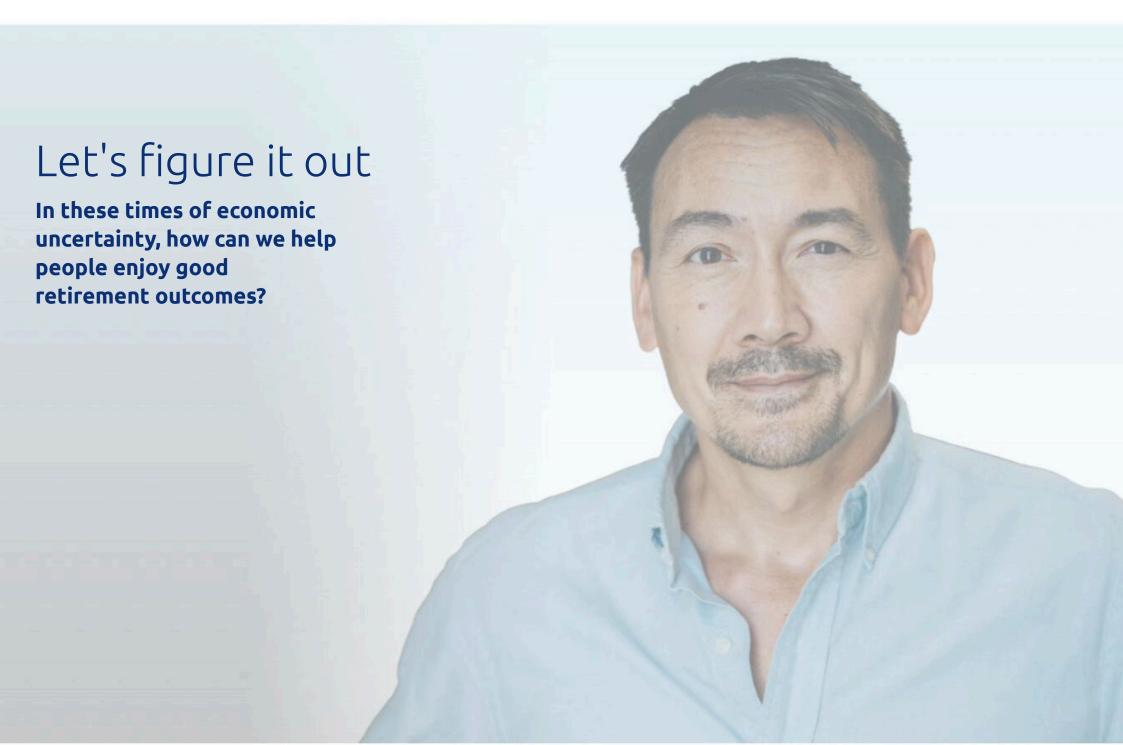




Exploring how retirement attitudes and experiences are changing







Welcome to our Retirement Voice 2022

How confident are British people about their plans for retirement? What's important to them? For the second year running, we share the views of almost 6,000 people from all walks of life.

How the picture has changed

Since we last spoke to people about their retirement aspirations and experiences, the financial landscape has continued to deteriorate.

Most people believe that the world is a tougher place to live in today than it was just a few years ago. The economy, already in decline from Covid and the Ukraine war, continues to show few signs of recovery.

Economic downturns always hit the vulnerable, the under-served and the older generations hardest.

While each group faces its own unique challenges, we found a remarkable consistency of attitudes towards risk and uncertainty – showing us that desire for stability and certainty is felt by most.

People are feeling the squeeze on their finances

Reflecting the backdrop of the increased cost of living, many are actively looking for ways to increase or supplement their income.

Despite the pressure, it's encouraging to see that savings for pensions are considered like utilities, with few saying that it would be a top priority to cut.

Our research also revealed that some differences still exist. Most notably we still see a disappointingly large confidence gap between men and women, even at the younger ages.

In the UK, the number of over-50s continues to increase. Understanding how to support this growing number of people retiring is ever more important.

Let's figure it out

Our findings are already helping us understand more about how people are thinking and feeling about their retirement. It underpins what we prioritise as a brand. It helps us to innovate, with a more inclusive mindset and ultimately aim to deliver better retirement outcomes for our customers.



Sangita ChawlaChief Marketing Officer,
Standard Life, part of Phoenix Group

Our findings show, more and more of us need support to figure out our futures.

Key findings

Through this research, we've captured the voices of almost 6,000 British people – spanning five generations, a variety of cultural backgrounds and a broad range of household affluence.

We've spoken to people who actively plan for their future; who may also take professional financial advice or guidance. We've also spoken with those in society who prefer not to think too far ahead – and choose to make financial decisions without expert support.

Through these pages you'll discover rich findings about how people are feeling about their retirement, and how the cost of living crisis has impacted their plans for the future.

The search for income

As the cost of living crisis continues to bite, people are looking for ways to improve their finances.



1 in 10 women are looking for second jobs



People are **six times** more likely to firstly cancel their TV subscription before cutting their pension contributions



15% of over-65s have unretired

Financial attitudes in an economic crisis

In times of uncertainty, people reveal themselves to be more alike than you may think.



49% prefer to take less investment risk, even if it means they have less money over the long term



78% hope for certainty of income



74% want to avoid taking on debt

The need for planning and guidance

To help people navigate the crisis, the right support is needed.



72% do little or no retirement planning



50% feel overwhelmed by information about their pension



Planners are almost three times more positive about their finances than non-planners



1The search for income

With belts tightening across the country, millions are looking for ways to boost their take-home pay.



