ISSUE **41**
SUMMER **2026**

INSIGHT

A WEALTH OF **ADVICE**

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WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SAVE FOR THE RETIREMENT YOU WANT?

PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM – *HOW LONG WILL THE HONEYMOON LAST?*

SIS PITCHES 'POWERING MORE PLAY' AT THE FIFA WORLD CUP

HOW THE 2027 PENSION IHT CHANGES COULD AFFECT YOU – AND WHAT TO DO NOW

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WELCOME

Welcome to our latest issue of Insight – A Wealth of Advice

As we move into the second half of 2026, we continue to navigate a changing landscape. Against a backdrop of political changes, shifting market expectations, rapid advances in artificial intelligence, and new rules for pensions and ISAs on the horizon, the decisions you make today could have a lasting impact on your financial wellbeing in the years ahead.

In this edition, Future Money CEO Richard Cole explores the potential economic and market impacts as the UK's fifth Prime Minister in as many years is set to take the keys to Number 10 and Justin Rourke, Head of Advice, explores what changes to ISAs in April 2027 could mean for your savings strategy.

Also included in this edition:

Financial advice in the age of AI – How technology is transforming financial services, where artificial intelligence can add value, and why human judgement remains essential when making important financial decisions.

How much will you need to retire? – The latest Retirement Living Standards tell us about the cost of retirement and how much you may need to achieve the lifestyle you want.

A client story from the world of football – A fascinating case study featuring one of our clients whose work is connected to the FIFA World Cup.

We hope you enjoy this issue. If there are any topics you would like us to cover in future editions, please get in touch. If you would prefer to download a digital copy or subscribe to new issues electronically, please visit: www.armstrongwatson.info/Insight



PAUL DICKSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND MANAGING PARTNER
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE







04 What do you need to save for the retirement you want?

06 How the 2027 Pension IHT changes could affect you - and what to do now

08 Prime Minister Burnham - How long will the honeymoon last?

10 What the 2027 cash ISA changes mean for your savings

12 SIS Pitches 'powering more play' at the FIFA World Cup

14 World Sporting Events

16 Why financial advice still matters in the age of AI

18 Meet the adviser - Charlotte Fletcher

What do you need to save for the retirement you want?

When it comes to planning for retirement, you need to have an idea of the expected level of income needed for the standard of living you desire.

Pensions UK, has published its annual Retirement Living Standards, which provide an updated picture of what retirement could cost and what different lifestyles might look like.

The standards, based on independent research, are designed to help individuals plan by illustrating three levels of retirement living - minimum, moderate and comfortable - each with a corresponding level of annual spending.

The newly published figures show the following annual spending requirements and assume individuals own their home outright.

It is important to note that the cost of retirement is likely to rise with inflation and that the standards are based on current prices of services and goods.

LIFESTYLE	SINGLE PERSON	COUPLE
Minimum	£13,900	£22,500
Moderate	£32,700	£45,400
Comfortable	£45,400	£62,700



What each lifestyle represents

A key strength of the Retirement Living Standards remains their focus on real life expectations rather than abstract numbers.

A minimum lifestyle is designed to cover essential costs, with some scope for social activities. This includes a UK holiday each year, occasional meals out and modest leisure spending.

A moderate lifestyle provides greater financial security and flexibility. This could include an overseas holiday each year, more frequent dining out and an increased ability to pursue hobbies and spend time with family.

A comfortable lifestyle allows for a higher degree of freedom and spontaneity. This may include multiple holidays, increased spending on leisure and social activities, and the ability to make more regular improvements to your home and lifestyle.



The role of the State Pension

The State Pension, currently £12,547.60 per year, continues to provide a foundation for retirement income. However, it remains below the amount required for a minimum standard of living and may not align with individual retirement goals.

In addition to this, many people wish to retire before State Pension age, increasing the importance of building sufficient personal and workplace pension savings.

How will this shape your retirement planning?

The Retirement Living Standards provide a useful benchmark, but individual circumstances will vary significantly. Factors such as retirement age, existing pension savings, health, family commitments and desired lifestyle all play a role in determining how much you will need to save for in retirement.

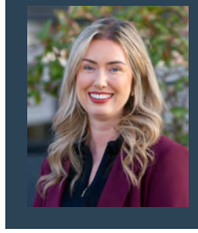
Cashflow modelling can help you create a practical plan. By projecting future income and expenditure, it enables you to understand whether you are on track and what adjustments may be needed.

Regular reviews are equally important to ensure your plan remains aligned with changes in markets, legislation and your personal circumstances.

Taking control of your retirement

For many people, workplace pensions remain the cornerstone of retirement saving, supported by employer contributions and automatic enrolment. Personal pensions can also play an important role, offering flexibility and ongoing tax efficiency.

However, knowing how much to save and whether it will be enough can be difficult without clear guidance. Early planning and regular review can make a significant difference to the outcome, helping you move closer to the retirement you want.



