Metritá WEALTH MANAGEMENT

financial Newsletter

Edition 51 – 2026

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Neurodiversity: protecting the future of a loved one with additional needs

If you have a loved one who is neurodivergent, whether they have autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or another condition that affects how they think, learn, or interact with the world, you may have concerns about their long-term wellbeing and financial security.

Every person's needs are different. Some people live independently with minimal support, while others need ongoing care throughout their lives. Whatever your circumstances, having the right plans in place can help provide reassurance that your loved one will be supported in the future.

Understanding their future needs

Effective planning starts with understanding your loved one's current and future requirements. This isn't just about finances – it includes practical, emotional, and day-to-day support.

Consider:

- Their level of independence and daily living needs
- Education, employment, or training opportunities
- Ongoing therapies and specialist support
- Social inclusion and quality of life
- Support with communication, paperwork, or managing finances

Taking these factors into account can help create a plan that evolves as their needs change.

Protecting their financial future

One of the biggest concerns for parents, carers, and guardians is what would happen if they were no longer able to provide support.

Life insurance can help provide financial security for your loved one. A policy such as Zurich Life Insurance could provide a lump sum that helps cover living expenses, care costs, or future support arrangements.

Zurich Family Income Benefit is another option to consider. Rather than paying a lump sum, it provides a regular income over a chosen period. This can help maintain financial stability and support ongoing care or living costs.

If you are the main provider for your family, Zurich Income Protection can also play an important role. It can provide a replacement income if illness or injury prevents you from working, helping you continue to support your loved one financially.

When considering protection, it's important to:

- Think about future care and support costs
- Consider how any payout should be managed
- Review your cover regularly to ensure it remains suitable

Using trusts to protect loved ones

Leaving money directly to a loved one in a will may not always be the most appropriate option, particularly if they need help managing finances.

A trust can give you greater control over how money is used and managed in the future. Trustees can oversee the funds and make decisions in your loved one's best interests.

Benefits of a trust may include:

- Providing structured access to money over time
- Helping protect against financial mismanagement
- Preserving eligibility for certain means-tested benefits where appropriate

Planning for future decision-making

Financial planning is only part of the picture. It's also important to think about who could help make decisions if your loved one needs support in the future.

This may include:

- Setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) for health, welfare, and finances
- Considering deputyship arrangements where necessary
- Identifying trusted people who can advocate on their behalf

These measures can help ensure important decisions continue to be made in their best interests.

Future housing and care

While many neurodivergent individuals live with family support, it's worth considering what future living arrangements might look like.

Options may include:

- Supported living accommodation
- Specialist residential care
- Independent living with outreach support

Having the right protection in place can help provide the financial resources needed to support these arrangements over the long term.

Review plans regularly

Planning for a loved one with additional needs isn't a one-off exercise. Circumstances, legislation, and support requirements can all change over time.

Regular reviews can help ensure:

- Protection cover remains appropriate
- Trust arrangements continue to meet objectives
- Plans adapt to major life changes such as adulthood, employment, or changing care needs

Looking ahead with confidence

Planning for a neurodivergent loved one is about more than finances. It's about creating a secure foundation that supports their wellbeing, independence, and future opportunities.

By combining protection solutions such as Zurich Life Insurance, Family Income Benefit, and Income Protection with legal and practical planning, you can help ensure your loved one is supported for years to come.

Taking proactive steps today can provide valuable peace of mind and help protect the future of the people who matter most.

Author: Zurich

Is deferring your State Pension a good idea?

Most people don't even question when to take their State Pension. You reach State Pension age, and you apply for it. But there's another option – you can choose to delay taking it.

By deferring, you'll eventually receive a higher amount each week, which can make financial sense in certain situations. But for others, the numbers just don't add up. If you think it might be an option for you, discuss the considerations with your 2plan adviser who can help you come to the right decision.

What happens when you defer

If you do not claim your State Pension when you reach State Pension age, it will not be paid and is effectively deferred until you decide to claim it. During that time, your future payments grow. That increase is with you for life. So, if you live long enough, you'll eventually gain more overall than if you'd started taking it straight away.

