, [7]Investment Association, 2025

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Gen Z – betting on an inheritance – time to stand on your own two feet?

Retirement can seem an age away when you're in your twenties and thirties, but it's never too soon to start saving for the future. The earlier you start, the bigger the pot when you retire.

Inheritance – no longer a sure bet

Around a quarter of Gen Z and Millennials aren't thinking about how they will fund their retirement because they expect to inherit money or property in the future, according to recent data[8]. With higher care costs, longer lifespans, frozen tax thresholds and changing Inheritance Tax rules, this could prove a risky strategy. The timing and value of an inheritance can't be guaranteed, which could result in a big financial black hole later in life.

Saving doesn't have to be taxing

Even if you are saving for other big life events, such as buying a new home, see if you can put aside a dedicated amount every month for your pension. Regular contributions over a long period of time soon add up and can benefit from growth over the years to retirement. These regular contributions can be topped up with lump sum payments over the years, such as bonuses. And don't forget the government's role – each contribution you make, currently up to 100% of earnings and within the £60,000 Annual Allowance, benefits from tax relief, boosting your savings straight away.

Make your pension work harder

Remember to:

- Start early – small, regular contributions benefit long-term from compounding
- Max out employer pensions and contributions to boost pension savings
- Think about combining small pension pots from previous jobs for easier tracking and potential cost savings
- Pensions are long-term investments – don't panic over short-term dips in performance.

The message is – don't rely on anyone else to fund your retirement – nothing is guaranteed.

[8]Standard Life, 2025

The retirement landscape – hybrid working changes the scene

Higher productivity. Better quality of life. Greater satisfaction. These are just some of the potential benefits of hybrid working; but that's not all. It could also support your retirement journey.

Hybrid working has become increasingly popular since the pandemic, with 28% of British adults opting to clock up their hours both in the office and at home during the first quarter of 2025. Employees aged between 30 and 49 are the most likely to take advantage of hybrid working, followed by those aged between 50 and 60[9].

Take a phased approach

Hybrid working is not only good for your wellbeing; it can also help you adjust to spending less time in the office as you head towards retirement.

One global survey[10] found that 49% of workers aged 50 or older had either already started phasing into retirement or wanted to do so. Seventy-five percent of the workers who have started their retirement journey have reduced their work hours.

Gradually easing into retirement by working between one and three days a week for a few years after the age of 66 can boost a pension pot by tens of thousands of pounds, according to recent data[11].

The ability to reduce your hours and/or responsibilities or to continue working beyond retirement age will depend on your job, industry and personal circumstances.

Spoilt for choice

If you don't want to stay in your current role, there are other ways to transition towards retirement. You could apply for a part-time job, turn a hobby into a business or volunteer your time to support others. The choices are endless – and the choice is all yours!

Regardless of what retirement means for you, it's a good idea to seek financial advice before making any big decisions. Pensions, investments and tax payments could all be impacted; there might also be a need to bridge income gaps as your earnings reduce.

We can help you make an informed choice, with the aim to achieve your retirement dreams.

[9]ONS, 2025, [10]WTW, 2024, [11]Standard Life, 2024

Unspent pensions to be included in IHT from 2027

From April 2027, unspent defined contribution pensions will be included in Inheritance Tax (IHT) calculations – a major shift from current rules where pensions typically fall outside the estate.

The government estimates 8% of estates will be affected annually, with average IHT bills rising by £34,000. In reality, costs could be higher if people don't review their arrangements. All estates that include pensions will need to check IHT liability, creating potential delays between pension providers and executors. A further risk is double taxation: pensions inherited after age 75 are already taxed as income and from 2027 could also face IHT – meaning more than half the value could be lost to tax.

Planning considerations

Options to reduce exposure include tax-free gifting, using trusts, charitable legacies (reducing IHT to 36%), and whole of life insurance written in trust to cover liabilities. This change underscores the importance of estate planning. With rules evolving, pensions can no longer be assumed to sit outside IHT. Reviewing your estate now will help protect family wealth and ensure it is passed on as intended.

The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated. Financial protection policies typically have no cash in value at any time and cover will cease at the end of the term. If premiums stop, then cover will lapse.

Life insurance – time to redress the gender gap

Women are falling through the cracks when it comes to life insurance. According to a new report, a third of women do not have a life insurance policy compared with 16% of men[12]. So, women are twice as likely not to have a life insurance than men – that's a huge variation.

The report also revealed that 29% of women have never been educated about life insurance, versus 18% of men. This lack of education might explain why double the number of women believe they can't afford life insurance compared with men.

For those women who do have life insurance, 29% are unsure how their policy would benefit loved ones in the event of their death.

Financial support in time of need

Life insurance can provide partners and families with vital financial support in the form of a lump sum or regular payments if the policyholder dies during its term with premium payments up-to-date. Life insurance claimants received a total of £4bn in payouts last year[13].

The amount of money paid out depends on the level of cover that you purchase.

This needs to be aligned with your personal requirements, it's not a 'one size fits all' approach. Other protection policies which provide financial support if you are unable to work due to a critical illness or injury are also worth considering. People often take out a life insurance policy at the same time as a mortgage, with some providers making it a condition of the loan.

Don't risk being uninsured or under-insured. It's a small price to pay for the peace of mind you'll benefit from.

[12]Life Insurance Index, 2025, [13]Association of British Insurers and Group Risk Development

Autumn Budget – forward thinking

As the Autumn Budget fast approaches and speculation heats up about potential announcements, it's hard to know what to do with your finances – if anything – in advance of the key fiscal event.

What we do know is that National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR), an independent think tank, forecasts the government will miss its self-imposed target, predicting a £41.2bn deficit by 2029/30. To address this, the Chancellor may need to raise billions through tax increases, spending cuts or additional borrowing. Consequently, NIESR suggests the Autumn Budget should include *'a moderate but sustained increase in taxes.'* Adding *'Substantial adjustments in the Autumn Budget will be needed if the Chancellor is to remain compliant with her fiscal rules.'*

While we always advocate taking control of your finances, we obviously can't predict the exact policy announcements. Focus areas could include changes to tax reliefs and thresholds (such as pensions, Income Tax bands and Capital Gains Tax), IHT, tax-efficient savings, Dividend Tax and business owner tax planning, including Entrepreneur's Relief.

Proactive financial planning

We know that any information at this point is purely speculative. Useful things to think about could be the simple ones like maximising ISA contributions, assessing your current pension contributions and realising capital gains, if relevant to your individual circumstances. Also, revisiting your pension inheritance strategy is wise now that IHT on unused funds seems likely.

Whatever the Autumn Budget brings, we can review your financial plan, making sure you have a clear idea of what may be worthwhile addressing now, and how to respond to changes after the event.

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It is important to take professional advice before making any decision relating to your personal finances. Information within this document is based on our current understanding and can be subject to change without notice and the accuracy and completeness of the information cannot be guaranteed. It does not provide individual tailored investment advice and is for guidance only.

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