If you would like advice and support to give you clarity, direction and confidence about your future, please get in touch.

Call **0808 144 5575** or email **help@armstrongwatson.co.uk**

FIONA DURHAM
Financial Planning Consultant

How the 2027 Pension IHT changes could affect you – and what to do now

For some time, pensions have been seen as one of the main investment vehicles available. They offer income tax relief on contributions, the potential for capital growth, and - since 2017 - pensions have usually fallen outside an individual's estate for Inheritance Tax (IHT). This has provided a strong mitigation strategy for IHT, allowing people to spend other assets first and preserve pension funds as a legacy tool, which can be passed down tax-free if death occurs before the age of 75.

However, that landscape is changing and pensions will be brought into the scope of IHT from April 2027. With less than 12 months until the reform, it is important to understand how these changes affect you and ensure you are in the most financially responsible position for you and your family. For many, this will necessitate the most significant financial planning changes in recent years to reduce the risk of an unexpected IHT bill.

What is changing from 6 April 2027?

Under current rules, unused defined contribution pensions (SIPPs and many workplace DC schemes) typically sit outside of your estate for inheritance tax purposes. From 6 April 2027, the value of unused pension funds and certain pension death benefits will be brought into the IHT regime, meaning they may be counted when calculating the taxable value of an estate.

This will alter how wealth is accumulated, preserved and ultimately passed on to future generations. The extent to which you are affected will depend on the size of your overall estate, your pension value and how your assets are currently structured. It's therefore important that you review plans, understand your potential exposure and adapt your approach to planning before this change is introduced.

One of the less talked about changes is how the role of executor will change. At present, pensions are managed via an expression of wish and the trustees of the pension scheme (usually the provider) will action any changes. Under the new rules, personal representatives are expected to carry more responsibility for reporting and paying any IHT due on unused pension funds, meaning the role of an executor will become more involved. They will need to gather accurate information on pension values, liaise with the pension providers and ensure IHT calculations are accurate and submitted correctly. In most cases, the estate remains responsible for paying any IHT liability before distributions are made to beneficiaries.



How including pensions could create a new IHT bill

As the example below shows, the inclusion of pension assets within the estate can significantly increase the taxable value, potentially creating IHT liability where none previously existed.

Asset Type	Value (£)	Current treatment	Treatment after 6 April 2027
Personal assets	£400,000	Included in estate	Included in estate
Pension fund	£600,000	Typically outside of estate	May be included in estate
Total estate value	**£1,000,000**	**£400,000 assessed**	**£1,000,000 assessed**
Less: NRB allowances (full entitlement assumed)	-	(£400,000 used)	(£500,000 used)
Taxable estate	**-**	**£0**	**£500,000**
IHT @ 40%	**-**	**£0**	**£200,000**

Should you still pay into a pension?

You may be wondering if it is still worthwhile paying into a pension. The answer is yes, but the amount of contributions and the reason for doing so may be different. Pensions should not be seen as an unattractive option and continue to offer valuable benefits such as employer contributions, tax relief and investment growth. Your current planning may still be efficient, but a review may be necessary and consideration should be given to the wider context of your retirement needs and estate planning objectives rather than as a default approach.

How can you plan for pension Inheritance Tax changes?

Where a new or increased IHT liability is identified, early planning becomes crucial to give you the greatest flexibility and the widest range of options.

Understanding the current value of your estate and modelling how it may grow over time allows you to quantify any potential exposure. From there, gradual steps can be taken to help manage the position in a controlled and tax-efficient way.

There are number of mitigation strategies to help reduce or manage your Inheritance Tax exposure, including:

- Restructuring assets
- Adjusting contributions
- Making use of gifting allowances
- Planning larger gifts in line with the seven-year rule
- Drawing pension income strategically
- Considering protection solutions such as life insurance

Consideration should also be given to the number of pension arrangements you hold. Many individuals accumulate a number of pensions over their working lives and consolidating them may simplify the picture, although advice should be sought to avoid the loss of potentially valuable benefits and guarantees.

With the right guidance, the upcoming changes need not be a cause for concern, but rather an opportunity to build a clearer and more robust financial plan for the future.



EMMA COPLEY
Financial Planning Consultant

For advice and support to help you understand how these changes apply to your individual circumstances and develop a tailored solution, please get in touch. Call **0808 144 5575** or email **help@armstrongwatson.co.uk**

Prime Minister Burnham –
How long will the honeymoon last?

UK politics has once again dominated the headlines, with Labour entering a new chapter following the departure of Sir Keir Starmer and the expected arrival of Andy Burnham as Prime Minister. We take a look at what options lie ahead for the 'King of the North' and the role investment markets will play in this.



Starmer's downfall

Given the size of the parliamentary majority Keir Starmer secured in the 2024 general election, his premiership was expected to deliver a period of political stability, which has been absent in the UK since the 2016 Brexit referendum. Yet, having alienated many Labour MPs with his attempt at welfare reform and alienated many in the business community with increases to the minimum wage and National Insurance contributions, his approval ratings quickly sank.