The numbers in practice

Imagine you're entitled to the full new State Pension of £241.30 a week. Deferring for one year would increase it by around £13.95 a week, or roughly £725 a year. The trade-off is, by choosing to wait a year, you'd miss out on about £12,548 of State Pension income during that time.

So, if you deferred at 66 and started at 67, you'd need to live until around 84 to come out ahead. Of course, this is a simplified illustration and doesn't account for factors such as tax, annual State Pension increases, inflation or individual circumstances.

The potential benefits

For some, deferring can be a part of a wider retirement plan. If you're still working or have other income sources, adding your State Pension to your earnings could push you into a higher tax band. Waiting until your earnings fall – for example, once you stop working – might mean you pay less tax overall, depending on your total income in each tax year. Of course, this won't apply to everyone.

You might also defer because you simply don't need the money yet, so letting your State Pension grow in the background can feel like building an extra layer of financial comfort for later life.

And there's the longevity factor. If you expect to live well into your 80s or beyond, a higher guaranteed income can make your later years easier to plan for.

The downsides

Deferring isn't without risk. The biggest of which is time. You'll need to live long enough for the higher payments to outweigh what you've missed by waiting.

Health is another key consideration. If you're not in great health, or if your family history suggests a shorter life expectancy, deferring may leave you worse off.

There are also important things to consider if you die while deferring your State Pension as whether any extra State Pension can be inherited depends on individual circumstances

You also cannot build up extra State Pension during periods when you or your partner receive certain benefits, such as Pension Credit or Universal Credit.

And once you start receiving a higher State Pension, it could also reduce some means-tested benefits, as this counts as income.

What to consider before making a decision

If you are thinking about whether to defer, it's worth discussing the following when you speak with your adviser:

- **Do you need the income now?**
  If your other pensions or savings cover your costs, waiting might make sense.
- **What's your health like?**
  Longevity matters more here than almost any other factor.
- **How will it affect your tax?**
  Your State Pension counts as taxable income, so the timing of when you take it could affect how much tax you pay in a given year.
- **Are you receiving benefits?**
  Some benefits don't increase if you defer and might even be reduced once you start claiming a higher pension.
- **What gives you peace of mind?**
  Sometimes the certainty of regular income now is worth more than a slightly bigger amount later.

Alternatives to deferring

If your goal is simply to increase your pension income, there are other routes worth exploring with your adviser. You can check your National Insurance record, for example, to see if there are any missing years and consider topping them up. You might also be entitled to free National Insurance credits, such as for caring responsibilities.

Weigh things up with your adviser

Deferring your State Pension can be a useful option if you're in good health, don't need the money right away and expect your income to change in the coming years. On the other hand, the risks can outweigh the rewards if you rely on every pound of income, have health concerns or are eligible for means tested benefits.

Ultimately this is a personal decision and there's a lot to think about. If you think deferring might be an option for you, discuss it with your 2plan adviser who will be able to make a recommendation based on your individual circumstances.

Important information

The value of investments and the income from them, can go down as well as up, so you may get back less than you invest.

Investors should note that the views expressed may no longer be current and may have already been acted upon. This information is not a personal recommendation for any particular investment. Tax treatment depends on individual circumstances and all tax rules may change in the future. Withdrawals from a pension product will not be possible until you reach age 55 (57 from 2028).

Author: Fidelity

Should you save or pay down debt?

Building up your savings and paying down debt both contribute to having good financial wellbeing. This means that choosing which goal to prioritise can be a difficult decision. In this article, we'll provide you with some pointers to help you decide what you should focus on first.

Please note that what's right for you will depend on your personal circumstances. But, as a rule of thumb, if you have short-term high-interest debts, you could consider paying them off before focusing on saving.

First, let's break the stigma, having debt is normal

Having some sort of debt is entirely normal for most people. Borrowing allows us to be more flexible with our finances and provides opportunities we wouldn't otherwise have – like buying a house with a mortgage.