Financial pressures are forcing people to seek new ways of increasing their income

The cost of living crisis is testing the depth of people's pockets.

And with interest rates spiralling to decade-high levels, homeowners are also facing a sizeable jump in their monthly mortgage repayments.

People's finances can only stretch so far – and, despite taking measures to cut back on everyday spending, running out of money is a key concern that's shared by more than half of the people we spoke to **(58%)**.

With the economic outlook unlikely to improve over the short term at least, the ability to make ends meet has become a significant challenge.

Indeed, we're seeing a clear trend in people searching for second jobs, putting the brakes on their retirement plans and even returning to work having previously retired.

Almost 1 in 10 are looking for second jobs

In the hunt for extra income, 8% of people are hoping to take on second jobs.

Women, ethnic minorities and those aged between 18-44 are the most likely to be on the lookout for additional employment opportunities.

Groups most likely to be looking for extra work

Women	18-44	Black	Asian	Mixed
10%	12%	14%	12%	19%

Millenials and minorities are seeking work that pays more

In response to the cost of living crisis, 1 in 10 of those aged between 26-41 say they plan to change their current job for one that pays better.

Asian (11%) and black people (12%) are also more than twice as likely as white people (5%) to say they're thinking of seeking new employment as a way to improve their finances.

The impact on older generations

The crisis is keeping people in work for longer – and forcing some to unretire.

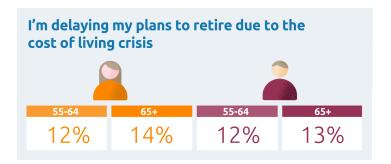
The ongoing financial uncertainty is having an impact on when people hope to step away from their working life. Indeed, more than **1 in 10** of those who are approaching retirement told us that the crisis has caused them to delay their plans. And this is true for both men and women.

At the same time, more than two-thirds **(67%)** of people who are over the age of 65 now believe they'll need to keep working beyond their State Pension age. This number has gone up from **61%** last year.

More than 1 in 10 **(15%)** retirees who are over the age of 65 also say they've chosen to unretire.

If these trends continue, it could have a significant impact for employers – and Britain's labour market in general. This is simply because, not only will an ageing workforce stifle job opportunities for younger generations, but older employees will tend to command a higher average salary.

So, in effect, the employer's day-to-day running costs could remain higher for longer.



Women are more likely to unretire for financial reasons

36% of women who have unretired say they had to go back into employment because their pension didn't give them enough to live on. This is twice the number of men **(18%)**.

Traditional ideas of retirement are changing

32% of people see their retirement as being a gradual decline to their working hours. The traditional 'hard stop' to employment now resonates with less than half of people today **(48%)**.

Pension saving will outlive Netflix subscriptions

The cost of living crisis is forcing most people to cut back on their everyday spending.

As people look for cost savings, they're more likely to stop or reduce regular payments towards TV subscriptions, phone contracts and even charity donations before they'd consider adjusting how much they save into their pension.

There are perhaps three reasons why pension contributions are so far down the list of cost-saving priorities

1. Present-day bias

People generally prefer to live in the moment – so they'll naturally gravitate towards those things that might deliver the best short-term results.

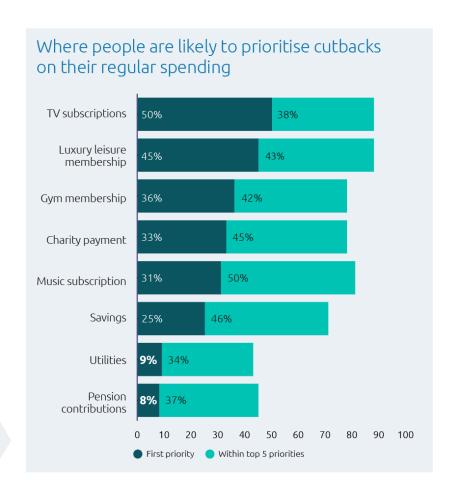
2. Lack of engagement

We know that pensions aren't front of mind for many people – so it perhaps isn't surprising that they don't immediately think of reducing or stopping their contributions.

3. Practical understanding

Another consequence of people feeling detached from their pension is that they're less likely to know what process they'd need to follow to make a change to how much they're saving.

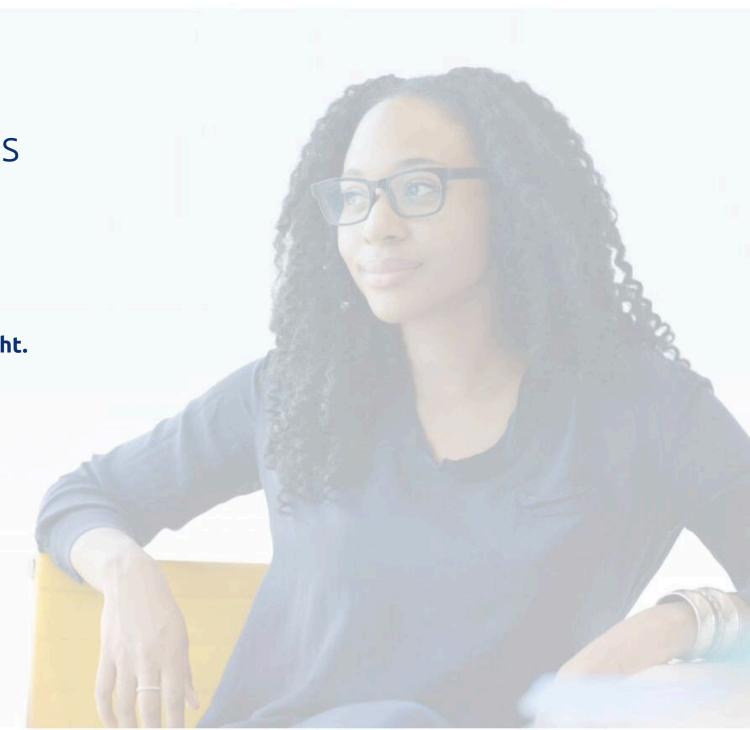
In the list of regular payments where people would look to firstly cut back on their spending, pension contributions rank roughly alongside household utilities (8% and 9% respectively).