Rachel Reeves just about managed to keep the pound and gilts out of crisis, with her fiscal rules limiting borrowing, but her tax hikes suppressed economic output and a crash in investor confidence never felt far away. Add to this a disgruntled public, angered by the lack of positive change they had been promised, and the growing popularity of Nigel Farage's Reform party is easier to understand. Opinion polls were weak, Labour MPs had had enough, and Starmer was forced from office.

A beacon of hope for Labour

At the time of writing, Andy Burnham is set to take the keys to No. 10 and the Labour Party is a happy place. A natural communicator who sits in the middle of the party, with charisma and a vision for government that many felt his predecessor lacked, Burnham should be able to wield the power of the large Labour majority he inherited. But how long will this honeymoon last?

futureMoney

The UK's challenge

The UK's fiscal position remains challenging. An ageing population is driving higher health, pension and social care costs, while welfare spending remains elevated. Public services continue to demand additional funding, and a greater focus on defence spending is needed in a volatile world.

Yet the nation's tax burden is already very high, limiting the government's ability to raise further revenue.



At the same time, financial markets remain highly sensitive to fiscal credibility. Investors may be willing to overlook ambitious rhetoric during a leadership contest, but they will be far less forgiving if spending commitments begin to outpace economic reality. The ever-present threat of the "bond vigilantes" means the government has less freedom than many politicians would like to believe.

Plan A

The solution to this puzzle is higher economic growth, something that all politicians will promise, yet which is hard to deliver. Policies such as greater devolution and a focus on employment support as a way to reduce the welfare bill may help, while a surge in productivity driven by AI-enabled efficiencies would also be welcome. But these are merely possibilities at this stage.

Plan B

If those measures fail, then something else will have to give, and each option will cause disappointment. Spending cuts will upset Labour MPs; higher taxes will upset voters; and greater borrowing will upset the markets.

A long and happy marriage?

Burnham's outsider status has allowed him to take power untarnished by the perceived failures of the 'Westminster elite', but in a country where taxes are high and average living standards have not increased since the 2008 financial crisis, it is likely his support will soon fade and market-threatening behaviour could emerge - unless he unlocks real change in the economy.

For now, the pound and UK markets appear comfortable that Andy Burnham understands the constraints of the nation's finances. The real test will come once campaign promises collide with the practical realities of governing.

All content accurate at the time of writing - 02/07/26



RICHARD COLE
CEO | FUND MANAGER
FUTURE MONEY LTD

Important Information

Please note that the contents are based on the author's opinion and are not intended as investment advice. This information is aimed at professional advisers and should not be relied upon by any other persons.

Any research is for information only, does not constitute financial advice or necessarily reflect the views of the author and is subject to change.

It remains the responsibility of the financial adviser to verify the accuracy of the information and assess whether the fund is suitable and appropriate for their customer.

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. The value of investments and the income derived from them can fall as well as rise and investors may get back less than they invested.

Important information about the funds can be found in the Supplementary Information Document and NURS-KII Document which are available on our website or on request.

For any information about the Future Money funds please contact the authorised corporate director, Margetts Fund Management Ltd, on 0121 236 2380, admin@margetts.com or at 1 Sovereign Court, Graham Street, Birmingham B1 3JR. A copy of their Terms of Business which relates to investments into the funds can also be obtained using these contact details.

What the 2027 cash ISA changes mean for your savings

We are set to see a significant shift in how ISAs will operate from April 2027.

While the £20,000 ISA allowance remains unchanged, a limit to the amount that can be allocated to cash ISAs will affect how investors structure their savings, and this will require careful planning.



How are ISAs changing from 2027?

From 6 April 2027, individuals under the age of 65 will be limited to a cash ISA allowance of £12,000 per year, while the remaining £8,000 (of the £20k allowance) must be used in non-cash ISAs such as Stocks & Shares ISAs. Those aged 65 and over retain the full £20,000 cash ISA allowance.

The changes, initially announced in the 2025 Autumn Budget, only apply to new contributions meaning existing balances are not affected. In practical terms, 2026/27 is the final tax year where most savers can allocate the full £20,000 to cash.

The Government has also recently announced that a 22% charge will be introduced on interest paid on cash held in non-cash ISAs (which also applies to those age over 65), alongside further anti-circumvention measures, including restrictions on transfers from non-cash ISAs into cash ISAs and rules to prevent wholly cash-like investments being used to sidestep the policy aim.

This further underlines how important it is that your existing investments are reviewed - in this case to avoid unexpected tax consequences.

Why are the rules around ISAs changing?

The Government intends to shift behaviour away from holding large cash balances and towards longer-term investment.

The policy aims to encourage higher long-term returns for savers, driving greater participation in equity markets and supporting UK economic growth by channelling capital into businesses.

How will this impact you?