However, debt can also cause financial stress, and having too much of it could mean you struggle to meet repayments. If you have debt, paying it down is likely to be an important priority so you can free up your money to meet your other financial goals. Still, saving money is a sensible and important thing to do. For example, without an emergency savings fund, you may have to resort to borrowing more in the case of an unexpected expense.

Debt vs savings – things to think about

Here are some tips to consider when deciding between saving and paying down debt. These are general tips so if you're looking for personalised advice then please speak to a financial adviser. Talking to an adviser could help you understand how to balance your competing financial priorities – but please note there's likely to be a cost for this. If it's something you'd like to consider, you can find an adviser through the government's MoneyHelper website.

1 Create a written plan

Before you start allocating extra money toward debt payments, it's a good idea to make sure you have a written plan. A good plan takes into account what gives you joy and purpose, as well as your money goals. Keeping your plan updated as your circumstances change can help to keep your goals current and on track.

Once you have a clearer idea of what you want to achieve, you can start to work out how your current finances fit in. It might be overwhelming to list all your debts, especially if they come from more than one source. But doing so might give you a better idea of what to tackle first. For example, will you focus on paying off the debt with a higher interest rate first, or will you pay off the smallest debt amount first?

Remember that if you're focusing on paying down one source of debt, you'll need to make at least the minimum payments on your other debts.

2 Think about checking interest rates

Keep in mind that with credit cards and some other types of consumer debt, high interest rates can increase unexpectedly. And those rising rates could delay your progress. When your money is consumed by high-interest payments, you'll likely have more difficulty trying to save or meet other financial goals.

3 Look out for penalty fees

Some types of debt, such as mortgages and other loans, might charge penalty fees if you pay them off early or make additional payments. If this is the case with your debt, it may not be worth overpaying. Instead, you might choose to prioritise saving money and continue to make debt payments on schedule.

4 Remember that not all debt needs to be prioritised

Some types of debt are more of a priority than others, like mortgages – and they should be prioritised according to their importance.

If your debts include student loans, remember that they work differently than most other debt. Repaying your student loan differs on what repayment plan you are on – which depends on where in the UK you are from and when you studied. As a result, you may find you aren't required to pay anything toward your student loans until after you earn a certain amount.

5 Are you ready to save?

If you're keeping up with mortgage payments, paying off any credit card bills each month and don't have any other loans, then you may want to think about your saving goals.

If you haven't already, consider creating a financial safety net to fall back on. A good aim is to save at least three months worth of easily accessible savings so you're equipped for any unexpected costs you might face.

What's next?

Taking time to examine your financial situation and make priorities for your income is the first step toward reaching your financial goals. With our tips to get you started, we hope you'll have a clearer idea of what to think about and how to progress towards the financial future you want.

Remember

If you're unsure about your finances in any way, it's recommended to look for financial assistance. MoneyHelper, a government-backed service, provides free and impartial guidance to help clarify your money and pension choices. They have a range of guides on dealing with debt that might be helpful if you need extra support.

Author: Aegon

Great expectations

Your home might be your castle, but if you're hoping it will fund your retirement too, it could be time for a rethink.

Many of today's adults grew up listening to stories of how their parents or grandparents made hundreds of thousands of pounds on the house they bought decades ago.

The key tax thresholds haven't moved in years. The nil rate band According to Savills, average UK house prices have soared by over 250% in the last 25 years.[1] It sounds so easy. Assuming you can get onto the property ladder, maybe there's no need to worry about a pension or other complicated financial solutions to funding retirement.

But the Savills' figures don't tell the whole story. Once adjusted for inflation, the real increase over the same period is just 92%. Recent Rathbones analysis highlights that the average UK home is now worth less in real terms than it was in 2016, a reminder of how much inflation changes the picture.[2]

From the mid-1980s, the golden age of property investing in the UK saw returns exceed other investments for over thirty years, driven by falling interest rates, rising household incomes, limited housing supply and strong population growth.

Those drivers have largely gone into reverse over the last decade, with the added factor of a more demanding tax and regulatory environment for buy-to-let investors.