Financial attitudes in an economic crisis

While people are different, it's the same big issues that are likely to keep them awake at night.



Most people hope for certainty of income – and want to avoid risk and debt

Our research shows that, in these difficult times, most people would prioritise certainty of income when it comes to their plans for retirement.

At the same time, they're perhaps gravitating towards the core beliefs and behaviours they think will allow them to better stabilise their household finances. More specifically, the majority are rejecting the idea of taking on debt to see them through the crisis. We're also seeing fewer differences in attitudes to investment risk across the generations.

What	What do we mean by 'planners' and 'advised'?				
	Planner	Has put a great deal of thinking into their retirement plans			
Y -1	Non-planner	Hasn't put any thinking into their retirement plans			
•	Advised	Has paid for financial advice from a registered professional			
	Non-advised	Hasn't paid for financial advice from a registered professional			



Personal finances

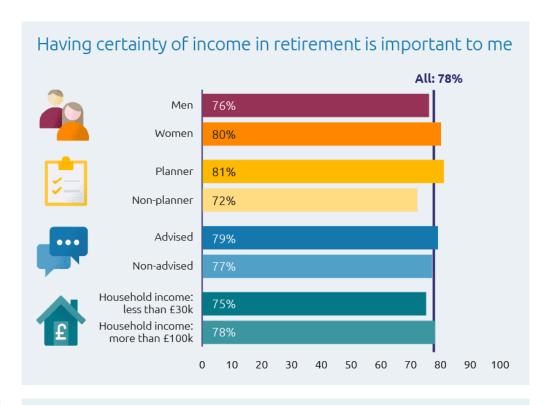
78% hope for certainty of income in retirement

As people find their financial resilience under threat, it's perhaps unsurprising that a significant majority put 'certainty of income' as being an important retirement priority.

More than two-thirds **(68%)** will also go as far as to say that an ideal scenario would involve them having enough guaranteed income to cover their essentials – but with some extra flexibility to cover other spending.

Perhaps most surprisingly is that non-planners place significantly less importance on having certainty of income in retirement than planners do **(72% vs. 81%)**. This may suggest that some people in this group carry overly optimistic expectations about how their financial situation might look in their later years.

Attitudes by ethnicity						
White	Black	Asian	Mixed			
78%	74%	74%	75%			



Attitudes by	generation				
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
69%	78%	78%	76%	80%	85%

Approaches to investing

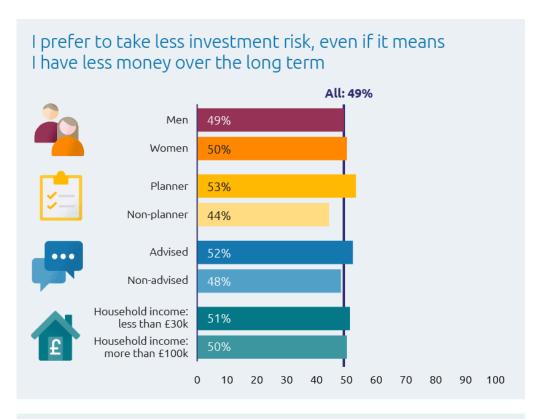
Around half (49%) prefer to take less investment risk

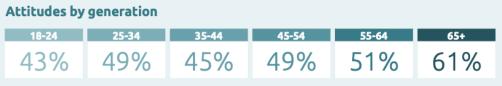
As market volatility dominates the daily news cycle, almost half of people say they'd rather limit their exposure to investment risk — even if it means they have less money over the long term.

What's interesting is that this view is largely shared equally across gender, ethnicity, affluence and whether people take advice or not.

Where we do see more of a difference is between planners and non-planners **(53% vs. 44%)**. Of all the groups, those who don't plan for retirement are the most likely to be comfortable taking more investment risk. This again suggests that they may be overly optimistic about their finances.

Attitudes by ethnicity						
White	Black	Asian	Mixed			
50%	43%	48%	42%			





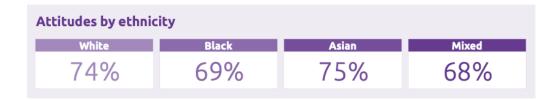
Attitudes to debt

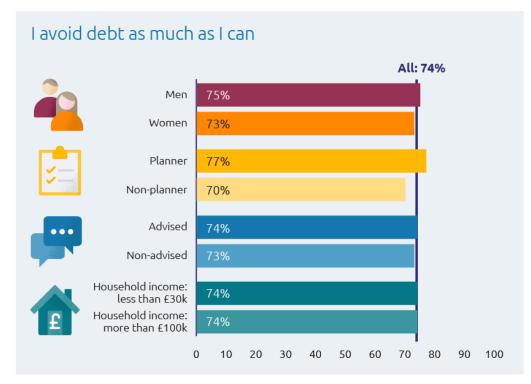
74% of working people want to avoid taking on debt

Despite household incomes being stretched across the country, most working people want to avoid racking up debt as much as they can.

This strong aversion to taking on credit is even more pronounced with those who have already retired (89%).