Whilst the rationale is understandable, there are some clear risks and challenges savers need to consider.

- Reduced flexibility for cautious investors - Not everyone is comfortable with investment risk, particularly those nearing retirement.
- Behavioural distortion.
- There is a risk this change encourages short-term “use it while you can” decisions, rather than a genuine shift to investing or individuals exploring the most suitable option for them.
- Cash still has a role - Emergency funds, planned expenditure, and peace of mind cannot be replaced by market-based assets, therefore it is always important to have some cash savings.
- Unintended consequences for lending markets - Cash ISA deposits are an important funding source for building societies—reducing them could have wider impacts.

Why ISAs still matter more than ever

These changes are taking place in an increasingly challenging tax environment for savers and investors. Income tax bands remain frozen, pulling more people into higher rates of tax as earnings rise. At the same time, dividend and savings tax rates have increased, while capital gains tax allowances have been significantly reduced in recent years.

This all creates a growing tax drag on personal wealth and reinforces the importance of the ISA as one of the most valuable tax wrappers available, allowing any interest, dividends or capital gains generated within the wrapper to remain tax-free. There are also no reporting requirements, making ISAs not only efficient but straightforward to manage over time, and one of the most effective tools available for preserving and growing wealth over the long term, particularly as tax pressures increase elsewhere.

A clear window of opportunity

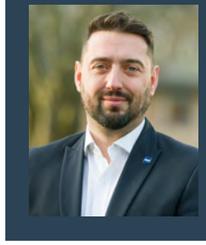
The upcoming changes, due to be introduced in April 2027, create a defined, time-limited opportunity for savers under the age of 65 to use their full £20,000 cash ISA allowance for the 2026/2027 tax year.

Taking a proactive approach now can make a meaningful difference. That may involve:

- maximising the current cash ISA allowance while it remains unrestricted
- reviewing whether part of your allowance may be better allocated to investments
- ensuring existing cash holdings are structured efficiently

The rules are changing, but the principle remains the same: tax-efficient planning rewards those who act early, not those who react late.





If you are unsure how these changes affect your position, please get in touch for further support on **0808 144 5575** or email via **help@armstrongwatson.co.uk**

JUSTIN ROURKE
Financial Planning Director - Head of Advice

SIS Pitches ‘powering more play’ at the FIFA World Cup



Over recent weeks, the nation has been gripped by the excitement of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with fans following every moment of the competition taking place across North America. While attention naturally centres on the game itself, there is another crucial element underpinning the tournament’s success - the world-class pitches on which it is taking place.

Nine of the 16 stadiums feature advanced pitch technology designed, manufactured and installed by UK-headquartered SIS Pitches to maintain consistent playing conditions throughout the competition. This marks a significant milestone in the company’s journey and builds on two decades of involvement in the World Cup, dating back to Germany in 2006 and more recently Russia and Qatar.

Founded in 2001 to provide grass pitch solutions, SIS Pitches has rapidly grown to become a global pioneer in the development and management of sports surface infrastructure, delivering high-performance natural and hybrid pitches for some of the most prestigious sporting venues in the world. With operations spanning Europe and North America, the business, which has been a client of Armstrong Watson since 2014, has built its reputation on innovation, technical expertise and a commitment to its customers, ranging from youth sports and education venues to international stadiums.

The company’s sustained growth has been underpinned by continued investment in research and development, allowing SIS Pitches to respond to the increasing demands placed on modern sports surfaces. Its portfolio now includes the design, construction and maintenance of high-performance playing surfaces, supported by its proprietary systems, including SIS Grass Hybrid reinforced turf and advanced drainage and aeration technologies, all of which have been deployed for the World Cup.

SIS Pitches’ hybrid turf system is installed at stadiums in San Francisco, Miami, Kansas City, Toronto, Monterrey and the New York New Jersey Stadium, where the final will take place on 19 July. By stitching synthetic fibres into natural grass, the system enhances durability, strengthens root development, and ensures surfaces can withstand intensive use while maintaining performance. Alongside this, the company’s DrainTalent solution, deployed in Guadalajara, Seattle and Vancouver, uses vacuum drainage and subsurface irrigation to manage extreme weather and promote healthier turf. In Monterrey, SIS Pitches demonstrated its full-service capability, designing, constructing and maintaining the entire pitch in 2025, using a combination of hybrid turf, undersoil heating and aeration systems tailored to local conditions.

Throughout this period of growth and increasing international reach, Armstrong Watson has provided ongoing audit, advisory and compliance support. As the business has expanded into new markets and taken on ever more complex projects, maintaining robust financial and regulatory frameworks has been essential.