Even as the UK housing market shows signs of a structural change, a JP Morgan survey revealed that 60% of people still expect house prices to rise more over the next 25 years than they have in the last 25 years. That seems optimistic.

[1]Savills, February 2025

[2]Rathbones, 'Don't bet the house' – June 2026

[3]Pensions UK, Retirement Living Standards – May 2026

As Karen Ward of JP Morgan notes:

> "Unless something miraculous happens to our economy and average earnings, that would mean the average house price to earnings ratio goes from six times today to twelve times the average person's salary. That doesn't sound hugely feasible to me."

The potential for disappointing property returns is just one reason why your home should support a pension, rather than replace it. Unlike a pension, your home isn't designed to provide an income. To turn your home into money, you have to sell it, downsize, or borrow against it. These options all come with compromises, costs and uncertainty.

The downsizing dilemma

Downsizing can release significant amounts of equity that could be used to help fund retirement. But it's important to understand whether the proceeds are going to be enough to enable you to live the life you want. Legal fees, moving costs, Stamp Duty and the cost of smaller homes in desirable areas mean that the amount released is often far less than expected – and rarely enough to replace a proper pension.

To put this into perspective, according to Pensions UK, a couple aiming to enjoy a moderate standard of living in retirement would need a pension pot of between £165,000 to £250,000.[3] The maths simply doesn't work for most people.

Equity release: flexibility with friction

Borrowing against your home to release equity can help some people, but it's not simple or cheap. Interest rolls up significantly over time, reducing the value of your estate and limiting future flexibility. It can be useful, but it's no substitute for long-term savings.

Selling your security

Many people underestimate the emotional impact and practical difficulty of leaving a long-term home. The memories created, or the strong friendships with neighbours and the local community, could make selling all the more difficult when you reach retirement.

A single bet

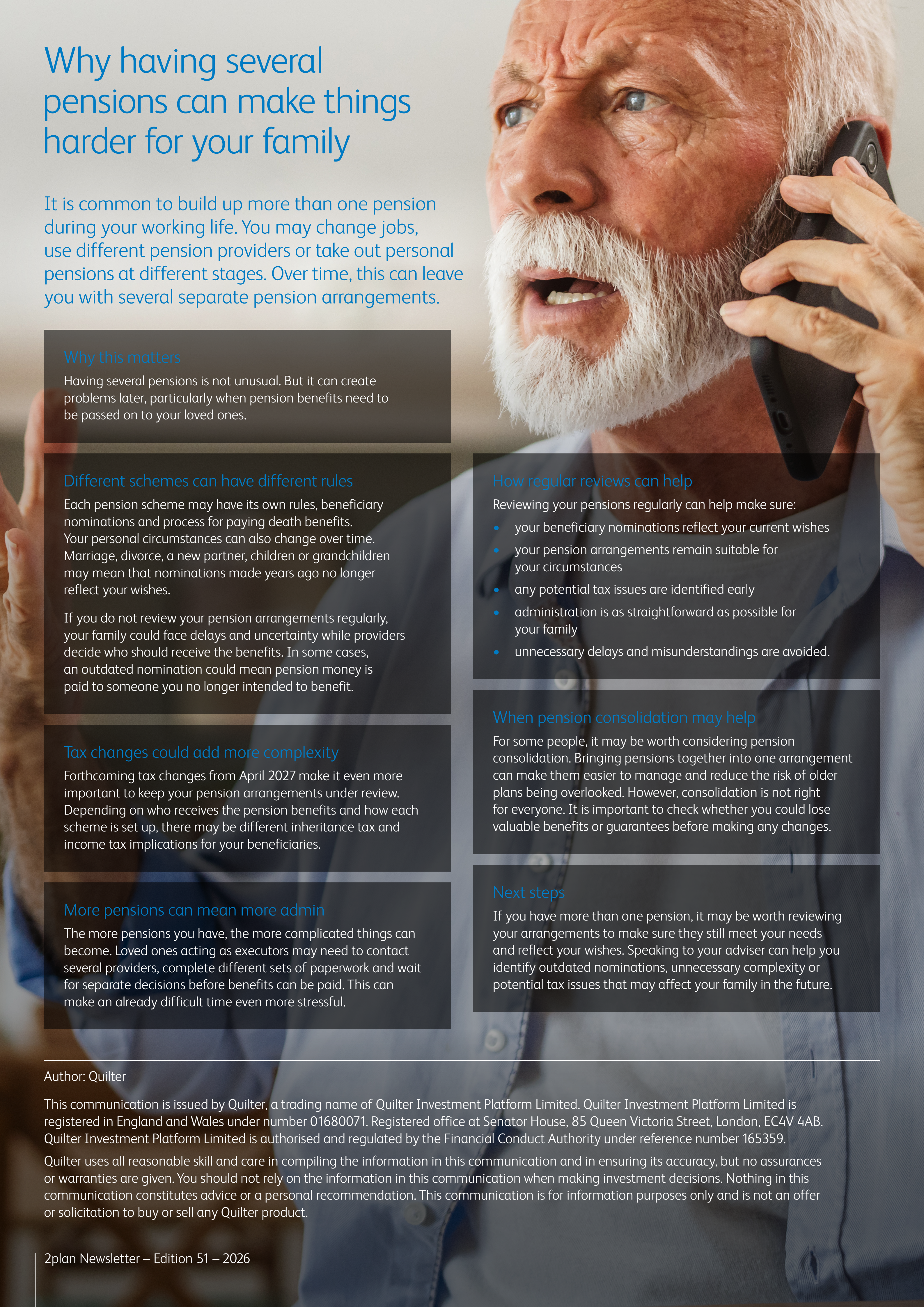
One of the key benefits of a professionally managed pension fund is that it spreads risk by diversifying your money across a wide range of assets. Putting all your retirement hopes into one asset – your home – is like putting all your savings into one company's shares. If anything goes wrong, such as local market changes, planning developments, a crash in prices just at the wrong time, or simply a lack of buyers, you carry all the risk.