Interestingly, household affluence has no bearing on people's current attitudes towards debt. In fact, those with a total household income of less than £30k hold exactly the same view as those who have combined earnings that surpass £100k.





Attitudes by	generation				
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
69%	69%	68%	71%	82%	88%

Attitudes differ when it comes to financial positivity, spending and equity release

The day-to-day pressures on finances are of course affecting people in different ways.

Indeed, women, non-planners and those with lower levels of household income are likely to be shouldering the biggest financial worries and anxieties.

Interestingly, these groups are also among the least likely to consider using the value built up in their home to bridge any potential gap in their retirement finances.

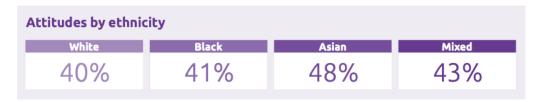


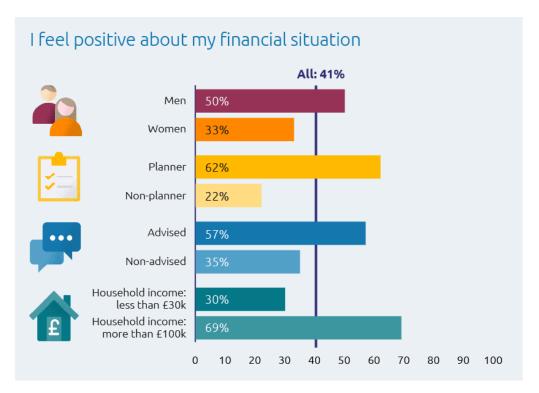
Financial outlook

Less than half of people feel positive about their financial situation

The cost of living crisis has put household finances under significant pressure. And, since our research last year, there's been a sizeable shift in the number of people who feel positive about their finances (dropping from 48% to 41%).

Where we see the biggest change is among women – who are now significantly less likely to feel assured about their current financial situation (moving from 42% down to 33%). And while financial positivity has dropped for all groups, planners are still almost three times more likely to feel better about their finances than non-planners (62% vs. 22% this year compared to 68% vs. 27% last year).





Attitudes by	generation				
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
43%	40%	37%	36%	42%	55%

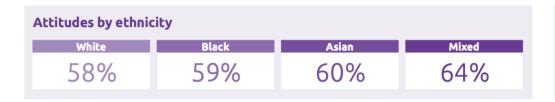
Sustainable spending

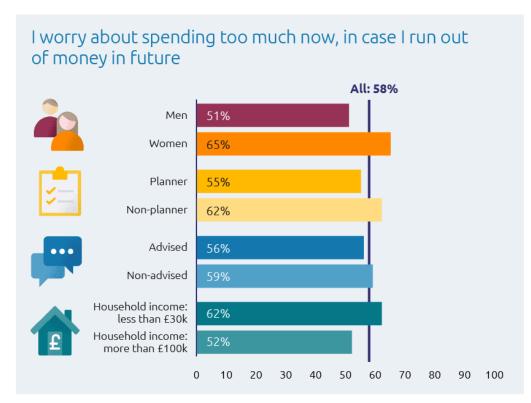
58% worry about spending too much now, in case they run out of money

As energy, fuel and food costs continue to rise, most people are worried that they might run out of money in the future.

Men are less likely to stress about their spending – but there's little difference between those who take financial advice and those who don't.

The benefits of making a plan can also be seen here, with planners being less likely to have concerns about running out of money than non-planners.





Attitudes by generation						
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
63%	67%	64%	57%	52%	41%	

Funding retirement

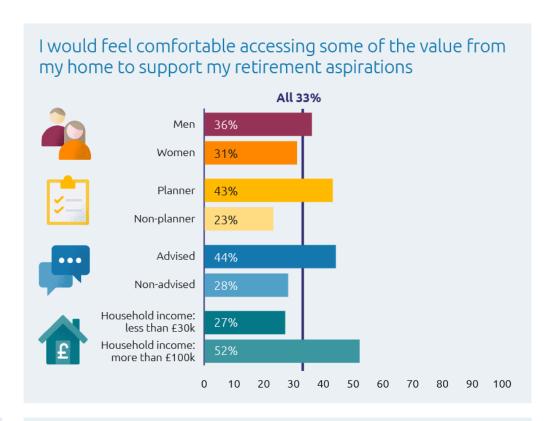
33% feel comfortable taking value from their home to support their retirement

As people's finances are being challenged on all fronts, their home could offer further means to help fund their life after work.

The possibilities of equity release would be of most interest to planners, those who take advice and have greater levels of household income. Non-planners and older generations would be the most reluctant to consider the idea.

Our findings also suggest there are cultural differences in terms of how people view their homes. Indeed, ethnic minorities are considerably more comfortable with the thought of accessing the equity in their home than white people.

Attitudes by ethnicity						
White	Black	Asian	Mixed			
32%	42%	41%	42%			



Attitudes by	generation				
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
41%	41%	38%	31%	24%	21%

Health and age anxiety

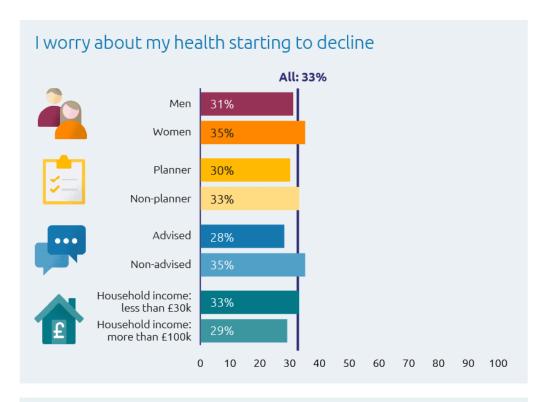
People are likely to worry most about their health in retirement

When people think of their life in retirement, around two-thirds **(64%)** prefer to focus on how things might look during the early stages.