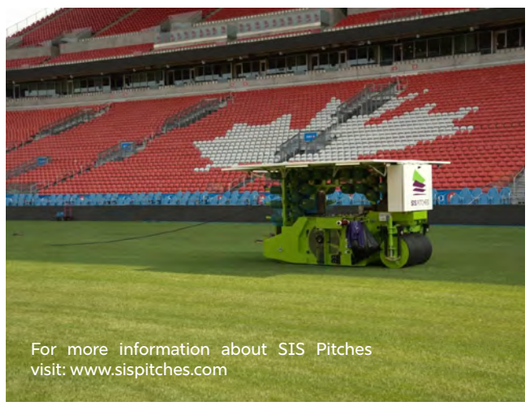
Richard Condron, Chief Financial Officer at SIS Pitches, highlights the importance of this relationship: “Throughout my time as Group Financial Controller and, more recently, as Chief Financial Officer, Armstrong Watson has consistently delivered an exceptional level of service. Beyond their role as auditors, they have acted as a trusted partner, supporting the business as it has grown while ensuring we remain robust and compliant from a regulatory perspective.”

He added: “The team at Armstrong Watson is highly responsive and brings valuable insight across all areas, making them an important part of our continued success.”

Audit and Assurance Partner Lauren Graham said: “SIS Pitches stands as a recognised leader in its field, contributing to some of the most high-profile sporting events in the world. Its continued innovation and commitment to excellence ensure it remains well-placed to meet the demands of elite sport, and we are delighted to have supported them with their audit, financial reporting and other advisory projects. We look forward to working with Richard and the team for years to come.”







For more information about SIS Pitches visit: www.sispitches.com

Chasing the moment and planning for the costs of attending world sporting events

Witnessing a global sporting event in person is something on many people's bucket lists. Whether you want to experience the roar of a Grand Prix circuit, the drama of a World Cup final, or the spectacle of an Olympic opening ceremony, these occasions deliver unforgettable memories, but they can also come with a hefty price tag, meaning careful planning may be required.

1 FIFA World Cup

With the 2026 World Cup taking place across the United States, Canada and Mexico, the scale and cost of attending have never been more apparent. The World Cup is arguably the most sought-after event to attend in sport, but a multi-city tournament, and vast distances between venues, significantly increase overall cost. Ticket prices can vary widely - from a few hundred pounds for early-stage matches to several thousand for finals - but accommodation and travel often dwarf ticket costs, particularly in host cities with limited capacity.



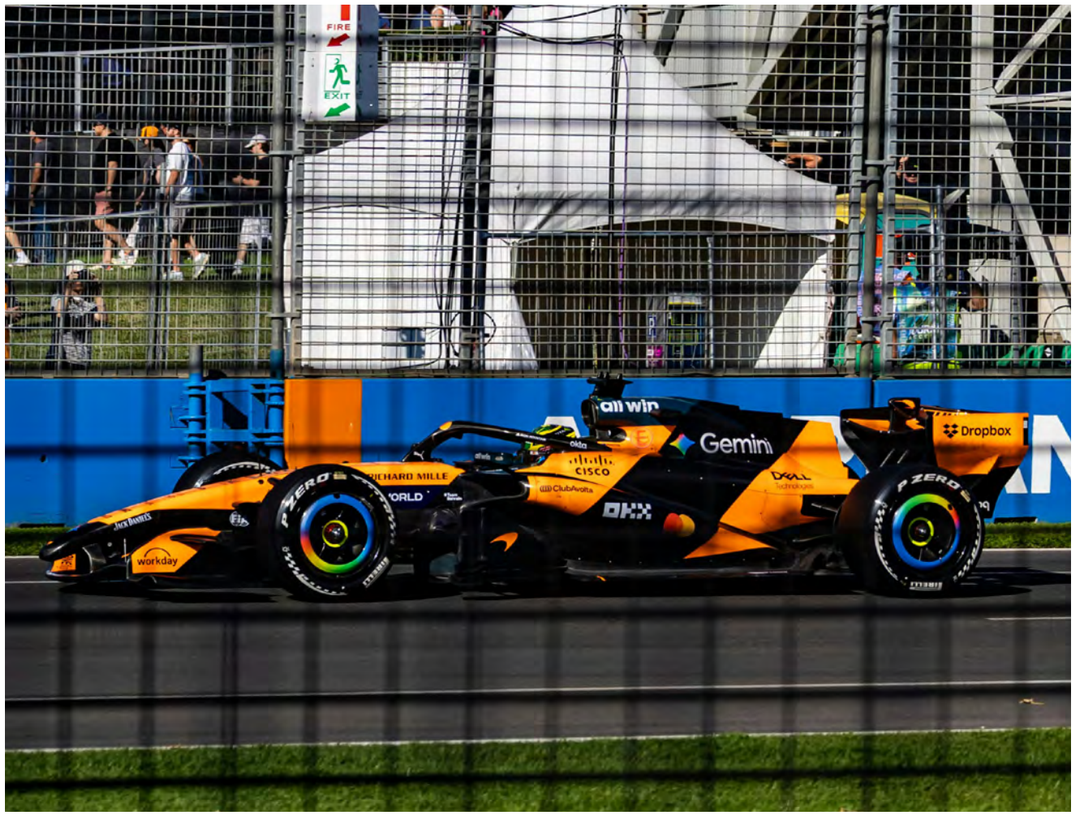
2 Olympic Games

Looking ahead, the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles will bring another high-profile, high-demand opportunity for sports fans. As with previous Games, the breadth of events provides flexibility — but costs can vary dramatically depending on what you attend and high demand drives up accommodation prices, often years in advance.