Your home gives you security and stability, but it doesn't give you income. It's part of your life and should be a place to enjoy your retirement, not the thing that has to fund it.

Important information

This article should not be construed as a form of personal recommendation or financial advice. Parmenion accepts no duty of care or liability for loss arising from any person acting, or refraining from acting, as a result of any information contained within this article. All investment carries risk. The value of investments, and the income from them, can go down as well as up and investors may get back less than they put in. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future returns.

Author: Parmenion



Why having several pensions can make things harder for your family

It is common to build up more than one pension during your working life. You may change jobs, use different pension providers or take out personal pensions at different stages. Over time, this can leave you with several separate pension arrangements.

Why this matters

Having several pensions is not unusual. But it can create problems later, particularly when pension benefits need to be passed on to your loved ones.

Different schemes can have different rules

Each pension scheme may have its own rules, beneficiary nominations and process for paying death benefits. Your personal circumstances can also change over time. Marriage, divorce, a new partner, children or grandchildren may mean that nominations made years ago no longer reflect your wishes.

If you do not review your pension arrangements regularly, your family could face delays and uncertainty while providers decide who should receive the benefits. In some cases, an outdated nomination could mean pension money is paid to someone you no longer intended to benefit.

Tax changes could add more complexity

Forthcoming tax changes from April 2027 make it even more important to keep your pension arrangements under review. Depending on who receives the pension benefits and how each scheme is set up, there may be different inheritance tax and income tax implications for your beneficiaries.

More pensions can mean more admin

The more pensions you have, the more complicated things can become. Loved ones acting as executors may need to contact several providers, complete different sets of paperwork and wait for separate decisions before benefits can be paid. This can make an already difficult time even more stressful.

How regular reviews can help

Reviewing your pensions regularly can help make sure:

- your beneficiary nominations reflect your current wishes
- your pension arrangements remain suitable for your circumstances
- any potential tax issues are identified early
- administration is as straightforward as possible for your family
- unnecessary delays and misunderstandings are avoided.