But when they're asked to consider the potential negatives, the biggest common fear is facing a decline in their health – though this has dropped slightly since last year (36% down to 33%).

The second most common fear people have about their retirement is getting or feeling old **(32%)**.

Attitudes by ethnicity						
White	Black	Asian	Mixed			
34%	26%	28%	24%			



Attitudes by generation						
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
28%	32%	31%	33%	35%	39%	

The nation's youngest pension savers fear isolation in retirement

Loneliness is the biggest fear 18-24-year-olds carry when thinking about their life after retirement (31%). When compared to other age groups, they're also the most likely to worry about the death of a loved one (22%) and feeling like they'll lose their identity (14%).

Retirement is a positive experience

Despite the fears people may hold about their life after work, the vast majority of retirees **(85%)** say their retirement has been a positive experience.



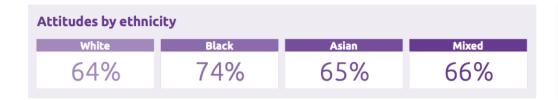
Leaving an inheritance

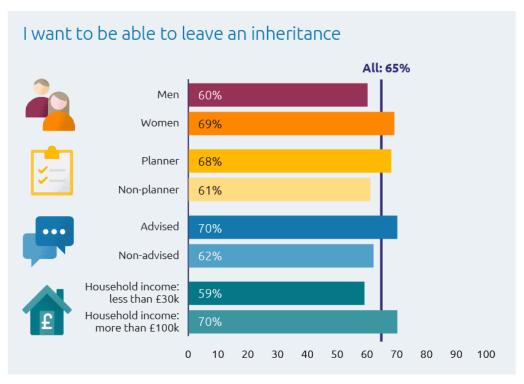
65% want to leave an inheritance behind when they die

People who are more engaged with their finances, or have higher levels of household income, are more likely to want to leave an inheritance.

Looking across the different ethnic groups, black people are decidedly more inclined to want to pass something on when they die.

Despite a notable desire to leave an inheritance, we've seen a drop in the number of people we spoke to who say they've made a will, when compared to our research last year **(down from 40% to 36%)**.





Attitudes by generation					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
68%	74%	66%	61%	56%	64%

Family support in later life

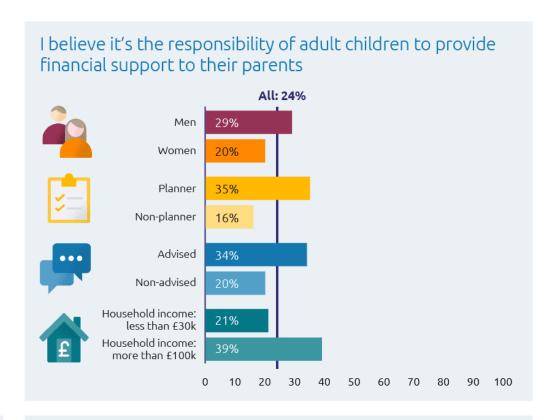
24% think adult children should give their parents financial help

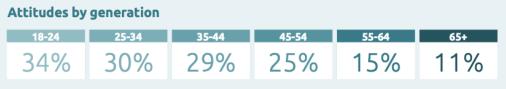
Almost a quarter of people think adult children have a responsibility to offer financial support to their parents.

Asians, planners and those with higher household incomes are the most likely to hold this belief.

Interestingly, it's the youngest age groups who feel the strongest about giving financial help to their parents – though this view gradually dissipates as we move through each generation; perhaps as the reality of the costs involved begin to set in.

Attitudes by ethnicity					
White	Black	Asian	Mixed		
22%	35%	44%	33%		





Gender gap

The cost of living crisis has widened the disparity

The ongoing economic uncertainty appears to be having a bigger impact on women than men.

Indeed, right now, women are significantly more likely than men to say they're finding their current financial situation difficult (31% vs. 19%).

This has had a bigger impact on their overall financial positivity – which, compared to last year, has fallen from **44% to 33%.**

This is a much bigger drop than we've seen with men, whose financial positivity has drifted from **54% to 50%.**



Gender gap (cont.)

Women are even more worried about their future financial stability

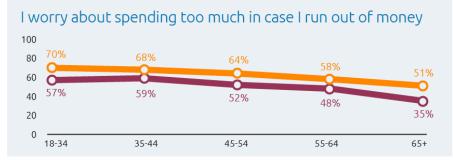
Women now carry even greater levels of anxiety around their future financial stability.

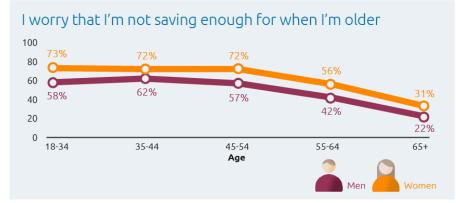
They're more likely to be worried about spending too much and running out of money **(65% compared to 59% last year).** And they're even more worried that they're not saving enough for their future **(58% jumping up to 66%).**

If we were to contrast this picture with men – their worries about saving and spending have either remained exactly the same as last year, or we've only seen very slight movement.

Financial positivity and anxieties across the generations







Gender gap (cont.)

The gap in financial knowledge and confidence has also grown.