3 Tour de France

In contrast to many global events, the Tour de France offers a unique appeal - it is free to watch, making it one of the most accessible elite sporting events. Even more appealing is the race's planned Grand Départ in the UK in 2027, which will provide a rare opportunity to experience the spectacle closer to home. Any costs are driven by travel and accommodation and can range from £800 to £2,000, though the 2027 UK stages could significantly reduce this.



4 Formula 1 Grand Prix

As Formula 1 has surged in popularity, so too have ticket prices, and demand-driven pricing is pronounced. Premium hospitality packages can run into the thousands, but general admission still offers a more accessible entry point. The cost of this experience also varies by circuit (Monaco and Singapore come with a higher price tag than the likes of Hungary or Belgium) and also whether you plan to attend on practice, qualifying or race days.

5 Wimbledon Championships

Wimbledon offers both prestige and relative accessibility. While Centre Court tickets can be costly and are difficult to secure, the event uniquely maintains a tradition of on-the-day ticket sales via "The Queue". Meanwhile, London accommodation during the Championships is expensive.

Bringing it into the financial plan

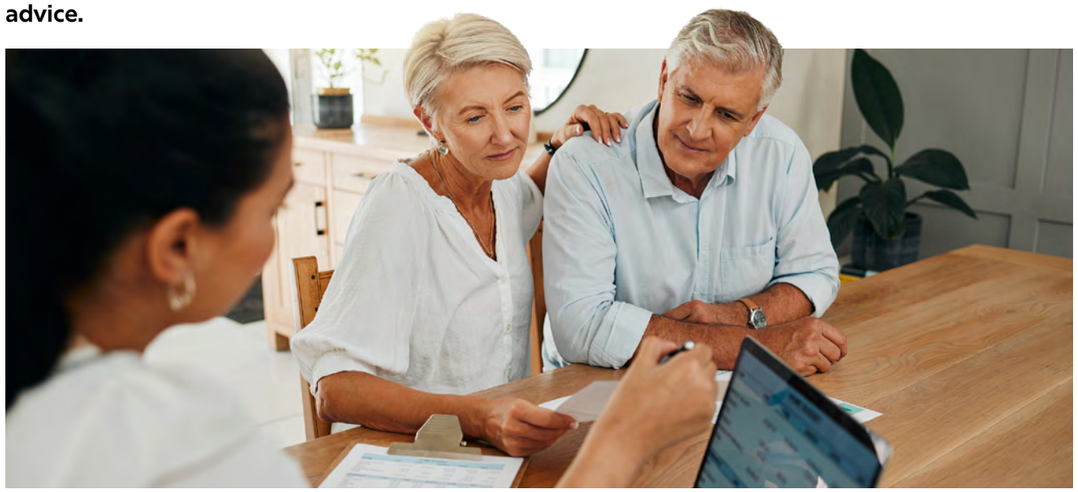
For many, ticking off one of these events is about more than sport - it's about memory-making. With careful financial planning, those moments can be enjoyed without compromising long-term financial security.

It is important to treat major events as planned expenditures rather than spontaneous splurges. By using time to your advantage and planning both the organisation and costs of such experiences well in advance, these bucket-list moments can sit comfortably alongside — rather than in conflict with — wider financial goals.

Why financial advice still matters in the age of AI

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed the way individuals access financial information. From portfolio suggestions to retirement projections, AI tools can now provide instant answers at little or no cost. It is therefore understandable that many investors may question whether they still need professional financial advice at all.

However, while AI can be a useful tool, it is important to recognise its limitations —particularly when compared to the value of professional, tailored, and (most importantly) regulated financial advice.



Financial advice vs AI: the key differences

Financial planning is not simply about selecting investments. It requires a deep understanding of your overall circumstances, including your objectives, tolerance for risk, capacity for loss, tax position, and long-term aspirations. A professional adviser does not just provide information—they interpret it in the context of your personal situation.

By contrast, AI tools largely operate on generic assumptions. While they may produce technically accurate outputs, this technology cannot fully understand nuance in the way a human adviser can. For example, two individuals with identical income levels may require very different strategies depending on family circumstances, future plans, or attitudes to risk. AI can process data, but it lacks the ability to challenge assumptions, explore uncertainty, or identify behavioural risks.

Human judgement matters in financial decisions

Behavioural factors are, in fact, one of the most significant risks facing investors. Self investors can be prone to emotional decision-making—whether that is overtrading, chasing performance, or holding onto underperforming investments for too long. Even with access to vast amounts of information, the challenge for AI lies in interpreting it objectively and consistently.