When pension consolidation may help

For some people, it may be worth considering pension consolidation. Bringing pensions together into one arrangement can make them easier to manage and reduce the risk of older plans being overlooked. However, consolidation is not right for everyone. It is important to check whether you could lose valuable benefits or guarantees before making any changes.

Next steps

If you have more than one pension, it may be worth reviewing your arrangements to make sure they still meet your needs and reflect your wishes. Speaking to your adviser can help you identify outdated nominations, unnecessary complexity or potential tax issues that may affect your family in the future.

Author: Quilter

Enhancing your financial planning experience

At 2plan, we're always looking for ways to make financial planning more accessible, engaging and valuable for our clients. That's why we're excited to introduce enhancements to the tools we use to support your financial journey.

Over the coming months, we will begin using EVPro, a modern financial planning platform that brings together risk assessment and cashflow modelling in one easy-to-use solution. This development represents an important step forward in how we help clients understand their financial position, plan for the future and make informed decisions with confidence.

A better way to understand investment risk

Every financial plan starts with understanding you. A key part of this process is assessing your attitude to investment risk and ensuring that any recommendations are appropriate for your circumstances and goals.

Our new risk assessment process has been designed to make this experience more intuitive and engaging. The questionnaire is straightforward to complete and helps build a clearer picture of:

- Your attitude towards investment risk
- Your ability to withstand potential losses
- Your investment knowledge and experience

While these areas have always been important, the new approach helps us gather a more comprehensive understanding of how you feel about investing and how risk fits within your wider financial plans. This means your adviser can have richer, more meaningful discussions with you about your objectives, concerns and priorities.

Most importantly, it helps ensure that any advice and recommendations remain aligned with your personal circumstances, financial goals and comfort level with risk.

Bringing your future to life with cashflow modelling

One of the most exciting additions is the introduction of cashflow modelling.

Financial planning often involves making decisions today that may influence your lifestyle many years into the future. However, it can sometimes be difficult to visualise how those decisions might play out over time.

Cashflow modelling[1] changes that.

Using information about your income, spending, savings, investments[2] and future ambitions, your adviser can create a visual representation of your financial future. Rather than relying on estimates or assumptions alone, you'll be able to see how different decisions could affect your plans in a clear and understandable way.

This can help answer questions such as:

- When could I realistically retire?
- Will my current savings support the lifestyle I want?
- What happens if I increase my pension[3] contributions?
- How might changing my retirement date affect my plans?
- What impact could unexpected events or market fluctuations have on my finances?

By exploring different scenarios together, you and your adviser can gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges that may lie ahead.

[1]Cashflow modelling is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

[2]The value of investments and any income from them can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the original amount invested.

[3]A pension is a long-term investment – the fund value may fluctuate and can go down. Your eventual income may depend upon the size of the fund at retirement, future interest rates and tax legislation.

Supporting better advice conversations

One of the biggest benefits of these enhancements is that they help transform financial planning discussions.

Rather than focusing purely on numbers, risk scores or product solutions, conversations can become more centred on what matters most to you. Cashflow modelling provides a visual framework that helps bring your goals to life, making it easier to discuss future plans and understand the potential consequences of different choices.

The result is a more collaborative planning experience, where complex financial concepts are easier to understand and discussions are focused on achieving the outcomes that are most important to you.

Looking ahead

As EVPro becomes part of our advice process, your adviser will guide you through any new assessments or planning exercises that may be relevant to your circumstances. You may be invited to complete the enhanced risk questionnaire and participate in a cashflow modelling discussion as part of your ongoing financial planning review.

These improvements are designed with one goal in mind: to provide clearer insights, more meaningful conversations and greater confidence in your financial future.

By combining an enhanced understanding of risk with powerful cashflow modelling tools, we're making it easier than ever to see the bigger picture and create a financial plan that supports your long-term goals.

Cashflow modelling is not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Author: 2plan

If you would like to discuss any of these topics in more detail, please feel free to contact me to make an appointment. If you have friends, family members or colleagues who you think would be interested in these topics, please pass this newsletter to them.

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