Men are still more likely than women to say they're comfortable in their financial knowledge, as well as in their confidence to make good financial decisions. But the gap has grown since last year. The change is perhaps a symptom of the fact that women are now almost twice as likely than men to put no planning into their retirement (19% vs. 35%).

Not only that, but the number of women who say they put a 'great deal of thinking' into their retirement planning has dropped since last year (21% down from 23%). On the other hand, the number of men putting greater focus on into their plans for the future has grown (32% up to 35%).

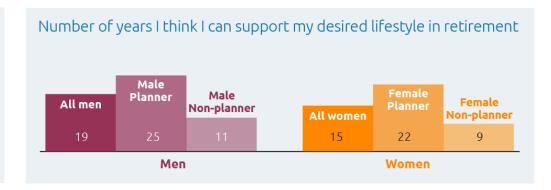
How financial confidence has changed 2021 2022

Women are less optimistic about how long they can support their retirement lifestyle.

On average, women think they'll be able to fund their retirement for three years less than men.

While financial confidence and planning have a role to play, women are also less likely than men to be saving into private pension **(49% vs. 60%).**

And, where they have been enrolled into a workplace scheme, they're more likely to only be saving the minimum level of contribution than men might be **(71% vs. 58%).**





The need for more planning and guidance

Despite the last few years of economic uncertainty, many people still don't plan for their retirement.



The positives of making a plan

Through our research last year, we were able to clearly show how the act of planning can make a huge difference to people's retirement outcomes.

This picture hasn't changed. Indeed, we can still see that those who plan will generally feel better about their finances – and enjoy a better life-afterwork experience.

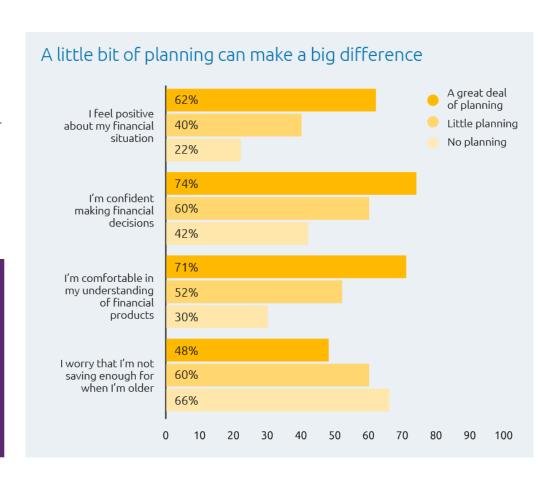
And while those who put a great deal of thinking into their plans for retirement are likely to have the most positive outlook, even those who take smaller steps will feel better than those who do nothing.

Non-planners are even less assured in their understanding of financial products

Compared to last year, we can see that non-planners are less comfortable in their understanding of financial products than planners.

In fact, the gap in knowledge has widened significantly (moving from 73% vs. 39% to 71% vs. 30%).

This year, non-planners are also more likely to be worried that they're not saving enough for when they're older **(61% rising to 66%)** and feel less confident in their ability to make good financial decisions **(47% dropping to 42%)**.



The benefits of planning are open to everyone

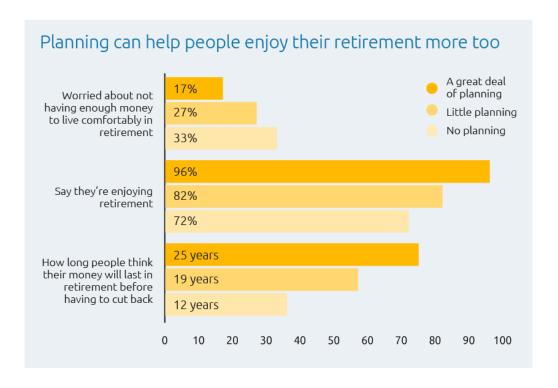
Our findings reveal that planning delivers positive results across all levels of wealth.

For example, **93%** of planners on low incomes would say they're enjoying their retirement – that's compared to just **66%** of non-planners on low incomes.

Not only that, but low-income planners* are three times more likely to feel very comfortable with the amount of savings they have compared to low-income non-planners (49% vs. 16%).

They're also more than twice as likely to say they feel positive about their current financial situation **(50% vs. 19%)**.

*People who fall into the 'low income' bracket have a yearly personal income of £20k or less.



Despite the benefits, most people still don't plan for their retirement

Our research shows that when it comes to retirement planning, the vast majority of people (72%) are still doing little, if anything.

This is despite the fact that the cost of living crisis is forcing more people to pay closer attention to their finances.

If we want to get more people thinking about how they can best achieve their retirement goals, we need to understand what the barriers are to making a plan, so we can ultimately work to remove them.

The vast majority don't plan for retirement

72% say they do little, if any, retirement planning.





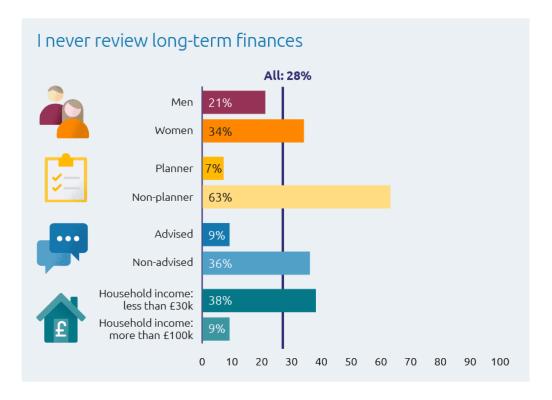
More than a quarter of people (28%) never review their long-term finances

A significant portion of the population **(28%)** admit that they never check their long-term financial situation. This could be because people think it's too much effort to do so **(10%)** or that they don't know where to start **(18%)**.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, non-planners are the least likely to look at their finances. However, the non-advised, women and those with lower levels of household income are also less likely to consider their financial outlook.