Professional advisers play a crucial role in managing this risk. By applying a structured investment philosophy and acting as an independent voice, they help ensure that decisions remain aligned with long-term objectives rather than short-term market movements. This discipline is particularly valuable during periods of volatility, when emotions can lead to costly mistakes.

AI lacks accountability, regulation and protection

Another key consideration is the quality and reliability of information. AI systems typically rely on publicly available data and may not always distinguish between high-quality, up-to-date sources and less reliable material. Even well-intentioned "guidance" can be misinterpreted as advice. This can lead to individuals making decisions without fully understanding the risks involved.

Professional financial advice, on the other hand, is subject to regulatory standards designed to protect consumers. Advisers must ensure that recommendations are suitable, clearly explained, and in the client's best interests. This provides an additional layer of accountability that AI tools simply cannot replicate. Should things go wrong, clients also benefit from access to formal complaints and compensation frameworks—something not available when relying solely on technology.

Cost vs value and AI scope

Cost is often cited as a reason for avoiding advice. At first glance, using AI or managing investments independently may appear more cost-effective. However, there is a difference between cost and value. Time spent researching, monitoring investments, and making decisions should not be overlooked. More importantly, the potential cost of making poor decisions—whether through lack of diversification, inappropriate risk-taking, or inefficient tax planning—can far outweigh any initial savings.

It is also worth noting that financial planning extends beyond investment management. Areas such as retirement planning, Inheritance Tax planning, and structuring income in a tax-efficient manner require a joined-up approach. AI tools tend to focus on isolated tasks, whereas a professional adviser considers the wider picture and how each component interacts over time.



Use AI to complement advice

This is not to say that AI has no role to play. Used appropriately, it can enhance efficiency, provide useful insights, and support both advisers and clients in understanding complex topics. However, it should be viewed as a complement to advice—not a replacement for it.

Ultimately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. For some individuals with simple needs and a high level of financial knowledge, a DIY approach may be appropriate. However, for those seeking clarity, confidence, and a strategy tailored to their personal circumstances, professional advice remains highly valuable.

In an increasingly complex financial landscape, the ability to combine technical expertise with human judgement, experience, and accountability is what sets professional advice apart. AI can provide information—but it cannot replace understanding.

And when it comes to your financial future, that distinction matters.



For professional, financial advice tailored to your specific circumstances, please get in touch on **0808 144 5575** or email **help@armstrongwatson.co.uk.**

STUART SMITH
Financial Planning Consultant

Meet the adviser – Charlotte Fletcher

FINANCIAL PLANNING CONSULTANT - LEEDS



Describe a typical working day

As a parent of a young child who doesn't sleep, my day begins early, around 4:30 am. I generally start by going for a run or to the gym, then head into the office for meetings. No day looks the same in terms of client meetings; I can have a meeting with a business owner in the morning to discuss the day-to-day running of their business, and then a meeting with a retired couple in the afternoon to discuss how to fund their travel plans for the next few years. There's no similar day-to-day in financial planning; likewise with clients, and there's no one-size-fits-all in helping clients achieve their goals.



What do you enjoy most about providing financial advice?

I first decided I wanted to be a financial adviser after seeing my parents undertake financial advice and them being open with me when discussing financial matters. It never felt like a "taboo" topic. I saw first-hand the difference financial planning can have and what a difference it can make to people's lives.

I think it's really important for the younger generation to be involved in conversations about finance. There are so many life skills that aren't taught in schools, and financial planning is one of these. I encourage all my clients, where they are comfortable, to include their children because it helps with planning for their future too.



What's the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?

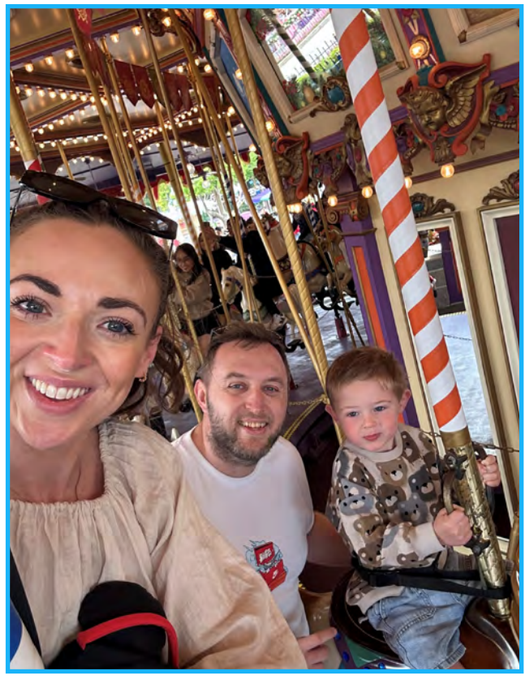
"You don't need to have everything figured out"

This was said to me by a teacher of mine who could see that I was someone who strived for everything to be perfect and to have the end goal in mind. He made me realise that action is the key, and a lot of the time you don't need to have things figured out, but if you don't strive towards something, you don't go anywhere in life.