The number of people who check their finances at least once a year has also dropped since our last retirement study **(46% down to 42%).**

Attitudes by ethnicity					
White	Black	Asian	Mixed		
29%	27%	24%	19%		



Attitudes by generation					
18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
30%	30%	30%	31%	24%	22%

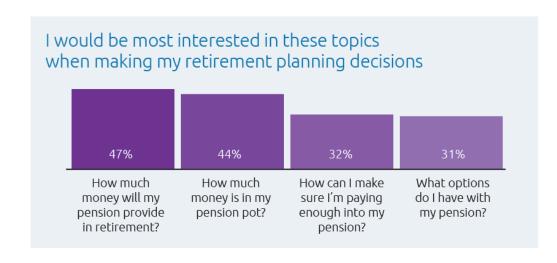
People have large gaps in their pensions knowledge – and feel overwhelmed by information

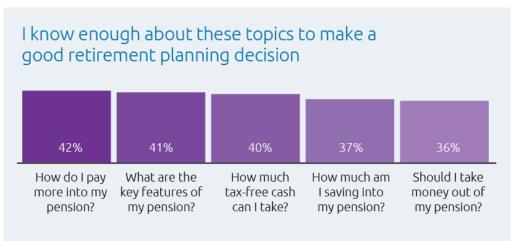
If we're to help people make good financial decisions, it's clear that more education and support is needed.

Indeed, our research shows that the majority of people don't feel confident in their ability to make a good decision when it comes to some of the pension basics. This includes understanding exactly what they have, and how they can best manage it.

At the same time, lots of people **(44%)** think it's easy to find information and guidance to help with their retirement planning.

Unfortunately, half the population **(50%)** think the information they come across is overwhelming – and a significant number **(41%)** don't know what to do with it all.





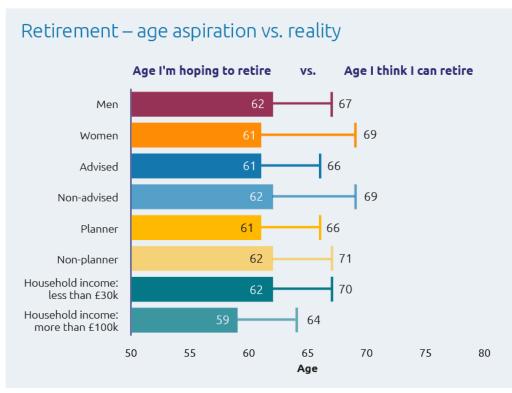
There's a disconnect between retirement aspirations vs. reality

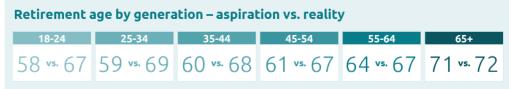
Across all the different age brackets we spoke to, we found there's a clear difference between the age people want to retire and the age they think they'll actually be able to.

While this may not be entirely surprising, the gap is far more pronounced with younger age groups. Indeed, there's a **10-year** difference in the retirement aspirations and expectations of those aged 25-34, but just **three years** between those aged 55-64.

This could perhaps suggest that the early hopes people carry for their retirement are unrealistic and, as time goes by, reality begins to set in.







Action is needed to combat the rising guidance gap

The cost of living crisis has forced its way into most homes across the UK.

Many people will be facing difficult financial decisions on their own – and some of these could have far-reaching implications on their quality of life. Not just in the here and now, but also in retirement.

We know there's already a significant guidance gap in the UK. But the current economic uncertainty has perhaps accelerated the need to dramatically upscale the awareness, availability and accessibility of good financial guidance services.

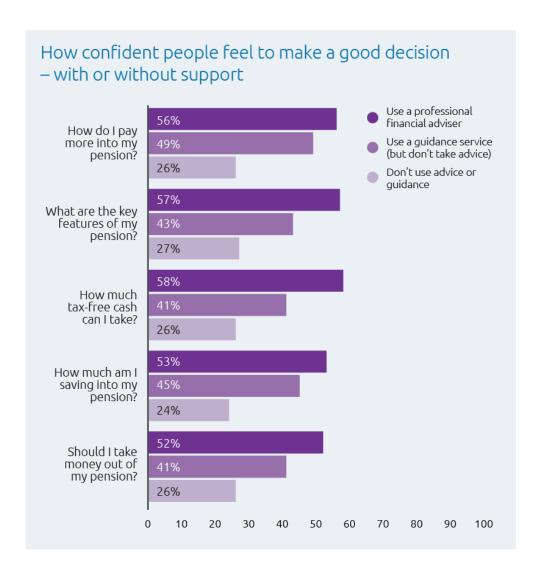
People who seek guidance feel better equipped to make good financial decisions

Our research shows that those who seek guidance feel more confident in their ability to make good decisions when it comes to their retirement planning than those who don't.

People who pay for professional financial advice are perhaps unsurprisingly the most assured in their decision-making – but we must recognise that not everyone has the need for full advice.

If we're to help those people in society who may be the hardest hit by the cost of living crisis, doing more to usher them towards a guidance service could be key.