When you're not supporting and advising clients, what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I am currently on the hunt for a sub-1 hour 30 minutes half marathon and have recently competed at a few Hyrox competitions.

I also love to travel, and any chance I get, I like to get away with my family and explore different places.



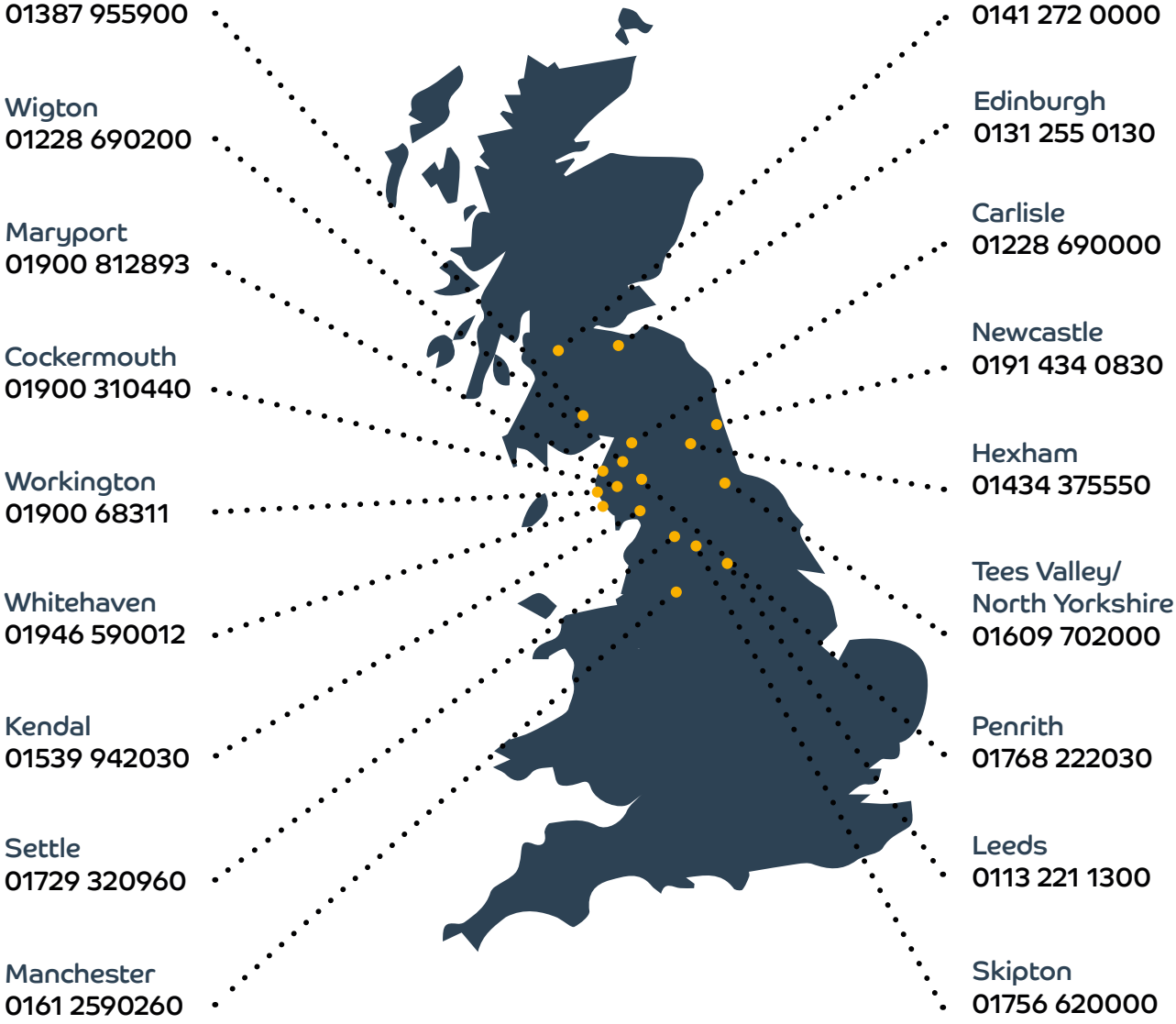
You're about to retire on an unlimited budget what's the first thing you'd do?

As someone who loves to travel, that is what my retirement would entail: visiting as many new places and having as many experiences as possible. I want to spend more time in Italy, and as any trip away becomes a walking food tour trying local cuisines, the plan would be to find the best tiramisu.

If there was one financial tip you could offer readers what would it be?

Start early and don't worry about starting small... doing something is better than nothing at all. Whether this be using your annual pay rise to put towards your retirement goals before you see it in your pay cheque, or putting what you can afford away every month, small steps all help towards the end goal, whatever that may be.





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