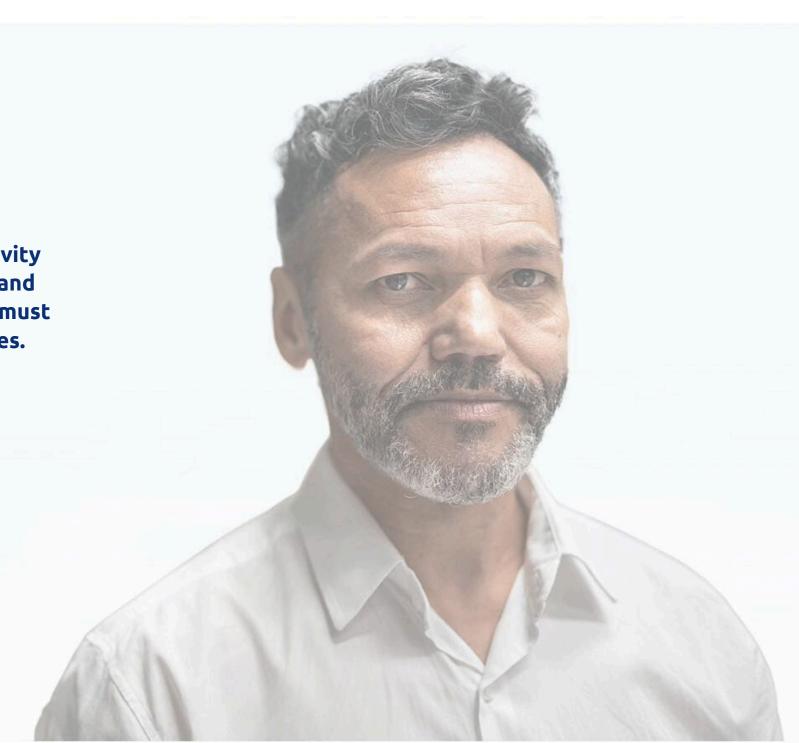
Because helping more people better understand their options can only be a good thing.





4 Where we go from here

If we're to champion inclusivity and foster better financial and social wellbeing for all, we must address three key challenges.



Where we go from here

Let's address the need for more income and certainty

Our research reveals that many are doing what they can to protect their lifestyles, either by taking on additional jobs, returning to work, or cutting costs. What's encouraging is that, to a large extent, pension savings remain largely untouched.

We can also see that the majority are looking for more certainty of income, highlighting the need to broaden support. For some, this may be through increasing their working hours or returning to work – placing a greater onus on employers. For others, this may mean accessing more appropriate retirement solutions that are better designed to deliver increased certainty.

What's clear is that there is much work to do in this area. This is one of the reasons why Standard Life has partnered with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in a joint research initiative. Through this, we want to encourage more active collaboration across the industry, with employers, advisers, and policymakers to help accelerate innovation in retirement income.





Let's encourage people to plan for their retirement

For the second year running, we found that most people are still doing little to no retirement planning, despite finding that there were clear emotional and financial benefits for those that do.

What's more, we found this year that there is a level of overoptimism with people that don't plan when it comes to investment risk, needing certainty of income, and attitudes to debt.

Against this backdrop, we need to do even more to actively promote the benefits of planning, whether this is through more interactive tools or more targeted communications. Last year, we made positive steps in these areas by launching a number of digital services that offer support, including Money Mindset, a financial wellness proposition that helps customers get a holistic view of their finances and set life goals, and a Homebuyer Hub designed to support first-time buyers.



Let's bridge more gaps – not just gender, but guidance and advice too

Our research has highlighted a guidance and advice gap, as people continue to feel overwhelmed with what they receive, and less confident about their decision making. Yet we know that whether you do a great deal of planning or just a little, you'll still have a more positive outlook on your future.

It's concerning to see that the gap has widened between genders since our research last year, with women in particular at a disadvantage. We see that women are more anxious about their finances, feel less confident in their financial knowledge, and are less optimistic about how long they can support their retirement lifestyle. We must continue to tailor the support we offer to help women engage more with their financial planning.

Where people access advice and guidance varies. But wherever they turn to, it needs to be personal, relatable, and provided in a simple and engaging way for customers.

About our research

In August 2022, Standard Life commissioned an independent study that sought to understand consumer attitudes to pensions and retirement plans.

We wanted to bring to light what influences people's ability to save for retirement and how they feel about the decisions they need to take now to plan for their financial futures. For those that have already retired, we wanted to learn about their experience of retirement so far.

The study questioned a total of 5,980 UK adults, with the data being weighted to give a nationally representative sample by age, gender, region and working status. The sample included 1,000 interviews to boost Asian and Black ethnic groups to provide a larger sample for analysis.

The research sample included UK adults aged 18 to 80 and covered a range by income, savings, region, gender, ethnicity, and other key attributes. This built on the research sample and topics from last year. In addition, we looked at some new areas for this year's report, including auto-enrolment – which reached its 10-year anniversary – and the effects of the cost of living crisis.



We're here to help you

We offer a variety of content to help with financial wellbeing and money worries

We have a range of resources to help people improve their financial wellbeing, including support for everyday money worries, advice on where to get help with rising costs, and information on how to manage the financial impact of major life events.

Useful resources

- Support with everyday money worries
- Where to get help and support with your rising costs
- Support with physical and mental health
- Support with life-changing events

Our charity partnerships

We've partnered with two charities – the Samaritans and Cancer Research UK's Race for Life – to help people with their mental and physical wellbeing, as well as to raise awareness and vital funds.

Our wider research initiatives

We're committed to staying close to our customers and what's important to them through our research programmes, including Phoenix Insights. We also engage in a joint research initiative with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Getting in touch

Our <u>Contact & Support</u> hub provides details on the different ways peoplecan get in touch with us, including via phone or secure online messaging.



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